

Government

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89
G.O. No. 588, 4th June 1915.

Government Museum.

Furnishing the Government of United Provinces with a brief note on the history and methods of working of the Museum at Madras.

Government of Madras.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

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G.O. No. 588, 4th June 1915.

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Furnishing the Government of United Provinces with a brief note on the history and methods of working of the Museum at Madras.

No. 588, EDUCATIONAL, 4TH JUNE 1915.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper :—

Letter—from P. MASON, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to Government, United Provinces, Industries Department.

To—the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Educational Department.

Dated—Naini Tal, the 7th May 1915.

No.—950—XVIII—185.

I am directed to ask that with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council this Government may be furnished at the earliest convenient date with information as to the history and methods of working of the Victoria Museum at Madras.

Order—No. 588, Educational, dated the 4th June 1915.

The Government of the United Provinces will be addressed.

(True Extract.)

P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR,
Secretary to Government.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

No. 589.

From

THE HON'BLE DIWAN BAHADUR

P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR AVARGAL, C.I.E.,

Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Educational Department,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE

UNITED PROVINCES,

INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT.

Dated Ootacamund, the 4th June 1915.

SIR,

With reference to your letter No. 950, dated the 7th May 1915, I am directed to forward (1) a brief note on the history and working of the Museum at Madras, (2) a copy of the report of the Superintendent of the institution on the subject of its more extended use, and (3) a copy of the proceedings of this Government passed thereon.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR,

Secretary to Government.

APPENDIX I.

A brief note on the history and working of the Provincial Museum at Madras.

1. The Madras Government Museum was opened in 1851 in accordance with the wishes of the Court of Directors of the East India Company that a central museum should be established at the Presidency town, with smaller ones at the principal towns in the mufassal. As the local museums started at the same time at Bellary, Cuddalore, Mangalore, Rajahmundry and Ootacamund did not make much progress, they were closed in 1861 and merged with the Central Museum at Madras, which still continues to be the only public museum in this Presidency. A new set of buildings was erected for the Museum in 1894. In addition to the large collection of archaeological exhibits, which includes the Amaravati marbles, relics from the ruined Buddhist stupa at Bhattiprolu, copper-plate grants, sculptured stones and figures, coins, bronze and copper images, pre-historic implements and pottery, the exhibits in the Museum are arranged in seven sections, namely, Botany, Mineralogy, Natural History, Economic, Arts, Industries and Ethnological.

2. The Museum is managed by a whole-time Superintendent on a salary of Rs. 500—50—800 with free quarters. The Superintendent is also Principal Librarian of the Connemara Public Library attached to the Museum and Director of the Marine Aquarium. He is eligible for the privileges regarding leave and pension granted under the Civil Service Regulations to officers of the Indian Educational Service. At the Museum itself, he has under his control the following establishment:—

	Pay.
	RS.
Personal Assistant*	100—10—200
Archæological Assistant	100— 5—150
Zoological Assistant	100— 5—150
Herbarium-keeper (Botanical Assistant)	100— 2—120
Head clerk and cash keeper	50— 1— 60
Clerk	35— 1— 40
Do.	30— 1— 35
Do.	25— 1— 30
Do.	20— 1— 25
Taxidermist	30— 1— 35
Do.	20— 1— 25

* Also Sub-Librarian of the Connemara Public Library.

In addition to the above, a staff of 31 peons (gallery attendants) on pay ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 18 is employed in the Museum.

The Personal Assistant, in addition to the general management of the staff, has to see to correspondence and to check all bills and accounts. The Archæological Assistant looks after the Arts section also. The Zoological Assistant frequently tours with one of the taxidermists to collect specimens. The Botanical Assistant is in charge of the botanical and economic galleries, also frequently tours and is the Museum photographer. The duties of the first and second clerks are confined to the Museum office, to the inspection of the gallery attendants and to seeing that the buildings are kept clean. They see to the opening and closing of the buildings and are in charge of the keys of all the cases which are locked.

The gallery attendants are directly supervised by the head peon and the clerk on duty. The former posts the peons to the several galleries, arranges for their relief for meals by turns and goes round daily not less than four times at irregular intervals differing from day to day. The clerk on duty similarly inspects the rooms, separately. The head peon and the clerk on duty are required to sign their names, noting the hour every time they go round on a slip with which each gallery attendant is provided. These slips are collected in the evening and scrutinized by the Superintendent.

3. The Museum is open from 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. except on Fridays, when it is closed for cleaning. The first Saturday in each month is reserved for Indian female visitors. The Museum being open on Sundays and other gazetted holidays, the members of the staff are allowed compensation leave by turns.

4. The Museum is maintained entirely from Provincial funds and the Superintendent, who is directly under the orders of Government in the Educational Department, is in certain respects recognised as the head of a department. He submits to Government an annual report on the working of the institution.

APPENDIX II.

Letter—from J. R. HENDERSON, Esq., M.B., C.M., F.L.S., Superintendent, Government Museum.

To—the Secretary to Government, Educational Department.

Dated—the 9th May 1914.

No.—375.

I have the honour to report on the subject of the utilization of museums in India for educational purposes. My remarks with reference to the Madras Museum may for convenience be arranged under two headings, shewing (1) what has been done in the past and is being done at present to utilize this institution for educational purposes; (2) what, in my opinion, might be done to increase the educational facilities. It will be seen that my considerations deal solely with the comparatively small number of educated persons who visit museums in India, for I agree with the trustees of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, that while the sub-conscious education received by illiterate visitors is by no means to be despised, the most that a museum can do for this class, "is to provide a vast and above all an orderly spectacle which impresses their minds and thus prepares them for the reception of new ideas."

I. Past and present educational facilities in the Madras Museum—(a) *Special exhibits*.—While the general collections of South Indian animals, minerals, geological specimens, etc., are undoubtedly of great value to students and specialists, in a number of the galleries index-cases have also been arranged, to show structural and other details by means of exhibits which are not confined to South Indian specimens. To take a single example, in the Bird Gallery there is a case illustrating the general external characters and osteology of birds, which is of undoubted use to students. The student of Zoology is particularly well provided for in the numerous osteological exhibits to be found in all the animal galleries, and the specimens in the Botanical gallery have been arranged almost entirely for utilization by Botanical students. While I still hope to improve these special educational exhibits, want of space and other considerations will prevent much more from being attempted in this direction. All the leading colleges in which the natural sciences are taught have their own class museums, and it must not be forgotten that special educational exhibits are more or less out of place in an ordinary museum, because they are often of little or no interest to the general public. In my opinion the Madras Museum compares very favourably with other public museums, in the direct facilities it has placed in the way of students, more particularly in the natural sciences.

(b) *Museum Lectures*.—A scheme for the delivery of popular lectures at the Museum was originated by Surgeon-General, G. Bidie, but my predecessor only continued the series for a single season (1885-86). Dr. Thurston, in 1895-96, gave a course of practical demonstrations in "Anthropology and Anthropometric Methods" to students preparing for the local B.A. degree in History, and repeated the course three years later. In 1904, while Acting Superintendent, I gave a course of twelve lectures at the Museum, to Training School Masters, on "The study of animals." Again in 1909, while still Acting Superintendent, I gave eight lectures on "The Study of Indian Animal Life," to teachers in European and Training Schools, from various parts of the Presidency. These two courses, which were well attended, were conducted with the active co-operation of the Educational Department. Finally, on Saturday afternoons in November and December last, I delivered four public lectures on the "Common Vertebrate Animals of Madras." In selecting a subject, the choice was limited to one illustrated by specimens which could be conveniently removed from the Museum galleries to the theatre, and which were not too small to be properly seen by the audience. The lectures were intimated in the chief local newspapers and in all the Madras first grade colleges. They attracted fair audiences, chiefly of students, but as, in order to obviate artificial lighting of the theatre, they were held from 4 to 5 P.M. the time was probably not very convenient for the general public.

(c) *Museum demonstrations*.—Both when Acting Superintendent, and later when I was confirmed in the appointment, I frequently availed myself of opportunities of conducting parties of visitors round the Museum, and in consequence was led to form a high opinion of the educational value of such demonstrations. While on leave in 1912, I investigated the methods of the only two "Museum Guides" then I believe appointed in Britain, at the British Museum and the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, and was so much impressed by what I saw that I determined to start the system in Madras. Accordingly last year, after ascertaining that the Educational Department were sympathetic and that they were willing to make the preliminary arrangements, I determined to commence with pupils from the higher classes of High Schools in Madras City. In thus deciding to make the experiment with school boys rather than with college students, I was led from a somewhat lengthy experience of the latter class to believe that their thoughts are so occupied by the preparation of examinations, that they would be less likely to appreciate the acquisition of knowledge which did not come within the immediate scope of their special studies. Moreover, it appeared to me that the teachers of college students could more appropriately deal with the specialised exhibits to which reference has

already been made. The plan which has been carried out from early in November 1913 up to the middle of last month, consisted in receiving regularly every Monday and Tuesday afternoon at the Museum, parties of 75 pupils, divided into three batches each accompanied by a teacher to maintain discipline. Experience has shown that 25 is the maximum number which can be satisfactorily dealt with by each guide, and that one hour is sufficient for each demonstration. One batch was conducted by my Zoological assistant over the Zoological collections, the second by the Botanical assistant over the Botanic and Economic collections, and the third by myself over the remaining sections of the Museum. The arrangement with regard to the schools participating in the demonstrations were made by the Educational Department, who drew up regular programmes which were communicated both to the schools and to me. The method adopted in imparting instruction, consisted in taking a comparatively small number of typical exhibits to illustrate broad general lessons, avoiding all technicalities and details. The pupils were freely questioned and in turn invited to ask questions of the demonstrator. Many of them took notes and, I believe, they were usually required afterwards to furnish written accounts of the demonstrations. I am convinced that the boys' interests are awakened during these visits, and that it is possible, by means of the demonstrations, to impart useful information which is not included in the ordinary school curriculum. The time thus spent is reckoned part of the school work for purposes of attendance, and in order to curtail as far as possible the period of absence from school, the demonstration commenced between 3 and 4 in the afternoon. In addition to these demonstrations to school boys, a series, also arranged for by the Educational Department, was given to teachers in Madras schools by myself on Saturdays from 10 to 11 A.M., during November and December last. The instruction imparted in this second series was of course somewhat different, and consisted chiefly in giving hints on those exhibits which are most likely to afford material for general lessons, should the teachers desire to conduct their pupils over the Museum. The programme provided for 26 teachers attending each of these special demonstrations.

II. Proposals for the improvement of the educational facilities in the Madras Museum—(a) Museum Lectures.—If it is decided to continue and still further develop the courses of lectures at the Museum, it seems to me imperative that certain improvements be effected in the theatre, and that the usual lecture accessories be provided. Apart from the stage the theatre is very inadequately lighted, and improvements in this direction will be necessary if lectures be held, as in my opinion they should be held, with artificial light. As there are many museum exhibits, which it is either impossible or inadvisable to show at a public lecture, the custom now almost universally adopted of exhibiting these by means of lantern slides should I think be followed here. For this purpose an up-to-date electric lantern is necessary and the use of such an instrument would greatly contribute to the success of the scheme. A few other accessories, such as a lantern stand and operator's table, lecturer's table, screen for pictures, black-board, etc., would complete the equipment. The necessary recurring expenses would provide for the preparation of slides, diagrams, etc., electric current, overtime payment of servants, advertisement, and for the remuneration of lecturers. As regards the last item, the Government of India have sanctioned the payment of a fee of Rs. 100 for each lecture at the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and it is hoped that the same arrangement will be given effect to in Madras. In my opinion the lectures should be restricted to subjects which can be illustrated by specimens in the museum collections, and that only persons who have made a special study of the subject selected should be asked to lecture.

(b) Museum Demonstrations.—It is now generally recognised in England that it is not advisable to require members of a museum staff to perform the work of regular guides, and that it is better, both from the point of view of the museum and of visitors, that specially qualified persons should be appointed for the purpose. I may add that experience of the system in Madras has led me on the whole, to form the same conclusion. Apart from the fact that the staff here have always as much work on hand as they are able to deal with, and that consequently the time spent in demonstrations is taken from their more legitimate duties, it is frequently highly inconvenient to leave a piece of special work which one may have had unexpectedly to undertake. Moreover, one or other member of the staff is frequently absent on tour, and there is often little time in which to give warning of this. I am of opinion, therefore, that special guides should be appointed by the Educational Department, and if this be done it would be possible to extend the working of the scheme and deal with a much larger number of visitors than hitherto. I would be prepared to give every assistance to these guides and if necessary special courses of instruction. I would of course still hold myself responsible for conducting over the museum distinguished visitors, specialists, and parties of tourists, etc., who from time to time visit the institution.

(c) Research.—At present there are no facilities of any kind for the carrying out of work at the Museum by persons who are not members of the staff. Hitherto there has been no special demand for the prosecution of research work, but in course of time it is likely to arise. The Madras University has recently established studentships to enable graduates to undertake research, and it is possible that some of the holders might conduct their investigations at the Museum, with advantage both to that institution and to themselves. While I have at present no definite proposals to bring forward under this head, I would remark that a part of the Oriental Manuscripts Library, situated in the old Museum building, which will be vacated when the new University Library is built, might perhaps at a later date be utilised for this purpose.

APPENDIX III.

Government Proceedings No. 1178, Educational, dated the 15th October 1914.

The Government have read with interest the suggestive report of the Superintendent, Government Museum, on the subject of the more extended use of the institution under his control. They observe that Mr. Henderson is already doing useful work in opening up the educational influences and opportunities of the Museum. They generally approve of the further proposals submitted by him for this purpose and hope that these will re-act on the improvement of the institution.

2. The Government recognise the usefulness of the scheme of delivering popular lectures at the Museum and they consider it desirable that this scheme should be continued and still further developed. The Superintendent will accordingly be requested to submit detailed proposals for the improvements required in the Museum theatre in this regard and the provision of the necessary accessories, together with an estimate of the recurring and non-recurring expenditure involved thereby.

3. The Government also recognise the necessity for the employment of special guides for the purpose of conducting parties of visitors over the Museum and of explaining to them the exhibits therein. The Director of Public Instruction will be requested to submit, in consultation with the Superintendent, Government Museum, proposals for these appointments.

4. As regards the provision of facilities for carrying out research work in the Museum, the Government are of opinion that action in this direction should be deferred until the old Museum building, which is at present occupied by the Oriental Manuscripts Library, is vacated and handed over to the Superintendent.

6
EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT.

NOTES CONNECTED WITH G.O. No. 588, EDUCATIONAL, DATED
THE 4TH JUNE 1915.

[SUBJECT.—*History and methods of working of the Government Museum at Madras.*]

Previous paper :

G.O. 975, Educational, 18th August 1914.

From the Government of the United Provinces, No. 950, dated the 7th May 1915.

The Government of the United Provinces request that they may be furnished with information about the history and methods of working of the Government Museum, Madras. The Government of Bihar and Orissa made a similar request last year and a brief note was prepared and sent to that Government. Submitted that a copy of the same note with necessary alterations, together with a copy of the report of the Superintendent of the Museum on the subject of the more extended use of the institution and a copy of the proceedings of this Government passed thereon, may be furnished to that Government.

2. A draft letter is placed below for approval.

A.S.—22-5-15.

B.G.—22-5-15.

P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR—25-5-15.

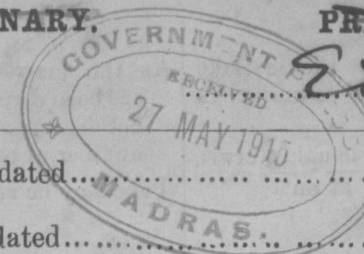
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Sir,

In reference to your letter
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directed to forward (1) a brief note
on the history and ^{methods of} ~~the~~ working of the
~~RANAM~~ Museum at Madras,
(2) a copy of the report of the Sup^t
of the ^{institute} ~~Museum~~ on the subject of ^{its} ~~the~~
more extended use of ~~the~~ ^{its} ~~institutions~~
and

and (3) a copy of the proceedings
of this Govt. passed thereon.

as
21/5/15

I have etc

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~~25/5/15~~

[appendices