

Public Works (1895) Department.

RAILWAY BRANCH.

G.O., No. 57 R

DATED 29th August.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Water Supply. — Estimate of Rs 8,085 for obtaining water for Poddanur on the Madras Railway from the Jyal river, sanctioned.

3052
13-7-95

From
MADRAS RAILWAY,
The Agent and Manager.

To
The Consulting Engineer
for Railways.

Dated
188

Recd.
No.

Letter to Am in No 2574
9-8-95

No. 797

South Indian Railway Co., Ltd.

AGENT'S OFFICE,

TRICHINOPOLY, 30th August 1895.

From

Ag:
THE AGENT,

SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY,

To

THE CONSULTING ENGINEER

FOR RAILWAYS,

MADRAS.

Sir,

Referring to your endorsement No. 1946 of 20th June 1895, forwarding copy of the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's letter (Local and Municipal Department No. 890 dated 3rd May 1895) to the Chief Secretary to Government of Madras, I have the honor to collate the following extracts from reports by the Superintending Physician and the Traffic Manager, of this Railway, on the subjects referred to in the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's letter.

The Superintending Physician writes the arrangements made by his Department during the Tiruvannamalai Festival of 1894 were as follows:—

"The Apothecary of the Section (located at Villupuram) visited Tiruvannamalai daily and stayed several hours, and inspected the station grounds, latrines, &c. Disinfectants were freely used about the grounds, and especially on spots where pilgrims sat about or washed &c.

"All

transd

3760
2.9.95

Dated
Received
No.
189
ENCLOSURE.

From
THE AGENT,
SOUTH INDIAN RAILWAY,
Trichinopoly,
To
THE CONSULTING ENGINEER FOR
RAILWAYS,
Madras.

(2)

All rubbish was swept twice daily and burnt in the incinerator. The waterman was stationed at the well to serve out water and prevent its pollution. Disinfectants were served out to the station staff for use when required and a supply of cholera medicines was left with the Station Master. The Apothecary during the festival month made special inspection of Stations on his Section and was absent from Head Quarters for 21 days on this account. It is the general practice during festivals for the Apothecary of the Section, in whose length of line a festival occurs, to act as above specified. This is done at Kumbakonam, Tirupati, Madambaram, etc.

The transport of large numbers of semicivilised, and unruly, pilgrims with horrid and insanitary ways, is a difficult traffic question and so much of it as is related to Medical Management is certainly not, in my opinion, happily solved by the Acting Sanitary Commissioner in his letter to the Chief Secretary to Government. Copy of which you send me with your above quoted letter. The special latrine carriage proposed by the Acting Sanitary Commissioner has yet to be invented: and when used by large numbers of pilgrims is more likely to be a nuisance on wheels than a measure appertaining to sanitation, and to prevent bona fide pilgrims from using the station latrines would mean the stationing of two ticket examiners at the double latrines at Stations (some of our Stations have more than two latrines) to scrutinise the tickets of passengers, essaying towards the calls of nature. This would mean further a prohibitive waste of time at Stations.

The Acting Sanitary Commissioner appears

"appears to be under the impression that Cholera-stricken
 "passengers are allowed to travel together. This is a
 "great mistake. No sooner does a passenger show
 "any symptom of the disease than every other passenger
 "in the Carriage is removed to other parts of the train
 "and the Cholera stricken passenger alone carried
 "in the polluted carriage. The patient is not dropped
 "by the Railway authorities where they choose, but
 "put down at the nearest large station where there
 "is a hospital. The polluted carriage is then
 "subjected to a process of disinfection. I
 "pointed out a few years ago that no process
 "of disinfection practicable for a carriage
 "would satisfy theoretical requirements, still the
 "the Carriage is well scrubbed and washed
 "with an antiseptic fluid, and then fumigated
 "(closed) with sulphur."

"It is my belief that in 99% of cases
 "of Cholera showing itself in passengers, the
 "disease manifests itself only after the journey he,
 "has commenced, the patient being free from
 "the disease at the time of purchasing his ticket, not
 "for a person with the actual disease dominant
 "on him to pass the ticket Collector's gate, and
 "walk or be carried up the platform of the
 "station and put into a Carriage, without
 "being detected by the Railway Servants, or
 "being objected to by other passengers, is
 "well nigh an impossibility."

"I may here say with reference to
 "the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's proposal
 "to have a reserved ambulance carriage
 "that the present practice obtaining on this
 "railway of removing healthy passengers
 "from a Carriage contaminated by a
 "Cholera patient and allowing the patient to
 "travel

"travel in it alone is preferable."

"But medical necessities may be carried by the Chief Guard in his van at Festival times"

"Similarly I do not see good reason for a medical Subordinate to travel as proposed by the Acting Sanitary Commissioner in the district of occurrence of the festival. Such pilgrims as come away from an infected area (themselves being poisoned) usually manifest the disease only after a good distance is travelled - 50 miles and upwards. and if, as is proposed, the District authorities should inform the Railway authorities at what points along the line in the district Cholera Stricken patients are likely to alight - the reason for travelling Subordinates is still less evident."

"I do not think anything more can be done than is now done in the transport of large numbers of pilgrims. Perhaps for ethical reasons, if for nothing else, stricter orders may be issued as to prevention of over crowding of trains. But all over the world occasions continually arise when it is necessary to carry a passenger some how and to crowd into a Compartment nearly twice the number it is meant to carry. mere overcrowding however, offensive to one's sense of comfort and decency, will not produce Cholera." —

The Traffic Manager writes:—

"The measures taken by this Department for dealing with the Sanitation of passengers going to, and returning from, Tiruvannamalai last December have been explained in my reports to you dated 22nd December 1894 and

"13th February 1895 respectively".

"It will be seen therefrom that in every instance we followed the rules laid down as far as it lay in our power, and I fail to see anything in the observations of the Acting Sanitary Commissioner which go to prove neglect on the part of the Railway authorities in respect of the cases brought to notice."

"As Mr. Birch was the Traffic Officer in charge at the time, I called upon him to offer what remarks he might be desirous of making upon the report of the Sanitary Commissioner, and I now beg to quote from his memorandum the following expression of his views:—

"The bulk of the passengers who attend this festival and Cattle fair come from adjacent places, a large majority being residents of places within 100 miles. I call attention to this as the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's remarks imply otherwise. A continuous stream of persons walk into, and away, from Tiuvannamalai during several days of the Fair, many of them bringing or removing cattle. The unchecked spread of disease by these persons is not touched upon by the Sanitary Commissioner. The disease was certainly not conveyed there by our passengers since its prevalence at a village only 7 miles distant was officially notified by the District Magistrate before the Festival commenced. x x x x x

"So far as could be known no person suffering with choleraic symptoms was permitted to get into the trains but

"it may reasonably be supposed that
 "premonitory symptoms passed unnoticed
 "in such large crowds."

"No cases were detected either in trains
 "or at Stations until the Festival was
 "over and the rush to leave the place
 "commenced."

"The Station Staff, largely aided
 "by auxiliaries, and under personal
 "Superintendence of the District Officer,
 "assisted by a Contingent of the Reserve
 "Police, moved day and night amongst
 "the returning passengers, and several
 "suspicious cases were removed from
 "the premises to the local hospital"

"I may say that our duties in
 "regard to passengers suffering from contagious
 "or infectious disease are very simple. If any
 "case is discovered in the train the carriage
 "in which the person is travelling is cleared
 "of other passengers and the patient is taken
 "out at the nearest station where medical aid
 "can be rendered. The vehicle is then detached
 "and disinfected."

"I admit there is at times some
 "difficulty in detecting these cases, especially
 "if the sick person is accompanied by his
 "family or friends who may be averse to the
 "interference of the authorities, being wishful
 "to take if possible, the patient to his house."

"As a rule passengers alighting at their
 "destination pass away immediately from the
 "Company's premises and we have nothing
 "more to do with them. They then become
 "subject to the care of the town or district
 "authorities."

"I understand, however, that at the festival we are referring to, the people had no regular camping grounds, and squatted, without sanitary provisions, in the open grounds about the town."

"That amongst a concourse of over 100,000 people with such conditions prevailing, it is not to be wondered at, that sickness broke out."

"If the Acting Sanitary Commissioner would direct attention to the necessities of the people during their stay at the festival, much good would result. That is the time and place for adopting preventive measures."

"With regards to returning passengers no doubt many of them have to wait some hours before they can be entrained. On three closing days of the festival we despatched no fewer than 25,000 people which fact will convey some idea of the stress of work put upon the traffic staff."

"If the people themselves, when sickness has declared itself amongst them, would call attention to their cases the evil might be better combated, but there is, as before stated, the desire to hide the fact in order to avoid detention and to get home."

"I come now to the suggestions put forward by the Acting Sanitary Commissioner, who in para 4 of his report, recommends the attachment of a latrine carriage to each train carrying over 100 pilgrims."

"I do not see the necessity for this."

"These passengers do not travel great distances on our line. I would venture the remark that the average time they are in the

"the train is not more than 6 hours."

"An healthy person would be able to contain himself during this time and anyone having sudden motions could use the latrines at Station passed enroute."

"The instances of Cholera affected persons in trains are, fortunately, few in our experience and the provisions now in force for dealing with them have so far proved satisfactory."

"What would be the result if a latrine carriage were provided?"

"I will preface my answer to this question by stating that people generally attend these feasts in village or family groups 50 or more together and the most intelligent person of the party transacts business, buys tickets, &c. - If, therefore, one of the party required to go to the latrine carriage, which would be I presume, in the rear of the train, he would, in all probability, have his friends accompanying him thither, fearing to lose one another. In such an event the confusion and the risk of accident would be great when handling a full train of many hundred persons."

"The Station latrines are always available, and Sanitary precautions adopted, particularly at times of festival traffic, as pointed out by the Superintending Physician, with whose remarks on this part of the subject I thoroughly agree."

"With regard to para 5 of the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's report as to a carriage reserved and fitted solely for ambulance purpose being attached to each train carrying over 200 pilgrims, I also think this unnecessary. If we had this carriage and a latrine carriage with

with an Apothecary travelling in the former as suggested.
 in para 6 of the Acting Sanitary Commissioner's report
 on each train carrying over 200 passengers (only
 required at festival times) we should have to increase
 our rolling stock and medical staff. It seems
 to me the difficulty might be met in a simpler
 and less expensive manner by halting special
 trains carrying pilgrims at certain intervals or
 at principal stations, for 30 minutes during which
 time the Company's Apothecaries could carry out a
 cursory examination of the passengers and the
 passengers themselves be able to visit the latrine,
 or what would be better, some grounds near by,
 with trenches ready made, set apart for their use.

"It might also be considered advisable
 to have some bottles of Cholera Mixture available
 in the Chief Guard's van, which the guard could
 give out in prescribed doses when necessary,
 in the initial stage of a Choleraic attack, this
 might have some beneficial effect."

"In Conclusion, I beg to assure you that
 the subject is one which will continue to receive
 my careful attention."

With reference to the foregoing I am
 of opinion that the procedure adopted by the
 Railway Company is in the right direction,
 and on the most practical lines possible, under
 the circumstances only a general supervision
 of such crowds as frequent the Railway
 premises and trains at Festival times can be
 attained, and to attempt anything more
 would involve not only so serious an
 interference with the travelling public as to
 result in their avoiding the Railway, but
 would entail a very considerable increase in the
 Company's working expenses in the matter of
 rolling

Rolling Stock and Staff, without adequate result.
I believe that a Latrine Carriage attached to a train would in many ways be more harmful than its absence, and an ambulance Carriage would certainly scare many pilgrims into the most desperate straits before they would submit to being incarcerated in such a vehicle.

I think that during Festivals more might be done, and with greater advantage on the lines on which the Railway Administration, now works, if the Company's Superintending Physician, and the Government Medical Officers in charge of the respective Districts traversed by the line of railway, put themselves before hand in communication and conjointly agreed on the measures that could best be taken with the staff and materials at their command to combat the epidemics and the insalubrious influences at work, or expected.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Yours most obedient servant

J. H. L. Mesurier
for Agt. Agent

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N^o 590 A. dated 20.9.95

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,

RAILWAY BRANCH.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following

Read Report from the Sanitary Commissioner of Madras, --

No. 890 dated 3rd May 1895.

Letter from the Agent and Manager, Madras Railway, No-

1628 dated 11th July 1895, with enclosure

Letter from the Agent, South Indian Railway, No. 797 dated

30th August 1895.

Order thereon, No. 590 A. dated 20.9.95

The Sanitary Commissioner -
in the report above quoted enters a --
strong protest on the pilgrim traffic
of the South Indian Railway as regards
Overcrowding

Failure to detect and treat pilgrims -
suffering from Cholera.

and suggests need of Latrine carriages
and Ambulance carriages.

2. Regarding the first complaint it ap-
pears to His Excellency the Governor -
in Council that the reports reveal the
great insufficiency of the rolling --
stock and ^{he} desires the attention of the
Railway Administration be drawn to this

It

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A 797 30.8.95

It also appears desirable that pending the construction of more carriages, arrangements should be made to obtain by ^{hire} ~~line~~ or otherwise third class carriages from the Southern Mahratta Railway -- during times of much traffic.

3. Certain proposals are before the Government of India to allow the use of Covered Wooden Wazons in emergencies -- but this should not delay the provision of third class carriages above alluded to.

4. ~~The accusation of failure to detect and separate pilgrims suffering from cholera~~ does not appear to be borne out by the reports, but it seems desirable to make a trial of attaching -- one ambulance carriage or to reserve 2 compartments (one for each sex) on a pilgrim train and to provide the guard with ~~prescribed remedies~~ *the necessary remedies* --

5. This system would supersede the -- present one of removing all the passengers from a carriage in which there is a detected patient and which system is tantamount to ^{converting} ~~turning~~ that carriage into an ambulance carriage besides causing great inconvenience ^{and} ~~or~~ discomfort to the healthy passengers.

6. As regards the supply of latrine carriages the evidence goes to show that it is practically impossible, and that the best way to deal with the -- wants of passengers in pilgrim trains -- is to stop the train between stations at convenient places where trenches -- should

That failure to detect and separate pilgrims suffering from cholera, has occurred

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should be dug and screens erected and sweepers provided.

7. In view of the profit directly derived by the Railway ^{from} ~~by~~ this traffic -- it appears to His Excellency the Governor in Council that except in cases -- of wealthy Municipalities, it should devolve on the Railway Company to provide both the latrine accommodation -- ^{referred to} ~~above~~ ^{noted} as well as temporary -- cholera camps for the treatment of -- patients on removal from the train at places where no regular hospitals -- exist.

W. S. 19/5/95

M. R.
13
19/5/95

The Hon. Mr. C. J. J. J.
for the purpose of the
Sanitary Commission

same
from 19/5

To the Congress for the
Sanitary Commission
Local & General Report

A/-

N^o 590. P. dated 20.9.95