

(1) Number of pages 6
(2) Date of repair 29.9.86
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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	576	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	3. 4. 1868	197

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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Communicating papers reporting comple- (Vide Proceedings, Public Works Depart-
tion of the District Jail at Madura. { ment, dated 27th March 1868, Nos. 633
& 634.)

Chief Secretary.

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department.
27th March 1868.

No. 633. Read the following letter from the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, to the Secretary to Government, Department Public Works, dated Madura, 4th March 1868, No. 2,551 :—

1. I have the honor to report, for the information of Government, that the new Jail at this station was handed over to Doctor Murray, the Superintendent of the Jail, on the 20th ultimo, by

Copy of letter from Captain Prendergast, dated 29th February 1868.

Captain Prendergast, whose report accompanies this letter.

2. These buildings have been constructed on contract at a total cost of Rupees 96,794, the estimate sanctioned* being for 85,800 : the original estimate,

* 28th March 1867, No. 981. however, was for Rupees 1,04,602, but Rupees 18,802 was deducted for prison-labor, which, however, has only cost Rupees 15,374, owing to finishing the work in sixteen instead of twenty-four months. An extra sum of Rupees 10,994 sanctioned† by Government, includes extra cost of Police guards, and an item of

† 3rd February 1868, No. 368.

excess for the roofing, viz., Rupees 2,171-15-4, reported on in letter to Government, No. 2,112, dated 25th January 1868.

3. Two years were allowed by Government for the completion of the work; but the work has been carried out in sixteen months, as the commencement was not made until 15th October 1866, delays having taken place in getting the ground given up.

4. The work appears to be well done, and suitable for the purpose required; these favorable results may in great measure be attributable to the untiring perseverance of the Range Officer, Mr. Colquhoun, in managing and instructing in different trades from 200 to 300 prisoners employed on the works. Mr. Colquhoun has been throughout ably assisted by Overseer Davasagamony. Captain Prendergast considers the Overseer deserving promotion, though, under the strict orders of Government, we cannot recommend him to such promotion, as he is only efficient as a building Overseer, knowing nothing of irrigation. He will, however, be useful in superintending the Jail about to be built at Palamcottah, in Tinnevely District.

Deputy Jailers' quarters	...	...	Rs. 500
Dressers' quarters	...	...	1,000
Lines for twelve Warders	...	...	2,000
Bathing cisterns with platforms, urinals, and gratings in the wall in connection with the drainage, &c.	...	...	1,500
Value of land	...	...	2,600
Total	...	...	7,600

5. Some further subsidiary buildings as per margin* are still required, and the estimates, amounting with cost of land to Rupees 7,600, have been forwarded to the Inspector General of Jails.

From Captain H. L. PRENDERGAST, R. E., Executive Engineer, to the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, dated 29th February 1868, No. —.

1. I have the honor to invite your attention to the fact of the new Jail having been handed over to the Superintendent of the Jail, on the 20th instant; the receipt for the buildings having been signed by Doctor Murray and myself. A personal inspection was made on the morning of the 20th, when this department was relieved of charge of the new Jail, and also of the expenditure heretofore incurred in paying the salaries of the Police Constables on guard over the prisoners.

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2. The buildings have been completed in accordance with the sanctioned estimate, amounting to Rupees 85,800; an additional grant of Rupees 10,994 having been made, *vide* G. O., No. 363, of the 3rd February 1868, to cover the extra cost of Police guards, to make good the sum expected not to have been required for payment in consequence of labor supplied by the prisoners, and to meet one item of excess, Rupees 2,171-15-4, in the cost of roofing; as already explained to Government in my letter* No. 2,112, of the 25th January 1868.

* *Vide* G. O., No. 331 of 31st January 1868.

3. By the Order of Government No. 1,996, of the 25th June 1866, two years were specified as the period within which the Jail was to be completed; but the work has in reality been carried out in sixteen months; for there was some delay in obtaining authority, and then enforcing the Act to take up the land required, and a commencement was not made till the 15th October 1866. Convict labor has been utilized throughout as much as was possible. There was but little skilled labor found among the prisoners; but batches of men were instructed in brick and tile-making, in bricklaying, and as sawyers, and smiths. Great credit is due to the Range Officer, Mr. Colquhoun, for his untiring perseverance and energy; and also very successful management of from two to three hundred prisoners at a time, many of whom were under long sentences as desperate characters. The Government have insisted, on more than one occasion, that the labor of prisoners should be largely utilized, so as to reduce the cost of building the new Jails; but these orders contemplated a certain supply of skilled labor being found, and being provided by transfer from other parts of the country. No injunction was made that the construction of a Jail should furnish a school of instruction: but here the wishes of Government have been met beyond the letter of their instructions, in a number of the prisoners being put in training and executing the work of skilled workmen under the supervision of a small number of paid hands; after a time these men were quite able to work under the ordinary superintendence that is exercised over free labor, and some of

than they had any prospect of formerly. I consider Mr. Colquhoun deserving of particular commendation for taking upon himself this additional work, in which also he was throughout ably assisted by Overseer Davasagamony. This Overseer was sent to the Madura District just in time for the Jail works, and from his experience in building at the Presidency, his services were most valuable. I bring forward this Overseer to your notice, as the best in the Division, for the Jail proposed to be built at Palamcottah; the Range Officer strongly recommends him for promotion in the department, and I should have been glad to have been able to enter his name for promotion, but after the publication of G. O., No. 51, of the 7th January 1868, I could not express an opinion that he is fully qualified for the charge of a Range, including irrigation works, for his whole service has been spent on buildings. If however at any time a Supervisor is required at a large station for superintendence of buildings, I think this man is highly deserving of, and capable of holding such a position.

4. The construction of the buildings was given on contract to the firm of Ruttanum Moodelly & Co., or rather to the partner V. Ragava Chariar: and the result is very creditable to him; this, however, you have been able to judge of by inspection of the buildings: there were difficulties encountered especially in obtaining the supply of good wood, the local market utterly failing, but Ragava Chariar met all our demands most promptly, and remained himself almost the whole time in supervision of the work.

5. The temporary barracks built within the enclosure wall have answered their purpose very well: they have been more than once subjected to severe weather but have been occupied the whole time that the Jail has been in progress, with very trifling repairs. These sheds are now quite serviceable, and might accommodate a number of prisoners still for some time to come, if the old Jail in the town is soon vacated. Although the Superintendent of the Jail has received over the new Jail he is at present awaiting orders of the Inspector General before bringing the buildings into occupation, and it depends on the abandonment of the old Jail whether any measures can be taken on the Order* of Government, No. 1,996, dated 25th June 1866, for the disposal of those

* Paragraph 17.

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27th March 1868.*

buildings. An offer of Rupees 35,000 has been made by one person, but it seems likely that a larger sum might be realized by putting up the place to auction in convenient lots.

6. The average daily number of prisoners employed in building the Jail has been 245. The number of days occupied, 432. The actual total number of prisoners at work, 106,139; but a very large amount of labor has been employed in clearing and levelling the Jail site, digging temporary wells, &c., which work was not provided in estimate, as no expense was incurred.

There were trained as—

Brick and tile-makers...	30
Tempering clay...	30
Bricklayers...	50
Sawyers...	40
Blacksmiths...	5

The average number of Police Constables guarding the prisoners was as 1 to 7, but among the prisoners guarded there was every day a party told off as scavengers and sweepers, and a cooking party; the prisoners on actual work were scattered to some distance at the brick-fields, and also in another direction in excavating soil for levelling the whole area within the enclosure wall; when the wall had been raised a few feet, 100 of the prisoners worked without fetters: and from that time the same number had their limbs free in treading clay at the brick-fields, and on the scaffolding for the upper part of all the buildings. The prisoners have in general behaved well and worked cheerfully: in dealing with a large body of prisoners, the control that this department can exercise depends much on the assistance given by the Jail authorities. The Range Officer expresses himself to have been greatly indebted to Dr. Rule for his cordial co-operation when the work was commenced, and latterly every assistance has been most willingly afforded by

7. Certain new demands have lately arisen which were not contemplated at the time the estimate was framed, and the want of which does not interfere with the occupation of the buildings as they now stand; these are for bathing cisterns for the different classes of inmates; for quarters outside the walls for the Deputy Jailor, for the Warders and Dresser; estimates are prepared and under examination, to be sent for the approval of the Inspector General of Jails; while the Police Department appears also to require Constables' lines in the immediate neighbourhood. These additional provisions still require the sanction of Government, as the want of them has not yet been represented. A sketch plan of the ground round the Jail has been sent to the Inspector General, in order that he may decide on the sites of the exterior buildings: the land available is but limited in extent, and as no buildings are allowed in close proximity to the wall, it will, I think, be necessary to purchase the whole open plot of ground to the east of the Jail. Land fetches a very high price all about Madura, and judging by the value decided by arbitration for the Jail site, about 2,600 Rupees must be paid for the value of convict labor, so that a grant of about Rupees 8,000 will be needed in the coming official year. This does not include the cost of Police lines: but if they must also be built, another sum of Rupees 2,500 will be necessary.

No. 634. ORDER THEREON, 27th March 1868, No. 1,004.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 60.

1. Communicated to the Judicial Department.

2. The thanks of Government are due to Captain Prendergast for the effective manner in which the views of Government in regard to the employment of convict labor have been carried out under his superintendence in the construction of the new District Jail at Madura, and His Excellency in Council observes with satisfac-

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
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tion the praiseworthy exertions of Mr. Sub-Engineer Colquhoun and Overseer Davasagamony, as brought to notice in these papers.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division.
,, Judicial Department.

Enclosed 1863 Sept

Proz of April

Proz of April 1863

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*Communicate papers
reporting completion
of the District Jail at
Madras*

With an index

*By Mr. Superintendent of Public Works
Government of Madras
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