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Local & Munl. (1897) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS.

G.O., No. 2011/m

DATED 15-9-97

INDEXED. *CR*

[Despatch Abstract.]

Madras mnl. Commⁿ

*Recording full proceedings & also a copy
of abstract proceedings of a general meeting
of the Madras mnl. Commⁿ held on 31st
May 1897*

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BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Local & Munl. (1897) Department. ^{MS}

CURRENT No. 3049 M

This Order No. 2011 H. mis. dt 15.9.97.

From

THE PRESIDENT,
Municipal Commission,
Madras.

Recorded

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G. No. 172
H. No.

Dated 23 August 1897

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Enclosures 2.

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Forwarding full proceedings
as also a copy of abstract
proceedings of a general
meeting of the Commissioners
held on 31 May 1897

29/9
27/8

Madras, 23rd August 1897.

LOCAL & MUNICIPAL DEPT.
3049h
President, Municipal Commission.

G. No. 172

From

LIEUT.-COL. SIR GEORGE MOORE, KT., C. I. E.,

To

The Secretary to Government,

Local and Municipal Department,

SIR,

Fort Saint George.

I have the honor to submit herewith for the ----

information of Government full proceedings as also a copy
of abstract proceedings of a General Meeting of the Com-
missioners held on 31st May 1897.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. L. Moore Lt. Col.
President, Munl. Commn.

BACK PAPERS.

G. O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G. O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Enclosures
2

Proceedings of a General Meeting of the Municipal Commissioners
for the City of Madras, held at their Office Premises, No. 22,
Errah Bauloo Chetty Street, Black Town, on Monday, the
31st May 1897, at 5 p. m., under the provisions of the City
of Madras Municipal Acts I and VII of 1884 and II of 1892.

PRESENT:

Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. J. Moore, C.I.E., *President*.
M.R.Ry. R. N. Pragasa Mudaliar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. C. Yetherajulu Naidu Garu.
M.R.Ry. P. M. Sivangnana Mudaliar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. P. V. Kistnasawmy Chetty Garu.
M.R.Ry. M. Varadarajulu Chetty Garu.
M.R.Ry. C. S. Theagaroya Mudaliar Avargal.
E. H. Elliot, Esq.
M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur C. Kalyanasundaram Chettiar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. V. Varadappa Naidu Garu.
The Hon'ble P. Rungiah Naidu Garu.
N. Subrahmanyam, Esq.
M.R.Ry. M. K. Lakshmana Charriar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur V. Krishnama Chariyar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. C. Tirumalayya Naidu Garu.
M.R.Ry. P. Subramania Iyer Avargal.

Madras Electric Tramways.

The first subject on the agenda was the President's Memorandum, dated 5th April 1897, on the remarks by the Attorneys to the Trustees for the Debenture Holders, Madras Electric Tramways Co., on the resolution of the Commissioners, dated 30th November 1896.

THE PRESIDENT:—I put this subject on the agenda paper in case we should hear anything from the committee appointed at a public meeting of the share-holders of the Tramway Co. at whose request the consideration of this question was postponed. But now that we have not heard anything from the committee; the only course open to the Commissioners is to adjourn the consideration of the subject to a future meeting.

The subject was accordingly adjourned.

A New Market for Madras.

THE PRESIDENT:—The next business is the G. O. No. 883, M. Mis., dated 13th April 1897, sanctioning the proposal of the Commissioners to raise a loan of one lakh of rupees for the construction of a New Market.

The G. O. was unanimously recorded.

Proceedings of the Standing Committee.

THE PRESIDENT:—The next business is the consideration of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee, dated 14th April and 14th May 1897, and resolution No. 2 iii of the Proceedings, dated 19th March 1897.

MR. R. N. PRAGASA MUDALIAR:—I should like to have a slight information; unfortunately I was not present in Madras and have not seen the papers connected with the Mahomedan Burial Ground in 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions. All that I want to know is whether the modified list has been prepared with reference to the suggestions of the Sanitary Commissioner.

THE PRESIDENT:—I went through it with the Sanitary Commissioner. I went through every one of them myself.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU:—With reference to Resolution No. 12 of 14th April, I want to know whether P. Thulasingham Mudaly came to claim batta himself or did anybody authorize him.

THE PRESIDENT:—The Revenue Officer authorized him.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU:—Is it not out of the way for any one to ask for batta? He wants batta for three months.

THE PRESIDENT:—He was put on special duty and he wanted Rs 1,000.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU:—Yes, he wanted one thousand rupees, but there is no reason why he should get Rs. 180. Our solicitors should include it in their bill.

THE PRESIDENT:—As to the question of batta, it is a matter entirely between him and ourselves.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU:—I should like to have the papers connected with it, circulated.

THE PRESIDENT:—Yes, certainly.

It was proposed by Mr. V. Varadappa Naidu and seconded by Mr. Thirumalayya Naidu and carried "that the papers connected with the subject be circulated."

THE PRESIDENT:—With reference to the resolution No. 2-iii of 19th March, I have seen this man. It is due to the mistake in the plan of the Overseer. I have settled it with him.

The rest of the Proceedings was recorded.

Franchise to Lady-Graduates.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU, in moving the following resolution of which he gave notice:—

"That lady-graduates be included in the list of Voters of the Madras Municipality, and the Government be addressed to amend the Act to include the lady-graduates as Voters."

said:—

"In bringing the proposition to admit lady-graduates as voters in the Municipal Elections I have to point out that in Section 9 of the Municipal Act under sub-division (a) it is said that a person to be qualified to vote must be of male sex, and in sub-division (f) which follows, it is put down that the person must be a graduate of some University in the United Kingdom or British Colony or India; so the section clearly means that only the male graduates are qualified to vote and not the female graduates. At the time when the Act was passed, I don't think that we had female graduates at Madras. Now we have more than a dozen, and every year the Medical College is passing out more lady-graduates. At this stage it is our bounden duty to recognise the advance of education among the females and give them the same privilege to vote at the Municipal elections as is given to male graduates. In the Bombay Municipal Act there is no restriction as to sex among the voters, and likewise it is the case in the Madras Mofussil Municipal Act. I don't see the reason why we should be so narrow-minded as to exclude lady-graduates from voting. I request you to pass this resolution unanimously."

RAI BAHADUR V. KRISHNAMA CHARIAR in seconding the proposition said:—

"I second the motion, not in the spirit of a crazy champion of the 'Women's cause' as the expression is understood in certain quarters. I certainly deprecate the impolicy of admitting women to seats in Municipal or Local Councils, or to the Bar of our Law Courts wherein to prejudice a Jury or a Judge or a Magistrate with lachrymose addresses in favour of murderers, thieves and swindlers. At the same time, I must say that I am not an admirer of the estimable class of Municipal Road Contractors who carry the theory of subjection of women to the cruel extent of compelling poor Upparava or Wodder women to draw huge iron rollers to level our public roads under repair—a sad spectacle discreditable to any corporation and rightly exposed in a public assembly by the late sister of our former Governor, His Grace of Buckingham, when she returned home after a visit to Madras. Now to come to the motion before the meeting, I do not propose to refer to the English politics about 'Women's Rights.' In fact, I do not pretend to have studied that sort of literature, and I believe the question of extending the electoral franchise to Women is still in the controversial stage in England. But I speak with personal knowledge when I say that the educated ladies in Madras to whom Dr. Varadappa Naidu's motion refers have, by the University and other public examinations they passed, given clear proof of their intelligence and intellectual culture and power of applying

themselves to a close study of a given subject. Their minds are tempered by knowledge, and in the practice of their profession they have got to know the sanitary needs of the city, and they are keen about house and street cleanliness as well as personal cleanliness so essential to public health. The lady graduates in arts and medicine, though limited in number, are doing a valuable service to the community as school teachers and medical practitioners and hospital assistants, and are in short stealing a march upon the young men of Madras (educationally, I mean), to say nothing of their examination papers being generally clean and neatly written, and their answers being correct and to the point, far more so than those of the graduates and under-graduates on the male side of the school-going population. Now I would ask all present here to contrast the claims of this educated class to those of the unlettered, ignorant, and not always sober men of the toddy drawing caste and owners of arrack who are allowed to vote at our Municipal elections, and say how far it is just or proper to deny the right to vote to the educated section of the gentler sex, several of whom pay a licence or carriage-tax besides being graduates of the University. I well remember, sir, the discussion on section 9 of the Municipal Act relating to elections during the seventies, when the old Act was revised; and I think that the female portion of tax-payers was excluded in order to keep out the common women, known as dancing and singing girls, and other women of ill repute who could read, and write, and whom their paramours delighted to benefit and please, by building houses for them and making them rate-payers. But all this was twenty years ago, when lady-graduates of the University were unknown and when female education had not made the advance now visible in many a Madras family. Now, if there are ladies qualified by their University education to join the electorate of this city with a capacity to understand the objects of an election and to conform to the election rules far better than pedlars and other illiterate members of the male sex, there is no reason why this altered state of things should not be recognised. The graduates are all on a level, and therefore all of them are or ought to be eligible to vote at an election. The principle of the equality of graduates having been practically acknowledged, it is difficult to see how the refusal of the privilege to a section of them can be justified. After all the privilege of voting which the motion before the meeting proposes to confer is but small and has not to go beyond the well educated and well taught graduates of the female sex. It does not propose to give any prominence to women as candidates for Commissionerships or other public positions which it is undesirable for women to hold, and the dozen female graduates resident in Madras can do no harm such as young, inexperienced male graduates of under age are said to be blindly doing at the Municipal and other elections of the present decade. On the contrary, the female voters of the educated class are likely to set the male graduates a good example by voting in the right way with an eye to the selection of one qualified to plead in the interests of public health, about which they are more keen than those young graduates who hunt after place and preferment and are often said to ignore all other interests. At any rate, sir, the question of granting female graduates the right to vote is no longer outside the domain of practical politics in Madras, because the Mofussil Municipalities Act recently amended, gives this right to women whether educated or not, and this single fact gets rid of all arguments based on matters of policy. Furthermore, we need not fear that the number of lady-graduates on whom it is proposed to confer the right of voting would ever swamp the male votes even in distant years to come. To deny the right to educated women in the Madras City, while women in the rural Districts without any educational qualification have it at this moment, is an anomaly and a reproach that may be safely removed by a slight change in the wording of section 9 of the Madras Act. The City of Madras and its corporation are entirely of British creation and we have done practically nothing to mark its progress during the Queen's Record Reign in any permanent form. Let us at least try to remove the epithet 'Benighted' by passing this motion before the Meeting, which affirms a principle perfectly harmless and is such as to serve as a fitting memorial of the long and enlightened rule of the Sovereign Lady of whom we are all proud, and the political, social, and economic progress of whose Empire we all delight to note and admire at the present hour. I, therefore, second Dr. Varadappa Naidu's motion and hope that it will be passed without a division.

MR. P. M. SIVANGANA MUDALIAR:—I do not know, if lady-graduates in Bombay or Calcutta are allowed to vote.

MR. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU:—There is no restriction as to sex in Bombay or Calcutta. The only restriction is the property qualification.

Mr. R. N. PRAGASA MOODALIAR in opposing the resolution said :—

"I regret I have to oppose the resolution before the meeting as it stands, on two grounds. In the first place, I consider the present motion to be far in advance of the times. Even if the resolution is carried by the Commissioners, and even if Government should deem it expedient to move the Legislature to amend the Act as suggested, it is a matter of certainty that at least, for a long time to come, no appreciable influence is likely to be exercised by the extension of the franchise to lady-graduates. According to the last University Calendar there are, in all, some 15 lady-graduates in arts and medicine, and out of this small number there are, perhaps, not more than half a dozen or so residing in the town. I would ask you, then, whether for the sake of the few you can count at your finger's ends it is worth while to amend the Act. I doubt, as I said before, whether Government would move for the amendment of the Act, even if the present resolution is passed by us. In the next place, I consider that the resolution, as it stands, is materially defective. From the wording of the resolution, I understand that it is intended to extend the privilege to graduate-ladies only and not to women rate-payers generally. If there is a proposal to extend to women the right of voting I, for one, would be too glad to support it, although it must be admitted on all sides that the social condition of women in this country, is incomparably below that of enlightened England, where the question of suffrage for women is still in its early stage. Under sub-sec. (a) of Sec. 9, in order to be a qualified voter a person must 'be of the male-sex,' unless this sub-sec. is modified so as to remove the disqualification arising from sex, I think it would be inconsistent to make lady-graduates voters. Moreover, if women, many of whom contribute large sums to the Municipality in the shape of taxes, are excluded from voting at Municipal elections, it does not stand to reason to extend the privilege to a handful of lady-graduates."

THE PRESIDENT :—With reference to the question about voting in Bombay, it appears to me that the power of voting at ward elections is restricted to the members of the male sex.

Mr. N. SUBRAMANIAM :—I should like to know how many lady-graduates there are in Madras and whether Mr. Varadappa Naidu has had any communication or knowledge that those lady-graduates have felt it a grievance that they have not been allowed to vote at the election of Municipal Councillors for their respective divisions and if so, how many of them have expressed dissatisfaction at the present state of the law.

Mr. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU :—There are in all 10 lady-graduates in Madras of whom six belong to the local university. Three of them reside in the 5th Division. For the last three years they have been mentioning this to me as a grievance. They say that men are exclusively selfish.

RAO BAHADUR V. KRISHNAMACHARIAR :—I may add that sometime ago the lady Superintendent of a Women's Hospital has been brought under the taxation list; she said that she did not understand why she should be subject to taxation when she did not enjoy any of the privileges of a rate payer.

Mr. N. SUBRAMANIAM :—After the information that is now afforded, it is scarcely worth while to pass this resolution. At the outside there are only 10 lady-graduates which will give one lady-graduate to each Division. Whether the single vote of a lady-graduate will make any difference in the result of the elections is a very doubtful matter. With Mr. Pragasa Mudaliar I shall be prepared to consider favorably any proposition which will place the female sex in the same position as the male sex, viz., that women who possess property qualifications should be allowed to vote. But so long as women who hold property and pay large sums into the Municipal exchequer in the shape of lighting, water, and other taxes are excluded from the privilege of voting, I think it is premature to rectify the law so as to affect a much smaller section of the female sex. In these circumstances it seems to me useless to consider Mr. Varadappa Naidu's proposition. We are not to make a law symmetrical from a theoretical point of view, but what we have to do is to pass laws which will practically help the welfare of the Municipality. I think the passing of his proposition will make no difference in the administration of Municipal Officers. If Mr. Krishnamachariar's arguments are worth anything, we ought to go much further and allow lady-graduates to come on Municipal Boards.

Mr. P. M. SIVANGNANA MUDALIAR :—It seems to me that the only persons that are entitled to vote are the rate-payers; but graduates are given voting power as a special privilege. Even in

such an enlightened country as England women are labouring under a peculiar disability in regard to the exercise of the franchise. It is doubtful whether this will be successful in India where female education is not in so much in advance. So long as women who hold property are not allowed to exercise the privilege of voting, it would be an insult to them to give preference to lady-graduates. In our Municipality graduates were not first allowed to vote but later on as education advanced graduates were given the power.

Mr. E. H. ELLIOT :—I hope it will not be supposed that if I am not in sympathy with this resolution, I am wanting in respect for lady-graduates. Let us ask ourselves as sensible men whether it is worth while to legislate for a handful of persons who may not after all take advantage of this privilege that we want to extend to them; and in the second place let us ask ourselves whether we should stop here and not go further; whether we should not grant the privilege to those women who possess property qualifications. I think we ought to take a sensible view of the question and not trouble Government with a thing of no importance.

Mr. P. SUBRAMANIA IYER :—Considering the importance of the question and the divergence of opinion, I may put to Mr. Varadappa Naidu whether he would press it at this meeting.

Mr. V. VARADAPPA NAIDU :—With regard to Mr. Sivangnana's remarks that the privilege of voting was not extended to women in England, I may state that after a great deal of discussion ladies were allowed the franchise in regard to Local Boards, though not in regard to Parliament.

The proposition was put and lost. The meeting then terminated.

THOMPSON AND CO., PRINTERS, MADRAS.

MINUTES of the PROCEEDINGS of a GENERAL MEETING of the MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONERS for the CITY of MADRAS, held at their Office Premises, No. 22, Errah Bauloo Chetty Street, Black Town, on Monday the 31st May 1897, at 5 P.M., under the provisions of the City of Madras Municipal Acts I and VII of 1884 and II of 1892.

PRESENT :

Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. J. Moore, C.I.E., *President*.
M.R.Ry. R. N. Pragasa Mudaliar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. C. Yetherajulu Naidu Garu.
M.R.Ry. P. M. Sivangnana Mudaliar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. P. V. Kistnasawmy Chetty Garu.
M.R.Ry. M. Varadarajulu Chetty Garu.
M.R.Ry. C. S. Theagaroya Mudaliar Avargal.
E. H. Elliot, Esq.
M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur C. Kalyanasundaram Chettiyar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. V. Varadappa Naidu Garu.
The Hon'ble P. Rungiah Naidu Garu.
N. Subrahmanyam, Esq.
M.R.Ry. M. K. Lakshmanachariar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur V. Krishnama Chariyar Avargal.
M.R.Ry. C. Tirumalayya Naidu Garu.
M.R.Ry. P. Subramania Iyer Avargal.

No. 1.

President's memorandum, dated 5th April 1897, on the remarks by the Attorneys to the Trustees for the Debenture Holders, Madras Electric Tramways Company, on the resolution of the Commissioners, dated 30th November 1896.

Deferred.

No. 2.

G.O., No. 883 M., Mis., dated 13th April 1897, sanctioning the proposal of the Commissioners to raise a loan of one lakh of rupees for the construction of a New Market.

Recorded.

No. 3.

Proceedings of the Standing Committee, dated 14th April and 14th May 1897, and resolution No. 2-iii of the Proceedings, dated 19th March 1897.

Proposed by M.R.Ry. V. Varadappa Naidu Garu and seconded by M.R.Ry. C. Tirumalayya Naidu Garu—

"That the papers in connection with resolution No. 12 of 14th April 1897 be circulated."

Carried.

The rest of the proceedings were recorded.

No. 4.

M.R.Ry. V. Varadappa Naidu Garu moved the following resolution of which he had given notice:—

"That lady graduates be included in the list of voters of the Madras Municipality, and the Government be addressed to amend the Act to include the lady graduates as voters."

M.R.Ry. Rao Bahadur V. Krishnama Chariyar Avargal seconded.

The resolution on being put to the vote was lost.

The meeting terminated.

G. M. J. MOORE, Lieut.-Col.,

President, Municipal Commission.

Municipal Office, Madras,
June 1897.

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