

Blue Book of Colony of Natal 1880

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Accession No. 1101/428
Class No. DEPARTMENTAL

REPORT OF PROTECTOR OF IMMIGRANTS.

THE HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor, and for transmission to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State, and to the Government of India, the following Report for 1880, upon the Indian Immigrants in the Colony :—

ARRIVALS DURING THE YEAR.

During the past year, five ships with Emigrants from India have arrived. The numbers embarked and landed, and the deaths which occurred during the voyages, are shown by the following table :—

Ship.	Embarked.	Births.	Total.	Deaths.	Landed.	Port of Embarkation.
Dunphaile Castle, 2nd ...	318	—	318	3	315	Madras
Umvoti, 6th ...	212	—	212	3	209	"
Dunphaile Castle, 3rd ...	313	2	315	3	312	"
Mars ..	332	—	332	—	332	"
Canada... ..	511	—	511	6	505	Calcutta.
Total	1,686	2	1,688	15	1,673	

The above ships were inspected on arrival, and the provisions of the Indian Immigration Act (VII. of 1871) found to have been complied with, no complaints being made by the Immigrants—excepting by those per "Canada," from Calcutta. These Immigrants complained that an insufficiency of food was supplied them during the voyage, and that of an inferior quality. A large quantity of surplus stores was ascertained by actual survey to have remained on board after the disembarkation of the Immigrants; and, with the exception of the ghee, the quality of the provisions was good. These complaints were enquired into by me at the time, and the matter fully reported on to the Government.

No change in the management of the Agencies was effected during the past year, but negotiations have since been entered into with Mr. Firth, Emigration Agent for Demerara, to perform a like duty for Natal at Calcutta; and should the British Guiana authorities have no objection to the performance of the dual duties by that gentleman, I am of opinion that the interests of neither colony will suffer, but, on the contrary, benefit, inasmuch as the close season for the West Indies is the one in which it

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is most desirable to despatch Coolies to Natal. According to present calculations, only two or three shipments from that Port will be required annually. It is therefore anticipated that Mr. Firth will be able to furnish these shipments without detriment to the Demerara Agency.

The Calcutta Agent reports that great difficulty in obtaining Emigrants has been experienced in consequence of the stringent regulations with regard to the percentage of women which must accompany them.

BIRTHS.

Three hundred and thirty-five (335) births have been registered during the year.

DEATHS.

Two hundred and eighty-five (285) deaths have been registered during the year, being 13·87 per thousand of the population. I append a return of those which have taken place from other than natural causes. (Annexure A.)

MARRIAGES.

Ninety-two (92) marriages have been registered during the year, chiefly among new-arrived Immigrants.

INCREASE AND DECREASE OF POPULATION SINCE 1879.

The following abstract shows the approximate number of Indians now in the Colony :—

Estimated number in 1879 ...	...	...	19,008	
Arrived during 1880 ...	...	...	1,673	
Born in the Colony ...	...	...	335	
				21,016
Deaths during 1880 ...	...	...	285	
Left the Colony ...	...	...	195	
				480
Estimated number in the Colony, Dec. 31, 1880 ...	...	...		20,536

HEALTH.

I have nothing of importance on this subject to add to my Report for 1879. The same complaints are still prevalent, viz., dysentery, diarrhoea, and cutaneous diseases. A low type of fever has not been infrequent, owing to an unusually hot and wet season.

Nothing appears to have been done to mitigate the ill effects caused by the pollution of streams in the Coast Districts. The medical officers attribute a great portion of the sickness which prevails to this source. The doctor of the Avoca circle reports thus, regarding the condition of one of the streams which flows through a thickly-populated district :—"The said river (Little Umhlanga) is in an abominable condition, and I hesitate not to say is quite unfit for man or beast to drink in its present state. Other water is obtainable by the Indians who reside or are located on the banks of this filthy

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stream, but at inconvenient distances. The stench from it at times during the hot weather is most objectionable." Fortunately this cannot be said to be the condition of all the other rivers which run through the Coast districts—this being by far the worst.

Drink is a fruitful source of trouble, and many evils are traceable to it ; but I cannot say that I think it is much on the increase, as more restrictions have been placed on the sale of liquor, and better police supervision is provided in Victoria County, where Indians are most numerous.

HOSPITALS.

The Central Hospitals, three in number, which have been erected, are found to answer their intended purpose admirably, and the planters show every disposition to assist the medical officers in carrying out their instructions with regard to the medical treatment of their Indian labourers.

Estate hospitals do not find favour with the Indians, who prefer, as a rule, when suffering from slight ailments, to be treated in their own houses.

COMPLAINTS.

Only one case of actual ill-usage has been brought to my notice, and this would not have been considered of much moment were it not that the assault was committed on a woman, viz., by an employer of a few Indians. The case was duly brought to the notice of His Excellency the Governor, who directed the cancellation of the contract with the employer, which was immediately carried out. No ill has resulted from the effects of this assault, as it was not by any means of a serious character.

Complaints of a trivial nature, more particularly from the up-country districts, are by no means uncommon, but frequently on enquiry are found to be groundless. These complaints from up-country arise chiefly from a want of supervision by an Inspector, and the difficulty experienced by Indians in bringing their cases before the Magistrates, owing to long distances, and a lack of Interpreters. Consequently, desertions from employers take place, and many of the Indians find their way to the Protector to lay their cases before him, which, as I have stated above, are often frivolous, and made up to excuse their illegal absences. These matters have been duly reported to the Government here, but, as yet, beyond the formation of a Medical Circle and the appointment of a doctor to it, nothing has been done to increase the power of supervision, or to remove the causes of dissatisfaction which exist in this respect. Unless an up-country Inspector is appointed, I would recommend that no more Indians should be indentured to residents in remote districts, and which, I may say, are practically beyond the reach of the Protector, and Magisterial jurisdiction.

VISITATION OF ESTATES.

The Estates on the Coast have been duly visited during the past year ; and I am glad to be able to report that the relations between the planters and their Indian labourers are, as a rule, satisfactory, and the latter, when inclined to work and to behave themselves properly, are contented, and have little to complain of. Latterly, a good number of the recently-arrived Coolies have shown a great disinclination to work, and desertions have not been rare in consequence.

As regards the visitation of up-country farms, it has been found almost impossible to comply with the conditions in this respect, and only a portion of them have been visited. Those farmers who were fortunate in getting good men speak most highly of their labourers, who in turn appear content with their masters; but then again other Indians are frequently very unwilling to remain in isolated places, and positively refuse to return having once made their way back to the Coast.

EDUCATION.

I am pleased to be able to report that progress has been made in this most desirable object. The Superintending Inspector of Schools favours me with the following information:—"During 1880 only eight Schools for Indians have been under Government inspection—four during the whole year, two since 1st September, and two since 1st October. The accompanying table gives some statistics regarding them. (Annexure B.)

"Only four of these—one hundred and ninety-six pupils—are able to read English narrative, containing words of more than two syllables, to write a fair round hand, and to work sums in the first four rules. About sixty Indian children attend the various English schools in the Colony, and vie successfully in all the standards with their European school-fellows.

"The Indian Immigrant School Board has not been able to expend more than £118 6s. 8d. of the £1,000 voted by the Legislative Council for Indian education, owing to the non-arrival from India of the Inspector sent for at the end of 1879. A telegraphic enquiry was sent to the Government Secretary, Madras, in December last, and a similar reply was received a month afterwards stating that a selection had been made, and that particulars would follow by post. The Inspector will make a tour through the Coast Estates immediately after his arrival, with a view to the establishment of Schools wherever practicable, and will report thereon for the information and guidance of the Board."

SOCIAL STATIS.

The Indian population has now attained considerable numbers, and forms a very important portion of the community. The acquisition of land is much desired, and appears to be the great object in view; in fact that each should have a little independence of his own. A great increase in the acreage farmed by these people on their own account has taken place during the last year or two, since the expiry of the five years' indenture, since the re-opening of Immigration. Their gardens, and shops kept by them, may now be found in many parts of the Colony, more particularly in the Coast districts.

RETURN PASSAGES.

I had occasion to remark in my last Annual Report on the subject of grants of land in lieu of return passages to time-expired Indians, but nothing, so far as I can learn, has been done by the Government to carry out the conditions of Section 51, of Law 2, of 1870, since the date of the Report in question. Those Indians who have applied under the conditions of the above-quoted Law—some forty in number—have now large families consisting of from five to ten persons; it is obvious, therefore, that to return these Indians, say forty families (some two hundred individuals), would be an expensive matter; and it is not at all unlikely that the majority of these people, if they do not get the land assigned to them, will ere long demand their return passages. Under the circumstances, I think they should be positively refused the land applied for, or be put in possession of their lots.

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COMMUNICATION WITH INDIA.

Remittances by Immigrants to their friends and relatives in India have amounted to £280 10s. for the year. In addition to this sum, no inconsiderable amount of money has been taken by those who paid their own passages previous to the expiry of their ten years of industrial residence. Forty-four such passengers have returned to India during the past year.

LAWS

Do not appear to call for any amendments, except the Ordinance regarding that most important question, the Law of marriage and divorce, and which should not be lost sight of, as I cannot help being of opinion that the rigidity of the Law in this respect is responsible for many of the crimes which would not be committed were the Protector empowered to grant divorces.

INTERPRETERS.

Only one additional Interpreter has been appointed, a Mr. Doherty, to one of the up-country Magistrates' Courts. I trust that similar appointments will shortly be made in all Divisions where Indians are employed, and where there are vacancies.

CONCLUSION.

A most valuable addition has been made by the appointment of two non-official gentlemen to the Indian Trust Board, viz., Messrs. H. Binns and C. Manning, both of whom recently occupied seats in the Legislative Council. Their experience and knowledge of the various matters affecting the general question of Indian Immigration to Natal have been a great assistance to me, and will tend in the future to the advantage of all concerned.

It is again my agreeable duty to express, for His Excellency's information, my indebtedness to the several officers of the Department for the zeal and efficiency displayed by them in the performance of their onerous duties, and which leave nothing further to be desired from them.

I have, &c.,

S. GRAVES,

Protector of Immigrants.

Department of Immigration, Durban, Natal, March 31, 1881.

REPORT OF PROTECTOR OF IMMIGRANTS (continued).

ANNEXURE A.

RETURN OF DEATHS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS
FROM OTHER THAN NATURAL CAUSES.

When died, and Where.	Name and Number.	Sex.	Cause of Death.
Isipingo.—Nov. 19, 1879 ...	Syadamah Bee, No. 2,741	Female ...	Burn
Durban Hospital.—April 8, 1880...	Abdool Gafoor, No. 19,848	Male ...	Snake bite
Albion, Isipingo.—May 9, 1880 ...	Manniamma, No. 16,858	Female ...	Accidental drowning
Cato Manor.—Jan. 18, 1880 ...	Bunsee, No. 8,688 ...	Male ...	Strangulation
Masden, Umgeni.—Jan. 16, 1880...	... ..	Female ...	Accidental Smothering
Jos. Harvey's Estate, near Verulam.—July 13, 1880 ...	Narrainen, No. 5,249 ...	Male ...	Accidental burning
Seacow Lake	Not known	Girl ...	Burnt
Umtata Estate.—April 8, 1879 ...	Mungray, No. 12,626 ...	Male ...	Discovered in a cane-field, April 8, 1879, with marks of violence, evidently met with a violent death
Alexandra County.—Aug. 26, 1880	Choorae, No. 18,339 ...	Male ...	Supposed to be murdered
Umhlazeni River, near 'Redcliffe.—Nov. 18, 1880	Velan, No. 21,639 ...	Male ...	Drowning
Umtata Estate.—Nov. 5, 1880 ...	Parasuramen, No. 22,834	Male ...	Strangulation, supposed to be suicidal
La Mercy.—Nov. 10, 1880 ...	Soobramanien, No. 19,158	Male ...	Accident by the fly-wheel of machinery
Mount Edgcombe.—Nov. 18, 1880	Soobatha Ramannah, No. 17,138	Male ...	Drowned in a stream on Mount Edgcombe Estate during the heavy rains
Delta Estate.—Dec. 14, 1880 ...	Lutche Ram	Male ...	Internal injuries, occasioned by falls from and under a cart

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ANNEXURE B.

SCHOOL RETURN.

No.	School.	Under Management of	No. of Pupils in Regular Attendance.			Average daily Number of Absentees.	Average Number of Free Pupils.	Government Expenditure.	Monthly Rate of School Fees.	Amount of School Fees Collected.
			Boys.	Girls.	Total.					
1	Durban Day, No. 1 ...	Wesleyan Church ...	40	10	50	12	1	£ s. d. 50 0 0	} 6d. to 2s.	£ s. d. 11 19 0
2	Durban Evening, No. 1 ...	"	10	0	10	3	0	2s.		8 4 0
3	Durban Day, No. 2 ...	Church of S. Africa	35	4	39	8	0	} 40 0 0	} 1s.	8 1 0
4	Durban Evening, No. 2 ...	"	12	0	12	4	0				2s.	3 8 0
5	Pietermaritzburg Day ...	"	20	7	27	5	2	} 13 6 8	} 2s.	10 14 0
6	Pietermaritzburg Evening...	"	8	0	8	3	0				2s. 6d.	1 15 0
7	Bridgeford ...	Wesleyan Church ...	34	1	35	2	17	} 15 0 0	} 6d. to 1s.	0 14 0
8	Cornubia ...	"	15	0	15	1	0			
Total ...			174	22	196	38	20	118 6 8		45 0 6

DEPARTMENTAL

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