

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 183

Press
~~Mis.~~

7-8

Dated 17-2-1857.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Sect. II. 1. - 10,400 Bks. - 10-12-32.

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 17th February 1857.

No. 7. Read the following letter from T. B. ROUPELL, Esq., Session Judge of Coimbatore ; to H. FORBES, Esq., Acting Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, dated Coimbatore, 31st January 1857, No. 1.

SIR,

I have the honor to submit the accompanying communication[†] to my address from Dr. Aitken, ^{† 27th January 1857.} the Civil Surgeon attached to this Zillah, which that Gentleman has requested me to transmit to you.

(Signed) T. B. ROUPELL,
Session Judge.

From Civil Surgeon W. AITKEN, M. D.; to T. B. ROUPELL, Esq., Civil and Sessions Judge of Coimbatore, dated 27th January 1857.

SIR,

It has occurred to me, that advantage might be taken of the opportunity afforded by the suspension of the supply of free labour to the Mauritius, to open up an outlet for the disposal of a large proportion of the Criminals, who at present overcrowd the Jails, and entail enormous expense on Government for their safe custody and support, I therefore have the honor to direct your attention to the rough sketch of a scheme for the transportation to that Colony of all Convicts sentenced to Imprisonment for periods of two years and upwards, with a view to its being submitted to the consideration of Government, as I am not aware that any such proposition has hitherto been brought forward. It is possible that the scheme may meet with considerable opposition, but any valid objections to it would, I imagine, be likely to emanate from the Colonists only, and it may reasonably be anticipated, that the dislike they might at first evince to such Importations, would speedily be overcome by the pressing wants of the Colony. On the other hand, many things may be advanced in favor of it, but I shall only advert to a few of the most important.

1st. There is the immediate and permanent relief it would afford to Government, by enabling it to dispense with the services of a host of Peons, and to employ in other directions the Military at present required as Guards, as well as by the saving of the expenses at present incurred for their support.

2nd. There is the benefit which might be expected to accrue eventually to the State by the return at the expiry of their sentences, of bodies of labourers, trained to habits of industry with moderate savings, who, it may be supposed, would be much less likely to relapse into criminal habits than is the case on release under the present system; and to the Criminals themselves by the greater prospect of success which their improved position would give them on their return to their usual avocations.

3rd. There is the wide spread influence which I imagine, the dread of such a punishment would have in deterring others from committing crime.

4th. The greater adaptation of it to the Criminals of this country, as a means of reformation, than any lenient system of Prison discipline, or teaching, which I think will at once become apparent, when it is considered that in addition to the difficulty of teaching Adults, who are neither very apt nor very willing scholars, there is the certainty that, however excellent a blacksmith, carpenter, weaver or other kind of mechanic a man may become, the moment he again returns within the reach of caste influences, that moment will he ignore all acquaintance with any acquirement however valuable, which would in any way interfere with his caste status.

5th. The increased space which this would render available in Jails, would enable the authorities to adopt a proper system of classification of Prisoners, and to enforce a more stringent system of discipline and rigid seclusion from the external world, which, with suitable employment, such as breaking of granite or any other occupation requiring a considerable amount of physical exertion, would speedily alter the impression prevalent with regard to Jails, and instead of the comfortable lodgings to which criminals at present have the privilege of retiring, after a little wholesome out-door recreation, would convert them into Prisons in the true sense of the word.

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 17th February 1857.

Propositions.

1st. That all Criminals sentenced to Imprisonment for two years and upwards, be transported to the Mauritius, and there allotted to the Colonists as labourers on tickets of leave at a fair rate of remuneration for their services, and be subject to such regulations as the Government of the Colony may consider necessary for the maintenance of proper supervision and good order.

2nd. That a dépôt be established at Madras for the reception and detention of all Convicts under sentence of Transportation, until means of transport can be provided

3rd. That a Superintendent of Convicts be appointed with a suitable establishment, whose duty it should be under the orders of Government, to attend to all the arrangements necessary for their safe custody and transport to their destination.

4th. That with the concurrence of the Government of the Colony, a similar dépôt be established there for their reception.

5th. That an Agent be appointed in Mauritius to receive and allot the Convicts to Masters, to draw and retain the profits of their labour over and above what is required for their maintenance, till the expiration of their sentence, and to provide for their return to this country, when they have completed their turn; or should they prefer to remain, to assist them in obtaining engagements as free labourers.

(Signed) W. AITKEN, M. D.

Civil Surgeon.

(A true Extract.)

(Signed) T. B. ROUPELL,

Civil and Session Judge.

No. 8. ORDER THEREON, No. 183; dated 12th February 1857.

The Sessions Judge of Coimbatore will inform Dr. Aitken, that his scheme of transporting to the Isle of France all Convicts sentenced to two years' imprisonment and upwards, does not appear to Government to be feasible.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,

Chief Secretary.

No. 183

Sessions Judge of Coimbatore
The ^{intention} ~~first consideration~~ Dr. Aitken is

that his
scheme of transporting to

to Isle of France all convicts

sentenced to two years imprisonment
does not

appear to Government to be feasible
is impracticable

Fort St. George,
12th February 1857

Sessions Judge of Coimbatore Disp. 11th