

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Justice DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 370

Press
~~Mis.~~

175-180

Dated

15-3-1918

9/10

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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1

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
15th March 1864.

Read the following papers:—

No. 175. From W. H. CRAKE, Esq., Chairman Chamber of Commerce, Madras; to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Madras, dated 24th August 1863.

By desire of the Chamber of Commerce, I have the honor to draw your attention to the dangers which threatened this town on the night of the 26th June when a fire broke out at Messrs. Line & Co.'s Cotton Godowns. The accident alluded to occurred during the Mohurram, and the Chamber has every reason to suspect that it was caused by the passage through the town of the riotous torch-light processions a few hours before the discovery of the flames.

The Chamber begs to urge upon Government the great desirability of establishing an efficient Fire Brigade in the town, and of appointing some official to give orders in such an emergency as the above. The Chamber would also hope that the Government will order the discontinuance of torch-light processions through the town, as they are alike dangerous to property, and annoying to the inhabitants.

Referred to the Commissioner of Police for report.

Fort Saint George,
27th August 1863.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 176. From Lieutenant Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 7th September 1863.

I have the honor to return the letter of the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the organization of a Fire Brigade for this City, and on the use of torches with native processions, which was referred to me on the 27th ultimo.

2. I will in the first place detail the number of Fire Engines at present available, and the ordinary course pursued on the breaking out of fire, and then proceed to consider the most expedient manner of improving upon existing arrangements.

3. The engines are at present stationed at the following places:—

Arsenal...	...	...	...	3
Custom House...	...	...	...	1
Commissariat Office	...	...	...	1
Bullet Manufactory	...	...	...	1
Mint...	...	...	...	1
Gun Carriage Manufactory	...	...	...	1
Gunpowder	..	...	...	2
Railway...	...	...	...	2

Total... 12

Besides these I am given to understand that there are five or six engines in store at the Arsenal which might be rendered serviceable at a moderate cost, and four more belonging to the Railway which could be made available in the course of a few hours. The executive of the last named Department has always been prompt in affording assistance on all occasions.

4. The Municipal Commissioners sent orders to England some time ago for two Fire Engines with hoses, suction pipes and buckets complete, which are expected to arrive shortly.

5. A Tindal with a party of Lascars remains at the Arsenal day and night in readiness to turn out in case of any alarm of fire, and the Store Serjeant in charge of the engines always accompanies them to superintend and direct their working. The engine at the Custom Office, which is in charge of the Master Attendant, is worked by the boatmen; that at the Gun Carriage Manufactory by the Ordnance Pupils and coolies; and most of the others are in like manner worked by the establishment to which they are attached.

6. On all occasions of fire, intelligence is immediately sent by the Police according to circumstances. If the fire is not serious the nearest engines are generally found sufficient, but in all alarming cases a requisition is sent to the Fort, and the engines are generally accompanied by a fatigue party from the European Regiment in garrison, which is always found to be most efficient, not only in working the engines, but in rendering assistance in every way.

7. In London it is the duty of the Police to give notice at the Parochial Fire Engine station, and at the nearest station of the Fire Engine establishment, to clear the street or ground in the immediate vicinity of the fire, and to assist in the rescue of persons, and in the removal of property conformably with the wishes of the owners; but they are prohibited from working the engines except in cases of absolute necessity. These rules are followed here as far as applicable, but it has generally been found necessary for the Police to work as Firemen as well as to attend to their own proper duties.

8. It will thus be seen that, with the exception of the Railway Engines all the means for suppressing fires both in men and materiel are furnished by Government and that on a liberal scale. These means with the addition of the engines ordered by the Municipal Commissioners, who it is to be presumed will organize a small party to work them, will I believe be found sufficient.

9. It appears, however, that the Government engines might be more advantageously posted than they are at present, and I would suggest that those now in store be put into a serviceable condition and stationed as follows:—

- One at Abercrombie's Battery.
- One in Royapoorum, or in Washerman's Pettah.
- One in Triplicane.
- One in Saint Thomé, and
- One in Pursewaukum, or in Vepery.

If this proposal is adopted, it will be necessary to provide cover for the engines at central positions within their respective Districts, and as these matters are managed by the Parochial authorities in England the charge of the engines might be undertaken by the Municipal Commissioners. I would also strongly advise that all the Government Fire Engines be periodically inspected by a competent person from the Arsenal in order to ensure their being kept in a fit state for immediate service.

10. If one of the engines expected by the Municipal Commissioners is kept at their premises in Sembooy Doss Street, and the other at, or near the Trevelyan Water Works, they will be available for the central and western portions of the City.

11. An important matter connected with this subject is the supply of water, in which respect we are not well provided. There are certain cisterns on the Esplanades, and in the vicinity of the Custom House and of Clive's Battery which belong to the Department of Public Water Works.

There are also other cisterns belonging to the Municipality situated in the China Bazar road, Nulla Moottoo Chetty Street, and Oodacal Street; and a few public Wells in different parts of the town; but it is generally found necessary to resort to the Wells in private houses which is objectionable for many reasons.

12. The large body of water in the reservoir at the Trevelyan Water Works might probably be made use of to supply cisterns at different points in the west and centre of the town; but this being an Engineering question, I simply draw attention thereto.

13. With regard to the hope expressed in the concluding portion of Mr. Crake's letter to the effect that Government would order the discontinuance of torch-light processions, I cannot venture to recommend the adoption of any such measure. No procession of any kind takes place at night, whether Hindoo or Mahomedan, without being accompanied by torches and blue lights. Processions from Pagodas of a religious nature, and those from private houses on occasions of domestic ceremonies are alike in this respect, and there is probably not a night in the year during which such processions do not take place in some part of the town.

14. It is stated in the Chairman's letter that there is reason to suspect that the late fire was caused by the torches accompanying the procession at the Mohurram; this view may be correct, but it was also the opinion of many that it arose from spontaneous combustion.

15. For sometime past owing to the sudden increase in the Cotton trade, a much greater quantity of that article has been brought into Madras than the purchasers have been able to house and the consequence is that it has to be stowed in court yards, and on the pials of houses, until proper places can be procured for its reception. This is a state of things which cannot be expected to last, but while it does continue it seems more reasonable that the owners should make some special arrangements for the protection of their goods from fire, than that they should call for measures involving so indiscriminate an interference with the long established customs of the people.

16. It must, however, be admitted that the straggling parties at the Mohurram scarcely come within the same category as the processions to which I have referred in the 13th paragraph of this letter, as they partake more of the character of saturnalia than of ordinary religious observances, and it is notorious that a great number of the persons engaged are not Mussulmen, but Pariahs and Hindoos of the lowest castes. On the last two occasions of the celebration of this festival, the numerous bands of masqueraders who used to frequent the Mount Road, and the neighbourhood of the houses of European gentlemen, were restricted by me to Triplicane and other quarters principally inhabited by Natives, which restriction, when petitioned against, was approved of by Government.

17. Without therefore going the length of prohibiting torch-light processions during the Mohurram, endeavours may be made to prevent all except Mussulmen from taking part therein, and also to concentrate the various parties as much as possible in order to bring them under supervision.

Referred for the opinion of the Municipal Commissioners with reference to the suggestions made in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12.

FORT SAINT GEORGE,
8th September 1863.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 177. From the Municipal Commissioners for the Town of Madras; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 16th September 1863.

1. In returning the letter from the Commissioner of Police, dated 7th instant, and its enclosure, referred by Government for our opinion on the suggestions made in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12, we have the honor to state that the places at which the Commissioner of Police proposes to station the five additional Fire Engines appear to us to be well selected, and we shall have no objection to take charge of the engines if Government will provide Depôts for them, and the requisite establishments to work them.

2. The two engines imported by us from England will be stationed one at our office and the other at the Trevelyan Water Works, as recommended by Colonel Wilson.

3. The large supply of water stored in the Trevelyan cistern can, in our opinion, be availed of in case of a fire breaking out in the western and centre sections of the town, pipes having been laid down in Andeapah Naick Street as far as the Market.

(Signed) A. C. SILVER, Lieut. Colonel, *Officiating President.*

(") B. CARDOZO,

(") S. JESUDASEN,

Municipal Commissioners for the Town of Madras.

No. 178. From Lieutenant Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 30th January 1864, No. 20.

I have the honor to report that about 7 o'clock on the night of the 18th instant, a fire was discovered in one of the godowns in the block of buildings to the north of the Custom House, known as the Bankshalls, where most of the rice and other grain landed in Madras is stored.

2. The Police under the direction of Mr. Ansell, the Deputy Commissioner, were on the spot shortly after the alarm was given, and the engine from the Custom House having been brought

up by Supervisor Veerasawmy Naick of the Master Attendant's Department with a party of boatmen, the fire was got under about 11 o'clock by their combined exertions, although it was not entirely quenched until some hours later. A party of the 4th Regiment Native Infantry which arrived shortly after the commencement of the fire, and which remained until a sufficient body of Police had been collected from the more distant stations, rendered material assistance.

3. I herewith forward copy of a report from Mr. Ansell, in whose remarks I entirely concur, and as I believe the subject of a Fire Brigade is still before Government, I take this opportunity of recommending that a sufficient supply of leather buckets, ladders, fire-hooks, crow-bars, axes, and grapnels be attached to each engine. In paragraph 9 of my letter, dated 7th September last, No. 117, I suggested that the Government engines should be periodically inspected by some competent person, and my opinion is strengthened by the fact that the hose of the engine burst on the night of the 18th, and the consequences would have been serious had not a spare one been procured very soon afterwards.

4. It is also highly desirable that some improved method of drawing water from the wells, and of conveying it to the scene of action should be adopted. The first object may be obtained by the use of small portable pumps with leathern hoses, and by fitting the public wells with cross-bars and wheels. The second, by supplying low trucks for the water casks which could thus be taken to the spot in much less time, and with much less labor than is now required, and the chatties or buckets could be more speedily and easily filled therefrom. On the occasion of the fire now in question, I observed that the wastage which took place in filling the chatties from the bung-hole was very great. A small pump, such as is used in distilleries for pumping liquor from one cask to another would fill the engine from casks without either loss of time or wastage.

5. The property destroyed consisted principally of rice and new gunny bags to the value of about 5000 Rupees, all of which were in the godown where the fire commenced, and beyond which it fortunately did not extend; for had it done so, the contiguity of the buildings and the narrowness of the lanes by which the block is intersected would in all probability have rendered futile all endeavours to stop its further progress.

6. Although the owners of several godowns and their servants were on the spot, including the proprietor of the goods destroyed, yet not one of them gave the slightest assistance in any way, or made any attempt to do so.

7. I have now the honor to recommend that a gratuity may be sanctioned for distribution amongst the Police and boatmen engaged on this occasion, as in addition to working the engine they were actively employed in conveying water from a considerable distance, and in working inside the godown itself, removing the burning goods and materials, a service which cannot be performed without more or less damage to clothing which the men cannot well afford. The reward, if sanctioned, may be paid from the sum provided for "Rewards for information and for services rendered," and as the number* of men engaged was considerable, I beg to name the sum of 250 Rupees.

8. The Supervisor Veerasawmy Naick, whose name has on more than one occasion been brought to the favorable notice of Government, was of great assistance during the whole affair.

9. I have omitted to mention that the cause of the fire has not been ascertained, but there is no reason to suppose that it was other than accidental.

From J. ANSELL, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Police; to Lieutenant Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police, dated Madras, 23rd January 1864.

With much pleasure I beg to bring to your favorable notice the praise-worthy conduct of the Police, who were on duty with me at the fire in the third line Bank-halls on the night of the 18th instant; the greatest praise is due to all who were present for their strenuous exertions and endeavours to extinguish the fire. I would, however, more especially mention Constables Banyard of the 1st Division, and Middleton of the Marine Police. The Police were ably assisted by a

* 3 Inspectors.
3 Constables.
4 Jemadars.
2 Darogahs.
9 Duffadars.
14 Naigues.
66 Peons.
16 Marine Police.
52 Boatmen of Master Attendant's Department.

strong party of the 4th Native Infantry and several boatmen: these were engaged in rolling casks of water from the cistern north of Clive's Battery to the site of the fire, a distance of five or six hundred yards. I also consider this a favorable opportunity to bring to notice the inadequate supply of water and necessary implements at present available, in the event of a fire breaking out in town. Filled as every godown is with cotton and other combustible materials, I would urge the necessity of adopting some measures, not only to facilitate the supply of water, but also to provide necessary and proper implements, such as scaling ladders, long fire-hooks, axes, grapnels with ten or twelve feet of light chain attached, and a plentiful supply of leather buckets.

2. On the recent occasion it was indeed providential that it was a clear and fine night, and that there was no wind: had there been a strong north-easterly wind blowing, all the exertions made would, in my opinion, have proved futile, the fire could not have been (as it was) confined to the godown in which it originated: and had it reached the Cotton Screw and the Commissariat Arrack Godowns, which are in close proximity, how far it might have spread, or what amount of life and property might have been destroyed it is impossible to conceive.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. J. WILSON, Lieut. Colonel,
Commissioner of Police.

No. 179. From Lieutenant Colonel W. J. WILSON, Commissioner of Police; to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 6th February 1864, No. 23.

With reference to my letter of the 7th September last, No. 117, I have the honor to report that two Fire Engines have recently been constructed at the Gun Carriage Manufactory, so that the number at that establishment now consists of three which may be depended upon as being maintained in a serviceable condition.

No. 180. ORDER THEREON, 15th March 1864, No. 370.

The papers above recorded have reference to an application made by the Chamber of Commerce for the establishment of an efficient Fire Brigade, and for a prohibition against torch-light processions through Black Town. On the latter point, the Commissioner of Police deprecates the issue of any such prohibition as that for which the Chamber apply. He observes that "no procession of any kind takes place at night, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, without being accompanied by torches and blue lights. Processions from Pagodas of a religious nature, and those from private houses on occasions of domestic ceremonies, are alike in this respect; and there is probably not a night in the year during which such processions do not take place in some part of the town." He states at the same time that the torch-light processions during the Mohurram, which is an essentially Mahomedan festival, are engaged in not only by Musselmans, but also by Pariahs and Hindus of the lowest caste; and he proposes that endeavours should be made to prevent all but Musselmans from taking part in them, and also to concentrate them as much as possible, so as to bring them under due supervision. The Governor in Council concurs in the Commissioner's views.

2. As regards the means available for extinguishing fires, it appears that there are 14 engines at present stationed at the following places:—

Arsenal...	3
Custom House ...	1
Commissariat Office...	1
Bullet Manufactory...	1
Mint ...	1
Gun Carriage Manufactory...	3
Gunpowder do. ...	2
Railway...	2
Total...	14

in addition to which there are five engines in store at the Arsenal, and two belonging to the Municipal Commission.

6 *Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,*
15th March 1864.

3. Lieutenant Colonel Wilson recommends that the additional engines available should be posted as follows:—

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 at Abercrombie's Battery. | 1 in Pursewakum or Vepery. |
| 1 in Royapoorum or in Washermanpettah. | 1 in Semboos Street, and |
| 1 in Triplicane. | 1 at the Trevelyan Water-works. |
| 1 in St. Thomé. | |

This arrangement is sanctioned. Colonel Wilson does not propose the formation of a separate establishment for working the engines, and, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, it is not necessary. It is a duty which may very well be done, as it has been hitherto, by the Police, aided, in Black Town, by the boatmen and, in the case of a serious fire, by a fatigue party from the European Regiment in the Fort. The formation of a separate Fire Brigade in a straggling town like Madras, would be a very expensive measure, and one not warranted by the necessities of the case.

4. The Government approve of the Commissioner's recommendation that the Government engines should be periodically inspected by a competent person from the Arsenal. The necessary arrangement will be made by the Inspector General of Ordnance and Magazines, who will also arrange, in communication with Lieutenant Colonel Wilson, for a sufficient supply of leather buckets, ladders, fire-hooks, crowbars, axes and grapnels being attached to each engine.

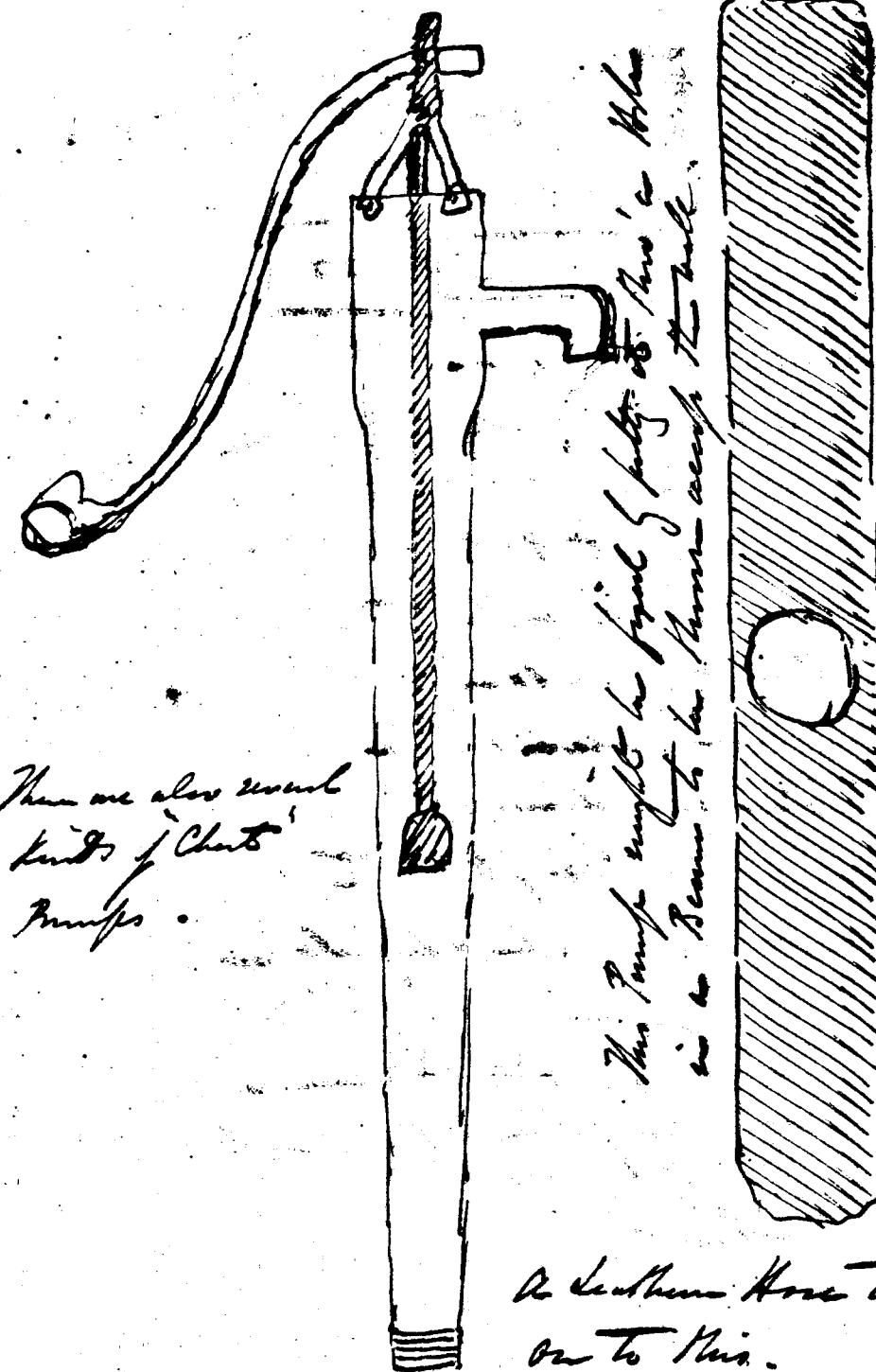
5. Referring to the important matter of supplying water to the engines, it appears that a large supply can be obtained from the Trevelyan Cistern in the western and centre sections of the town, pipes having been laid down in Andeapah Naick's street as far as the market; but in most localities it must come from the neighbouring wells, and to facilitate the drawing of water from such wells and its conveyance to the scene of action, the Commissioner of Police recommends the use of small portable pumps with leather hoses, the public wells being fitted with cross-bars and wheels. He also recommends the provision of low trucks for the water casks, and the use of small pumps, such as are used in distilleries for pumping liquor from one cask to another, for the purpose of filling the engines from the water casks. The Governor in Council will be prepared to consider the expediency of procuring apparatus of the description recommended on being furnished with designs of the pumps and estimates of their cost. It is understood that the Commissioner is now engaged in making further inquiries on the subject.

6. The Government sanction the disbursement of the sum of Rupees 250 in rewarding the Police and boatmen engaged in extinguishing the late fire at the Bankshalls.
(True Extract.)

- To the Chamber of Commerce.
- „ Commissioner of Police.
 - „ Inspector General of Ordnance and Magazines.
 - „ Municipal Commissioners.
 - „ Civil Paymaster.
 - „ Accountant General.
 - „ Military Department.

Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

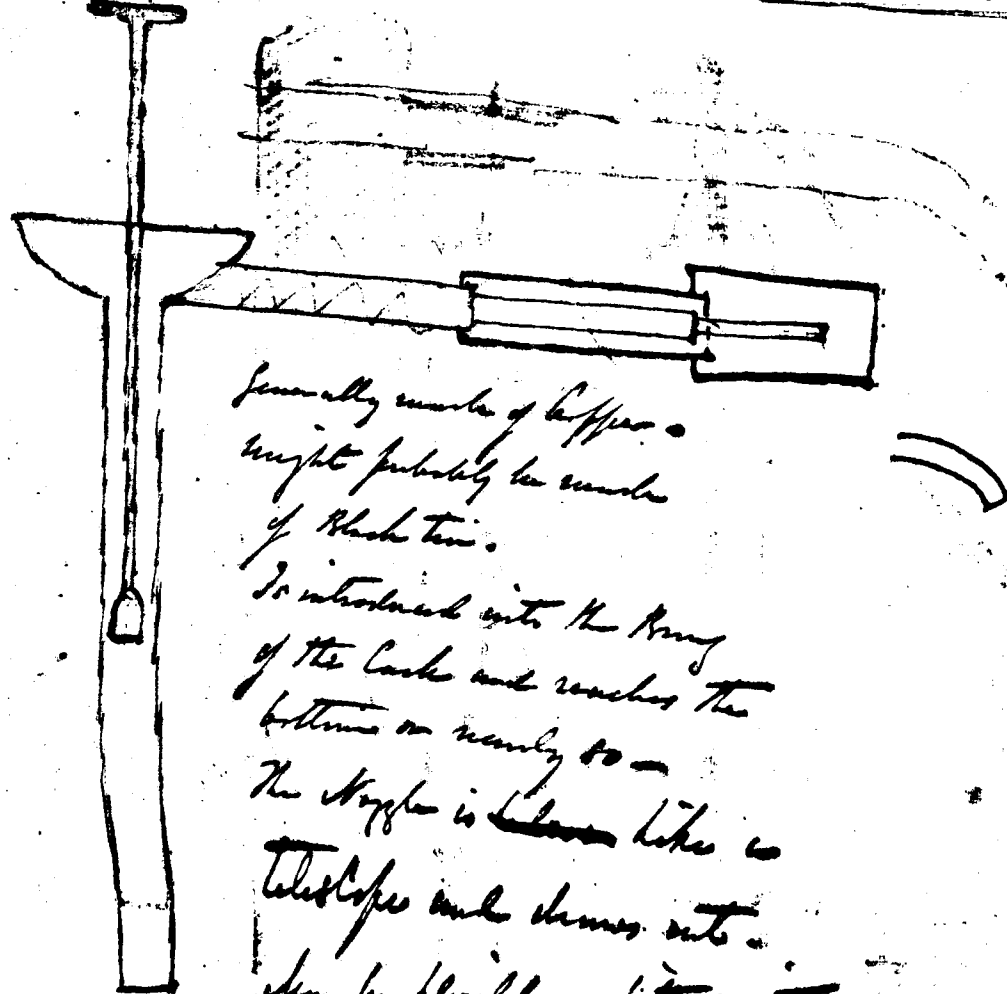


There are also several
kinds of 'Chut'
Pumps.

This Pump might be found of utility to the Police in the case of a fire in a room to be drawn across the wall.

A leather hose to send
on to this.

of Commerce for the Estab-
lishment of an efficient
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that



Generally made of copper.
 might probably be made
 of black tin.
 Is introduced into the King
 of the Cask and reaches the
 bottom or nearly so -
 The stopper is ~~like~~ like a
 telescope and comes out -
 being as flexible as fitted with
 a hinge so as to be disengaged -

Hand Pump for filling one Cask
 from another.

- To the Chamber of Commerce.
- „ Commissioner of Police.
- „ Inspector General of Ordnance and Magazines.
- „ Municipal Commissioners.
- „ Civil Paymaster.
- „ Accountant General.
- „ Military Department.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

Judicial Department.

Proceedings of the Madras Government Read the following:-

- Letter from the Chamber of Commerce } Here enter 24 Aug. 1863.
- Letter from the Commissioner of Police } do - 7th Sept. 1863. No 117
- Letter from the Municipal Comm^{rs} } do - 16th do -
- Letter from the Commissioner of Police } do - { 30 January 1864 No 2
6 February - No 2

Order thereon 15th March 1864 No 376

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Muselmans from taking part
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 Governor in Council concurs
 in the Commissioner's views.

2. As regards the means
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 are 14 engines at present
 stationed at the following
 places:-

Arsenal	3
Custom House	1
Commissionariat Office	1
Bullet Manufactory	1
Mint	1
Gun Carriage Manufactory	3
Gunpowder Do	2
Railway	2
Total 14	

in addition to which there
 are five engines in store at
 the Arsenal, and two
 belonging to the Municipal
 Commission.

3. Lieut Colonel Wilson recommends that the additional Engines available should be posted as follows:-

- 1 at Mercrombie's Battery
- 1 in Royapuram or in Washermanpett
- 1 in Triplicane or Washermanpett
- 1 in St. Thomas
- 1 in Cursewan Kum or Vepery
- 1 in Sembowdoss Street &
- 1 at the Periyar waterworks.

This arrangement is sanctioned.

Colonel Wilson does not propose the formation of a separate Establishment for working the Engines, and, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, it is not necessary. It is a duty which may very well be done, as it has been hitherto, by the Police, aided, in Black Town, by the boatmen and, in the case of a serious fire, by a fatigue party from the

The European Regiment in the Fort. The formation of a separate Fire Brigade in a straggling town like Madras, would be a very expensive measure, and one not warranted by the necessities of the case.

4. The Government approve of the Commissioner's recommendation that the Government Engines should be periodically inspected by a competent person from the Arsenal. The necessary arrangement will be made by the Inspector General of Ordnance & Magazines, who will ^{also} arrange, in communication with Lieut Colonel Wilson, for a sufficient supply of leather buckets, ladders, fire-hooks, crowbars, axes and grapnels being attached to each Engine.

5. Referring to the important matter

Matter of supplying water
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And to facilitate the drawing
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with Cross bars and wheels.
He also recommends the use
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used in distilleries for
pumping liquor from one
cask

The Governor in Council will
be prepared to consider the
expediency of procuring apparatus
of the description recommended
on being furnished with designs
of the pumps and estimates of
their cost. It is understood that
the Commissioner is now engaged
in making further enquiries
as to the best description of appa-
ratus for the purpose.

Cask & Another, for the pur-
pose of filling the Engines
from the water Casks. The
Governor in Council approves
of these arrangements. The
Inspector General of Ordnance
& Drapery will procure
the apparatus required,
in communication with
the Commissioner of Police.
6. The Government sanction
the disbursement of the
sum of Rupees 250, in reward
to the Police and Boatmen
engaged in extinguishing
the late fire at the Bank Hall.

Master Attendant in charge
of the Office of Super-
intendent of Marine } desps. 23/3/64

The Chamber of Commerce
The Commissioner of Police
The Inspector General of Ordnance & Magazine, desps. 16/3
The Municipal Commissioner
The Civil Paymaster
The Agent General
The Military Department

Admiral 1884 & 1885

1885

President of the

Admiral 15th March 1884

Admiral 15th March 1884

Considering that the
formation of the Division
at Messers not necessarily
demonstrating the arrangement
proposed with regard to the
places at which the Division
Engineers should be posted
all the more of displaying
them with united.

1885

1/5 1885