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(2) Date of repair 9.6.86.
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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

P. W. D.

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	1523(W)	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	26.3.1878	-197-

Not to be folded or roughly handled

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

26th March 1878, No. 1,523 W.

General.
Establishment.

Read the following paper:—

No. 363. From Major J. PENNYCUICK, R.E., District Engineer, Salem, to the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, dated Salem, 14th March 1878, No. 235 S.L.

I HAVE the honor to report that nothing further has yet been discovered regarding the origin of the fire in the Salem Divisional office, the occurrence of which has, I believe, already been reported to you by the officer in charge.

2. On my return here yesterday, I found the two rooms generally used by the division and my own office sealed up, and the records, partly in these rooms and partly in the verandahs and my own office-room, all in the most extraordinary state of confusion, my own office people working in the verandah and the Range office apparently broken up altogether.

3. It is not at all clear what object was expected to be gained by scaling up the rooms, especially as a large portion of the records had been taken out, and those locked up had no particular significance, and the Superintendent of Police, who had also just returned, at once agreed that there was no reason why the rooms should not be opened, which was accordingly done; it will, however, be some days before they are fit for use, as a portion of the roof had been taken off, or rather broken through, in order that water might be thrown in; the ground is covered with the debris, and the walls, floor, and one window have been damaged by the fire.

4. It appears that the fire was confined to one corner of the room, and the papers burnt, and of which remains are found, do not appear to be of any importance.

5. The really important loss is that of the cash-book and vouchers for January which have altogether disappeared, leaving no trace behind them; I do not for a moment believe that they have been burnt, nor does Major Hodges. The fire only lasted a short time and could never have been very intense; the loose files (bundles tied up with tape) that formed the greater part of the fuel have been for the most part only partially destroyed, the edges having been burnt and the centres left as always happens with folded or bound papers. Even amongst those that have been reduced to tinder, it is still possible by careful examination to make out what was printed on them, and a careful search has found nothing that appears to have formed a part of either cash-book or voucher. Any one who knows how difficult it is to burn a bound book will be quite sure that a large cash-book could not have been so utterly destroyed as to leave no trace behind it, and the thick leather covers would certainly not be vaporised by such a fire as the one in question.

6. The inference of course is that the papers mentioned were stolen and the fire lighted to induce the belief that they had been destroyed.

7. As yet no list has been made of the papers lost or destroyed, and making one will give some trouble owing to the injudicious course adopted of mixing up all

the records together and locking up the place without previously ascertaining what the actual damage was.

8. Unfortunately the officer who was officiating as Superintendent of Police (Mr. Thomas) when the fire took place has just left, Major Hodges having returned, and Mr. Skrine, the Additional Sub-Collector, who began the inquiry, is ill, but further inquiry will of course be made. As yet suspicion has only fallen on one person whom I will not name at present, as the evidence to connect him with the affair appears to be of the flimsiest description.

9. The Deputy Examiner of Public Works Accounts is to be here to-morrow to examine the books that are left; Mr. Hughes' action in asking that this examination might be made was judicious, but I am unable to approve of his having practically suspended the whole of his own office establishment; there is nothing at present to connect any one of them with the fire, and the result has been to throw his office work into the greatest possible confusion without, so far as I can see, any compensating advantage. If any of these men had any thing to do with the matter evidence against them is not likely to be obtained by letting them all remain at home for a week doing nothing and subject to no supervision. It would have been much more sensible to let them go on working as usual pending inquiry.

No. 364. ORDER THEREON, 26th March 1878, No. 1,523 W.

RECORDED in continuation of G.O., No. 1,394 W, dated 18th March 1878.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) E. A. FOORD, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government, P.W.D.

Exd. W. J. Lewis.

Spare Copies

GENERAL
ESTABLISHMENT.

Cont. of (1878) Notice.
PUBLIC WORKS.

Let 4 March 2016.

Recd.

Recd.

Recd.

G. O. 110 200 1878, No. 1/20 W.

RECORDED

No. 808-834.

Use in the State District Office
For the purpose of the...

No. 235 SL.

District Engineer's Office,
Salem 14th March 1878.

From The District Engineer,
Salem.

To The Chief Engineer,
D. S. W.

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-6-

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Sir,

your most obedt. servant.

John P. Jones, Major, A. E.

District Engineer.

Local
Establs
Circulated in continuation
of the previous letter which
was circulated on the 9th
March.

From
The District Engineer,
Salem.

CAF 16/3

To
The Chief Engineer
D. P. W.

Lib
No 15234 326 Mar 78
Recorded in con-
tinuation of L. O. No.
1354 B. dated 18th
March 1878. CAF 25/3

Dated 14th
Recd: 23 March 1878.

No 235 SL

Reporting regarding
the fire in the Salem
Divisional Office.

In the order
circulated

Ch 33911

Act. of (1878) ~~Public~~

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Let.

W.C. 28-23

G. O. 26 Mar. 1878, No. 15234

Recd.

File in the Salem Div.

Animal Office further

report regarding the

Recorded

Int. in Rep.