M.R.O. 1—89,000—16-10-39.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Political **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 557 Press / ~~Mis.~~

Dated 17—8— ~~19~~1857

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 18. Read the following Minutes.

Minute by the Right Honorable the President.

When offering some remarks in support of the views of Lieut. General Sir P. Grant, on the state of the Madras Army, I mentioned, that I had possessed the opportunity of ascertaining that the Regiments stationed at Madras were overworked to a degree almost past endurance.

This garrison never contains more than two Native Corps, and there is not the slightest probability of the Army being able to afford a larger number.

One of the two Regiments has generally returned from Foreign Service, is probably weak in numbers, and is at once diminished by men going on Furlough.

The other is generally destined for Foreign Service in a short time, and instead of being prepared for such service by easy duty, the Sepoys have to start, with their strength and constitutions weakened by the severe work of the Presidency duties.

Those duties cannot be diminished with due regard to the Public Service, in fact they have been laid down much more in accordance with the easy and careless state of unpreparedness which has hitherto been allowed to exist here, as well as throughout the country, than with proper consideration for the safety of a capital town containing a large population and a considerable amount of valuable property.

With a view then both to the efficiency of the Regiments in garrison, and to the safety of the Town, I consider it necessary that there should be an additional force to which the Government may look for permanent assistance.

I have been informed by those of greater experience, that such a Corps could easily be formed, in the shape of a Militia, composed of the class forming the majority of the Madras Sappers, a race of men connected and likely to sympathize in no way either with Mussulmen or Hindoos.

I would strongly recommend that immediate steps should be taken for this purpose in the Military Department.

15th July 1857. (Signed) HARRIS.

No. 19. Minute by the Honorable W. ELLIOT, Esq.

The proposition of the Right Honorable the President to provide more adequately for the protection of the Town and for the Military requirements of the garrison appears to me to be highly deserving of attention.

Although I have not the means of knowing the wants of the garrison which his Lordship as Commander-in-Chief of Fort St. George possesses, I am still so far acquainted with the severity of the duty imposed on the Sepoys generally, that I have hitherto refrained for applying for the Honorary Guard to which I am entitled as a Member of the Government.

I have no hesitation in saying that in the event of any serious and general disturbance of the peace, the Military means available are wholly inadequate to the protection of the Inhabitants, scattered, as they are, over a large area, the various parts of which are at long distances from each other.

I consider his Lordship's suggestion to form a Local Corps from the class of men from which the Sappers are recruited to be a peculiarly happy one. They constitute the bulk of the hard working and laborious class of the community. They are a stalwart and bold race. But as must naturally be the case with such a class, among them are also found the poorest and most needy members of the population, the men who, in a time of disorder, would be foremost in turning the occasion to good account by acts of plunder and spoliation.

A strong body of well selected men from this class, under regular discipline and organization, would, I consider, prove a very efficient Military body, and one likely to afford the most effective support to the cause of order and tranquillity.

The plan has my cordial support.

16th July 1857. (Signed) WALTER ELLIOT.

Fort Saint George, Political Consultation, 21*st July* 1857.

No. 20. ORDER THEREON, No. 557; dated 17th August 1857.

Ordered that the foregoing Minutes be communicated to the Military Department, in view to immediate steps being taken for the formation of a Corps of Militia from the class of men therein described, for the protection of the Town and for the Military requirements of the garrison of Fort Saint George.

Exd. H. Morgan.

Minute

The proposition of the Rt Honble the President to provide more adequately for the protection of the Town & for the military requirements of the garrison appears to me to be highly deserving of attention.

Altho' I have not the means of knowing the wants of the Garrison which his Lordship as Commander in Chief of Fort St George possesses, I am so acquainted with the Severity of the duty imposed on the ~~Sepoys~~ generally, that I have ~~hitherto~~ refrained from applying for the honorary Guard to which I am entitled as a member of ~~the~~ Council.

I have no hesitation in saying that in the event of any serious [illegible] disturbance of the peace, the military means available are wholly inadequate to the protection of the ~~[illegible]~~ inhabitants scattered as they are over a large area, the various parts of which are at long distances from each other.

I consider his Lordships ~~[illegible]~~ suggestion to form a local corps from the class of men fr. wh the sepoys are recruited to be a peculiarly happy one. They constitute the bulk of the hardworking & laborious class of the community. They are a stalwart & bold race — that as must naturally be the case with such a class. Among them are also found the worst & most needy members of the population ~~community~~ — the men who in a time of disorder

to be foremost in turning the occasion to good account by ~~[illegible] the opportunity~~ acts of plunder & ~~[illegible]~~ spoliation.

A strong body of well selected ~~[illegible]~~ men from this class ~~[illegible]~~ under regular discipline & organisation would I conceive prove a very effective military body & be likely to afford the ~~[illegible]~~ most effective support to the cause of order & tranquillity.

The plan has my cordial support

Walter Elliot

16/7/57

Suppt to Cons. 21 Aug
Political 1857 Department.

No 673

Minute by the ~~[illegible]~~
Honorable Mr Elliot.

Dated 16th July 1857.

Intimating ~~that~~ the project for the formation of the Militia from ~~the~~ Madras Sappers recommended by ~~the~~ the Resident has his cordial support

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When offering some remarks in support of the views of Lt Genl Sir P. Grant on the state of the Madras Army — I mentioned — that I had possessed the opportunity of ascertaining that the Regiments stationed at Madras were overworked to a degree almost beyond endurance —

The Garrison never contains more than
~~There~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ & ~~there~~ is not the slightest probability of the army being able to afford

& larger number.

One of the two Regiments has generally returned from foreign service – is probably weak in numbers – & is at once diminished by ~~men~~ going on furlough.

The other is generally destined for foreign service in a short time – & instead of being prepared for such service by easy duty – the sepoys have to start – with their ~~[illegible]~~ ned by the ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ of the ~~Presidency [illegible]~~ –

Those duties ~~ought to be~~ diminished with due regard to the public service – in fact they have been laid down much more in accordance with the easy & careless state of unpreparedness which has hitherto been allowed to exist as well as throughout the country – than with ~~[illegible]~~ consideration for the safety of a capital town containing a large population & a considerable amount of valuable property –

With a view then both to the efficiency of ~~the~~ Regiments in garrison – & to the safety of the town – I consider it necessary that ~~there~~ should be ~~made~~ an additional force to which the Govt may look for permanent assistance.

I have been informed by those of greater experience that such a corps could easily be formed in the shape of a militia composed of the ~~steps forming the majority of those~~ Madras Topasses a race of men connected ~~and~~ & likely sympathising in no way either with Mussulmans or Hindoos.

I would strongly recommend that immediate steps should be taken ~~with~~ for this [illegible] purpose in the Mil. Department.

July 15/57. Harris.

Political Dept.

No. 557

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation
Under date 17th July 1857.

Read the following Minutes:

By the R. H. the President (Dated 15 July 1857 No.)

By the Honble W. Elliot Esq (Dated 16 " No.)

Ordered that the foregoing Minutes be communicated to the Military Department in view to immediate steps being taken for the formation of a Corps of Militia from the class of men therein described, for the protection of the Town and for the Military requirements of the Garrison of Fort St. George.

H

W.E.

To the Military Depart. with the Minutes

Desp. 17th ent. 17th

J. Maltby

Hamilton Major
Ag. Dy. Secy to Govt

18 – 20

To [illegible] Comm. [illegible] Indy.

Political 1857 Department

No. [illegible]7.

Extract Minu: Consn.

dated 17th April 1857.

Communicating for the purpose indicated, the Minutes of the R. H. the President & the Hon. Mr. Elliot on the subject of the formation of a Native Militia.