

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

235

Press
~~Mis~~

115-116

Dated

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,*
6th February 1865.

No. 115. Read the following letter from J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails, to A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint G. dated Coimbatore, 12th January 1865, No. 481.

I have the honor to inform you of my having visited the Jail at this station, containing 317 prisoners; the improvements directed at my last visit in the ventilation had been carried out, but any thing approaching the fetid, sickly smell that struck me on entering, or the relief in quitting, the Jail enclosure I never before experienced; this unwholesome atmosphere seems to lie like a mist in the hole which, surrounded by walls, constitutes the Jail enclosure, but unlike a mist it is not dissipated by the sun's rays; the wards are not worse than the rest of the area. Averse as I am to all patchwork on this wretched building, I cannot allow the prisoners to have such an abominable and confined atmosphere about them; and have requested Mr. Harris at once to have part of the walls knocked away, and a temporary palisade substituted; this and the

* From some negligence that sent for at my last visit has never been received.

abundant use of coal-tar* in the cells and,

above all, to the whole surface of every vessel used for urine or ordure, and the paving of the whole floor of the Hospital with a coat of coal-tar is all that I can devise by way of improvement; I also directed the lighting of greenwood fires in every ward.

2. The additional taint I attribute to the great amount of sickness and lity a year ago, as noticed at my last visit; nothing would justify the detention of the prisoners in this building for one day longer than may be absolutely necessary; and the moment the buildings at the new Jail admit of it, all healthy men should be there removed, the aged and infirm being sent to Vellore, and the casual sick treated in the present Jail which is close to the Civil Dispensary; this will, it is hoped, preserve the new building from taint; and I shall take an early opportunity of proposing the erection of Hospital enclosures in communication with, but outside of the Central Jails, both at this place and at Rajahmundry.

3. The prisoners now in Jail consist of 34 sentenced to 14 years and upwards; 76 to seven years and upwards; 86 to two and under seven years; 24 from one to under two years; and 50 to less than one year, besides 11 without labor; of these 28 are women; 122 will ordinarily be released of this number in the course of this year; 50 in 1866, and 27 in 1867. There was only one Civil debt.

4. One hundred and forty-three prisoners are employed at the new station roads; 46 in the ordinary requirements of the Jail; 9 in the improvements directed at my last visit, and 22 were in Hospital.

5. Since my last visit or during the months of September, October, November, December, and to this date, there have been † deaths proper to this Jail exclusive of a large mortality in a gang transferred from the Lawrence Asylum, before reported on.

† September 1864	...	...	...	...	6
October	"	...	...	...	6
November	"	...	...	...	5
December	"	...	...	...	10
To 12th January 1865	...	...	...	...	27

6. I had occasion to inquire here as to the state in which prisoners sent from the hills had been received in this Jail; the result has led me to make further references to the Officer in charge of the gang at the Asylum. I had no means of inquiring further, at this station, into the matter; but I have every reason to believe that there has been gross neglect on the part of the Warder in charge. Indeed, I

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regret to say that in very many cases of transfer lately, reports have reached me which induce the belief that proper care is not taken of prisoners on the way; and for this and other reasons I have determined on recommending to Government a change in the system in the case of prisoners who, having been transferred for labor on the hills, become ill either from the climate or their own perverseness.

7. I have been anxious to prevent the abuse of the indulgence designed

Labor.—Rule 16 and Circular No. 130.

for well conducted, intelligent prisoners under which after two-thirds of their term

passed in Jail they became eligible as Maistries. A casual entry in a note in which one-third was by mistake entered for two-thirds of the term, had been held in some Jails to justify the employment as Maistries of convicts, only one-third of whose sentence had expired; but this was rectified by Circular No. 130, in November 1863; and there can be no justification of prisoners appointments as Maistries, since that date, two-thirds of whose sentence has not expired. In the case of one Sowry Cootty, especially, who was sentenced a year ago to three years' imprisonment, this rule has been broken through, and in several cases the selection required explanation, which has since been called for, together with information as to the extent to which the Jailer is controlled in these selections.

8. I have brought to your notice the step I consider calculated to hasten the completion of the new prison, which is most urgently needed. Every precaution which human foresight can devise will be necessary to secure these new buildings from taint; and it is for this reason that, on the first transfer to the new Jail, I propose keeping the sick away from it, and as the building approaches completion adding to it a separate Hospital enclosure.

No. 116.

ORDER THEREON, 8th February 1865, No. 235.

To be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,

Chief Secretary.

*Chief Secy to the Govt of Madras
Dated 12th Dec 1864
Recd: 31st Jan 1865*

*Enclosure
No. 238
Visit to the Jail at
Mylapore with re-
marks.*

*8 February 1865 No. 235
W.A.
W.A.*

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