

Public (1895) Department.

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DATED 12th March 1895

[Despatch Abstract.]

NEW SOLAR PHYSICS OBSERVATORY AT KODAIKANAL.

Requesting that Mr. Michie Smith, Government Astronomer, Madras, may be permitted to remain out of India on duty for six weeks or two months in connection with his privilege leave, in order to enable him to obtain the necessary information in regard to the equipment and working of the----

At

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GOVT. OF FORT ST. GEORGE.

PUBLIC (1895) DEPARTMENT.

**LETTER to the Right Honorable
the Secretary of State for
India.**

Dated 12th March,

No. 3 of 1895.

*Requesting that Mr. Michie Smith, Government
Astronomer, Madras, may be permitted to re-
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months in connection with his privilege leave in
order to enable him to obtain the necessary inform-
ation in regard to the equipment and working
of the new Solar Physics Observatory at Kodai-
kánal.*

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

LETTER—to

THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

RIGHT HONORABLE SIR,

The Government Astronomer, Madras, Mr. Michie Smith, has been entrusted with the duty of supervising the erection of the Solar Physics Observatory at Kodai-káanal in the Palni Hills which was sanctioned in despatch to the Government of India, No. 117, Revenue, of the 31st August 1893.

2. Mr. Michie Smith has represented to us that it is essential that certain important changes in regard to fitting up should be effected in the new observatory. He has been in correspondence with Astronomers in Europe on the subject, but finds it extremely difficult to obtain all the necessary information and advice on the question by letter. It seems certain that personal consultation with Astronomers and makers of astronomical instruments on the various important points connected with the subject is indispensable.

3. Mr. Michie Smith will be entitled to privilege leave for two months and nineteen days on the 1st May next and it is our present intention to grant him the leave with effect from that date or any subsequent date on which his duties will permit of his availing himself of it. The short time he will have at home will be fully taken up by private business, but in order not to lose so favourable an opportunity we propose, with your approval which we have now the honour to request, to permit Mr. Michie Smith to remain out of India on duty for six weeks or two months in connection with his privilege leave. This would enable him to meet the members of the Solar Physics and Indian Observatories Committees and to discuss with them the equipment and working of the new observatory. He would be entitled to half pay, or Rs. 400 *per mensem*, while on this duty.

4. As an example of the various questions to be settled, Mr. Michie Smith writes as follows :—

“For the present somewhat clumsy photoheliograph I propose to substitute a simple lens of seventy feet focal length placed at one end of a long room with its axis parallel to the earth's axis and a camera at the other end. Dr. Huggins and some others whom I have consulted think the proposal a good one, but Sir Howard Grubb suggests certain difficulties in carrying it out. Whether these difficulties are serious or not can probably be only decided by actual trial, which is impossible here but could be readily arranged for at home. If my plan is approved of, the cost of the heliostat and lens will be considerably less than the cost of the dome required for the photoheliograph which it is at present intended to use, while the facilities offered for spectroscopic work will be enormously increased.”

5. In these circumstances we trust that you will not withhold your sanction to our proposal and that, as time presses, it may be communicated to us by telegraph.

We have the honour to be,
Right Honorable Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servants,

(Signed) WENLOCK.
(„) CHAS. M. CLARKE, Lt.-Genl.
(„) H. W. BLISS.
(„) J. GROSE.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
12th March 1895.

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