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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	73	Press.
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Dated	9.1.1878	197

Not to be folded or roughly handled.

No. 111 (Statistics and Commerce), dated India Office, London, the 2nd August 1877.

From—Her Majesty's SECRETARY OF STATE for India.

To—His Excellency the Right Honourable the GOVERNOR GENERAL of India in Council.

I FORWARD herewith a copy of a memorandum* by the Army Sanitary Commission on the British Burma sanitary report for 1875.

* Dated 4th June 1877.

2. Sanitation in this Province appears to be in a seriously backward state, and I must express my hope that future years will have more to shew in this respect, and that the annual reports will embody complete information as to the works carried out.

3. I request your attention to the remarks made in this memorandum on the subject of fevers in British Burma. Careful inquiries should be made as to the local causes of these fevers and as to how far they belong to the enteric class, and energetic measures should be taken for the removal of the conditions which favour their prevalence.

Memorandum of the Army Sanitary Commission on the Report of the Sanitary Commissioner for British Burma for 1875.

A LARGE part of the present report is devoted to meteorology, vital statistics, jails and vaccination, and there is not so much information as could be wished on sanitary condition. The report is, nevertheless, in advance of those which have preceded it in several important particulars, and some of the facts it contains are new to the sanitary history of this Province.

1. Registration of deaths was carried out in 14 towns and 14 rural circles in British Burma in 1875. The assigned population amounts to 2,866,473, and the registered deaths to 40,370—a death-rate of 14.08 per 1,000. The lowest rate was 7.75 per 1,000 at Shwegyeen; the highest was 40.55 per 1,000 at Bassein Town, in which 1,100 deaths were registered out of a population of about 28,000. In six towns the death-rates exceed 22 per 1,000, and these are the only instances probably for which the death-rates are approximately correct. Registration is still very defective in many rural circles and in several of the towns. One peculiarity of the registration of deaths is that the numbers are returned once a quarter in 15 towns and districts—a practice which, even if it were sufficient for making up the annual statistics, would be of no use for sanitary purposes and the prevention of disease, since for such objects the sanitary authority must be kept informed of the amount and kind of epidemic disease current in the districts over which the authority is exercised. It appears to be unnecessary to say more on the subject, as it is receiving the attention of the Government.

2. The following were the chief registered death causes in 1875:

	Number of deaths.
Fevers	25,075
Bowel complaints	5,212
Small-pox	752
Cholera	761
All others	8,570
	40,370

Taking the registration as it is, it will be seen that the diseases classed as fevers and bowel complaints were the cause of three-fourths of the registered mortality.

3. The registered fever death-rate for the districts and towns in the tables was 8.74 per 1,000, and in 14 towns with populations over 5,000 the fever death-rate was 6½ per 1,000. The lowest rate, 2.71 per 1,000, was returned from Henzada with a population of 15,482, and the highest, 17.9 per 1,000, from Shwegyeen with 7,486 inhabitants. But there is reason to believe that the fever death-rate expresses only the diagnosis made by the village officer whose qualification in

in any case that it does not stagnate, except in specially unfavourable localities, and in such, where they exist, it would be important for sanitary work to ascertain the comparative amount and character of fevers which prevail. The facts, as they stand, appear to point to the conclusion that the heavy rainfall could be best removed by improved surface drainage where needed, and that in a few exceptional localities only would drainage operations, properly so called, be required.

In the special case mentioned, where severe paludal fevers occur on the skirts of mountain ranges, the causes of malaria may be at a distance from the town sites, and in the upper ends of valleys, or in districts resembling the Terai of Northern India. But the whole subject well merits investigation.

8. *Cholera*.—There were 761 deaths registered as cholera in 1875, but it seems doubtful if many of them were true epidemic cases. The disease existed from March to December in different parts of the country.

The same law of diffusion was observed as in India, and only a small proportion of groups of population was attacked.

The ratios are given for only six districts, and these show that out of 1,423 villages 108 only had cholera cases. No account is given of the state of the attacked villages.

9. *Small-pox*.—There were 752 deaths from this disease. "The greatest number of deaths were in March, at which season the inoculators do the greatest part of their work". The fact suggests the remedy. In spite of inoculation the deaths were comparatively few, fewer indeed than the ratio in England and Wales in non-epidemic years. In four districts and seven towns there was no small-pox, a result to which vaccination is said to have "contributed in some degree". "This is especially noticeable wherever the civil authorities and the Civil Surgeons take an interest in the work of vaccination." The total vaccinations in 1875 amounted to 24,381, of which 20,112, or 82.89 per cent., were successful.

10. *Bowel Complaints*.—There were 5,312 deaths registered under this head in 1875. In two towns the death ratios from these diseases were 10.85 and 18.83 per 1,000. It is satisfactory to learn from the report that inquiry is to be made into the causes of this high mortality, and it may be suggested that an opportunity may be taken to learn what diseases are registered under this head. An inquiry in Madras Presidency on the same subject has resulted in an order to class the diseases in future as "cholera".

11. *Leprosy*.—There is not much of importance under this head. The total number of lepers, according to the last census, was 3,203—1.20 per 1,000 of the population.

The practical results of the inquiry up to the present time appear to be that leprosy is not contagious; that in one-third of the cases it was hereditary; that the conditions which produce malarious fevers have no influence in the causation of leprosy; that fish diet is not a cause of the disease; that by far the greater proportion of cases occur among Natives of India; and, lastly, "all medical officers here consider that poverty, dirt and insufficient food are the principal exciting causes of leprosy".

12. *Civil Sanitary Improvements*.—Municipalities have been established at Rangoon, Moulmein, Akyab, Bassein, Toungboon, Prome and Henzada, but all of them have not furnished reports. Those which have done so appear to be engaged in carrying out the simpler reforms, but no work of any great importance has been undertaken.

The following brief abstract will show the nature of measures in operation.

Rangoon.—The town has been lighted. Seven thousand five hundred and ninety-five lineal feet of brick drains have been laid down, other open drains have been arched over, but to drain the town effectually there should be plans, surveys, a proper system and water. Tanks have been excavated and deepened, cavities filled up, and large areas of the strand bank have been filled in. A dry-earth latrine has been put up on trial. The town pumps, 21 in number, have been put in good order, and the wells improved, but a proper water-supply is required. Conservancy arrangements have been improved, street watering has been extended. But all night-soil is thrown into the river—a most unsafe practice.

Moulmein.—Very little has been done during the year except current surface cleansing. Cesspits with their abominations and dangers are in use, and low-lying districts are liable to flooding to such an extent that "stagnant water cannot be said to exist". The whole sanitary work has evidently, to be done.

Akyab.—The work done here has been apparently improvement in surface drainage and tree-planting.

Bassein.—The chief work done is road-making, which appears to have been much required, but the report deals rather with what it is desirable to do than with anything that has been done, except the building of a slaughter-house.

Prome.—Water is obtained from the Irrawaddy, but requires filtering. None of the town wells are fit for drinking. There are no drains, only ditches which carry the water into a swamp without an outlet. Two roads have been metalled, the main streets are fairly kept, but the bye-lanes are neglected. Conservancy very defective. Cesspools are in use, no public latrines.

Tavoy.—Nothing reported in the way of sanitary work, except surface cleansing, &c.

All that can be said about these reports is that a beginning has scarcely been made in initiating public health improvements, and that, as the municipalities are now organized, it would be most desirable that the towns should be inspected by the Sanitary Commissioner and some engineering officer, with a view of obtaining a grasp over the problem presented by each town, and advising the municipalities on the most efficient and economical methods of dealing with evils brought to light. In this way much useless or unnecessarily costly work might be avoided, and consistent plans adopted for future guidance.

13. The Commissioner states that "no improvements have been effected in the sanitary state of the villages of the Province, but much might be done in the way of simple improvements, to be carried out by the people themselves; many of them are situated on the banks of rivers, and the houses being all raised from 3 to 10 feet off the ground, they are washed clean once a year at least by the rise of the rivers, which on falling leave nothing but pure silt behind them; this natural annual cleansing is the most satisfactory sanitary agency at work in the Province at present".

The facts suggest that much good might possibly be done by a few simple rules drawn up in the vernacular, pointing out the chief sources of danger to health in towns and villages, and advising simple and easily applied remedies.

14. The report as a whole is of more interest than others which have preceded it. We have suggested some points of inquiry regarding the more important diseases, which, together with what we have advised regarding the initiatory proceedings in towns and villages, includes the main practical results of the year. It would be well if the municipalities were made to understand that what is now required of them is to put their towns in a proper sanitary state with as little delay as possible, which is indeed the main duty devolving on them by their office.

The 4th June 1877.

Exd.—N. C. D.

Public Department
Proceedings of the Madras Government.

Read the following:-
No. 367.

FROM

J. O'KINEALY, Esq.,
Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India.

TO

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF
BRITISH BURMA.

Home Dept.

Sanitary.

FORT WILLIAM, the 21st December 1877.

SIR,

I AM directed to forward the accompanying despatch*
from Her Majesty's Secretary of

* No. 111 (Statistics and Commerce), dated 2nd August 1877. State for India, with enclosed memorandum by the Army Sanitary Commission on the British Burma sanitary report for 1875.

2. The remarks of the Commission on the nature of the fevers which prevailed in British Burma and their probable causes are full of interest; and I am to request that the line of enquiry suggested by the Commission may be followed.

3. As regards the conservancy of Prome, I am to remark that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India on a recent inspection of that town entertained an opinion similar to that expressed by the Commission; and I am to request that attention may at once be directed to the matter.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. O'KINEALY,

Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India.

No. 15/368.

COPY of the above letter and of its enclosures forwarded to the Local Governments and Administrations and to the Military and Public Works Departments for information.

S. F. C. Davies.

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India.

Exd.—C. A. S.

Home Dept. Press—No. 431—19-12-77—175.

Order

Order thereon, 7 Jan'y /78. No 34.

*Communicated to the Board of
Revenue and to the Sanitary Commissioner.
(True Extract)*

*H. H. H. H.
Under Secretary*

*The Revenue Department
with Enclosure
- Board of Revenue
- Sanitary Commissioner
- Single and two sets of Drafts*

Revenue 1878 Sep 1st

No. 44.

No. of Govt Public Sep 1st

Dated 7th Jan
Recd 7th Jan

No. 34. En: 1

Communications

Resolution of Govt of India on
Dispatch from Secy of State
forwarding Memo of the
Army Sanitary Commission
on the Report of the Sanitary
Commissioner for British
Burma for 1875

24073

Recorded

9. Jan 1878

W. W.