

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	821	Press
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46-47		
Dated	19-8-1928	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 22nd June 1858.

No. 46. Read the following letter from Colonel J. C. BOULDERSON, Commissioner of Police; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 5th June 1858, No. 66.

From J. URQUHART, Esq., Coroner of Madras; to Colonel J. C. BOULDERSON, Commissioner of Police.

Sir,

1. *With reference to your letter dated May 7th, 1858, I have the honor to state that in at least five cases of death by drowning during the year 1856, life might have been preserved had the authority of the Commissioners extended to private wells and tanks.*

2. *Four of these cases occurred in wells and one in a tank.*

3. *Special notice is taken of the state of these wells on account of their having either no parapets, or only the remains of parapets. The tank is remarked upon as being from its position in a school compound peculiarly dangerous.*

4. *Although I have mentioned only four cases in which life might have been preserved had the authority of the Commissioners extended to private wells, I am of opinion that other cases of drowning might have been prevented had the wells in which such cases occurred been better protected.*

5. *The wells in Madras are usually quite open, and persons drawing water (sometimes from a great depth) are liable, especially when the vessels are large and the individuals feeble, to overbalance themselves and fall into the wells. Again it is known that natives often when drawing water stand upon the parapets of the wells, and accidents from this cause are by no means rare.*

6. *These dangers I consider might be met by having all wells boarded over, leaving only a sufficient opening for the passage of water pots and "chemboos." This covering would also I believe in not a few cases prevent self destruction as time would be given for thought, and persons suffering from sudden indisposition or other causes of depression would be less likely to destroy themselves from the difficulty attending the attempt.*

7. *The tanks in Madras as a general rule have no parapets and it appears difficult to suggest how security can be given to them without considerable expense. In the case of the public tank in Rundall's Road there is an excellent wall and a gate guarded by a sentry. In this tank there has been no case of drowning during the period I have held the office of Coroner.*

(Signed) J. URQUHART,

*Madras,
Coroner's Office, Beach,
May 28th 1858.*

Coroner.

SIR,
1. With reference to Extracts from Minutes of Consultation under date 26th November 1857, and 28th April 1858, I have the honor to submit, in margin, for the information of Government, a copy of a letter to my address from the Coroner of Madras, on the subject of insufficient protection against accidents from drowning, in the tanks and wells situated within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

2. It is very sad that so many accidents should occur, and certainly it is most desirable that every feasible and reasonable precaution should be taken to render them less frequent. The proposal therefore made by Dr. Urquhart for covering the wells, (with a grating I presume he means,) is deserving

consideration, and so far as the public wells are concerned, the Government can order his suggestions to be carried out.

3. The tanks situated in private gardens are numerous, and the expense of enclosing them would of course be very great, but that the Government have neither the power to enforce, nor to execute even free of cost to them, against the wishes of the landlords, but parapet walls may be raised round all tanks which are surrounded by public thoroughfares, and on the road side of those which border on thoroughfares.

4. I beg leave to recommend the subject to the favorable consideration of Government.

No. 47. ORDER THEREON, No. 821; dated 19th June 1858.

It is observed that as respects public tanks and wells, or private tanks and wells in the vicinity of streets, orders have been already given in Extract Minutes Consultation 26th November 1857, No. 1554, para. 11. The Government have no power to compel the adoption of Dr. Urquhart's plan as respects any other wells, and they doubt how far it could in practice be carried out even in regard to these. The Municipal Commissioners may however try it in a few public wells and see how it succeeds.

*(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.*

Exd. F. Cartledge.

Judicial Department
 No 821
 Extract from the Minutes of Consultation
 Dated 19 June 58.
 From Commission of June 5 June 1858.

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Commissioners of Police — } JP
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