

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

983

Press

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Dated

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

No. 983.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

Sir,

I am directed to transmit, for the information of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and for communication to the Protector of Emigrants, Calcutta, copies of a Despatch to Her Majesty's Secretary of State, and of the papers therein referred to, on the conduct of Captain Kennedy of the Ship *John Scott*, which vessel was engaged by the French Government at Pondicherry to convey emigrants from that station and Karikal to Guadaloupe.

OOTACAMUND,
8th August 1870.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Chief Secretary.

Edw. J. Wright,

Read the following letter from the Sub-Collector of South Arcot, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Cuddalore, 5th January 1870, No. 1:—

With reference to the telegram from Government, dated 31st December 1869, to Mr. Norfor, the British Consular Agent at Pondicherry, to arrange with the Collector of South Arcot about landing the emigrants from the *John Scott* if they were not all landed by the French Government, I have the honour to state that, having received information of the same on Sunday the 2nd instant, I proceeded to Pondicherry on the 3rd, and on the 4th instant I had an interview with His Excellency the Governor M. Bontemps.

2. From him I learned that every precaution had been taken for the benefit of the coolies, and that no person has died of cholera since the 31st. Out of about four hundred and fifty coolies on board some sixty have been landed and placed in the house for lepers, the latter having been removed by the priests on the request of the French Government. The building was whitewashed, and on the 25th or 26th December the patients from the ship were admitted. The disease which had suddenly broken out with great violence was suddenly stopped.

3. The Governor has also caused a pandal to be erected a mile or perhaps less to the south of the town. About three hundred persons could be accommodated in it, but as there has been no cholera for the last four days it is not likely to be used. It will thus be seen that every effort is being made by the authorities there to alleviate the distress and remove all cause of complaints.

4. His Excellency informed me that he considered it safe to remove the quarantine on the 6th instant, which will be six days after the last decease, and even that is not known certainly to have been from cholera. As affairs have now taken a very favourable turn, and there are only one or two days more to wait, I beg to suggest that no active measures be taken immediately.

5. There has been a very great quarrel or misunderstanding between the French Doctor on board and the Captain, and it is under the consideration of the authorities to remove the Doctor and appoint another who is now attending on the sick, and is on good terms with the Captain. He has also promoted games of amusement among the coolies, and infused fresh courage into all.

6. As far as I can recollect, the history of the case is as follows:—

The emigrants were to have been embarked on December 8th, or about that date; but a single case of cholera having occurred in the Dépôt, a week's delay ensued, during which no fresh attack having happened the coolies were embarked about the 15th. It took two or three days to reach Karikal where 100 or 200 emigrants more were put on board, though cholera had broken out in the town.

7. Soon after leaving Karikal cholera attacked some eight or ten of the emigrants, and the Doctor was determined to have the ship put about for Pondicherry. The Captain stood out to sea to get a good wind for the tack, and the Doctor thinking he did not intend to go back shut himself up in his cabin, as the Captain alleges, and would not attend to the sick. Then the Captain steered for Pondicherry, and after anchoring there for a day or two, the disease became very virulent.

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8. The Governor had at first referred the matter to the Sanitary Commission who refused to allow the sick to be landed, but when the sickness increased, the Governor determined to land the sick, and on the 25th or 26th they were brought on shore. As soon as any fell sick they were taken to the Hospital provided by the authorities, and a Doctor and Assistant, I believe, placed in their charge.

9. The Medical Officers in charge are in quarantine as well as the sick, but in four or five days after the arrangement proposed by the Governor had been carried into effect no fresh cases occurred. The purifying of the ship has also been going on, and European Medical Officers will be sent as soon as the quarantine is over, to complete the sanitary arrangements. The medical or chemical appliances for the sick are at hand, so that there will be no difficulty in effecting everything that is required.

10. It is possible that the Sanitary Commission will object to the quarantine restrictions being removed on the 6th instant; but His Excellency has shown a determination to assist the emigrants as far as he can, and he will no doubt overrule all minor objections, and if it can be done with any degree of safety there will be free communication with the shore to-morrow.

11. He informed me that he had taken as much care for the comfort and medical assistance of the coolies as if they had been French troops under the like difficulties, and I believe he will do all that can reasonably be expected of him.

12. One of the persons who were landed as sick has run away, and perhaps some others will feign sickness in the hope to escape from the hospital provided for them on shore. Having received their advance they will run away with it or so much of it as may be left, and then try their chance at a new enlistment.

13. I beg to send a statement received from the Governor regarding the number of deaths. It will be seen that thirty-five coolies and one sailor have died of cholera. This is a large number out of 450 coolies.

STATEMENT of Deaths among the Emigrants.

Dates.	Deaths in the <i>John Scott</i> .	Deaths in the Lazaretto.
December 16th	1	.....
„ 18th	1	.....
„ 19th	4 (of which one is a sailor)	.....
„ 20th	1	.....
„ 21st	1	.....
„ 22nd	1	.....
„ 24th	3	.....
„ 25th	6	.....
„ 26th	2	.....
„ 27th	1 (drowned)	6
„ 28th ... ..	.....	4
„ 29th ... ..	.....	6
„ 30th ... ..	.....	1
„ 31st ... ..	.....	1
January 1st ... ..	.....	1 evasion.
„ 2nd ... ..	.....	.....
„ 3rd	1 (child)	.....

Recapitulation.

On board the <i>John Scott</i> , by Cholera... ..	19
Deaths in the Lazaretto... ..	16
	35
One drowned	1
One evasion	1
Emigrants... ..	37

And one European dead from Cholera.

(True Copy.) (Signed) P. L. ROBERTS,
Sub-Collector.

Order, 27th January 1870, No. 109.

The foregoing report on the Cholera outbreak on board the Emigrant Ship *John Scott* shows that, out of 450 coolies, thirty-five deaths occurred between the 16th and 30th December last, when the mortality ceased. One death, in the case of a woman, occurred from drowning.

2. The Government consider the arrangements made by the Governor of Pondicherry to have been most humane and considerate towards the victims, and they resolve to tender their thanks to His Excellency for the prompt attention paid by him to the British subjects who were visited with this calamity.

3. The epidemic appears to have died out; and orders have, it is observed, already been given, through the Protector of Emigrants, for inquiry as to the embarkation of cholera patients under the sanction of the Consular Agent at Karikal.

(Signed) J. I. MINCHIN,
Acting Chief Secretary.

To His Excellency M. BONTEMPS, Governor of the French Settlements in India,
dated Fort Saint George, 27th January 1870, No. 110.

I do myself the pleasure of conveying to your Excellency the thanks of my Government for the attention and humanity evinced by your Excellency in the measures taken for the reception of the British subjects, emigrants on board the Ship *John Scott*, when that vessel returned to the Pondicherry Roadstead with cholera on board.

Accept Sir, &c.,
(Signed) NAPIER.

Read again letter from the Sub-Collector of South Arcot, dated 5th January 1870, No. 1, recorded in Proceedings of Government, dated 27th idem, No. 109.

Read also the following letter from the Protector of Emigrants, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 31st January 1870, No. 10-W. :—

With reference to the case of the emigrants per *John Scott*, I have the honour to forward a report from the British Consular Agent, and depositions given before him by the Captain and Mates; also copies of three letters written by the French Surgeon on board to the Captain, on December 18th and 19th, after leaving Karikal.

2. I called on the British Consul at Karikal to report what occurred there. Copy of his letter is herewith sent.

3. From the information obtained from these reports, depositions, and letters, I am of opinion that the authorities at Karikal were decidedly in fault, allowing the 150 emigrants to be shipped there, nor do I understand the conduct of the French Surgeon of the *John Scott*.

4. There was undoubtedly cholera in the Pondicherry Dépôt a week before the embarkation of the emigrants, and on that account alone the embarkation was delayed till the 13th December.

British Consul's report, Jan. 18th, 1870, para. 2.

5. A woman died of cholera on the 16th December, just before the *John Scott* anchored at Karikal, and was not even buried until orders were received from the

* *Vide* letter from British Consular Agent, Karikal, of January 26th, 1870, paragraph 1.

† *Vide* Captain's statement in Proceedings, Madras Government, of 25th January 1870.

Master Attendant. The French Surgeon was examined* on shore the following morning, and, after a consultation with the Port Surgeon, 150 more emigrants were embarked, and the ship despatched† with an unclean

Bill of Health on the morning of the 18th; when the ship was starting on the 18th

the Surgeon appears to have begged‡ the Captain to remain, because there was cholera on board; during

‡ *Vide* Captain and Mates' statements.

the day he wrote him two letters requesting him to return, and on the 19th morning he again wrote urging the Captain to return, which he then did.

6. The incomprehensible part of the affair is, why did the Surgeon agree to embark the emigrants at Karikal, when he knew the woman had died of cholera the previous day, and then when the ship was starting, why did he beg the Captain to

anchor again stating there was cholera on board. The statements differ slightly as to the time when this

Vide statement of Captain and Mates.

verbal request was made.

7. Eight Pondicherry emigrants were attacked with cholera on the 18th, the day the ship left Karikal, and on the 19th morning there were ten cases and two deaths. Before night two

See report of death, No. 1.

more deaths, and eight deaths occurred before the ship got back to Pondicherry.

8. During the epidemic, 135 persons were attacked with cholera, of whom thirty-eight died; one woman jumped overboard; one man disappeared from the ship; and another absconded from the Lazaretto; a fearful list of casualties, which might, I believe, have been reduced to almost nothing, had the ship remained in the Karikal roads until the outbreak had ceased; for the first few days only the Pondicherry coolies were attacked, and certainly the lives of all the Karikal emigrants, who subsequently died, would have been saved had they not been sent to sea in a ship, which actually had cholera cases on board at the time of sailing.

9. I believe the real truth is that the French Surgeon authorized the embarkation against his own wishes, and that he knew perfectly well what a risk he was running, but was afraid to take the responsibility of stopping the embarkation. The Protector of Emigrants also should not have allowed the emigrants to be embarked in a ship in which he had been told by both the Doctor and Captain a woman had died of cholera on the previous day.

10. As to what occurred at Pondicherry after the return of the *John Scott*, I believe the wisest course would have been to have landed all the emigrants, and had the ship thoroughly cleansed and fumigated. Thirty deaths occurred after the return of the ship on board and in the Lazaretto. Had the emigrants been landed at once, I think many of these lives would have saved.

11. I have simply reported the facts of this lamentable case, in order that Government may take such notice of it as they think proper. All I can say is that had the *John Scott* come in here, instead of Karikal, to take emigrants on board, I would not (as Protector of Emigrants) have permitted their embarkation.

Order, 24th February 1870, No. 239.

In their Proceedings of the 27th January last, No. 109, the Government noticed the lamentable loss of life which occurred on board the *John Scott* Emigrant Ship.

2. From the reports of the British Consular Agents at Pondicherry and Karikal, now submitted, it would seem that the mortality was owing—

1st.—To the emigrants being allowed to leave the Dépôt at Pondicherry too soon (seven days) after one certain case of cholera and two doubtful cases occurred at the Dépôt.

2nd.—To a large batch of emigrants being embarked at Karikal on board the *John Scott*, although it was known that a fatal case of cholera had occurred on board the ship just before it anchored at Karikal.

3rd.—To the persistence of the Captain of the *John Scott* in leaving Karikal with cholera on board, and the delay that occurred when the *John Scott* arrived at Pondicherry, in landing the emigrants. For this delay the Sanitary Commission are responsible. The Governor of Pondicherry humanely overruled them, and probably saved many lives.

3. The conduct of the Consular Agent, Mr. Sam, is inexcusable, and his explanation does not in any way exculpate him. He knew that a death from cholera had taken place in the Karikal roads; he knew that there had been cholera in the Pondicherry Dépôt; he must have known, as stated* by the Sub-Collector, that cholera had broken out in the town of Karikal, and he was clearly bound to have refused his sanction to the embarkation of a very large number of coolies from Karikal, until there had occurred a sufficient interval to judge whether cholera had entirely ceased on the *John Scott*, and that there was no cholera taint among the coolies at the Karikal Dépôt. If he had done this, many lives would have been saved.

4. The Government consider Mr. Sam's conduct on the occasion to have been marked, not only by a want of common prudence, but by the neglect of a clear duty, and must cancel their order of the 11th instant, permitting Mr. Sam to continue to hold his office, although he has attained the age of fifty-five years. Mr. Sam must at once retire from the post of Consular Agent.

5. The Government consider Mr. Norfor also to blame in not having insisted on a longer period than seven days after the occurrence of a case of cholera at the Emigration Dépôt at Pondicherry, before emigrants were embarked.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. I. MINCHIN,
Acting Chief Secretary.

Edw. J. Wright.

Translation of a letter from His Excellency the Governor of the French Settlements in India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor of the Presidency of Fort Saint George, Madras, dated Pondicherry, 20th May 1870, No. 15.

Your Excellency was good enough some months ago to take notice of an incident in connexion with the emigrant ship, the *John Scott*, and to support with your opinion the proceedings of the administration of Pondicherry. I believe I ought in consequence to furnish you with a copy of a letter I have just received from the first-class Marine Surgeon who proceeded on this ship as Surgeon and Delegate of the Government. It is to be observed that this Surgeon, who arrived from France at the time of the formation of the Lazaretto for the sick of the *John Scott*, had been forthwith placed in charge of the Lazaretto, and had consented, from devotion to his duty, to proceed with the coolies to their destination, in the place of his colleague, Dr. Baquié, who went on board at the beginning of the voyage, but was subsequently found to have had serious differences with the Captain.

2. The administration of Pondicherry had not omitted doing anything in order to avoid difficulties with Captain Kennedy, whose chicaning spirit and bad faith were already apparent. Dr. Dudon is, moreover, a man who is dispassionate, observant, very agreeable in his manners, and of great devotion to his duties. His statements agreeing with those of Dr. Baquié, his predecessor, there is no longer any doubt as to the bad principles or even the insanity of the Captain of the *John Scott*. I feel bound to make known to your Excellency my convictions on this subject, in at the same time informing you that henceforth this Captain will not be permitted to take part in any contracts for the transport of emigrants.

Copy of a letter addressed by the Government Delegate on board the Ship *John Scott*, to the Governor of the French Settlements in India, dated Saint Helena, on board the *John Scott*, 27th March 1870.

I have the honour to inform you of the arrival of the *John Scott* at the anchorage of St. Helena after a voyage of thirty-six days from Mauritius.

Our sanitary state has been very good up to the present time, and, although the emigrants have been 105 days at sea, their moral condition is excellent.

As for the rest, we have not had much bad weather at the Cape of Good Hope, and we have had fresh provisions up to St. Helena. We have thus had only a few sick on board and no scurvy.

During the voyage I have lost only one woman, who was affected with beriberi.

My relations with the Captain are not good. I have had difficulties with him arising from various circumstances.

From the want of discipline among the crew, of whom I have personally to complain, and from the brutality of the sailors to the emigrants. I have had frequently to pacify the Indians when over-excited from bad treatment, and I have warned the Captain, that whatever may be the patience of the coolies, and the influence of my advice with them, a time might come when they would defend themselves. The Captain is never moved by my remonstrances. He is not disposed to punish his men. Thus the troubles are always frequent enough. From the supply of fresh provisions for the emigrants. Already at Mauritius the Captain deceived me. In showing me eighteen sheep that he had purchased, he asked me whether I thought them equal to thirty Pondicherry sheep. They were in fact equal, and I had nothing to say about them, but after our departure the Captain intimated to me that only twelve of them were for the coolies.

Now he pretends that it was in accordance with the instructions of the Government of Pondicherry that he had put on board the entire quantity of fowls, pumpkins and onions, and that he is not bound to take in a fresh supply at St. Helena. After very long parleying, I believe,

No. 19 of 1870.

however, I have induced him to buy a small quantity of these eatables, mainly by telling him that he would have to answer for an infraction of the 15th Article of the conditions of engagement.

I have had many more difficulties with the Captain on account of his hallucinations. He sees enemies every where. The least gesture of an emigrant is a grave insult to him, and even a threat. At times he fancies himself pursued and threatened by a man whom he points out and whom he wishes to punish, although the fact may be false and the man in question perfectly establishes an *alibi*. In these moments, he is unjust to every one, and frequently rude to me, whom he wishes to render responsible in my capacity of "Delegate of the French Government for pretended insults and menaces from French coolies," but the coolies are admirably disciplined, very mild, and the maistries are excellent.

Lastly, I have still to complain of the bad food at table, and especially of the want of bread, the wheat on board being damaged.

However it may be, Monsieur le Gouverneur, the emigrants have had little to suffer up to this time, and I hope to be soon able to land them at Guadeloupe in good condition, and thus to end one of the most painful tours of duty that could have fallen to a Marine Surgeon.

(True translation.)

(Signed) J. W. LYONS,
French Translator.

23rd May 1870.

Exd. J. Wright.

To

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

MY LORD DUKE,

We have the honour to send, for the information of your Grace, a copy of a letter we have received from M. Bontemps, the Governor of Pondicherry, on the conduct of Captain Kennedy of the ship *John Scott*, which vessel was engaged by the French Government to convey emigrants from Pondicherry and Karikal to Guadeloupe.

2. After the emigrants had been embarked at Karikal and when the ship was about to sail for Guadeloupe, cholera, in an epidemic form, broke out on board and the ship returned to Pondicherry, where, after some delay, the sick were landed and the vessel remained in the roads, until it had been thoroughly cleansed and fumigated and all traces of disease had disappeared.

3. During the time that the cholera lasted, out of 450 emigrants, thirty-five died, one woman jumped overboard, one man disappeared from the ship, and another absconded from the Lazaretto.

4. The details of this lamentable occurrence and the orders passed by us are contained in our Proceedings, dated 27th January, Nos. 132 to 134, and 24th February 1870, Nos. 123 and 124, enclosed. The Captain from the first showed how unfit he was for the duties imposed upon him. Many lives would probably have been saved had he not persisted on leaving Karikal with cholera on board his ship, although the French Surgeon remonstrated against his proceedings.

5. The French authorities, when they became aware of the violent dissensions that had taken place between Captain Kennedy and the French Surgeon, appointed another medical man M. Dudon to be in charge of the coolies on board the *John Scott*. M. Dudon who, as described by M. Bontemps, is a Surgeon in the French Navy, of much experience and excellent temper, was obliged on arrival at St. Helena to report the conduct of Captain Kennedy to the French authorities at Pondicherry. This report forms an enclosure to M. Bontemps' letter.

6. We consider that there are strong *prima facie* grounds for the opinion expressed by M. Bontemps that Captain Kennedy is unfit to have charge of a ship conveying native emigrants. It has not been possible for us to obtain from Captain Kennedy any explanation of his conduct after he finally sailed from Pondicherry, but we think it right that the correspondence should be submitted to your Grace.

7. It will be seen that no ship of which Captain Kennedy is in command will be employed in conveying emigrants by the French Government.

8. The correspondence relating to Captain Kennedy's conduct has also been communicated to the Protector of Emigrants at Madras, to the Bengal, Bombay, and Mauritius Governments, and to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Réunion.

OOTACAMUND,
8th August 1870.

We have the honour to be,
My Lord Duke,
Your Grace's most obedient,
humble servants,

(Signed) NAPIER.
(„) W. A. McCLEVERTY.
(„) A. J. ARBUTHNOT.
(„) J. D. SIM.

Sept 17/8

Public Department.

No. 983.

To

The Secretary to the Government
of India. *Bengal*
Department.

Sir,

I am directed
to transmit for the infor-
mation of His Excel-
lency the Lieutenant Gover-
nor of Bengal and for
communication to the
Protector of Emigrants,
Calcutta, copies of a
Despatch to Her Majesty's
Secy. of State, and of
the papers therein referred
to, on the conduct of Cap-
tain Kennedy of the
Ship "John Scott" which
vessel was engaged
by the French Govt. at Pondi-
cherry to convey Emi-
grants from that
Station and Karikal
to Guadaloupe.

Same to
Sept 17/8 No. 984.

The Secy of Bombay, and Protector of Emi-
grants.

Copy to the Protector of Emigrants, *Calcutta*
at Calcutta

Public DEPARTMENT.

No. 835.

From

His Excellency the Governor of the French Settlements in India.

Dated 20 May. 1870.

FOR ORDERS.

I cannot see that we can do
any thing in this matter - I can
only suggest a courteous reply -
re-iterating our satisfaction
at His Ex: humanity towards
the colonies & perhaps adding that
his experience of the Captain
will not be lost on us - A copy
of the paper might go to the Protector
of Emigrants. L.D.S.

Since writing the
above I have seen this
2^d: the 1st: remark
on the back of the
original letter. It
seems hardly worth
while to turn the the
leaf of the letter with
this - as he will have
seen from our former -
letter that the 1st: of
Pondicherry did his
best

J. D. S.

✓ Public. Feb 28th 1870
1870 Aug 19

Alb. 1870. Department

No. 903

To

The Secretary to the
Government of Bengal.
Department

Dated 8 Aug. 1870
40. 44.

Forwarding copies of papers
bearing on the conduct
of Mr. Kennedy of the S. A. S.
before death when that
vessel was engaged to
carry European to
Bombay & Kanthal to
Guadeloupe.

229/6-004
To 10 Aug 7/50