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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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

893

Press
Mis.

Dated

8.6.1875

196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

8th June 1875.

No. 73. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 7th May 1875, No. 1,188:—

Read the following letter from Surgeon Major J. SEORRTT, M.D., Inspector of Vaccination, Madras Presidency, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Madras, 8th March 1875, No. 2,041:—

I HAVE the honor to submit to the Board a report on the lists of snakes received from the different Collectorates in this Presidency during the past year.

2. Whilst a few of the lists contained some valuable information and the correct designations of the poisonous and non-poisonous species, others had fanciful vernacular names of snakes said to be poisonous. From a few districts specimens were received which enabled me to distinguish the different species. I have redistributed all of these to the Medical College and the Government Central Museum.

3. I now subjoin a list of the poisonous snakes common in this Presidency with such of their vernacular names as could be ascertained, and it will be seen that many different designations are given to the same species. This, no doubt, has led to the belief among natives of the country that there is in Southern India a very large number of poisonous snakes. A careful inquiry reduces the poisonous

- * 1. Naga Tripudians or Cobra.
- 2. Bungarus Ceruleus.
- 3. Daboia Elegans.
- 4. Echis Carinata.

- † 1. Ophiophagus Elaps.
- 2. Bungarus fasciatus.
- 3. Trimerurus (several varieties).
- 4. Hypnale Nepa.

species to about eight. The four noted on the margin* are the most common in the different districts of this Presidency, and of these the first three are the most deadly and occasion the chief mortality. The other four poisonous snakes† rarely cause deaths. They are never met with in the vicinity of inhabited

villages, but restrict their movements to the jungles and hills of hilly districts. They are found chiefly in South Canara and in the Northern Provinces.

4. Sea-snakes are very poisonous, but along the Eastern Coast the *Enhydrina Bengalensis*, or Vala Kadyen, seems to occasion the chief mortality among fishermen and boatmen.

5. The list now sent is still, as regards vernacular names, incomplete, the absence of specimens making it impossible to identify the snakes alluded to in many of the received lists. Imperfect as it is, however, the present list may be relied on as correct.

6. I beg to enclose colored drawings of all the poisonous snakes I have as yet been able to distinguish. I think it would be well to have copies made, and largely distributed, of the four snakes common to all the districts; copies of the four rarer species might also be distributed in the particular provinces they inhabit. There would be no difficulty also in preserving specimens of the poisonous snakes in spirits and lodging them in some prominent places in the chief market towns. Duplicate copies of the accompanying drawings might perhaps be made in the School of Arts; but, if the Board find any difficulty in that, I have ascer-

tained that an artist will make as many copies as may be required at a charge of one Rupee per copy.

7. A general impression prevails that the natives know little of snakes or of their names. They do fail to distinguish the poisonous from the non-poisonous species, and the names in use may differ in each district. Many of the vernacular designations are however very appropriate to the species indicated, but unfortunately the mythology, superstition, and mystery of the Hindoo races have led to many imaginary names and attributes being given to snakes. I have met with natives who could give a correct and expressive name to each snake, though even with them their poisonous qualities were invariably exaggerated, and both natives and Europeans class many innocuous snakes as poisonous.

8. Surgeon-Major Nicholson, in a treatise on Ophiology, derides the idea of exterminating snakes, first, on the score of expense and, secondly, from his belief as to the impossibility, and he contrasts the mortality of snake-bite with that of dog-bite resulting in hydrophobia. The mortality from snake-bite and dog-bite cannot, however, be put in comparison, for the hydrophobia cases to which he draws attention chiefly occur among the European races, and are not caused by stray dogs, but by pets kept by the Europeans themselves. What with unnatural food and habits such dogs often become mad and bite their owners. Hydrophobia is not of frequent occurrence among the natives of the country, though every village and hamlet is filled with pariah dogs. Snake-bite with natives has quite different features. The people go about almost unclad, and while engaged in their usual avocations, or in moving abroad during the night, are bitten and die. Owing to the religious mystery enshrouding every snake, and knowing well the cunning and rapidity with which snakes conceal themselves after giving the death-wound, the friends of the injured persons make no exertions to hunt up or destroy the snake, but resort to charms, or the victims submit, as they say, to their fate. But I believe, if an inducement be offered in the shape of a small sum of money, that entire communities will soon be engaged in the search for, and destruction of, the poisonous species. The most recent information shows that one out of every 5,000 human beings in this country is yearly destroyed by snake-bite, and this mortality need not be.

9. Admitting that the number of poisonous snakes is great, also that they are widespread and increase rapidly, still a systematic plan for their destruction, persistently carried out, must, as I believe, end, if not in their exterminations, at least in a vast reduction of their numbers. As the case now stands, a greater number of deaths is produced by these poisonous reptiles than by wild beasts.

10. I would only add further that in localities infested with snakes the breeding of poultry should be encouraged, more especially the guinea-fowl; pea-fowl should be domesticated, and the common hedge-crow, or crow-pheasant, or *kallikaka*, which is often wantonly destroyed by natives, should be protected.

11. Destruction or extermination of the snakes should be carried out chiefly during the pairing and breeding season in the months of May, June, July, and August.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

A List of Poisonous Snakes with their Vernacular Names.

Scientific Name.	English Name.	Tamil Name.	Telugu Name.	Hindustani Name.	Canarese Name.
Naga Tripu-	Cobra ...	Naga or Nella Pamboo. Nagam.	Thachu Pam-moo.	...	Chatti Candodi. Rakta Candodi. Nagar Han. Naga Sarpa. Kadabalaka. Balevadaka. Balehan Han.
Bungarus Arcuatus.	Bungarus, or White-arched Bungarus.	Yannai or Pannay Vyrien. Kundum Karuvashalay. Viriyan. Punnari Pamboo. Kattri Vyrien. Kajuthee do. Seegootu do. Iratta do. Shev do. Kolli do. Shevuttu do. Changili do. Peru do. Kannadi do. Peru Kunnadi Vyrien.	Thusta Pam-moo. Thati Buruga.	Kraft. ...	...
Daboia Elegans.	Russels Viper. Chain do. Cobra Manilha. Tie Polanga...	Kutta Vyrien. Shuruta do. Pul do. Kuru do. Shiru do. Kayattu do. Nedu do. Murukku do. Not known	Katuku Rekula Poda. Peda Pinjara. Puli Pinjara. Ruktha do. In Kistna also Kutlapurugu.	Ulloo Bora. Jesser.	Kudralu, or Kolaka Kunnadi. Raktamizali. Chattemundi Han. ...
Echis Carinota.	The Carpet Viper. Asp.	Seru Suratay ...	Suratay Pam-moo.	Afae ...	Tavadu hapa-ladu. Midi kudralu. Tavodu kammadi.
Elaps Ophiophagus.	The Hamadryad or Hill Cobra.	Do. ...	Veiragu ...	Not known.	Not known.
Bungarus Senafaciatus.	Yellow-banded Bungarus.	Do. ...	Bungaram Pam-moo.	Do. ...	Do.
Hypnale Nepa		Do. ...	Not known...	Do. ...	Chatti Candodi. Kan-
Trimesurus.		Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	Rakta Kunnadi. Nettra Kunnadi. Chatte Kunnadi Han.

MADRAS,
8th March 1875.

(Signed) JOHN SHORTT, M.D., Surgeon-Major,
Inspector of Vaccination, Madras Presidency.

ENCLOSURES Nos. 2 to 12.—Colored drawings of Snakes.

DR. SHORTT's letter, with the twelve colored drawings which accompanied it, will be submitted for the orders of Government.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
8th June 1875.*

2. In order to give publicity to the information therein contained, it would be necessary to have a large number of the colored drawings made to accompany the report which without these would be useless. The Board have ascertained that the drawings can be photographed on a reduced scale and colored at the Survey Office at a cost of about Rupees 450 for 1,500 copies. It might suffice to color merely the head and a small portion of the body, in which case the cost would be reduced to about Rupees 300 for 1,500 copies. Specimens of photographs are forwarded herewith, but, even at the rates mentioned, it would cost a considerable sum to disseminate the information widely.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

No. 74.

ORDER THEREON, 8th June 1875, No. 893.

Miscellaneous.

THE Board are authorized to procure 1,500 copies, colored, at a cost of Rs. 450, for distribution to district officers, the

Medical Establishment, and others with copy of Dr. Shortt's report, which should be reprinted. Ten sets should be sent to the Government Office.

2. The native names in the Vernacular and in English should be given on each copy, as well as the scientific name.

3. The thanks of Government are due to Dr. Shortt for this practically useful contribution to the discussion of this important subject.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. MACGREGOR,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

„ the Accountant-General.

„ the Surgeon-Major J. Shortt, M.D.

Financial Department

No. 138

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 11th May 1875.

Read the following Resolution passed by the Board of Revenue, dated 11th May 1875, No. 2,041:—

I HAVE the honor to submit to the Board a report on the lists of snakes received from the different Collectorates in this Presidency during the past year.

2. Whilst a few of the lists contained some valuable information and the correct designations of the poisonous and nonpoisonous species, others had fanciful vernacular names of snakes said to be poisonous. From a few specimens were received which enabled me to distinguish the different species. I have redistributed all of these to the Medical College and the Government Central Museum.

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Govt. of Madras.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

to

to

to

Dated June 18th.

Recd.

Recd.

G. O., 8th June 1875, No. 893.

JUNE.

No. 73-74.

Snake.—Authorizing the Board of Revenue to procure 1,500 colored copies of the drawings of the — of the several districts of the Madras Presidency at a cost of Rupees 450 for distribution to district officers and others with a copy of Dr. Shortt's report. Directing the native names in the Vernacular and in English to be given on each copy, as well as the scientific name, and thanking Dr. Shortt for the practically useful contribution to the discussion of this important subject.

largely distributed of the four species of snakes in the districts; copies of the four rare species might also be distributed in the particular provinces they inhabit. There would be no difficulty in preserving specimens of the poisonous snakes in spirits and adding them to the prominent places in the chief market towns. Duplicate copies of the accompanying drawings might perhaps be made in the School of Art, but if the Board find any difficulty in that, I have ascertained that an artist will make as many copies as may be required at a charge of one Rupee per copy.

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Daboia Elegans.	Russels Viper. Chain do. Cobra Manilha. Tie Polanga...	Kattri Vyrien. Kajuthee do. Seegootu do. Iratta do. Shev do. Kolli do. Shevuttu do. Changili do. Peru do. Kannadi do. Peru Kunnadi Vyrien.	Katuku Re-kula Poda. Peda Pinjara. Puli Pinjara. Ruktha do. In Kistna also Kutlaparugu.	Ulloo Bora. Jesser. Kudralu, or Kolaka Kunnadi. Raktamizali. Chattemundi Han. Tavadu Kunnadi Han.
Echis Carinota.	The Carpet Viper. Asp.	Seru Suratay Pamboo. Kutta Vyrien. Shuruta do. Pul do. Kuru do. Shiru do. Kayattu do. Nedu do. Murakku do. Not known	Suratay Pam-moo.	Afae Tavadu hapa-laka. Midi kudralu. Tavodu kamadi.
Elaps Ophiophagus.	The Hamadryad or Hill Cobra.	Do. ...	Veiragu ...	Not known. Not known.
Bungarus Senafaciatus.	Yellow-banded Bungarus.	Do. ...	Bungaram Pam-moo.	Do. Do.
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MADRAS,
8th March 1875.

(Signed) JOHN SHORTT, M.D., Surgeon-Major,
Inspector of Vaccination, Madras Presidency.

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(True Copies and Extract.)

W. C. C.
Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with twelve colored drawings and three photographs of snakes to be returned.
Copy to the Inspector of Vaccination, Madras Presidency.

Exd. J. W. Fischer.

PROCEEDINGS, 7TH MAY 1875, No. 1,188

BOARD OF REVENUE,
MADRAS.

1875.

Recd. 1875. 24th
No. 118. 1874

24th May 1875

Received

18. May

MAY.
No. 1,188.

Lists of Snakes—received from the several districts of the Presidency.—Letter from D. Short reporting on —, together with colored drawings which accompanied it, submitted for orders of Government. Advisability of annexing a large number of these drawings to the report, in order to give publicity to the information therein contained, suggested.

W. C. C. order

Ch. 893 dated 1874