

Copy of Punjab Government Circular No. 5078-GS-61/21489, dated the 20th June, 1961, from the Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab, to all Heads of Departments etc., etc.

Subject :—Distinction between 'Warning' and 'Censure'.

I am directed to say that certain doubts and misapprehensions have been raised regarding distinction between 'Warning' and 'Censure' as these have nowhere been defined in clear terms. The position, therefore, has been examined and is explained in the following paragraphs for the guidance of all Departments.

2. The foremost aspect to bear in mind is the fundamental and formal distinction between the two terms. An order of 'Censure' is a *formal* and *public* act intended to convey that the person concerned has been held guilty of some blame-worthy act or omission for which it has been found necessary to award him a formal punishment. Nothing can amount to a 'Censure' unless it is intended to be such a formal punishment and imposed for 'good and sufficient reasons' after following the prescribed procedure. A record of the punishment so imposed is kept on the officer's confidential roll and the fact that he has been 'censured' will have its bearing on the assessment of his merit or suitability for promotion to higher posts.

3. There may be occasions, on the other hand, when a superior officer may find it necessary to criticise adversely the work of an Officer working under him (e.g. point out negligence, carelessness, lack of thoroughness, delays, etc.) or he may call for an explanation for some act or omission and taking all circumstances into consideration, it may be felt that, while the matter is not serious enough to justify the imposition of the formal punishment of 'Censure', it calls for some in-formal action, such as the communication of a written warning, admonition or reprimand. If the circumstances justify it, a mention may also be made of such a warning etc. in the officer's confidential rule. However, the mere fact that it is so mentioned in the character roll does not convert the warning etc. into a 'Censure'. Although such comments, remarks, warning etc. also would have the effect of making it apparent or known to the person concerned that he has done something blame worthy and, to some extent, may also affect the assessment of his merit and suitability for promotion, they do not amount to the imposition of the penalty of 'Censure' because it was not intended that any *formal* punishment should be inflicted.

4. The fact that a mere informal 'warning' cannot be equated to a formal 'censure' should not however, be taken as tantamount to suggesting that a written warning may be freely given without caring whether or not it is really justified. It is a matter of simple natural justice that written warnings, reprimands etc. should not be administered or placed on an officer's confidential record unless the authority doing so is satisfied that there is good and sufficient reason to do so. It may be reiterated here that in the discharge of the responsible task of recording the confidential reports, every reporting officer should be conscious of the fact that it is his duty not only to make an objective assessment of his subordinates' work and qualities but also to see that he gives to his subordinates at all times the advice, guidance and assistance to correct their faults and deficiencies. If this part of the reporting officers' duty has been properly performed there should be no difficulty about recording adverse entries because they would normally refer to the defects which have persisted in spite of the reporting officers' efforts to have been corrected. If after having taken such care the reporting officer finds that for the purpose of a truly objective assessment mention should be made of any warning admonition etc. issued especially those which have not produced the desired improvement, it is his right and duty to so mention them.

5. I am to request that these instructions may be brought to the notice of all Government Servants working under you. The receipt of this letter may please be acknowledged.