

THE

Hongkong



Government

GAZETTE.

NEW SERIES.

VICTORIA, SATURDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1859.

VOL. IV. No. 200.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The Contract for publishing this Gazette, entered into on the 24th September, 1853, was terminated on the 30th ultimo; and notice is hereby given that a NEW SERIES of this Gazette will be published hereafter, to commence from the 7th instant, under a New Contract, and that "THE HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE"

Colonial Secretary's Office, Victoria, Hongkong, 2d July, 1855.

By Order,

W. T. MERCER, Colonial Secretary.

ERRATUM.

In last Government Gazette, No. 199, Page 183, in the 67th Regulation for the Government of the Gaol, first line, for "on a Civil Process," read "or on Civil Process."

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The Colonial Surgeon's Report for the past Year, is published for general information.

By Order,

W. T. MERCER, Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Victoria, Hongkong, 15th March, 1859.

THE COLONIAL SURGEON'S REPORT FOR 1858.

CIVIL HOSPITAL, VICTORIA, 3d March, 1859.

The universally lamented and untimely death of my friend, the late Colonial Surgeon, has imposed upon me the duty of making this duty which will be but very imperfectly fulfilled on account of the short period I have held the office, and in consequence of my having been so fully occupied in the practice of my profession and other duties.

I would call the attention of the Government to the fact, that one most important source of information which would make the Colonial Surgeon's Report of much more value than it is at present, is entirely wanting to him. There is no proper Registration of Deaths in this Colony, and therefore when it is asked what percentage of the Inhabitants of this Island die from Climatic diseases? and what form do these diseases assume? only a general and imperfect answer can be given. And yet it is of great importance that this answer should be as correct and comprehensive as possible, for it is daily more and more satisfactorily proved that a very great proportion of the diseases to which our fall victims are owing to causes which are entirely preventable by human means, and which only need to be made evident in order that they may be got rid of.

I would submit that it is highly desirable, and at the same time very feasible, that the same system of Registration of Deaths should be established here as is in use in England, and that interment of the body should not be allowed to take place until the Sexton has received the proper form of Certificate of Death, filled up and signed by the medical attendant of the deceased.

Of course this should not be insisted upon in the case of the Chinese, nor perhaps in that of the Portuguese inhabitants of the Colony, as the former and many of the latter are not attended by duly qualified Medical men, and those who do attend them would not be able to fill up the Certificates in a satisfactory manner.

Were the Registration of the Causes of Death properly carried out, we should in a few years be in possession of a body of statistics which might prove of the greatest value.

That the Sanitary condition of this Colony stands in great need of improvement has been more than once pointed out in previous Surgeons' Reports; but I am moved to insist upon this necessity the more pressingly in the present Report, in consequence of the Colony having been visited during the year by one of the most terrible of those "preventable diseases," whose ravages, if not entirely owing to the most fearfully aggravated and extended by, neglect of proper Drainage and Cleanliness, the evil results of which must act with increased force in a Community so crowded together as that of Victoria, and in a climate so favourable to the decomposition of animal and vegetable products.

I am happy to learn that steps are to be taken to remedy the defects at present existing.

Previously to last Autumn, no well-authenticated case of Cholera was recorded to have happened in Hongkong, and so confident were the Medical Practitioners of the immunity of the place, that it was at first thought by them that the cases of the disease at first reported were merely severe cases of Diarrhoea. But it soon became only too evident that the disease amongst us was the true Asiatic Cholera, for the first symptom was wanting, and it destroyed its victims in an equally short space of time.

As was to be predicted of it, the disease first attacked the worst lodged and worst fed part of the Community—the Chinese, then some Indian coolies, and then the European Seamen both on shore and afloat, and at the same time some of the Soldiers of the Garrison, and the Prisoners in the Gaol. Finally, in three cases it attacked the higher class of European Inhabitants of the Colony, and in one of these cases proved fatal.

At the same time the Portuguese in Macao suffered severely from the disease, and cases occurred in the Forces at Canton, and in some of the Men-of-war in the River.