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Govt. of (1885) Madras.

JUDICIAL.

No 1061. Waj 6 May '85

Forwarded
through the Supty:
Engr: I Circle, to
the Engr: Engr: South
Arcot Division.

P.S.C.

Issued

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Encl.

G.O., 14th April 1885, No. 971.

C.S.
28-4-85

No 1061. Waj 6 May '85

APRIL.

W.
29-4-85

Jails.

Sanctioning the expenditure of Rs. 1,000 for the construction of temporary buildings to the camp jail at Mount Capper, and appointing a committee to report on the proposal to erect a permanent jail there.

S.E. I Circle

S.E. I Circle

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper :—

From H. R. GRIMES, Esq., Inspector-General of Jails, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Ootacamund, 14th March 1885, No. 65.

I have the honor to report that on my recent inspection of the district jail of Cuddalore, I was much struck with the unsuitableness of the existing buildings situated in the Old Town, Cuddalore, compared with the suitableness of the site of the camp jail at Mount Capper, situated some two miles from the public offices, viz., Sessions Court and Collector's Cutcherry, and, as I think there is no question as to the desirability of the latter site for a jail, I would strongly urge for the consideration of the Government the abolition of the old jail at Cuddalore and its permanent transfer to Mount Capper.

2. I forward, for the information of the Government, letters from the Superintendent, Dr. Robertson, who, from a sanitary point, considers there can be no doubt that Mount Capper is in every respect superior to the site of the jail in Old Town, Cuddalore, and he subjoins copies of remarks made by the Surgeon-General with the Government at his last inspection of the jail in December 1883.

3. I fully concur with the Surgeon-General in his remarks, and it has again become evident that if cholera prevails in the town it extends to the jail, for, during the past year, 1884, cholera was raging in Cuddalore; there were 16 prisoners attacked in the jail, of whom five died; the prisoners were removed to Mount Capper and the disease ceased; cholera again broke out in January of this year when there were two admissions and one death, and at the date of my visiting the jail early in February last, the greater part of the prisoners were encamped at Mount Capper and appeared to be in a better state of health and general appearance than the few there were in the Old Town Jail.

4. The buildings in the Old Town Jail are ill adapted; they are surrounded on three sides with houses, and on the remaining side they are contiguous to the back water, which, when the tide is out, is anything but a healthy locality to live near; there is great difficulty in finding suitable employment for the prisoners, and they have to be sent to work either on the roads in the town or up to Mount Capper, thus passing through the town which is most objectionable.

5. The site of the camp jail at Mount Capper has every advantage that can possibly be required for a jail; it is elevated, is on a laterite soil; there is a good supply of excellent water; ample employment can be obtained for any number of prisoners in digging laterite, also in working the garden, which has already been commenced and can easily be extended. The site of the jail is already enclosed by a five-foot wall with a deep ditch of some six or seven feet in depth and three to four feet in width on the inner side, making it now far more secure than many other jails I have lately visited, and there is ample space in the enclosure to locate 500 prisoners if necessary.

6. I would propose that the existing huts at Mount Capper be put into thorough repair, and that additional huts be built to accommodate in all 300 prisoners of all classes, also houses for the jailor, deputy jailor, hospital subordinates, and lines for the warders and guards. As the guarding of the jail will, I presume, shortly devolve on this department, there will be no necessity to build lines for the police. Dr. Robertson reports if the sheds are to be occupied for two or three years, they will require

to be more carefully erected, than if intended to be occupied merely for two or three months, and from a rough estimate he has had made, the cost of the more permanent sheds would be rupees four hundred and seventy only (Rs. 470). All the prison labor is at present given to the municipality gratuitously under the orders of Government, but if the reconstruction of the sheds is sanctioned, this department will require all the convict labor available.

7. The prisoners are at present entirely located at Mount Capper owing to cholera still prevailing in Old Town, also owing to the bad state of the roads after the recent floods. Dr. Robertson finds it impossible to superintend two jails; this arrangement I have sanctioned and now that the prisoners are located at Mount Capper, I would strongly recommend they remain there permanently, and though Dr. Robertson suggests that there is risk from fire which might necessitate the removal of the prisoners to the old jail, this certainly might occur, but with ordinary care I have little apprehension on this point. The prisoners at Vizagapatam were for years located in temporary sheds, and to the best of my recollection such an event never occurred. During the famine in 1876-77 many hundreds of prisoners were located in thatched sheds, and I never recollect of an instance of the sheds being burnt down either accidentally or maliciously.

8. Eventually I would propose that the buildings at Mount Capper should be constructed permanently by the convicts themselves; this could be easily and economically done, as there is any quantity of good material (laterite) on the spot, and it is my intention, if this proposal meets with the approval of the Government, to transfer skilled convict labor from the central jails, and to build the new jail at Mount Capper gradually year by year entirely by convict labor, supervised, if Government so wishes, by a professional officer of the Public Works department; before doing this, I will have plans and estimates drawn up, and submit them for approval.

9. As I am doubtful of the required temporary buildings being erected for the amount estimated for by Dr. Robertson, I would request, if Government sanctions the proposal now submitted, that a sum of Rs. 1,000 be allotted for the erection of the temporary buildings, which can be met from the budget allotment to this department of petty works of construction and repair for 1885 and 1886.

ENCLOSURES.

From Brigade-Surgeon C. ROBERTSON, M.D., Superintendent of Jail, Cuddalore, to the Inspector-General of Jails, dated Cuddalore, 10th March 1885, No. 42.

With reference to the proposal to transfer the district jail from Old Town to Mount Capper permanently, I have the honor to state as follows.

2. From a sanitary point of view there can be no doubt that Mount Capper is in every respect superior to the site of the jail at Old Town, Cuddalore. On this point I may subjoin a copy of the remarks made by Surgeon-General Cornish at his last inspection of the jail in December 1883:—

“The old jail is kept very clean, and every care given to the health of the prisoners, but there seems to be something in the locality favorable to outbreaks of cholera, and I think it rarely happens that cholera prevails in the town without extending to the jail.

“At Mount Capper, I find that the space occupied by the old famine jail has been enclosed by a substantial wall. The huts inside are wanting repairs, but still habitable, and an excellent well of water has been found in the laterite rock. Experience has shown that this site is healthy for prisoners, and I think the time has now come for considering whether the old jail buildings should not be permanently abandoned, and the whole establishment transferred to Mount Capper. Three repeated outbreaks of cholera, in a cholera season, show that the old jail is not a safe location, and it seems to me that the district jail might gradually be put up at Mount Capper, by convict labor, the prisoners being meanwhile huddled on the enclosed space.”

3. I may express my doubt as to whether the Jail department is equal to the task of constructing a permanent jail at Mount Capper. The only thing to be said in favor of the old jail at Cuddalore is that the buildings are there, while at Mount Capper buildings would be required to accommodate at least 300 prisoners of various classes, and besides, buildings would be required for the jailor, deputy jailor, hospital assistant, writer, warders, and police guards, while at Old Town all these prison officers, warders and guards, find their own accommodation.

Of course a new jail might be built at Mount Capper by the Department of Public Works, and the present jail buildings at Old Town handed over to the Salt department, who would most probably find them very useful. In such a case, however, the Department of Public Works might prefer to select their own site, and be unwilling to adopt what might be styled non-professional work.

4. When I recommended that all the prisoners should in the mean time be located at Mount Capper, I did so for two reasons, first, because epidemic cholera still prevailed at Old Town, and, secondly, because owing to the wrecked state of roads and bridges, I found it impossible to superintend two jails, but, should epidemic cholera abate, and the direct road to Old Town become practicable, I am not sure that it would not be better to return to the old jail at Cuddalore. It should always be borne in mind that in the camp jail the risk from fire, whether accidental or malicious, is very serious, and such an accident might in space of an hour necessitate the removal of the prisoners to the buildings at Old Town.

5. With regard to the estimate for rebuilding the sheds at Mount Capper, I may state that if it is intended to occupy the camp jail for merely two or three months, one or two sheds only will be required. If, however, the sheds, &c., are to be constructed with a view to being occupied for two or three years, they will require to be more slowly and carefully erected. I have made a rough estimate for this and find it comes to Rs. (470) four hundred and seventy only. All the prison labor is at present given to the municipality gratuitously under the orders of Government, but if the repair or reconstruction of sheds, to any large extent, be ordered, the Jail department will require all the convict labor available. Before proceeding further I should therefore request orders on this point. Meanwhile I may look out for materials and draw up approximate estimates of the cost of huts, &c.

From Brigade-Surgeon C. ROBERTSON, M.D., Superintendent of Jail, Cuddalore, to the Inspector-General of Jails, dated Cuddalore, 24th February 1885, No. 24.

I have the honor to inform you that I yesterday moved out the remaining 59 convicts to the camp jail at Mount Capper, where sufficient accommodation has been provided. In the present disordered state of Cuddalore, it is quite impossible for me to attend two jails at a distance of over 3 miles each, with unbridged rivers, and broken roads to traverse. I considered it better to assemble the convicts in the camp jail as being, on sanitary grounds, much the better place, in fact I do not consider it safe to assemble the convicts in the Old Town Jail at Cuddalore. A small expenditure for leaves and palmyras may be required in the construction of an office building, but the amount will not exceed Rs. 50 only, and the detailed statement will afterwards be forwarded.

2. A small police guard has been left in charge of the old jail buildings at Old Town, Cuddalore.

ORDER—dated 14th April 1885, No. 971, Judicial.

The expenditure of Rs. 1,000 recommended for the construction of temporary buildings to the camp jail at Mount Capper is sanctioned, the charge being met in the manner indicated by the Inspector-General of Jails.

2. In regard to the question of erecting a permanent jail at Mount Capper, the Governor in Council resolves to request the gentlemen named in the margin to form themselves into a committee in view to reporting on the proposal in question.

The District Judge,	} South Arcot.
Collector,	
Executive Engineer,	
Zillah Surgeon,	

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Jails.
 „ District Judge, South Arcot.
 „ Collector, South Arcot.
 „ Executive Engineer, South Arcot, through
 Public Works department.
 „ Zillah Surgeon, South Arcot.
 „ Accountant-General.

Exd. J. Wright.