

Marine (1898) Department.

G.O., No. 837 Marine

DATED 4th October 1898.

[Despatch Abstract.]

*Plague Regulations. Pres. L & M. Deptt,
reviewing ~~Reviewing~~ the opinions of certain native
gentlemen regarding the Madras
Comm. to the Presidency Port Officer.*

Reviewing the opinions of certain native gentlemen regarding the Madras —

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers:—

Replies from certain native gentlemen to a reference inviting their opinion as to the best methods of working the Plague Regulations.

Minutes by the Honourable Sir HENRY BLISS, K.C.I.E., dated 21st and 26th September 1898.

ORDER—No. 1196 P., dated 28th September 1898.

In May last the gentlemen whose names are noted in the margin were invited

The Hon'ble M.R.Ry. V. Bhashyam Aiyangar
Avargal, Diwan Bahadur.
M.R.Ry. P. Chentsal Rao Pantulu Garu, C.I.E.
The Hon'ble M.R.Ry. C. Jambulingam Mudaliyar Avargal, Rao Bahadur.
Muhammad Safdar Hussain Sahib Bahadur,
M.R.A.S.
M.R.Ry. G. Parameswaram Pillai Avargal.
The Hon'ble M.R.Ry. P. Rajaratnam Mudaliyar Avargal, Diwan Bahadur.
Nawab Saiyid Muhammad Sahib Bahadur.
The Hon'ble M.R.Ry. N. Subba Rao Pantulu Garu.
M.R.Ry. G. Subrahmanya Aiyar Avargal.
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. Subrahmanya Aiyar Avargal, C.I.E.

to favour Government with their views on the proper working of the Plague Regulations, after freely consulting public opinion. Their attention was directed in particular to detention of passengers, evacuation of houses and infected areas, disinfection of persons and clothing, and isolation of patients and of persons lately in contact with them. These measures, it was stated, were held to be highly necessary for the protection of the population; but as there were various ways of effecting them, it was the earnest desire of Government to ascertain such as might be most consonant with the ideas, customs and

susceptibilities of its Hindu and Muhammadan subjects. Suggestions were also invited for a method of house-to-house visitation which might be as free as possible from inconvenience and annoyance to the inhabitants, and might on the other hand call forth their co-operation.

2. The replies to this invitation were received in the months of June and July, and included a communication from the Kazi of Madras. They have been perused with much interest by His Excellency the Governor in Council, who now proceeds to pass orders on the main questions involved. In doing so, the Government has the advantage of the further experience gained in watching the methods adopted in other provinces of India, whether they coincide with its own or differ from it.

3. It is gratifying to observe that, speaking generally, the gentlemen consulted, and those with whom they discussed the Regulations, were satisfied with their main tenor, and conceived them well calculated to achieve the object in view without inflicting unnecessary hardship upon the people. Stress has, however, been laid upon certain points, the more important of which will now be considered separately, the decision of Government being based in each case on the principle of respecting as much as possible the dictates of religion, of caste and of natural affection.

4. *Agency to be employed.*—It is urged that, when such agency is available, Hindus should be employed in those parts of a city where Hindus predominate, and Muhammadans where Muhammadans are in a majority; and that a person

entering an occupied house for the removal of a plague patient or any similar purpose, should, if possible, be of the same religion or caste as the occupants. This will be an instruction to officers concerned, to be acted upon as far as circumstances permit. The suggestion that small committees be appointed in various parts of a city, to bring to notice matters requiring attention or enquiry, also meets with approval.

5. *Inoculation.*—In G.O., No. 837 P., dated 17th August 1898, it has already been ruled that persons who have been inoculated by M. Haffkine's process within a period of six months previously shall be exempted from segregation and also from detention when travelling. They must, however, evacuate infected houses in view to their efficient disinfection, and when they are travelling, their clothes will be disinfected.

6. *Burial and Corpse-inspection.*—In discussing Madras City Regulation 16 (3), which forbids that a plague corpse be touched except by those who undertake the necessary duties of preparing it for the funeral, the Kazi of Madras is in doubt whether public undertakers alone can touch the corpse. The Government is glad to be able to reassure him that such is not the proper interpretation of the Regulation, which permits that the dead be dressed for the grave by their own relations or in whatever manner may be customary among the class to which the deceased belonged.

The Kazi would also desire a modification of the same Regulation, in so far as it permits the President of the Municipal Commission to prescribe the routes of funeral processions, and to prohibit the burial of plague corpses in objectionable localities. But in times of plague these restrictions are sometimes essential to public safety, and the power to impose them must be retained by the President, who may be trusted to exercise it with the utmost discretion.

7. In discussing Additional Mufassal Regulation 16—which, it may be observed, can only be put in force by the special order of the Collector—it has been suggested that no corpse shall be touched for purposes of examination without the consent of the relations. It has already been clearly laid down by Government that medical examination of a corpse is entirely optional on the part of the relations, though in the absence of a medical certificate or of medical inspection the persons who have been in recent contact with the deceased are liable to be regarded as infected. This Regulation too is only to be put in force in mufassal towns and villages where it is found that people are concealing deaths from plague (G.O., No. 396 P., dated 27th April 1898).

8. *House-to-house Inspection.*—The Government entirely agrees that respectable inhabitants who volunteer for the service shall be employed to assist in searching for concealed cases of plague; that as far as possible houses be entered only by persons of caste or of the same religion as the occupants; and that with the same limitation women be utilised in examining women and in searching any room or place exclusively occupied by them.

9. *Removal to Plague Hospitals, Segregation, etc.*—The view has been put forward in more than one of the replies, that in hospitals and segregation camps relations should be allowed to reside and nurse the inmates, and that friends and religious instructors should be allowed to visit them. This has already been prescribed in paragraph 6 of G.O., No. 396 P., dated 27th April 1898.

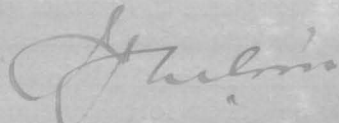
10. It has been urged by some of the gentlemen consulted that there should be no general compulsory removal to hospital, and that it would suffice to segregate plague patients, and persons who have been in contact with them, in isolated houses or sheds in such localities and with such precautions as might meet with the approval of the Sanitary authorities. His Excellency the Governor in Council has given mature consideration to this view, and has arrived at the conclusion that to a certain extent it may be experimentally accepted. Where, in the opinion of the Plague Commissioner, the Collector, or the President of the Madras Municipal Commission, the circumstances are such that complete isolation can be ensured without removal to a hospital or camp, the patient may be treated, and those who

have been in contact with him may be put under observation, at home. The necessary orders will be issued.

Considering, however, that home segregation on a large scale is extremely difficult, and that, even if attempted, it cannot be as efficacious as isolation in well-ventilated and sanitary hospitals and camps, the Government trusts that the public will recognise the necessity for providing for themselves, according to the requirements of their several castes, suitable temporary structures in open sites for the treatment of the sick and for the accommodation of persons obliged to leave infected houses and places. The people of Hospet have already taken action in this direction and are of their own accord erecting segregation sheds for the different castes by the side of the Government plague camp at that place, and His Excellency the Governor in Council hopes that this praiseworthy example will be widely imitated and that in every place which is or may be threatened with plague, private hospitals and camps will spring up. The Government is prepared to contribute towards their erection and to leave their internal management to such native medical practitioners as enjoy the confidence of the people. The hospitals and camps will, of course, be under the general supervision of Government officials, but these officials will have nothing to do with the treatment of the sick except at their request, and their duties will be confined to preserving order, preventing theft and keeping guard, and attending to sanitation.

11. It now only remains to Government to convey its thanks to the gentlemen who have been good enough to assist it with their advice, and to express the earnest hope that the co-operation of all classes of the community may render effective the working of the Regulations.

(True Extract.)



for Secretary to Government.

To the Gentlemen named in para. 1.

- " President, Municipal Commission, Madras.
- " Political Department.
- " Marine Department.
- " Plague Commissioner.
- " Surgeon-General.
- " Sanitary Commissioner.
- " Superintendent, Government Press, for publication in the Gazette.
- " To all Collectors (A-L).

Editors' Table.

ENDORSEMENT—No. 1197 P., dated 28th September 1898.

Copy to the Government of India, Home Department.

(Signed) H. TREMENHÆRE,
Secretary to Government.

5th August 1898

Marine

~~Public Works~~

Government (1898) of Madras.

LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL.

Recd.

Enclosures

1898.

Regd.

Spare copies

G.O., &c., Nos. 1196, 1197 P., 28th September 1898.

No. 837 Marine d/4 Oct 1898

SEPTEMBER.

*Communicated to
the Presidency Port
Officer -
(Id) W.B. de W*

The P.P.O.

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