

E. J. P. H. (1949) Department.

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[Despatch Abstract.]

J. H. R. d. — 25th Session —
Proceedings — Report — Papers
recorded.

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Back Papers.

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Further Papers.

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No. 1582-D-VII/48-26.

Madras Record Office,
Chittoor, 30th December 1948.

From

Rao Bahadur Dr. B.S. Baliga, Ph.D. (Lond.),
Curator, Madras Record Office, CHITTOOR.

To

The Secretary to Government,
Education and Public Health Department,
Fort St. George, MADRAS.

Sir,

Sub:- Indian Historical Records Commission - 25th
Session - Proceedings - Report.

Ref:- G.O. No. 1681, Public (Political), dated 31st
May 1944.

I beg to submit the following report with reference to
the Government Order cited above.

2. I attended the Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian
Historical Records Commission held at Delhi on the 23rd, 24th
and 25th instant and returned to Chittoor yesterday. I read a
paper on "Some Aspects of Education in Madras in the Early Nine-
teenth Century" before the Commission and at the meeting of the
Research and Publication Committee moved the following Resolution
which was forwarded by the Government with their letter No. 41031
G2/48-4, Education, dated 5th August 1948.

"This Commission requests scholars, archivists and
others engaged in research among archives to bring to the
notice of the Secretary, Indian Historical Records Commis-
sion, interesting and new subjects which they come across
in the course of their researches and upon which they find
sufficient materials among the archives, in order that a
list of such subjects may be published in the Annual Pro-
ceedings Volumes of the Indian Historical Records Commis-
sion for helping research students in the selection of
suitable subjects for their theses."

3. The Resolution was approved by the Committee and I hope
it will be of great help to research students working in the
various archives in India.

4. Of the several Resolutions considered by the Indian His-
torical Records Commission at its Members' meeting there was one
which related to Madras and Bengal. This was moved by Dr. R.C.
Majumdar and it related, so far as Madras was concerned, (1) to the
Mackenzie Manuscripts housed in the Government Oriental Manuscripts
Library, (2) to the Dutch and Danish records housed in the Madras
Record Office and (3) to the Tanjore Agency Records housed in the
Tanjore Palace under the custody of the Collector of Tanjore. The
Resolution itself, so far as I could see, was unobjectionable, its
object being to place more effectively under the control of the
Director of National Archives of India the records and manuscripts
which are considered to be the property of the Government of India.
But its first portion and its Explanatory Note were highly objection-
able inasmuch as they contained several wrong statements, some of
which were totally incorrect and besides seemed to cast a reflection
on the Madras Government. I, therefore, felt it my duty to take
exception to these statements and to explain the true facts which
are certainly creditable to our Government. The moment, therefore,
I received the Agenda on the 14th instant, I wrote my Remarks on
the Resolution and sent them along with a letter to Dr. S.N. Sen,
the Secretary to the Commission, and requested him to place them
before the Commission and to publish them in its Proceedings.
Copies of Dr. Majumdar's Resolution, my Remarks on its Explanatory

Note

pp. 5-13 infra

Note and my letter to Dr. S.N. Sen are enclosed for the information of the Government. It will be seen therefrom that Dr. Majumdar who had never seen even once the records and manuscripts in question or ascertained anything about them from me, the Curator of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library or from the Collector of Tanjore, had no right to indulge in making wrong statements. It will also be seen therefrom that I have shown how our Government have done everything possible for the records and manuscripts in question.

5. As soon as I reached Delhi I gave a copy of my Remarks to Dr. Majumdar and asked him why he did not obtain accurate information about the records and manuscripts in question either from me or from the Curator, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library. I pointed out to him how this had led to his making several wrong statements which I was bound to contradict before the Commission. He admitted that he had made a mistake, that he should have consulted me beforehand, but that, though the information upon which he had based his statements had been proved by me to be not correct, he had collected that information from a source which he thought reliable, namely, the Old Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission. I then told him that the Old Proceedings were all out of date, since during recent years everything practicable had been done for cataloguing, mending, rebinding, etc., the records and manuscripts in question.

6. At the meeting of the Commission, when he moved his Resolution, Dr. Majumdar said that it was not at all his intention to cast any reflection on any one, that he had based his statements on the Old Proceedings of the Commission and as several of these statements had now been shown by me to be inaccurate he would request the members to ignore his Explanatory Note and to consider the bare text of his Resolution alone which was meant for vesting the Central Government with the necessary control over their own archives now kept in the Provinces. The Secretary to the Commission, Dr. S.N. Sen, who is also the Director of National Archives of India, stated in this connection that all the records in question, viz., the Mackenzie Manuscripts, the Dutch and Danish records and the Tanjore Agency records, were the property of the Central Government. I then explained in detail to the Members how Dr. Majumdar was totally wrong in several of his statements, how our Government have already done whatever is practicable for centralising, preserving, repairing, cataloguing and making available for research the Dutch and Danish records and the Mackenzie Manuscripts and what steps they are now taking in regard to the Tanjore Agency Records. I read out portions of my Remarks and added that a Government which in normal times before the war used to spend about Rs. 20,000 annually over chiffon and which, as soon as the war broke out, purchased chiffon worth about Rs. 70,000 so that the mending work might not suffer, should certainly be said to be much interested in the preservation of their archives. Many of the Mackenzie Manuscripts and the Dutch and Danish records, I said, had already been mended and rebound and the remaining would be taken up for repairs the moment the chiffon position, which is at present very acute, improves. I told them that so far as the Tanjore Agency records are concerned they are purely the property of the Government of India and that whatever that Government desired to be done in regard to these records was being done by this Government. In the case of the Mackenzie Manuscripts and Dutch and Danish records, however, I said that, though they may now be claimed as the property of the Government of India, the one having been purchased by them from Col. Mackenzie and the other having been inherited by them from the Extinct Foreign Governments they have been looked upon as collections belonging to our Government for over a century and

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treated just as the other Provincial records and that if the Government of India now wished to resume control over these records and manuscripts they could do so only after consulting the Provincial Government. It must, however, be clearly understood, I pointed out, that if the transfer of control over them takes place, the Central Government would have to bear all expenses connected with their housing, preservation, etc. The Provincial Government, I remarked, cannot naturally be expected to contribute anything towards the upkeep of these records and manuscripts once they cease to exercise any control over them.

7. In view of my explanation the main text of the Resolution alone was passed omitting all objectionable statements. The purport of the Resolution is that the Government of India should arrange (1) for taking over the control and management of the Mackenzie Manuscripts, Dutch and Danish records and the Tanjore Agency records and concentrating them in Madras, Tanjore, and Calcutta, for the present, (2) preservation of these records according to the methods adopted in the National Archives of India, (3) indexing, cataloguing and publishing of suitable materials by whole-time employment of qualified staff, (4) inspection of these records by the Director, National Archives of India, and preparation by him of a comprehensive scheme of work and (5) providing such funds as would be necessary to work out the plan as envisaged. It was also recommended that the Director of Archives should report the progress of the work annually to the Indian Historical Records Commission.

Order 1322 Edn. No. 29-4-49

116 J.H.R.C. - 25th Session - 25th April 1949. No action is called for. Report - May be recorded for future reference.

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E.O.P.H.(C2).

Yours faithfully,

M. M. M. CURATOR. 30-12-1948.

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E. J. P. H.

G.O. No. 1681. Public (Political),²
dated, 31-5-'44; quoted at 'X' at the
top of page 1 ante, is required for
the disposal of this current. It has
been called for from the H.R.O.,
Chittoor. This may lie over till 17-1-'49.

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5. Resolutions by Dr. R.C. Majumdar on the maintenance of
certain collections of records and manuscripts.

This Commission views with grave concern the backward con-
dition of the (i) Mackenzie Manuscripts, (ii) Dutch and Danish
Records and (iii) Tanjore Raj Records placed from time to time by
the Central Government under the control and supervision of the
Governments of Madras and (present) West Bengal for preservation
and publication. Having considered the unsatisfactory condition,
this Commission strongly recommends that the Government of India
should arrange immediately for --

- (i) taking over control and management of these records and
concentrate them at one specified place each in Madras
and Calcutta for the present;
- (ii) preservation of these records according to the methods
adopted in the National Archives of India;
- (iii) indexing, cataloguing and publishing of suitable materials
by whole-time employment of qualified staff;
- (iv) inspection of these records by the Director, National
Archives of India, and preparation by him of a com-
prehensive scheme of work on the lines indicated
above; and
- (v) providing such funds as would be necessary to work out
the plan as envisaged.

This Commission further recommends that the Director of
Archives should report the progress of work annually to the Indian
Historical Records Commission and that the question of permanent
location of these records be considered at a future date.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

(i) Mackenzie Manuscripts:— Between 1929 and 1943 the Commis-
sion considered on six different occasions the various questions
arising out of the upkeep and maintenance of the Mackenzie Manus-
cripts in Madras. The note by the Secretary, which appeared on
page 84, part III, Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings,
Volume XX, is of special interest to the members and I draw their
attention to it. This is an extremely valuable collection, having
been procured by the Central Government as a huge cost of one lakh
of rupees. These are very old papers and naturally their normal
strength and vitality must have considerably ebbed away as time
passed and the slow process under which these are being rejuvenated
cannot be commended. As the manuscripts are mainly in South Indian
languages, the original intention of the Central Government in
locating it in Madras apparently was to get it examined by suitable
South Indian Scholars who were not then readily available elsewhere.
The most unfortunate part of the whole thing is that this collection
was never inspected by an expert of the Central Government. For
fourteen long years the matter had been dodged and it is time that
the Central Government now do something useful. In fourteen years
all the Manuscripts should have been repaired, indexed and fully
made available for bonafide research.

(ii)

(ii) Dutch and Danish records:— The problem of the maintenance of old Dutch and Danish records which were in the custody of the various Provincial Governments was considered by the Indian Historical Records Commission during its fifth and twelfth sessions and it was decided (Resolution I, Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings, Volume XII, p., 119) to concentrate them in the Madras Records Office. Some Dutch pattas written in Bengali character were however retained in the custody of the Bengal Government for local use. The object of concentration of these records was of course better preservation and their publication. But Madras Government have from time to time reiterated that in view of adverse financial position it had not been possible to undertake publication, indexing, etc., of these records. The only study of these records so far has been by a private scholar Mr. J. Van Kan who has published a catalogue of Dutch records in India. Nineteen years have elapsed and the Central and the Provincial Governments have failed to make these records available for research.

(iii) Tanjore Raj Records:— Another valuable collection, the Tanjore Raj Records, was saved in 1946 from being destroyed as useless papers by the timely intervention of an alert member of the Madras Regional Records Survey Committee. These records belonged to the late Crown Representative who agreed to bear expenses of their being indexed, catalogued, etc. The Madras Government again have been entrusted to carry out this programme of work. Nearly two years have passed and nothing is known as to what treatment these valuable papers have been given.

All the records of the three categories described above are extremely valuable and had been from time to time entrusted with the Government of Madras and West Bengal to deal with them but for some reason or other they have either partially executed the plan or have totally failed in their undertaking. It is necessary, therefore that the Central Government should immediately intervene in the matter and take over control and administration of all these records.

/True Copy/

M. Subramanian
ASSISTANT CURATOR.
20-12-1948.

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Copy of D.O.No.1582-D-VII/48-24, dated 16th December 1948, from the Curator, Madras Record Office, Chittoor, to Dr. S.N. Sen, M.A., Ph.D., B.Litt.(Oxon), D.Litt., Secretary, Indian Historical Records Commission, National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi.

Dear Dr. Sen,

As Dr.Majumdar has brought in a Resolution (Resolution 5 of the Members' Meeting) containing in its Explanatory Note several statements which are incorrect and which cast a reflection on the Madras Government, I have felt it my duty to explain briefly the true state of affairs to you and to the Commission. I am, therefore, sending you enclosed my Remarks on his Resolution and I request you to place them before the Commission and to publish them along with his Resolution and Explanatory Note in the Proceedings Volume. I shall of course attend the meeting.

I hope you will agree with me that Dr.Majumdar who has not seen the Madras records in question or known correctly what has been done for them has little right to criticise the Madras Government. If only he had written to me about these records I would have fully apprised him of their condition, preservation, publication, etc. You will please recollect that when you came to inspect the records of the Crown Representative at Palmaner in 1943 I showed you the Dutch records and told you how many of them had been mended and rebound. In my opinion it is not fair to attack in this manner a Government who admittedly have been the first among the Provincial

Governments

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Governments to organise a proper Central Record Office and to do whatever is possible to centralise, preserve and make available for research their vast collections of archives.

I received the Agenda only on the 14th instant and hence was unable to get fuller particulars about the Mackenzie collection from the Curator of the Oriental Manuscripts Library.

/True Copy/

M. Subramaniam
ASSISTANT CURATOR.
20-12-1948.

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Remarks of Dr. B. S. Baliga on Resolution No. 5 by Dr. R. C.

Majumdar:

I submit that most of the observations made in the explanatory note appended to this Resolution are based on incorrect information.

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MACKENZIE COLLECTIONS.

These collections are said to be in three different places; Madras, Calcutta and the India Office. In Madras they are not in the Madras Record Office, but in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library. It will be seen from Dr. Sankaran's observations on page 85 of the Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings, Volume XX, that the number of these manuscripts on paper, dealing with history and allied subjects available in the Library is only 323. Of these 290 were said to stand in need of repairs and out of these 290 the Madras Record Office has already mended with chiffon and rebound during recent years no less than 112 manuscripts. The remaining manuscripts which require mending will be taken up for repairs as soon as the chiffon position (which is now very acute) improves. Again, information available with me shows that, as one of the means of preserving these manuscripts, the Library has had them copied on durable paper and made them up into large manuscript volumes. Thus, Mr. C. P. Brown and Rev. William Taylor had most of them copied into 67 large volumes. The work of copying is still proceeding. It is, therefore, not correct to say that the Madras Government have not taken steps to preserve the portion of the Mackenzie collection handed over to them. In regard to cataloguing, a catalogue of the Mackenzie collection was got prepared by the Madras Government with the aid of Rev. William Taylor as long ago as 1838. During this century, a very large number of descriptive catalogues of the manuscripts in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese and Malayalam have been published by the

2. Library. These also ought to include the Mackenzie manuscripts, though I am not certain on this point. And, in regard to research, none of these manuscripts seem to have been withheld from research. In the face of all this, to say that "the matter had been dodged", is not correct so far as the Madras Government are concerned. And as the Madras Government have done all that could reasonably be expected from them, it does not seem to be fair to go back upon the decision made as early as 1828 to transfer these manuscripts into their custody.

DUTCH AND DANISH RECORDS.

In the case of these records also the Madras Government have done whatever is practicable, as will be seen from the Guide to the Records in the Madras Record Office published in 1936, and the Annual Administration Reports of the Madras Record Office, copies of which are available with the Commission.

The Dutch records consist of 1768 volumes, of which 1647 belonging to the Dutch Settlements of Cochin and Malabar were centralised by the Government so long ago as 1891, and the remaining 121 volumes were obtained from Bombay and Calcutta and centralised in the Madras Record Office in 1932 in pursuance of the Resolution of the Indian Historical Records Commission passed at its XIIth meeting. Immediately after the centralisation of ^{the} 1647 volumes the Government secured the services of a Dutch scholar, Rev. A.J.M. Heyligers, and, with his aid prepared and printed a Press List of them. Between 1908 and 1911 the Government employed another Dutch scholar, Rev. A.G. Van Der Berg and with his aid and the aid of Mr. Galletti, I.C.S., who was also a Dutch scholar, published 15 volumes of the memoirs of the Dutch Governors which were considered important and 8 volumes of these were translated

3. into English also. In 1916 a catalogue of all the Dutch volumes was also prepared and printed. The work of publication of more Dutch volumes was then not taken up mainly because of the difficulty of securing the services of suitable Dutch scholars. In 1931, however, when the Indian Historical Records Commission suggested the resumption of the publications, the Government found themselves unable to do so, faced as they were at that time with the great economic depression and the consequent financial stringency. The question of resuming the publications was again considered in 1938 in connection with another Resolution of the Indian Historical Records Commission, but it had again to be dropped in view mainly of the difficulty of procuring the services of a right type of Dutch scholar. However, in 1939 the 121 volumes which had been transferred from Bombay and Calcutta were catalogued with the aid of a Dutch knowing Missionary, Rev. Father J. Fruytier. So far as the preservation of these records is concerned, a good number of them which were in a very bad condition have been mended with chiffon at great cost and rebound: thus between 1938 and 1942 alone 151 volumes consisting of 18,143 sheets have been mended and rebound. Many more require mending. But they cannot at present ^{be} taken up for repairs for want of chiffon: they will be taken up for repairs when chiffon becomes available. It may be stated here that every effort is now being made to procure chiffon from Paris and other places. It may also be stated that, considering the very little use made of these records by students of research, much more has been done for these records than for the more important and frequently required series of other records. Finally, in regard to research, all these records have always been thrown open for research and no research student who wished to consult them has been denied access into them. In fact, the object with which the Press Lists and the catalogues were prepared was that ^{of} encouraging research into them. Only, the persons who have

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come to consult them, so far, have been very few. In view of all this, it is surely wrong to say that nothing has been done for them by the Madras Government in view of financial stringency.

The Danish records number only 9 bundles and about 200 volumes. They were also centralised as long ago as 1891 and they have all been subsequently listed with the aid of Rev. K. Heiberg. A list of marriages from the church registers contained in the collection has also been prepared and published with his help. Some of these records have also been mended and all of them have been thrown open for research. But, so far as I remember, no one has come to consult these records for historical research.

As most of the Dutch and all the Danish records belong to the Madras Government and as that Government have done whatever is practicable for centralising, preserving and making them available for research, it is doubtful whether they would agree to part with these records. At most, they can be expected to hand back the 121 volumes which were transferred to them in 1932.

TANJORE RAJ RECORDS.

To say that these records "were saved in 1946 from being destroyed as useless papers" is absolutely incorrect: there was no proposal at any time to destroy them. In January 1947 I was ordered by the Government of Madras under instructions from the Crown Representative to examine these records and to assess their historical value. Accordingly, I went to Tanjore, inspected these records in February 1947 and submitted a detailed report to the Government. I then took steps to secure the services of a Modi scholar, but, before anything could be done, I found that the Indian Historical Records Commission had at its XXIII Session passed a Resolution to the effect that these records should be handed over to the Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji Saraswathi Mahal

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Library. I, therefore, naturally concluded that it was not proper for me to proceed further until the views of the Government of India were ascertained as to whether the work should be done by the Library or by me. This question is still under consideration. - What delay has occurred is mainly due to the uncertain situation created by the Resolution of the Commission. These records are purely the property of the Government of India and the Madras Government, so far as I can see, can have no objection to giving them back, if required, to the Government of India.

M. V. Madhava
CURATOR,
Madras Record Office,
Chittoor, 16-12-1948.

