

Public (1895) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 237

DATED 2^d April 1895

[Despatch Abstract.]

VITAL STATISTICS.

Recording Proceedings of the Board of Revenue communicating to all Collectors, with remarks, orders of Government regarding the improvement in the registration of--- in the rural tracts of the Presidency.

41

BACK PAPERS.

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[G
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8,000-28-9-04.

ORDINARY, MS.

Public, DEPARTMENT.
G.O., DATED 2/4/95.
No. 239.

INDEXED

When given for copying. 2/4.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Procs of the Board of Revenue
coming to all collectors, with
remarks, orders of Govt re
the improvement in the registration
of Vital Statistics in the
rural tracts of the Presidency,
recorded.

READ AGAIN ORDER OF GOVERNMENT, DATED
189, No. , MISCELLANEOUS.

ENCLOSURES.

ORDER No.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT.

A A

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

PAPER NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DISPATCH
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BOARD OF REVENUE (REV. SETT., L. RDS. AND AGRI.), 18TH MAR. 1895, No. 71.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE
(REVENUE SETTLEMENT, LAND RECORDS AND AGRICULTURE).

READ—the following G.O., dated 6th February 1895, No. 77, Revenue:—

Read—endorsement of the Local and Municipal Department, dated 11th January 1895, No. 26, transferring to the Revenue Department the following letter from W. J. H. LE FANU, Esq., Collector of Górávari District, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Cocanada, 15th December 1894, Dis. No. 1009-Acc.:—

With reference to paragraph 5 of G.O., Nos. 1210 and 1211 L., Local and Municipal, dated 2nd July last, I have the honour to state that my Divisional officers, who have been consulted, make the following proposals for the improvement of registration of vital statistics.

2. (1) *The Sub-Collector.*—The only way that suggests itself to him is “to keep on impressing upon the Revenue Inspectors the necessity for seeing that the karnams keep their registers properly written up. The karnams’ duties are so multifarious that there is no use in trying any more severe method of improving the statistics. It is of course quite out of the question employing any other agency than the karnams. It might improve matters if a reward of Rs. 20 were offered to the karnam whose death and birth figures, as compared with the population of his village, showed the highest percentage.”

(2) *Head Assistant Collector.*—“No improvement can be expected so long as the work is done by the village karnams. In unions the work might easily be entrusted to the union establishment. As regards the other villages, the vaccinators may be entrusted with the registration. Each vaccinator’s range consists of ten or fifteen villages, each of which he has to visit as often as possible in order to vaccinate the unprotected children.” He proposes that “the rule that the vaccinator should visit each and every village in his range, at least once in two months, should be strictly enforced and that he should be required to open an additional column in his vaccination register for the purpose of registering vital statistics. The Deputy Inspector of Vaccination will then also have better opportunities to check the registration than at present.”

(3) *The Special Assistant Agent.*—He does not wish to propose any fresh measures for the improvement of the registration, as there is no necessity for it.

(4) *The Narsapur Deputy Collector.*—“In the absence of the organization of a special establishment for the purpose (say five registering clerks for each taluk on a small pay), the karnam must constantly be insisted upon by the Revenue Inspectors, Tahsildars and Divisional officers, who should take every opportunity of closely supervising and verifying the work of the karnams in this branch during their tours. The Tahsildars may also be instructed to adopt one arrangement in the case of big villages, viz., to divide such villages into as many wards as there are vettians and to impress upon each fellow the consequences of failure to report to the karnam the occurrences in the ward assigned to him.”

(5) *The Head-Quarters Deputy Collector.*—He suggests “that a District circular be issued from time to time strictly enjoining all village officers to pay special attention to the subject and to note in their registers every birth and death that takes place on pain of dismissal. Tahsildars and Deputy Tahsildars should be directed to make it a point to make personal enquiries in the villages visited by them in their tours and verify the entries in the karnams’ registers, bringing to notice any cases of neglect or

irregularity in view to the offenders being properly punished. If registration is to be placed upon a sound footing, it is indispensably necessary to provide for efficient check of the village registers of registration." To this end he would propose "the appointment of a Registration Inspector on a salary of, say, Rs. 25 per mensem for each division (Divisional officer's charge). He is to visit every village in his jurisdiction at least twice a year and make careful enquiries of every family regarding births and deaths by going from house to house and then verify the entries in the village registers and report in a tabular form, from time to time, the cases of neglect or irregularity, if any, detected by him. If this proposal be sanctioned and carried out, registration of vital statistics will doubtless be on a very satisfactory basis. This proposal will involve an expenditure of Rs. 1,500 per annum for the whole district."

3. Columns to show the condition of the registration of vital statistics have been provided in the Tahsildars' and Revenue Inspectors' diaries. The vaccinators and the Deputy Inspectors of Vaccination also seem to be now initialling the registers of vital statistics in almost all the villages visited by them. If the additional expenditure from Provincial funds proposed by some of the Divisional officers cannot now be incurred owing to the financial crisis, the Tahsildars and other officers named above will be directed to verify the births and deaths in each village they visit and to certify having done so at each visit and to get the karnams punished for any omissions found.

4. The registration in the numerous zemindari estates of this district is very unsatisfactory, the karnams therein not being amenable to the control of Government officers. It seems to me to be necessary to render the village munsifs, rather than the karnams in those estates, responsible for registration of vital statistics.

Order—dated 6th February 1895, No. 77, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

The Government considers that until the time comes for making the registration of births and deaths compulsory, the

only means of improving vital statistics is for Collectors to insist over and over again on the karnams doing this part of their duty correctly and to impress on Divisional officers and Tahsildars the importance of their personally supervising the work of karnams in this matter. Karnams found to have neglected this portion of their duty may be suitably punished; but the Government does not approve the proposal to offer rewards to karnams whose birth and death figures may show, as compared with the population of their villages, the highest percentages. The Board of Revenue will be requested to issue the necessary instructions to Collectors.

2. The proposal to entrust the registration work to union establishments and vaccinators does not commend itself to Government, nor is Government prepared to entertain any proposal to employ special establishments for this work.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement).
Copy to the Local and Municipal Department.

RESOLUTION—dated 18th March 1895, No. 71.

The order read above will be communicated to all Collectors for information and guidance, with the request that they will once more impress upon all Divisional officers, Tahsildars and Revenue Inspectors the great importance of their giving close attention to the registration of vital statistics.

2. The Board, in its Proceedings, dated 30th November 1894, No. 506, which will now be communicated to all Collectors, submitted a proposal that the registration of births and deaths should be made generally compulsory, and that, in districts where

the village-heads largely outnumber the accountants, the duty of registration should be transferred to the former. On these proposals, no orders have as yet been received.

(True Copy and Extract.)

Regiment
Secretary.

To all Collectors.

„ the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Copy to the Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department.

APPENDIX.

PROCEEDINGS of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 30th November 1894, No. 506.

Read—G.O., dated 3rd July 1894, No. 477, Public, forwarding, for early remarks, Proceedings of the Government of India regarding improvement in the preparation of birth and death returns.

Read—Reminder, dated 14th November 1894, from Government, Public Department, requesting to submit an early reply to communication regarding vital statistics.

Resolution—dated 30th November 1894, No. 506.

The question as to how more accurate vital statistics should be procured was considered by the Board in its Proceedings, dated 26th September 1881, No. 1937. Messrs. Wilson, Grose, Price, Furnell, Sashiah Sastri and Cornish were then in favour of compulsory registration in rural areas, and the Board itself was "not actually opposed to the passing of a legislative enactment to compel registration" provided it were "made generally applicable by slow degrees." On the best consideration it can give to the subject, the Board ventures to suggest whether (as regards the greater part of this Presidency) the time has not arrived when it may be safely made obligatory that the occurrence of a birth or death should be reported, by the persons concerned, to the head of the village in which it occurs. Hill tracts and backward localities might be exempted by extending the Act only to such places as are from time to time notified by Government. There would be no necessity to work the law with rigour until it became well known, and if the power of sanctioning prosecutions were conferred on Tahsildars and officers superior to them, this restriction would be an efficient safeguard against an abuse of the law. The duty of reporting a birth or death is so easy, that if the obligation were known it would rarely be neglected. This appears to be the experience of many of the municipalities. The Board believes that by making the reporting of births and deaths compulsory, an approach to accuracy can be secured without any cost to the State or appreciable hardship to the people. One objection raised in 1881 was that "a law casting upon the families concerned the burden of making the returns would lead to a corresponding laxity on the part of village officials charged with the duty of collecting the required information;" but as village officials would still be charged with the duty of seeing that all births and deaths were reported, it is not obvious what excuse there would be for any relaxation of vigilance.

2. The suggestion that paid registrars should be appointed for rural towns (and, the Board would add, for all major unions) at the cost of local funds, is receiving the consideration of Government, as also is the proposal that special establishments should be appointed to secure correct statistics in certain selected areas (*vide* G.O., dated 2nd July 1894, Nos. 1210, 1211 L., Local and Municipal).

3. A suggestion of minor importance is whether the duty of registration may not with advantage be transferred from the village accountant to the village-head. This proposal was recently made by Mr. Sewell, when Collector of Bellary, on the grounds—

(1) that there are more village-heads than accountants.

(2) that the village-heads have less work than the accountants; have the control over the menial servants who collect information of births and deaths; and are less liable to be called away from the village.

Mr. Sewell urged that the fact that many village-heads are illiterate was no objection, inasmuch as such men manage to get other scriptory work (*e.g.*, the maintenance of pound registers) performed.

The Board took the opinion of all Collectors on the proposal, and a majority were in favour of it. The circumstances of the districts are, however, so various that it would be unwise to lay down a hard-and-fast rule. Where (as in Malabar) the village establishment is numerically very weak, where there are as many accountants as village-heads, and where the village-head and accountant already share the labour of preparing the birth and death returns, no better arrangement is feasible. Until the village establishment is strengthened, stricter supervision is all that can be looked to for an improvement.

In other districts where the village-heads largely outnumber the accountants, the former can best collect the statistics, and (following the example of Chingleput and South Canara) should be entrusted with the duty. In some districts (educationally backward, like Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Kurnool) the Collectors may be right in thinking that many village-heads are in competent to perform the task, or get it performed, and in such districts the accountants must continue to register.

4. As regards zemindaris and inam villages much improvement may be hoped from the reorganization of village establishments, which is contemplated, and made practicable, by the passing of the Madras Proprietary Estates' Village Service Act, 1894; but until this reorganization is accomplished it is perhaps worthy of consideration whether the vital statistics for zemindaris and inam villages should not be compiled and published separately, as being notoriously far more defective than those of Government villages possessing an establishment under adequate control.

5. At pages 40-42 of his annual report for 1893, the Sanitary Commissioner describes fully the method in which the vital statistics are at present collected, compiled and checked, and knowing the pains that are taken by the supervising officers in most districts, the Board is not sanguine that any steady advance will be made towards better results, without the recommended legislation. A table is appended showing for each district (columns 4 and 11) the decennial increase according to the last census, and the increase accounted for by the differences between the number of births and deaths.

It is noticeable that in Chingleput and South Canara, where the registration appears to be specially good, the duty is performed by the heads of villages, and not by the village accountants.

In Madras and the Nilgiris the great difference between columns 4 and 11 may be accounted for by immigration. In Tanjore on the contrary emigration accounts for the agreement. Why the difference in Gódvári should be so vast is not apparent, for though the Agency tracts are extensive the population therein is sparse. The table indicates that registration is especially defective in Gódvári, Vizagapatam, Ganjam, Nellore, South Arcot, Tinnevely and Malabar. From Nellore, South Arcot and Tinnevely better results might have been expected. In the three northern districts the zemindari and agency areas are immense, while in Malabar an exceptionally weak establishment has to cope with the fact that the population is not congregated in villages.

6. It has occurred to the Board whether it would be expedient to insist on each Collector reviewing the vital statistics of his district once a month, but it doubts whether such a review would be practicable or useful. When each village is dealt with separately, the monthly birth and death rates fluctuate so greatly that no figure can be pronounced normal, and to keep on calling for explanation of unexplainable variations would harass the revenue establishment beyond endurance, and to no purpose. The scrutiny at jamabandi, and occasional scrutinies when on tour, must be mainly relied on so far as the superior revenue officers are concerned, while the Revenue Inspectors and Tahsildars must be kept up to their duty of constantly checking the village returns by local inquiry.

(True Extract).

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department.

Exd J. Oliver.

APPENDIX to Board's Proceedings, dated 30th November 1894, No 506.

DETAILED districtwar statement comparing increase of population according to census and the estimated increase for the whole population at the rate ascertained from the annual returns of vital statistics for the portion of the population for which death and birth returns were received.

Districts.	1	2	3	Increase by census.		6	7	8	Increase by birth and death returns.			12	13
				Difference between columns 2 and 3.	Percentage of columns 4 on 2.				Difference between columns 7 and 8.	Percentage of column 9 to column 6.	Increase on column 2 at the percentage in column 16.		
1. Ganjam ..	1,749,499	1,896,893	1,896,893	147,304	8.4	1,061,461	232,430	202,949	29,481	2.8	48,986	98,318	40.2
2. Vizagapatam ..	2,481,284	2,802,992	2,802,992	321,708	13.0	1,418,632	311,792	236,624	75,168	5.3	131,508	190,200	10.7
3. Gódvári ..	1,795,369	2,078,782	2,078,782	283,413	15.8	1,750,708	381,804	353,432	28,372	1.6	28,726	254,687	61.2
4. Kistna ..	1,648,480	1,866,582	1,866,582	307,102	19.8	1,526,802	505,145	326,924	178,221	11.7	181,172	125,930	75.2
5. Kurnool ..	678,551	817,811	817,811	139,260	20.5	731,879	268,768	173,813	94,955	13.0	88,212	51,048	97.4
6. Bellary ..	721,584	900,126	900,126	178,542	24.7	1,402,958	504,005	296,725	207,280	14.8	196,272	86,239	96.4
7. Anantapur ..	604,580	708,649	708,649	103,969	17.2	1,167,069	337,190	226,868	110,322	9.5	108,499	44,535	95.0
8. Cuddapah ..	1,121,038	1,272,072	1,272,072	151,034	13.5	1,180,509	301,228	174,911	126,317	10.7	130,565	112,935	68.3
9. Nellore ..	1,220,286	1,463,736	1,463,736	243,500	20.0	1,180,509	301,228	174,911	126,317	10.7	130,565	112,935	68.3
10. Madras ..	405,848	452,518	452,518	46,670	11.5	404,192	164,285	158,259	6,026	1.5	6,088	40,582	100.0
11. Chingleput ..	981,381	1,136,928	1,136,928	155,547	15.8	972,742	392,094	239,434	152,660	15.7	154,077	1,470	74.2
12. North Arcot ..	1,822,873	2,160,487	2,160,487	337,614	19.6	1,858,644	554,518	348,907	205,611	11.1	203,339	155,275	63.6
13. Salem ..	1,592,915	1,962,591	1,962,591	369,676	23.2	1,689,727	551,432	309,227	242,225	14.5	230,978	138,703	71.9
14. Coimbatore ..	1,657,690	2,004,839	2,004,839	347,149	20.9	1,678,807	477,163	290,992	186,171	11.1	184,004	163,145	96.8
15. Trichinopoly ..	1,215,083	1,372,717	1,372,717	157,634	13.0	1,212,108	374,333	272,541	101,792	8.4	102,063	55,621	79.7
16. South Arcot ..	1,815,723	2,162,851	2,162,851	347,128	19.1	1,803,772	510,000	376,892	133,108	7.4	134,364	212,764	95.9
17. Tanjore ..	2,131,019	2,228,114	2,228,114	97,095	4.6	2,099,052	613,450	517,794	95,656	4.6	98,027	932	78.3
18. Madura ..	2,168,680	2,608,404	2,608,404	439,724	20.3	1,301,416	408,051	258,535	149,516	11.5	249,398	190,326	43.4
19. Tinnevely ..	1,699,747	1,916,095	1,916,095	216,348	12.7	1,698,789	493,154	387,374	105,780	6.2	105,384	110,964	70.9
20. Malabar ..	2,865,035	2,652,565	2,652,565	212,470	12.2	2,380,631	638,477	439,579	98,868	4.2	99,331	188,199	98.9
21. South Canara ..	959,514	1,056,081	1,056,081	96,567	10.1	948,345	317,705	212,709	104,996	11.1	106,506	9,939	100.0
22. Nilgiris ..	91,034	99,797	99,797	8,763	9.6	87,733	15,918	14,917	1,001	1.1	1,001	7,762	100.0
Total ..	30,827,113	35,630,440	35,630,440	4,803,327	15.6	28,305,677	8,252,932	5,819,405	2,433,526	8.6	2,651,132	-2,152,195	71.2

Pub
996

956 75 10-8-94
662 75 12-9-94
520 85 17-7-94
477 75 7-94

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1895.

Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records
and Agriculture),

MADRAS.

Printed March th.

Recd 24/3/95
Recd 25/3/95

Proceedings, 18th March 1895, No. 71.



CS.
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Order 2 April 1895, No. 2

Recorded.

3813.
for CS.
28/3/95

Copy to the Com. Secy. - dated 13/4/95

When given for copying
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AD AGAIN G.O., No.
189

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO G. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

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