MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1460	Press Mis.
31-32	
Dated 4—11—	1931.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department, for the month of November 1859.

No. 31. Read the following letter from GEO. PEARSE, Esq., M. D., Director General, Medical Department; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 31st October 1859, No. 196.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of Government, an Extract from a Report by the Inspector General of Hospitals, Series No. 6, dated 26th May last, on the Jails at Madras, with my remarks appended thereto.

Extract from a Report by the Inspector General of Hospitals with remarks of the Director General annexed.

SERIES No. 6,—PRESIDENCY.

"Supreme Court Jail."

"Justices' Jail."

"Penitentiary."

23. "The two first Jails on this list are situated in the Black Town. These buildings were erected at a period when sanitary science received little consideration. The lower apartments in both, more resemble dens adapted for wild animals, than dungeons for unfortunate human beings sentenced to incarceration for a series of years in a tropical climate. Some of the cells in the Supreme Court Jail, do not exceed 10 feet long by 8 broad and 8 high, the only opening being the ponderous door, which, when enclosed, excludes air and light. Fortunately the number of prisoners confined is usually small, and to this circumstance, it owes its freedom from disease. But if the time ever comes when it will be necessary to occupy it more generally, a pestilence must be the result. There is only one life prisoner there now—an European; another occupant of one of the cells is sentenced to confinement for four years. There are in all 6 Europeans and 26 Natives in this Jail; they all have a sickly anemic look, and 4 out of the former are in Hospital. Ventilation there is none in any part of the building, and one of the main drains of the town passes under the walls, the stench from which is at times abominable. The Justices' Jail is only now used as a lock-up house for the night, or for parties awaiting trial. As in the other; strength and security appear to have been all that was desired when it was constructed. Sanitary considerations do not appear to have been thought of."

26. "I very strongly recommend that the prisoners in the Supreme Court Jail be transferred to this well regulated establishment,* and that the former be henceforth disused as a Jail. The Hospital in the Penitentiary consists of upper and lower apartments capable of containing 40 patients. The upper rooms are particularly well ventilated. The Jail and Hospital are surrounded by a double wall, the outer 18 and the inner 12 feet high, the space between being 8 feet."

*The Penitentiary.

REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL.

Remarks.—The Inspector General's description of the Madras Jails, and the miserable accommodation they afford for the unhappy inmates needs no comment from me, they are evidently ill-adapted for Europeans undergoing incarceration in a tropical climate, and must be seriously detrimental to health. The subject calls for the attention of the Legislature.

(True Extracts.)

(Signed) GEO. PEARSE, M. D.,
Director General, Medical Department.

No. 32. ORDER THEREON, 4th November 1859, No. 1490.

Referred to the Commissioner of Police for his remarks, on the proposal to transfer the prisoners in the Grand Gaol to the Penitentiary.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

List

No. 1490 – 4 November 1859.

Referred to the Commissioner of Police for his remarks on the proposal to transfer the prisoners in the Grand Gaol to the Penetentiary.

JPO

The Commissioner of Police
" Director General of the Medical Dept.
} Circ. &c