

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	94	Press
		Mis.
	46-17	
Dated	2 - 7 -	19 1857

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
from 2nd to 8th July 1859.*

No. 16. Read the following letter from J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, dated Ootacamund, 17th June 1859, No. 249.

I have the honor to acknowledge the Proceedings of Government relative to Mr. Lechler's letter, intimating that his visits to the Salem Jail, as a teacher and Missionary, were likely to be prohibited by me.

2. I must say that I regret that Mr. Lechler should not have quoted my letter of the 2nd of May of which Mr. Hodgson must have informed him and in which I plainly stated "that the ruling of Government that Missionaries can be allowed to enter prisons only at the requisition of Christian inmates, seems to me decisive."

3. I think it proper that I should recount the several references and replies on this subject, that the Government should know exactly what is the practice of its Officers in this respect.

4. On the 22nd of November last in reply to Mr. Hodgson's question, whether private individuals might be allowed to give Bibles to convicts, I stated that "no private individual in the service of Government can be permitted to distribute Bibles or other books of a religious tendency to prisoners, not Christians," but "that no prisoner shall be deprived of any book unless it be of an immoral or seditious tendency. Bibles, korans, Vedas and Shastres and all books authorized in Government schools, I should not think it right to prohibit if presented to the prisoners generally or to any individual prisoner. At the same time I consider our Government pledged not to allow any of its servants to take any immediate and active part towards disseminating Christian doctrine among those who are subjected to their several control."

5. Mr. Hodgson's letter* of the 19th April, I enclose in original, my reply quoted in para. 2 is written in pencil on it.

6. I see no reason to propose any modification of the Rule laid down by Government, except that, in accordance with Lord Canning's Minute, visits of Missionaries may be, in more general terms, restricted to occasions on which any prisoner may desire to see one.

7. I have felt the question to be an exceedingly difficult one from the fact that the act of a Missionary, done by permission, is likely to be considered the act of the Officer in charge, through the Missionary, and it requires more judgment than the majority possess to avoid countenancing such a construction.

8. I will circulate the proceedings and enclosure.

No. 17. ORDER THEREON, 2nd July 1859, No. 911.

In his letter cited above, the Revd. Mr. Lechler represented that, pending a reference to the Inspector General of Jails, he had been permitted by the Subordinate Judge of Salem, at the request of three prisoners—one of whom is a Native Christian—to visit them in the Jail on Sundays and to read and explain the Christian Scriptures to them. He had also provided several more prisoners, also at their own request, with Tamil Spelling and other books, and understood that they were also seeking permission to join his little Sunday School, as he termed his conferences with the three prisoners in one of the wards of the Jail.

2. Mr. Lechler had made five visits in all, when he received intimation that it was not likely the Inspector General would countenance his visitations. His object in addressing Government was to learn whether he could continue his instructions to the prisoners in question and to any others who might apply hereafter for the same benefit.

3. A copy of Mr. Lechler's letter was forwarded to the Inspector General of Jails. In reporting on it, that Officer recounts, for the information of Government, the several references made to him on the subject and his replies to them.

4. Mr. Rohde would propose that, in accordance with the views of the Supreme Government, the visits of Missionaries should be restricted, in general terms, to occasions in which any prisoner, even if not a Christian, may desire to see one.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
from 2nd to 8th July 1859.*

5. On this the Government observe, that the course laid down by the Government of India, is to use their own words that "if a man being in Jail, should desire to hear a Christian preacher, it would be quite right to admit a preacher to him individually. In the case of a Christian prisoner, this would be done as a matter of course, under such rules as prison discipline may prescribe, and should the case occur of a prisoner who is not a Christian, desiring to hold intercourse with a Christian teacher, his wish should not be refused. But this is a very different thing from giving to Missionaries free access to Jails and allowing them to preach to whomsoever they choose."

6. The Acting Sub Judge of Salem will accordingly inform Mr. Lechler, in reply to his address to Government, under date the 23rd May last, that he is at liberty, at proper times and under due restrictions, to visit any Christian prisoner in the Salem Jail, as well as any prisoner—though not a Christian—who may really desire to hold intercourse with him. But the Sub Judge will satisfy himself in every such case, that the prisoner does truly and bona fide wish to see Mr. Lechler, and he will be careful that that gentleman's intercourse be restricted to those whom he may go expressly to visit.

7. The Inspector General is further informed, in reference to para. 4 of his letter, that the Government do not approve of Bibles being presented *generally* to the prisoners by any persons, whether in or out of the public service, nor to any prisoner unless to one who is a Christian, or who has really applied for the book. The same remark will of course apply to the presentation of Korans or of the books of any other religions.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

*Judicial.
Proceedings of the Madras Govt.*

*Read again letter from
the Revd. J. M. Lechler,
dated 23rd May 1859*

*Recorded in the Proceed-
ings, 10th June 1859 N^o 47.*

*Read also letter from the
Inspector General of Jails. Enter 17th idem N^o 249.*

Order thereon 2 July 1859 N^o 911

*In his letter cited above,
the Revd. Mr. Lechler pre-
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Scriptures to them. He*

had also provided several more prisoners, also at their own request, with Tamil Spelling & other books, & understood that they were also seeking permission to join his little Sunday School, as he termed his conferences with the three prisoners in one of the wards of the Jail.

2. Mr. Sechler had made five visits in all, when he received intimation that it was not likely the Inspector General would countenance his visitations. His object in addressing Govt. was to learn whether he could continue his instructions to the prisoners in question & to any others who might apply hereafter for the same.

and his nephews
to them.

3. A copy of Mr. Sechler's letter was forwarded to the Inspector General of Jails. In reporting on it, that officer recounts, for the information of Govt., the several references made to him on the subject, ~~in his replies to them~~, Mr. Rohde was guided by the order of the 30th Novem^r 1844 No. 783, which directed that only those prisoners who were Christians, & who desired to see a minister of the Christian religion, should be provided with religious instruction.

4. Mr. Rohde would propose ~~no other modification of the rule except~~ that, in accordance with views of the Secy.

It was merely
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-tion from Mr.
Rohde's letter.

pres

Supreme Govt., the visits
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4 - On this the first observation
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refused - But this is
a very different thing
from giving to Mission-
aries free access to
Jails and allowing
them to preach to whom-
soever they choose -

5. The Act. Sub Judge
of Salem will accordingly
inform Mr Sechler in
reply to his address to

sent under date the 23
May last, that he is at
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Prisoner in the Salem

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The Prisoner does truly
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6. The Inspector feels
is further informed
in reference to this letter
that the Govt. do not

approve of Bibles being
presented generally

to the Prisoners - nor to
any Prisoner unless
to one who is a Christian,
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The same Council
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Sp

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returned.

assuming a note