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# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Rublee* DEPARTMENT.

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| G.O. No. | <i>235</i>  | Press<br><del>Mis.</del> |
| Dated    | <i>7-3-</i> | <i>1966</i>              |

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*7th March 1866.*

No. 30. Read the following Despatch from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Honorable the Governor in Council, Fort Saint George; dated India Office, London, 25th January 1866, No. 1.

I forward, for your information, a copy of a Memorandum by Mr. E. B. Cowell, lately Principal of the Sanscrit College, Calcutta, and now one of the Examiners for the Indian Civil Service under Her Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners, on the subject of providing a collection of Urzees in the different Vernaculars of India, for the purpose of familiarizing candidates, previous to their appointment to the Indian Civil Service, with the style of such documents.

Dated 9th November 1866.

2. I am of opinion that the plan suggested by Mr. Cowell is likely to prove very useful, and I have to request that your Government will cause a selection of Urzees and other documents filed in the Courts of Justice to be prepared in the Vernacular languages current in your Presidency in which candidates are examined in this country, and will have the same lithographed, and copies forwarded to this office.

3. The volumes should be accompanied, as suggested by Mr. Cowell, with an English translation; and it might be expedient that, in each volume, a small number of the Urzees should be *fac simile* of the originals.

*Memorandum by Mr. Cowell on a selection of Urzees.*

The Vernacular languages of India can never be studied for their literature, for they have none worth reading; they are useful simply as a means of communication with the people.

Our chief object in these examinations must be the practical one—how best to fit the candidates for being efficient officers in their country districts. The language, whatever it be, must, of course, be first learned grammatically, and this can only be done by studying the best books which are written in it; but, after a time, there comes a point where the scholar's and the practical man's knowledge diverge. All these languages have a high written style, and also one less grammatical and more colloquial; the former used by the learned Natives in written composition, the latter by all in daily life. The high dialect cannot be ignored; some knowledge of it is indispensable, for the colloquial is based on it, and high phrases, borrowed from it, are elsewhere current; but it is of no practical use to study this artificial dialect beyond a certain point.

An Officer of Government in India finds two main uses of the Vernacular, viz., talking with the people and reading the written documents presented to him. With regard to the Bombay languages, it appears that the main test of the examinations in Bombay has always related to the candidate's proficiency in these two points; and to a certain extent it was attempted in the examinations of Madras. But in England, we can only expect a very limited proficiency in either. The accurate pronunciation of these Oriental languages can never be learned except from a Native; and the power to converse comes slowly to most men, as the ear is gradually accustomed to the sounds which everybody is using around, and in the same way the power to read the written character (unless it be very clear and easy) is only given by a great familiarity with the language. The difficulty in reading these current hands arises mainly from the long flourishes, the omission of diacritical dots, &c., and the irregular forms and contractions, which disguise the words even to a practised eye, unless they can be guessed from the context. If the student has mastered the language, it will be an easy matter for him to master the ordinary handwriting, but not otherwise.

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*7th March 1866.*

But it seems to me highly desirable, and, at the same time, perfectly practicable, to accustom the candidate, while in England, to the style of the Urzees and other Court documents, which he will have so much to do with in India; and this very familiarity with their ordinary style and phrases will, in itself, be a great step towards his reading these documents for himself, hereafter, in the current hand as they are actually written.

I would recommend that a volume should be compiled in India, by some Officer of Government selected in each Presidency, consisting of about one hundred Urzees and other similar documents, in each of the seven Vernacular languages in which the candidates are respectively examined. This volume should be studied in the fourth half-year, and form one of the text books for the last examination. It should be lithographed in a plain hand-writing, corresponding to our copper-plate writing in English, for I do not think that it would be wise, especially at present, to embarrass the student with difficulties in the hand-writing. The style of these papers will be, in itself, difficult to him, coming as he will to them from the classical style of the printed books. I also think that it would be well to accompany each Selection with an English translation, to be printed in a separate volume, as the student might thus exercise himself in re-translation, as well as acquire practice in reading the originals by himself.

*9th November 1865.*

No. 31. ORDER THEREON, 7th March 1866, No. 235.

Ordered to be communicated to the Board of Examiners, who will take the necessary steps, in communication with the Translators to Government, for compiling a selection of Urzees and other documents of the description required by the Secretary of State, in the Vernacular languages\* of this Presidency. They will have 200 copies of each Selection lithographed and bound, for transmission to the India Office.

(True Extract).

*Chief Secretary.*

To the Board of Examiners.

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| „ | Tamil Translator to Government. |
| „ | Telugu do.                      |
| „ | Canaroso do.                    |
| „ | Malayalum do.                   |

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Public Department

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Recd the following  
Despatch from the Right Honorable  
the Secretary of State for India.  
(Despatches 25<sup>th</sup> January 1866. N: 1)

Order thereon 7 March 1866. N: 235

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copies of the same being for-  
warded to the India Office.

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To the Board of Examiners  
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Proceedings of Government  
dated 7 March 1866.

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Public 1866. Department.

No. 235.

PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNMENT.

Dated 7 March 1866.

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~~7th 1881-1882~~