

Local & Munl. (189⁹) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 400 P 2nd

DATED 13-3-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Utility of White-washing during Plague

Recording Progs. of the Plague Commr. Comd^t to an Offr. for information & guidance, letter from the Sanitary Commr. Madras, stating that the use of lime-wash may well be discontinued if disinfection has been correctly accomplished with the solutions of perchloride of mercury and hydrochloric acid.

BACK PAPERS.

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

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

Proceedings of the Plague Commissioner, MADRAS-1899.

LHM Enc 5139



Recd.

Regd.

8. 3 — 1899.

Enclosures

Spare copies *by cur*

Proceedings, No. $\frac{570}{40}$, 1st March 1899.

Order No 400 Pmis 7/13.3.99

Mis

MARCH.

Recorded

13/3/99

13397

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLAGUE COMMISSIONER.

READ—the following papers:—

From Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Plague Commissioner, Madras, dated Camp Vellore, 14th February 1899, No. 527/S.

With reference to your Ref. on C. Nos. 1391 and 1663, dated 9th February 1899, I have the honour to state that the District Medical Officer, Anantapur, consulted me demi-officially [correspondence not preserved] with reference to reduction of expenditure in disinfecting, and suggested that, instead of whitewashing the whole of the interior of the houses, a distance of a certain number of feet (as far as I remember not exceeding 3 feet) in height only should be completed. In reply, I pointed out to him that if it was difficult to get lime in other than markedly stale condition in practice, if the perchloride of mercury solution with hydrochloric acid were efficiently applied, any further attempt with a substance such as lime, which is subject to change of its causticity from exposure, was unnecessary; in short, that beyond giving the rooms a final appearance of brightness and cleanliness, I considered the action of no importance—provided the really efficient mode of disinfecting by the perchloride of mercury had been practised in the first place. I, therefore, suggested that, as a final ornamental act, whitewashing might be retained in houses in which cases had really occurred, but that, in other instances, in "infected areas" the soaking with perchloride solution ought to suffice. The question of whether or not lime placed on walls subsequent to the use of perchloride had inimical influence on the latter was not discussed by me; as I assumed that before lime-washing a house, an interval to allow of complete drying of the walls would have been arranged for—an interval more than sufficient to secure all germicidal action of the perchloride solution.

Ref. on C. No. 2080.

With reference to your No. 527/S, dated 14th February 1899, I have the honour to say that I welcome any suggestion that will lessen the time and trouble expended in disinfection, without lessening the value of the work done. I have the honour to request that you will inform me whether you consider that a general direction may be issued to discontinue lime-washing.

20th February 1899.

(Signed) L. E. BUCKLEY,
Plague Commissioner.

To the Sanitary Commissioner.

From Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Plague Commissioner, Madras, dated Camp Tirupati, 25th February 1899, No. 636/S.

With reference to your letter, Ref. on C. No. 2080, dated 20th instant, I have the honour to state that, provided disinfection has been correctly accomplished with the perchloride of mercury solution in combination with hydrochloric acid, the use of

lime-wash must be regarded as a work of supererogation. It might therefore well be discontinued—otherwise than in instances where the local authorities are of opinion that it would be of special advantage to hand over a disinfected house to the tenant, in an attractive condition.

2. It seems to me that the correct place for lime-washing of houses is not as a method of disinfection, but of improving the general sanitary condition of houses *before* the arrival of an epidemic. Lime-washing has an effect upon organic impurities on walls that is of value in decreasing the chances of a favourable nidus for microbes, but the act of white-washing includes a general clean-up and airing of a house which is of greater moment. When such action is taken, not with reference to a solitary house here and there, but to a whole town, or large section of it, there can be no doubt of its being possible to look for important sanitary results. Whilst upon this subject, therefore, I would advise your reminding Collectors of the power given under section 186 of the Madras District Municipalities Act. Provided that no farce is enacted—it being frequent for inhabitants to attempt to satisfy an order by splattering a little whitewash on the outside of a house—I believe the enforcement of the order in municipal towns suffering from, or threatened with, plague, would be a most judicious measure.

PROCEEDINGS—No. 570, dated 1st March 1899.

The papers read above are communicated to all Collectors and the President, Madras Municipal Commission, for information and guidance.

K. S. M. S. S. S.
7/3/99
Personal Assistant
for Plague Commissioner.

To all Collectors (A—L).

„ the President, Municipal Commission, Madras.

Copy to the Sanitary Commissioner.

„ „ Surgeon-General.

„ „ Secretary to Government, Local and Municipal Department.

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