M.R.O. 14—18,000—27-9-24.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 54 Press ~~Mis.~~

105-106

Dated 2—1—~~19~~1867

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 105. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 13th December 1866, No. 8,829.

Read the following letter from the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Fort Saint George, 27th November 1866, No. 4,688 :—

1. With reference to the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, as per margin, I have the honor to remark that, with reference to Mr. Ellis' Report, paragraphs 40 and 41, it is not very easy to see how there can be any systematic "organization for affording medical advice and relief" during cholera epidemics, considering the wide tracts of country involved, the almost constant presence of cholera in the country, and the very insignificant establishment of the Medical Department, which is almost entirely occupied in ministering to the wants of the Civil and Military servants of the State.

No. 7,813, dated 29th October 1866.

2. It seems necessary, before proceeding further in the consideration of this important question, that the views of Government should be definitely ascertained on the following points :—

(a.) Whether it is expected that medical aid is to be afforded under direction of the Government Medical Establishment to the entire population ; or,

(b.) Whether the efforts of the Medical Establishment are to be mainly directed in the future, as in the past, to providing aid for the Military and Civil Establishments, and finding subordinates for duty in the Civil Dispensaries already or hereafter to be established. I shall be glad, therefore, if the Board of Revenue will be so good as to elicit an expression of opinion from Government on this very important question, before I proceed to submit in detail a scheme by which such an organization as the Sanitary Commissioner contemplates might be provided.

3. It may save time, however, if I briefly review some of the difficulties which will have to be considered in the organization of a scheme of medical relief to be practically useful to the people generally.

4. The first that strikes the attention is the inadequacy of an establishment formed solely for the benefit of Government officials, to provide for the wants of the entire population.

The population of the Madras Presidency may be reckoned at about twenty-four millions, and of Great Britain twenty-eight millions. In the former, we have a Medical Establishment of all ranks numbering 736; and in the latter, it is calculated that 20,000 educated and legally qualified Medical men find employment in ministering to the health of the population.

5. The contrast just made is, in point of fact, not quite a fair one, for the Madras Medical Establishment furnishes officers and subordinates to the Provinces of Mysore, Coorg, Travancore, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, a portion of the Central Provinces, Burmah, and the Straits Settlements; and if the population of these districts are taken into account, it will be found that the Government Establishment of 736 individuals are the only persons available for the medical relief of a population half as large again as that of Great Britain. A considerable number of the "Hospital Assistant" class, moreover, are not fitted, by experience or training, for anything more than the carrying out of orders for the preparation and

exhibition of medicines, so that practically the numbers given are not really available for giving medical assistance to the Civil population.

6. The first thing to be done, if Government desires to take up in earnest the question of medical aid to the people, is to establish arrangements to ensure to the native public a supply of Doctors who may be capable at least of recognizing the symptoms of ordinary diseases, and of following an appropriate line of treatment. Practitioners of medicine abound in every native town and village; but as their professional knowledge, even of the most elementary kind, is subjected to no test, and their practice to no kind of supervision, it is very questionable whether any benefit would be gained by the employment of such persons to look after the health of the sick-poor. When the great wave of epidemic cholera from the north passed over Southern India in 1818, the records of the Medical Department shew that it was a common practice for the Civil authorities to entertain some of these native practitioners to assist the Government Medical Establishment in administering medicines, under orders, and in visiting the people in their own houses. At that time cholera, in an epidemic form, had not previously prevailed within the memory of those living.

It was a new and terrible disease, and every effort was made by the Government of the period to provide medical assistance for those who might be attacked. Consequently hospital sheds, and conveniences for the sick, were put up in all populous localities, and "hakeems" were engaged to administer medicines, and carry out a course of treatment laid down by Civil Surgeons, or which had been approved of by the Medical Board.

7. The epidemic visitation which called forth these extraordinary measures for the relief of the people, has unhappily been followed by an almost annual accession of cholera in many districts and localities, and familiarity with the fact, if it does not "breed contempt," has apparently had the effect of leading those entrusted with the administration of affairs and the people to despair of eradicating it, either by a liberal provision for medical treatment of the sick, or a comprehensive measure for enforcing the observance of hygienic laws. The small Government Establishment of Medical Officers and Subordinates have always done their best, in their own limited spheres of duty, to afford medical aid during epidemic seasons; but as their circles of duty have been for the most part confined to Military Cantonments and Civil Stations, it follows that the assistance they have been able to afford to the general population has been infinitesimal in character.

8. To place medical aid within reach of the people so as to be of any practical use, I believe it will be necessary to employ to some extent the indigenous practitioners of the country, and it is for the Government to determine how far it may be practicable and advisable to legislate for the issue of licenses to such native Doctors as may hereafter pass a test of minimum qualification regarding the nature and the uses of drugs, and of the treatment of the more common forms of disease. The present race of "hakeems" cannot, of course, be interfered with; but, as a temporary expedient, it may be advisable to have some of them instructed in the most approved modes of treating cholera, fevers, &c., for employment under the Revenue Department in districts noted for liability to outbreaks of epidemic diseases.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
9th January 1867.

In this way it might be possible to make a beginning of a system of medical relief, that in time would enable the Government to cope, in some degree, with the present unresisted progress of disease, amongst its native subjects.

9. Epidemic diseases such as cholera, fever, &c., to be treated efficiently must be treated early. To accomplish this with the limited staff of the Medical Department, for the people generally, is manifestly impossible. Even in Great Britain where Medical men bear so much higher a proportion to the population, it is found that a cholera epidemic (such as the one now passing over European countries) taxes to the utmost the energies of the Medical profession, and that even with the facilities which exist in civilized countries for obtaining medicines and advice, many people die for want of early and prompt treatment. Until every considerable village in India possesses a medical practitioner, who is capable of affording aid to the cholera and fever-stricken inhabitants, the medical treatment of disease must be regarded as not satisfactorily provided for.

10. Should the Government be satisfied, on consideration of these initial difficulties, that the Medical Establishment sanctioned and kept up on account of the various departments of the State are inadequate to the demands of the Civil population for medical aid, and that it is desirable to do something to mitigate, as far as possible, the scourges which destroy so many of the population, then I would respectfully submit it is highly desirable that measures should be considered for training up a class of Medical men competent to afford the aid which the Medical Establishment of the State, from their location and duty engagements, are unable to give.

11. Meanwhile, as desired, instructions will be drawn up for the guidance of Collectors as to the best mode of organizing a system for the distribution of medicines.

12. It is scarcely necessary for me to add that the proposed measure will necessitate larger indents on the Home Government for stores, or that the formation of a class of native Doctors for the whole community must prove a costly proceeding. Should the Government, however, desire an expression of my views on the best mode of undertaking this important work, I shall be ready to give them when required so to do.

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1. Ordered that the foregoing letter be submitted to Government, with reference to Government Order dated 10th October 1866, No. 2,737, and Board's Proceedings thereon, No. 7,813, dated 29th idem.

2. The Board do not suppose that Government contemplated so extensive a scheme as that indicated in the above letter; but the subject is one of such importance, and the possible benefit to be derived from even partial success is so great, that the Board deem it worthy of the best consideration how far it may be feasible to carry out the idea suggested.

3. Unquestionably, the main point in dealing with epidemics in this country is, to have on the spot the means of intelligent application, at the earliest possible moment, of all immediately available remedies; and if by any means the qualifications of the native medical practitioners could be so improved as to enable them to grapple in the first instance with disease, there would be room to hope that the ordinarily resulting mortality might be materially diminished.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 9th January 1867.

4. The question how this can be effected is doubtless beset with difficulties; but its importance entitles it to the fullest consideration, in the interests of the vast population whose welfare is at stake.

No. 106. ORDER THEREON, 9th January 1867, No. 54.

Miscellaneous.

The Government did not, as the Board remark, contemplate such extensive measures, but they will be glad to have the Principal Inspector General's views on the general question.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department.

Extd. S. T. Augustin.

Mil Pro 8th Nov 66 No 7
Pro. 10th Oct 66 No 246 to 247

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under Gilbert
Surgeon at the
Chief Stations
relating measures
Cholera &c
9th Jany. 67

Revenue 1866. Department.
Pro of Govt for January 67
No 448 7-

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE,
From Asstt Surgeon Medical
Depart. Chingleput 13th Dec. 1866.

Dated 13th December 1866.
Dep Pro -
Rec. 15th

I doubt if Mr Gilbert has
always doubted whether the
Hypochlorite of Lime &
Chlorine medicines, into which they
have attempted to convert sewage
but the P. S. General may be
kept supplied some general
measure that will keep
Cholera —

No. 8,822.

Submitting with remarks letter from Principal Inspector General Medical Department requesting orders on certain points connected with proposed organization of a scheme for affording Medical advice and relief during Cholera epidemics.

No 1054 to 106

Recd 9th Jany 67
Write Order

Exd. S. T. Augustin.