

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	<i>246A</i>	Press <u>Mis.</u>
Dated	<i>20 - 2 - 1918</i>	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
20th February 1867.*

No. 166. Read the following Proceedings of Government in the Public Works Department, dated 14th February 1867, No. 433.

Sanctioning, under circumstances represented, a deviation from the standard plan of Lunatic Asylums furnished by the Government of India. (Vide Proceedings, Public Works Department, dated 14th February 1867, Nos. 233 & 234.)

No. 166A. ORDER THEREON, 20th February 1867, No. 266A.

To be recorded.

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

Exd. J, Tulloch.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
14th February 1867.*

No. 233. Read the following letter from the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Camp, Columundai, 29th January 1867, No. 4,263 :—

1. In compliance with the Order of Government, dated 22nd November 1866, No. 3,732, I have placed myself in communication with the Sanitary Commissioner and the Principal Inspector General of the Medical Department, with a view to the preparation of plans and estimates for the proposed Lunatic Asylum at Madras, with reference to the standard plan furnished and the remarks of the Government of India, regarding the description of materials to be used in the construction of such buildings.

2. The Governor General has authorized the adoption of the plan furnished by the Sanitary Commission for Bengal as a standard for Lunatic Asylum in India.

3. There are some minor details, however, which the Principal Inspector General of the Medical Department and the Sanitary Commissioner think require modification, and regarding which I, agreeing with these Officers, request the orders of Government.

4. The Bengal Sanitary Commission, referring to the great improvements which have been made in Europe in treating the insane, insist strongly upon the principle that "The less the insanes are dealt with as prisoners the better; their safe custody must be made to depend on no high walls, but on the attention of kind and vigilant assistants."

5. The Bengal Commission, therefore, lay down that the enclosing wall round the entire space occupied by the cottages of the lunatics should not be more than five feet high, and concealed by shrubs.

According to the Bengal standard plan, the dwellings of the insane will consist of detached cottages.

Out of every six cottages one only will have iron barred doors and windows for the insane who most require restraint.

The doors of the other cottages will be of battens, the lower half of each being sparred for ventilation.

The criminal lunatics only are separated from the other insanes by a high wall.

6. The Sanitary Commissioner and the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, are of opinion that to secure the safe custody of lunatics in India, and to protect the public from danger from escaped lunatics, more efficient restraint is required than is afforded in the standard plan furnished from Bengal for the lunatics who are not criminals.

7. It would be necessary, on account of the heat during the greater part of the year, to keep the batten doors open, and there would be no impediment, except the vigilance of the assistants or keepers, to the escape of the inmates of the Asylum during the night.

8. A system of vigilance, which is possible in Europe with efficient and well paid European agency, cannot, with safety, be adopted in this country, when such agency can with difficulty, and only at an enormous expense, be obtained.

9. The Sanitary Commissioner and the Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, suggest that the doors should be iron barred, with an outside shutter (with ventilating apertures) in case of rain. They are supported in this view by

the opinion of Dr. A. Payne, the Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylums at the Bengal Presidency, who is an Officer of great reputation and experience in the treatment of the insane in India.

10. Dr. Payne says "whatever may be said against iron bars for Asylums in Europe, when such things are not seen out of Jails, they afford, in my opinion, by far the best means of occupying the space devoted to doors and windows in India.

"The Native so frequently employs them in his own house, that the sight of them can awaken no unpleasant association, and it may not be generally known that even to an European an iron barred window loses all its gloomy repulsiveness if it be painted green or white instead of black, as it almost invariably is, while the advantages attending the use of iron bars in India are indisputable."

11. If barred doors and windows are provided for the cottages, it will probably not be necessary to provide a high enclosing wall. An earthen embankment, surmounted by a thick hedge, would be an economical substitute for a high wall. If it is decided that, as a rule, the cottage doors and windows are not to be iron barred, I concur with Dr. Shaw and Mr. Ellis in thinking that a high enclosing wall is absolutely necessary for the safe custody of the Lunatics.

12. That there is a strong tendency on the part of the insane to escape from custody, is shown by the returns of the Idiot Asylum attached to the Monegar Choultry.

Although this is called an Idiot Asylum, the majority of the inmates are lunatics, for out of seventy patients, only ten are idiots, the remaining sixty being lunatics.

The number of escapes from the Asylum during the past year was eighteen.

13. In the Bengal standard plan no provision would seem to have been made for verandahs to the cottages, for it is stated that the quarters occupied by night ought not to be used during the day. Galleries and sheds are provided for working and exercising the lunatics in wet weather, and at other times they should take exercise under trees.

14. I agree with the Sanitary Commissioner, and the Principal Inspector General, in thinking that verandahs, six feet in width, should run the whole length of the cottages.

In certain cases it might be necessary to humour some of the insanes who are disinclined to use the sheds. Some may from infirmity be unable to leave the cottages, and a small verandah, while it would greatly add to the comfort of this class of insanes, would also protect the cottage in rainy weather.

Dr. Payne advocates narrow verandahs on either side of the building, and suggests that curtains of canvas or gunny may be made to hang from the eaves of these verandahs, to be used when required.

15. The Hospital accommodation, provided according to the Bengal standard plan, is small, and it may often be necessary to treat minor cases of illness in the cottages themselves, reserving the Hospital for graver cases.

There can be no objection to this course, but it is an additional reason for providing the cottages with the verandahs we have suggested.

16. In the report of the Bengal Sanitary Commission it is stated, "that in addition to the dwellings for the insane, a separate quarter for the criminals, and another for women, with the sheds for exercise and work, every Lunatic Asylum

"should have a Hospital calculated to contain five per cent. of the population, "with quarters for the Resident Medical Attendant, a house for the Deputy Superintendent, an office and store rooms for clothing, raw materials and manufactured goods, privies, wells, and cook-rooms."

It seems doubtful what is the rank of the Resident Medical Attendant for whom quarters are to be provided. In the standard plan which accompanied the report of the Bengal Sanitary Commission, a house is provided for the Deputy Superintendent, an Office for the Superintendent, and a small house for a Native Doctor, who would seem to be the only Resident Medical Attendant.

17. I have, therefore, to request the decision of the Government as to the nature of the quarters required for the Resident Medical Attendant of the Madras Lunatic Asylum.

18. The bungalow in Locock's Gardens would serve for a residence for the Superintendent, if he is required to reside on the premises, or it could be converted into a Hospital for Male Lunatics.

It is unsuited, from its size, for the quarters of a Native Medical Subordinate.

19. The Principal Inspector General, Medical Department, taking it for granted that the Superintendent of the Madras Lunatic Asylum will be a Medical Officer, and considering the distance from Madras of Locock's Gardens, is of opinion that the Superintendent should reside at the Asylum, and that a suitable house should be provided for him; as shown above the existing bungalow can be repaired and made use of for this purpose.

No. 234. ORDER THEREON, 14th February 1867, No. 433.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 31.

1. Under the circumstances urged in this letter, the Right Honorable the Governor in Council is of opinion that the safe custody of the inmates of the proposed Lunatic Asylum will be better secured by the provision of iron bars to the doors and windows of the several cottages than by the erection of a boundary wall, and His Lordship in Council sanctions this arrangement, as well as the addition of a narrow verandah along the whole length of the cottages, both in front and rear.

2. The bungalow referred to in paragraph 18 should be put in good repair, and be appropriated to the accommodation of the Superintending Medical Officer.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division.
Public Department.

" Sanitary Commissioner.
" Principal Inspector General, Medical Department.

Erd. S. T. Augustin.

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from the Standard Plan
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of 1894
Nov. 20 1894

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