

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	680	Press Mis.
	(43-44)	
Dated	7-7-	1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

7

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
7th July 1866.

No. 43. Read the following letter from G. A. BALLARD, Esq. Magistrate of Malabar, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George ; dated Calicut, 23rd June 1866, No. 83.

I have the honor to request the Orders of Government, after consideration of the following remarks, with regard to the introduction of the Towns' Improvement Act in Cochin.

2. From estimates submitted, in accordance with Orders issued by me after the receipt of the G. O., dated 9th ultimo, No. 471, I consider that the sum of Rupees 5000 per annum is the utmost that can be raised under the Municipal Act if introduced there at present.

3. The exaction of even this sum will be felt by the Town. I beg to enclose Memoranda written by proposed Municipal Commissioners, and it must be remembered that these are not the un-

From Messrs. Whitton, Brunton, Leslie, and Curien.

meaning objections of persons indiscriminately setting their faces against all taxation, but the expressions of men aware of the advantages of Municipal arrangements, and, under favorable circumstances, desirous of seeing them made.

4. But I am not prepared to advocate the absolute postponement of the introduction of the Towns' Improvement Act in Cochin. I only desire to see it moderately applied.

5. If the Act is introduced, it seems the opinion of the residents consulted, and it is my own, that funds should be raised by ; (1) a rate on houses, &c. ; (2) tax on trades, &c. ; and (3) tax on carriages, &c. ; and I think that without undue pressure Rupees 5000 might be raised thus :—

	RS.
By 4 per cent. on an estimated annual rental of about Rupees 70,000.....	2800
By tax on trades, &c.....	2000
By tax on carriages, &c.....	200
Total.....	5000

6. But in the Appendix to the G. O. of the 9th ultimo, the amount to be raised by the Municipality for Police purposes alone amounts to Rupees 5162.

	RS.
* By 1 Head Constable at Rupees 22....	264
„ 10 2nd Class Constables, at Rupees 7....	840
Total...	1104

The Inspector General has at my instance assented to a reduction* of the Police force, which would reduce its total annual cost nearly to Rupees 5779, and consequently the Municipal contri-

bution to Rupees 4334. But this would only leave a petty sum of Rupees 666, which the 25 per cent. ordinarily allowed by Government would only raise to Rupees 850 for expenditure on Municipal purposes apart from the Police. This expenditure would be unappreciable, and the townsfolk would find themselves taxed for a rather reduced establishment of Police, which they have hitherto had the benefit of, free of special taxation, without any of those other outward and visible Municipal improvements whose introduction would in some degree gild the pill.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
7th July 1866.*

7. I cannot but think the Police charges might be further reduced without real objection, and would therefore respectfully request further attention to paragraphs 7 and 8 of my Memorandum of the 2nd February last, and to the statement forwarded therewith, as far as they relate to Cochin.

Vide, page 23 of the Proceedings of Government, dated 9th May 1866, No. 471.

8. I proposed that the cost of Police to the Town should be arranged as only to be Rupees 275-4-0. Even then the charge per head of the population falls at about double the incidence of the same charge at Calicut or Tellicherry.

9. And I now venture to suggest that under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the Police charge to the Municipality be limited for the present to Rupees 3000—25 per cent., as usual, being contributed by Government, and any further sum determined on as absolutely necessary being specially provided by Government from Imperial Funds. This will leave Rupees 2000 of the Municipal funds, plus the ordinary 25 per cent. contributed by Government, to be expended on general Municipal improvements—improvements which are very desirable in themselves, and only politic as tending to induce a better feeling towards the Act.

P. S.—I send copy of this letter to the Inspector General for any remarks he may desire to offer.

The accompanying estimate represents very truly what is the amount required for a thoroughly good system of conservancy for this Town. But from what I know of the present prevailing poverty of the inhabitants, I fear that it will not be possible to raise more than what will be barely enough for the support of the Police, and perhaps for the repair of the roads. Sanitary reform is urgently needed, and it will be indeed a pity if its claims are overlooked.

(Signed) G. E. WHITTON, M. B.,
Civil Surgeon.

I have carefully studied each item of this estimate, and I do not think the total at all in excess of what would be absolutely necessary to ensure an effective system of conservancy for Cochin. It is however greatly beyond the amount estimated to be raised by the new taxes, although the full rate of 7½ per cent. on the rental of house property has been calculated.

Such a tax as 7½ per cent. on what in very many instances in this place is the sole income and support of aged persons, widows, and children, would, in my opinion, be most oppressive, and with Dr. Whitton I believe that really no more than would suffice to pay the Police could be raised, and consequently nothing would be left for conservancy purposes.

Since I have known Cochin, there has been no time of such universal depression and stagnation of business of all kinds as the present. Thousands of carpenters, coopers, coolies, &c., formerly employed at good wages, are now, through no fault of their own, thrown out of all work, and destitution and misery prevail on all sides.

A worse moment than the present for introducing a new tax, or for putting fresh burdens on a community already reduced to idleness and utter poverty could not have been selected.

(Signed) G. BRUNTON, M. Inst., C. E.

Cochin is suffering from the greatest depression, which has been brought about chiefly by the almost total collapse of the oil trade to Europe. In my opinion, there is not the least hope of a revival of this trade for, at least, twelve months to come, and it seems doubtful if it will ever be what it has been before. The collapse has been caused by two things: namely, by two years of bad crops of coconuts, and a gradual increase of the consumption of the oil in different parts of the country. For some years, nine or ten I think, there has been a constant stream

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
7th July 1866.*

of emigration of artisans from Cochin, which has increased during the past two years, and latterly large numbers of coolies have left the place from absolute want of employment.

I cordially concur with Mr. Brunton's remarks in the third paragraph of his Minute.

The income of the proposed Municipality, as estimated, would little more than cover the expenditure for Police purposes, and the estimate, it should be noted particularly, is based on the highest rate of seven and a half per cent. When I consider upon whom this tax will fall, I can come to no other conclusion than that it would be oppressive to impose it just now, and am therefore of opinion that it would be injudicious to introduce the Act at the present time.

(Signed) P. LESLIE.

I, for one, have great faith in the benefit of the Towns' Improvement Act; but I cannot help remarking upon the fact that the present depressed state of trade in a great measure nullifies its implied advantages; and this makes me suggest that we might go on, for the present, with some slight concession on the part of Government. The Ferry Fund and the Abkarry Revenue are sources whence Government might suitably assist the Municipality; and as these are purely local funds, I hardly see what objections can be raised by Government against applying a portion of two such fertile sources of revenue to local improvements. Of course, if no greater sum than that enough to support the Police, can, under all circumstances, be raised, it would be most impolitic to thrust an oppressive law upon an already oppressed and almost indigent working class; for no conception can be formed of the positive want and indigence of the class of operatives who have been thrown out of employ by the collapse of trade and the suspension of several Houses of business. I think, therefore, for the present, if the Government is bent upon introducing the Towns' Improvement Act, it would be false policy to conceal the fact that it would be impossible to go on without the aid of Government. I cannot omit to remark that the amount proposed to be raised is at the rate of 7½ per cent., a very high percentage and one seldom ever realized in the process of trading. Upon this point, I cannot but express myself very strongly at the rate of 7½ per cent. it would be highly injudicious and oppressive in the extreme to force the Act upon the people; but if reduced to 3½ per cent., and the surplus made good by a grant from the Abkarry and Ferry Funds, I have no doubt the working of the Act would give general satisfaction.

(Signed) C. CURIEN.

No. 44. ORDER THEREON, 7th July 1866, No. 680.

Forwarded to the Inspector General of Madras Police, who is requested to inform Government, without delay, how far the Town Police of Cochin can be reduced. It is the desire of Government to meet the views of Mr. Ballard as far as possible.
(True Extract).

Acting Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector General of Police.

„ Magistrate of Malabar, with enclosures returned.

Exd. R. H. Lee.

For Orders.

It rests with the govt to
decide where the Act
shall be applied - but
if applied at all, the
full expense of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the
police & of such other
charges as govt may deem
necessary for roads &c.
Sanitary arrange-
ments must be made -
The Muzti would only propose
to levy Rs 5000 this year for

The Police charge alone is
more than that! It ~~is~~ seems
desirable therefore to enable
the Just? for! -

~~Draft~~ ^{for}
~~Order thereon 7 July 1886 No. 680.~~

For? of the Just? sent. of
Mr. Police who is requested
to inform for without
delay how far the Irish
Police of Locking can be
reduced. This the desire of justice
I do. The result
for as per

The Chief of Police
Magistrate of Malabar } despatch
(with Irish notes)

L. to meet
Mr. Ballard as
wks.

Public 1866 Dept.

from
The Magistrate of Malacca

To the Chief Secretary to Govt.
Fort St. George

Dated 23rd June 1866
No. 26

No. 83

Encls: 20

No. 77

Requesting orders of Govt.
in the introduction of the
Towns Improvement Act
in Cochin.

22 July
1866

43-44

With an Order