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[Despatch Address.]

Quarantine

Communicating report
of the Port Surgeon, Colombo,
relative to the disposition
of — on Coolies from
Porticoon.

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1890 No. 116-7

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REMARKS WITH LIST.

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REMARKS WITH LIST FOR UNDERSTANDING
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REMARKS WITH LIST

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G.O., 26th May 1890, No. 381.

MAY.

Quarantine.

Communicating report of the Port Surgeon,
Colombo, relative to the imposition of — on
coolies from Tuticorin.

unreasonable one, I have only to point to the case of the "Patna." Had such a rule been in existence then, and had the quarantine of observation been duly enforced, those passengers who developed cholera after they had landed would have been detected early in the disease and properly isolated, and the city of Colombo would have been spared the alarm of a threatened epidemic of cholera.

From the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Colombo, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Colombo, 13th May 1890, No. 44.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 169, of the 3rd instant, regarding the removal of quarantine on arrivals from Tuticorin, and to refer you to mine, No. 41, of the 28th ultimo, forwarding, for the information of His Excellency the Governor of Madras, a copy of a report by the Port Surgeon of Colombo on the subject.

ORDER—dated 26th May 1890, No. 381, Public.

The report of the Port Surgeon, Colombo, forwarded with the Colonial Secretary's letter read above, will be communicated to the Collectors of Tanjore and Tinnevely and to Messrs. Adamson, Macartaggart and Co., Negapatam.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Collector of Tanjore.
„ the Collector of Tinnevely.
„ the Presidency Port Officer.
„ Messrs. Adamson, Macartaggart and Co.

Edw. A. Raitt.

On the 27th June there appeared in the Government Gazette a regulation whereby arrivals from ports, in which or about which cholera was prevalent or had been prevalent even ten days previously, were liable to quarantine for a period not exceeding ten days. Upon this regulation, the "Java" was quarantined for 48 hours for touching at Kangeranturai, then declared a foul port.

I directed the attention of Messrs. John Walker and Co., the Agents of the "Lady Gordon," to this new regulation on the 16th July.

On the 22nd July I called the attention of the Colonial Surgeon, W.P., to the circumstance that the bill of health from Negapatam was foul, and pointed out to him that arrivals from this port should be quarantined at the first island port touched.

On the same day I notified to the Agents here that arrivals from Negapatam were liable to quarantine unless they carried clean bills of health.

Since this notice was issued, I have reason to believe that the vessels of the British India Company have made it a point to return a few miles up the coast to a port called Tirumalavasal, so as to come provided with a clean bill of health from that port and so evade the quarantine against Negapatam.

Early this year rumour of cholera reached me from private sources, which before long received confirmation in the bill of health issued from Tuticorin. The schooners "Virgin Mary" and "Philip and James" brought foul bills of health from Tuticorin, and were therefore quarantined.

The same day the Agents were informed that "Cholera having broken out in Tuticorin, all arrivals from that port are liable to be placed in quarantine in terms of the regulation of the 27th June published in the Government Gazette of the 28th June 1889."

On the 2nd February, the "Mecca" arrived with a foul bill of health and carrying native passengers. She was placed in quarantine, and every thing that could be done to ameliorate the condition of the natives on board was done, some of them being transferred to the S.S. "Serendib." It was the intention of the Colonial Surgeon, W.P., to release this vessel after 5 days' quarantine, but as at this time cholera appeared along the North Road and so afforded ample evidence of the unhealthy state of the country sending the native passengers that he deemed it prudent to enforce the full period of ten days allowed by the regulation. The "Mecca," however, elected to take herself off, and proceeded to Negapatam and landed the passengers there.

The Agents of the British India Company, seeing that the Civil Medical Department were in earnest about imposing the full period of quarantine, very wisely prevented their next steamer, the "Palitana," from bringing natives across.

From the 16th February, quarantine was not enforced against arrivals from Tuticorin on the order of the P.C.M.O.

On the 13th March, quarantine against Tuticorin was resumed, as the bills of health stated that cholera had again appeared. On this day the P.C.M.O. issued the instructions which now guide me, and I at once informed the Agents here of the new departure in procedure.

I do not think that, after the above details, it can seriously be asserted that the quarantine imposed here has been either unnecessary or exercised without due notice. It will be observed that, although rumours of the prevalence of cholera had reached this port, yet such rumours were only considered an incentive to more careful inspection, and that resort was had to quarantine only when these rumours received confirmation in the bills of health received. In every instance where quarantine was imposed there was ample reason, and, with a knowledge of the causes that contributed to the disastrous epidemic at Dutch Bay, it would have been culpable and inexcusable had any relaxation of the rules been allowed.

With regard to the complaint of want of notice, I think I need say but little; from the instances I have detailed, it cannot, I think, be urged that I have been remiss in this matter. If, as stated by the Collector of Tinnevely, the people had been gravely inconvenienced, the blame must lay at the door of the Agents of steamers, whose constituents they are, in not apprising them of the rules adopted here from time to time. I also think that the Agents at Tuticorin, who, I understand, are kept informed of everything relating to quarantine at this port, by wire, should have notified the Collector of Tinnevely.

It is not usual for natives from the Madura sea-board to take passage to this port in any number, but whenever any vessels have arrived here, similarly circumstanced, as those from Tuticorin, they have been accorded the same reception. I have only to instance the recent case of the "Nowshera" in proof of my contention that no favor or partiality has been shown by me, as the Collector of Tinnevely would seem to maintain.

I have incidentally referred to the circumstance that rumours of cholera in Southern India have reached me from time to time, and I here repeat that all action I had taken had commenced only when those rumours had been confirmed, and never before. I have elsewhere stated that these rumours are not without their use, and that, in the absence of official and authentic information regarding the health of the villages from which most natives come, it would not be blameless if some amount of consideration were not given them. It is this very uncertainty and absence of information that has led to the adoption of a quarantine of observation of 24 hours in the case of vessels arriving from the ports of Southern India, even with clean bills of health. If an example were required to show the necessity for such a rule, and to prove that it is not an

2. A telegram on this subject was despatched to His Excellency on the 11th instant, and I am to express the hope of this Government that the Government of Ceylon has been able to comply with the request therein made. A reply to the telegram is awaited.

(Signed) J. GROSE,
Ag. Chief Secretary.

READ—also the following papers:—

From the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Colombo, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Colombo, 28th April 1890, No. 41.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 117, of the 14th February last, regarding the imposition of quarantine on coolies from Tuticorin, and to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Governor of Madras, the enclosed copy of a report by the Port Surgeon of Colombo on the subject.

ENCLOSURE.

REPORT referred to (No. 81 of 24th March 1890).

In reference to the accompanying correspondence sent to me for report, I have the honor to submit the following remarks:—

2. The memorandum of the Honorable the Colonial Secretary states that there seems to be a complaint that we have unnecessarily and without due notice established quarantine against Tuticorin, and the letter of the Collector of Tinnevely further asserts that more indulgence has been shown the ports of the Madura sea-board than the decision regarding Tuticorin was based on only idle rumours of cholera, and that the quarantining of arrivals from this latter port when provided with clean bills of health was an unreasonable proceeding. I propose to address myself to the refutation of each and every one of these strictures, and in doing so, I shall have to go as far back as the Dutch Bay epidemic and trace the history of, and the circumstances attending and justifying, the various procedures adopted from time to time by me at this port in my capacity as Port Health Officer.

The epidemic of cholera which brought about the collapse of the pearl fishery at Dutch Bay, and which continued with such severity for nearly a twelvemonth in the Northern Province, has been clearly traced to the introduction of the disease from Southern India. This experience is entirely in keeping with that of previous epidemic, for cholera is not epidemic in this island as in the adjoining peninsula. It does not originate *de novo*, and is invariably an imported disease.

During the fishery referred to, the bills of health issued from Tuticorin were always clean, and accordingly native passengers brought over were permitted to land at this port without any reservation.

On the 2nd April 1889—i.e., two days after the collapse of the fishery—I wrote to the Agents in Colombo of the British India and Asiatic lines of steamers that, as cholera was reported to exist in Southern India, I would quarantine all arrivals at this port not carrying clean bills of health.

Up to the 6th May seven steamers arrived from Tuticorin all carrying clean bills of health. The last of these was the "Patna," and two days after her arrival, cases of cholera appeared in Colombo, which upon investigation were found to be all in passengers landed by this steamer; and were it not for the vigorous measures taken by the Civil Medical Department, these cases would have become the nucleus of a most serious epidemic in Colombo.

This circumstance led to the adoption of preventive measures against the introduction of disease by way of Tuticorin, and at a conference between the P.C.M.O., the Colonial Surgeon, W.P., and the Master Attendant of Colombo, it was held that the then existing regulations were ample, and, if strictly adhered to, sufficient to cope with the difficulty.

Acting upon this decision of the Board, constituted as above, I wrote to the Agents of the British India and Asiatic lines on the 13th May that quarantine, for 48 hours, would be imposed on all arrivals from Tuticorin unprovided with clean bills of health. The next four arrivals from Tuticorin—the "Canara," "Maharajah," "Asia," and "Patna"—were accordingly quarantined for 48 hours each.

On the 3rd of June the P.C.M.O. rules that 24 hours' quarantine would be ample in case there were no native passengers on board, and this decision was communicated to the Agents here the following day.

On the 11th of June the S.S. "Kohinoor" and "Java" arrived with native passengers, and being provided with clean bills of health were admitted to pratique at once.

C No. 1338

From the Hon^{ble} the Colonial Secretary Colombo

Dated 28 April 1890.

FOR ORDERS.

We cannot help observing that the Ceylon
 authorities may do. ~~They do not~~
 The Port Bureau deals very lightly
 with the question that there is no
 quarantine against vessels from
 the Indian ports & it is probably
 true that there is no restriction
 elsewhere than Colombo.

As we can do is to advise the agents
 to the effect of Fremont & Tanager &
 to advise the Tanager &c.

AS
 10/5/90
 C
 9 May.

Both Mr. Sir A. Gordon and the Colonial
 Secretary spoke to me on this subject and
 from what they said I feel sure that
 the Ceylon Govt. will not make any change.

J
 7 May.