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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 1733
B.P. No.

Press
Mis.

Dated 17-8-1875 196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Cumbum—Headquarters.

Read the following papers:—

No. 119. From H. R. FARMER, Esq., Acting Head Assistant Collector of Kurnool, to J. STURROCK, Esq., Under Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Cumbum, 12th April 1875, No. 113.

I have the honor to request that some of the medicines more urgently required in cases of fever and dysentery may be forwarded to me as soon as practicable by the bearer of this letter, a Daloyet of the Head Assistant Collector's Office, Cumbum.

2. I enclose an abstract of births and deaths in Cumbum for the quarter ending the 31st March last. The population of Cumbum in 1871 was 7,295. Since then 1,122 deaths and 798 births have been registered. Deducting the former and adding the latter, we get the present population as 6,971; and this without deducting a large number of people who have left the place to preserve their health and lives. Amongst this population of 6,971 souls, 173 deaths and fifty-eight births have been registered in the last three months. Thus deaths have reached the almost unprecedented rate of 100* per mille per annum.

* 99·6 without making allowance for decrease of population on account of persons leaving Cumbum.

3. I have the honor at the same time to enclose a copy of letter, No. 3, of today's date, from the Passed Hospital Apprentice in charge of the Civil Dispensary, in which he suggests that the Hospital be closed until the receipt of medicines from Madras.

4. I have also the honor to enclose a translation of an arzi just received from the Tahsildar, detailing the present condition of Cumbum, which the Government will probably consider deplorable. The result of the Tahsildar's application to the Collector is also given.

5. The relative positions of Cumbum, Madras, and Kurnool, and the previous correspondence with regard to the public health at Cumbum and supply of medicines (of which correspondence I beg to enclose a synopsis) will, I hope, be considered by Government to justify me in addressing you direct and sending a special messenger to prevent delay.

6. One of my own servants died last night from fever, enlarged spleen, and dysentery. He was in the prime of life. Some chlorodyne was given him when it was too late. This is the fifth death amongst my servants since I came here. Two more are leaving for Madras. One of the remaining ones seems to be in a very precarious state today. I learn that the confidence of the people in European medicines and treatment is altogether shaken, since the medicines really required are not in store, and other medicines which prove ineffectual are dispensed. The matter has, I am thankful to say, now attracted the attention of the Medical

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Department; but, in the mean time, it seems to be right that I should take the most effectual steps in my power to prevent further loss of life from remediable causes.

P.S.—Since writing the above the father of the man who died the night before last has succumbed, father and son within twenty-four hours, making the sixth death amongst my own servants. I have been round the town this morning; but a description of what I saw and heard would give this letter a sensational appearance, and this I think it better to avoid.

The state of the patients at the Hospital is very bad, for the Hospital Apprentice, the cook, and the scavenger are down with fever, and the only other hospital servant is a ward cooly. Two Range Officers have had to leave during the last quarter on medical certificate; the Assistant Superintendent of Police is not in the Division, and the Forest Officer is unable to leave his bed.

5 P.M.—This man had died a few hours before I wrote this postscript.
13th April 1875.

H. R. F.

Referred to the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department (to be returned), with a request that the requisite supply of medicines may be at once prepared for transmission to Cumbum by the special messenger who has been sent with the letter. The Surgeon-General is requested to consider whether any other immediate measures of relief can be adopted.

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Chief Secretary.

19th April 1875.

No. 120. From H. R. FARMER, Esq., Acting Head Assistant Collector of Kurnool, to J. STURROCK, Esq., Under Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Cumbum, 14th April 1875, No. 117.

In continuation of my letter, No. 113, dated the 12th instant, despatched yesterday by special messenger, and making an emergent application for a supply of the medicines more urgently required in fever and dysentery cases, I have the honor to inform you that thirty-three deaths had been up to yesterday evening registered during the month in Cumbum. Thirty-three deaths within thirteen days amongst a population of 6,971 people gives a death ratio of 133 per mille per annum. My letter, No. 113, shows that, during the last quarter, the deaths were at the rate of 100 per mille per annum. This extraordinary fatality, with no suitable medicines, will, I hope, be considered with reference to my former letter to justify me in thus addressing you direct, to save time.

P.S.—A list of the only medicines now available at the Civil Dispensary, Cumbum, is herewith forwarded. This should have been enclosed with my letter, No. 113.

Referred to the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, in continuation of previous correspondence forwarded this day.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
19th April 1875.

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Chief Secretary.

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No. 121. From Surgeon-General E. G. BALFOUR, Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, to the Honorable D. F. CARMICHAEL, Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Fort St. George, 15th July 1875, No. 389.

In my letter of the 5th May, I had the honor to report to the Honorable the Governor in Council all the steps that I had taken, to furnish medical aid to the people of Cumbum who were suffering from an epidemic of fever of a severe type, and the Order issued thereon, on the 18th May, required me to keep Government informed of Surgeon Ross' further proceedings.

2. I beg, therefore, to mention further that, on the 6th May, Surgeon Ross sent a preliminary report on the insanitary condition of that town. It mentioned some points which seemed to me of sufficient importance to be placed before the Municipality, and I subjoin copy of my letter, No. 4091, in which I requested this to be done. On the 14th May, Surgeon Ross again reported to me, this time, on the character of the prevailing fever, and he wrote to me because on the 5th May I had invited his attention to the possibility that it might be enteric fever, but his reply left no doubt that the remittent fevers which had at first been prevailing had turned to the intermittent form and were becoming more tractable.

3. At the date of that report, Surgeon Ross was ailing, but about the 20th May, when the disease began to abate in the town, he became very ill with dysentery, and at the last days of the month, his life was in great peril; he rallied however, and, having sent off the extra Hospital Assistant as no longer required, he was himself sent off to Madras on the 8th June, arriving here on the 12th idem, with symptoms indicating the extreme severity of the illness from which he was as yet scarcely convalescing. On the 1st instant, he furnished his final report which I now enclose.

4. It will be seen that during his stay 1,593 cases of fever were treated, of whom thirty-seven or 1 in 43 died, and 134 cases of dysentery treated, of whom ten or 1 in 13.4 died. He had to adopt the system of house-to-house visitation, owing to the dislike entertained by the people to the unhealthy hospital-site. He writes urgently as to the insanitary condition of the town. It was particularly in April 1875 that the death-rate was high, but on the 8th June, the day of his leaving the town, there were only twenty cases of fever and one of dysentery under treatment.

5. As orders have already been issued to abandon the station in G.O.,* No. 499, dated 31st March 1875, I need not refer to the subject generally, further than to remark that the Municipality do not appear to have made sufficient efforts to remove existing insanitary conditions, and this point might be more cared for by the village authorities.

6. I beg to place on the margin the names of the extra Commissioned and Hospital Assistant Officers whom I ordered to Cumbum on learning the outbreak of fever. Of second-class Hospital Assistant Narrainsawmy, whom I ordered from Cuddapah, Surgeon

Surgeon R. E. Ross from Madras.
Second-class Hospital Assistant T. Narrainsawmy, No. 733, from Cuddapah.
Third-class Hospital Assistant B. Francis, No. 849, from Kurnool.

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Ross reports that he performed his duty in a satisfactory manner, and I will add that I have been much pleased with the manner in which Surgeon R. E. Ross attended to the sick until he himself fell dangerously ill, and had to be sent off from the place.

From Surgeon W. S. FOX, Acting Secretary to the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, to the Deputy Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, Mysore and Ceded Districts, dated 14th May 1875, No. 4091.

REFERENCE.—Surgeon R. E. Ross' Sanitary Memorandum, No. 1, dated 6th May 1875, your No. 188, of the 12th May 1875.

SUBJECT.—The points noted in the memorandum are with three exceptions entirely within the power of the Municipality to attend to.

Boundary pillars of earth, limewashed, should be erected, beyond which all persons should resort for purposes of nature. The cost would be nil, and all possible pollution of the water by excreta prevented. It is within their power to prohibit the use of the water from certain localities; also to prohibit the deposit of manure on the banks, and the removal of the latrines and burial and burning places are also simple matters. It is also within the Collector's power to attend to Goondlakamma and to compel deeper interments.

2. It will also be found easy to drain the village itself, and to prevent water stagnating in it, but the larger suggestion of draining the paddy-fields which surround the village is of course impracticable.

3. The supply-channel would seem to need attention. Paragraph 7 mentions that decayed vegetable matter half fills the stream all through its course.

4. The Municipality may have any number of medical men and sanitary officers for whom they are willing to pay. At present there is one Commissioned Medical Officer and four of the subordinate medical grade, certainly a very ample number of medical men. It is competent for the Municipality to entertain a Compounder. A latrine is stated to be only five yards from the edge of the supply-channel. This is over-near, and its removal should at once be attended to. The other latrine, about sixty yards from the supply-channel, seems to be sufficiently remote.

5. The removal of the hospital, the removal of the village, and the compulsory migration of the people, are points which need not engage attention at present, seeing that a change of the station has been ordered.

From Surgeon R. E. ROSS, Indian Medical Department, Madras, to Surgeon W. S. FOX, Acting Secretary to the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, Fort St. George, dated 1st July 1875, No. 28.

I have the honor to state, for the information of the Surgeon-General, that, in accordance with demi-official, No. —, dated 20th April 1875, directing me to proceed to Cumbum on special duty in connection with an outbreak of fever in that locality, I left this station on the 22nd and arrived at my destination on the 26th April. On my arrival I found that the principal diseases prevalent were intermittent and remittent fevers complicated in many cases with jaundice, hypertrophy of the spleen, and diarrhoea. Dysentery also prevailed but only to a slight extent. The number of cases, however, increased after my arrival.

2. As the daily attendance at the Dispensary appeared small, I considered it necessary to visit the village and see the patients at their own homes, who were too ill or unwilling to seek medical aid, persons having been previously sent by Mr. Farmer, Head Assistant Collector, to find out in what houses illness existed. A large number of cases were thus discovered, and I accordingly directed second-class Hospital Assistant Narrainsawmy, who had been sent specially from Cuddapah to attend the patients at their houses and supply them with necessary medicines—a duty which he performed in a most satisfactory manner.

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3. As a plentiful supply of quinine and other suitable drugs had arrived and more were forthcoming, we consequently were enabled to treat all cases of illness with more or less advantage to a large number of patients. The large quantities of quinine which had been so promptly supplied were very necessary, as it was of little use unless given in large doses, when its effects were most encouraging.

4. I found it impossible to induce any patient to remain in hospital, all appeared to be aware of its unhealthy site, and their invariable answer was, "If I stayed there I would die." Indeed, for some time after my arrival, unless they had some one to remain with them and attend to their wants, they would be badly cared for, as the Hospital Assistant in medical charge, the cook, and the sweeper were ill with fever.

5. Of the unhealthy and insanitary condition of Cumbum anyone who visits it cannot but speak in the most depreciatory terms, and feel that, so long as the place exists in its present state, sickness and a mortality far above most places in this country must exist also, and that it is one of the worst places in the Madras Presidency that could be chosen as a residence for Europeans, from whom as much work is expected as if they lived in a healthy locality.

6. The sanitary condition has been much neglected, but is now somewhat improved. On examining the watercourse which supplied the village, I found that it was being polluted from the following sources:—

(1.) Natives resorting to its banks for purposes of nature, above places used for drawing water for cooking or drinking, the excreta getting washed into the stream by the rains.

(2.) Decayed vegetable matter half choked the stream; a good deal of this is caused by ryots placing some herb in the water, which when thus rotted is thought to make good manure.

(3.) Drainage from houses, liquid manure from dung-heaps, washing of clothes or person all help to make the water unfit for human use. The air is contaminated by the following causes:—

(i.) The ventilation of native houses is exceedingly bad. I found it almost impossible to enter some of them, particularly those that contained a patient suffering from dysentery, as they are not particular as a rule about the removal of excreta.

(ii.) The malaria from paddy-fields surrounding the village and bordering the roads must be a fertile source of sickness. The noxious odours that arise especially in the evenings after the intensely hot days are most intolerable.

(iii.) The air is sometimes impregnated with bad odours arising from the place used for excavation which was placed about 150 yards from the village, and also from a graveyard less than quarter of a mile distant, where several bodies had been placed in graves about two feet deep and consequently were torn up by jackals and dogs, the ground being strewn with portions of half-decomposed corpses, and the stench in and about the place horrible. The excuses given by the people for shallow burying were that they were too weak to dig deeply, and also that in many cases there were no relations alive to bury a corpse. It being therefore interred through charity not much trouble was taken to dig a deep grave.

7. A great deal of this neglect on the part of the sanitary officials may be attributed to the fact that nearly all of them were more or less fever-stricken—Shortly after my arrival two clerks in the Taluk Cutcherry died, and the Police Inspector, who had gone away on sick leave, also died from fever, at a short distance from Cumbum. The Police Hospital was so full of patients that I had to apply to the Assistant Superintendent for an extra supply of cots, and take some men into the Civil Hospital, placing others in the verandahs. On receipt of your docket, No. 4594, dated 4th June, I directed the two Hospital Assistants, who had been sent specially from Cuddapah and Kurnool, to return to their respective stations, any further extra medical assistance not being necessary. As I had suffered from an attack of dysentery which left me unfit for duty, and feeling that so long as I remained in Cumbum there was little chance of regaining my usual health, I left on the 8th June, arriving at this station on the 12th. At the time of my departure there were only twenty-five cases of fever and one of dysentery under treatment. The fever had been steadily declining for some time and was of a more favorable character. Still the deaths were numerous, seven people having died from the 1st to the 8th of June.

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The death-rate in April was very high, amounting to 136 per mille per annum. In May there was a reduction of thirty-two, it being eighty-three per mille per annum.

8. There were treated during my term of duty 1,593 cases of fever and 134 of dysentery. From the former disease thirty-seven, and from the latter ten cases ended fatally; there were nineteen deaths from other causes, making a total of sixty-six in forty-three days. I may mention that the population of Cumbum has decreased 964 since the year 1871; a good deal of this has been caused by emigration, owing to a desire on the part of a large number of the inhabitants to leave the place when possible. Before my departure the following sanitary improvements had been effected:—

(1.) The watercourse was carefully watched, and all persons resorting to its banks for purposes of nature were heavily fined.

(2.) Dung-heaps and cesspools in and about the village were removed and their recurrence prevented.

(3.) Drainage from houses into the watercourse prevented as much as possible.

(4.) Washing of the person or clothes, above places resorted to for water for cooking or drinking purposes, was strictly forbidden.

9. No steps had been taken to remove decayed vegetable matter from the watercourse, nor was a latrine, which is too close to and must defile the stream, removed.

No. 122.

ORDER THEREON, 31st July 1875, No. 970.

The Governor in Council has not decided to abandon Cumbum as a Civil Station, nor is there any intimation to this effect in the Order in the Revenue Department, dated 31st March 1875, No. 499, directing the Surgeon-General to depute an officer "to examine the country and report on a favorable site."

2. Dr. Ross seems to have been sent to Cumbum to afford aid to the fever-stricken inhabitants, and he has reported the result of his proceedings. He does not, however, appear to have examined the country or selected any other site.

3. The Governor in Council highly appreciates the service rendered by Dr. Ross and the Hospital Assistant placed under his orders, and directs that the papers above recorded be communicated to the Revenue Department, to the Board of Revenue, to the Collector of Kurnool, and to the Sanitary Commissioner.

4. The Deputy Surgeon-General of the Division has been directed to examine the neighbourhood after the rains with the Civil Officers, and to report on the subject of a new site for the Head Assistant and Taluq Headquarters. Meanwhile the Board of Revenue will consider the possibility of a re-arrangement of districts or divisions so as to dispense with the presence of the Head Assistant in the Cumbum taluq.

5. The place seems almost hopelessly unhealthy, but the Acting Head Assistant ought to have taken means to prevent some of the most glaring nuisances, especially the shallow graves, and the pollution of the water supply. His special attention is now directed to the subject.

(True Extract.)

B. G. S. S. S.
Officiating Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue Department.
" Board of Revenue.
" Collector of Kurnool.
" Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department.
" Sanitary Commissioner.

Exd. J. Wright.

1875

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To THE REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

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G.O., 31st July 1875, No 970.

JULY.
 Nos. 119-122.

General.—Orders passed on certain reports
 respecting the extreme unhealthiness of this
 station, and the desirability of selecting a new
 site for the headquarters of the Head Assistant
 and Valuer.

1895. 17/7/33

10.1.25

17 August