Revenue (1897) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

G.O., No. 1358

DATED 10th March

[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording Progs. Local and Municipal Depts. Commg. to certain officers the circular of the Sanitary Commr. regarding the importation of certain articles, for publication in the Dt. Gazettes, and requesting the Govt. of India to issue orders under Act III of 1897, prohibiting export by rail and road of certain articles from plague-inflicted localities, the import of which by sea has already been prohibited.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Government {1897} of Madras.

LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS
18 MAR 97
SECRETARIAT

Recd. } 1897. *Enclosures*

Regd. *Spare copies*

G.O., No. 316 M., 26th February 1897.

D. Dis. 17/3/97

FEBRUARY.

G.O. Mis No. 1358 dy 10th March 1897

Recorded.

List D. 10.3.97

2 To The Board of Rev (L.R.) (Rev. L.R.D.)

2 Bubonic Plague.

Communicating to the President, Municipal Commission, Madras, and to all Collectors, the circular of the Sanitary Commissioner regarding the importation of certain articles, for publication in the District Gazettes, and requesting the Government of India to issue orders under Act III of 1897, prohibiting export by rail and road of certain articles from plague-infected localities, the import of which by sea has already been prohibited.

Secs. 13.3.97

D.C. 9/3/97

T.C. 8/3/97

Note. Sir Lethbridge thinks that copies of this may be sent to the Press for information.

9/3/97

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers :—

Report from the Sanitary Inspector on special duty, to the Health Officer, Madras Municipal Commission, dated 6th February 1897.

"I beg to report that, after examining the Bombay passengers with the platform overseers at Perambur, I travelled by the same train to the Central station and, on my further examination, I observed some cases of butter from Bombay and some parcels of fruits from Poona addressed to Madras.

As I am of opinion that articles of human consumption should not be sent for from the plague-affected stations, I request you will be so good as to cause the necessary orders to be issued for the stoppage of such articles being sent from the above-mentioned stations."

Extract from letter from Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel WALKER, Surgeon, 1st District, to the Health Officer, Madras Municipality, dated 8th February 1897.

* * * * *

I hear that large consignments of goods of various kinds are being sent from Bombay to Madras to be auctioned for want of market there. Voyrodiet informed me that a lot of bicycles were being sent. Should not such traffic be stopped if possible? In my opinion Madras should strictly quarantine against all Bombay consignments, especially grain of all kinds which would probably bring infected rats.

* * * * *

From J. NIELD COOK, Esq., D.P.H., Health Officer, Madras Municipality, to the President, Madras Municipal Commission, dated 9th February 1897.

I am of opinion that there is very little danger of infection from bicycles and articles of that nature which will not have been in infected centres or attracted rats.

2. The question of food-stuffs such as grain and flour, butter, dates, &c., is more important. I have seen no evidence to guide me except negative evidence. It would be best settled by experiment. If I am relieved of some of my work and can get a room to which no one else has access except my assistant, I am prepared to inoculate a rat or guinea pig with the plague bacillus and feed others with grain mixed with its excreta and watch them to see whether any of them are infected. Dr. Simpson of Calcutta seems to think there is a danger of live-rats infected with plague being imported in grain bags and acting as disease-carriers. This seems to me possible, but not likely to happen in transport by train though much more likely to happen in a ship's cargo of grain or flour. In the case of grain there is the husking and in that of flour the cooking which is a safeguard, though not a complete one, as it has been shown by experiment that certain disease germs can survive baking in the interior of a loaf.

3. As the question is a large one and affects the whole Presidency, and not only the Madras Municipality, I would suggest that it be referred to the Sanitary Commissioner who may have further information on the subject than is in my possession.

4. I have replied about the supposed case at Perambur.

G. No. 738.

Forwarded to the Secretary to Government, Local and Municipal Department, for information.

(Signed) G. M. J. MOORE, Lieut.-Col.,
President.

9th February 1897.

No. 151.

Referred to the Sanitary Commissioner for early remarks.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
12th February 1897.

(Signed) G. S. FORBES,
Secretary to Government.

From Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. KING, M.B., C.M., D.P.H., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Local and Municipal Department, dated Camp, Gazzalapalle, 16th February 1897, No. 405-S.

With reference to correspondence accompanying your endorsement, No. 151, dated 12th February 1897, I have the honour to forward for information a copy of a circular issued by me on the 2nd instant treating much the same points as therein stated. Infection of the human being by plague-infected food has not been proved, but there is good reason to hold that this is very likely; as Kitasato, who first discovered the bacillus, successfully infected certain of the lower animals by feeding them upon infected material. Any action with the object of preventing the importation of food articles from the Bombay Presidency would therefore be reasonable and founded on safe ground.

2. In judging, however, of the necessity for enforcing such action, it must not be forgotten that the Madras Presidency is not in the position of defending itself against the inroads of the disease from a foreign country separated from her by the sea. Besides importation by the seaboard, the Presidency has to defend itself against inroads by rail and road throughout a very large frontier. Under these circumstances, any attempt at defence by prohibiting this and that trade—otherwise, say, than in the very obvious case of risk involved in the importation of second-hand clothing, waste paper and rags—would necessitate the entertainment of a very large staff, and, even if supported by troops, would not be really effectual,—a fact proved by the experience of Russia. Under these circumstances, I believe the best course is to attempt to draw the attention of the public to the dangers involved, as I have hoped to do in the circular quoted. The public once thoroughly alarmed—of which, at the end of four months absolute indifference, there now seems a tendency—may be relied upon to withdraw demands, and thus effect exclusion of articles more fully than if it were attempted by special staffs and legislation.

3. In the matter of bicycles and other articles of this nature, I agree with Dr. Nield Cook in thinking the risk must be extremely limited; where care is specially requisite in this case, as with all merchandise from Bombay, is the safe disposal of the dust—especially that derived from the soil—and waste material forming the packing. There is no doubt as to the liability to infection of rats and of their being conveyers of infection, and it would be a wise precaution to follow the rule laid down in rule 20 embodied in G.O., No. 1985 M., dated 18th November 1896, even before a locality is affected "as a matter of prevention" by at least eliciting each householder's attention to the subject.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

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Enclosure.

Circular No. 280-S.

In connection with the prevalence of plague, the question of the danger of importation of dates, grapes, butter, flour and other eatables from Bombay has been raised by local authorities. No law that will suffice in this matter exists, and if it did it would be inapplicable, unless it embraced the question of importation from Bombay of nearly every article of commerce, and that to enforce it special establishments existed; nevertheless, that matters may arrive specifically infected is indubitable. Whilst therefore no law exists that would condemn the importer of such articles, there can be no reason why in the interests of their populations Chairmen of Municipal Councils should not endeavour to do their best to *persuade* merchants to cease importing such materials from Bombay, until all danger has passed.

2. In connection with flour used for bread, it is desirable that it be remembered that the theory, that the heat to which bread is subjected during the process of baking is sufficient to cause the death of both simple and death-bearing germs is incorrect. Recent researches in Europe show conclusively that a large percentage of the interior of loaves duly baked is not sterile, and that even the cholera microbe which is most susceptible to heat may survive. Not only is the infected flour to be feared, but the sacking, the vessels and the outside of baked and cold loaves touched with hands that have also handled infected sacking; further, the ground where such sacking has rested may be the starting point of mischief, more especially if the floor be of damp earthen character usually found in Madras bake-houses.

3. Probably, however, the danger from articles mentioned in no way is so great as that of waste paper and other packing material used for merchandize, to which your attention was specially drawn in this office letter No. 1843-S, dated 3rd October 1896, communicated with foot-note No. 1941-S, dated 16th October 1896. Government has recently been specially requested to prevent importation of waste paper and rags *as such* and it is hoped effective measures will result. Till this is the case, however, undersigned would ask that each instance coming to notice of chairmen be reported to this office with as little delay as possible, and that pending a reply the consignee be desired in the public interest to refrain from "breaking bulk."

Fort St. George,
2*nd February* 1897.

(Signed) W. G. KING, M.B., D.P.H.,
Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

From the Sanitary Inspector on special duty, to the Health Officer, Madras Municipal Commission, dated Madras, 18th February 1897, No. 61.

Your attention is once more respectfully requested to my letter, No. 58, of 6th February 1897, in which orders were requested to prevent butter and other articles of human consumption being imported by land from plague-affected districts.

2. I beg to report that on the 16th instant when I was inspecting the S.S. *Nawab* from Bombay, I observed that the marginally-noted articles were imported into Madras from Bombay. It will be necessary on my part to reiterate on the evil consequences of the consumption of these articles. It may be pertinent here to remark that the rules are to be all the more strictly observed now at Madras, as the merchants in exporting the articles from Bombay would not be particular in looking to sanitary conditions of the coolies and labourers that may be employed in getting the work done as Bombay is almost depopulated now.

1. Date (dry and wet fruits).
2. Wheat flour.
3. Wheat sugii.
4. Wheat bran.
5. Cloves.
6. Almond.
7. Sugarcandy.
8. Preserved grapes (kismiss).
9. Prawns from Allapa.

} From Bombay.

3. I have only to request that the orders prayed for may be expedited.

From J. NIELD COOK, Esq., D.P.H., Health Officer, Madras Municipality, to the President, Madras Municipal Commission, dated 22nd February 1897, No. 76 M.

It appears from the attached report that flour bran and dried fruits are being imported from Bombay. Such imports have been entirely interdicted in all the Mediterranean ports, and, I think, not without reason. For there is an appreciable danger of infected rats being imported with such cargoes, beyond the possibility of the infection being carried by the excreta of such vermin dropped amongst the flour or by the bags.

2. Messrs. Oakes & Co. have stopped the importation of oats from Poona on my advice. They tell me that their Bombay butter does not come from Bombay, and when I tried the other day to grow the plague bacillus in sterlised butter, I found *only dead bacilli* in two days, but further experiments are necessary before I can give a positive opinion on the possibility of butter carrying infection.

3. I should like to know whether Government has come to any decision on the question of Bombay imports as we have no power to act under the regulations. The danger of infection by imports *may be small*, but, I think, in the case of a disease like the plague, not only probable but possible dangers should be guarded against.

Enclosure.

Extract from the *Indian Lancet*, 16th February 1897, page 169.

Professor Hankin's experiments.—Professor Hankin tells me that in some of his experiments he added quantities of the bubonic plague microbe to grain. Within 48 hours the microbe had vanished and was no longer to be detected by the tests he employed. If we can rely on the tests employed by this eminent Bacteriologist this would seem to imply that the microbe is unable to continue to exist in grain.

G. No. 783.

Forwarded to the Secretary to Government. The question of Bombay imports was referred under this office No. 738, dated 9th February 1897.

(Signed) G. M. J. MOORE, Lieut.-Col.,
22*nd February* 1897. *President.*

Order—No. 316 M., dated 26th February 1897.

The Sanitary Commissioner's letter read above will be communicated to the President, Municipal Commission, Madras, and to all Collectors with the request that the circular therein referred to may be published in the District Gazettes for the information of the public.

2. As regards the prohibition of importation by rail and road from infected localities of rags, waste paper, bedding, used gunny bags and second-hand clothing, the import of which by sea has already been forbidden, the Government considers that general orders on the subject should be issued by the Government of India, which may be binding on the Railway Companies generally and thus make the prohibition more effective by making it penal on their part to receive at such stations in the Bombay Presidency and other infected areas articles for export to non-infected areas. His Excellency the Governor in Council is not prepared, on the information at present before him, to take steps for the prohibition of the import of food-grains and other food-stuffs from infected localities; and they will also be requested to prohibit the importation from Goa of all articles, the importation of which by sea is already prohibited.

No. 316 M., 26TH FEBRUARY 1897.

3. The following telegram will be despatched to the Government of India :—

"This Government requests that Governor-General in Council will issue orders under Act III of 1897, prohibiting export by rail and road from plague-infected localities and also the import by land from Goa territory of rags, used apparel and bedding, waste paper and used gunny bags, the import of which by sea has already been forbidden. Destruction of all articles carried contrary to such prohibition should, in the opinion of this Government, be also authorised."

(True Extract.)

Secretary to Government.

To the Marine Department.
" the Public Works Department.
" the Revenue Department.
" all Presidents of District Boards.
" all Chairmen of Municipal Councils.
" all Collectors.
" the President, Municipal Commission, Madras.
" the Surgeon-General.
" the Sanitary Commissioner.

Exd. C. M. Thumbuswamy.

When given for copying ____
When copied ____
When examined ____
When signed ____
} 189

READ AGAIN G.O., No. 189 , DATED

ENCLOSURES TO G. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
LETTER OF GOVERNMENT							
STATEMENT WITH DITTO							
PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING WANT FOR DESPATCH IN ORIGINAL.							

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