

18-1-13 ✓

[R.O.]
10

10,000-24-10-12.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Block No. 2

Paper taken out of the Records from the charge of the Referencer,

Dept. Marine Press 801 No 801, dated 11-7 1911 Rank No. 181
Mis. Rout. Range,

Date taken out.	FOR WHAT PURPOSE.			Initials of Referencer.	Date returned.	Initials of attender.
	Department.	C. No.	Year.			
18/1/13	Marine	443	13	B	15/2/13	B

Marine (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 802 Mar
DATED 15 September 1911

[Despatch Abstract.]

Medical Inspection: Letter from the P.O. Officer enquiring whether the views taken as to the meaning of the telegrams from the ^{of the P.O. Officer} East India telegrams to - of crews & passengers, is correct, recorded with reference to No. 790 of 11.9.97.

[M.C.]
600-23-6-97.

Indexed. 23/9/97
24/9/97

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
	790-01	Mar.	16.9.97				
	5838	"	15.9.97				
	5702	"	8.9.97				
	5642	"	4.9.97				
	5632	"	3.9.97				
	5562	"	1.9.97				
	5502	"	30.8.97				
	756	"	26.8.97				
	745-6	"	23.8.97				
	682	"	30.7.97				
	363	"	22.4.97				
	315	"	31.3.97				

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

Marine (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 12262

From

The Presidency Port Office,
Madras

Order 802 Marine, dated 15th September 1897

Recorded with
reference to the revised
rules for inspection of forward
vessels issued with G.O. 790.
Marine, of 11 Sep 97.

No. 949
328 9

Dated 9 September 1897

Received 11. 10. 97

Registered

Enclosures "

Spare copies

To The PPO
R.S.
14/9/97
17/9/97

Inquiring? SUBJECT.

Stating whether the view taken
regarding the telegram
relative to medical inspection
of crews and passengers
is correct.

The revised rules are
quite clear on this point.
They only apply to vessels and
persons leaving for ports out of
India direct.

R.S.
14 Sep 97. 14/9/97

FURTHER PAPERS.

No. 1.

R. & S. 2824.

Sir,

India Office,
16th November 1897.

16th November 1897.

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to forward, for submission to the Marquis of Salisbury, copy of the papers noted in the margin, from which it will be observed that the Government of India find considerable difficulty in carrying out the conditions of the Venice Convention relative to the examination on shore of all persons sailing from infected ports of India westward, and propose that the examination shall be made on board in cases where a strict adherence to the rule laid down in that Convention would occasion delay and difficulty.

I am to state that Lord George Hamilton proposes with the concurrence of Lord Salisbury to approve the action of the Government of India in this respect, and desires to draw attention to the suggestion that the reasons which have led to this modification of the Venice Convention may, if it is deemed necessary, be explained to the Foreign Governments interested.

I have, etc.,

A. GODLEY.

The Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office.

No. 2.

Foreign Office,
18th January 1898.

Sir,

I laid before the Marquess of Salisbury your letter of the 16th of November last in regard to the difficulties experienced by the Government of India in carrying out the conditions of the Venice Convention relative to the examination on shore of all persons sailing from infected ports of India westward, and their desire that the examination should be made on board in cases where a strict adherence to the rule laid down in that Convention would occasion difficulty and delay.

In reply, I am directed by His Lordship to transmit herewith for the information of the Secretary of State for India in Council, copy of a Memorandum on the subject which has been drawn up in this Department, and also of one which has been furnished by the Senior Medical Officer to the Local Government Board.

It will be observed that there are on general considerations very grave objections against proposing any amendment on a technical subject to a Convention made by an International Conference, and that it is feared that to do so would open the door for the proposal of other changes which might be disadvantageous alike to the interests of India and to the general freedom of navigation.

It must be borne in mind that the conditions obtained at Venice for Indian passengers and trade were much more favourable than had been anticipated, while the concessions made to British commerce, especially in the matter of the passage of the Suez Canal, altogether exceed any concessions hitherto obtained at previous Conferences.

Moreover, it would not appear to be a favourable moment for suggesting any such modification when proposals are being made to add to the stringency of the Convention wherever the safeguarding of India Ports against the infection of plague is concerned.

Some prominence is given by the Government of India to the fact that since "concession, "of board ship inspection has been granted under the Convention in regard to the most "dangerous class of persons, namely, pilgrims, it ought to be made as regards other persons "should circumstances render this desirable."

It will be seen, however, from the papers enclosed that this contention is based on a misconception, and that the concession referred to is not in any way concerned with "board ship inspection," but relates to the detention under observation of pilgrims arriving at ports of departure for such period as will suffice for the detection of any persons passing through the

period of incubation of plague; and that it is an additional requirement to that of individual inspection on shore before embarkation.

In view of all these considerations Lord Salisbury is strongly of opinion that any attempt to modify the Convention at the present moment would be alike fruitless and inopportune.

I am, etc.,

GEORGE CURZON.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

Enclosure 1 in No. 2.

The Venice Convention of 1897 provides that all persons leaving a plague-infected port shall be medically inspected by day and on shore before going on board. The Government of India propose that the medical inspection should be allowed to take place on board and bring forward certain reasons in support of this amendment.

There are general considerations against proposing any amendment whatever to a Convention made by an International Conference on a technical subject. Such an agreement is the outcome of a series of compromises, each resting on the other; the administrative habits and, indeed, the prejudices of the countries parties to it, are often the unknown reasons for some particular provision, which may not perhaps of itself be of much value, but is nevertheless valued in some particular country and is there appealed to as one of the valuable parts of the agreement offering compensation for some other provision disliked in that country. Each country, for certain, finds in the Convention of Venice some provision which it would like to alter. Any proposal to amend is almost sure to be followed by others; the plague has not spread beyond India, but it should not be forgotten that the conditions obtained at Venice for Indian passengers and trade are much better than it was thought they would be. Amendments proposed by other countries are not likely to be in the direction of greater freedom for navigation.

As regards the particular amendment wanted by India, it must be observed that inspection on board ship was looked upon with much disfavour by the Conference. When the British Delegates informed the Conference that persons leaving India were already medically examined under a spontaneous order of the Government, the French Delegates read in an ironical tone an extract from the report for 1894 of the Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India describing the manner in which pilgrims were examined on board. The British Delegates replied that things were now different, but the Conference decided unanimously that it was preferable that the inspection should be on shore, and the final text of the Convention leaves no option in the matter.

The Government of India alleges another part of the Convention as a justification and as a precedent for the proposed amendment. But the part cited is entirely misunderstood in India. It was originally proposed at the Sanitary Conference of Paris, 1894, that there should be applied to pilgrims starting for the Hedjaz the admirable system adopted by the Government of India in regard to troops leaving for active service, namely, that they should be held under observation for a certain number of days in order to draught out men having in them the germs of disease, especially epidemic disease. Both the British and the Netherland Government objected for very good reasons to the application of this system to pilgrims. It was eventually set aside by making its adoption conditional on local circumstances rendering its adoption possible. But before this addition to the Convention had been agreed to, it had been conceded that this holding under observation for a certain number of days, which is radically different from a medical inspection, might in the case of ships sailing from the Netherland East Indies, be held to be performed on board during the voyage, because the voyage is in fact longer than the period adopted, for administrative purposes, as the incubation period of cholera or of plague. This arrangement was not allowed in the case of India on account of the shorter voyage. This arrangement was not provided for the purpose of detecting and isolating any case of plague or cholera that may occur during the efflux of the incubation period, and it cannot be appealed to in support of performing on board the medical inspection of each individual, a provision ordered in view of preventing the embarkation of any person who may at the moment of embarkation be recognised as already or probably suffering from either of those diseases.

The question of the possibility of carrying out inspection on shore in Indian ports will be decided by the Powers to whom the amendment may be submitted, on the evidence furnished by the Indian Government. If the amendment is to be submitted to the Powers with any chance of success, it must be supported by evidence showing that the provisions of the Convention are, on this point, not merely inconvenient, but really impracticable and it must also be shown that the proposed amendment will introduce a system at once effectual and free from the objections made to that which it is to replace.

At Calcutta the convenience of the passengers and of the Customs officials appear to be the main hindrance to carrying out inspection on shore. At Bombay passengers leaving the

outer wall of the dock are now examined on shore in rooms erected for the purpose. But in the case of ships sailing at night from "the Stream" or from the docks, it would, it is said, be difficult to control the movements of passengers after they have been medically inspected on shore the day previous to departure, and there is especially the additional difficulty in the case of sailing from the docks, that the ship's latrines being closed while in dock, passengers and crews must, "to use the only available latrines," be allowed to go freely about the docks, which are in free communication with the city. There is therefore no certainty that passengers and crews will not, after medical inspection, visit plague-infected parts of the city, or even that a plague-infected person will not take the place of a passenger passed as healthy.

In the case of ships sailing from "the Stream," special inspection rooms would have to be built, and it would still be difficult to control the movements of passengers after inspection when the ship did not sail till night.

The medical authorities of Continental Europe have, I fear, little confidence in the sanitary practice of India, and the consideration of the state of things that has been allowed to grow up and to continue at Bombay, as described at Venice by the Indian Delegate, can but have increased this want of confidence.

If the above reasons are given in support of the proposed amendment the obvious reply will be that the difficulties complained of can be removed by the construction of proper inspection rooms and of dock latrines cut off from the city, and by a proper police supervision of ships after the passengers have been inspected and have gone on board. Until these measures have been shown to be practicable, the Indian amendment is little likely to be accepted by the Powers.

Neither will it appear to the Powers from the evidence as yet furnished that the amendment will provide any remedy for the difficulties alleged in the case of the existing provision. The Indian Government allows that in the case of plague, medical inspection must be made by day. But it is obvious that the passengers and crews will be just as difficult to control after inspection on board as after inspection on shore, and that there will be just the same danger in both cases from passengers using "the only available latrines," which are in free communication with the plague-infected city.

The Government of India urges further that, in the case of crews, inspection on shore is still more difficult of execution than in the case of passengers. It is said that the "annoyance and risk are clear and that the merit of the precaution is not apparent, since the crew have been already on board, and if one of them on inspection is found to be suffering from plague, he must be considered to have infected the ship." No doubt this is so, and the necessary measures of disinfection must be taken in the case supposed. But inspection on board will not prevent these circumstances arising. Why cannot crews shipped at Bombay be inspected on shore before going on board and be inspected again, if they have had free communication with the city, before the passengers ship? A certain number of the crew might in special cases be examined on board if they really cannot leave the ship. The Convention orders the inspection to be made "on embarkation." The Calcutta rules provide that the crew of a healthy ship arriving from an infected port shall not land except on duty for ten days from the date on which the ship left the infected port. Why cannot crews shipping at Bombay be similarly restricted after they have passed, on shore, their medical inspection? Obviously communication with the city should be kept within the narrowest possible limits. Carelessness in treating this point will assuredly arouse suspicion in Continental Europe, and it will be said that the precautions possible at Calcutta in the case of ships from infected ports might well be enforced at plague-infected Bombay for outward-bound ships while lying in that port.

Thoroughly efficient medical inspection carried out in the manner recommended by the Conference is certainly the most important and the most valued of the precautions on the adoption of which valuable freedom was guaranteed to ships leaving infected ports in India. The reasons alleged in support of the proposed amendment of the Convention are as little likely to carry weight with the other signatory Powers as those alleged in the case of passengers.

It is possible that further and more convincing evidence can be produced as to the necessity and efficiency of the inspection on shore, or that the existing evidence can be so put as to prove both points; but I would submit that as the matter at present stands the amendment is certain to be rejected and that the evidence as yet given in support of it by the Government of India will raise in the minds of Foreign Governments doubts as to the zeal of the Indian Government in fulfilling its share of the obligations contained in the Convention.

Another method of avoiding the risks which would, as I believe, be run by putting the evidence now sent home before the other Powers, would be to suppress it and merely propose the amendment, pointing out that inspection on board has hitherto been permitted by the Bombay rules as an alternative and has proved efficient, as although 333,405 persons were inspected during February, March, April, and May, and a considerable number of plague patients were removed from ships, no single case of plague has occurred on board any ship so inspected after leaving Bombay. The "Dilwara," on which plague did occur, was inspected, not by the ordinary civil, but by the military, authorities.

It may be noted that the Indian authorities evidently intend to impose against ships from plague-infected ports the maximum of restriction allowed by the Convention. In several cases the rules as originally submitted to the Central Government exceeded this maximum. The Bombay rules, which are to be recast, provide that all vessels arriving at Bombay after having communicated with vessels from infected ports shall be treated as if they had themselves arrived from infected ports. I do not see that the Central Government has taken exception to this provision; but I think that it will constitute a distinct infraction of the Convention except there was plague on the vessel communicated with and except the communication was of such a nature as to be likely to have conveyed the infection. The provision as it stands is a reproduction of one of the most unreasonable rules of the old quarantine system of Europe.

I notice that the Calcutta rules on disinfection speak of a "pressure of from one and a half to two degrees;" there may be a recognised pressure scale in India; but unless this is so, it would be better to say clearly "to two atmospheres."

In this memorandum I have dealt only with general considerations, but I would suggest that the case be referred to Sir R. Thorne for his opinion both on these and on any medical considerations raised in the papers.

5th December 1897.

H. F.

Enclosure 2 in No. 2.

Local Government Board,
5th January 1898.

Sir,

I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th ultimo, and of its enclosures, respecting the difficulty found in carrying out the conditions of the Venice Convention relative to the examination on shore of all persons sailing from infected ports of India westward, and I am to transmit to you, for the information of the Marquess of Salisbury, the accompanying copy of a minute on the subject by the Board's Medical Officer, Sir Richard Thorne.

I am, etc.,

H. C. MONRO,
Assistant Secretary.

The Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office.

Enclosure in above.

With a view of complying with the wish of the Marquess of Salisbury, that he should be supplied with my observations on the Despatch from the Government of India, which embodies a request that the Sanitary Convention of Venice, 1897, should be so modified as to allow of the examination of passengers and crew leaving plague-infected ports of India being made on board ship instead of on land, I have examined the enclosures to the Despatch, and have read the memorandum prepared by Mr. Farnall on the subject, and I now beg leave to make the following observations:—

I could not usefully discuss a number of the points urged, in favour of the amendment, in documents emanating from the different Provinces of India, because they deal with details concerning different ports, which can only be properly understood as the result of a personal knowledge of the local circumstances, including such matters as the relation of docks to the waters of the ports, and the relation of both to the cities to which the docks are attached.

Under these circumstances, I feel that I ought to confine my observations, in the main, to general considerations, and I do so with the less hesitation, because some of the local difficulties referred to relate to ports which are not infected with plague, and to which there is no present necessity of applying the decisions of the Conference as regards infected ports.

At the onset, I would observe that it comes to me as news, that the inspection of crew and passengers required under Chapter I, [II., (1^o)], has not all along been made on shore at Bombay, and I am convinced that the English Delegates at Venice were not alone in the belief that this work was, at the date of the Conference, carried out before and not after embarkation. The passage in the principal speech of the Delegate of the Indian Government hardly admits of any other interpretation, especially where, in referring to a strict and individual examination of both crew and passengers, it is stated:—"Les individus dont la condition ne parait pas satisfaisante ne peuvent s'embarquer."

As regards the medical value of an examination on board as contrasted with one on shore, in so far as prevention of plague is concerned, I may say that I find myself very much in agreement with the advisers of the Government of India. The risk of conveying plague by ship to Europe is, I believe, small; and since plague can rarely, if ever, be definitely detected during the somewhat long period of incubation of the disease, no personal examination, whether on shore or on board, can with certainty eliminate the disease. According to

information received from the military authorities, the regulations as to inspection were "carefully and fully given effect to" in the "Dilwara" case, and it was doubtless owing to the difficulty attending the incubation period that the "Dilwara" incident occurred. So also, if the Singapore telegram of 17th December 1897, in the "Times" to the effect that "The Bombay steamer to-day landed at Penang a passenger suffering from the plague" be true, the explanation of this further plague occurrence will probably be the same.

But on the value of adhering to the requirement as laid down in the Convention in every other respect I have no sort of doubt. I believe it to be a matter of the first importance.

It must be remembered that the concessions made to British views, and hence to British commerce, especially in the matter of the passage of the Suez Canal, altogether exceed any concessions hitherto obtained at previous conferences. Indeed, the Conventions dealing with the prevention of cholera are in this respect much more stringent than the Venice Convention of 1897, which deals with plague. It was also matter of very general observation during the sittings of the Conference, that certain Powers, and notably Mediterranean Powers followed in the direction which the British Delegates aimed at, with extreme reluctance, and that their votes were only given in favour of such important clauses as that permitting vessels from plague-infected ports of India to transit the Suez Canal during the incubation of the disease, because, for other reasons than the question of plague prevention, they did not wish to take an attitude which would militate against the signature of a Convention. Some of these Powers would, I feel sure, hail an opportunity for revising some of the terms of the Convention, and for inserting requirements involving that increased stringency which they believe to be necessary. How far it would be practicable, if any portion of the Convention came under review, to oppose demands of this description, and which would be adverse to British commerce, I cannot pretend to say. But I am certain that such matters as the continued "spread and increase in severity" of plague in India, announced at Simla at a much later date than the request in question, and the grave conditions of the native parts of Bombay, conditions obviously tending to foster and maintain a filth-disease such as plague, would be quoted in favour of demands in this direction. Indeed, that any such request should come from the Government of the country, which alone presents danger to European and other parts, seems to me to give an aspect of extreme gravity to the demand, and this the more so because it is certain to be urged that this examination of persons which raises difficulty, is not one which it is intended to impose permanently or generally upon Indian ports, but it only deals with a condition of grave emergency and its application is limited to those ports only where the emergency has arisen. It so happens that the British delegation did endeavour to secure some limitation of the paragraph of the Convention in question in one of the sittings in committee, but the proposal met with such unanimous opposition that, as a matter of policy, the proposal was at once withdrawn.

In another respect I think any demand to modify the Convention in respect of the inspection of persons about to embark is singularly ill-timed. It comes at a moment when proposals are made to add to the stringency of the Convention, wherever the safe-guarding of Indian ports against the infection of plague is concerned; and it reaches this country directly after the receipt of new regulations made under Ordinance No. 3, of 1897, by the Government of Ceylon, which Island cannot well be distinguished topographically from India in point of risk from plague, to the effect that every vessel or boat arriving from Bombay, however healthy it may be, shall be subjected to quarantine for ten days from the date of sailing, and that no person shall land during that period.

I cannot, as already indicated, pretend to form a judgment as to the real extent of the local difficulties which lie in the way of the adoption of inspection on shore during the period that Indian ports of departure are infected with plague, and which are deemed to make that inspection impracticable. But I cannot help being struck with the prominence given in some of the appended documents to mere questions of convenience. It is admitted that the question of inspection of the crew is that which is most important, and it appears also to be held that it is this inspection which presents the greatest difficulty. But even Sir James MacNabb Campbell, who summarises the whole subject in his communication of 24th June 1897, admits that "it might be possible to arrange to inspect the crew in batches on shore." Another difficulty seems to relate to latrines, but it is apparently limited to those that are now available, a limitation that would appear to an ordinary reader itself to suggest the remedy. Then again, it is implied that control of persons inspected on shore could not be such as to prevent them subsequently paying a visit to the city. Such a visit would, of course, be regrettable for the purposes held in view by the Convention; but if the authorities had done their best, it could at least be contended that they had complied with the terms of the Convention and had acted to the utmost of their powers to enforce it.

And, lastly, some prominence is given both in Sir James MacNabb Campbell's communication and in that of the Secretary to the Government of India, No. 1904, Simla, 6th August 1897, to the fact that since "concession of board-ship inspection" has been granted under the Convention "in regard to the most dangerous class of passengers, namely, pilgrims," it ought to be made as regards other persons, should circumstances render this desirable.

As to this, I venture to submit that there is some misunderstanding. Chapter 2 [II. (1^o)] of the Convention requiring the shore inspection applies definitely to pilgrimships as well as other ships, and is subject to no modification or concession. The Dutch Delegates also

made it clear that such inspection was carried out in their Colonies. The concession referred to is not in any way concerned with "board-ship inspection;" it relates to the detention under observation, *i.e.*, in quarantine. Of pilgrims arriving at the ports of departure, for such period as will suffice for the detection of any persons passing through the period of incubation of plague; it is an additional requirement to that of individual inspection on shore before embarkation, and is dealt with in a different paragraph. The British Delegates were assured at Venice, as they had been at the Paris Cholera Conference, that such quarantine detentions could not be carried out by the Indian Government, and hence they secured the concession in sub-head "Navires à Pelerins (2°)" in order to meet the difficulties of India. The Dutch Indies were at the same time allowed to maintain the "observation" in question on boardship, this concession being granted because the length of the voyage of all their pilgrimages between the ports of departure and any port at which they might touch was more than sufficient to cover the period of incubation of plague.

RICHARD T. THORNE.

22nd December 1897.

No. 3.

India Office,
8th February 1898.

R. & S. 146.

Sir,

With reference to previous correspondence terminating with Mr. Curzon's letter of the 18th ultimo, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to inform you that the papers respecting compulsory examination on shore at the time of departure from an infected port have been forwarded to the Government of India, their attention being drawn to the views expressed by the Marquis of Salisbury in regard to the inexpediency of making any attempt at the present moment to modify the Venice Convention in this respect. I am to add that the substance of this opinion has been telegraphed to the Viceroy.

I have, etc.,
A. GODLEY.

The Under Secretary of State,
Foreign Office.

No. 59.

FROM

J. P. HEWETT, Esq., C.I.E.,
Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

*The Secy: to the Govt of India,
Marine Department*

Home Department.
Sanitary.

Calcutta, the 25th March 1898.

SIR,

I AM directed to forward, for the information of the Government of No. , dated the March 1898. , a copy of the marginally noted letter to the Government of Bombay, and enclosures, on the subject of compulsory examination on shore, in accordance with the requirements of the Venice Convention, of persons sailing from an infected port.

2. As the not infected with plague, the Government of India do not consider that it is at present necessary to make any alteration in the existing rules under which persons sailing from are inspected either on board or on shore. Should, however, any port in become infected with plague, it would be necessary to introduce arrangements at that port for examining both crews and passengers on shore before embarkation.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. P. HEWETT,
Secretary to the Government of India.

Heading.

No. 949
328 G.

PRESIDENCY PORT OFFICE,
Madras, 9th September 1897.

From

Commander H. A. Street, R.N.,
PRESIDENCY PORT OFFICER,
Madras,

To

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
MARINE DEPARTMENT,
Chennai.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge
the receipt of your telegram of the 8th
Instant reading as follows:—

"Crews of vessels sailing from all
Coast ports may be inspected on
board but passengers must be
inspected on shore".

2. As no reference is made in

this telegram to any previous orders
of Government or connected correspond-
ence, there was some doubt as to
the

The P.S.O.
informs his an-
swer to 929/1321 of 3rd Sep 97 in which he puts the question which should this refer to.

the particular vessels whose crews
were allowed to be inspected on board.

I presume however that this inspection
refers to crews of vessels sailing

for foreign ports (40 Marine n:
670, dated 28th July 1897) and have

informed Port and Health officers
accordingly. I trust my view is

correct.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obed. Servant,

H. A. Street

Commander, R. N. M.

Presy. Port Officer