

1. Number of pages. 12
2. Date of repair. 4-1-87
3. Serials of Reference
M.R.O. 1-20,000-16-10-80

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	887	Press
	(474-175)	Min.
Dated	30-6-	1918/69

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
30th June 1869.*

No. 174. Read the following letter from the President of the Municipal Commission for the Town of Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 16th June 1869, No. 66.

I have the honour to submit, for the consideration of the Right Honourable the Governor in Council, the annexed letter from the Municipal Commissioners of the 4th Division on the subject of the Lock-hospital in Vepery. On the representation of a householder in Vepery some time ago, I had intended bringing this subject before the Commissioners at the last general meeting; as, however, I was given to understand it was only a temporary measure, I refrained from doing so; but having since inspected the hospital in company with the Honourable Mr. Ellis, and the Principal Inspector General of Hospitals, it appears to me that it is intended as a permanent Lock-hospital, and though not prepared to go the same lengths as the Commissioners of the Division, I still cannot but consider the placing of an establishment of this kind in a crowded locality such as Vepery as very undesirable. I am fully alive to the importance of these institutions, but should wish to see them located in more out-of-the-way places than they occupy at present.

From the Municipal Commissioners, 4th Division, to the President of the Municipal Commission, Madras; dated Madras, 15th June 1869.

As Commissioners of the 4th Division we feel it our duty, in the interests of the residents of, and proprietors of houses in, Vepery, to express our views on the establishment of a Lock-hospital in that populous district, and in the very midst of a large and respectable community. We presume that the only reason for choosing the present position is that the premises, which were formerly the Police Office, were at the time vacant and available. Landed property in Vepery has greatly risen in value of late, and if the house in question, when no longer required by Government, had been offered for sale, it would readily have fetched a remunerative price, and been converted into a comfortable dwelling-house, instead of being what it now is—a grievous nuisance to the neighbourhood.

2. We should have drawn the attention of the Municipality to this subject earlier, had it not been that the building in question was first made use of merely as a Health Office, the location of which in so populous a place as Vepery, though objectionable, was certainly less so than the present Lock-hospital, disgusting as it is alike to the senses and the moral perceptions of the people around it. It cannot be denied that such an establishment should be remotely situated, and not in the heart of a town; and it may not be amiss passingly to advert to the recent strongly expressed opinion of the Right Honourable the Earl of Mayo, when the subject was brought before him, in regard to the absolute necessity which exists for placing Lock-hospitals beyond the limits of towns.

3. We shall now proceed to describe the situation of the Vepery Lock-hospital. In front is the continuation of the Vepery High Road, (Jeremiah's as it is here called) a well-known thoroughfare, and on the eastern side is Rundall's road, also a thoroughfare, and the principal road in the locality; so that a more conspicuous site could not have been chosen. On the western side and the rear are houses of various sizes always occupied, as houses in so central a position may well be expected to be. In short the hospital is situated not only in the heart, but in the very best part of Vepery, and is surrounded by the houses of respectable citizens on every side. To place such an establishment in such a site argues, we regret to say it, an utter disregard to the feelings and welfare of the residents in the neighbourhood. The presence of a large number of diseased women in a populous district cannot but have a deleterious effect on the atmosphere, and although the hospital arrangements may be under judicious sanitary supervision, still the presence of fetid animal matter before it is removed which can only be done at certain times of the day, and not throughout the night, cannot but cause a stench which is wafted into the neigh-

Health Office, the last

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bouring houses according to the direction of the wind. The drain into which the sewage from the hospital is discharged, is of itself a sickening nuisance, and not only has the stench been found to be overpowering, but it has also been the cause of frequent illness in those residing within its influence : among other symptoms those of diphtheria having been discovered.

4. There is also another point for consideration, and that is the demoralising influence which a Lock-hospital, situated so prominently and in so populous a place as Vepery, is likely to exercise among the community, the younger members especially. Without dwelling on a point so obvious, we would mention one fact, which has been brought to our notice, sufficiently revolting to excite feelings of strong indignation. The patients of the hospital, demoralized and debased as they are, indulge in the most indecent talk of which they are capable, in tones loud enough to be heard in the adjacent houses, where the inmates are of all ages and both sexes. Nothing can be more disgusting, or more revolting to our best feelings than this !

5. We have seen your letter of the 1st June to one of the Commissioners of our division who represented to you the offensive and dangerous state of the drain above referred to, and solicited your immediate attention to it. We are thankful to you for your action in the matter, and we are glad to find that you are of opinion that it is far from desirable to have Lock-hospitals in crowded localities, and that you entertain the hope " that the Committee now sitting, of which Dr. Mackenzie is Chairman, may be able to recommend to Government a more favourable site." We think, however, that in so important a matter a decided course of action on the part of the Municipality is absolutely necessary ; and we beg, therefore, that you will have the goodness respectfully to represent to Government that by placing the Lock-hospital in Vepery in its present position, a grievous injury has been inflicted on a large number of respectable citizens, and to solicit that immediate measures may be adopted for its removal. We would only observe, in conclusion, that no difficulty can possibly arise as to the selection of a suitable site ; we need only point to the direction of the situation of the Magdalene Asylum and the new Lunatic Asylum : abundant space, we submit, will there be found.

No. 175.

ORDER THEREON, 30th June 1869, No. 887.

The Government have it in contemplation to erect a large Lock-hospital for the use of native patients as soon as a suitable site is selected. When the new building is provided, the inmates of the Lock-hospital in Vepery will be transferred to it.

(True Extract).

Chief Secretary.

To the President of the Municipal Commission

for the Town of Madras.

,, Inspector General of the Indian Medical Department.

Exd. J. Wright.

Health Office, the location of which is

16-6-69.

Madras 15th June 1869.

To
The President of the Municipal Council
Madras.

Sir,

As Commissioners of the 4th Division we feel it our duty in the interests of the residents of, and proprietors of houses in Vepery, to express our views on the establishment of a Lock Hospital in that populous district, and in the very midst of a large and respectable community. We presume that the only reason for choosing the present position is that the premises which were formerly the Police Office, were at the time vacant and available. Landed property in Vepery has greatly risen in value of late, and if the house in question, when no longer required by Government, had been offered for sale, it would readily have fetched a remunerative price, and have been converted into a comfortable dwelling house, instead of being what it now is - a gross nuisance to the neighbourhood.

We should have drawn the attention of the Municipality to this subject earlier, had it not been that the building in question was first made use of merely as a Health Office, the location of which in

Govt. of Madras.

PUBLIC.

To

THE PRESIDENT OF THE
MUNICIPAL COMMISSION
for the Town of Madras.
&c., &c., &c.

Dated June, 30th.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 30th June 1869, No. 887.

JUNE
Nos. 174-175.

Directing the transfer of the inmates of the
Vepery Lock-hospital to the large Lock-hospital
which the Government contemplate erecting as
soon as a suitable site is selected.

popular a place as Topsy, though objectionable, was certainly less so than the present Lock Hospital, disgusting as it is alike to the eye and the moral preceptions of the people who see it. It cannot be denied that such an establishment should be remotely situated, and not in the heart of a town; and it may be the more justly to submit to the most strongly expressed opinion of the Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, when the subject was brought before him in regard to the absolute necessity which exists for placing Lock Hospitals beyond the limits of towns.

We shall now proceed to describe the situation of the Topsy Lock Hospital. In front is the continuation of the Topsy High Road, (Queen's Road as it is called) a well known thoroughfare, and on the eastern side is Randall's Road, also a thoroughfare and the principal road in the locality; so that a more conspicuous site could not have been chosen. On the western side and the rear are houses of various sizes, shops, occupied, as houses in such a position may well be expected to be. The Hospital is situated not only in the heart, but in the very best part of Topsy, and is surrounded by the houses of respectable citizens on every side. No place such an establishment, in such a site argues, we repeat to submit

either disregard to the feelings and welfare of the residents in the neighbourhood. The presence of a large number of diseased women in a popular district cannot but have a deleterious effect on the atmosphere, and although the Hospital, as arrangements may be under judicious sanitary supervision, still the presence of fetid animal matter before it is removed which can only be done at certain times of the day, and not throughout the night, cannot but cause a stench which is wafted into the neighbouring houses according to the direction of the wind. The drain into which the sewage from the Hospital is discharged, is of itself a sickening nuisance, and not only has the stench been found to be overpowering, but it has also been the cause of frequent illness in those residing within its influence—among other symptoms (those of diphtheria having been discovered).

There is also another point for consideration, and that is the demoralising influence which a Lock Hospital, situated in a popular and in so popular a place as Topsy, is likely to exercise among the community, the younger members especially. Without dwelling on a point so obvious, we would mention one fact, which has been brought to our notice, sufficiently revolting to excite feelings of strong indignation.

The patients of the Hospital, demoralized and debased as they are, indulge in the most indecent talk of which they are capable, in tones loud enough to be heard in the adjacent houses—where the inmates are of all ages and both sexes. Nothing can be more disgusting, or more revolting to our best feelings than this!

We have seen your letter of the 1st June to one of the Commissioners of our division who represented to you the offensive and dangerous state of the Drain above referred to and solicited your immediate attention to it. We are thankful to you for your action in the matter and we are glad to find that you are of opinion that it is far from desirable to have Lock Hospitals in crowded localities, and that you entertain the hope that the Committee now sitting of which Dr MacKenzie is chairman, may be able to recommend to Government a more favourable site." We think, however, that in so important a matter a decided course of action on the part of the Municipality is absolutely necessary, and we beg therefore that you will have the goodness respectfully to represent to

Governor

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Government that by placing the Lock Hospital in Vepery in its present position, a grievous injury has been inflicted on a large number of respectable citizens, and to solicit that immediate measures may be adopted for its removal. We would only observe in conclusion that no difficulty can possibly arise as to the selection of a suitable site—we need only point to the direction of the situation of the Magdalene Asylum and the new Lunatic Asylum—abundant space, we submit, will there be found.

We have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedient servants
J. W. G. P. H.
J. W. G. P. H.
J. W. G. P. H.

Municipal Commissioners 4th
Division.

