

Public Works (1897) Department.

RAILWAY BRANCH.

G.O., No. 1151. R

DATED 17th Decr 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Disposal of a corpse at the Drampad
Station Madras Ry.

Pres. Revenue Dept. passing orders on
Board's proceedings ^{regarding the} —, Commu-
nicated to the Ry. Adms. Concerned.

BACK PAPERS.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
	367	By	4-3-98				
	875	By	28-6-98				

Copy of letter no. 54 dated 18th January
1897 from the District Magistrate,
Buddapah to the Assistant Traffic
Manager Goahy.

With reference to your telegram about the body of a railway porter of Urapadee Station which was removed from the Railway premises and thrown on the road side, I have the honor to state that the conduct of the Station Master in this matter appears to me to be so bad as to call for severe punishment and to request that you will take adequate notice of it.

2. As the District Medical Sanitary officer states (1) "It was the duty of the Station Master to see that no corpses are removed from any Madras Railway buildings and thrown into any through fare; and it was his duty to see that in case of death his subordinates are 'decently buried'"

3- It is intolerable that a Railway Station Master should throw the dead body of one of his subordinates on the road side and then after 3 days wire in all directions to various authorities stating that the body was lying unburied.

N^o 20253.
28779

Madras Railway Company.
Traffic Manager's Office
Central Station, Madras, 19th January 1897.

The Off: Agent and Manager,
Rayapuram.

Dear Sir,

(Death of Porter Chengalraju at Tirumpadu.)

I beg to report for your information that Porter Chengalraju was attacked with cholera at Tirumpadu station on the 13th instant and died the same day. The station premises were disinfected on arrival of the apothecary.

The body of the deceased was only buried on the evening of the 16th idem as the station master was unable to get the village authorities to bury it although the Village Munsiff and Tahsildar were addressed on the matter.

During the interval the body was lying outside the Company's premises. The matter has been reported to the Collector by the Divisional Officer and you may perhaps think it desirable to bring the matter to notice of Government.

Name - Chengalraju
caste - Rajio
age - 36 years
sex - male

Occupation - Porter, M. R. Coy.

Yours faithfully,

W. Geo. Wallington

for Off: Traffic Manager.

(True Copy)

W. H. West

Off: Agent & Manager.

*Agent and Manager Madras Railway**to* the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras,

No. 9812/80, dated 20 January 1897.

I have the honour to forward herewith, for your information and such action as you may consider necessary, copy of a report received from the Ag. Inappi Manager of the death from Cholera of a porter named Chengalapur at Urapadu.

2. The conduct of the village authorities in permitting the corpse to lie just outside the station premises for three days without taking steps to have it buried, demands serious notice.

N^o 447 of 23.1.97

A.M's N^o $\frac{9872}{80}$ of 20 Jan'y 97

with enclosure -

Transferred to
the Revenue Department
for favour of necessary
action..

W. 22/1/97

W. R

25/1/97

INDEXED
23/5/97

Copy of letter No: 62, dated 29th January 1899
from the District Magistrate of Cuddalore
to the Assistant Traffic Manager, Madras
Railway Company, Gooty.

With reference to your letter No: S. 150
dated 23rd January 1899, I have the honour
to state that to my mind it is obvious that
the first person to be brought to book over this
scandalous affair is the Railway Station
Master. Even accepting his own statement
that deceased Railway Company's servant
died in the Railway Company's premises
under his charge and instead of seeing
to the burial he had the body placed by two
women close outside the Railway premises
where it was consumed by birds and beasts
after being a danger and a nuisance to those
in the locality.

2. I request you will inform me how you dis-
pose of this matter.

Copy of letter N° 150 dated 3rd Feby/897 from
the Assistant Traffic Manager Gooty to the
Collector of Cuddapah.

I have the honour to acknowledge
the receipt of your letter N° 62 dated 29th ultimo.

2. I admit that the case is a very bad
one but it is difficult to see how the sta-
tion Master could well prevent it.

3. The Porter died on the 13th ultimo and
the Village Munsiff was advised by the Sta-
tion Master at once to have the corpse bur-
ied.

4. I also wired the Tahildar through
Station Master Razampetta on the 14th morning
and the Station Master Urapadu sent a
similar message to him on the 13th idem.

5. It is presumed the Munsiff and Tahil-
dar have a competent staff to deal with the
sanitation of the district of which the Rail-
way comprises a part whereas the station
Master could not be expected to personally
bury the corpse and has no authority over
the village staff. The station scavenger at-
tended and it is apparent he became affect-
ed by the general scare which appears to have
been the cause of this case.

6. I have no wish to screen the station
Master if he is shown to be wrong but taking
into consideration the caste prejudices &
the fact that there was no delay in reporting
the matter to Munsiff and Tahildar it would
appear

appear that they are chiefly at fault.

7. If you can find out any other action it was possible for the station master to take. I shall be prepared to deal with him in a suitable manner.

Copy of letter No 62, dated 10th February 1894 from the District Magistrate Buddagah, to the Assistant Traffic Manager, Madras Railway Co. Ltd.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter marked S. 150, dated 3rd instant, and to state that I find no reason to modify my opinion of what I consider the gross misconduct of the Tramp Station Master.

2. There are duties imposed on both the Tahsildar and the Reddi whether they have properly discharged their duties I shall be quite ready to consider and though they have caste as well as the station and may not like the business of interring a corpse I shall not allow any plea of caste to be advanced in excuse for neglecting duty. But I am not prepared to consider their conduct until the matter of the Station Master be disposed of. It is he and not they who is the primarily guilty person.

3. You ask me to state what the Station Master should have done. It is easily said he should have had a grave dug as speedily as possible by Railway coolies or other menials or other coolies (having obtained any help in the way of sanction that was necessary from yourself or the Permanent Way Inspector) and had the body buried. When the female relatives arrived

arrived and professed helplessness he should certainly not have left the body of the Railway Company's servant who died on the Railway Company's premises in his charge to be unburied on the ground a short distance off to be devoured by birds and beasts and to spread disease.

4. There is no doubt that it was the legal duty of the Railway Company to have seen to the burial of their servant dying on their premises under the circumstances existing in this case. Instead of which a public nuisance and a public scandal has been caused as well as considerable inconvenience to public officers of the rank of Tahsildar and Assistant Surgeon. For this the Company's servant the Station Master is responsible and I consider he should be very severely punished. No leniency whatever is in my opinion due to him on the score of caste as you seem to imply.

Agent and Manager Madras

to the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras,

No. $\frac{9812}{223}$, dated 10th March 1897.

In continuation of my letter No. $\frac{9812}{80}$ of the 20th January last regarding the death from cholera ~~at~~ at Elampadu of Pater Chengalrajan, I have the honour to enclose copies of correspondence which has passed between the District Traffic Officer and the Collector of Cuddalore on the subject of the responsibility for the neglect or inability to bury the corpse in proper time.

2. The As Traffic Manager in forwarding these papers to me writes as follows:-

"The Pater was living in the village level
"was lying when attacked under a tree, in
"the station compound and there he died. Dr
"Apothecary was wired for but the man died
"before he could arrive, and he had still
"living Cholera patients on other parts of his
"district he returned to them without delay.

"Immediately on the man's death the
"Station Master wrote to the village Reddy
"arrange for burial and states that he had
"received a verbal reply to the effect, that
"it should be done, but not finding any
"steps taken he wired to the Tahsildar to
"same evening. The following morning the
"female relatives of the deceased arrived

"and removed the Corpse from the Compound back
"being unable to obtain assistance towards its
"burial, left it lying. About the same time
"the Station Master sent to the Village Munsiff
"from whom he received a written reply that
"the body should be interred about 2 P.M.
"This not being done the Station Master addressed
"the Tahsildar and the District Surgeon and
"the body was eventually buried on the
"16th after having been mutilated by birds
"and animals.

"I cannot say whether the Village au-
"thorities were helpless or indifferent in the
"matter. It appears to be a fact that a
"scare had been established, that the Tali-
"garies and Village servants had deserted and
"that several other corpses had been left lying
"about equally promiscuously.

"The Collector now expresses the opinion that
"the Station Master ^{was} guilty of grave misconduct
"and asks that he be severely punished and
"that it was the legal duty of the Railway
"Company to have seen to the burial, and
"it appears advisable that our legal position
"should be ascertained or that the views of
"Government should be obtained as to whether
"the duty of disposing of the dead in such
"circumstances rests with the Local Govern-
"ment Officials or with the Railway Com-
"pany. The man had died suddenly and
"it might have been of poison and the Station
"Master would have accepted a grave risk
"if he had, supposing it had been in his
"power, buried the body without the
"concurrence

"concurrence of the Civil Authorities. He
"appears to have done all he could to move the
"authorities to take prompt action. The Station
"Inspector had deserted and the Station Master
"could only have carried out the course
"indicated in the District Magistrate's letter
"of the 10th ultimo by burying the body on
"his own hands. With the caste sentiments so
"imbedded in the Natives I doubt both whether
"any order to that effect would have been
"effective and whether such a course would
"have commended itself to Government.

The Medical Officer writes as follows:-

"While I think the burial of the body was
"a public duty, I think the Station Master
"might have resorted to the Apothecary from
"Rangnata to bring Scavengers to dispose of
"the body when he saw that great delay
"taking the necessary steps."

"With this view I concur, but this was
"an error of Judgment and not the serious
"crime imputed by the Collector and it
"must be remembered that the Station
"Master was in hopes from hour to hour
"that the local village authorities would
"carry out the promise they had made."

I shall be glad to receive the views of
"the Government on the question raised in this
"correspondence in order that the Staff may be
"duly advised what action should be taken
"in future under similar circumstances.

No 1487c of 15.3.97

A.M's No. $\frac{9812}{223}$ of 10.3.97
with enclosures.

GR. CN. 112/97

Transferred to
the Revenue Department
for favour of necessary
orders on the last page
of the Agent's letter, in
continuation of R.O.D

Endorsement No. 447C

of 23rd January 1897. -

15/3/97

11/2/97

MSR

11/3/97

INDEXED.
23/3/97

Public works (1897) department
Ry. Current No: 205
Government (1897) of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd 14. 12. 97.

Recd. 13. 12. }
Regd. 13. 12. } 1897.

Enclosures

Spare copies

G.O., No. 1002, 30th November 1897.

NOVEMBER

Disposal of a corpse at the Urampadu Railway Station.

Passing orders on Board's Proceedings submitting to Government report on the — in the
Cuddapah district.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—again G.O., Mis. No. 566, Revenue, dated 29th January 1897.

ABSTRACT.—Referring to the Board of Revenue for report letter from the Agent and Manager, Madras Railway Company, reporting the conduct of certain village officers at Urampádu in permitting a cholera corpse to lie just outside the station premises for three days.

READ—again G.O., R. No. 553, Revenue, dated 18th March 1897.

ABSTRACT.—Referring to the Board of Revenue correspondence from the Agent and Manager, Madras Railway, asking for the views of Government as to whether the duty of removing a corpse from the railway premises under circumstances stated rests with the Government officials or with the Railway Company.

READ—again G.O., R. No. 973, Revenue, dated 19th May 1897.

ABSTRACT.—Recording, with remark, Board's Proceedings communicating to the Collector of Cuddapah, with remarks, memorandum from Government calling for early submission of report on conduct of certain village officers in permitting a cholera corpse to lie just outside a railway station for three days.

READ—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue), Mis. No. 3338, dated 7th September 1897:—

Read—the following letter from A. C. TATE, Esq., Collector of Cuddapah, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 25th August 1897, No. 107-Tour:—

I have the honour to return the enclosures of Board's Proceedings, Mis. No. 487, Land Revenue, dated 8th February 1897, and to report about the disposal of the dead body of the Madras Railway Company's porter Chengalrayadu, who died on the Railway Company's premises at Urampádu station on 13th January 1897.

2. The first intimation I received of the matter was the following wire on 15th January 1897 from the Assistant Traffic Manager, Gooty:—"Porter died from cholera at Urampádu. Authorities advised to remove corpse. No action taken three days. Arrange." I instantly wired as follows to the Tahsildar of Rámpéta:—"Attend instantly to matter of railway porter's corpse, left unburied at Urampádu."

3. The Tahsildar's action thereon is indicated in his report, Ref. on Cur. No. 6374 of 1896, dated 16th January 1897, written from Lebaka, where he was in camp when he got my wire; before he reached Urampádu the body had been buried by Dr. Thummon Singh, Assistant Surgeon, who had proceeded from Cuddapah for the purpose.

4. I wrote my letter of 18th January, Dis. No. 54-Magl. (one of the returned enclosures), to the Assistant Traffic Manager at the instance of the District Medical and Sanitary officer and I note that the Traffic Manager's letter in which he suggested that the matter should be brought to the notice of Government is dated 19th January. The stationmaster of Cuddapah had written me on 16th January as follows:—"I have been directed by the Divisional officer to inform you that the body of the porter who died of cholera at Urampádu had since been removed" and I infer that the renewal of the correspondence by the Madras Railway authorities is traceable to my having pointed out the fact that it was their own servant, the stationmaster, who was to blame in the matter.

5. Until I received Board's Proceedings, Mis. No. 1138, dated 25th March 1897, I was expecting a further reply from the Railway Company whose Assistant Traffic Manager informed me in his letter of 4th April 1897, No. S. 150, that he was awaiting final instructions from the Agent and Manager, but on receipt of that order of

the Board I called for a full and detailed report on the Board's order from the Tahsildar of Pullampet in my Ref. on Cur. No. 62-Magl., dated 1st April 1897, and the Tahsildar replied in his Ref. on Cur. No. 6374 of 1896, dated 17th April 1897, from which the Board will observe that cholera had established a regular "reign of terror" in Pullampet taluk at the period alluded to. There were two hospital assistants on cholera duty in the taluk at the time, and the Railway Company has also its own hospital assistant. As regards the disposal of the dead body of the railway porter Chengalrayadu, who died on the Railway Company's premises, I consider that it was the duty of the Railway Company to have seen to its disposal, however unpleasant and troublesome the duty might have been. I agree with the Pullampet Tahsildar's remarks contained in his arzi of 17th April, and do not see any necessity to deal severely with the reddy in this matter. He was no doubt terribly frightened like every one else, and the duty of disposing of the corpse of their servant lay on the Railway Company. The village magistrate has active enemies who have been trying to bring him to grief, and in this present matter I think the railway stationmaster should be dealt with before the propriety of punishing him is considered.

6. I must apologise for the delay in sending this report, and can only plead in excuse heavy work and worry in connection with famine operations. I have five or six other old references pending and shall try and dispose of them without further delay.

Resolution—Mis. No. 3338, dated 7th September 1897.

The report read above will be submitted to Government with reference to its orders, Mis. No. 566, dated 29th January 1897, and No. 553-R., dated 18th March 1897.

2. One Chengalrayadu, a porter in the service of the Madras Railway Company, died of cholera in the premises of the Urampádu railway station on the 13th January last. The remains were not buried until the evening of the 16th idem, in spite of repeated applications made to the village officers for assistance. During the interval the body was lying outside the Company's premises quite uncared for, being mutilated by birds and beasts. The stationmaster having reported the matter to the District Medical officer, the Assistant Surgeon arrived on the 16th, and had the body buried with the help of the reddy of the village. The Collector received the first intimation of the matter on the 15th January, and at once wired instructions direct to the Tahsildar, but that officer being then in camp, was able to reach Urampádu only on the morning of the 17th by which time matters had been set right.

3. The first question for consideration in this case is, who was responsible for the inordinate delay in the disposal of the dead body. A question of somewhat greater importance is raised by the Agent and Manager, Madras Railway, viz., what action should be taken in future under similar circumstances, and by whom. As regards the first question, the Board agrees with the opinion of the District Medical and Sanitary officer which is concurred in by the Traffic Manager (*vide* conclusion of Agent's letter, dated 10th March 1897, to the address of the Consulting Engineer for Railways). The burial of the body was a public duty which devolved upon the village officers, but when it was found that the Government and Railway servants in the village were all thoroughly demoralized by fear and had disappeared from the village, the stationmaster should have wired to the nearest railway station for scavengers to dispose of the body. It may, however, be noted that the Assistant Surgeon was eventually able to obtain the reddy's assistance for the burial of the corpse.

4. As regards the conduct of the village magistrate, if it is a fact, as stated by the stationmaster (*vide* opening paragraph of the Agent's letter already quoted), that the village reddy intimated to the stationmaster first by word of mouth on the 13th, and then by letter on the 14th January, that he would take steps to have the body buried, the Board considers that suitable notice should be taken of the reddy's failure to make good his promise. In any case the village magistrate neglected his duty, and the Collector is not justified in deferring orders on the said neglect, pending the issue of orders by the railway authorities on the case of the stationmaster.

5. It remains to consider what definite instructions should be issued by the railway authorities to their subordinates for their guidance in future. It goes without

saying that the railway subordinates should take prompt steps for the removal of dead bodies from the station premises. They should at once communicate the news of the death to the village magistrate, whose duty it then is to enquire the cause of death and to have the body buried or burnt, if there are no suspicious circumstances connected with the death. If the village magistrate fails to appear within a reasonable time (say twelve hours), the stationmaster or other railway officer in charge should take steps for the disposal of the corpse, the fact of such disposal being at once reported to the village magistrate. The nearest police officer should also be communicated with immediately after the death occurs and in any case before the body is buried or burnt, so that action may be stayed in the event of an inquest being considered desirable.

6. The delay of over five months that has occurred in the submission of the report is ascribed by the Collector to pressure of famine work. The report was only received after the issue of many reminders and of two telegrams. Mr. Tate reports that he has several other papers of a similar nature pending with him. The Board trusts that he will be able to dispose of them at an early date. The delay in dealing with the present case renders it impossible to recommend the adoption of severe measures towards either the village magistrate or the stationmaster.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. C. C. CARR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with Collector's letter and enclosures.
" Collector of Cuddapah.

ORDER—No. 1002, Revenue, dated 30th November 1897.

Miscellaneous.

The Government concurs in the Board's remarks in paragraphs 3 and 4 of its Proceedings last read above.

2. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Proceedings it is observed that although Mr. Tate had full materials before him on the 18th April, he did not submit his report till the 25th August following. He has been frequently to blame for similar delays and his explanation that he had heavy work and worry in connection with famine is not satisfactory.

3. As regards the instructions to be issued for guidance in future under similar circumstances, His Excellency the Governor in Council is of opinion that generally, when a death occurs at a railway station and the body is unclaimed, the stationmaster who has the chief supervision of the premises and the village munsif whose duty it is to attend to the sanitation of the village are both concerned. The first thing is to remove the corpse from the premises of the railway and the stationmaster must see that this is done and done decently. The next thing is to have the corpse buried. This is not the duty, legal or otherwise, of the stationmaster, though, as in the present case, circumstances may make it advisable that he should take action to that end himself. It is, however, incumbent upon him to inform the village magistrate that there is a corpse and also where it is, as also any other circumstances touching the death which it may be necessary to notice. The further responsibility as to the burial then rests with the village magistrate. When the death occurs from cholera in the middle of a cholera scare, the duties indicated above become more onerous and of more importance than in ordinary circumstances but are in no way altered in character.

(True Extract.)

[Signature]
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue).
" the Public Works Department.
Copy to the Public Department.

Ed. A. F. Eccleston,
50 Copies.

No. 1151. Dated 17/12/97

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

RAILWAY BRANCH.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following

Order No 1002 Revenue, dated 30th November 1897.

*Communicated to
Railway administration
for information & guidance.*
[Signature] 14/12

Ag. Secy to Govt. [Signature]
S. L. [Signature]
Ag. Secy to Govt. [Signature]
Ag. Secy to Govt. [Signature]

Despatched on 18/12/97

[Signature]