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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

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Government of Madras

Judicial DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 2809	Press
B.P. No.	Mis.
Dated 23-10-1883	195

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper:—

From Lieutenant-Colonel T. K. GUTHRIE, Acting Inspector-General of Police,
to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 13th October 1883,
No. 5294.

As instructed in G.O., 20th August 1883, No. 2210 (Judicial), I have the honor to report that at the most important railway stations and at all not situated in the immediate vicinity of police stations the platform constables remain all day; at others they attend twenty minutes before the arrival of trains and wait until the station is clear of passengers; the necessity for their presence at other times is not apparent, as railway watchmen and porters are present.

2. The instructions given to platform constables are as follow:—

- (1) To watch the bad characters known to them, and to ascertain their destination; they also warn the other passengers in the carriage.
- (2) To take note of any suspicious-looking persons and to convey their suspicion to the station master and guard of the train.
- (3) To take down any complaint made and either take the complaining parties to the police station or ascertain their address should they desire to continue their journey.
- (4) To make immediate inquiry into any cognizable offence and arrest if necessary.
- (5) To take into custody persons arrested by the railway officials.
- (6) If necessary, to get into the train either for better watching of suspected persons, or the further prosecution of any inquiry they may have begun.
- (7) They are instructed to report any oppression or malpractice on the part of railway officials to the station master and to their station-house officer in whose daily report it is entered and so reaches the inspector and superintendent of police.
- (8) To wire through the station master the presence of bad characters to the station of destination.
- (9) To keep order on the platform and in the station.

3. The above instructions deal, I think, with "obvious faults," Nos. 1, 2, 3, and No. 4, in part, for if the connection be now faulty, it is capable of improvement with the existing system. "Fault" No. 5 is in my opinion no fault. I consider it better there should be an "independent agency" (see fault No. 3). I do not see how the police can be at once an "independent agency" and "identified in any way with the railway."

4. District superintendents of police have been left to issue their own orders, and there is a want of uniformity in consequence, so that it cannot be said the above instructions to railway police are entirely carried out throughout the railway system. This is a matter requiring rectification no doubt, and I think it would not be difficult, with slight assistance from the railway authorities, to make the instructions general and thoroughly effective, so far as they go. I allude to the instructions Nos. 6 and 8; the railway police ought to be free to travel by any train without cash payment or production of a warrant, and should have free use of the telegraph in both cases under the authority of the station master.

5. The platform constable has not always money to pay for a ticket or time to get a railway warrant from his station. I would therefore suggest that railway station masters should be authorized to give the constable a pass to enable him to travel to any station and back. If it be considered necessary to recover fare from this department then the pass might be treated in the same way as the ordinary railway warrant, so that the necessity for any journey might be scrutinized in the office of the district superintendent of police and my office. If it be decided not to recover, then the pass should be forwarded by the station master who granted it to the superintendent of police, who would endorse and forward it to the manager of the railway.

6. Station masters ought to be instructed to render every assistance in the free use of the telegraph wires for the prevention and detection of crime along the line; if payment, however, be a necessity, a simple system of check could be, I conceive, easily arranged.

7. Up to this time, local criminal gangs have made no extensive use of the railway, and when they have done so they have taken care to avoid the railway stations in the vicinity of their villages where they would be known to the platform police.

8. The serious difficulty we have to encounter is in the matter of night trains and thefts therefrom. A thief unknown to the local police gets into the train, covers himself up and feigns sleep; he thus escapes the scrutiny of the police all along the line until he gets out at a station where he is sure he is unknown.

9. The only remedy for this that suggests itself to me is the frequent travelling by these trains of the platform constables or other railway detectives; the constables might proceed by one mail train and return by the next.

10. Our police in the mofussil have yet, in many railway districts, to understand that it is not only the man of one cloth and evil countenance they have to look after, but he also in goodly attire with silver watch and swagger stick. Some of these gentry hailing from Madras city have recently been convicted in Salem district. Both men and women from Bombay and Poonah commit theft on the Madras railway.

11. I may be permitted to observe, in conclusion, with regard to the faithful registration of railway crime, that all cases are reported and registered when the loss is of importance to the victim, but when on the other hand the loss is slight no report is made, the parties putting up rather with their loss than face the prospective trouble of a police investigation, and may be trial at a distant court. My opinion in this matter is that it would not be wise to harass people by a police investigation in the case of a trivial charge which they themselves are unwilling to proceed with.

ORDER—dated 23rd October 1883, No. 2809, Judicial.

The Government approve generally of the proposals made by the Inspector-General of Police, and his letter will be transferred to the Department of Public Works (Railway branch), in view of the improvement of the Railway Police Administration, in the directions suggested by him.

(True Extract.)

C. G. MASTER,
Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Police.
" Public Works department, Railway branch.

Exd. J. Wright.

Govt. of (1883) Madras.

JUDICIAL.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 23rd October 1883, No. 2809.

OCTOBER.

Railway Police Administration.

Approving generally of the proposals made by the Inspector-General of Police for the improvement of the — in this presidency, and transferring his letter to the Department of Public Works (Railway branch).