

a parade of activity they issue rules and orders, and frame contracts to bedizen a report, and there leave it. Their own servants tremble for their position if they proceed to carry out the orders.

We quote the following statements made by Surgeon-Major Barry:—"There are sixteen night soil cart stands in the city. The number of carts in each varies from one or two to—may be—fifty. As the night soil has to be carried through public thoroughfares over three miles from the city to the poudrette factory it is important that they should be in first class working order, not liable to break down, outwardly clean, and with valve fittings calculated to stop effluvia. I went round every depôt and found not a single cart in tolerable working order. Either the barrel was in holes, or the top valve did not fit, or the outflow fittings did not work. The Bhangi had to shove it up with a stick, or batter it down with a stone, or the wheels were broken, or there was no yoke for the bullocks, or there was a cart without a barrel, or a barrel without a cart.

"The night soil contractor nominally is the individual responsible for seeing that the carts are kept in order, but who looked after the contractor I never could discover. Nobody shoved the responsibility on another's shoulders it is true, but everybody was resolute that it should not be saddled on his own. Under such a system, who can wonder at finding in the heart of the city, as I did, carts with only one wheel, full of night soil unremoved for ten days, others full for four or five days, awaiting the pleasure of the contractor to remove them. When a cart broke down there was nobody to report it, nobody to make a fuss about it, the contractor being naturally the last man to take notice of it, as it was in his covenant that he should keep damaged carts in repair out of his own pocket.

"I pass over such incidents in my rounds as finding a loaded night soil cart, lying, I know not for how many days, at the side of the Maháleshvar Road, bereft of a wheel, on its way to the poudrette factory. It is easy to imagine what stenches of decomposition were emitted from such a focus as that in the hot weather. Over these incidents of an isolated character, accidents, so to speak, in a well regulated house, I should not dwell, but they were a part of a *routine of disorder*, all the more glaring because it was the interest of everybody connected with the Municipality, especially of the contractors, to put on their best behaviour, under the influence of our presence, and under the apprehension of fines. If I can speak of those things happening since we took up the work, what must have been the condition of Poona when the contractors had not twenty British soldiers to look after them.

"The terms of their arrangements obliged the night soil contractor to fill the barrels three-quarters, the remaining quarter being assumed to be necessary for the gases. If the filth were removed every morning in its fresh state, as contracted for, before 11 a.m., that is before decomposition had come into full play; and were good, sturdy bullocks (again, as per contract) employed to cover the three miles to the poudrette factory, a good deal more than a twelve-anna cart might safely be carried. But setting these considerations aside, the contractor does not give the Municipality a twelve-anna value. There is no check over the measurements, and the natural result is that the contractor had in use when I came a collection of skin-and-bone bullocks worthy of a place in a famine museum. I

never saw such an aggregate of lean kine. They would have broken down under a twelve-anna load, and I could not help wondering often how many hours were absorbed by some of these wrecks in passing the third mile-stone. That a contractor should have dared, in face of his agreement, to parade before the city such broken-down crocks would alone indicate how little he had to fear from the impetuous zeal of the Municipality. I have no doubt that in order to get such bullocks to draw the carts at all, only as much went into the barrels as was compatible with some demonstration of the work being carried on. Again, it will be seen there was *no check*."

The only person capable of giving any information on any subject appears to have been the Municipal Secretary. Surgeon-Major Barry writes, "The one bright spot in the Municipality, so far as my experience goes, is Mr. Kumthekar, the secretary. He is the only one I have met among them, with a head on his shoulders, of any practical bent, or any grasp of the condition of the town."

Surgeon-Major Barry complains of the "extraordinary behaviour of the Municipality in giving the English clerk six months' leave of absence from 1st March, almost the very day I took over the office. He has been many years in his post, he was the only English-speaking person in it, and he was let go, when I, who did not know Marathi, most wanted him. If the Municipality had resolved to keep back information, and to thwart all access to it, they could scarcely have devised a more palpable plan. They have themselves to thank for the suspicion such action engenders. I do not believe in the trustworthiness of the muster rolls. Let me give a single fact. We found at one muster eleven names of people who had been dead for years—*once more, no check*."

With regard to the condition of the Mahar quarter we read, "I know that it is due to the austerity of official diction to refrain from superlatives if possible, but in this instance no language can properly describe the horrible condition of filth, not self-bred, but poured round these poor people by the Municipality. If my language should seem strong in this case it would be criminal to water it."

A pleasant feature in this most graphic and painful report is the tribute paid to the work done by the British soldiers. "The thoroughness with which the twenty British non-commissioned officers and men went about their exceedingly unpleasant task is, in my opinion, the most creditable incident of the whole campaign."

"Surgeon-Major Barry has, without doubt, suggested the only possible means of grappling with the prevailing neglect and incompetence when he says:—"I am of opinion that there is one way, and only one, of confronting this failure and making sanitary administration a success. Government must take the public health into their own keeping. The Municipality must be given an officer who is a government nominee, responsible only to the Government for the due performance of his duties, and removable only by Government if he fails to perform them well." The reason for this is obvious. "House owners, the very men whose pockets the health officer is obliged in duty to touch, are masters of the situation. It is their influence that brings in the elected members."

We should like to give fuller extracts from this Report, but we have given enough, we think, to show the urgent need of drastic reform.

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