

# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Public* DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

1429

Press  
~~Mis.~~

Dated

14-11-1867

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Read the following :—

No. 102. Extract from the Proceedings of the Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal for the month of August 1867.

Paragraph 154. Although the dry-earth system of conservancy has not yet been authoritatively introduced into Military stations, it has for some time been practically at work in the latrines of most

Conservancy.

of the European Regiments in the country. Its practical value has been fully established, and its claim to be considered the best form of conservancy yet adopted in this country has been almost universally acknowledged. Under its use the condition of the latrines has greatly improved. Indeed, when carefully carried out, as it is in many European Regiments, it may be considered as near perfection as any form of conservancy can be. But while the dry-earth system, when thoroughly introduced and properly looked after, promises to keep the latrines in as satisfactory a condition as can be desired, a better mode of disposing of the sewage is much required. Under present arrangements, the night soil is removed in carts to a distance from the Barracks, and buried in deep pits which are dug for the purpose from time to time, and covered over with earth when full. It is a well known fact that sewage buried in this manner takes a long time to decompose and become resolved into its ultimate elements, and during the very long period taken up by this process noxious gases may be evolved through any cracks in the soil, or organic matters may become infiltrated into the water supply. But apart from these possible sources of danger, it cannot be denied that this mode of disposing of sewage is far from being intelligent. An immense quantity of valuable manure in every Military Cantonment is thus thrown away which might be utilized with the best sanitary and financial results. There can be little doubt that the proper mode of disposing of sewage is to consign it to the soil in such a manner as will allow of its being utilized by plants. It not only is in this manner rendered altogether innocuous, but becomes actually useful, and the natural relation between the animal and vegetable kingdom is thereby preserved. To throw away so much valuable manure is not only wasteful in itself, but also offers a bad example to the Native cultivators. The great difficulty in the conservancy arrangements of Indian cities is to find a market for the sewage. Were the cultivators alive to the actual money value of manure in securing good crops, this obstacle would speedily disappear, and the sewage, instead of proving a difficulty, would become a source of profit. In some parts of the country the Native farmers have learned its value, but these are the exceptions; and when they see that in every Military Cantonment tons upon tons of sewage are literally thrown away, they are not likely to learn that it is really a most valuable product which can be turned to good account. If a small model farm were attached to each Military Station the sewage could be utilized, whilst, so far from being an expense, these farms would soon become a source of profit, and would prove centres of instruction in agriculture to the Native population. They might be situated on the outskirts of Cantonments, and might, in many instances, include portions of the Cantonment lands. These are often extensive, and too frequently bare, without trees, and in certain seasons there is hardly a blade of grass to be seen on their surface. It is entirely a mistake to suppose that

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,  
14th November 1867.*

vegetation is inimical to health, and that a place is likely to prove salubrious in proportion to the degree in which it assumes the characters of a wilderness. Mean-Meer is a striking instance of these defects, and it may not be inappropriate to extract here some of the remarks which were made on our recent inspection of that Cantonment:—

“ A channel is now being made to convey water from the Baree Doab Canal into Cantonments. The primary object appears to be to provide good drinking water for the men, that of the wells of the station having been generally unfavorably reported on by the Chemical Analyst. But other and important advantages might be secured from this supply. Part of the Cantonment lands might be placed under cultivation. If this were limited to certain crops, and the area to be so employed carefully laid down, no ill effects could arise, and the funds at the disposal of the Cantonment Committee would be much benefitted. The water might also be employed for trees and gardens, and the bare arid plain on which Mean-Meer now stands might, to some extent at least, be clothed with green, to the great comfort of the residents, and with no detriment to their health. Nothing can be more depressing than its present appearance. In June 1864, the Sanitary Commission recorded its opinion, that ‘ portions of Cantonments, situated at some distance from the quarters of the soldiers and other residents, might sometimes be cultivated with wheat, barley, and other cereals without objection of any kind.’ I would strongly recommend the question to the consideration of Government. Vegetation, so long as it is not over-watered, nor allowed to become a jungle, is not prejudicial to health; on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that it has a most beneficial influence.”

No. <sup>74</sup>  
5866

Ordered that the above extract be forwarded to the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab; the Chief Commissioners of Oudh, the Central Provinces, and British Burmah; the Commissioner of Mysore, and the Resident at Hyderabad, with the remark that the subject seems to be deserving of attention.

HOME DEPARTMENT,  
SIMLA,  
26th October 1867.

(Signed) E. C. BAYLEY,  
*Secy. to the Govt. of India.*

No. 103. ORDER THEREON, 14th November 1867, No. 1429.

Communicated to the Military Department, and to the Sanitary Commissioner.  
(True Extract).

*Chief Secretary.*

To the Military Department.  
„ Sanitary Commissioner.  
Exd. J. Tulloch.

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Department and to the Sanitary  
Commissioner.

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- Sanitary Comm. }