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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

2nd June 1881, No. 2956.

Defences—Forts.

Read the following paper :—

No. 44. *From Brigadier-General H. O'CONNELL, Quartermaster-General, to Colonel E. L. HANKIN, Acting Secretary to Government, Military Department ; dated Ootacamund, 14th May* 1881, *No.* 560.

I have the honor, by order, to forward, for submission to Government, the enclosed letter, No. 71-A.G., dated 12th April 1881, from the General Officer Commanding Centre District, with annexures, being the Annual Report for 1881 on Fort St. George. This report is forwarded in accordance with Order of Government, No. 6973, of the 12th December 1879.

2. With reference to Brigadier-General Stewart's recommendation in para. 3 of his letter, that the works of the fort be demolished, the ditches filled in and the ground about properly levelled, the Provincial Commander-in-Chief submits that, so long as our Arsenal and Magazines are retained in their present positions in the fort, it would be very undesirable that the whole of the existing defences should be destroyed. He concurs in the opinion expressed by Sir Neville Chamberlain, that the main or inner portion of the fort should be retained as a defensive work and armed on the land side.

See para. 3 of this office letter, No. 352, dated 3rd June 1880 (published in Order of Government, 23rd August 1880, No. 5372).

3. The outworks of Fort St. George might, with advantage, be demolished and the ditches filled in. The expense of such an undertaking is the only objection to it. Though these outworks are cracked in very many places from subsidence of foundations, the walls are massively constructed, and it would be laborious and costly completely to level the walls, fill up the ditches and make the ground a smooth and neat boulevard. If funds for such a work could be made available, the improvement to the appearance of the Presidency city would be considerable.

4. Brigadier-General Stewart founds his strongest argument for the total demolition of the defences of Fort St. George on the increase of health and enjoyment of life the troops quartered in the fort would derive thereby. The Surgeon-General, Her Majesty's Forces in Madras, has been asked whether, from statistics in his office, it could be shown that the British troops in Fort St. George, and especially the battery of the Royal Artillery occupying the casemate barracks, were less healthy than troops elsewhere in the Presidency, or were invalided in larger proportionate numbers. His reply, No. 9-O., dated 13th instant, is enclosed. It will be observed that, although such statistics are by no means conclusive proof on such a point, those forwarded by the Surgeon-General do not support the assumption that Fort St. George is an unhealthy place, or that the troops quartered there suffer from depression of spirits to an extent that causes an unusual amount of invaliding.

5. The following plans connected with the report on Fort St. George are also submitted :—

1. A general plan of the defences of Madras, including Fort St. George and the Beach Batteries.
2. Plan of Fort St. George.
3. Sections of do.
4. Plan of the Napier Battery.
5. Do. Light House Battery.
6. Do. Clive's Battery.

Inspection Report of the Officer Commanding the District.—Rule IV. Proceedings of the Madras Government, No. 6973, 12th December 1879.

From Brigadier-General R. C. STEWART, Commanding Centre District, to the Quartermaster-General; dated Fort St. George, 12th April 1881, No. 71-A.G.

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Commander-in-Chief, that on the 30th March I, together with the officers named in the margin, inspected Fort St. George in accordance with the orders of Government on this subject.

Colonel Gloag, Royal Artillery.
Major Vibart, Royal Engineers.
Major Kenney-Herbert, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.

2. We discussed the several paras. of my predecessor's report,* dated 6th April 1880, and also the reports of the Officiating Superintending Engineer, and the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, in the Fort, and we found unanimously that time had shown that the conclusions come to in the above reports were sound, and that the steps recommended should be again vigorously advocated.

* Copies annexed.

3. I beg, then, now to urge the Commander-in-Chief to press on the consideration of Government that the works of the fort be demolished, the ditches filled in, and the ground about properly levelled and ornamented, as is done with all forts that have passed their day and become useless.

4. That it is an idling of time to discuss the description of ordnance that should be placed on the ramparts of Fort St. George, and that it is a pure waste of money to spend year after year large sums to plaster up with Portland cement, &c., the outside of mouldering works that cannot sustain an armament fit for the defence of the place, are points that will no doubt be conceded, though perhaps no present action might be considered necessary. But in support of my strong recommendation that these decaying walls be at once levelled, and the noxious ditches filled in, I would found my strongest argument on the increase of health and enjoyment of life the troops quartered in Fort St. George would derive thereby.

5. In the late report of the Army Sanitary Commission, relating to the high rate of invaliding of soldiers in the Madras Presidency, much stress is laid on the fact that numbers of men are sent home who on arrival at Portsmouth are found quite well and fit for duty.

6. What is stated here I know to be true, for when I was Governor of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, lately, I requested the Horse Guards authorities to issue orders to the effect that officers in medical charge of the troops coming home should overhaul their invalids between Malta and Portsmouth, with a view to sending straight off to their depôts, &c., from the latter port those found fit, instead of overcrowding Netley with hundreds of men in perfect health.

7. In each ship-load of invalids from India, one-half are able on arrival at Portsmouth to proceed at once to their depôts or to be discharged, and want no medical treatment. Why is this? How comes it that a man is pronounced unfit for service in India, and within a month is as well as a man can be? I answer that, as far as regards Fort St. George, it arises in the greatest part, if not wholly, from the melancholy and heart-depressing environment that the man is subject to, and from the fact that, surrounded as he is on all sides by the dirt and decay of years, his eye can rest on no pleasurable object.

8. Enforced, as some are, to live, eat and sleep in noisome casemates without light or ventilation, and irritated, as all are both day and night, by the heat, from being shut off from the refreshing sea breeze by crumbling ramparts, can we wonder what it is that sends the young soldier (and the old one) to indulge in debauchery in the town, and that crime and punishment follow, ending in disgust, sickness and invaliding?

9. Our greatest aim should be to overcome the dreadful dislike to India that, through the intolerable dulness and monotony of his life, the young soldier experiences after the first few weeks of novelty have passed off. This, in a great measure, can be done by giving him comfortable quarters, pleasant and agreeable surroundings, and something to occupy him in which he can take an interest.

10. I recommend, then, with all energy of expression, that, to commence with, the sea face of the fort be levelled and its ditches filled in, that the work be executed by the British troops in the fort, supplemented by two companies of Sappers, whose officers would superintend it. As in the case of razing the Rangoon defences after the Burmah War, the European soldiers would be employed so many hours in the morning and so many in the evening, receiving so much pay for so much work done.

11. If what I now earnestly commend for the favorable consideration and strong advocacy of the Provincial Commander-in-Chief meet with success, we shall soon have some life in the fort,—the grateful sea breeze passing through it, and in the end a superb esplanade which not only the British soldiers of the garrison, but the whole of the society of Madras, could enjoy.

12. I need say nothing as to the wonderful improvement there would be in the appearance and health of Madras, and how much more enjoyable life would be here for the troops, if the works of the land face were cast down, the ditches filled in, and the glacis levelled all round and skilfully ornamented. In this work I am sure the Municipality would take the keenest interest. In the mean time, I pray that orders may be given to proceed with the demolition of the works of Fort St. George upon the sea-face at all events, for even if that alone were done, the sea breeze would be freely admitted to the fort, and the first step on the road towards improvement would be made.

13. With regard to the Beach Batteries, I have only to say that, when completed and equipped with their full armament, they will afford good protection to the harbour of Madras.

Report of the Royal Artillery Officer in accordance with Rule II, O.G., No. 6973, dated 12th December 1879.

From Major G. F. CHAMBERS, Commanding Royal Artillery, Fort St. George, to the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, Centre District, St. Thomas' Mount; dated Fort St. George, 25th March 1881.

With reference to G.O., No. 6973, of 12th December 1879, and Standing General Order, No. 151, of 23rd December 1879, I have the honor to make the following report on the armament of Fort St. George:—

The armament, as it now stands, is that laid down in Proceedings of Government, No. 1164, of 13th March 1880.

The armament is distributed round the Fort as follows.

St. George's Bastion.—Three 10-inch mortars on iron beds.—Four 18-pounder S. B. guns.—One 6-pounder iron S. B. gun.

The 18-pounders and 6-pounder are mounted on iron carriages resting on stone flooring. The 18-pounders are used to signal the arrival of mails, and the 6-pounder is fired, a morning gun, on Sundays and General Parade days.

Guns, carriages and flooring are all serviceable for the purposes they are required.

North Ravelin.—Two 18-pounders S.B., one mounted on an iron carriage, one on a wooden travelling carriage standing on the ground.

One of the guns is now being revented in the Madras Arsenal. These two guns are the time guns,—the one being fired day and night, the other being there to supply the place of the time gun, in case of a change being necessary, as is often the case, the violent jerk on the tube by the machinery in firing the gun being destructive to the copper vent.

North Sea Face.—Two 80-pounder R. M. L. converted guns, mounted on sliding carriages on traversing platforms, which run on stone racers. These stone racers are very unsuitable, become quickly uneven and make accurate laying extremely difficult. Raised racers and hollow solid trucks are required.

One 7-inch B. L. Armstrong gun, mounted on a sliding carriage on a traversing platform, which runs with hollow solid trucks on raised racers.

The carriages are very old ones, which have been repaired, painted and re-issued by the Ordnance Department. The guns are all serviceable.

South Sea Face.—Armed exactly in the same manner as the North Sea Face.

Saluting Battery.—Twenty-one 24-pounder S.B. guns, mounted on iron carriages which rest on stone flooring, all in a serviceable state.

By Proceedings of Government, No. 6854, of 29th October 1880, the armament above detailed is again to be altered.

Beach Batteries.—These batteries are still in the hands of the Public Works Department, and the guns mounted in them are at present under the charge of the Ordnance Department.

Light House Battery has one 9-inch M. L. R. gun.

Napier Bridge Battery has one 9-inch M. L. R. gun.

Clive's Battery, recently handed over by the Royal Artillery to the Public Works Department, has no gun mounted in it.

I have no remarks to make on this report.

ST. THOMAS' MOUNT,
26th March 1881.

(Signed) A. R. GLOAG, Colonel, R.A.,
Commg. Royal Artillery, Centre District.

Remarks by the Officer Commanding Royal Artillery, Centre District.

From Colonel A. R. GLOAG, R.A., Commanding Royal Artillery, Centre District, to the Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General, Centre District, Madras; dated St. Thomas' Mount, 2nd April 1881.

When forwarding the report of Major Chambers, No. 19 Battery, 9th Brigade, Royal Artillery, Fort St. George, I did not make any remark regarding the armament, &c., on which

that officer reported, but I now forward a few remarks, which I think perhaps might be submitted to the Brigadier-General Commanding the District along with the report in question.

2. I feel that in my opinion it is quite immaterial what description of rifled ordnance is placed on the ramparts of Fort St. George, as they are quite unable to sustain any ordnance which would have any effect against a modern war vessel attacking from seawards. The fact really is that the improvements which have been made in the nature of rifled ordnance have placed Fort St. George out of the category of defensible fortresses.

3. The heaviest R.O. in the works of Fort St. George would be quite useless almost against a modern iron-clad, armed with 100-ton guns, the extreme range of the fort guns* being 2,000 yards, *i.e.* the first ricochet of the projectile. The extreme range of the 100-ton gun† and the other heavy natures of naval rifled ordnance is from about 3,500 yards to 5,000 yards. Thus, sustaining little or no damage herself, the iron-clad, lying secure, could in a short time lay all the building within the fort in ruins; and perhaps there would be no use in firing upon the ramparts, because they are in many places so much decayed, that, very heavy firing carried on continuously for some time from them, they would probably come down from its effects. I am therefore of opinion that it would be expedient, as well as economical if the ramparts were destroyed and the ditches filled in.

Not armour-piercing, modern guns.
* Rifled 80-pdr. and 7″ R. Armstrong—Is an armour-piercing lowest class.
† First-class armour-piercing gun.

Report of the Royal Engineer Officer.—Part 2, Rule II.

From Major H. M. VIBART, R.E., Superintendent of Works, Presidency, to the Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General, Centre District; dated Madras, 25th March 1881.

With reference to G.O. (Military Department), No. 6973, of the 12th December 1879, I have the honor to state that the Report on Fort St. George, drawn up last year by Captain A. C. Smith, R.E., cannot be improved upon. No alterations have taken place since that time.‡

‡ The following plans are herewith forwarded:—
1. Plan of Fort St. George.
2. Sections of do.
3. General plan of Fort St. George, showing the Beach Batteries, the Harbour of Madras.
4. Plan of the Napier Battery.
5. Do. Light House Battery.
6. Do. Clive's Battery.

From Surgeon-General Sir A. D. HOME, V.C., K.C.B., Surgeon-General, Her Majesty's Forces in Madras, to the Quartermaster-General; dated Fort St. George, 13th May 1881, No. 9-O.

In answer to your letter, No. 445-3048, of 25th ultimo, I have the honor to state that the health of the garrison of Fort St. George compares not unfavorably with that of most of the troops stationed elsewhere in this command.

As a general principle, it can be affirmed that amongst the requirements for a healthy dwelling in this country are these:—That it should be placed at a fair elevation, on ground not encroached on by other buildings; that it should have a free exposure to the breeze, be spacious and have a cheerful outlook. I cannot say why the casemate barracks in Fort St. George, in which all these conditions are wanting, are not inferior in point of healthiness to the Infantry barracks there; but it is a fact that they are not.

In the enclosed return, the health statistics of a considerable number of the stations in the command for the last five years are given; but I do not think that the test of healthiness as evidenced by invaliding, chosen by the General Officer Commanding the Centre Division, is a good one. It will be apparent that the illness to which invaliding is due may have been acquired elsewhere than at the station where the man was invalided, and also that the invaliding of a regiment newly arrived from England ought in its first year to be less (in proportion) than that of a battery of Royal Artillery long resident in India. Accepting the proposed test, however, it will be seen that for the last five years the invaliding rate of the Royal Artillery in Fort St. George is 47·1 per 1,000 of the strength, whilst that of the Infantry there is 51·1 per 1,000.

The statistical evidence in the case is not in my opinion of itself sufficient to sustain an opinion either way, complicated so greatly as such an inquiry is by secondary conditions, particularly by those of the respective ages of the contrasted bodies of men, their previous places of residence and their length of service in India. I should prefer a general to a special view of the subject, and especially I should be guided by the consideration that epidemic disease due to insanitary conditions is not (in a period of years) more prevalent in Fort St. George than elsewhere in the command.

However desirable the levelling of the works and the filling in of the ditches of the fort may be on other grounds, I see no case for it in the unhealthiness of the garrison.

Stations.	Arms.	Average Annual Strength.					Average Daily Sick.					Admitted.					Died.					Invalided.				
		1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.
Madras ...	Artillery ...	42	27	66	62	121	2	1	4	3	11	58	17	67	76	171	1	3	...	...	1	...	1	7	3	4
	Infantry ...	568	588	510	376	305	26	29	48	30	18	634	564	712	678	413	7	6	7	2	3	27	25	34	28	6
	Details ...	26	31	14	24	39	3	3	3	2	7	26	37	40	39	55	1	4	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	2
Bellary ...	Artillery ...	149	149	150	130	152	5	10	12	13	17	122	195	321	265	418	2	3	1	3	4	2	5	2	2	2
	Infantry ...	746	695	719	469	224	47	55	65	53	25	769	1,048	1,286	1,097	617	4	5	10	8	1	35	32	28	23	4
	Details ...	3	1	...	...	...	1	..	...	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bangalore ...	Cavalry ...	388	444	422	450	421	21	32	30	40	35	388	497	508	566	483	3	10	4	10	3	13	32	45	20	14
	Artillery ...	447	466	453	426	444	24	32	30	39	37	421	562	617	761	567	7	7	4	4	2	17	24	30	20	10
	Infantry ...	773	785	695	363	339	23	20	43	38	34	532	395	751	773	601	10	7	9	2	2	29	11	18	21	5
	Details ...	33	35	40	39	54	...	...	2	1	2	6	5	22	26	26	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Secunderabad ...	Cavalry ...	338	385	408	419	387	11	22	42	40	26	298	382	639	563	381	3	7	18	10	6	10	7	22	22	4
	Artillery ...	515	517	517	400	524	30	34	42	31	39	614	664	883	698	664	5	4	10	6	6	26	24	31	14	9
	Infantry ...	1,460	1,490	1,522	1,330	1,583	75	82	91	78	104	1,659	1,810	2,373	1,653	2,151	24	25	34	9	8	41	52	75	85	12
	Details ...	14	9	24	32	36	1	1	1	1	2	31	40	37	34	9	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Stations.	Arms.	Ratio per 1,000 of Strength.																				Invalided.
		Average Daily Sick.					Admitted.					Died.					Invalided.					For period of 5 years.
		1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	
Madras ...	Artillery ...	47·62	37·03	60·60	48·39	90·91	1380·95	629·63	1015·15	1225·81	1413·22	23·81	111·11	...	...	8·26	...	37·03	106·06	48·38	33·06	47·1 per 1,000 men.
	Infantry ...	45·77	49·32	94·11	79·79	59·01	1116·20	959·18	1396·08	1803·19	1354·09	12·32	10·20	13·72	5·32	9·83	47·53	42·52	66·66	74·47	19·67	51·1 do. do.
	Details ...	115·38	96·77	214·28	83·33	179·49	1000·00	1193·55	2857·14	1625·00	1410·26	38·46	129·03	214·28	125·00	...	...	...	...	...	51·28	
Bellary ...	Artillery ...	33·55	67·11	80·00	100·00	111·84	818·80	1308·72	2140·00	2038·46	2750·00	13·42	20·13	6·66	23·07	26·31	13·42	33·56	13·33	15·38	13·15	
	Infantry ...	63·00	79·14	90·40	113·01	111·61	1030·83	1507·91	1788·60	2339·02	2754·46	5·36	7·19	13·91	17·06	4·46	46·91	46·04	38·94	49·04	17·85	
	Details ...	333·33	...	...	...	...	666·66	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Bangalore ...	Cavalry ...	54·12	72·07	71·09	88·88	83·13	1000·00	1119·37	1203·79	1257·78	1147·26	7·73	22·52	9·48	22·22	7·12	33·51	72·07	106·63	44·44	33·25	
	Artillery ...	53·69	68·67	66·22	91·55	83·33	941·83	1206·01	1362·03	1786·38	1277·02	15·66	15·02	8·83	9·39	4·50	38·03	51·50	66·22	46·94	22·52	
	Infantry ...	29·75	25·48	61·87	104·68	100·29	688·22	503·18	1080·58	2129·48	1772·86	12·93	8·92	12·95	5·51	5·90	37·51	14·01	25·90	57·85	14·75	
	Details ...	...	...	50·00	25·64	37·04	181·81	142·86	550·00	666·66	481·48	...	...	25·00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Secunderabad ...	Cavalry ...	32·54	57·14	102·94	95·46	67·18	881·66	992·21	1566·17	1343·67	984·49	8·87	18·18	44·12	23·86	15·51	29·59	18·18	53·92	52·50	10·33	
	Artillery ...	58·25	65·76	81·24	77·50	74·43	1192·23	1284·33	1707·93	1745·00	1267·18	9·71	7·73	19·34	15·00	11·45	50·48	46·42	59·96	32·50	17·17	
	Details ...	51·37	55·03	59·80	58·65	65·70	1136·30	1214·76	1559·13	1242·86	1358·81	16·44	16·77	22·34	6·76	5·05	28·08	34·90	49·27	41·35	7·58	
		71·43	111·11	41·66	31·25	55·55	2214·28	4444·44	1541·66	1062·50	250·00	142·86	111·11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	

(Signed) A. D. HOME,
Surgeon-General.

No. 45. ORDER THEREON, 2nd June 1881, No. 2956.

Ordered that the foregoing report on Fort St. George be forwarded to the Government of India.

2. The Honorable the Governor in Council concurs in the opinions of the Provincial Commander-in-Chief expressed in paras. 2 and 3 of the Quartermaster-General's letter. Neither the actual condition of the works nor the health of the resident troops appears to call for the immediate demolition of the defences, while the safety of the Arsenal and Magazines with their extensive stores demand that at least the inner portion of the works shall be maintained, and the Government are not prepared to recommend that the heavy cost of dismantling the massive outworks should be incurred at present.

(True Extract.)

C. Newton Captain, R.E.,

For *Ag. Secretary to Government,*
Mily. Dept.

To the Quartermaster-General, with 6 plans.
" Public Works Department. with 5 of ditto
" Inspector-General of Ordnance, with a copy of O.G., No. 5372 of 1880.

Exd. A. Raitt.

18 July 1881.

P.W.C. No. 3640

Govt. of [1881] Madras.

MILITARY.

To THE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL,
&c., &c., &c.

S.P.C.

Dated June, 2nd.

Issued

Recd: 18 June Encl.

G.O., 2nd June 1881, No. 2956.

JUNE.
Nos. 44—46.

B No. 1564 Wa/23 June/81

Forwarding to the Government of India the Annual Report on Fort St. George for 1881.

B No. 1564 Wa/23rd June/81

Communicated to the Supt. of W. Presidency.

C.S.

20/6/81

S. of W. Presy

20/6
23/6/81