

Government of Madras.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

Recd.

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} 1908.

Enclosures

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G.O., No. 204, 18th March 1908.

pp-8

Conference of Curators of Museums in India.

Recording copy of the preliminary report on the — held at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, in December 1907.

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers :—

I

G.O., Nos. 361, 362, Educational, dated 11th June 1907.

II

Letter—from M. M. S. GUBBAY, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry (Practical Arts and Museums).
To—the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Educational Department.
Dated—Calcutta, the 4th March 1908.
No.—2324—2330-9.

With reference to the correspondence ending with your letter No. 362, dated the 11th June 1907, I am directed to forward, for information, a copy of the preliminary report on the Conference of Curators of Museums in India which was held at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, in December last. A copy of the full proceedings of the Conference will be forwarded later.

No. 2331-9.

A copy, with a copy of the Conference report, is forwarded to the Foreign Department, with reference to the correspondence ending with the endorsement from that department, No. 13 I.C., dated the 21st November 1907.

ENCLOSURE.

Letter—from N. ANNANDALE, Esq., Secretary to the Trustees of the Indian Museum, Natural History Section.
To—the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Commerce and Industry.
Dated—the 15th February 1908.
No.—209.

In continuation of this office letter No. 1118, dated the 6th December last, I have the honour to forward herewith a preliminary report on the Museum Conference. A copy of the full proceedings of the Conference will be sent to you later.

Report on the Museum Conference.

The Conference assembled at 10 A.M. on December 27th in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the following delegates being present :—

E. Thurston, Esq.
Hon'ble Mr. Ibrahim Rahimtoola, C.I.E.
C. L. Burns, Esq.
G. D. Ganguli, Esq.
J. Cameron, Esq.
Pandit Gauri Shanker.
Syed Enayet Karim, Esq.
J. W. N. Cumming, Esq.
Dr. M. K. Kanga.
Dr. A. Mitra.
P. Hide, Esq.
T. H. Holland, Esq., F.R.S.
J. H. Burkill, Esq.
Dr. N. Annandale.

Proceedings were opened by the Hon'ble Mr. J. F. Finlay, C.S.I., who welcomed the delegates to Calcutta.

Mr. T. H. Holland, F.R.S., was proposed as Chairman and elected unanimously. Mr. Holland explained the genesis of the Conference and asked the delegates to elect a Secretary. Dr. N. Annandale was elected Secretary.

The Conference then proceeded to draw up a programme of topics to be discussed and arranged that each topic should be introduced by one of their number. Mr. Cumming brought forward a number of questions as regards the details of Museum management. It was agreed that each member who spoke on any of the topics should be asked to submit a summary of his remarks in writing to the Secretary, in order that there might be no misunderstanding, and that a sub-committee should be chosen to summarize the discussion of each day's meeting and draft resolutions based thereon. Messrs. Annandale, Burns and Cameron were appointed as a sub-committee to deal with the first day's proceedings.

The programme of topics agreed upon was as follows :—

- (1) Systematic exchange of duplicates and casts of unique specimens, to be introduced by Dr. Annandale.
- (2) Provincial organization of collecting in the field, to be introduced by Mr. Cumming.
- (3) The publication of results, to be introduced by Dr. Annandale.
- (4) Disposal of type specimens, their registration in catalogues distributed for the information of workers. The registration of new specimens, to be introduced by Mr. Burkill.
- (5) Classification of public exhibits and reference collections, to be introduced by Mr. Holland.
- (6) Methods for the preservation of specimens and labels specially suitable to the climate, to be introduced by Mr. Burkill.
- (7) Recognized special functions of particular Provincial Museums to be introduced by Mr. Thurston.
- (8) The preparation of guides for the public, to be introduced by Mr. Thurston.
- (9) Art sale-rooms in connection with Museums, to be introduced by Mr. Cameron.
- (10) Mr. Cumming's questions.
- (11) Financial aspects of Museums to be introduced by Mr. Cumming.
- (12) The question of separating the Botanical collection from the Lucknow Provincial Museum for the purpose of handing over the specimens to the Horticultural Gardens, Lucknow, to be introduced by Mr. Ganguli.
- (13) Question of an Annual Museum Conference, to be introduced by Dr. Mitra.

The first item on the programme was then introduced by Dr. Annandale and Messrs. Holland, Cameron, Burkill, Thurston, Burns, Hyde, Cumming and Dr. Mitra also discussed the question.

It was agreed that the delegates should carry out an inspection of the Indian Museum on Sunday the 29th December.

The meeting was then adjourned in order that the delegates from the Punjab, who had not yet reached Calcutta, might take part in the discussion.

The Conference reassembled in the Indian Museum at 10-30 A.M. on Monday, December 30th, Messrs. Percy Brown and Bhai Ram Singh also being present in addition to the delegates already mentioned.

The Secretary explained that Messrs. Percy Brown and Bhai Ram Singh, delegates from the Punjab, had read the remarks made by delegates as regards the first topic for discussion on the programme and had expressed their views in writing.

The following resolutions as regards the first topic were proposed and passed unanimously :—

- (1) That the systematic exchange of duplicates and of reproduction of unique specimens between the Indian Museum and the Provincial Museums would be beneficial to both from a scientific and an economic point of view.
- (2) That in order to ascertain the wants of the different Museums as regards duplicates and reproductions, the Superintendent of the Indian Museum should have opportunities of consulting with the officers of the Provincial Museums from time to time.
- (3) That lists of duplicate specimens available for distribution in the various Museums should be circulated.
- (4) That, in order that these proposals should be carried out, it is necessary that there should be a considerable increase in the expert staff of the Central Museum at Calcutta and in the skilled subordinate staff both of the Indian and of Provincial Museums.
- (5) As the qualities and training necessary for subordinates who have the sorting, cataloguing and distribution of specimens cannot be gauged by the ordinary standard of examination, Directors of Public Instruction in India should be informed of the qualifications necessary for the work and of the prospects of the boys fitted to undertake it, and that selected candidates for the posts in the Provincial Museums should undergo a period of training in the Indian Museum.

* The word "Provincial" in this respect is understood to include Presidential and State Museums.

Dr. Annandale and Mr. Thurston were appointed to draft resolutions as regards the topics discussed during the remainder of the Conference.

The second topic, namely, Provincial organization of collecting in the field, was then introduced by Mr. Cumming, who gave a detailed account of what was being done as regards collecting in connection with the Quetta Museum. Other delegates having expressed their opinion, the following resolutions were proposed and passed unanimously:—

(1) That taxidermists for the Provincial Museums should be trained in the Indian Museum, and that an expert taxidermist should be employed from Europe or America and attached to the staff of the Indian Museum, in order that he might both do the work of that institution and supervise the training of the Provincial men.

(2) That in order to assist the Indian Museum in its survey of the fauna of India, local Museums shall give what assistance they can, and that the Superintendent of the Natural History Section shall be asked to draw up and circulate a statement of the special requirements of the Museum.

(3) That in order to interest recognized authorities on Natural History, Archaeology and other subjects in the different provinces they shall be given a definite position on the staff of the Museums by their appointment as honorary officers.

The third topic was then introduced by Dr. Annandale, namely, that of the publication of results. It was agreed that a sub-committee should be formed to discuss the question of art publications and report to the Conference on the following day. Messrs. Burkill, Thurston, Brown, Burns and Mitra were appointed for the purpose. Several delegates took part in the discussion and the following resolutions were unanimously passed as regards publications other than those dealing with art:—

(1) That the "Records" and "Memoirs" of the Geological Survey shall be the recognized official medium for the publication of scientific geological work in India, the "Records" and "Memoirs" of the Indian Museum for that of zoology and the publications of the Botanical Survey for that of botanical work, the "Records" in each case being devoted to shorter papers and notes, and the "Memoirs" to more detailed monographs.

(2) That in every case the size of the "Records" shall be super royal octavo ($11\frac{1}{2} \times 7$).

(3) That in the "Records" each paper shall commence on a separate page.

The sub-committee submitted the following report as regards art publications and the Conference accepted it unanimously after several delegates had expressed their views:—

The sub-committee consider it desirable that the publications on Art—Pure and Industrial—made in India should be unified. The publication should take the form of a serial edited and conducted in a way similar to the Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Zoological, Botanical and Archaeological departments.

The Provincial monographs on Industrial Arts and the Technical Art Series published by the Survey of India should be absorbed. From the serial extra plates might be easily struck off for the use of Schools of Arts and for other purposes.

The Committee believe that the present system, by which the Provincial Governments are asked to write monographs on specified subjects, cannot much longer continue, because the subjects common to most of the provinces have now been exhausted, and further the Committee believe that the Technical Art Series finds a far more extensive sale among European visitors to India than among the class for whom it was intended. The class to which these visitors belong would be more easily reached by a serial than they are by the present publication, while the artisans should be reached by pattern books through the Schools of Art. The serial would form the basis from which the designs of the pattern books be taken.

Mr. Burkill opened the discussion on the fourth topic, viz., disposal of type specimens, etc. He dealt with the subject under three headings, (1) the disposal of type specimens, (2) their registration in catalogues, and (3) the registration of new specimens. Mr. Holland invited the attention of the Conference to the importance of "types" and to the necessity of registering all specimens as they were received. Other delegates expressed their views and the following resolutions were passed unanimously:—

(1) That all zoological "types" in India shall be deposited in the Indian Museum, but that the Superintendent of the Natural History Section shall be empowered, with the consent of the Trustees, to transfer to the British Museum (Natural History) such entomological "types" as may be, in his opinion, in danger of destruction owing to the climate.

(2) That all Palaeontological "types" shall be placed in charge of the Director of the Geological Survey, and all Botanical "types" in that of the Director of the Botanical Survey.

(3) That in each case either a duplicate, a drawing or a photograph of the type shall be sent to the institution from which the original specimen was obtained, and that the "type" itself may be lent for scientific examination to this or other institutions if it can be sent with safety.

(4) That it would be useful that lists of types should be published periodically.

(5) That all specimens received at any Museum shall be entered in a general register as expeditiously as possible and that the register shall be divided into volumes representing the main sections of the collection in such a way that the ordinary clerk can appreciate the

differences between these sections at sight and with no possibility of confusion. The following eight headings were approved as being suitable for the collections of a Provincial Museum:—

1. Archaeology and Epigraphy.
2. Coins and Medals.
3. Art and Ethnology.
4. Economic Products.
5. Geology.
6. Plants.
7. Animals.
8. Books, Maps and Manuscripts.

The fifth topic, namely, the classification of public exhibits and reference collections was introduced by Mr. Holland, who explained the proposals recently made by the Trustees of the Indian Museum as regards the distribution of the collections into their proper sections. It was pointed out by several delegates that local Museums were not able to afford the staff necessary for a separation of the collections into separate sections. The following resolution was proposed and passed unanimously:—

The Conference expressed their approval of the scheme for splitting the Indian Museum into sections as proposed by the Trustees and were of the opinion that the principles involved were the best so far as the Central Museum for India was concerned.

The sixth topic, namely, methods for the preservation of specimens and labels specially suitable to the climate was introduced by Mr. Burkill. Several delegates having expressed their views, the following resolution was proposed and passed unanimously:—

(1) Dr. Annandale and Mr. Burkill were requested to incorporate their remarks on the subjects of the preservation of specimens in a note and to circulate them to the different Museums. They were also requested to conduct systematic experiments on the effect of naphthaline in preserving specimens of different kinds from the attack of insects.

Mr. Thurston introduced the seventh topic, viz., recognised special functions of particular Provincial Museums. Other delegates having expressed their opinion, the following resolutions were proposed and passed by a majority:—

(1) That the Provincial Museums of India should in the main confine their scope to the Presidency, Province or State in which they are situated.

(2) That in the opinion of the Conference, it is desirable that in every Province or State there should be but one Government or State public Museum.

(3) That the officers of every Provincial Museum should have direct access to a good reference library, and that this library should whenever possible be connected with the Museum.

Mr. Thurston also introduced the eighth topic, namely, the preparation of guides for the public. After several delegates had expressed their views, the following resolution was proposed and passed by a majority:—

That the preparation of guides and catalogues is eminently desirable provided that such works can be prepared by the officer in charge or by some competent authority. That the issue of guides in the vernacular languages is quite unnecessary.

The ninth topic, namely, Art sale rooms in connection with Museums, was introduced by Mr. Cameron. Several members expressed their views but no resolutions were passed.

The tenth topic, namely Mr. Cumming's questions.

It was agreed that Mr. Cumming should discuss the various points brought forward by him with the heads of the different sections of the Indian Museum. Mr. Cumming did not consider it necessary that his questions should be discussed further by the Conference.

The eleventh topic, viz., Financial aspects of Museums, was introduced by Mr. Cumming. Several members having expressed their views, the following resolution was proposed and passed unanimously:—

That each member of the Conference be asked to send to the Secretary for distribution and consideration an abstract statement of the financial position, needs, prospects of the Museum he represents, and sources of the funds on which the Museum depends.

The twelfth topic, namely the question of separating the Botanic collections from the Lucknow Provincial Museum, was introduced by Mr. Ganguli. Several members having expressed their opinion the following resolution was proposed and passed unanimously:—

The Conference approve the proposal of the Committee of the Lucknow Museum to dismantle the collection of Botanical specimens at present exhibited in that Museum, but recommend that the specimens should not be destroyed, dispersed or sent elsewhere until the Reporter on Economic Products, who will be able to visit Lucknow in a few months, has had an opportunity of inspecting and reporting upon them.

The thirteenth topic, namely the question of an Annual Museum Conference, was introduced by Dr. Mitra. Several members having expressed their views, the following resolutions were proposed and passed unanimously:—

(1) That a Conference be held triennially.

(2) That a Standing Committee be appointed to make arrangements regarding future conferences and to advise on Museum matters.

(3) That the Standing Committee shall take steps to ensure that bodies interested in Museum matters shall be represented at future conferences.

(4) That the Standing Committee consist of five members.

(5) That the Standing Committee consist of Messrs. T. H. Holland, E. Thurston, Percy Brown and of the Superintendents of the Natural History and Industrial Sections of the Indian Museum and they shall have the power to fill vacancies that may occur in the membership of the Committee.

N. ANNANDALE,
Secretary, Museum Conference.

Order—No. 204, Educational, dated 18th March 1908.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

H. D. TAYLOR,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Superintendent, Government Museum.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O., No. 204, EDUCATIONAL,
DATED 18TH MARCH 1908.

[SUBJECT.—*Preliminary report on the Conference of Curators of Museums.*]

From the Government of India, dated 4th March 1908, No. 2324-2330/9.

Advance copies of the letter and report have been circulated to His Excellency the Governor and the Honourable Members.

2. A draft order recording the report is submitted for approval. The receipt of the detailed report may be awaited.

P.R.—17-3-08.

K. RANGASWAMI AYYANGAR—17-3-08.

C. A. SOUTER—17-3-08.

H. D. TAYLOR—18-3-08.

[G.O., No. 204, Educational, dated 18th March 1908.]

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Papers of other departments.

Department.	Number.	Date.	Original (=O.) or spare copy (=S. C.).	Despatcher to note the return of the papers to the departments concerned.



No. 2324-2330-9.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

(PRACTICAL ARTS AND MUSEUMS).

Calcutta the 4th March 1908.

From

M.H.S. Gahray, Esq. I.C. S.

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India.

To

The Secretary to the Govt. of Madras, Educational Department,
MADRAS.

Sir,

With reference to the correspondence ending with your
letter No. 362, dated the 11th June, 1907, I am directed
to forward, for information, a copy of the preliminary report
on the Conference of Curators of Museums in India which was
held at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, in December last. A copy
of the full Proceedings of the Conference will be forwarded later.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

K. S. Gahray

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India.

No. 2331-9.

A copy, with a copy of the Conference report, is forwarded
to the Foreign Department, with reference to the correspondence
ending with the endorsement from that Department, No. 13 I.C.
dated the 21st November 1907.

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The S. G. M.