

1882.
Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

Printed December, 23rd.

Proceedings, 24th Nov. 1882, No. 2897.

Bringing to the notice of Government the need that exists for the speedy removal of the Commissariat Slaughter-house from the Government Farm lands, Saidápet, and requesting attention to the question of the meat-supply of the Commissariat Department.

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(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with copies of Board's Proceedings, 5th August 1882,
No. 1949, and 29th August 1882, No. 2153.
" " Superintendent, Government Farms
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READ—the following letter from W. R. ROBERTSON, Esq., M.R.A.C., Superintendent, Government Farms, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Saidápet, 13th September 1882, No. 1305:—

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2. I would refer the Board to paragraph 75 of my report for the year ending the 31st of March 1880, and to paragraphs 61 and 64 of my report for the following year. Last year—*vide* paragraph 104 of my Annual Report—our stock were severely attacked by foot-and-mouth disease, and, though we lost none, we were put to a considerable expense in connection with this outbreak. On the 9th of August last, a case of "Anthrax" appeared in the Aden herd, and the most valuable cow of the lot succumbed to the disease. As will be seen from the enclosed copy of a report received by me at Coonoor, we were put to a very considerable expense, in connection with this outbreak of disease, in having to remove the whole of the live stock, both cattle and sheep, from the farm buildings, and to provide temporary sheds elsewhere for occupation until the buildings were declared to be free from infection.

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I regret to inform you that the cow "Sultanna II" died last night at 10 o'clock, it is believed from Anthrax.

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12. The Board are satisfied that Mr. Robertson's deductions that the disease, in all the cases above mentioned, was communicated by the slaughter-house cattle, is correct, for the position of the stock-yards is so isolated and so distant from any thoroughfare, that it seems almost impossible for the infection to be conveyed in any other way. It is no part of the Board's duty to comment on the necessity that exists for preserving the health of the troops by the supply of wholesome meat, and they content themselves with drawing the attention of Government to the fact that diseased animals are frequently brought for slaughter at the yards. They must, however, strongly urge on Government the removal of these slaughter-yards from the farm on account of injury done to the farm by their presence. Short of complete removal of the yards, only one course remains, viz., that every animal offered for slaughter be inspected, before it enters on the farm lands, by a competent Veterinary Surgeon.

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Printed December, 23rd.

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7. In his Annual Report for the year 1879-80, paragraph 77, Mr. Robertson again found himself compelled to recommend the postponement of purchase of some new farm live-stock till such time as the slaughter-house should be removed, while (paragraph 75) he stated that the "stock-breeding experiments which it was resolved in 1875 to proceed with are still deferred chiefly because the Commissariat slaughter-

yards still remain on the farm." In this year the farm suffered severely from their presence. An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (*epizootic aptha*) amongst the farm sheep caused the death of seven and prostrated many others, and this was followed by an attack of sheep-pox (*variola ovina*) which resulted in the loss of 70 sheep, and the permanent disablement from ruined constitutions of many more. "Both these outbreaks can only be attributed to diseased sheep being driven through the farm on their way to the slaughter-yards, and so bringing in the infection, for our sheep are never allowed to go beyond the limits of the farm, which is also extremely isolated." Three bullocks also were lost by Rinderpest, and "the disease can only be traced to diseased cattle having been brought in for slaughter."

8. Mr. Robertson's protest was repeated in his report for 1880-81 (paragraphs 60, 61, 64, 78). The presence of the slaughter-house resulted that year in (1) the further postponement of all experiments in stock-breeding, six years having now been lost; (2) an attack of foot-and-mouth disease, which happily did not prove fatal, amongst the cattle; (3) the death of 99 head of sheep from *variola ovina*, and the illness of many more.

9. During the year 1881-82, foot-and-mouth disease again broke out amongst the cattle—communicated, there is no reason to doubt, in the same way—but no deaths ensued.

10. In August 1882, however, the farm suffered a severe loss in the death of the finest Aden cow from *anthrax*. This was the animal that during the previous year had yielded so large a supply of milk that Mr. Robertson wrote of it "the out-turn of milk is higher than is usually obtained from the cows of some of the most esteemed dairy breeds."

11. The Superintendent, having several times objected to the commencement of an experimental farm on commercial principles, on the ground that the presence of the slaughter-house neutralized his best endeavours in the direction of maintenance of healthy live-stock, was again addressed on the subject by the Board, and replied by his letter, No. 1165, of 14th August 1882, printed with Board's Proceedings, No. 2158, of 29th August 1882. The Board called on him to "substantiate, by facts that can be quoted and relied on, his statements that diseased cattle are allowed to be brought to the slaughter-house," and his letters printed above constitute the reply.

12. The Board are satisfied that Mr. Robertson's deductions that the disease, in all the cases above mentioned, was communicated by the slaughter-house cattle, is correct, for the position of the stock-yards is so isolated and so distant from any thoroughfare, that it seems almost impossible for the infection to be conveyed in any other way. It is no part of the Board's duty to comment on the necessity that exists for preserving the health of the troops by the supply of wholesome meat, and they content themselves with drawing the attention of Government to the fact that diseased animals are frequently brought for slaughter at the yards. They must, however, strongly urge on Government the removal of these slaughter-yards from the farm on account of injury done to the farm by their presence. Short of complete removal of the yards, only one course remains, viz., that every animal offered for slaughter be inspected, before it enters on the farm lands, by a competent Veterinary Surgeon.

13. The Board are aware that difficulties have been found to exist in the way of selecting a site for a new slaughter-house. In their Order of 30th August 1876, No. 4398, Government sanctioned "for immediate execution" a plan for erecting the new slaughter-house and quarters for the station butcher opposite the Saidápet Toll-bar at a cost of Rs. 8,600 and Rs. 3,500, respectively, but on a strong remonstrance by the Collector of Chingleput, Government were pleased to direct that, if possible, a new site might be selected in some less objectionable locality (G.O., No. 1458, of 11th October 1876). Correspondence followed, the Military authorities being anxious to find some site situated about half-way between the Fort and the Mount, and the Collector stating that he could find no suitable site. The Sanitary Commissioner (letter, No. 164, of 27th February 1877) stated that he could see no valid objection to the selected site

maintaining that "a slaughter-house could be constructed in this position so as to avoid all sources of annoyance to residents in the neighbourhood." Nevertheless, the Government (Order, No. 979, dated 8th March 1877) resolved to leave the slaughter-house for the present on the farm, "as the matter is not emergent." The reason for this is not apparent, as the removal was considered to be an immediate necessity some months previous.

14. The subject was revived in 1881, and a new site near the Government Bakery was proposed to be acquired under Act X of 1870. But subsequently it was considered better to remove the yards to the old Superintending Engineer's Office on the south side of the Adyar River, and in their Order, No. 122, dated 31st January 1882, Government referred the matter to the Public Works Department, in view to estimates being prepared. The Board have heard nothing since.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Acting Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with copies of Board's Proceedings, 5th August 1882,
No. 1949, and 29th August 1882, No. 2158.
" " Superintendent, Government Farms
" " Director of Agriculture.

1882.
Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

Printed December, 23rd.

Proceedings, 24th Nov. 1882, No. 2897.

Bringing to the notice of Government the need that exists for the speedy removal of the Commissariat Slaughter-house from the Government Farm lands, Saidápet, and requesting attention to the question of the meat-supply of the Commissariat Department.