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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

P
Judicial 1925 DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 572 Press Mis.

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Dated 12 — — 1925

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Fort Saint George, Public Works Consultation of 12th April 1859.

No. 113. Read the following Extract Minutes Consultation in the Public Department, dated 2nd April 1859, No. 526.

Communicating a Minute of the Honorable the President suggesting certain measures for the efficient conduct of correspondence between the Home and Indian Governments as well as of carrying on the Printing system in this Presidency. } (Vide Diary to Consultation 12th April 1859. Nos. 5 @ 7.)

No. 114. ORDER THEREON, No. 870; dated 12th April 1859.

Ordered that the foregoing Extract be recorded.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

X3

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

No. 526.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation, under date the 6th April 1859.

Read the following Minute by the Honorable the President, dated 2nd April 1859.

It was understood that the first subject I was to take up was the mode in which the correspondence is conducted between the Home and Indian Governments.

2. This has not been altered since the time when the business of the East India Company was confined to the affairs of a few Commerical Factories. According to the custom of that day, the ill-paid Agents employed abroad were required to report the whole of their proceedings, sending home an exact transcript of every letter which had been written by them.

3. Since the Factories have become Empires, this practice has been productive of the greatest inconvenience. The Home Government is overwhelmed with a mass of correspondence which no physical capacity can master. No sufficient distinction is made between those subjects which are of a perfunctory, and those which are of an important character; and overgrown bodies of Clerks and Printers are kept up, at the Indian Presidencies and in London, at a lamentable cost of money, and still more of misdirected time and labour, for the purpose of carrying on this monster correspondence.

4. The correspondence of the Colonial Office is conducted on a different principle. Each Governor sends to the Colonial Office an Annual Report, or Blue Book, upon the general state of his Government, and he also makes up the Annual Budget, or Financial Exposition, according to a prescribed form—beyond which he is left to follow his own judgment as to the reports made by him. Whatever faults may have been found with our Colonial Administration, it has never been alleged that Her Majesty's Government has been insufficiently informed of what has been passing in the Colonies. The subjects which are really worthy of the attention of the Secretary of State, are brought to his notice in a well prepared shape; and the correspondence of forty or fifty separate Governments, which, under other conditions would be unmanageable, is conducted with regularity and ease. Since 1855-56 the Annual Colonial Blue Book has been adopted into our Indian system, under the name of the Annual Administration Report; but as every thing else has remained unchanged, this has merely made the correspondence still more unwieldy.

5. Immediately upon assuming charge of this Government, I consulted our able and experienced Secretaries, Mr. Pycroft and Mr. Bourdillon, whose joint Memorandum upon the subject has been read in Council. My colleagues agreed with me, that the recommendations contained in this Memorandum should be forthwith acted upon, that is, that leaving the Annual Administration Report to be made as at present, we should report such subjects, from time to time, as are necessary to be reported, each in a separate letter. The selection of the subjects will be ordinarily left to the Secretaries, but the Members of Government, in passing Drafts which dispose of important questions, will also note particular questions as proper to be reported upon. The saving of time, labour, and expence, from this change, especially if it should be adopted in the other Presidencies, and the concentration upon the great interests of India of powers of mind which are at present too much frittered away among a variety of insignificant objects, cannot fail to be productive of great public advantage.

6. Mr. Pycroft's and Mr. Bourdillon's remarks upon the necessity of pruning the redundancy of *writing*, which is carried in this country to the same excess as *speaking* is at home, are perfectly just; and we will depend upon their giving due effect to their sensible, practical suggestions.

7. The Madras Government has, of late years, made great use of the Printing Press, without the aid of which the enormous mass to which its Indian and English correspondence have grown, would have been unmanageable; and the *waste* arising from this excessive correspondence, which formerly existed in the form of interminable copying, has now assumed the shape of unlimited printing. Although upwards of 500 persons are employed on the Government Press in Fort Saint George, it has been found necessary to sanction the establishment of separate Presses for the Education Department, the Board of Revenue, and the Accountant General's Office, and a similar measure was in contemplation for the Adjutant General's Office.

8. Printing can be executed with greater celerity and economy in a single large establishment, under effective Superintendence, than in a number of scattered Presses; and the relief which will

be afforded to the Government Printing Press by the reduction of the Home correspondence, will easily enable the Superintendent, Mr. Smith, to undertake to execute the Printing required by the Board of Revenue and the Adjutant General. Instead, therefore, of procuring from England at a heavy additional cost the new Presses and other plant which have been applied for by the Board of Revenue, the existing Printing Establishment and material attached to that Office should be united with those under the charge of Mr. Smith, who will, for the future, be responsible for the prompt and satisfactory execution of the work required by the Board.

9. Even with this additional work, the Establishment of the Government Printing Press will be so large as to make it proper that it should be enquired into by the Commission for the revision of the Public Offices under this Government.

10. One other point requires to be noticed. Having observed, before I left England, that the printing paper used at the Government Press of Madras was of the expensive kind called "*Hand* made, laid Foolscap," I obtained a report upon the subject from the able professional Examiners of Printing at the Stationery Office in London, from which it appeared that only *Machine* made paper is now ordinarily used in printing for Her Majesty's Government, as being both better adapted for printing, and also being obtainable at a greatly reduced cost. On arriving at Madras, I ascertained that attention had been repeatedly called to the same subject here, and that remonstrances had been addressed to the Court of Directors, in consequence of a large quantity of thick, woolly, inferior Hand made paper having been sent to this Government from the India House; a great part of which is still in store. As great pains have been taken of late years at Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the selection of proper qualities of paper, and annual contracts for the supply are made on a large scale, with great fidelity and exactness, I venture to suggest that the Officers charged with this Department at the India House, might, with advantage, be instructed to avail themselves of the Stationery Office Contracts for the supply of paper for India. Such is the consumption of foolscap paper in the Indian Presidencies, that this change alone, irrespective of the economy arising out of the proposed alteration in the Home correspondence, would be productive of a saving of a very large annual amount.

(Signed) C. E. TREVELYAN.

MEMORANDUM.

The Proceedings of the Madras Government are reported to the Home Government—in General letters, which are prepared quarterly, for each Department, and include all subjects, except those of the most trivial and routine character—and those which have been reported separately, from time to time, on the occasion arising, in what are called special letters.

2. There are 10 Departments in the Government Office, viz:—

The Public,
Judicial,
Revenue,
Public Works,
Financial,
Financial Railway,
Ecclesiastical,
Marine,
Political,
Military,

besides which, although the Educational is included in the Public Department, the Proceedings in it have of late been reported separately.

3. Thus there are, or should be, eleven General letters prepared every quarter—a great number of subjects embraced in them being altogether of a local or personal character, and of no general, or public importance whatever.

4. The labor thrown upon the Uncovenanted Servants in the Office in the preparation of these letters is very considerable. In some Departments as many as fifty subjects are included in one General letter. The papers,—"Collections" as they are called—have to be got together, arranged and gone over. Sometimes a sort of precis—more or less full—is given in the Despatch. At other times, the "Collections" are merely entered in the margin and referred to in a general way. "We here forward papers connected with such a subject."

5. The work of the Office Servants does not end with the despatch of the General letter itself. On the replies of the Home Government being received, their remarks, however unimportant, have to be communicated, at the expense of no little time and trouble, to the Offices or persons to which they relate. The replies furnished by these Offices or parties to the references then made to them have also to be reported in what are called "reply letters" and cost much labor in preparation. The papers, the duplicates of which had formed the collections, have, moreover, again to be extracted from the records, that the No. and date of the Home Despatch in which they are noticed—or, as is more frequently the case, not noticed—may be endorsed upon them.

6. This double collecting of papers interferes very much with the other business of the servants in the Record Office—an Establishment short handed and indifferently paid. It, also, contributes to the wear and tear of papers, and tends to their being mislaid, or lost—not so much, however, now, that the papers are printed and several copies taken, as when there was but one copy and that in manuscript.

7. These General letters receive but scanty notice at the hands of the Home authorities. Sometimes they are not replied to for years. When they are, subject after subject is dismissed with "No remark"—or with what amounts to the same thing "we observe that you did or said so and so."

8. In the Revenue and Public Works Departments, from sheer press of business the transmission of these General letters has been suspended for some years, without, as far as is known, causing any inconvenience, and, certainly, without exciting any remark.

9. We understand from the Honorable the Governor that from the great increase of business in the old departments and from the creation of new departments, the correspondence with the Home authorities has become overwhelming, and that they are prepared for the discontinuance of a system which, however it may have been fitted to times gone by, is not suited to the present day, and is not followed in any of the Crown Colonies. We have been asked to consider in what manner this may be best effected and the Home correspondence put upon a more reasonable and manageable footing.

10. There seem to us to be only two ways of accomplishing this—both proceeding on the principle that nothing but what is really important is to be reported Home at all.

11. The first is to report such subjects, from time to time, as are necessary to be reported, each in a separate letter. The other, to have periodical—but not general letters—say, one letter a month or a quarter, and in them to communicate all the important subjects that have come under notice during the preceding period—month, quarter, as the case may be—such questions, as from their very character, their magnitude, or pressing nature should be reported separately, being so reported, each in a letter to itself, much as they are now.

12. Of the two, we are inclined to prefer the former. There seems to us great security for the topic that is reported being really of consequence or home interest, when it must become the subject of a distinct letter. If several subjects are to be reported together, it is to be apprehended that some may slip in as passing muster with others, although not themselves of such intrinsic importance as to demand being reported.

13. The selection of the subjects for report must, it is presumed, rest with the Secretaries in their several departments. The Members of Government could not be expected to undergo the drudgery of going over the lists and marking out the papers. The submission by the Secretaries of a list of subjects to be reported, would merely enable the Government to strike out any that seemed to them not worthy of report, and they will always have the power of exercising this check as far as needful, as all the reporting letters will have to be passed by them as they now are. This could afford no check against the *omission* of subjects proper for report. In that respect, the Secretaries must exercise their discretion. In case of doubt, they would usually be more prone to report than to omit. Moreover, the Members of Government, in passing drafts which dispose of important questions, would probably not unfrequently note the question as one to be reported home—which, of course, would be attended to. This in fact is occasionally done now.

14. The above observations have reference only to the subject immediately submitted for our consideration; but we have ventured to go further and to offer a few remarks on the question of simplifying and abridging correspondence generally—that to be reported home as well as that which is not to go out of India. At present, the letters and reports from several Public Offices are more prolix and diffuse than they need be, or than they might easily be compelled to be. The Government of India insist that all letters to them shall be complete in themselves—that the matter to be told, the application to be made, and the reasons on which it rests, shall all

be fully stated in the report itself, and that they shall not be left to gather it wholly or in part from enclosures. Correspondence or other documents may be sent up for reference, if desired, but the letter must tell its own story without them. This Government have, it is believed, made the same requisitions on the Officers subordinate to them—but they are not always complied with. A letter is not unfrequently sent up to Government giving cover to a correspondence between subordinate officials, the substance of which might very well have been conveyed in the letter itself, rendering further reference unnecessary. Sometimes, the covering letter merely repeats what has been said in the transmitted letter, which letter is thus quite useless. In other ways much comes before Government which would well bear shortening.

15. The best remedy for this, it is conceived, is that such papers should be returned to their authors with an Official Memorandum, pointing out what is redundant or superfluous, and requiring the submission of a revised letter clear and complete in itself—and free from all extraneous matter. A few cases of this kind would act as a very effectual check.

16. An instance in point happened in the Judicial Department only a few days since. The Sudr sent up an application for an increase to the Establishment of the Sub-Judge's Court at Ootacamund, and, in explanation of the reason for the proposed augmentation, referred to enclosed correspondence between themselves and the Sub-Judge—two or three letters on each side. They were told, in reply, that the Government were not to be left to pick out the wheat from the chaff—and desired to forward a letter of their own, showing what was wanted and the reasons in full for its being required. This they then did—and, probably, after this hint, will continue to do hereafter.

17. Another, and though a minor thing—still one of some consequence—may be noticed, viz. the slovenly way in which papers are often sent up to Government. Sometimes the paragraphs are not numbered. At others, no regard is paid to punctuation, and there is not a stop from one end of a page to the other, nor a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence. This has led to some injustice towards the Government Press, which is blamed for the faulty way in which the work is turned out; whereas the errors are those of the original manuscript. The Press Examiners are not men who can do more than see that the print accurately follows the manuscript. They cannot be trusted to point the letter press, or break it up into sentences. The remedy in this, as in the preceding case, would be to return such defective papers for correction, and admit none that did not come up in a satisfactory state.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

31*st March* 1859. („) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

ORDER.—Resolved, that the above Minute be communicated to the several Departments of the Secretariat.

2. Resolved, also, that paras. 7, 8, and 9, of the Minute, be furnished to the Board of Revenue, to the Adjutant General, to the Commission for enquiring into the state of Public Offices, and to the Superintendent of the Government Press.

3. Resolved, likewise, that the Superintendent of the Government Press be directed forthwith to take over from the Revenue Board the Presses and Printing Material of every kind in that Office. He will be allowed the amount appropriated by the Board for the payment of their printing establishment, and will make his own arrangements for the entertainment of the necessary compositors and other servants. On the transfer being carried out, all the printing required for the Board will be executed at the Government Press. There will be no distinct department of the Press for the purpose, nor any separate accounts. The papers will be printed as a part of the general business of the Office.

4. The printing for the Office of the Adjutant General will, as heretofore, be executed at the Government Press. No separate Press will be set up in that Office.

(True Extract and Copies.)

Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

No. 526.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation, under date the 6th April 1859.

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(True Extract and Copies)

Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue Department.
" Public Works do.
" Military do.
" Judicial do.
" Political do.
" Financial do.
" Railway do.
" Ecclesiastical do.
" Marine do.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

Pd Works 1859 Depart.
Cons 12 April.
No 873.
Extract Mins = Cons.
in the Public Depate

Dated 2d }
Recvd 8th } Apl 1859

No 526.

Commmunicating a Minute of the Honorable the President suggesting certain Measures for the efficient Conduct of Correspondence between the Home & Indian Govts as well as of Carrying on the Printing System in this Presidency.

No 870
To be recorded
Govt Genl
12th Apl 1859

No 1114.