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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	<i>237</i>	Press Mis.
Dated	<i>5-3-</i>	<i>1867</i>

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
5th March 1867.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 25. Proceedings of Government in the Financial Department.

States the Government of India consider }
that the charge for the collection of }
Mortuary Statistics for the Town of }
Madras is properly a Municipal one, and }
they direct that, if the duty cannot be }
performed without additional charge }
to any establishment which the Sani- }
tary Commission may require for its }
other duties, arrangements should be }
made so that the expense for the Mor- }
tuary Returns may cease to be a }
charge on the General Revenues. } (Dated 16th November 1866, No. 432).

No. 26. From the Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 22nd February 1867, No. 539.

I have this day submitted the Mortuary Returns for the 4th Quarter of the past year, 1866, and I take this opportunity to lay before Government the very imperfect data upon which these Returns are framed.

2. It is, I conceive, of great importance that the current Returns of the public health of Madras, one of the largest towns in India, should be prepared from accurate data.

3. At present we are ignorant of the actual number of inhabitants, and the registration of deaths is most imperfect. The last census taken was in 1863. It was conducted by the Municipal Commissioners, but it was left optional to the inhabitants to fill in the enumeration papers, there being no legal penalty attached to a refusal to give the required information.

4. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the last census is inaccurate.

5. No registration of births is in force.

6. Although there is a registration of deaths, it is of a very unsatisfactory kind, as will be seen from the following description.

7. In March 1853 the Medical Board, while reporting upon the Sanitary condition of Madras, pointed out to Government the necessity for establishing Returns of births and deaths in each Division of the town. This measure, as regards Mortuary Returns, was brought into operation on the 1st January 1855, but it was considered impracticable at this time to obtain a Return of births.

8. Up to the 31st December 1859, the duty of collecting the information regarding deaths rested entirely with the Municipal and Police authorities; this information being tabulated in the office of the Principal Inspector General and published annually.

9. At the above time, however, the whole Mortuary establishment was transferred to the office of the Principal Inspector General, under whose entire control it remained till the 1st January 1866, when, in accordance with Proceedings of Government, No. 819, dated 4th August 1865, it was removed to the office of the Madras Sanitary Commission, where it now remains.

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10. The classification of diseases originally adopted in 1855 was that given in the Bombay Mortuary Returns, but in 1859 it was assimilated to that of the Registrar General of England in his Annual and Quarterly Reports of Mortality.

11. In 1862 the system of classification was again altered to that approved and adopted at the Statistical Congress of Vienna in 1855, for the recording of diseases and mortality of all nations, and which had been introduced into the Returns of the entire British and Indian Army, and in the Civil Returns of the Madras Presidency.

12. In 1860 Weekly Reports of deaths were published in the *Fort Saint George Gazette*, and still later in 1863 Quarterly Returns were furnished to Government, both of which are continued to the present time.

13. The Mortuary establishment attached to the office of the Sanitary Commissioner consists of one Head Writer and two Clerks, with six men employed in collecting the reports of deaths as they occur in the different Police Divisions, and who bear the official designation of Mortuary Conicopolies or Accountants.

14. The system which they adopt is as follows: Each Mortuary Accountant makes a daily visit to the different Christian, Mahomedan, and Hindoo burial grounds, lying within the Division of which he is in charge. The Vettyan [grave-digger or burner of bodies] gives them, or to speak more accurately, is supposed to give them, the number of persons who have been interred or burnt the day previous, with as much information as he possesses concerning the age, sex, occupation, and cause of death of the deceased. It often happens that the Vettyan, who was on duty the day previous, is absent at the time of the Mortuary Accountant's visit, the information is then obtained second-hand from some person who has been left in charge of the ground. If the Vettyan is unable to give the particulars connected with the deaths among Hindoos on the day following the interment, he obtains it from the friends of the deceased on a subsequent day (the 2nd or 3rd after the actual burial or burning) of funeral ceremonial, known as the "Milk Day."

15. The Vettyan, it must be here mentioned, keeps no book or record of any sort, but all the information he gives is from memory.

16. After visiting the burial grounds, the next thing the Mortuary Accountant does, or is supposed to do, is to attempt to verify the statements of the Vettyan by the best means in his power. These are but limited. He first visits the Police Tannah nearest to the burial ground, and past which the funeral processions proceed, where, by an arrangement between the Mortuary Accountant and the Police, the friends of the deceased deposit a writing containing particulars concerning the deaths. In some instances a pencil and slate or cadjan leaf is left at the Tannah upon which the friends record the information required for the Mortuary Register.

17. But as there is no legal obligation, and consequently no order is in force by which the Police can insist upon those conducting funerals furnishing this information, the entries at the Police stations are very irregularly made.

18. If the particulars concerning the deaths of the individuals agree with what the Vettyan has told the Mortuary Accountants, they are satisfied without further inquiry; but if discrepancies arise they go to the house of the deceased for further information.

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5th March 1867.*

19. Great difficulty often occurs in making this inquiry. The relations of the deceased very frequently refuse to give any information and abuse the Mortuary Accountants.

20. These attempts to check the information obtained at the burial grounds are obviously of a most unsatisfactory nature, and presuming that the information originally obtained from the Vettians is of the most untrustworthy character, it cannot be doubted that many errors are of constant occurrence amongst the entries made in the Mortuary Register.

21. The difficulties with regard to the registration of Native deaths are greater amongst the Hindoos than among the Mahomedans. The burial grounds of the Mahomedans have constant watchers, and no one is buried without an order from the Cauzee; but the entries of the causes of death are necessarily very inaccurate, both for the Hindoos and Mahomedans, as being supplied in almost all cases from verbal inquiries made by ignorant persons from those conducting the funeral ceremonies.

22. With regard to the Christian burial grounds, with one exception, there is less difficulty in checking the correctness of the reports brought in, as a Register is kept at each and a duplicate copy sent to this office at the end of the quarter. The Mortuary Accountant of the 1st and 3rd Divisions complains of certain difficulties in getting reports from the Roman Catholic and Armenian burial grounds in his Division, from there being no one constantly present at these grounds, which renders it necessary to obtain the information from the neighbouring Police Tannah.

23. Since the preparation of the Mortuary Returns for the Town of Madras has been transferred to this office, I have made no alteration in the system hitherto pursued. I was aware that the Madras Municipal Act was about to undergo revision, and I preferred continuing the existing system which, though imperfect, is well understood by those engaged in the work of registration, and by the public, until legislative provision could be made for rendering registration of births and deaths compulsory, and also for taking a census of the population.

24. Having recently been engaged under the orders of the Government as a member of a Committee appointed to revise the existing Municipal Law, I am aware that provision has been made in the Draft Bill for assimilating the Madras Municipality to those of Bombay and Calcutta, as regards the taking of a census and the registration of births and deaths.

25. My object in addressing the Government at present is to put them in possession of the details of the present system under which the Mortuary Returns are prepared, and to exhibit how little reliance can be placed in these Returns, and how necessary it is that legislative action should be taken in this matter.

26. It is of the most serious importance that an accurate enumeration of the inhabitants should be periodically made; that an exact registration of births and deaths should be maintained, and that the causes of death and the localities where epidemic and endemic diseases most extensively prevail, should be correctly known.

27. Without this information the efforts of the Municipality for the improvement of the public health cannot be efficiently directed, nor can the results of Sanitary improvements be ascertained.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
5th March 1867.*

No. 27. ORDER THEREON, 5th March 1867, No. 237.

In April 1866 the Government directed that, pending the final determination of the question as to the permanent arrangements to be made for the collection of Mortuary Statistics for the Town of Madras, that duty should be performed under the orders of the Sanitary Commission, and an allowance of 74 Rupees per mensem was sanctioned for the purpose, to be expended under the control and superintendence of the Sanitary Commissioner.

2. The Government of India, advertent to the decision contained in their Resolution of the 17th February 1864, that the charge is properly a Municipal charge, have now directed that if the duty cannot be performed without additional charge to any establishment which the Sanitary Commission may require for its other duties, arrangements should be made so that the expense for the Mortuary Returns may cease to be a charge on the General Revenues.

3. It is shown in the foregoing letter from the Sanitary Commissioner, that the present system under which the Mortuary Returns are prepared is very inefficient, and in the revised Municipal Bill, which has recently been laid before Government, provision has been made for the compulsory registration of births and deaths under the orders of the Municipal Commissioners, and should the Bill in question be passed all charges connected with this duty will be defrayed by the Municipality. In the meanwhile, the present charge will continue to be defrayed from the General Revenues.

(True Extract).

Chief Secretary.

To the Sanitary Commissioner.
„ Municipal Commissioners.
„ Accountant General.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
16th November 1866.*

No. 58. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Simla, 31st October 1866, No. 3134.

With reference to your letters, Nos. 131 and 135, dated 7th and 10th April 1866, I am directed to state that the sanctions of fresh Charges and Establishments during November and December 1865 and January 1866, therein reported, with the exception of that relating to Mr. Pelly's revision of Establishments are confirmed. But I am to observe, with respect to the charge of Rupees 74 monthly, for the preparation of Mortuary Returns for the Town of Madras, that the expense is properly a Municipal charge, as decided in Financial Resolution, No. 914, of 17th February 1864; and if the duty cannot be performed without additional charge by any Establishment which the Sanitary Commission may require for its other duties, arrangements should be made so that the expense for the Mortuary Returns may cease to be a charge on the General Revenues.

EXTRACT from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Financial Department, under date the 17th February 1864, No. 914.

Read again Financial Resolution, No. 4196, dated the 29th August 1863, deciding that the pay, amounting to Rupees 95 a month, of two Writers, engaged in registering and tabulating the deaths that occur in the Town of Madras, should be borne by the Municipality, it being a charge which affects the sanitary condition of the Presidency Town; and leaving it to the Madras Government to consider whether the charge does not admit of reduction, seeing that it compares unfavorably with the provision in the Principal Inspector General's Office for the vital statistics of the European and Native Forces throughout the Presidency.

2. Read, also, an Endorsement from the Home Department, No. 740, dated the 30th January 1864, forwarding a letter and its enclosures from the Government of Madras, stating that, under the explanation given by the Principal Inspector General of the Medical Department, the charge in question cannot be reduced, and that the Government considers that it is one which should be borne by the Municipal Revenues, and not by the income of the Municipality, inasmuch as it relates to a question of general interest, viz., the sanitary condition of the Presidency Town.

RESOLUTION.—The Governor General in Council sanctions the charge in the Principal Inspector General's Office, for registering and tabulating the deaths that occur in the Town of Madras, as a temporary expense, pending the completion of arrangements, at the earliest practicable date, by the Municipality of Madras, for a correct and sufficiently explicit registration of deaths, this duty properly belonging to the Municipality.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the above Resolution be sent to the Accountant General and Civil Paymaster of Madras, for information and guidance.

(A true Extract).

(Signed) B. H. HOLLINGBERRY,
Asst. Secy. to the Govt. of India,

No. 59. ORDER THEREON, 16th November 1866, No. 432.
Communicated to the Revenue, Judicial, Public, and Educational Departments.
(True Extract).

(Signed) J. D. Shaw
Secretary to Government.

To the Revenue Department.

„ Judicial „
„ Public „ ✓
„ Educational „

Exd. J. H. Burns.

Public Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers.

Proceedings of Government in the } (Hence enter 16th November/66 No. 432)
Financial Department }

From the Sanitary Commissioner } 22nd February/67 - 639
Madras - }

Order thereon 5th March 1867 No. 237.

In April 1866 the Government directed that pending the final determination of the question as to the permanent arrangements to be made for the collection of mortuary statistics for the town of Madras, that duty should be performed under the orders of the Sanitary Commissioner, with an allowance of 7½ Rs. per

W. H. A.

Public Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers.

Proceedings of Government in the } (Here enter 16 November/66 p. 122)
Financial Department }

From the Sanitary Commissioner } 22nd February/67. 547
Madras - }

Order thereon 5th March 1867 No. 237

In April 1866 the Government directed that pending the final determination of the question as to the permanent arrangements to be made for the collection of mortuary statistics for the town of Madras, that duty should be performed under the orders of the Sanitary Commissioner, and an allowance of 7½ Rs.

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Pub. No 16 Jan 67 p. 122
No. 237

Public 1866 Dept

No. 5 March 1867

Proc. Govt. Print. Order
No 232

21st 15th 23rd Mar/68

21st 23rd

No 14/87

When the Madras is reached, no
unpublished one must be made
that of the duty cannot
be postponed without a
definite change, is any
other decision, while the
Sanitary Commission may
be made for it, there is
no doubt, arrangements should
be made so that the
expense for the Mortuary
Statistics may not be
for a change in the
general Revenue.

Sanitary Commissioner
Madras -
No. 14/87

15th 23rd Mar/68
of Public Revenue that the
change for the Mortuary
Statistics for the

for mndm was sanctioned
for the purpose, to be expend-
ed under the control and
superintendence of the
Sanitary Commissioners.

2 The Government of
India, adverting to the decision
contained in their Resolution
of the 17th February 1864
that the charge is properly
a municipal charge,
have now directed that
if the duty cannot be
performed without ad-
ditional charge to any
Establishment which the
Sanitary Commission
may require for its other
duties, arrangements should
be made so that the
expense for the Mortuary
Returns may cease to
be a charge on the General
Revenues. It is shown in the
3- foregoing

foregoing letter from the Sanitary
Commissioners that the present
system under which the mortuary
returns are prepared is very
inefficient, and in the revised
Municipal Bill which
has recently been laid before
Government provision has
been made for the compulsory
registration of births and
deaths under the orders
of the Municipal Commissioners
and should the Bill in
question be passed all
charges connected with this
duty will be defrayed by
the Municipality. In
the meanwhile the present
charge will continue to
be defrayed from the
General Revenue.

Sanitary Commissioners
Municipal Commissioners } Dispt 12/3.
Accountant General.

11.
Hedge 1864. Department.

No. 254.
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PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT.

Dated. 5th March 1897.

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