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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

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

1392-B

Press
Mis.

Dated

10-4-1877 197.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1877.*

Famine Relief.

No. 234C. Read the following letter from Surgeon-General G. SMITH, M.D., Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated 27th March 1877, No. 195:—

With reference to G.O., No. 1,033, dated 12th March 1877 (Proceedings of Madras Government, Revenue Department), I have the honor to submit, for the information of His Grace the Governor, the report of the Deputy Surgeon-General therein called for.

2. The mode adopted by Dr. vanSomeren of securing a standard of comparison, and of judging of results by actual weighments as against that standard, is a great improvement upon the method hitherto in vogue of judging by the eye rather than by the platform scale. I think that this mode should be generally adopted.

3. The only standard at present available being that of the weights of natives, conditioned by age and height, who have themselves somewhat suffered from the general scarcity, though not a scientifically accurate one, is one in which the error of calculation falls on the side of under-statement rather than of over-statement.

4. With Dr. vanSomeren's views touching the nutritive value of 1 lb. of rice I entirely agree; 1 lb. of rice yields 68 grains of nitrogen and 2,732 of carbon. The unavoidable internal waste of the adult body per diem in a state of complete rest demands for its performance a minimum of 138 grains of nitrogen and of 3,500 grains of carbon; there remains, therefore, a deficit of 70 grains of nitrogen and of 768 grains of carbon, which must be obtained from external sources or from the tissues of the living body itself. A diet of this kind substitutes chronic for acute starvation. In the words of the report it "cannot be said to preserve life, although it may postpone death."

Report upon the Condition of the Inmates of the Relief Camps at Palaveram and Poonamallee.

On Sunday, the 18th March, I visited the relief camp at Goolam Chavady, west of Palaveram, and on Tuesday, the 20th March, that at Teroomoochy, beyond Poonamallee.

2. Both camps are admirably situated and their several parts well arranged, while cleanliness constitutes a conspicuous feature every where in one and the other. The famine-stricken poor could not be placed in more favorable hygienic condition, so far as pure air, cleanliness, light, suitable water-supply, and general orderliness are concerned.

3. At the Goolam Chavady camp I inspected 883 non-resident working paupers, besides 545 (including 32 travellers) who receive food as non-workers; 312 of the latter number slept in camp the previous night.

4. Of the camp residents, some, not in hospital, needed to be there. But the appearance of almost all workers and non-workers led me to regard them as below par. Appearances, however, are deceptive. And different observers may

form different opinions of what appearances signify. It was, therefore, determined to weigh a large number of those receiving relief, and in that way arrive at a definite and demonstrable conclusion regarding their condition.*

5. Most opportunely I received on the 23rd instant, from the Zillah Surgeon of Nellore, tables of weighments which may serve as a standard of comparison. Surgeon-Major Ross's observations were made on male prisoners under trial and female and juvenile convicts in the district jail at that station. The under-trial prisoners especially were probably men more or less below the mark, as they must have suffered from the recent general scarcity and dire distress of the district, so that in choosing their condition as the standard a very low rule of weight is selected.

6. The following table (No. I) shows the average age, height, and weight of working poor at the Palaveram camp. The Nellore standard is entered in red ink:—

Table I.

	Men.		Women.		Juveniles.	
Average age ...	32.54	37.68	31.38	35.04	13.66	13
.. height ...	5-2.71"	5-3.6"	4-10.81"	4-11"	4-7.44"	4-6.3"
.. weight ...	109.13	83.6	92.31	70.54	70	50.03

7. As weight increases with height and age from 25 to 50 years, and the average ages and heights of the paupers, were, except with the juveniles, higher than those of the prisoners, their weights should have been higher too; but, as a matter of fact, they were considerably lower. And among the juveniles, though the difference in age was but a fraction lower, and in height but one inch and a fraction less, the difference in weight was almost 20 lbs. or two-sevenths of the whole weight.

8. The next table (No. II) is constructed on but few observations. There were only ten men and three women among the resident poor at the Palaveram camp between the ages of 25 and 50, and of the requisite heights, while there were no children old enough to compare with the standard.

Table II.

	Men.		Women.	
Average age ...	32.54	43.1	31.38	40.66
.. height ...	5-2.71"	5-2.55"	4-10.81"	4-11.5"
.. weight ...	109.13	85.4	92.31	73.33

9. In the foregoing tabular statement it is also very evident that the weights of the relief camp residents, which ought to have been higher, *quoad* their heights and ages, were actually lower than those of the prisoners in Nellore.

10. Table III conveys similar information regarding the working poor in the camp at Poonamallee, only that the heights of the juveniles were not taken there.

Table III.

	Men.		Women.		Juveniles.	
Average age ...	32.54	34.2	31.38	31.84	13.66	13.85
.. height ...	5-2.71"	5-5.4"	4-10.81"	5-1"	...	...
.. weight ...	109.13	97	92.81	80.76	70	63.67

11. The same fact is patent in the above table also. The weights of the poor range more or less considerably below those of the convicts. But it is noteworthy that those weights also range *above* the weights of the workers in the Palaveram camp, thus corresponding with the observation I made at my inspection, before weighing the people, of the apparently better condition of the Poonamallee poor. Explanation of this difference will be given in an appended extract from a demi-official written by Major Murray to my address.

12. The last table (No. IV) presents a comparison of the Poonamallee non-workers with the Nellore standard.

Table IV.

	Men.		Women.		Juveniles.	
Average age ...	32.54	34.52	31.38	31.84	13.66	13.54
.. height ...	5-2.71"	5-4"	4-10.81"	5-2.44"	...	...
.. weight ...	109.13	83.92	92.81	76.32	70	58.08

13. Here, again, the condition of the poor furnishes a contrast to that of the convicts. And, further, the condition of the non-workers in this camp is manifestly much inferior to that of the workers.

14. All the tables thus combine in forcing upon me the irresistible conclusion that the inmates of both camps are very seriously reduced in *flesh*. That the *strength* of the workers in Palaveram has also been seriously reduced is proved by twenty-five of their number having fainted at work on the 8th and seventeen on the 10th March.

15. How far this reduction in flesh and *strength* is due to starvation before the poor sought relief, and how far it is due to deficiency of food after they sought and obtained assistance, I have not data to determine, nor are such data now available.

16. The only way in which the adequacy of food to the requirements of the system can be determined is by periodical weighments, and weighments should be made with every inmate in the several camps.

17. At both camps, until the 5th March, only three-quarters of rice, besides a few pies' worth of condiments, were given to each adult and considerably less to each child. And from the 18th February to the 9th March 10 pies daily were given to an adult worker for rice, which, with 6 pies for condiments, make annas 1-4, while a woman received annas 1-1, and a child 8 pies.

18. I venture to assert, with confidence, that the forementioned supply of food given to the inmates of the camp and the supply purchasable for the several sums mentioned in the last paragraph were quite inadequate to the nourishment of the human body. And the very feeble and emaciated condition of the young children below eleven, who have not been included in the several tables given above, is explained to a certain and probably a considerable extent by the very short commons on which they have subsisted.

19. Since the 5th March, adult inmates have received $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of rice besides condiments, while adult male workers receive a wage of annas 1-6, and a woman annas 1-3, and children 9 or 10 pies.

20. Periodical weighments will prove whether, and to what extent, the condition of the inmates improves on the better diet. They will also show if the pound of rice for an adult male worker, and proportionately less for a female and juvenile, suffice to nourish their bodies.

21. Conceding a great deal for difference of race, on which some now questionably insist, an adult male, on light work, can scarcely meet the waste of his system, and the demand for the maintenance of animal heat on less than 175 grains of nitrogen and 3,500 grains of carbon. In one pound of rice he gets only 68 grains of nitrogen and 2,732 grains of carbon. In this hot country it is the necessary proportion of nitrogen, which especially requires to be supplied to a laboring man, and in one pound of rice there is less than half the requisite quantity.

22. It has been positively stated that men at rest have actually gained flesh on one pound of rice with a modicum of condiments. The statement is not supported by proofs, and it is opposed to the teachings of science. Until evidence be adduced to prove our present knowledge incorrect, such an assertion simply deserves discredit.

23. The puny proportions and miserable appearance of the children in both camps oblige me specially to urge that they be adequately fed! They require pabulum for growth as well as maintenance, and accordingly the quantity of food they obtain should be proportionately larger, though, in different degrees, according to ages, absolutely less than that provided for adults, between eighteen and forty or fifty years of age. Feed the young on too little, and they cannot but become stunted in size and feeble in body.

24. In conclusion, I must express my firm conviction that one pound of rice for working men, and proportionately less for working women and children, with the usual quantity of condiments, is altogether inadequate. Such a diet cannot be said to preserve life, although it may postpone death. And for the juvenile inmates of the camps, in which an adult receives $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of rice, children and youths should receive quantities ranging from half a pound to one pound and a-half.

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M.D.,
Deputy Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service,
Presidency and Northern Districts.

APPENDIX.

Extract from a Demi-Official from Major Murray, Special Relief Officer, Chingleput District, to the address of Deputy Surgeon-General W. J. vanSomeren, M.D.

THE real reason is that our Palaveram people (workers) are very largely composed of people from other districts, or from great distances in our own, who have come to us after holding out about their own villages till work and food quite gave out; they are also composed of discontented wanderers who have gone from place to place in search always of a better wage or of being largely fed, as at Madras, without work to do; hence their poor condition, and hence the fact that having come to us in a low state, the present low-working wage is not sufficient to pull them up, and indeed, as I have officially reported, I see them going down the hill under it rather than pulling up.

At this Poonamallee camp the case is different. The country all round hereabouts is agricultural, and our laborers here are almost entirely composed of agricultural laborers (Pycarries) from the surrounding villages.

Cultivation hereabouts is largely carried on under wells, which makes the ryot to some extent (where he exerts himself) independent of rain and tanks.

Agricultural labor has, therefore, continued here somewhat longer than in other places; and these laborers of ours have had work and their usual subsistence to a later date from the ryots. Again, work was started here early in the commencement of the distress, and a new road from Tinnanore to Koratoor (the old camp) under my charge gave employment to large bodies of these laborers, for whom the ryots had no further employment; these people until lately were working under the old rate of pay, which I think was a good and sufficient rate, and hence, from these reasons combined, their physical condition was kept fairly up to the mark, even though they did share that wage with their families.

My reason for saying that they are here now going down the hill is this—that the working wage has been greatly lowered, and as they naturally, in cases where the wives and children cannot work, still continue to share with them their wage, the consequence is obvious.

A very large portion of these people are of a class that will not send their wives and children into the camp, and if these don't work the physical condition of the whole family suffers.

True Extract.)

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M.D.,
Dy. Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service,
Presidency and Northern Districts.

No. 234D.

ORDER THEREON, 10th April 1877, No. 1,392B.

Miscellaneous.

COMMUNICATED, with its enclosure, to all Collectors of distressed districts who, with the Zillah Surgeons' aid, may adopt the test suggested.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1877.*

2. With regard to the Surgeon-General's remarks regarding the insufficiency of 1 lb. of rice, the Government observe that that is not the whole wage.

(True Extract.)

Additional Secretary to Government.

To all Collectors of Distressed Districts.
" the Board of Revenue.
" the Financial Department.
" the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department.
" the Sanitary Commissioner.
" the Public Works Department.

Ed. A. F. Goodall.

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Condition of the Territory of the Provisional
and Education Camps, Classified and
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REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

F No. 1940

From Surgeon Genl. G. Smith M. D.
Surgeon Genl. J. M. D.
Dated 27th March

1877.

FOR ORDERS.

This I.P. is
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FOR ORDERS.

8/19/40

D. H.

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Deputy Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service,
Presidency and Northern Districts.

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(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M.D.,
Dy. Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service,
Presidency and Northern Districts.

Ed. F. R. Bantlemann.

No 196

Office of Surgeon General India
Fort Saint George 27 March 1877.

From

Surgeon General George Smith M.D.
Surgeon General India

To

The Secretary to Government
Revenue Department.

Sir

With reference to G.O. No 1033 dated 13th
March 1877 (Proceedings of Madras
Government Revenue Department) I have
the honor to submit for the information of
His Grace the Governor the report of the
Deputy Surgeon General therein called for.

2. The mode adopted by Dr Sanderson of
securing a standard of comparison, and of
judging of results by actual weighments as
against that standard, is a great improve-
ment upon the method hitherto in vogue
of judging by the eye rather than by the
platform scale. I think that this mode
should be generally adopted.

3. The only standard at present available
being that of the weights of natives, conditioned
by age and height, who have themselves
somewhat suffered from the general scarcity
thought

though not a scientifically accurate one is one in which the error of Calculation falls on the side of under statement rather than of over statement.

4. With Dr. Van Soweren's views touching the nutritive value of lb 1 of rice I entirely agree. lb 1 of rice yields 68 grains of nitrogen and 2732 of Carbon. The unavoidable internal waste of the adult body for diem in a state of complete rest demands for its performance a minimum of 138 grains of Nitrogen and of 3500 grains of Carbon. There remains therefore a deficit of 70 grains of nitrogen and of 768 grains of Carbon, which must be obtained from external sources or from the tissue of the living body itself. A diet of this kind substitutes chronic for acute starvation. In the words of the report it "cannot be said to preserve life although it may postpone death."

Have the honor to be
Sir

Your most obedient servant
R. S. M. D.
Surgeon General M.D.

12/11

I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. in relation to the above named matter. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. in relation to the above named matter. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. in relation to the above named matter.

Feb 1392

New 1899. Sept
 Fine
 Simpson Fine & Shurtliff
 Simpson Fine & Shurtliff
 To the Regt & Government
 Revenue Dept
 Sept 28 1899
 Dec 28 1899
 No 195
 District.
 In favor of Simpson Fine & Shurtliff
 Henderson's Report on the
 of the animals of the Ornithology
 and Natural Science
 Department District.