

# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Judicial* DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 30/

Press  
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Dated 22. 2. 1865 19

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Proc

*Madras Government, Judicial Department,  
22nd February 1865.*

Read the  
No. 214

Principal Inspector General, Medical Department,  
to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief  
Government, Fort Saint George; dated 10th February 1865,

Refers

Government, Judicial Department,\* in which  
reference is made by the Principal Inspector General  
to the Jails to the *Mahals* in the Fort of  
Vellore, and the purpose entertained  
therein, I have the honor to

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Submission to Government, a  
letter and report for the In-

Principal General of the Division, in which  
prison arrangements in the

as to their being fit

that I have called upon

report fully on the buildings, in a sanitary  
reception

for the

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*Mahals*

also called

which consisted

Principal General of Hospitals, Division, of the  
Principal General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George;

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Principal Inspector General, the enclosed special  
a sort of courtesy, a Jail, I think it right  
who had been sent from  
dition, as number (origi-  
ments for their accommo-  
tion, admitted of. Some  
were utilized; but when it  
is of the least perfect kind,—that they were  
instances affected by scurvy and ulcers, and  
with the emanations from urine chatties, it  
ts;—and if 1200 men are to be sent  
y of whom much the same condition as the 60  
Mahals, now nearly empty, (which I am informed  
be thoroughly ventilated, and prepared  
such a number of diseased human  
precaution, may be serious in the extreme.

#### VELLORE JAIL.

Place of confinement situated within the Fort walls,  
other several within the Fort walls, into  
tubs. These are occupied by  
arrangement the appropriate  
these have passed passing  
to tubs outside, at some little distance. There is  
serving as a latrine, and conservancy is in use. Water is obtained from a well

within the Fort, and it is of very good quality. Rations have been spoken of in another place. The cook-room consists of a semi-circle of huts, built against one of the internal bastions of the Fort.—These men are chiefly employed on out-door labor. When sick, they are treated in the Prison Hospital. They all appear contented and healthy. From what I have learned, it appears that they like their condition so much, that when their period of confinement is over, some have been known to commit fresh crime, with the view of being sent back to Jail.

Vellore, 27th January 1865.

(Signed) J. MAYER,  
Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals.

No. 215. From J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails, to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 16th February 1865.

I have the honor to inform you of the state of the Mahals of Vellore, which I visited on the 4th instant.

2. I may as well, to save you the trouble of reference, mention that the Mahals consist of, first and foremost, a range of courts with suitable apartments for the higher classes of the State prisoners, for whose accommodation the Mahals were originally intended; these afford ample accommodation for the survivors of all classes, for the Kandiyans, for the members of the Bhunjé families, and for those of the Palconda Zemindar.

3. Between these and the two quadrangles, around which are the numerous apartments formerly occupied by the dependents of the Mysore Maharaja, is a long court, divided into two by a wall and kind of balcony, to which access is gained from the upper floor of Tippoo's Mahal, and from which his women were used to look on at the antics of dancing dervishes and other buffoons. This court contains several buildings in a ruined state, which it would be better to remove than to repair; one building only being worth repair. The balcony is in fair order.

4. In the rear of this court, and opening into it, are the two large quadrangles known as Tippoo's and Hyder's Mahals, surrounded with cells, on two floors, and each having in the middle a fine open pavillion on pillars, in excellent order. Most of the rubbishing additions, built, I suppose, at the will and fancy of the inmates, have already been knocked away, and soil and rubbish, to the depth of perhaps two feet, have been removed.

5. There are still some buildings left against the middle, on either of the two ends of Tippoo's Mahal. I have said nothing regarding their removal, till something is settled about a Hospital. If one is not built in the Court I have described in paragraph 3, I think the west side of the smaller, or Tippoo's, Mahal may be used for the treatment of the sick; but if the occupation of these buildings is to continue, the better course will be to build a suitable Hospital in the court referred to.

6. In the rear of the Mahals are double lines of sheds, divided into apartments for cooking, extending the whole length of the building, and which serve both cooking-sheds and work-sheds, and thus relieve the area in front of the building during working hours.

7. Mr. Barlow had pierced the rear walls of many of the back cells in Tippoo's Mahal; but I requested him to desist, till I ascertained how far the Prisons' Department was authorized to make any great changes in a building not yet made over to it.

8. I think it right here to mention, before making any person's officer responsible for the building, that a large number of the doors have been found missing; the officers must not be held responsible for them.

9. Dr. Fry, who came over the Mahals, strongly deprecated the transfer of any of the Mahals at one time; and I fully agree with him in the propriety of this precaution.

10. I should wish all caves and holes in the walls made by the late occupants, stopped substantially, before any thing else is done.

11. If the Government would direct it, I should wish the roofs of the back cells ventilated, by putting in two iron or pottery tubes, bolted down to a bar placed under the two next rafters, as shown in a plate to my first report.

Also on the three sides of the back areas fitted

with windows, looking into these areas;

the windows to be four feet high

wide, barred and venetianed, as shown in a sketch of the Jail shown in the plates to

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at the end of the upper verandahs of the Mahal, to shut off at night all access to the corner rooms, from the prisoners.

12. These 16 gates will cost about Rupees 480. I should think they are absolutely necessary, but would greatly tend to security, and the maintenance of order and discipline.

I could transfer about Rupees 500 for these repairs and alterations, from the amount provided in my budget for alterations and repairs not exceeding 500 Rupees. The Government prefer the work being done by the Department of Public Works; but a small sum will suffice if the Government does not object to my being in charge of the Jail.

14. I should wish to require more repair than I at first anticipated, and in the walls; this is of no present importance, but it may affect the kind and quality of repairs and additions to be made.

Upstairs in this Mahal are 42 double and 12 single cells; each cell measures in the clear, more or less,  $12 \times 9 \times 9 = 972$  cubic feet; there is a slight difference in the cells. At the new rate of 643 feet to each prisoner, only one prisoner should be in each cell, but I should not think six in the double, and four in the better ventilated single cells, under the pressure now existing, excessive; and on this my previous calculations are based. I now omit in my estimate all cells not directly facing the quadrangle.

strongest recommendations of Mr. Beckett, a pensioned Apothecary at Vellore, for the post of Jailer, in the hope that, by combining the duties of Jailer and Medical Attendant, he might entitle himself to adequate remuneration. I told Mr. Beckett that if he obtained Mr. Barlow's nomination, I would confirm him in the post of Jailer; but that I could not hold out the inducement of further remuneration, till I had consulted the Government. Both Dr. Miller and Dr. Fry testify so highly to the professional qualifications of Mr. Beckett, that I have great confidence in suggesting that he should be entertained, not only as Jailer, but as ordinary Medical attendant on the sick prisoners, receiving, for the double office, a salary of Rupees 100. Dr. Fry said he had no subordinate available; while his own charge, extending to (I think above) 5000 persons, precluded his giving his ordinary attendance, with a due regard to his proper and primary charge.

17. The points on which I request the orders of Government, are, 1st, whether I am to consider the Mahals under my control, as an ordinary prison building

2ndly.—Whether I am at liberty to pierce the roof and walls for ventilation the mode proposed in paragraph 11.

3rdly. Whether the Government would object to such alterations of the building, not affecting its stability or relation to the purpose for which it was originally designed, as may, from time to time, be found necessary, for the security and health of the prisoners.

18. The blocking up of holes, and white-washing of the building, are matters that it is not necessary I should ask any questions about, nor did I consider the question of removal of places run up by the inmates, one in which the Government was in any way interested.

19. On perusing the revised plan of the Mahals obtained from the Chief Engineers' Office, I find shown:

In Hyder's Mahal, upper floor, 42 double and 12 single cells.

In the lower floor, 40 double and 10 single cells.

In Tippoo's Mahal, 54 double and 22 single cells in the upper, and 50 double and 22 single cells in the lower floor, exclusive of those 32 corner cells on both floors which do not directly face the quadrangle, and which consequently could not be thoroughly ventilated, or a total of available cells (still excluding the 32) of 252 in Tippoo's Mahal and of 186 in Hyder's, or altogether (but without the 32 corner cells) 438 available cells, each with a superficial area of about  $12 \times 9$  feet, say 108 and a height, more or less, of 9 feet.

20. The total accommodation afforded by the cells facing the quadrangle and excluding the corner rooms would, according to the rate I formerly assumed of 6 to each double, and 4 to each single cell, be for 876 prisoners.

21. The total accommodation of these cells, putting only two in a cell, would be suited for 876 prisoners; in this case each prisoner would have (within a few

15. As soon as the smaller Mahal can be completed, I would remove into it 200 prisoners, 100 at a time, beginning the relief with the Cuddapah Jail.

16. I had received from Dr. Miller, Mr. William Blair, and Dr. Fry, the

inches) an area of 51,000 square feet, and in almost all the cells (inclusive of measurement to the top of the joists) a total cubic space of at least 500 feet of air.

No. 216. From R. CULE, Esq., Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, Fort Saint George, to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 20th February 18

I have the honor, with reference to my letter, No. 38, of 10th instant, to forward, for the information of Government, a report by Assistant Surgeon Fry, on the Mahals at Vellore.

2. The suggestions of that officer, for the sanitary improvement of the buildings, Government may perhaps see fit to refer to the lately appointed Committee.\*

#### REPORT OF THE MAHALS, VELLORE FORT.

The Mahals, situated at Vellore, consist of two large buildings, enclosed by a high wall, and occupying an area of 51,000 square yards, erected by Government, after the taking of Seringapatam, for the reception and safe custody of the families of Hyder and Tippoo. They are supposed to have been erected in 1800, and were inhabited shortly after. Nothing certain is known of their occupation; but they were certainly inhabited at the time of the Vellore Mutiny, of 1807, as mention is made, in Orme's History of the Vellore Mutiny, of a Mussulman having been erected on the walls of the Mahal, occupied by the young Mysore Prince.

2. The Mahals may safely be conjectured to have been erected over 60 years; during this long period the families have gradually decreased in number, and at the present time, there is only one of the wives of Tippoo Saib left. She is a child of 12 years of age, and occupies a small room in Tippoo's Mahal about six months ago, and now occupies a room in a smaller building unconnected with the two principal Mahals. The two buildings, when thrown open six months ago, after 60 years occupation, presented such a scene of dirt, disorder, and filth, that it is only wonder is, human beings should have been able to live in them. All sanitary measures were evidently completely ignored, rank vegetation flourished in the open ground, and each apartment had evidently been used for living in during the day, sleeping in at night, for cooking, and for the purposes of nature. The walls of every room were begrimed with soot and dirt, and ornamented with pictures of all sorts of filthy and disgusting scenes. Idly never thought of, and the whole presented an appearance that literally defies description. Gangs of convicts have been working daily to remove the debris, and to clean the buildings, and their present state is as follows:

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE MAHALS.

4. As both Mahals are built on a high wall, a plan of the buildings is enclosed for reference.

5. The large Mahal, formerly occupied by Tippoo's family and retainers, consists of apartments, which more correctly ought to be described as a quadrangle, in form, all facing inwards, looking out on the quadrangle, in other purposes.

Each apartment or cell has a small room adjoining for the sleeping apartment. There are no other rooms in the Mahal.

These rooms are situated round the whole of the quadrangle, and are surrounded by a blank wall, 20 feet high, which

completely encloses the whole building. As the inner cells are built against this wall on two sides, it will be clearly seen how deficient they must be, both as regards light and ventilation; they receive the former through the outer apartment, but are still very dark, and are entirely deficient with regard to the latter; they may be described as close, hot, and uncomfortable to remain in.

7. The outer apartments which all face the open quadrangle are better supplied with light and air. Each set of apartments (an inner and outer one) are divided from those on either side by a party wall.

Number of Cells.

|                        |                       | Inner. | Outer. |          |     |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|----------|-----|
| Large Mahal, Tippoo's. | On the upper story... | 81     | 81     | Total... | 162 |
|                        | On the lower story... | 75     | 75     | Total... | 150 |
|                        |                       |        |        | Total... | 312 |
| Small Mahal, Hyder's.  | On the upper story... | 58     | 58     | Total... | 116 |
|                        | On the lower story... | 52     | 52     | Total... | 104 |
|                        |                       |        |        | Total... | 220 |

8. The average cubic measurement of each cell, either inner or outer, upper or lower, is 972 cubic feet. The average dimensions being, length 12 feet, height 9 feet, and breadth 9 feet.

9. The total number of cells in both Mahals is 532, each cell on an average containing 972 cubic feet. Exclusive of the above number are a few very small cells, so situated as to be of no possible use.

10. The small apartments, built in the quadrangle, on an upper and lower story, in sets of two. One being within the other, the whole range enclosed by a brick wall 20 feet high, presenting a blank surface, with the exception of the aperture for the door to each Mahal. The apartments on the upper story are reached by narrow wooden stair cases, one at each angle of the building, and there is a verandah also running round, by which access to the apartments is gained. Between the high external wall and the back of the cells on the East and West sides of both Mahals there are spaces, as will be seen on referring to the plan.

11. The space on the West side is 38 feet broad, fitted up with sheds of a very substantial character, evidently intended for cooking purposes; but they do not seem to have been much used. A high wall of the same height as the outer one divides the cooking sheds of either Mahal from the other.

The space on the east side is 56 feet broad, and is covered with buildings of various descriptions, all very much dilapidated. This space, common to both Mahals, is divided by a wall on which is erected a latticed verandah communicating with the large Mahal, so as to enable the occupants to view any sports in the court-yard without being seen. The entrance to the Mahals is through this space.

13. The Mahals are drained by a series of small surface channels running into one large drain which empties itself into the Fort ditch, the common receptacle for all the filth of Vellore.

14. Water is obtained from six wells, three to each Mahal, two in the west space near the cooking sheds, the other in the space (east side); both Mahals are exactly alike in this respect.

15. The water is good and abundant.

16. The best well was accidentally discovered when the Mahals were being built; it had been excavated a year before, when the Fort was built, but for some purpose had been covered over.

17. When informed by the Sub-Collector, some months previously, that the Mahals were to be turned into a prison for a large number of convicts, 1200 in number, I carefully at various times went over the whole of the buildings to judge of their adaptability for the purpose, and after mature deliberation am of decided opinion that, in their present state, they are wholly unsuited for

the reception of a large body of men, more especially prisoners. My grounds for arriving at this opinion are as follows:—

1st.—The extremely deficient state of ventilation from the situation of the apartments, which seem to have been built for the express purpose of shutting out both light and air, and are surrounded by a 20 feet high blank wall.

2nd.—The absence of any place for latrines.

3rd.—The deficient drainage.

4th.—No suitable place for the sick, unless some of the cells were set apart for the purpose—a highly objectionable plan, as it would be difficult to keep the sick apart from the other convicts, and there would be no possibility of keeping such a Hospital clean, besides the risk of infectious disease spreading from the impossibility of separating the sick from the rest of the convicts.

5th.—The total want of any means of restraining the convicts to any particular portion of the building. If so many convicts were "told off" for each cell, there are no means at present of restricting them to those particular cells, as there are no doors.

6th.—The collection of such a large body of men, 1200 (who, I am given to understand, would be the old, useless, disabled men from the other Jails in the Madras Presidency—such men not to be employed out of the Jail, but to be constantly in the same comparatively speaking confined area), would, I am of opinion, be productive of very grave results, should diseases of an epidemic character break out.

18. Of other objections, such as difficulty in guarding and keeping the convicts under constant supervision, I do not venture to offer an opinion, but may state that only four days ago three prisoners, employed in clearing out the Mahal, escaped. Under these circumstances, I think it my duty as sole Medical Officer to suggest that the Mahals being used as prisons in their present state, however, the following suggestions are made, which, in my opinion, might render the buildings more suitable for the purpose intended.

1st.—The quadrangle having been already cleared, levelled, and all vegetation removed, presents a clean appearance, and nothing further is required with regard to it.

2nd.—The cells should be thoroughly cleaned, scraped, to remove the soot and dirt, afterwards white-washed, all holes in them filled up with bricks and chunam. To render the ventilation better, the back wall of the inner cell should have an aperture made in it, one foot broad and six feet in length from the floor, such aperture being guarded by two or three iron bars; a ventilating tube might also be placed in the wall between the inner and outer cell, which might be partially removed; to remove it entirely would be better, but this might render the building unsafe.

19. The inner and outer cells combined contain on an average 2000 cubic feet. consideration should more than four convicts be placed in this space, thus allowing 500 cubic feet for each person.

The convicts could then be confined in separate sets of four. If the same four convicts always occupied the same cell, they could be made responsible for the due cleanliness of the same.

For calls of nature, a pipe might be passed through the wall of each cell, communicating with tarred tubs for the reception of urine; tubs being placed "in situ" when the men are locked up at night, and removed when they are opened in the morning, emptied and well washed out. Lamps placed along the verandah would throw light into the cells through the grated door, and allow the convicts to see out. With regard to drainage, the drains should be well cleaned out, repaired, enlarged if necessary, and well flushed.

22. The most important points next to be considered are four, viz.,

- 1st.—Site for a latrine.
- 2nd.—Site for cooking purposes.
- 3rd.—Site for washing purposes.
- 4th.—Site for a Hospital.

A great object would be gained, could these buildings be entirely separated from the main body of the Mahals, so as to be quite distinct from the cells and the prisoners.

23. On referring to the plan accompanying this report, it will be seen that there is an open space common to both Mahals between the back of the cells and the outer high wall, on the east and west sides. The spaces in the west side are covered with buildings evidently erected for cooking, and, as mentioned before in this report, are in good repair.

24. This space in the large Mahal, Tippoo's, I would suggest, should be converted into a latrine for the use of both Mahals. Access from the smaller, or Hyder's, could be gained by a door made in the party wall, shewn in the plan in red.

25. The same space in the small Mahal should be used for cooking purposes for both Mahals; access to it from big Mahal, through the door in party wall. This plan, I think, is preferable to the cooking sheds and latrines being in the space.

26. The wells (2) in cooking space should be used solely for cooking purposes, and the wells (2) in the space where the latrines are, might be used solely for washing, &c.

27. I think the space in the large Mahal more suitable for the latrines, as it is near the Sally-Port of the Fort. If the dry system of conservancy was strictly enforced, the collection of the latrines might be carried out through a door which ought to be made in the outer wall on south-west side, shewn red in plan; if this was done, nothing need ever be carried through the main portion of the buildings, and the refuse from the cooking sheds might be removed by the same channel.

28. To render the latrines, as far as possible, entirely distinct from the buildings, I would suggest that those cells, the back walls of which form a part of the boundary of this space, should not be furnished with any means of ventilation, as if any holes were made in these walls, the offensive odour from the latrines would be carried into the Mahals. These unventilated cells need not be occupied by convicts, but might be used for storing tools, places of arms, &c.

29. The space on the east side also, quite distinct from the main building, might be made the site of a fine Hospital for both Mahals. If the party wall, with its latticed verandah, and the old dilapidated buildings were removed, almost enough material might be collected to build the Hospital. The two wells in this space might be used solely for drinking purposes.

30. A Hospital in this situation would be easy of access, either from the Mahals or the outside of the building.

31. Should these arrangements be carried out, the Hospital, latrine, cook-rooms, and washing places would all be entirely distinct and separated from the main buildings, an advantage I need not state of the greatest importance.

32. The building in the centre of each quarter, which might be converted into a workshop.

33. I may further add that considering the time those buildings are in tolerable condition as regards the brick and wood work.

VELLORE, 15th February 1865. FRY, Assistant Surgeon,  
In Medical charge of Vellore.

No. 217. From J. ROHDE, Esq., General of Jails, to the Honorable A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 21st.

In reference to the late visit to the Vellore Mahals, I have the honor to be adopting such of the principles of the Calcutta Prison Discipline Committee as may be practicable, in res-

pect to the ventilation of the building, and thus avoid the necessity for further changes.

2. I considered the prison resources adequate to such an adaptation of the building, as I at first proposed to meet the pressing demand for prison accommodation; but these resources are utterly inadequate to even an approximate adaptation to the requisition of the Calcutta Committee.

3. There will be no difficulty, as regards roof ventilation of the upper cells; but I could not undertake to pierce and fit into the back cells lateral windows, of the area, or even of half the area required.

4. The suggestions of the Committee that I consider applicable, with modifications, to this building, though not without skilled labor and supervision, are those connected with ventilation, providing for lateral ventilation, and free roof ventilation.

5. In respect of the cells which are on the three sides of the small back areas, they may be fitted with large windows, I should think, without any risk to the stability of the building, of the full area required for two persons, namely, 40 superficial feet; but I should doubt the propriety of piercing the main outer wall of the building to this extent. The windows, if put in, will be so near the ground that with the cell open to the ground on the opposite side, I should not think any further ground ventilation necessary.

6. The drainage of the area by surface and sub-soil drains is another of the Committee's suggestion applicable to this building, but it involves interference with works and buildings connected with the fortifications. I cannot think that any large expense would be necessary; but skilled superintendence would be essential to the drains being of use, perhaps to their being other than a nuisance. The present drains are worse than useless.

7. My plan was simply to occupy the building after it had been cleared of dirt and rubbish, with but few, and those inexpensive, changes. Should, however, the Government expect a well-adapted building, much more will be necessary, namely, the thorough ventilation of the inner cells, which will improve that of the outer cells, both by piercing the roof and putting in windows, the securing of each cell by a well-constructed grating and door occupying the whole opening of the front cell, and thorough drainage both surface and sub-soil.

8. I beg expressly to state that I recommended the arrangement not as what I could desire, but as what I thought I could obtain; and that in doing so, I did not hold myself responsible for anything beyond the suggestion of a make-shift to meet an immediate and pressing want.

ORDER THEREON, 22nd February 1865, No. 301.  
No. 218.

The Governor in Council resolves to refer the foregoing letters to the Committee appointed under date the 7th instant, and to request that the Inspector General of Jails and President of the Sanitary Commission will inspect the Vellore Mahals together, and report fully on the alterations which they consider necessary.  
(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector General of Jails.

" President, Sanitary Commission (with a Plan).

" Principal Inspector General, Medical Department.

Ed. J. H. Burns.

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Mr. J. in [unclear] to refer the pro-  
tectors under date of the [unclear] the [unclear]  
under date of [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
[unclear] and the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
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[unclear] [unclear] and report [unclear] [unclear] on  
the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

WOW

