

## SCOTT, G. PAPERS

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Gavin Scott, I.C.S. Joined Service and posted to Burma 1899; sent in 1916 on a mission to Bombay to investigate the administrative system with a view to improving the system in Rangoon; President of Municipality of Rangoon 1917; Scott's new Municipal Act for Rangoon finally approved in 1922.

Typed transcripts of five letters sent by Mr Scott to his father between February and April 1916. The letters were written while Scott was in India to study the Bombay Municipality. They were transcribed by Scott's father so he could send the texts to his other sons abroad. The present transcripts are taken from the father's letters. 11ff.

It is evident from these letters that Mr. Scott had not previously travelled at all widely in India. His descriptions therefore have a freshness which might not have been expected from someone who had already served more than fifteen years in the East. As far as the outward railway journey from Calcutta to Bombay was concerned, Scott says that it was on the last day that the finest views occurred. This was when the line descended sharply from the Ghats to sea level.

Having arrived in Bombay, Scott was immediately impressed with the many splendid stone buildings which reminded him of Scotland. These contrasted with the poorly constructed brick and wooden buildings in Rangoon. Bombay, too, brought Scott's first real glimpse of the grim reality of the First World War when he saw the arrival of the sick and wounded from the battlefields. He found that life in Bombay was arranged in a much more European fashion than it was in Rangoon. People with medium incomes lived in flats as only the very well-off could afford to pay for self-contained bungalows and compounds of the sort which existed in Rangoon.

Scott soon got down to work. His chief contact was P.R. Cadell, I.C.S. who was in charge of the Bombay Municipality and responsible for roads, street cleaning and all aspects of public health. Scott later studied the Bombay Improvement Trust and read its reports back to 1899. His initial views of the city changed. He was struck by its age, its insanitary areas and the narrowness of its streets. In some respects he felt Rangoon had been more fortunate. When the British captured the city in 1852 they had very largely destroyed it. Officers of the East India Company had redeveloped Rangoon with a grid of parallel streets and there were many wide thoroughfares. Rangoon, he felt, would never become such a nest of slums as Bombay was.

Scott made visits to Ahmadabad and Surat and included a chapter in his report on those municipalities. He travelled back to Calcutta by way of Delhi, Agra and Lucknow.

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