

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper:—

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Public), dated Simla, 15th July 1887, No. 28—1579-95.

Read—the undermentioned papers:—

Home Department Resolution No. 37-A—1392-406, dated 12th August 1885.
From the Government of Madras, No. 482-C., dated 14th June 1886, and enclosures.
" " of Madras, " 1456, " 12th July " do.
" " of Bombay, " 991, " 13th March " do.
" " of Bombay, " 1060, " 22nd March " do.
" " of Bengal, Mis. No. 634-20, dated 19th February 1886, and enclosures.
" " of Bengal, No. 1529 T.R., dated 3rd November 1886, and enclosure.
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" " of Bengal, No. 12 J., dated 3rd January 1887.
" " of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, No. 158—111-783, dated 11th February 1886, and enclosure.
" Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, No. 3681—161, dated 19th September 1885, and enclosures.
" " of Burma, No. 533-148 N., dated 25th September 1885, and enclosure.
" " of Assam, No. 5283, dated 27th August 1885.
" " of Coorg, No. 1107-144, dated 19th September 1885.
" Resident at Hyderabad, No. 18-G, dated 22nd January 1886, and enclosures.

Resolution—

The subject of discussion in the papers cited in the preamble is the preparation and printing of annual departmental reports submitted to the Government of India in the Home Department. In a letter, No. 392-S., dated the 22nd June 1885, the Government of the Punjab solicited a reconsideration of the whole question of the preparation and treatment of annual reports, so far as that province was concerned. The alterations suggested by Sir Charles Aitchison and the views provisionally held by the Government of India on the question are summarized in Home Department Resolution of the 12th August 1885. But as the subject was not one of merely local importance, the Governor-General in Council desired, before coming to a final decision, to have a full expression of the opinions of Local Governments and Administrations upon the proposals of the Punjab Government, so far as they affected the reports which are submitted to the Home Department. The replies from Local Governments and Administrations, read in the preamble, contain their opinions on the matter.

2. The proposals of the Punjab Government were made with double object (1) of removing the burden thrown upon district officers, heads of departments, and Secretariat establishments in connection with the preparation and reviewing of annual reports; and (2) of reducing the cost of printing the reports. These proposals have not been accepted in full by any Local Government or Administration, except by the Chief Commissioner of Burma; and Mr. Crosthwaite, the present Chief Commissioner of that province, holds, as his reply from the Central Provinces shows, different views from those held by Sir Charles Bernard. The Governments of Madras, Bombay, and

Bengal have, to some extent, accepted the proposals in question, and the Chief Commissioner of Coorg has expressed his opinion generally in favor of having statistical tables, accompanied by notes, for two years, and in the third year a set of comprehensive departmental reports.

3. The most adverse criticism of the proposals made by the Punjab Government proceeds from the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, from the Administrations of the Central Provinces and of Assam and from the Resident at Hyderabad. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh is of opinion that the presentation of evidence of departmental efficiency and the collection, in a convenient form, of information useful for administrative and other purposes cannot be secured under a system of triennial reporting with intermediate statistical tables and brief explanatory notes. He considers that, as was suggested in paragraph 7 of Home Department Resolution of 12th August 1885, the brief notes would probably be of little practical value, while the triennial report would necessarily be prolix and involve much labor in its preparation. The latter, moreover, would be four years old before the orders of Government could be passed or any subsequent action taken upon it. Sir A. Lyall observes that the labor of scrutinizing statistics is little augmented by that of writing a report on them, and that a careful scrutiny and comparison of past and present returns is a necessary part of the duty of the heads of departments in administering. But, while opposed to the general adoption of the proposals of the Punjab Government, Sir A. Lyall would meet them to some extent by doing away with reports on certain subjects and by substituting for them statistical tables accompanied every year by a brief commentary in the form of notes, such as is now supplied by the Local High Courts of Judicature in reviewing the Criminal and Civil Justice returns.

4. Mr. Crosthwaite, at the time Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, concurs in the views of the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh in regard to the small amount of labor required to write a report, when once the relevant statistics have been systematically studied. He remarks that the system of writing reports is useful, inasmuch as it ensures that statistics have been scrutinized, and that it enables the Government to see how much care and intelligence have been devoted to this scrutiny. Reports moreover, in Mr. Crosthwaite's opinion, enable administrative officers to periodically survey the whole of their work and to judge of the effects of it, while they assist Government in seeing how far the recognized principles of administration have been applied and how far errors require to be corrected. If for annual reports triennial reports were substituted, there is, he thinks, likely to be the disadvantage that the officer who had done the work would not ordinarily write the report, or, if he did, that his recollection of the facts regarding which he was writing would have grown dim with time. Under such a system, too, errors of administration could not be corrected at once. Mr. Crosthwaite admits that reports and reviews are often unnecessarily prolix and should be curtailed, and he suggests that the extended distribution of reports which at present prevails is unnecessary and expensive. He also deprecates the style of review which merely repeats, in other and perhaps fewer words, what is stated in the report.

The Officiating Chief Commissioner of Assam considers that the proposals of the Punjab Government are unsuitable to that province, and would lead to serious practical inconvenience. Mr. Ward is of opinion that the value of reports to departmental officers would be lost by triennial reports, while the labor of compiling the latter would be very great, particularly to officers who had held their charges only for a small portion of the three years.

The Resident at Hyderabad doubts if the proposed reform would have an useful effect, and argues that the review of the year's transactions by the head of the Government affords an incentive to work. Praise or blame, in the Resident's opinion, loses its effect if it relates to a time long passed away. The officer concerned may have left the locality, and it does not always happen that an officer remains at his post for the whole three years for which he would have to write the report.

5. Opinions briefly summarized above confirm the view taken by the Government of India in the Home Department, as expressed in the Resolution of the 12th August

1885, that it was not possible to go as far as was proposed by the Punjab Government in the direction of curtailing the preparation and submission of annual reports. After giving the subject full consideration the Government of India agrees in the main with the remarks made by the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and the present Chief Commissioner of Burma regarding the usefulness of annual reports as a means of testing departmental efficiency and the judgment and energy of officers, and also of checking and correcting administrative mistakes. Applying this principle, the Governor-General in Council is of opinion that annual reports must be maintained in the two following cases :—

- (a) Where the reports deal with the application of administrative principles still open to modification or the concrete working of which has to be watched.
- (b) Where the reports contain statistics which for administrative purposes must be compiled and examined annually.

These two heads comprise so many of the reports now falling under the cognizance of the Home Department that the conclusion to which His Excellency in Council has come is that, beyond insisting on brevity and methodical arrangement in the reports themselves, and on curtailment of reviews of them, it is impossible to afford much relief to Local Governments in the direction contemplated by this inquiry. The Government of India, therefore, desires that the reports dealt with in the Home Department should from 1887 onwards be treated in the following manner :—

- (i) To be submitted annually as heretofore :—

Report on General Administration.
 " Municipal Administration.
 " Local Boards' Administration.
 " Education.
 " Sanitation.
 " Civil and Criminal Justice.
 " Jail Administration.
 " Police Administration.
 " Lunatic Asylums.

- (ii) To be submitted in full every third year, statistical returns and brief commentaries in the shape of notes being submitted in the intermediate years :—

Report on Registration.
 " Dispensaries.
 " Lock Hospitals.
 " Vaccination.
 " Destruction of wild beasts and snakes.

The notes to be submitted with the statistical returns in the years intermediate between the submission of the reports should give a clear, though brief, indication of the supervising or controlling officer's opinion as to the significance of the statistics.

6. The following special reports should continue to be submitted as before :—

Chemical Examiner's Report.
 Report on Calcutta Medical Institutions.
 Report of the Port Health Officer, Calcutta.
 Report of the Commissioners of the Town of Calcutta.
 Report on Publications under Act XXV of 1867.
 The Review of Publications.
 The Report on Vernacular Newspapers.

The Government of India leaves to Local Governments, who submit reports on Legal Affairs and Criminal Tribes, discretion to determine whether these reports shall be annually prepared as at present, or prepared every third year, with brief notes in the intermediate years.

7. The Governor-General in Council would desire to express his earnest hope that Local Governments and Administrations will insist on curtailment of reports to the utmost extent which is consistent with a proper examination of the facts and figures

presented in them. A reduction in the size of the reports on Jails, Police, Education, and Sanitation is especially necessary. In most provinces these reports have become far too discursive.

Compression of reviews is not less called for than curtailment of reports: a review should contain only what is necessary to communicate the judgment of the reviewing authority regarding the salient features of the report. The Governor-General in Council attaches no value to reviews which merely repeat in abridged form what is set forth in the report reviewed.

8. While thus recognizing the need which exists for compression in the reports and reviews which reach the Government of India, His Excellency in Council is no less desirous that the same principles should be carefully followed as regards reports received by Local Governments and Administrations, but not forwarded to the Government of India. He fears that the time of administrative and executive officers is unnecessarily occupied as much by the preparation of reports and returns submitted for the information of the local authorities as by the preparation of those which reach the Government of India. He has therefore observed with satisfaction that the Government of Bengal has recently, in connexion with the Report of the Salaries Commission, directed its attention to this aspect of the case; and he trusts that all other Local Governments and Administrations will exercise a vigorous discretion not only in reducing the bulk of the reports and returns which are retained, but also in abolishing those that are not really required.

Order—

Ordered, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all Local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance; and that a copy be forwarded to the other departments of the Government of India for information and further necessary action, and that it be published in the Supplement to the *Gazette of India*.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. P. MacDONNELL,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

To the Government of Madras.

ORDER—dated 2nd August 1887, No. 1081, Public.

Communicated to the departments of the Secretariat in continuation of G.O., Public, No. 1455, dated 12th July 1886. The instructions issued by the Government of India in paragraphs 7 and 8 of their resolution will receive careful attention.

(True Extract.)

H. E. STOKES,
Ag. Chief Secretary.

To the Departments of the Secretariat.

„ Surgeon-General with the Government of Madras,
„ Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

no 2301W of 26th August/87

Communicated to
the Chief Engineer for
Irrigation the Consy.
Engineer for Railways
and the Examiner
P.W. Accounts, with
reference to paras 7 &
8 of the Govt of
India Resolution.

1st of 1000
W.

Ch. Engr for Irru
Consy Engr for Rys
Exr. P. W. A.

Govt. of (1887) Madras.

PUBLIC.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 2nd August 1887, No. 1081.

no 2301W of 26th August/87

AUGUST.

Reports.

Communicating, with remarks, to departments
of Secretariat Government of India resolution in
regard to the preparation and printing of annual
departmental reports submitted to the Govern-
ment of India in the Home Department.

With order

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(True Extract.)

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Secy. to the Govt. of India.

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To the Departments of the Secretariat.

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Exd. T. O'Connor.

no. 2301W of 26th August/87

Communicated to
the Chief Engineer for
Irrigation the Consulting
Engineer for Railways
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P.W. Accounts, with
reference to paras 7 & 8
of the Govt. of India
Resolution.

f Sd/ Loss

W.

Ch. E. for I.
Consng. Engr for Rys
Exr. P.W. A.

Govt. of (1887) Madras.

PUBLIC.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 2nd August 1887, No. 1081.

no. 2301W dated 26th August/87

AUGUST.

Reports.

Communicating, with remarks, to departments of Secretariat Government of India resolution in regard to the preparation and printing of annual departmental reports submitted to the Government of India in the Home Department.

With order

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The Resident at Hyderabad doubts if the proposed reform would have an useful effect, and argues that the review of the year's transactions by the head of the Government affords an incentive to work. Praise or blame, in the Resident's opinion, loses its effect if it relates to a time long passed away. The officer concerned may have left the locality, and it does not always happen that an officer remains at his post for the whole three years for which he would have to write the report.

5. Opinions briefly summarized above confirm the view taken by the Government of India in the Home Department, as expressed in the Resolution of the 12th August

1885, that it was not possible to go as far as was proposed by the Punjab Government in the direction of curtailing the preparation and submission of annual reports. After giving the subject full consideration the Government of India agrees in the main with the remarks made by the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh and the present Chief Commissioner of Burma regarding the usefulness of annual reports as a means of testing departmental efficiency and the judgment and energy of officers, and also of checking and correcting administrative mistakes. Applying this principle, the Governor-General in Council is of opinion that annual reports must be maintained in the two following cases:—

- (a) Where the reports deal with the application of administrative principles still open to modification or the concrete working of which has to be watched.
- (b) Where the reports contain statistics which for administrative purposes must be compiled and examined annually.

These two heads comprise so many of the reports now falling under the cognizance of the Home Department that the conclusion to which His Excellency in Council has come is that, beyond insisting on brevity and methodical arrangement in the reports themselves, and on curtailment of reviews of them, it is impossible to afford much relief to Local Governments in the direction contemplated by this inquiry. The Government of India, therefore, desires that the reports dealt with in the Home Department should from 1887 onwards be treated in the following manner:—

- (i) To be submitted annually as heretofore:—

Report on General Administration.

„ Municipal Administration.

„ Local Boards' Administration.

„ Education.

„ Sanitation.

„ Civil and Criminal Justice.

„ Jail Administration.

„ Police Administration.

„ Lunatic Asylums.

- (ii) To be submitted in full every third year, statistical returns and brief commentaries in the shape of notes being submitted in the intermediate years:—

Report on Registration.

„ Dispensaries.

„ Lock Hospitals.

„ Vaccination.

„ Destruction of wild beasts and snakes.

The notes to be submitted with the statistical returns in the years intermediate between the submission of the reports should give a clear, though brief, indication of the supervising or controlling officer's opinion as to the significance of the statistics.

6. The following special reports should continue to be submitted as before:—

Chemical Examiner's Report.

Report on Calcutta Medical Institutions.

Report of the Port Health Officer, Calcutta.

Report of the Commissioners of the Town of Calcutta.

Report on Publications under Act XXV of 1867.

The Review of Publications.

The Report on Vernacular Newspapers.

The Government of India leaves to Local Governments, who submit reports on Legal Affairs and Criminal Tribes, discretion to determine whether these reports shall be annually prepared as at present, or prepared every third year, with brief notes in the intermediate years.

7. The Governor-General in Council would desire to express his earnest hope that Local Governments and Administrations will insist on curtailment of reports to the utmost extent which is consistent with a proper examination of the facts and figures

presented in them. A reduction in the size of the reports on Jails, Police, Education, and Sanitation is especially necessary. In most provinces these reports have become far too discursive.

Compression of reviews is not less called for than curtailment of reports: a review should contain only what is necessary to communicate the judgment of the reviewing authority regarding the salient features of the report. The Governor-General in Council attaches no value to reviews which merely repeat in abridged form what is set forth in the report reviewed.

8. While thus recognizing the need which exists for compression in the reports and reviews which reach the Government of India, His Excellency in Council is no less desirous that the same principles should be carefully followed as regards reports received by Local Governments and Administrations, but not forwarded to the Government of India. He fears that the time of administrative and executive officers is unnecessarily occupied as much by the preparation of reports and returns submitted for the information of the local authorities as by the preparation of those which reach the Government of India. He has therefore observed with satisfaction that the Government of Bengal has recently, in connexion with the Report of the Salaries Commission, directed its attention to this aspect of the case; and he trusts that all other Local Governments and Administrations will exercise a vigorous discretion not only in reducing the bulk of the reports and returns which are retained, but also in abolishing those that are not really required.

Order—

Ordered, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all Local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance; and that a copy be forwarded to the other departments of the Government of India for information and further necessary action, and that it be published in the Supplement to the *Gazette of India*.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. P. MACDONNELL,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

To the Government of Madras.

ORDER—dated 2nd August 1887, No. 1081, Public.

Communicated to the departments of the Secretariat in continuation of G.O., Public, No. 1455, dated 12th July 1886. The instructions issued by the Government of India in paragraphs 7 and 8 of their resolution will receive careful attention.

(True Extract.)

H. E. Stokes
Ag. Chief Secretary,

To the Departments of the Secretariat.

„ Surgeon-General with the Government of Madras,
„ Sanitary Commissioner for Madras.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

No 2301 wd/26th August/87

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Communicated to the
Communicated to the
Ch. E. for Secy the Comg.
Ch. E. for Secy the Comg.
Engls for Secy the Comg.
Ph. Accts with reference
to paras 7 & 8 of the G.O.
Resolution

Min
22.8.87

PMC/6583

G.O. of 1887 Madras.

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Issued

Recd. 20.8.87 Encl.

G.O., 2nd August 1887, No. 1081.

No 2301 wd/26th August/87

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AUGUST.

Ch. E. for Secy
Comg. Engls for Secy
Engls for Secy
Ph. Accts
resques to

22.8.87

Note - In the General Branch, we
have since 1885-86, omitted all statistical
statements from the Annual Admin
Report, which is now made as brief as
possible - and early in 1887, Engls
were told by circular, to follow
the Gen Branch report as closely as
possible in drawing up the annual reports
all necessary statistics are given in the
G.O. 20.8.87 further seems needed in
the Gen Branch

Reports.

Communicating, with remarks, to departments
of Secretariat Government of India resolution in
regard to the preparation and printing of annual
departmental reports submitted to the Govern-
ment of India in the Home Department.

W. Thorne