

Public Works (1899) Department.

G.O., No. 399 W

✓
DATED 8th Feb^r 1899.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Treat the G.W. Stone

Stating that Govt will award the
result of a full inquiry regarding the _____ and the
loss caused thereby, and recommending that the system
of patrolling should be improved.

12

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Public Works (1899) Department.

CURRENT No. 1081

His Excellency the Governor

Submitted for information - The Superintendent Engineer will be directed to institute a rigid inquiry, with ^{From The Superintendent} ^{Engineer} the view of ascertaining, if possible, the cause of the fire - ^{Order.} ^{Strike.}

No. 744

R.S. I was at the site of the fire this morning into the workshop officials. A full inquiry will be made & loss estimated. I expect the latter will not be less than Rs 30,000.

Dated 4th February 1899

Received 3 4.2.99
Registered

Enclosures
Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Fire in the Public Works Store

Submits copy of the letter No. 2068 of 3-2-99 reporting the occurrence of a serious fire & reports that he is proceeding there now.

B
Inn orders

4th 1/2/99

No. 399 W 28.2.99

The Government will await the result of a full inquiry and an estimate of the actual loss sustained. The

Rs. 42.99 17.2.99

BACK PAPERS.

No.	Date.
1	21-5-99
2	19-5-99
3	20-5-99

Cause of the fire should, if possible be ascertained

2. The system of patrolling should be
improved in the ~~most~~ ^{most} method
adopted in Jan'y of this Presidency
S. E. Price. Sec'y of War

S. G. v. Currier Sept 21/97

1. Reminder issued 21-3-99

2. ² Remainder issued 19-5-99

8 — 50 — 36 — 6 — 51

420 11/11

FURTHER PAPERS.

Weyenb

From H. Moss Esquire, General Supdt., P. W.
Stores, to the Superintending Eng^r.
V-circle, dated Madras, 3^d Feb'y, 1899,
No. 206 S.

I regret to have to report the occurrence of a serious fire in the Public Works Stores early this morning. Word was brought to Mr. Hutton and myself at about four o'clock this morning that the stores were on fire and we both at once proceeded to the spot. We found the middle portion of stores godowns where part of the paint and small stores were kept entirely on fire and everything within them which could suffer practically destroyed and nothing could be done to save them. All that was possible was to endeavour first to prevent the fire spreading further and then to put it out.

When we arrived the Store-keeper who was already there was endeavouring with the assistance of the sepoys from the neighbouring Plague station to get the manual Fire engine to work but not very successfully.

We

We brought our steam fire engine to the hydrant but before steam was up a police fire engine (H. Division) arrived under steam and we put it to work at this hydrant removing ours to the other and later on to the seven wells as there was a difficulty in coupling the suction and it was evident that there was not water enough to keep both engines going. Meantime another police fire engine (C. Division) was got to work at another of the seven wells and abundance of water was thus brought to play on the fire. It was soon evident that there was no further danger but it took some hours to put the fire entirely out. When Mr. Hutton and I left about eight it was still smouldering here and there.

It is impossible to ascertain when the fire was first observed owing to conflicting statements but it seems to have been noticed by several people at about the same time that is about half past three o'clock. The lascars on duty seem to have sent notice to

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the police promptly and done all that was possible under the circumstances. But by that time the fire must have got fast hold of the contents of the building and as these consisted largely of wooden racks shelves &c it spread through this godown very rapidly.

We have so far found it impossible to assign any cause for this fire. The store was locked up as usual for the night at about 5 P.M., yesterday, no light or matches were used in it and nothing which might take fire spontaneously was left in it. The most probable supposition seems to be either that the store was maliciously set on fire or that it was broken into and accidentally set on fire by thieves using lights or matches within.

The extent of the damage cannot yet be given. The stock taking of the stores destroyed was practically completed by Mr. Hutton so that the actual value of the damage done can be ascertained from the accounts when stock has been again taken of those

stores

stores which have escaped and partially escaped destruction and their value estimated. As soon as it is made out it will be reported.

I think it would not be out of place here to acknowledge the services of the police and sepoy in getting the fire under. The latter especially were quickly on the spot and worked well. The General Foreman, Chief Store-keeper and all the Workshop foremen and Maistries and others of the Workshop establishment arrived very early and rendered every assistance in their power in getting the fire under. Unfortunately the destruction was practically complete by the time notice was given and anything could be done.

P.S. The astonishing rapidity with which the fire spread through the godown after it was first noticed seems to have been due to the heat bursting the paint drums and the godown getting filled with vapour from the oil. In about half an hour everything combustible in the godown was

was practically destroyed by fire.
(Sd) H. H.

No 746

Copy to the Chief Engineer, P.W.D. for information. This report was received by me at 10 A.M. on the 4th February. I am now going to the P.W. Workshops.

Clairmont Colonel R.E.
4/2/99
Supt. Engineer,
V. Circle.

4th Feb. 1899.

4/2/99