

Local & Munl. (1899) Department.
Plague.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 913

DATED 14-6-99
of 15-6-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Common Salt a preventive against plague

Recording letter from the Collector
Government of India forwarding for information
copies of certain correspondence regarding
the use of common salt as a preventive
against plague.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
1058P	10-7-99						

L. & M.
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Plague.

Local & Munl. (1899) Department.

CURRENT No. 24 of P.

From

The Under Secretary to the Govt of India.

Order no 913 Pms 8/14-6-99
Recorded

No. 180-4

Dated 31-5-99

Received at city 8-5-99
at Madras 10-6-99

Registered 10-6-99

Enclosures /

Spare copies /

SUBJECT.

Forwarding for information
copies of correspondence
regarding the use of
common salt as a
preventive against plague

Copy to the Sanitary Commissioner
Surgeon-General.
Rev Sept

For orders as to whether a few copies
of Mr. Gumpel's pamphlet may
be bought.

Not necessary
12 vi 99

10/6/99

Chaitanya

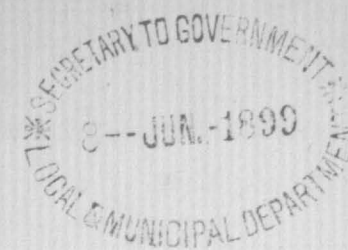
BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

No. 1004 .



FROM

R. NATHAN, Esq.,
Under Secretary to the Government of India,

To

The Secy. to the Govt of Madras,
Local and Municipal Department.

Home Department.
Sanitary-Plague.

Simla, the 31st May 1899.

SIR,

I AM directed to forward, for the information of the Governor in Council,

From Mr. C. Godfrey Gumpel to the Secretary of State for India, dated the 6th February 1899, and enclosed letter from Dr. Hans Buchner, dated the 28th January 1899.

From Mr. C. Godfrey Gumpel to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated the 18th March 1899.

a copy of the letters noted in the margin regarding the use of common salt as a preventive against plague.

2. I am to state that copies of Mr. Gumpel's pamphlet on the subject are not available in this office. It is published by

Messrs. Thacker and Company in Calcutta and Bombay.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

R. Nathan

Under Secy. to the Government of India.

To the Right Honourable Lord George Hamilton,
Secretary of State for India.

MY LORD,

Re the Plague in India.

The far-reaching importance of the above subject is my excuse for approaching Your Lordship with this letter and with my appeal.

How far I am justified in this step is evidenced by the contents of the accompanying letter of Dr. Hans Buchner, President of the Hygienic Institute and Professor at the University of Munich—a physiologist of acknowledged high standing.

After reading that letter Your Lordship will, I trust, be induced to peruse the accompanying pamphlet, when probably Her Majesty's Government will order the present Royal Commission in India or other delegates to institute the proposed experiment.

It is needless to say more in order to impress Your Lordship with the great desirability for action in the suppression of the plague (and cholera) in India, as also in other tropical countries; and while supplicating Her Majesty's Government for the suggested trial, I beg to subscribe myself—

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

C. GODFREY GUMPELS.

"Troutbeck,"

Elm Road, Beckenham, Kent,

6th February 1899.

Letter from DR. HANS BUCHNER, Professor at, and President of the Hygienic Institute of, the University of Munich.

28th January 1899.

I duly received your esteemed letter of the 24th instant, and hasten to inform you that you could not have applied to any one who is more convinced of the correctness of your views than I am, as I have, ever since 1890, brought forward evidence of the fact that the natural power of resistance of the organism against bacteria depends directly upon the *amount of its mineral constituents*.

The first proof of this I published in the "Archiv für Hygiene"—volume X, 1890—in an article entitled "Investigation on the bacteria-destroying effects of the blood and blood-serum"; and have already at that date shown that the bacteria-killing power of the normal blood-serum—upon which the natural protective powers of the organism against bacteria chiefly depend—is lowered and ultimately destroyed in proportion as the mineral constituents especially sodium-chloride are withdrawn from the serum.

Later on, in 1893, I continued these researches on the important office of the (neutral) salts in relation to the bacterium-destroying protective substances of the serum, to which latter I gave (in 1891) the name of "Alexins"; and added the second proof that the bacterium-killing qualities of blood-serum—after having been made ineffective through the abstraction of common salt—*could be restored again by the restitution of the lost minerals, especially common salt*. By same post I send you a copy of the dissertation of 1893, in which I have marked passages on pages 138, 189, 142, 174-6, to attract your attention.

1405 P. of 1899

These inquiries established the fact that the presence of mineral salts in the organism is of great importance for the natural resisting powers against infection; and that it would be dangerous to decrease their amount.

The influence of this diminution appears to become evident in the increased destructive action of water on the cells and on the protective serum (Schutzstoffe), which action is in itself always harmful. An organism deficient in salt may be compared to one, which contains an abnormal quantity of water, and possesses, like this latter, a diminished resisting power against infection.

It was naturally suggestive to apply these scientific results for practical purposes. But, when considering these possibilities, I was always induced to think that the low price of common salt in our countries gave every one the opportunity of supplying himself with the quantity he needed, and that any amount, beyond the body's necessity, is, as you correctly state, excreted by the kidneys.

You are quite right in stating that this does not apply to India, where, with the high salt-tax and among a people who—partly through poverty, partly through habit " (ignorance) "—do not use it, the human body does not receive sufficient of that mineral substance which imparts the power of resisting infectious diseases. And this applies in a special degree to vegetarians, as Professor Bunge (Lehrbuch der Physiologischen Chemie) has shown.

That such a deficiency of common salt—when it does exist—can be very harmful, and must essentially increase the pre-disposition for infection, I consider, in accordance with my experiments, as certain. And the possibility of such deficiency of common salt, which I did not think probable for Europeans, I must admit as possible for the inhabitants of India.

I must, however, add that, according to my inquiries, common salt is by no means alone capable of performing the important office assigned to the alkali-salts in the human body, but that other mineral salts are equally effective. I do not mean to say, that for example, experiments should be made with sodium-sulphate, since I am convinced that sodium-chloride is the most suitable for the human organism. I only wish to point this out in order to indicate that sodium-chloride must not be looked upon as a *specific* against the plague.

In conclusion, dear Sir, I do not hesitate to give my full support to the practical experiment as suggested by you. I consider it to have a strong scientific basis; and that it is, for this very reason, urgently demanded, being besides perfectly harmless. I should hence feel highly gratified were the British or Indian Government to decide to accede to your request and institute an experiment of distributing common-salt among the members of a community in which plague has broken out.

DR. HANS BUCHNER,

Professor der Universität.

Vorstand des Hygienischen Institutes der

Universität München.

Dated "Troutbeck," Elm Road, Beckenham, the 18th March 1899.

From—C. GODFREY GUMPELS, Esq.,

To—The Under Secretary of State for India.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, in which you inform me that the (completed) copy of my treatise on the prevention of plague is retained at your office to await the return of the Plague Commission from India.

May I be permitted to plead—in the name of thousands of human beings whose lives are sacrificed (in Bombay alone one thousand per week) to the persistence in the employment of inefficient means for preventing and curing the disease—

that the Plague Commission has been, is, and will be engaged in collecting evidence and information on the ways and means, which now for three years nearly have proved unsuccessful in suppressing the plague;

that the Commission, on its return to Europe, will be fully occupied for several months in arranging and classifying the truly bewildering evidence, with a minimum probability of producing, out of all the collected material, any definite valuable proposition for the prevention and cure of the disease;

that the question of employing sodium-chloride, as suggested in my treatise, lies outside the object of the present Royal Commission, and that hence the submission of my appeal to that Commission can only cause unjustifiable delay and most probable ultimate suppression of the whole subject;

that the proposed experiment is recommended by two authorities, whose high position in the sciences of Epidemiology and Bacteriology is unsurpassed by any member of the medical profession;

that it is not necessary to submit the question before another medical tribunal, in order to ascertain that no valid reason can possibly be advanced against the suggested experiment;

that this latter requires more an administrative than a medical faculty to carry the same into effect;

that hence the question would find its best solution in India, and might thus, with advantage, be referred to the Indian Executive Government and to Indian officials;

that every week's delay consigns thousands of human beings to the grave, and that hence immediate steps should be taken, not only for humanity's sake, but also to prevent those, with whom the decision of the whole matter rests, from being indicted for manslaughter as a consequence of their criminal neglect.

Nothing but ignorance, prejudice or callous indifference can stand in the way of ordering and carrying into effect so simple and inexpensive an experiment, on which one of the most momentous questions of mankind depends.

I can but hope that the importance of the subject will induce Her Majesty's Ministers to advise the Indian Government to institute the suggested trial without further delay. I shall be happy to furnish any number of copies of the treatise should this be required.

When given for copying _____
 When copied _____
 When examined _____
 When signed _____

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READ AGAIN G.O., No. _____, DATED _____
 189

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

A A A A A A A

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO:

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 IN ORIGINAL.

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