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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2870	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	20-10	1876
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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
20th October 1876. No. 2,810.*

No. 310. Read the following Circular from the Government of India in the Public Works Department, (Military Works,) dated Simla, 6th October 1876, No. 60 M. W. :—

COPY of paragraph 7 of the memorandum of the Army Sanitary Commission on the report of the Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal for 1873, forwarded to the Local Governments and Administrations and Departments marginally noted for information.

The Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, North-Western Provinces, and Punjab, in the Public Works Department.
The Chief Commissioners of Oudh, Central Provinces, British Burmah, Mysore and Coorg, and Assam.
The Resident at Hyderabad.
The Agents of the Governor-General for Central India and Rajpootana.
The Superintendent of Port Blair, and Chief Commissioner, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
The Inspector-General of Military Works.
Military Department, Adjutant-General, Quartermaster-General, and Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India.

By order,

(Signed) W. A. CROMMELIN, Major-Genl., R.E.,

Dy. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

EXTRACT paragraph 7 from a Memorandum of the Army Sanitary Commission on the report of the Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal for 1873, dated 25th April 1876.

"Paragraph 7. There is a remark made in the report on Howrah which appears to call for notice. The district covers 12 square miles, and the inhabitants live in scattered villages. In this instance the filth appears to be collected in pits and trenches covered with earth, and the Civil Surgeon objects to this on the theoretical ground that fever 'germs' are concentrated by it, citing not his own views so much as the theoretical views of others. It is one of the cases where hypotheses regarding disease causes, which are very proper subjects of discussion in their own place, but form no part of sanitary doctrine at all, are intruded into sanitary practice much to the detriment of progress in public health. The local Magistrate, considering the subject on its purely practical side, appends a marginal note on the report, to which the attention of all persons engaged on sanitary work may be profitably directed. He says: 'Opinions of men of science are so various and contradictory on a point like this that, do what we may, we are sure to have a medical opinion opposed to our plan,' and he goes on to state that the burial of night-soil in this manner has been followed by no evil results.

It appears necessary to place this point in its true light. In the first place, in doing sanitary work, the officer has nothing whatever to do with disease theories. He has to do simply with observed facts and experience bearing on the production of disease. It is true also that of all 'disinfectants' earth is perhaps the best, but, like every other agent, it has to be used with judgment.

It is a known fact that, when the amount of foul decomposing matter exceeds a certain proportion, there is danger of poisoning air, earth, and water, but, of course, this result would be of little or no moment if there were no inhabitants in the vicinity to be poisoned.

It would be far otherwise, however, if the night-soil were buried in masses where the soakage from it after rain could reach water sources, either rivers, tanks, or wells, or could be carried to ground occupied by dwellings, or if dwellings were erected over former accumulations of this kind. From all of these causes, incidental to the practice, human health and life have suffered especially during epidemic seasons.

On other papers the Commission have suggested the following procedure to prevent the evils stated :—

- (1).—The best method of dealing with all such matters is to apply them at once to agricultural use, either in the form of sewage manure, or by digging them immediately into the soil as manure, and with reference solely to the amount required for crops.

To

Circular No. 60 M. W.

Dated SIMLA, October 6, 1876.

Received

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
20th October 1876. No. 2,810.*

- (2).—Never to bury excreta in ground the drainage of which can reach any river or feeder, or any well or tank from which water is drawn for human use.
- (3).—If these conditions cannot be complied with, then to construct suitable receptacles of masonry below the level of the ground, taking care that they are placed at a safe distance from dwellings, that they are water-tight and covered to keep out rain. Into such receptacles ordinary cesspool matter mixed with earth may be safely thrown, and kept until decomposed, to be then used for manure dressings.

Of course if such matters can be disposed of by burial in localities where no danger is likely to follow, there can be no reason for incurring the cost of water-tight pits."

No. 311.

ORDER THEREON, 20th October 1876, No. 2,810.

MILITARY WORKS, No. 6-A.

RECORDED, and communicated to
District Engineers and to the Military
Department:

(True Extract.)

Major-General, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To District Engineers.
To the Military Department.

Recd No 2810 d/20 Oct 1876
Recorded; and
Communicated to District
Engineers, and to the
Military Department

W.H.
20.10.76

Memorandum by the Army Sanitary Commission
on the Bengal Sanitary Reports for 1873-44.

Military Dept
1-11-76

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Govt. of Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

To the District Engineers

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 20th October 1876, No. 2810

Nos. 310/311

Bengal Sanitary
Reports for 1873-74

for circular from the
Government of India
forwarding Memo
transmitted by the
Army Sanitary
Commission on
the _____ Comd to
at Engrs & to the
Mil, Dept

But no P.O.
27/10/76