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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

14

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
28th April 1869.*

No. 237. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Allahabad, 3rd April 1869, No. 55.

General (Sanitation) Department.

With reference to the instructions of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State*recentlyreceivedfrom the Govern-
ment of India relating to the interchange
among the different Governments in

India of reports connected with sanitary subjects, I am directed to forward herewith twenty copies of the report on the sanitary arrangements at the Gurhmooktessur Fair of 1868.

From the Sanitary Commissioner, North-Western Provinces, to the Secretary to Government, North-Western Provinces; dated Allahabad, 9th November 1868, No. 202.

I have the honour to report, for the information of Government, upon the management and circumstances, in a sanitary point of view, of the past Gurhmooktessur Fair, which took place on the five days, from the 27th to 31st of October last, inclusive.

2. This fair is held on the extensive khadir of the Ganges at Gurhmooktessur during the days of the approaching up to the day of the full moon of Khatik, the day of the full moon being the great bathing day.

3. The fair is really divided into two widely-separated parts—the people of the Moradabad District assembling on the eastern bank of the river, the people of the districts to the west assembling on the western bank.

During the continuance of the fair under consideration, it was estimated that the collection of people on the west of Gurhmooktessur bank of the river was about six times as numerous as that on the east or Moradabad side; and, indeed, it may be fairly allowed that the business of the fair, and any real crowding together of people, occurred only on the Gurhmooktessur side, where it was generally estimated, and I think without exaggeration, that from 150,000 to 200,000 people were assembled on the last day of the fair.

4. The principal object of the gathering appeared to be the desire to bathe in the Ganges and drink of its water, and especially to baptize the infants born I should suppose during the past two years, by plunging them with some ceremony completely under the water of the river in a sudden and rather violent manner, the child being repeatedly tossed into the water, feet downwards, and then caught up again by its father at the command of the Fakeer directing the ceremony, until, by a lucky plunge, the child's head passed completely under the water. The bathing in the Ganges of the horses and cattle belonging to the people appeared also to be much desired, and was much practised. With this object in view it may be immediately understood that the great majority of the people present were respectable Hindus.

5. A second cause appeared to be a desire to worship at certain Hindu temples quite near to Gurhmooktessur town, and about a mile from the fair; to bathe in and drink of the water of a holy well attached to the temples. This well is surrounded with a high pucca terrace, and has steps on all four sides leading down to the water, which is about ten feet deep with a surface ten feet square. The surface of the water was covered with a roughly-fashioned net work of wood floating in it to prevent accidents, a woman having been lately drowned in the well. Many thousands of people bathed in this water, and the plan of bathing I saw pursued was that, after the bather had washed his body by throwing water all over and well rubbing it, he proceeded to wash his clothes, and this having been satisfactorily accomplished, as a last act the bather drank one or two handfuls of the water. On the last days of the fair it was noticed that the water in this well had an oily look, and was, I should say, a very unwholesome water to drink.

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6. A third cause appeared to be a desire to trade, the articles offered for sale being principally food and sweetmeats, toys, trinkets, beads, brass and iron vessels, articles of clothing, English ware, walking sticks, and bamboos. The sellers of such articles had furnished themselves with small shops situated at the margins of the principal thoroughfares, the sites of the shops being let during the continuance of the fair at an average rate of 2 Annas per foot of frontage.

Also a very large number of small mules and donkeys were brought to the fair for sale, and many newly-built bullock carts exposed for sale were noticed.

The shop-keepers were, in the majority of instances, Mussulmans, some of whom came from Delhi—the traders in mules and donkeys being either Mussulmans or Hindus of the lowest castes.

7. The site of the fair was prepared beforehand to the extent that certain main roadways were marked out, and a wide strip of sand running between the river and the fair kept clear of all encampments. Also in the centre of the fair a large open space, extending almost from one end of the fair to the other in its length, and fully sixty yards wide, was kept as a clear open space for people to move about upon.

Much high sirkee grass which existed in places on the site was cut down, and the people as they arrived were permitted to encamp under cloth raised tent-like on bamboos in any vacant spot they selected excepting on the roads, the central place or the clear river frontage.

8. Latrine spaces, fifteen in number, were provided on the outskirts of the fair, as far as possible, with due regard to convenience from the river and from the habited encampment.

9. These latrine spaces may be fairly described as standing in an irregular semi-circle outside the fair, and were divided by considerable interspaces of jungle-land or crops of millet, and they are worthy of description, and, with their attendant arrangements, of imitation in like circumstances. Each space was circular in space about twenty-five yards in diameter, and surrounded by a mat wall fully six feet high supported on bamboos, the entrance way being screened by an erection of mats supported in the same way. Inside a trench was provided daily; the first dug on the outer circumference of the circle enclosed, the circular trench of the succeeding day being dug inside of that closed up the day before—the trenches not being allowed to cross in front of the entrance way. The average cost of the mat erection for each latrine was Rupees 10. Four mehturs provided with spades were attached to every space. The trenches provided averaged eighteen inches in depth, and the contents, as deposited, were freely treated with dry earth.

Between each space a line of watchmen was established with orders to prevent the entrance of people from the fair into the jungle-tracts or crops which intervened, and this duty was performed with a very great amount of success. The latrine spaces being visited by a continuous stream of people, the jungly interspaces were found nowhere soiled.

Certainly great cleanliness and a perfect freshness of the air in all parts of the fair, including that of the latrine spaces, characterized this fair, and the work of conservancy was thoroughly and efficiently performed.

I cannot report that every person who attended the fair visited the latrine spaces; but a large majority certainly did, and I think nearly all the women, for whose sole accommodation every second latrine was reserved. Many young men who cared little for a long walk I have reason to believe went a good way out of the fair to frequent jungly tracts in the khadir, both above and below the fair, and I do not think this could be prevented.

10. A very plentiful supply of food of all kinds—such as Hindus eat—was offered for sale in the fair at reasonable rates, and much food was brought to the fair in the form of wheat, flour, and *dhal* by the people themselves, who were, as a rule, merry, and apparently happily enjoying themselves.

Without exception the articles of food observed were of good quality.

11. The water drunk by the people was the water of the Ganges, which flows along at this time of the year at Gurhmooktessur at a rate of about two miles an hour, and, but for the disturbance created by the bathers and the resulting impurities it must contain, would be a very wholesome water-supply.

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12. The Police arrangements of the fair were managed under the personal superintendence of Major Dunbar, the Superintendent, who also entertained and directed the watchmen connected with the latrine arrangements; and to the energy of the Police generally is due undoubtedly the considerable measure of success which attended the endeavours made to overcome that state of uncleanness which until recently has made these fairs both unpleasant and unwholesome.

13. The medical arrangements for the treatment of any person taken ill at the fair were satisfactory in every way. Dr. Moir, the Civil Surgeon of Meerut, was present at the fair during its continuance, three Native Doctors having been placed under his orders and attached to the Fair Hospital by the Deputy Inspector General of the Meerut Division. The hospital was established at a convenient place towards the centre of the fair, and consisted of two small thatched buildings standing within an area of some twenty yards square enclosed by a bamboo fence.

14. Only one person was brought to the hospital during the continuance of the fair, a man suffering from slight fever. No other case of sickness or any of accident was heard of up to the time I left the fair, when the people were departing for their homes.

15. On the day the people commenced to depart, two of the Native Doctors, furnished with medicines, were sent on to the principal halting places on the roads of exit from the fair, with order to take note of and treat any cases of sickness which might occur amongst the returning people. Up to the date of writing this report I have not heard that any cases of disease occurred during the return of the people to their homes, although, in many instances, their return journey was hindered and lengthened by an order of the Delhi authorities to the effect that the Delhi bridge would be closed to them.

16. In a sanitary point of view I should say that a joyous, open air, meeting on a practically limitless site such as that at Gurhmooktessur, cleanliness being cared for, would be a source of health to the frequenters but for the one unfortunate custom the people have of drinking the water they bathe in. To drink of the flowing river water under these circumstances is hazardous enough; but to drink of the polluted water of the stagnant holy well is a truly dangerous and positively disgusting ceremony.

17. I do not know how this custom can be modified so that the bathers shall not be positively required to swallow the water they take into their mouths; but if by any possibility those who direct the religious observances of the Hindus could be brought to believe and teach that the drinking at the time of bathing may be dispensed with, they might be the means of conferring an ample measure of good on the people of this country; and if, in addition, the people could be induced to take their daily supply of drinking water from the flowing river in the early morning, before the bathing of men and animals commences, the possibility of imbibing a dangerous contagion like that of cholera would be considerably lessened.

18. I was given to understand by Mr. Ward, the Magistrate in charge of the fair, that the sum realized by the renting of sites for shops adequately sufficed to meet any extraordinary expenditure on account of the fair.

19. Before closing this report I should mention that a number of lepers suffering from leprosy in its mutilating form, with loss of fingers and toes, were noticed as beggars in and about the fair. From all I could learn concerning these men I gathered that their usual place of residence was at Gurhmooktessur, where they subsisted on the charity of the numerous travellers who cross the Ganges at all times: they were said to have come from different parts of the country to live in huts apart from other men at Gurhmooktessur, hoping that when they died their bodies might be put into the Ganges. Their cries for charity, with lifted mutilated hands, were very urgent; their case apparently a very sad one, yet it appeared to be universally believed that the proceeds of their begging amply sufficed to procure for them the necessaries of life. However, I certainly think these unfortunate sufferers might, with propriety, be housed and cared for in a separate place so situated, that when they die their bodies may be burnt and the ashes put into the Ganges in accordance with their great desire. Their presence in the fair was undoubtedly misplaced.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
28th April 1869.*

From the Officiating Junior Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, to the Sanitary Commissioner, North-Western Provinces; dated Bareilly, 5th December 1868, No. 7A.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 202, dated the 9th ultimo, being a report on the management of the Gurhmooktessur Fair, which took place in October last.

2. In reply I am desired to state that the Lieutenant Governor has perused with interest your report, which shows that, upon the whole, the arrangements observed at the fair were good, and the result satisfactory.

3. Inquiry will be made of the Punjaub Government as to the alleged order for closing the Delhi bridge against the pilgrims, referred to in paragraph 15 of your letter.

4. The lepers spoken of in the last paragraph of your letter are understood to live constantly at Gurhmooktessur. The Magistrate of Meerut will be asked whether any arrangement could be made for limiting their location during the fair to some separate and appropriate spot.

5. I am to inform you that your report will be printed in the Selections of the Records of Government as it contains suggestions which might with advantage be followed elsewhere.

No. 238.

ORDER THEREON, 28th April 1869, No. 545.
Communicated to the Sanitary Commissioner.
(True Extract).

R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

To the Sanitary Commissioner.

Tranquebar 8th March 1869.

The Honorable R. S. Ellis C.B.
Chief Secretary to Government.

Sir,

I have the honor to request the favor of your kindly informing me, whether there are any rules or regulations in existence in reference to the fees, which Surgeons receiving regular pay from Government may claim for attending on private individuals, such as Missionaries etc. Cases have been brought to my notice at various times, which make it very desirable that Secretaries or Heads of Missions should be acquainted with the views of Government on this subject, and I should feel very thankful if you would kindly communicate to me any decision, bearing on the subject, which Government may have made either generally or in special cases. The case which now prompts me to ask for this favor, is the following:— The wife of one of our Missionaries, suffering from whitlow, or some such complaint, the Surgeon of the Station, who has regularly to visit the Hospital, next door to the Missionary's house, was applied to for medical advice. He attended occasionally when visiting the Hospital, and his visits amounted at last to 16, for which he now asks Rupees 80, notwithstanding the repeated request kindly to reconsider the charge the smallness of our means etc. As gentlemen, whom we had occasion privately to consult, are of opinion that some decisions of

Year of 1869 *Adra*.

PUBLIC.

THE SANITARY COMMISSIONER.

Dated April, 28th.

Recd

Encl,

G. O., 28th April 1869, No. 515.

APRIL.

Nos. 237-238.

(Continued letter from the Government of the North-Western Provinces forwarding copy of the report on the sanitary arrangements at the Cuthamokessu Barr of 1868.

Government, relating to such cases, do exist and as they advise
us to apply to you, I venture to ~~pen~~ these lines.

Praying to favor me with a kind reply

I have the Honor to be

Sir,

Your obedient Servant

~~W. H. Cordes,~~
~~Secretary~~

Received & subject General Order
 Medical Dept. for such arrangements as
 he may wish to make. R. S. M.
 Chutkewary
 March 27th 69.



Chutkewary

The Honorable R. S. M.
 Secy to Government

Mr. H. George

2/19/69

2/19/69

Enclosed of these are
 three rules relating
 to the same in form of
 letter to the Secy for
 attendance on
 private individuals,
 such as, uniformity
 etc.



20 APR 1869
 R. S. M.

20 APR 1869

Rev. Mr. George
 Registrar

20 APR 1869
 R. S. M.

No. 55 OF 1869.

FROM

R. SIMSON, ESQUIRE,
 Secretary to Government of the
 North-Western Provinces,

TO

The Secretary to the Government
 of Madras

Dated Allahabad, the 3rd April, 1869.

SIR,

GENL. (SANITATION)
 DEPT.

WITH reference to the instructions of the Right Hon'ble the
 Secretary of State,* recently received from the
 Government of India, relating to the interchange
 among the different Governments in India, of Reports connected with
 sanitary subjects, I am directed to forward, herewith, 20 copies of the
 Report on the sanitary arrangements at the Gurhmookteessur Fair of 1868.

I have the honor to be.

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

R. Simson

Secretary to Government,
 North-Western Provinces.

[Erd., Geo. D. S.]

Article not yet sent

From
The Secy to Genl Wm. W. Brown
Apr 55

Apr 20

27 3rd Regt
Apr 16 1864
1 Co. with 17 soldiers
forwarded 20 copies
of Report on the condition
arrangements at the
Furnessville before their
departure

Very truly
yours

1864-25-28 April/64.
Communicated to the
Secretary of the
War

Secretary of the
War

To the Secy of the War, (not dated)
Chas. M. Smith

203 822 28

With the order

Court of 1869 Madras.

Public

The Sanitary Commission.

Dated April 28.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O. 28 April 1869, No. 545.

Nos. 237. 238.

Forwarded letter from the
Govt of the North Western
Provinces, forwarding copy
of the Report on the Sanitary
arrangements at the Gurkha
Festival Fair of 1868.