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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

794

Press

Mis.

37/38

Dated

18-11-38

18-11-38

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
for the month of April 1860.*

No. 137. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Department, dated 31st March 1860, No. 484:—

Sanctioning the conversion of an old Shed in the compound of the Government Central Museum into a Library and Reading Room at a cost of Rupees 4,460 to be defrayed from the One Lac Fund of 1860-61 } (Vide Public Proceedings from 21st to 31st March 1860, Nos. 128-129.)

No. 138.

ORDER THEREON, 18th April 1860, No. 794.

Ordered to be recorded.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,

Secretary to Government.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from Lieutenant J. MITCHELL, Officer in charge of the Government Central Museum, to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 19th March 1860, No. 227.

I have had under my consideration the plan* of a Library and Reading room for the Government Central Museum and now have the honor to report thereon.

* ForWARDED with Government Order, No. 206, dated 15th February 1860.

2. On inspecting the plan, it appeared to me that the spaces between the windows, about 6 feet, afforded very limited accommodation for book cases, and I had also a doubt whether sufficient light for reading would be admitted to the central room, and as it moreover appeared by Colonel Bell's letter that no great saving would be effected by building on the proposed site, I took the opportunity of consulting the Civil Architect upon the subject.

3. Captain Hitchens has removed the doubts I entertained of want of light, and room for the book cases, and I believe the building is the best we can have under the circumstances. I had suggested for his consideration the possibility of building a room after the model of the new Reading room at the British Museum, but on a much reduced scale. This building as described in the 2nd Supplement to the Penny Cyclopædia P. 549, Edit. of 1858, is circular in plan and crowned by a hemispherical dome, the greater part of the books being placed in galleries surrounding the great central apartment. The Reading room is 140 feet in diameter and 106 feet high, it is lighted by a circular opening at the top 40 feet across, and by 20 large windows in the base of the dome. It affords accommodation for 300 readers and while the Reading room alone contains 80,000 volumes, the galleries, &c., have room for about a million more. The whole arrangements are said to afford an example of ingenious contrivance, and the building a fine example of constructive science.

4. After a careful consideration, Captain Hitchens is of opinion that a small building after this model with any architectural pretensions, could not be erected under about 10,000 Rupees (more or less), the doubt has also occurred to myself whether a top light, however modified by blinds, is suited to Madras, where the sun for a great part of the year is so near the zenith, I conclude therefore that all things considered it will be best to carry out the original plan which I now return.

5. If in the course of years when money is more plentiful, greater space should be required for the Museum, as I hope it will be, Government might then take into consideration some other plan for a Reading room. The room now proposed to be built must always be useful. It would for instance make an excellent lecture room. The delivery of lectures, (by qualified persons,) in the various branches of natural history, and the sciences connected therewith, appears to be one of the legitimate objects of a Museum in a place like Madras where there is at present no institution for this purpose, nothing to represent the Polytechnic or Mechanics' institutions of England.

6. I may take the liberty to remark, with reference to paragraph 2 of the Chief Engineer's letter that Colonel Bell has misunderstood me, it was the old material of the roof of the Museum that I referred to, not to that of the shed.

ORDER THEREON, 31st March 1860, No. 484.

The plan, submitted with the Chief Engineer's letter of the 23rd January last, No. 9477, for converting an old shed in the compound of the Government Central Museum into a Library and

Reading room, being approved by the Officer in charge of that Institution, the Honorable the Governor in Council sanctions the proposed work at the estimated cost of Rupees (4,480) four thousand four hundred and eighty, to be defrayed from the one lac fund of 1860-61.

(True Extract.)


Chief Secretary.

To the Department Public Works.

- „ Chief Engineer.
- „ Accountant General.
- „ Officer in charge of the Government Central Museum.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

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Concerning the con-
 sideration of an addi-
 tional stock in the Company
 of the Capital of the
 American and Foreign
 Trading Company of the
 City of New York, to be
 advanced from the
 one hundred of 1800-61-

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 John W. Smith
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