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Government of Madras.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
24th April 1863.*

No. 436. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Public Department:—

Passing orders on the Annual Medical Report)
of the Station of Ootacamund for the year } (Here enter 17th April 1863, No. 475.)
1867.

No. 437. ORDER THEREON, 24th April 1863, No. 1,252.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 47.

Forwarded to the Superintending
Engineer of the 7th Division, for com-
munication to Major Farwell.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 7th Division.

Ed. S. T. Augustin.

No. 115. Read the following letter from the Inspector General, Indian Medical Department, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George ; dated Fort Saint George, 4th March 1868, No. 93.

In submitting the enclosed extract from the Annual Medical Report of the Station of Ootacamund for the year 1867, by Surgeon Donaldson, the Senior Medical Officer there, I would beg to bring most prominently to the notice of Government the state of things described by him.

2. In Dr. Furnell's Report also the neglect of ordinary sanitary precautions is specially noticed ; and he concludes by saying that, in consequence, " the reputation of Ootacamund as a sanitarium is certainly on the wane."

3. I earnestly hope that, in the interests of the public service, some measures may be adopted to put our best sanitarium in a more satisfactory state ; otherwise the result must inevitably be, that it will become dangerous for invalids to resort to it.

Extract from Annual Medical Report of the Station of Ootacamund for the year 1867, by Surgeon
JAMES DONALDSON, M. D., Senior Medical Officer, Neilgherries.

" I am sorry to be able to give so poor an account of the conservancy of the station, and of its state generally. I brought this to notice in my last year's report. As the shortest way of describing it generally, I would here subjoin an extract from that report, and am sorry indeed that it is scarcely possible in any way to modify what is there stated.

" As regards the conservancy of the Cantonment, and the sanitary condition of the various bazaars and villages, things are as bad as they well could be ; there is indeed some appearance of drainage in the main bazaar, but it is conveyed simply into the upper portion of the lake close adjacent, the shore of which is thus converted (during wet weather) into a great open cess-pool. In the other bazaars and villages there is no attempt at drainage, and nuisances are committed in all directions in and round each ; no system of conservancy for the general Cantonment seems to have been carried out here ; no rubbish is carted away ; every compound serves as a collection of refuse and debris of every description, and the manure connected with each house is only taken away at all, because the potatoe field owners are glad to get it at the planting seasons, and take it from the compounds to spread on the intervening and circum-jacent fields. The roads and lanes and bye-ways of the Cantonment are almost, without exception, in a disgraceful state of disrepair ; it is impossible even on the best and most frequented thoroughfares to drive a carriage of the most easy description, without constant jolting and discomfort, from the wide ruts and numberless loose stones everywhere met with, but many of the less frequented roads leading to important parts of the Cantonment, containing many houses and residents, are, in places, all but impassable, and in many parts dangerous to passers by, whether on horseback " or on foot."

2. " The public roads are indeed somewhat improved in some places, though still exceedingly bad, and repaired, where repaired at all, without any regard to the commonest laws of road-making ; but there is no improvement observable in regard to the conservancy of the station, and in many places the collections of filth and decaying matters, with the consequent noisome effluvia, are worse, more prominent and unsavoury than at date of last report. I can only make one exception to the above, viz., the growth on the Jail Hill referred to last year, and about which I had some correspondence with the Municipal Commissioners, copy of which was sent to the Deputy Inspector General, Southern Division : this growth remained for some months, but was at length partly cleared, and thereby the nuisance was abated ; but the clearance was only partial, and if not looked after, the place will soon be as bad as before, owing to the very rapid growth of the plant (an Australian acacia) and to its being only cut down, not uprooted.

3. " Of the places which more especially require notice and careful cleansing, I would specify the borders of the public highway running from " Harrow on the Hill" to the Church ; the jungle

on the south side of the road being the worst, but that on the north side, within the compound of "Kempstow" being also very bad. These jungles on the way side are used by every passer by, who is so inclined, and the smell arising at times, especially after a shower of rain, is very bad. Another foul place, used by the public and servants of adjacent houses to a great extent, is the dense jungle at the entrance to "Ottley Hall." Another is the jungly border of a lane leading to Lovedale. Another and particularly offensive place is the lower part of the Jail Hill, on that side next and close to that part of the bazaar where butchers congregate. All manner of offal is here thrown out and left to decay, or to be eaten by dogs, kites, crows, and even by cows. It is a nauseous place to pass at any time, and, being on the borders of the public road from the Willow bund to the Jails, attracts the attention, and causes disgust to all strangers who happen to pass that way. Another disgraceful place is just below this on the edge of the public road, leading from the Willow bund to "Harrow Lodge;" the drainage and impurities of a number of houses are allowed to run and be washed down on to the public road, the drain alongside, which is thus transformed into a filthy cess-pool, which often overflows and runs across the road; for weeks it was thus a cess-pool on and across the public thoroughfare; and even in this drier weather the deep site of the nauseous pool remains, and the filth still exists alongside. Another and a very unnecessary, because lately established nuisance, is a large potatoe field of about seven acres, which borders the Government highway for about 200 yards, from the east end of Glynn Creek to the Willow bund; large quantities of foully smelling manure are brought to, and scattered on this new field, (not "ploughed" in or "covered" over) and there left to decay and contaminate the otherwise pure air of this neighbourhood. The bad odours arising from this field near the bund are very disgusting to the passer by it may be difficult to interfere with vested interests, and to shut up fields which have been cultivated thus for years, but this field was only opened last year, after the Municipal Commission was established, without the leave of that body I understand, and there would seem no reason why the natural beauty of the station should be destroyed and the air corrupted by a vile potatoe field being established without authority in the very heart and centre of Ootacamund.

4. "There are many other unclean spots which I shall be happy to point out, as well as those above mentioned, to the Sanitary Commissioner, if he should favor this station with an official visit. It will be seen from the above that one chief cause of the noisome state of many parts of this otherwise delightful sanitarium is, that excessive amount of undergrowth, which has been allowed to spring up and increase from year to year: part of this is, no doubt, in public places and under the orders of the Municipality; but the very much larger proportion of it is within the compounds of private houses; the remedy, therefore, seems easy; the proprietors of these lands get large rents for their houses, and can quite well afford to keep them clear of jungly undergrowth and other like nuisance; they could, I conceive, be ordered at once to clear their compounds of all jungle, furze, &c., and to keep their hedges down to a reasonable height above the adjoining roads; it could also, I presume, be insisted on, in a rather crowded station like this, that owners of houses should provide small privies for the servants of each house; and if their masters would order the dry earth system to be carried out in these, and see to its being done, the cleansing of a large part of Ootacamund would quickly and without expense to Government be effected; for a very fertile source of putrid emanations would thus be speedily removed, and a prospect of good conservancy for the station be more easy as well as more hopeful.

5. "This morning (23rd January) I took an hour to inspect the bazaar, market, public privies, the border of the stream skirting the lower end of the chief bazaar, &c.; bad as I knew it to be, I was astonished at the magnitude of the evil, and at its growth. I have acted as Sanitary Officer in many stations and Military Cantonments up-country, and have seen many vile places, but not even in the most neglected villages of the Deccan, where no Inspecting Officer had ever set his foot, did I ever see such an utter disregard of all the laws of decency and cleanliness as is here now to be seen by any one who has courage to investigate the extent of the evil. One can only wonder that the few bad cases of fever (three proved fatal), lately observed in the lower parts of the bazaar, have not been multiplied an hundred-fold, and that cholera has not long ago broken out.

6. "The open drains of the bazaar carry down the filth and refuse of the numerous hut^s until the level near the lake is reached, and there open cess-pools are farmed in, and on, and across the street, reeking with bad odours; there is no attempt at even emptying these cess-pools into the unhappy lake adjacent. The market this morning, Thursday, (Tuesday is market day,) was in a most filthy state; the ground set apart for the exhibition of fruits and vegetables being covered, "littered," with rubbish, straw, dung, &c., as if a whole herd of cattle had been quartered there for a week.

7. "The public privies, two for men and one for women, all very close together near the market, and within 80 yards of the Government high road round the lake, are simply a disgrace to the station. They are open pits surrounded by matting, crossed with planks or beams, (on which the *habitué* and *habitués* also are supposed to perch,) unsheltered in any way from sun or rain, and filled with such a seething foul mass that if any unfortunate, choked by the mephitic odours so copiously evolved, should faint and fall in through a broken plank, he would certainly be choked, if not drowned. There is no dry earth system, no means to quench or weaken the escaping gases; and the consequence is, that the large majority of Natives, who might otherwise resort to these places, are so deterred by the overpowering odours that, little delicate as are generally their olfactorys to strong smells, they prefer retiring to the first convenient spot, in rear of the lower bazar houses, or even to the more distant jungles. The natural result of this objection to use the public privies is, the conversion of the whole of the right bank of the little river, which here skirts the bazaar for about 400 yards, and feeds the upper lake into one grand *place d'aisance* for the bazaar population. To perform this walk with undefiled steps is more than difficult, and the odours that arise on all sides are, inconceivably noisome. To add further to the unsavoury and unsanitary aspect of this part of the station, which should be a pleasant promenade alongside stream and lake; it is here that the scourgings, and rubbish of the streets are shot; this refuse matter being brought in *barrows* and deposited in one of the dozen or so of heaps which fringe the margin of the lake on this its north side: no attempt is made to utilize, cover up, or burn all this decomposing matter; there it is thrown, and there it remains till washed into the lake by rains, or scattered to the winds in due course. The crows, bazaar dogs of the most revolting mangy appearance, stray cows, and domestic fowls are here, as elsewhere, the scavengers in this free station. One public privy is situated on the side of the public road leading to Candal, (one also at Ootocherry, and one at Candal). These are in much the same state as those above described, being fashioned on the same model; these are the only other public privies in the station which I have been able to discover, except those above mentioned; one crying want should here be noted in connection with this subject of neglected conservancy, there is no public privy for males or females attached to, or in any way connected with, the Police lines. These lines are of considerable extent, and comprise four ranges of building accommodating forty families. There being no private closets, and no place of public resort, the inmates of these lines resort to the back part of their dwellings, to holes and corners near at hand, and to every tree and bush which afford any appearance of shelter, and the state of the surrounding neighbourhood may be imagined; it need not surely be described."

(True Extract).
(Signed)

W. MACKENZIE, M. D.,
Inspr. Genl., Indian Medl. Dept.

No. 118. ORDER THEREON, 17th April 1868, No. 475.

In the report which accompanies the letter of the Inspector-General, Indian Medical Department, the Senior Medical Officer of Ootacamund describes, in language which the Inspector-General does not consider exaggerated, the unsatisfactory sanitary condition of that station. Many of the evils described have arisen from the neglect to enforce the provisions of the Towns' Improvement Act, which give ample power to the Municipal Commissioners to abate nuisances, to enforce

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
17th April 1868.*

cleanliness in the markets and places where offensive trades are carried on, and to clear away noxious vegetation.

2. The Governor in Council directs that the papers above recorded be communicated to the Sanitary Commissioner, and to the President of the Ootacamund Municipal Commission.

3. Dr. Ranking will lose no time in proceeding to Ootacamund and in placing himself in communication with the Municipal Commissioners and with the Executive Engineer in charge of the station, and he will suggest to them the practical measures which should be immediately adopted in anticipation of the more extensive schemes now contemplated for improving the conservancy of the Town of Ootacamund.

4. It is observed from the Municipal estimates for 1867-68 that a sum of Rupees 18,500 (exclusive of the amount required for Police) was available for purposes of conservancy and for the repair of the roads. The proper application of these funds should, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, have rendered impossible at Ootacamund, the condition described by Dr. Donaldson.

5. The Magistrate, who is ex-officio President of the Municipal Commission, is directed to furnish a special and detailed report on the receipts and expenditure of the Municipality of Ootacamund from the time of its formation up to the present date, with such remarks as may enable Government to judge how far the Municipal Commissioners have taken advantage of the means at their command. This report will be sent to the Sanitary Commissioner for submission to Government, with Dr. Ranking's report on the measures which he may, after consultation with the Municipal Commissioners and the Executive Engineer, recommend to Government for immediate adoption.

(True Extract).

B. H. M.
Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector General, Medical Department.
 " Sanitary Commissioner.
 " President of the Ooty Municipal Commission.
 " Public Works Department.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

P. 21 1868 Dep^d
Pr. of Govt for April
No 1465

Pr. of the Madras Govt
Public Dep^d

17th 30 April 68
No 24

No 475

Paying orders on
the Annual Medical
Report of the Station of
Dolacacmund for
the year 1867.

No 1252 - 24 April 68

With an Order

No 426-437