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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. <i>224</i>	Press
<i>453-686</i>	Mis.
Dated <i>21-1-</i>	<i>18 64</i>

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st January 1864.*

No. 453. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Judicial
Department:—

Communicating letter from the Inspector General of Jails
enclosing copy of his notes relative to the state of progress
on the Coimbatore Jail works, and stating that Lieutenant
Trail cannot be invested with powers of punishment over
prisoners confined in the Zillah Jail under charge of the
Session Judge. } (Here enter 11th January 1864, No. 38.)

No. 454. ORDER THEREON, 21st January 1864, No. 224.

Communicated to the Superintending Engineer, 7th Division, with reference to paragraph
1 of G. O. No. 3,509, dated 30th November 1863.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 7th Division.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers :—

Proceedings of Government in the Public Works Department.

Communicating letter from the Superintending Engineer, 7th Division, reporting on the progress made on the Coimbatore Jail works, and referring for consideration the question of investing Lieutenant Trail with the same powers over the Convicts employed on these works, that he has over those on the road to Goonoor Ghat.

(Dated 30th November 1863, No. 3509.)

From J. ROIDE, Esq., Inspector General of Jails; to A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, dated Madras, on Circuit, 16th December 1863, No. 474.

In acknowledging your Memorandum endorsed on the Proceedings Madras Government, Department Public Works, 30th November 1863, I have the honor to state that I do not consider that Lieutenant Trail can legally be

invested with powers of punishment over prisoners confined in the Zillah Jail under charge of the Sessions Judge.

2. The Government will observe, with reference to several of Colonel Walker's remarks, that they have nothing whatever to do with the question, and that the preparation of material, and appropriation of the whole sanctioned amount to the object for which it was granted, did not depend on the exact locality of the Jail : and that the delay in finally settling this did not depend on me.

3. I saw Colonel Walker in August, and approved the site to which residents wished to move the Jail, and handed the Memorandum to Mr. Grant, the Collector, with the view to his showing it and the site to you personally for your own satisfaction, and that you might make the members of Government acquainted with the arrangement and of such details of information as might be required. I again visited the Jail in the beginning of this month, and consented to the slight change in position proposed.

4. I had good reasons for not forwarding the indent for gates, having communicated with Colonel Simpson about them, and ascertained that there was a difficulty in undertaking more work for the Jails, which I hoped would be overcome on his return to Madras ; but even had I delayed to do anything, there was abundance of room for pushing on the work without the gates, and Colonel Walker might have called at Ootacamund when there, and had any difficulties removed at once.

5. As for the assertion that I am inimicable to the Department Public Works, I own myself inimicable to their delays and defects : but I believe that no Officer of that Department will deny that they have invariably received from me, when in my power, cordial co-operation and assistance. I object to bad bricks, and I object to sleeping five hours stuck fast in a hole or quagmire in a road that Department has " under repair." I object to the use of bad timber, and to bad work. I may have objected to the impressing of coolies, and the exposure of those coolies to undue risks ; but none know better than the Officers of the Department Public Works, with whom I have been or am associated, that they can at all times rely on my aid whether in my official or private capacity. All that Colonel Walker knows of me officially is in connection with that Honore Jail, and the Government knows whether antagonism to the Department, or antagonism to its work should fairly be charged against me ; and if the latter, whether my feeling was just or not. The tedious way in which that work crept on, and the result, I think fully justified my apprehensions.

6. I now enclose a copy of my notes written at Coimbatore, which will not only put the Government in possession of the state of progress, but also show whether my " antagonism" to the Department Public Works is such as furthers or hinders the work.

EXTRACT from the Notes of the Inspector General of Jails, on his visit to the Coimbatore Central Jail site, dated 1st December 1863.

Visited Jail site with Lieutenant Trail, arranged for the entrance about two points more to the west than that fixed on paper without reference to the contour of the land, and which would have given an unsightly aspect, one side of the entrance being much lower than the other; the entrance now fixed will allow the buildings on either side being on a level, and the front of the hospital will still be sufficiently protected from the west and north winds. I consider the foundations allowed in the plan and estimate unnecessarily deep for this soil, where a compact bed of nodular lime-stone presents itself within one foot of the surface. Mr. Trail concurred with me in this, and with the concurrence of the Chief Engineer a saving of one half in the cost of foundations may be made.

2. The intention is to complete one segment of the building containing one block of cells and two ranges of work-sheds at once; this will allow of the transfer for labor of 200 Convicts to assist in the work; indeed 264 Convicts may be kept in the cells when complete, and a further number of selected men, if necessary, in the work-sheds, the old Jail being used for the time as a prison for debtors, prisoners under trial, females and convicts unfit for hard labor.

3. Building stone for rubble work had been delivered of suitable quality at Rupee 1 per cubic yard; firewood was being laid in at 2-8 the 1000 lbs. Timber to a very small amount had been delivered by the Contractor. Indents for iron and iron gates were sent to the Inspector General of Ordnance, who had engaged to have the work done at the Gun Carriage Manufactory, the Ordnance work-sheds being now in full work for Military accoutrements.

4. I arranged with Mr. Trail for the position of the Jail's house on the road to be made from the Jail entrance, determined as above, to the town; this will be sufficiently removed from the corner selected as a burial ground, &c., and will command a good view of the entrance which must be hereafter kept clear.

5. Ample space about the Jail has been secured to prevent encroachment. The evil I noticed in my last visit to Salem of huts for Police Constables being located on the land secured for the Jail, and their occupation by persons over whom we have no control, may here be avoided, the proper Police lines being already sufficiently near the Jail.

6. From the Jail site I accompanied Mr. Trail to his brick ground, the dirt is very sandy, and will, I think, be improved by a large admixture of clay, which, Mr. Trail tells me, is procurable in the neighbourhood. The prisoners were here employed in working the clay and in piling firewood: some had been employed in moulding; but until the pug-mills turn out clay sufficient for the moulders, the most profitable employment for them will be bringing, mixing, and treading clay.

7. The laying out of this ground in regular hacks for which it is well suited would greatly economise labor. Benches and barrows are wanted to increase the out-turn now only 1000 a day by each skilled moulder, 2000, or in fact 2200 being the day's work of a skilled native moulder on the hills; the moulding here was excellent; my fear is that there is not clay enough in the soil, and that, perhaps, from its nature a much thinner brick will be necessary to secure good quality. Mr. Trail had given directions for experiments on different admixtures of clay with this soil.

8. Mr. Harris spoke of the neglected state of the roads consequent on the diversion of the convicts to Jail building. I observed, however, that where I found the roads bad, it was rather from what had been done than from what had been left undone. The Metapollam road gangs will be returned by May next, quite in time for any road repairs, which, in dry weather, are very unsatisfactory.

9. One gang of prisoners was employed in quarrying stone for the building. I did not visit it, but better tools were evidently required for it, and these I engaged to supply if any remain on hand of the steeled bars furnished for Prison's use on Indent.

10. The best work on which to employ the prisoners in the new Jail work will probably be the working of clay for bricks, of which, exclusive of getting six men should work daily, enough for 2000 bricks, excavating foundations, levelling, quarrying stone for building, and digging chunam stone; in the last, from experience at Guntoor, I should expect each man to do at the

rate of 1½ to 1½ cubic yards daily, dug and carried to within 40 yards, for each man of the gang employed, the removal of surface soil being included in the measurement; heavy steel pointed bars kept in good order are, however, necessary to this end.

11. On my visit to the Jail the following morning, I found the building decaying, the patching it had undergone two years ago had fallen away, the wards had evidently not been white-washed for many quarters, and the place altogether was in a bad state: the shutters which I had had removed to allow of better ventilation had in general been replaced at the requisition, I was told, of the Surgeon; in the cells in which this had been done, and where the shutters had not been opened, the air was foul: and though I am fully alive to the importance of protecting prisoners while asleep from chilling winds, I thought it well to direct that the lower half only of the shutter should be left to close, and that the second shutter should be fixed outside the window as a weather board in all the wards with a Western aspect. In the Eastern wards the whole of the shutters had long since been removed and fixed as weather boards.

12. As the officer in charge had been unable to get iron doors made to the female and debtors' cells, and I had been unable to provide them, I explained to the Jailor the course to be taken in putting gratings to the present doors, a plank being removed for the purpose. I further desired that the walls of the wards would be immediately scraped and white-washed with not fresh-prepared wash.

13. The sickness and mortality of the Jail continues high, it includes all serious cases, not only from the prisoners within the walls, but those from the Pughat and Metapollam road gangs. I can add nothing to what I have already repeatedly said on the subject of the mortality in this Jail.

14. An escape from the hospital had lately taken place, the prisoner having gained access to the roof of the building by means of a chair and the old sentry box in the hospital yard, the removal of the latter was sanctioned; and the Sessions Judge in charge is requested to call Mr. Brown's attention to the Inspector General's Circular, No. 61, cautioning Jailers against permitting loose articles, which might facilitate the escape of prisoners, to lie about the prison enclosures.

15. I found a Eurasian convict, sentenced to rigorous imprisonment in hospital, where it had been employed in "looking after" the Smiths and Carpenters. The Jailor on being told that he had not carried out the sentence faithfully, remarked that since his appointment the man had been in hospital, but that he was very useful as a check on the prisoners, &c.; he was informed that the prisoner was not to be employed to do his work, but that a transfer of this prisoner to Ootacamund, or to the Lovedale gang would be made, where the man will be employed according to his physical powers.

16. The Jailor said there was difficulty in supplying fresh and good water, owing to the detailing of the gangs to the new Jail work, and the system of guarding precluding the sending out of small gangs for the purpose; but this may easily be overcome by making every second prisoner returning from labor bring with him a pot of water.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. RÖHDE,

Inspector General of Jails.

ORDER THEREON, 11th January 1864, No. 33.

Mr. Röhm's letter will be communicated to the Public Works Department.

(True Extract.)

To the Public Works Department.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

Chief Secretary.

Wm. H. D. 20th
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