M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1492 Press ~~Mis.~~

31-32

Dated 3 - 11 — 1859

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, for the month of November 1859.

No. 31. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Department; dated 27th October 1859, No. 1626.

Passing orders on the Commission's report on the working and accounts of the Fort St. George Gazette Press. (Vide Public Proceedings from 22d to 31st October 1859, Nos. 36 to 39.)

No. 32. ORDER THEREON, 3d November 1859, No. 1492.

Ordered that the foregoing Proceedings be recorded.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following Proceedings of the Commission for investigating Public Establishments.

(Here enter 3rd September 1859.)

ORDER THEREON, 27th October 1859, No. 1626.

The Commission submit a detailed report prepared by their Secretary, Mr. Peachey, on the state of the books of the Fort Saint George Gazette Press for the half-year ending 30th April 1858. The Commission have added for the consideration of Government certain rules, the adoption of which will, in their opinion, tend to the better working of the Press, and to the improvement of its future management.

2. Mr. Maclagan was appointed Auditor of the Press accounts on the 25th April 1857, and submitted his report on the accounts for the year ending 30th April 1857, on the 27th July 1857. He represented the system of accounts previously existing in the Press Office as altogether inefficient, and suggested the adoption of a completely new set of books and system for future years, to have effect from the 31st October 1857. The Government, (Extract Minutes of Consultation, 5th August 1857,) approved Mr. Maclagan's new set of books, and instructed the Superintendent to adopt them in supersession of those before in use. The present book-keeper was spoken of by Mr. Maclagan as intelligent and quite competent to carry out the new system proposed. Mr. Maclagan was to inspect the books at the end of the first month of the new system to see that they were kept correctly.

3. On the 13th January 1858, Mr. Maclagan reported to Government that, in compliance with their instructions, the system of book-keeping for the Government Press, recommended in his letter of 27th July 1857, had been entered upon from the first of November, and he found that the books for that month had been correctly kept. The Book-keeper, P. Gooroosawmy, appeared thoroughly to understand the system. On the 19th May 1858, Mr. Maclagan reported his audit of the accounts of the Government Press for the half-year ending 31st October 1857. These had been kept on the old system. Mr. Maclagan had to audit the Press accounts for the half-year ending 30th April 1858. Much delay occurred in his doing this, and ultimately in April last, he reported that he had carefully gone over the Bill-book, Day-book, Cash-book and Journal, and having corrected various mistakes into which the Book-keeper had fallen, was then satisfied of their correctness. In consequence, however, of these changes in the subsidiary books, and of the system generally having been imperfectly understood, it would be necessary to rewrite the Ledger almost entirely, and this would probably occupy ten days or a fortnight. As he was about to leave Madras, he requested to be relieved of the duty of "examining the Ledger, and preparing an Abstract of the Accounts," which would oblige him to remain at the Presidency for a considerable length of time, and detain him from his proper duties.

4. Thereupon the further audit and examination of the books was made over to the Commission. This has been conducted by their Secretary, Mr. Peachey, and the result is given in the first 42 paragraphs of the present report. The system which was introduced by Mr. Maclagan is condemned as defective in itself and very indifferently carried out. The books are stated to have been badly kept, and to be full of erasures and errors.

5. The reformatory measures recommended are shown in paragraph 43. The accounts for the half-year ending 30th April 1858, are exhibited in paragraphs 44, 45, 46. In paragraph 47 is inserted a list of Public Offices charged through the Accountant General's books for Printing, Binding, Advertising, Paper and Gazettes. Some of these are certainly not properly speaking "Public Offices," nor entitled to have printing done for them unless on payment. In some cases the amount should be debited differently, as to the Supreme Government. For all the Public Offices in this Presidency rightly so called, the necessity of keeping separate accounts of the cost of Printing will have been superseded by the late orders.*

*16th July 1859, *Public Department, No.* 1084.

6. In paragraph 49 the Commission state that, from what is said by them in the previous paragraphs and from their own observations, it is abundantly clear to them, that the Department of the Government Press has become unwieldy and unmanageable, partly from its magnitude, partly from want of organization, mainly from the absence of a clear and well defined system of working the Establishment. The grounds of this conclusion are shown more at large in the next paragraph. In paragraph 51 are given, in juxta position, a Memorandum of points which had been submitted for the consideration of the Commission, the opinion of Mr. Smith, the Press Superintendent, upon them, and the observations of the Commission. To this is appended a list of Types which has been submitted by Mr. Smith, as required to make the Office efficient as the work now stands.

7. Paragraph 54 details the several recommendations of the Commission for the future regulation of the Press.

8. In an addendum the Commission advert to the fictitious manner in which the Press accounts have for many years past been made up, so as to exhibit a purely delusive profit. In future this system should be abandoned. The Accountant General should record only the true receipts and disbursements; and no charge should be made against any Public Departments or Offices either for Printing, Advertising or Gazettes for official record. Care must be taken that advantage be not taken of this by public offices to overload the Press with work, and those offices which have no claim to have work done for them gratis, should be obliged to pay for it. The Commission, paragraphs 61 @ 67, bring to notice the irregular proceedings of the Superintendent in keeping a considerable portion of the income and expenditure of the Press out of the regular accounts. They request the decision of Government,

1st.—As to the adjustment of two sums of money irregularly applied, and,

2ndly.—On the taking of the working stock. They have audited the accounts of the Press for the half-year ending 30th April 1858, and await only the decision of Government on the above points to complete the account for the year ending [illegible] 1859, and for writing up the accounts of May, June, July and August 1859. They append for the information of Government a Memo. on the state and requirements of the Press drawn up by the Deputy Superintendent Mr. Morgan.

9. The Government have attentively considered the Committee's report of which the abstract is above given. They do not propose to discuss the merits or demerits of Mr. Maclagan's system of book-keeping, nor the causes, whatever they may have been, which have prevented it, such as it was, being fully carried out as regards the books of the Government Office Press. All that is necessary for them to order is, that the books be now written up to date, and kept henceforward in the manner recommended by the Commission. The amount of the two sums alluded to in paragraph 69 of the report will be correctly ascertained, and will be written off to profit and loss. The fee of Rupees (300) three hundred which would have been paid to Mr. Maclagan, had he carried out the audit of the Press accounts for the half-year ending 30th April 1858, will be disbursed to Mr. Peachey, by whom that and the further audit of the accounts has been performed. Stock must be taken carefully, and a valuation made of it by competent parties under arrangements which the Commission will be pleased to see carried out.

10. It then remains to be considered what measures should be adopted for the better conduct of the Government Press in future. The Government are not favorable to the nomination of a Consulting Committee as advised in paragraph 51, Section I of the report, nor to the appointment of an Agent as recommended in Section IX of the same paragraph. The duties there proposed to be assigned to the Agent are such as properly devolve on Mr. Smith, as Press Superintendent; to appoint another for their discharge would only lead to a conflict of authority. Mr. Smith is not only a professional Printer, but has acquired, during his management of the Government Printing Establishment, a full acquaintance with all its capabilities and deficiencies. He is overtasked, and it is due to him, as well as to the public interests concerned, to give him proper help. Mr. Morgan whom the Government believe to be an able man, should continue to hold the chief place under him, and to advise with and assist him in all that concerns the Establishment.

11. The Government, therefore, resolve, that as a preliminary step, Mr. Smith should be asked what assistance he requires for the proper conduct of his duties. If there are any persons already belonging to the large Printing Establishment, who, if they were placed in situations of authority under Mr. Smith, would give him the assistance he requires, that would be the best arrangement of all. If there are none such, then persons of known character and ability might be selected from some of the numerous Presses at Madras. To send to England for such persons as are wanted—so long as they can be procured in the country—would be the least satisfactory expedient, because it is uncertain how they might turn out, and they would be sure to be deficient in local experience.

12. When Mr. Smith has obtained the assistance which he requires, he should submit a revised *Establishment* to the Chief Secretary under the heads recommended by the Commission, viz., General, Examiners, Compositors, Pressmen and Binders; proposing properly graduated scales of salary for each class, and fixing each at the number required for the performance of the present amount of business.

13. Mr. Smith should at the same time report the names of those persons who are unequal to the duties required of them, in order that, after proper inquiry, and, if need be, actual trial, they may be discharged before the Establishment is placed on its regulated footing with the advantage of retiring Pensions. When the Establishment has been so fixed, there should be no longer any extra pay for work over hours, and no employment of extra hands; and any work which cannot be executed by the Establishment, should be given out to private Presses. The art of Printing is happily in a very advanced state at Madras. The independent Presses are numerous, and they turn out their work in good style. Such of them as are known to be equal to the performance of the Government work should be invited to compete—the tenders being made so much above or below certain fixed rates according to the English practice.

14. With the exception of one to be retained in each Department for the examination of manuscript, the Examiners in all the Departments should be brought on the revised Press Establishment and conduct their duties henceforward under the Superintendent's orders.

15. The regulations recommended by the Commission in paragraph 54, (except so far as they have been modified in the preceding remarks,) seem to have been well devised and the Superintendent will be directed carefully to follow them, reporting for orders any case in which they may appear to him to be inapplicable.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Commission for investigating Public Establishments.
" Superintendent Government Press.
" Accountant General.
" Civil Auditor.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

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Prov.t Govt to the Assr.

No. 2003.

Proceedings of the
Madras Govt in the
Public Department.

Dated 27 October 1859
Rec.d 31

Passing orders on the
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Gazette Press.

No 1492.

No 31 of 62.

Recorded

3d Nov.r 1859.