

Public Works (1899) Department.

G.O., No. 994 W

DATED 8 April 1899.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Cubicles for jails. Pro: J. C. de Pa Commencing
to the P. W. of various letters from the Govt. India forwarding
plans of ——— designed by W. Donaldson,
Supt. Wk, Port Jail, Calcutta, & ended.

23.

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

Judicial (1899) Department.

From

From
The Judicial Dept

Order

Recorded

No. 47

ACK

27.7.99

Dated 16th March 1899.

Received

Registered

Enclosures ^x4 (2 Plans) ^x

Spare copies.

SUBJECT

SUBJECT.

Communicating to the Inspector
General of Prisons letter from the
Govt of India forwarding plans of
cells for the confinement
of prisoners by night, designed
by Mr. P. Donaldson, Supt
of the Presidency Jail Calcutta.

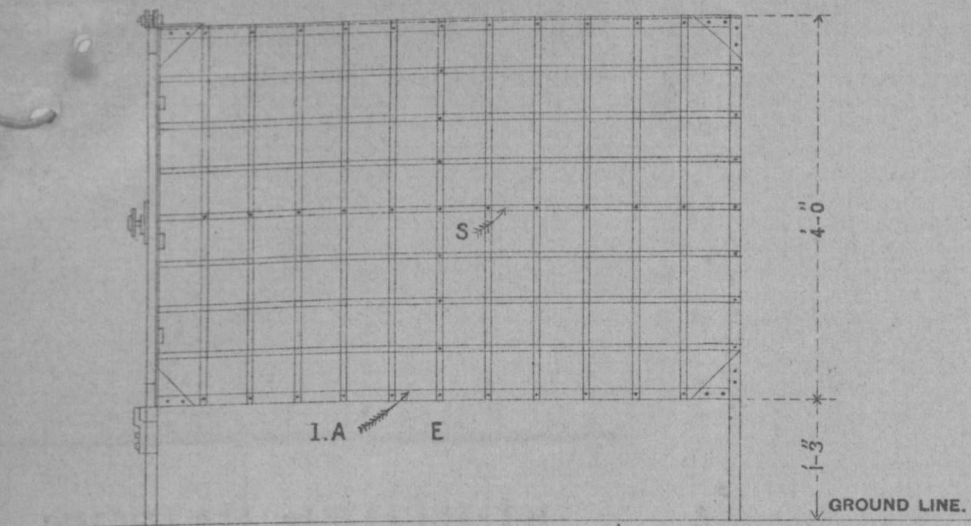
BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

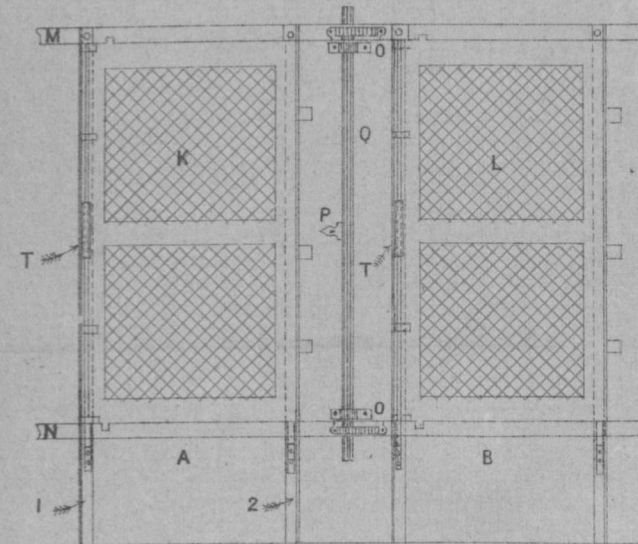
FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

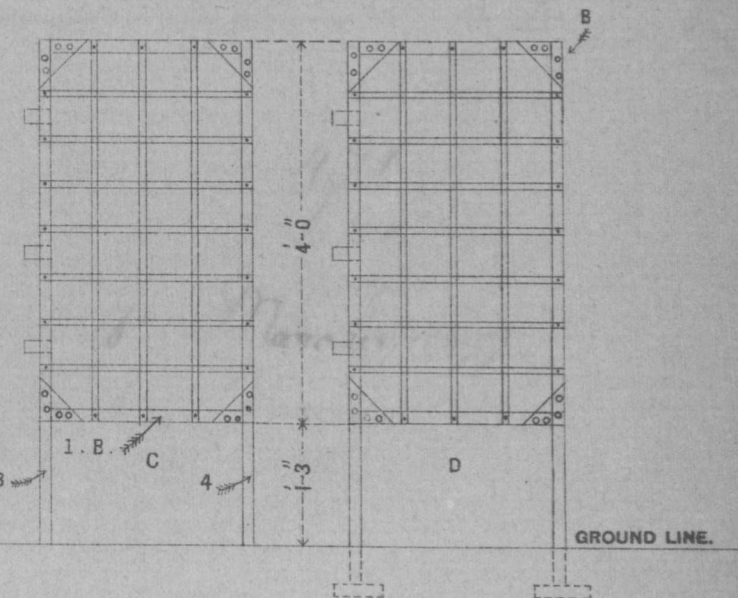
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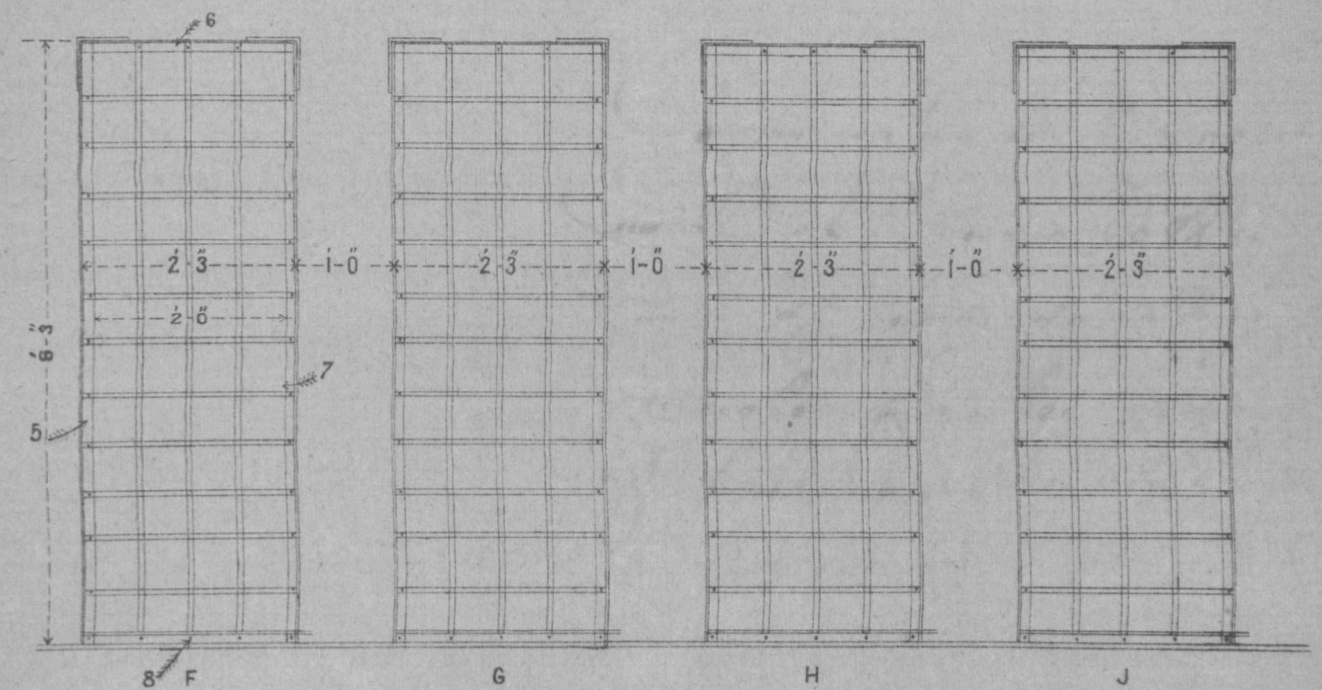
FRONT ELEVATION.



BACK ELEVATION.



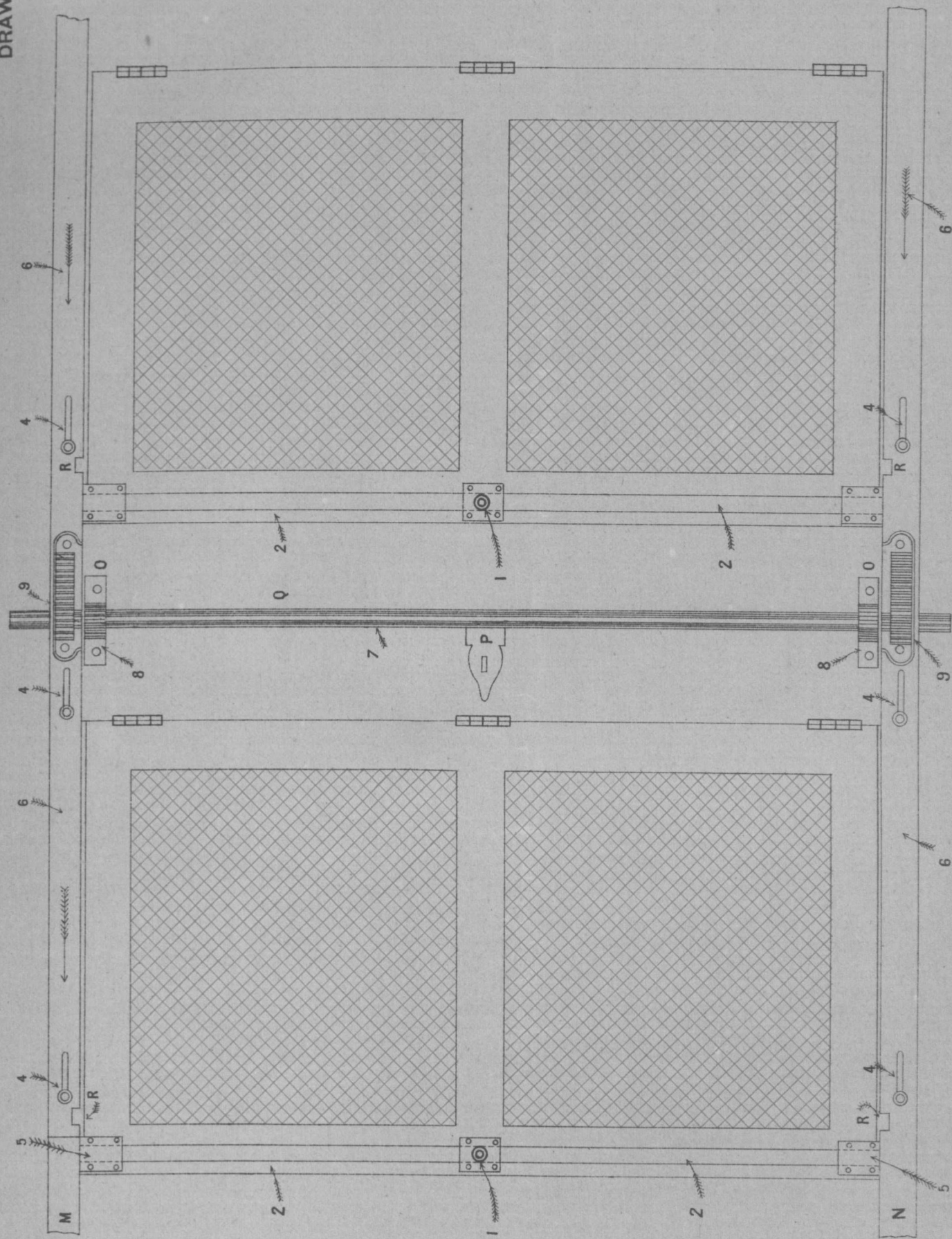
PLAN.



P. DONALDSON.

Drawn by
M. C. J. R.

DRAWING N. 2.



ARRANGEMENT OF
DOOR FASTENINGS.

P. DONALDSON.

Dated Calcutta, the 26th May 1898.

From—P. DONALDSON, Esq., Superintendent of the Presidency Jail, Calcutta,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, through the
Government of Bengal.

With reference to your demi-official letter No. 68, dated Simla, the 27th ultimo, suggesting that I should submit the plans, etc., of my design for jail cubicles to the Government of India through the Bengal Government, I have now the honour to do so, together with some remarks explanatory of the annexed drawings. I can supply better drawings if required.

The plan in drawing No. 1 shows an arrangement of four portable cubicles laid down in line and fixed to the floor of a ward, F. G. H. J., being the opening ends or front of the line. The front elevation, A. B., shows the arrangement of the doors of two such cubicles, K. and L. being the doors. It also shows the mechanism for working the lock-relieving apparatus of a series of doors at O. P. O. which is described further on. The back elevation, C. D., shows the backs of two cubicles; and the side elevation, E., the side of one such cubicle. From these drawings it is sufficiently obvious that this portable cubicle is composed of a framework of four vertical members, one at each corner, as shown in the front and back elevations at 1, 2, 3, 4, four horizontal members at top, as shown in plan at 5, 6, 7, 8, and four similar horizontal members as shown in the side elevation at 1-A., and back elevation at 1-B., below. These members are preferably made from angular bars of iron or steel of L. section rivetted together and provided with gusset or stiffening plates at the angles formed at the junction of vertical with horizontal members, as at B. (see back elevation).

The open portions of the framework are closed on top, sides and back with an open webbing of stout ribband steel (as, for instance, at S. in side elevation), the meshes or openings of which may be each from 40 to 50 square inches or even more, the area of the meshes being governed only by their capacity for preventing the occupant from crawling through them. They can therefore be pitched up to 8 inches square. These ribbands are rivetted to the framework in vertical or horizontal lines or otherwise, and at certain points of intersection one with the other, the objects being to prevent the occupants from readily leaving the cubicles, whilst air currents can pass freely through the meshes in all directions.

The open portion of the lower four horizontal members may be closed in with a similar open webbing of ribband steel, the meshes of which may be smaller because on this the occupant spreads his blankets and sleeps. All the foregoing is so obvious from drawing No. 1 that it is unnecessary to refer to it except in this general description.

As evidence of their portability, the design admits of the cubicles being fitted together in a workshop, taken to pieces, packed, sent to any part of India and re-erected at site. When put together they can be arranged and fixed in a sleeping ward, the feet of the vertical members being buried in masonry. They can be fixed as far apart or as near one from the other, as convenient. They can be placed in long double lines along a ward, or in series of threes or fours across a ward, or in fact in any distribution, as regards grouping, most suitable for the shape of the ward in which placed.

The longer the line, the fewer the padlocks, as each line, of whatever number, can be secured at P. (see front elevation drawing No. 1) with one single padlock.

The doors of the cubicles are fixed at the front ends as shown at F. G. H. J. in drawing No. 1, *vide* plan, and also front and side elevation. They may be of wood framing filled in with wire netting as shown, or of angular iron or steel, filled in with steel ribbands or slots, preferably the latter.

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Referring now to drawing No. 2,—near that edge of the door opposite to the side at which it is hung—there is a lock 1 with a couple of long vertical bolts 2, 2, the arrangement being such that by one operation, such as turning a spindle in one direction, the two bolts will be simultaneously moved outward, and by turning in the opposite direction they will be simultaneously moved inward. In connection with these bolts, each cubicle is provided with one upper and one lower longitudinal bar of any convenient length, arranged to slide laterally in suitable guides, *vide* 4, 4, 4, 4, and having notches cut in them as shown at R., such longitudinal sliding bars being, where desired, common to, or connected with, a series of cubicles, and the arrangement being such that the vertical bolts when projected outward, after shutting the doors, are held by the longitudinal bars, as the vertical bolts "shoot" behind them. If the longitudinal bars be now moved in the direction of the arrows 6, 6., these notches will come in front of the ends of the vertical bars and so release the doors of all the cubicles of the series in connection with which they are arranged. But if, instead of moving the longitudinal bars, the lock spindle at fig. 1 of any one locked door be turned so that the two vertical bolts are drawn inward, that door will be separately unlocked.

To move one or a series of these upper and lower longitudinal bars they are connected by a vertical shaft, fig. 7, revolving on its axis on the blocks, figs. 8, 8. These blocks are bolted to a board or plate fixed either at one side of a single cubicle or between any two cubicles of a series. At top and bottom of these blocks and attached to the vertical shaft are two toothed pinions, figs. 9, 9., which engage in the teeth of the racks fixed to the upper and lower longitudinal bars. A lever, P., in the form of a hasp, is the lever used to move the horizontal bars, and is so arranged that when all the doors of the series of cubicles to which it is connected are locked, the hasp will engage with a staple which, protruding through it, can be fastened with a padlock. To open the doors simultaneously then, all that is necessary is to release the lever, P., and turn it in the opposite direction. This one act moves the longitudinal bars with their notches so as to clear the vertical bolts, and all the doors open.

It will be seen from the drawings that the superficial area each portable cubicle occupies is that of an ordinary earth-bed 6' 3" X 2' 3", such as prisoners sleep on; to give more area is simply to increase the cost of the cubicle, and contract the capacity of the ward. It is besides unnecessary, seeing that an occupant can always be released by the door whenever he wishes to get out for the purposes of nature, the locking arrangement of each door being in the hands of the convict watchman on duty. There is thus no attempt at securing the occupant within his cubicle, except that, before being let out, he must satisfy the watchman that his reason is a valid one.

There can be no hardship in confining the occupant within this contracted area beyond what every one who sleeps under a mosquito curtain has to undergo. Nor is the confinement likely to injure the health seeing that the cubicles are open on all sides to every current of air passing through the ward.

Drawing No. 1 (*vide* plan) shows these cubicles pitched 12 inches apart. This may be considered to be a minimum distance. The further apart they can be pitched without interfering with the registered capacity of the ward the less chance of that contiguity between the occupants of adjoining cubicles which is the chief object of this form of inter-confinement. To place them quite close together is to frustrate and nullify the benefit to be derived from their use.

As regards the height of the cubicle it has been shown in the drawing as 4 feet from the bed to the top. This may be considered insufficient by some, but any objection on this score must be more sentimental than real. Asiatics are happier squatting than standing. If an occupant desires to stretch his body he can do so on the horizontal, or ask to be let out. But it is obvious that the height can be increased by lowering the plane of the bed, increasing the length of the uprights, or both. The sizes given are considered after practical experience in the Presidency Jail, Calcutta, to be sufficient.

These portable cubicles being fixed within the ward, away from walls and window openings, with the beds raised off the floor, with perfect ventilation all

about them will appeal to the thoughtful jail administrator. They possess another advantage. In the winter months it is now the habit to brick up some 3rds of the window openings of the sleeping wards. This practice, although good for preventing the cold winds from chilling the sleepers, nevertheless contracts and obstructs the ventilation of the ward. The heavy lingering C. O., finds no ready egress. But with lines of portable cubicles the window openings may be kept intact by attaching gunny purdahs to the ends of cubicles that could be dropped to shield the sleepers from the impact of the wind and yet allow of its free access to the ward. These purdahs would be in charge of the watchman on duty who could regulate their hanging when on watch.

It will be seen that the use of galvanized wire netting in the construction of these cubicles has been abandoned in favour of flat ribbands or slots of steel placed widely apart. Galvanized wire netting is unnecessarily costly as compared with these steel ribbands. Unless tightly stretched it bulges and looks unsightly. So to withstand the strains set up when stretching it heavier sections of framework are required than for steel ribbands. All this means extra cost and decreased efficiency. Steel slots or ribbands are cheap, easily fixed, and do not strain the framework even, when rivetted up to look smart and firm.

This portable cubicle will also appeal to the Engineer who has to "cubicle" the wards of a jail. Being all of uniform design and dimensions he has only to arrange them in the dormitories as he and the Superintendent consider best, and then to have them fixed and coupled up.

As regards expense; those constructed in the Presidency Jail to the dimensions given in the drawing cost in actual cash outlay for materials Rs. 40, and they were put together and fixed by the convict blacksmiths.

No. 2102-P., dated Calcutta, the 26th August 1898.

From—C. W. BOLTON, Esq., C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of the letter from the Home Department, No. 315, dated the 1st July 1898, and subsequent reminder noted in the margin, calling for an expression of opinion of this Government as to whether experience is in favour of the use of the jail cubicles designed by Mr. P. Donaldson, Superintendent of the Presidency Jail.

No. 366, dated the 16th August 1898.

2. In reply I am to state, for the information of the Government of India, that the cubicles have not been tried on an extensive scale, but that a group of five of them were put up in the Presidency Jail about a year ago for the sake of experiment and have been in almost constant use. The arrangements for locking the cubicles are so designed that the doors of a row of cubicles can be closed at one time, while it is possible to open or shut one cubicle without interfering with the others. The Inspector General of Jails reports that the cubicles appear to satisfy all requirements and that they could probably be erected as cheaply as any others that have been designed.

No. 444

FROM

R. NATHAN, Esq.,

Under Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras.

Home Department.
Jails.

Simla, the 3rd October
September 1898.

SIR,

I AM directed to refer to Home Department Resolution No. ^{10-Jails} 534-544 of the 5th December 1895, with which the Government of India circulated for the information of Local Governments and Administrations a plan and specification of cubicles for the confinement of prisoners by night which had been adopted in the Bhagalpur Jail in Bengal.

2. Mr. Donaldson, Superintendent of the Presidency Jail at Calcutta, has devoted attention to the construction of cubicles for jails and has invented a pattern which has been tried in the Calcutta Jail. I am directed to forward, for the consideration of the Governor in Council,

* Dated the 26th May 1898.
† No. 2102-P., dated the 26th August 1898.

the accompanying plans of these cubicles with a letter* from Mr. Donaldson explaining their construction and use, and a letter†

from the Government of Bengal reporting on the result of their trial in the Presidency Jail.

3. I am to take the opportunity to say that the Government of India have read with interest the remarks on the construction of cubicles in the sleeping wards of jails made in paragraph 3 of Madras Government letter No. 1044 Just. of the 20th June 1896 and trust that the matter will receive continued attention.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

R. NATHAN,

Under Secretary to the Government of India.

Judicial Department.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following paper :—

From the Government of India, Home Department,
No. 444, dated 3rd October 1898.

O R D E R :—No. 471, dated 16th March 1899.

Communicated to the Inspector-General of Prisons.

(True Extract)

for Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Prisons. (with enclosures.)
Copy to the Public Works Dept. (with enclos.)