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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

18th December 1878, No. 1826.

Civil Servants.

Read the following paper:—

No. 83. *From D. S. WHITE, Esq., Secretary to the Committee for the Examination of Assistants, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 10th December 1878, No. 508.*

I am desired by the President and Committee for the Examination of Assistants to submit, for the consideration of Government, the question whether the examination in the vernacular languages which the Junior Civil Servants are required to undergo on their arrival from England should any longer be enforced or kept up.

2. The examination is held annually on the arrival of each batch of newly-appointed civilians, and it was originally required under the instructions conveyed in the G.O., dated 16th January 1867, No. 65; but for reasons which I shall proceed to state it appears to the Committee doubtful whether it was then intended by Government that the examination should be an annually recurring one, and that if such was the intention of Government, the aim and object of such annual examinations have now been sufficiently attained. The order of Government of the 16th January 1867 above referred to embodies a Despatch from the Secretary of State in which the Madras Government are informed of the object of the detention in England of the Civil Service Probationers for a period of two years, and that as the "various arrangements hitherto in force for affording to Junior Civil Servants the means of studying in the native languages and of testing their qualifications in the vernaculars preparatory to their entering on active duties will now be unnecessary, it will only be requisite to prescribe such general rules as the Government may deem proper for the guidance of young civilians during the brief period which will henceforth elapse between their arrival in India and their appointment to a substantive office." Acting on these views the Government proceeded, after abolishing the then existing Board of Examiners and framing rules for the guidance of young Civil Servants on arrival, to order as follows:—

"With the view of enabling the Government to ascertain and report to the Secretary of State the result of the arrangement which has now been made for instructing the selected candidates for the Civil Service in the vernacular languages, each of the first batch of Junior Civil Servants appointed under the new system will be examined on his arrival in the vernacular languages which he has studied in England. The examination will be conducted by the Government Translator in conjunction with one of the Members of the Committee for the Examination of Assistants. The standard will be the same as that which Junior Civil Servants have been hitherto required to pass before being reported qualified for the public service."

3. It appears to the Committee that, under the terms of the above instructions, it was only intended to examine in the vernacular languages the *first batch* of Junior Civil-Servants then about to arrive (*i.e.*, in 1867), and that a report was to be made to the Secretary of State of the result of the arrangements made for training the Probationers in England as tested by the examination then directed. As a matter of practice, however, and under special orders, the examinations have now been held each year since 1867 or for a period of eleven years.

4. If, however, Government should be of opinion that the annual examinations were authorised by the instructions of the 16th January 1867, I am to submit, for their consideration, whether the object of holding such examinations has not been already sufficiently attained. The object of the examinations, as defined in the order of Government under reference, was that of enabling the Government to ascertain and to report to the Secretary of State the result of the arrangements made for training the Probationers at Home during a term of two years instead of during one year as had up to that time been the practice. The Committee submit that the experience of the ten or eleven annual examinations held since the order of January 1867 affords

ample data or material for a definite report on the extent and result of the vernacular teaching obtainable in England. The present letter is not perhaps the place for the Committee to state their opinion of that result, but it is briefly this—that while the young Civil Servants may and, as a rule, do obtain at home a well-grounded book knowledge of the general structure, Grammar, &c., of the vernacular languages, their knowledge of the languages on arrival is, for practical purposes, almost nil: pronunciation, idiomatic structure, the phraseology of ordinary and of official life, and, in fact, all knowledge that is of a practical and work-a-day character have, as a rule, still to be acquired.

5. The Committee would not be understood from the above to mean that the system of training in the vernaculars at home is altogether a failure. The well-grounded literary knowledge of the languages which most of the young Civil Servants possess on arrival enables them, in most cases after entering on their duties, to make rapid progress in acquiring a useful practical knowledge of the vernaculars. The object and result to which the examinations were directed being, in the opinion of the Committee, thus well ascertained, it is for the consideration of Government whether the examinations should any longer be enforced.

6. Besides the considerations already advanced, I am to state the following as additional grounds for discontinuing the examinations. The annual examination is a source of considerable inconvenience both to the Committee and to the young Civil Servants taking the latter first. The young men have, in most cases, ceased to study the languages for several months preceding their arrival in India, and their knowledge, although it has not disappeared, is to some extent latent and requires (if the Committee are to be favorably impressed) to be refreshed and renewed. For this purpose the young civilian must employ and read with a munshee, when, for all practical purposes (nothing being dependent on his examination), he might be better employed in making useful acquaintances and in preparing his equipment for his start in official life. The examination also having hitherto been regarded as obligatory, the young civilian does not consider himself at liberty to leave the Presidency Town until it has been held, and this may sometimes be an inconvenience both to the public service and to the young civilian. Under existing rules, the young men are permitted to remain at Madras for one month before proceeding to their destination; but it may sometimes be desirable or necessary that the newly-arrived civilian should proceed at once to his destination. The remaining point is that the young men do not arrive simultaneously, but at different times from September or October to the end of the year. The examination being held necessarily within one month after the arrival of each candidate imposes on the Committee the labor of several examinations instead of one examination. This is undoubtedly an inconvenience to the Committee.

7. On all the grounds above detailed, I am to state that the President and the Committee trust that His Grace the Governor in Council will see fit to direct the discontinuance of the annual examinations on arrival of the Junior Civil Servants.

No. 84. ORDER THEREON, 18th December 1878, No. 1826.

The Government are not prepared to dispense with these examinations, which answer many useful purposes.

2. They consider it desirable that young civilians should remain *for one month* at Madras, unless exceptional circumstances demand an earlier departure in any particular case. The examination should be so timed accordingly.

(True Extract.)

G. Master
Acting Chief Secretary.

To the Committee for the Examination of Assistants.
" Revenue Department.
Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

9/9/2

6 To the Board of Revenue Sep 14/1

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THE COMMITTEE FOR THE
EXAMINATION OF
ASSISTANTS,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated December, 1878.

Issued 28

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G.O., 1864 December 1878, No. 1826.

DECEMBER
Nos. 83-84.

Chief Secretary.—Noting that the Government
are not prepared to dispense with the examina-
tion in the vernaculars of Junior Civilian on
their arrival.

Resubmitted
to the Board of Revenue

11/10/79.

Miss No 99