

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

11th January 1882, No. 42.

Archæology.

Read the following paper :—

From Dr. J. BURGESS, Archæological Surveyor, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Bezvāda, 22nd December 1881 [Current No. 2803].

I have the honor to inform Government that I have examined the Amarāvati marbles deposited at the library in this town, and desire to call attention to the following.

2. The marble slabs are not *in* the library, but just under the drip of the eaves of the verandah in front of the library room, facing the south, and exposed to the full blaze of the sun all day. The library is close to the high road at the end of the bridge over the canal, and the narrow compound is only separated from the road by a low wall about 3 feet high. Some of the slabs are within 4 feet of this wall, and most of them within 3 yards of it. Hence it will be seen that the protection afforded them is only nominal and of the most precarious sort. Indeed within a very few days past, one of the stones has been deliberately broken during the absence of the library clerk.

3. To the twenty-three stones previously here, there have been added within the last two years, seven others, all that are known to exist now of the large and beautiful series that was so long at Masulipatam. Two of these are the largest slabs here, and one of them is unrivalled in size and beauty by any of the slabs now in England.

4. I would suggest that the whole of these slabs should be removed at once to Madras, so long as there is sufficient water in the canals to permit of their easy transit.

5. Should Government accede to this, I would recommend that the shipment should be effected under the supervision of a responsible officer of the Engineering service, and that he should be instructed to use every precaution against their being chipped or broken in any way in transit. The marble is peculiarly brittle and breaks with a very slight strain; and the carving (sometimes on both sides) is boldly executed and easily chipped.

6. I have taken notes of the condition of some of the slabs, and a description of twenty-three of them is given in Mr. Sewell's Report, pp. 55—59.

7. There are many other sculptures in the compound and verandah of the library, found at other places than Amarāvati, which would be well worth a place in a large Museum, and which ought to be cared for.

8. Inside the library room is an open press containing what is now left of a great "find" of Baudddha images, discovered some years ago at Buddhapād, some forty miles from this. There are said to have been originally about 400 in all, with inscriptions on many of the bronze bases; *now* there are left only thirty-one bronze images, eighteen bases, a dāgaba and about 160 fragments of all sizes :—that is perhaps half of the original "find." It appears that visitors occasionally help themselves to what they take a fancy for, and all the best are gone.

9. I have the honor to ask whether Government is disposed to take steps to preserve the poor remains left, and to use means to recover as many as possible of those removed? I can hardly doubt that if it were known that Government was anxious to have them for the Madras Museum, those in whose hands they are would readily return them.

ORDER THEREON, 11th January 1882, No. 42.

The suggestion contained in paragraphs 4 and 5 will be adopted, and the following telegram will be sent to the Executive Engineer at Bezvada:—

"Assist Dr. Burgess to make preparations for transporting marbles to Madras by canal."

The Public Works Department will issue more detailed orders.

2. Dr. Burgess is requested to submit draft of an advertisement to be published on the subject mentioned in his paragraph 9.

(True Extract.)

A. Davidson
Chief Secretary.

To Dr. J. Burgess.

„ the Department of Public Works. ✓

„ the Collector of Kistna.

Copy to the Superintendent, Government Central Museum.

„ R. Sewell, Esq., C.S.

Exd. J. Wright.

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N^o 138 Wap 16th January 1882

Communicated
to the Suptg. Eng^r
2^d Circle who will
arrange for the
careful removal of
the slabs under the
personal supervision
of the Executive
Engineer.

16.1.82

P. 3. 6. 223
Govt. of 11882 Madras.
PUBLIC.

To
DR. J. BURGESS,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated January, 11th.
Issued
Recd. H. J. Burgess
G.O., 11th January 1882, No. 42.

JANUARY.

Be N^o 138 Wap 16th January 82

Entd. in Receipt Regt.

Archæology.—Dr. Burgess' proposals for the removal of the Amarāvati marbles from Bezvāda to Madras by canal, approved; and the Executive Engineer, Bezvāda, instructed by telegram to aid in the matter.

S. E. 2^d Circle
14/1/89

with order.

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Exd. J. Wright.

P. W. D.

Govt. of 1882 Madras.
PUBLIC.

Per of the A. P. W.
No. 138 W 2/16 Jan'y/82

Comm'd to the Supty Eng^r
2nd Circle who will
arrange for the careful
removal of the slabs
under the personal
supervision of the Ex Eng^r
(22) R. J.

To
DR. J. BURGESS,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated January, 11th.

Issued

Recd. Encl.

G.O., 11th January 1882, No. 42.

16-1-82¹⁵ No. 138 W.
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1 Eng^r II Circle

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