

# CRIMINOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

BY  
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fact deconstruction

## CIRCULAR.

No. 5 or 1896.

FROM THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS,  
*North Western Provinces and Oudh.*

TO ALL SUPERINTENDENTS OF JAILS,  
*North Western Provinces & Oudh.*

*Dated Lucknow, the 5th June 1895*

With a view to ensure systematic release of prisoners and to prevent the possibility of their irregular discharge, Inspector General has the honor to request that the procedure laid down in paragraph 570 page 181 of the Madras Jail Manual, which is reproduced below, may be observed in these provinces in future—

"During the last week and not later than the 23<sup>rd</sup> of every month, a nominal list of prisoners to be released during the ensuing month shall be carefully prepared from the General Convict Registers, Release Register and Remission Register and shall be checked by the warrants. The names of prisoners contained in this list shall be read out by the jailer at a general parade to be held on the last day of each month, and any complaint of omission shall be at once inquired into by the jailer and if necessary brought under the notice of the Superintendent."

GEOFFREY C. HALL  
P. R. C.

SURGEON L.

Offs. E.  
Narb.

# Decoding the Paper Empire

A Micro-History of Systematisation in the 1895 British Colonial Penal System.

**Context Note:** An artifact deconstruction of Circular No. 5.

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GEOFFREY C. HALL  
P. R. C. S. I.

MAJOR LIEUTENANT COLONEL

*Offr Inspector-General of Prisons,  
North-Western Provinces and Oudh*

# Protocol for Systematic Prisoner Release (1895)

## PREPARATION & CROSS-VERIFICATION



### List Finalised by the 25th

A nominal list of prisoners due for release next month must be prepared.



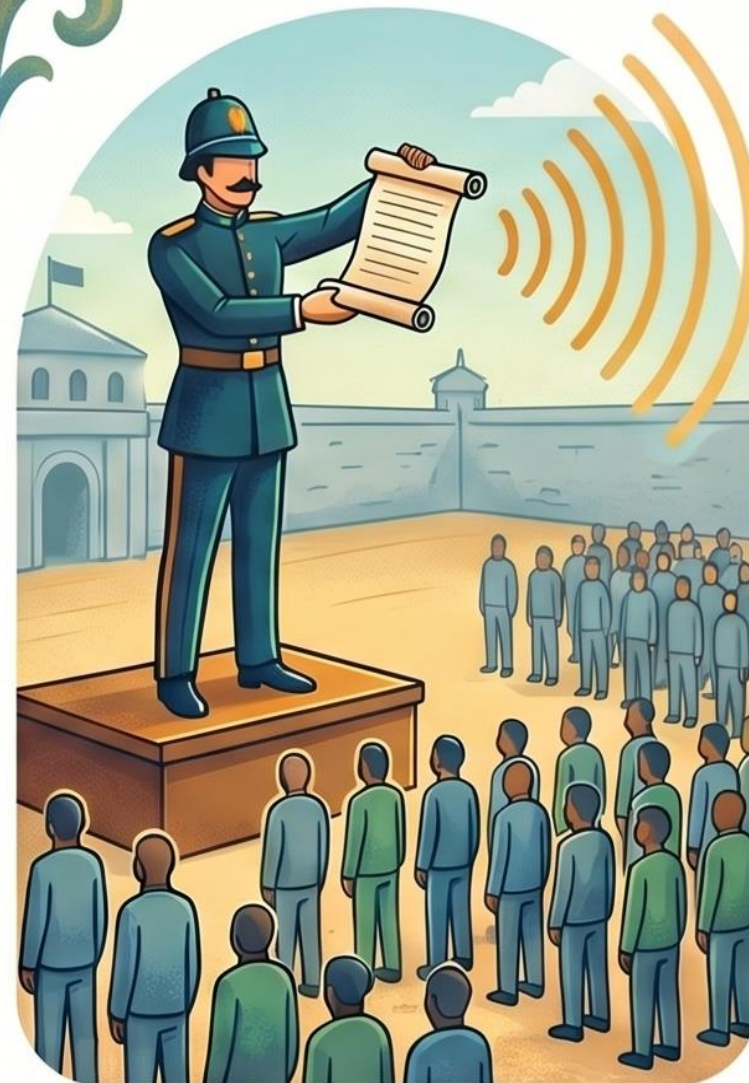
### Tri-Register Verification

Names are verified against Convict, Release, and Remission Registers and checked against warrants.



### WARRANTS

## TRANSPARENCY & GRIEVANCE HANDLING



### General Parade Announcement

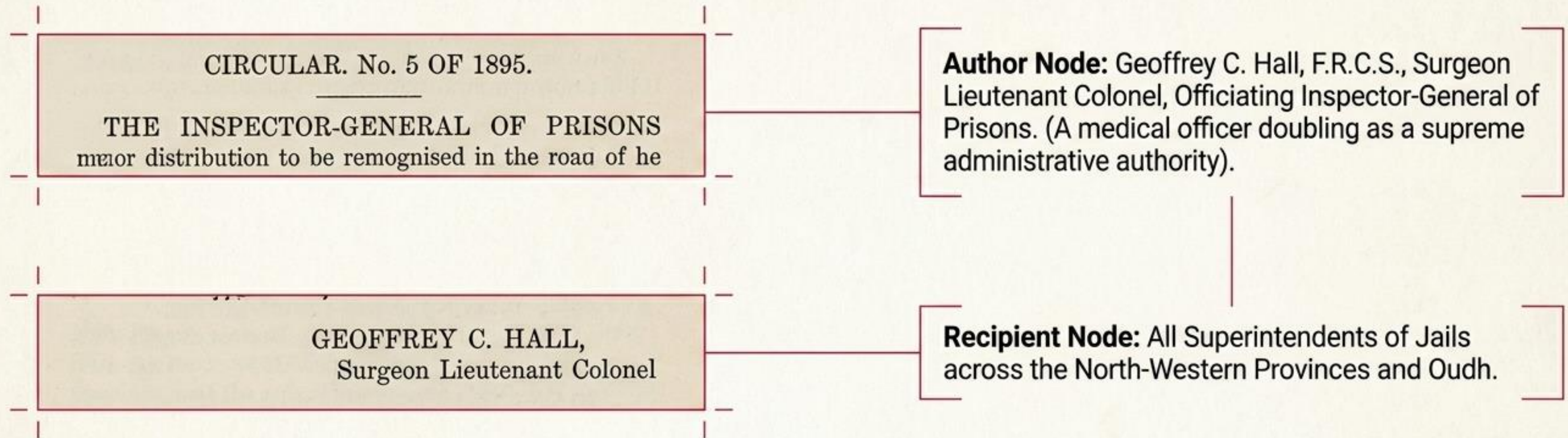
The list is read aloud by the jailer during a month-end general parade.

## IMMEDIATE OMISSION REVIEW



Any complaints regarding missing names are investigated and reported to the Superintendent.

# The Administrative Network: Lucknow, 1895

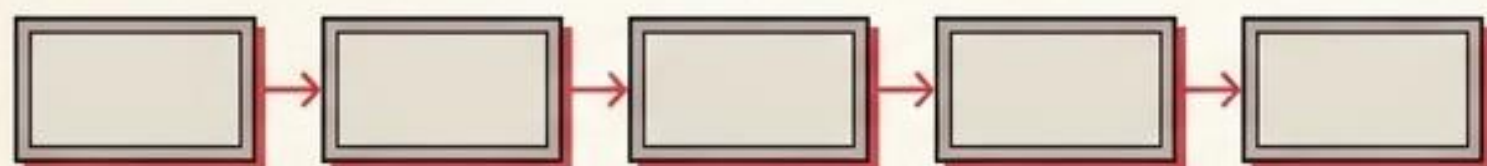


**Insight:** A single circular dispatched from Lucknow on 5th June 1895 standardises the operational protocol for an entire macro-region of British India.

# The Catalyst: The Threat of Administrative Chaos

With a view to ensure systematic release of prisoners and to prevent the possibility of their **irregular discharge**, Inspector General has the honor to request that the procedure laid down in paragraph 570 page 101 of the Madras Jail Manual, which is reproduced below, may be observed in these provinces in future:—

Systematic Release



Irregular Discharge



**Context:** In a vast penal system, irregular discharge meant either unlawful detention or premature release—both critical failures of colonial legal authority.

**Key Takeaway:** The circular is a direct intervention to eliminate local procedural variations and enforce a rigid, predictable output from the prison system.

# Importing the Administrative Blueprint

procedure laid down in paragraph 570 page 101 of the Madras Jail Manual, which is reproduced below.

Rather than inventing a new protocol, Surgeon Lieutenant Colonel Hall simply lifts an existing, heavily tested mechanism.



Madras Presidency



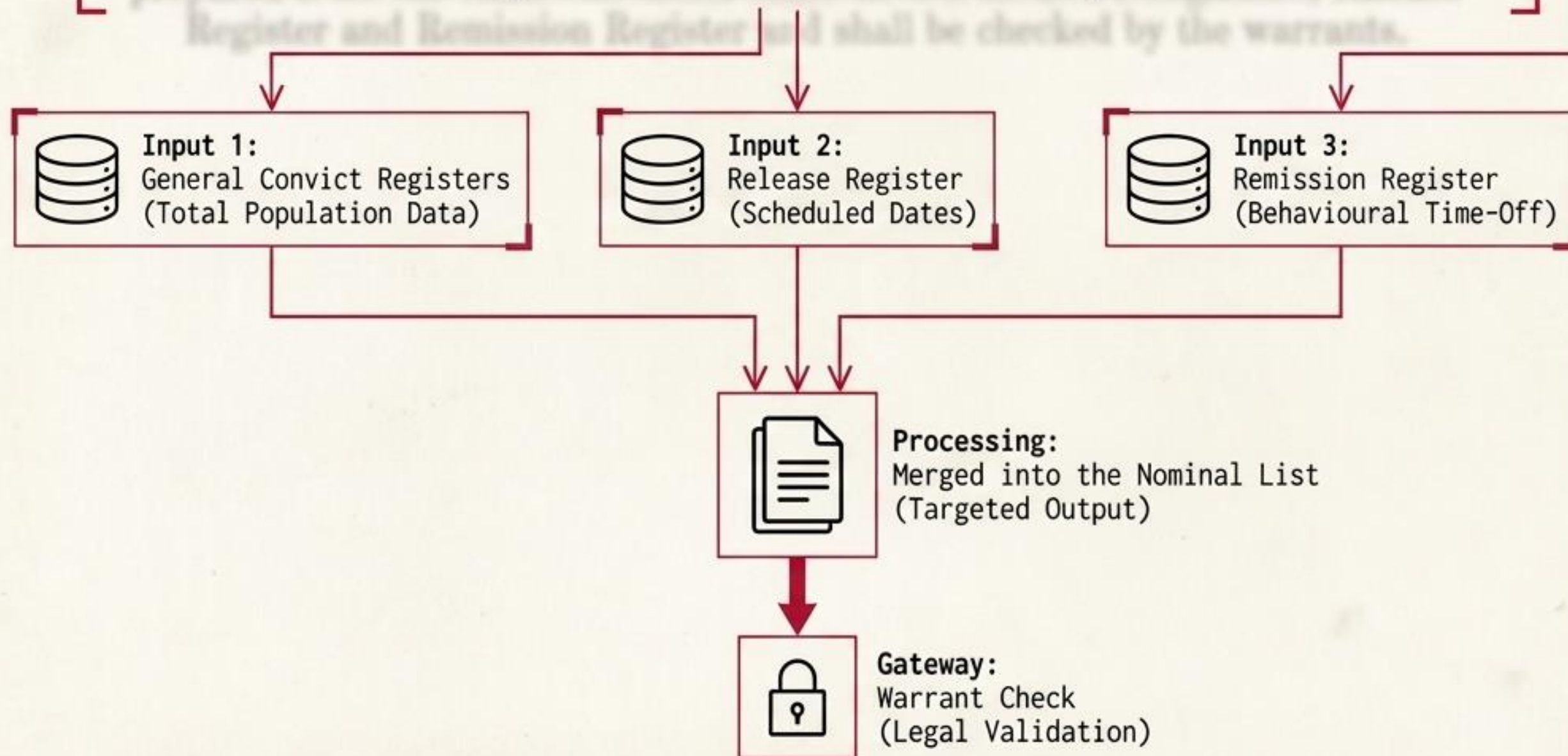
North-Western Provinces

Paragraph 570, Page 101 of the Madras Jail Manual becomes the legally binding operational standard for an entirely different province.

**Insight:** The Jail Manual functioned as the operating system of the colonial state, highly modular and capable of being deployed across diverse geographies to close bureaucratic loopholes.

# Data Architecture of the 19th-Century Prison

...prepared from the General Convict Registers, Release Register and Remission Register and shall be checked by the warrants.



Conclusion: A robust, three-point cross-referencing system designed to eliminate huia clerical error before the final list is drafted.



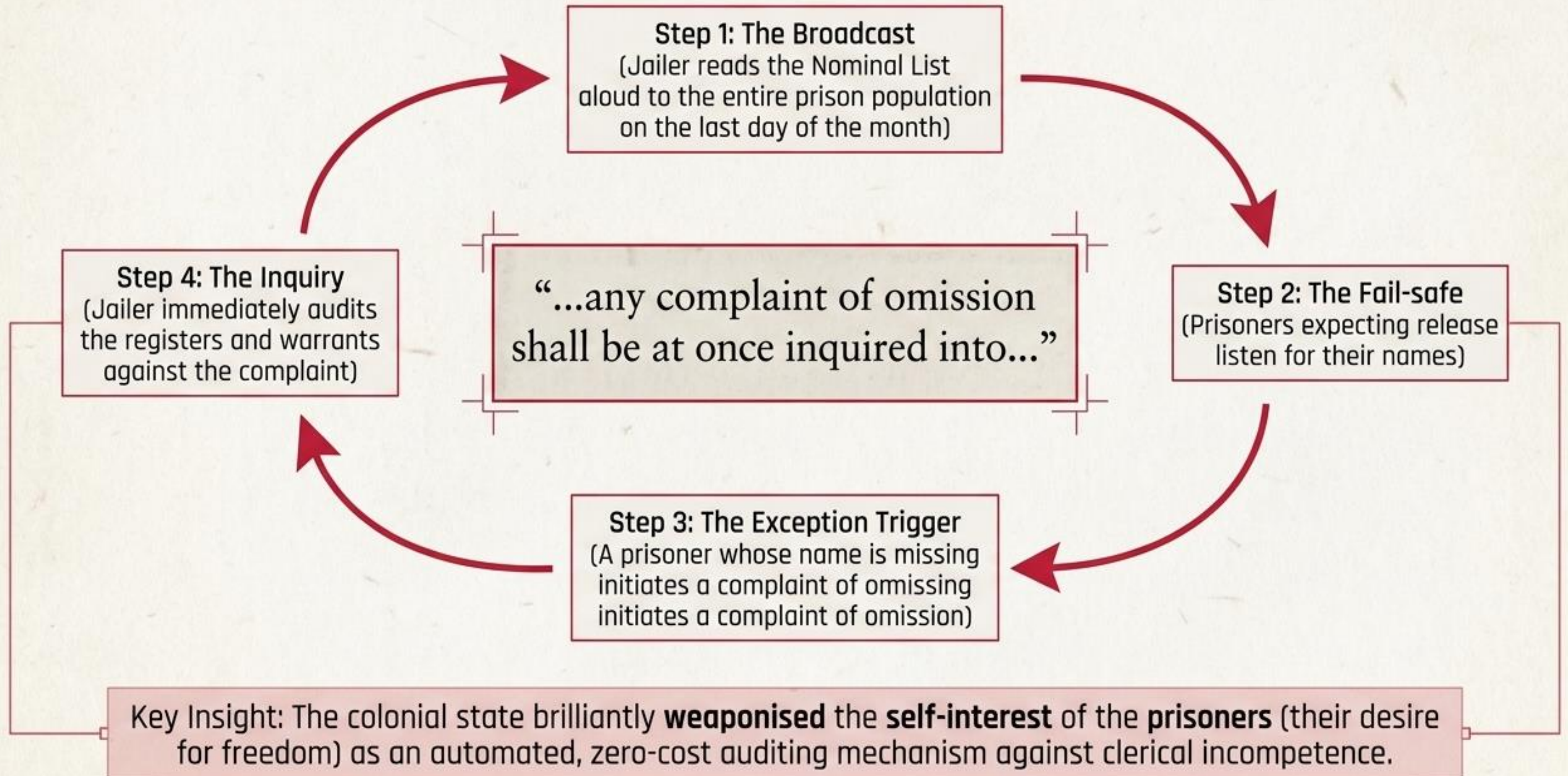
# Chain of Accountability: Execution vs. Oversight

	<b>The Jailer (Operational Execution)</b>	<b>The Superintendent (Executive Oversight)</b>
<b>Data Preparation</b>	<i>“Compiles the Nominal List and checks warrants.”</i>	[No direct action; relies on Jailer’s execution]
<b>The Audit (The Parade)</b>	<i>“read out by the jailer at a general parade”</i>	[No direct action]
<b>Issue Resolution</b>	<i>“inquired into by the jailer. Must handle routine errors immediately.”</i>	Executive escalation point. Only involved if brought under the notice of the Superintendent.

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**Insight:** The system delegates heavy operational and data-processing burdens to the Jailer, reserving the Superintendent purely for executive exception-handling.

# The Parade as an Open-Source Audit



# Synthesis: The Mechanics of the Paper Empire

## Data Centralisation



Complex human realities (behaviour, sentencing, release) were reduced to cross-referenced ledgers.

## Temporal Rigidity



Strict monthly synchronisation removed local autonomy and enforced macro-regional predictability.

## Modular Governance



The seamless transfer of the Madras Jail Manual to the North-Western Provinces demonstrates how the empire iterated and scaled its administrative code.

## Final Takeaway

British colonial rule was sustained not merely through military force, but through an obsessive, self-correcting bureaucracy. Circular No. 5 reveals an administration engineering out human error to maintain perfect systemic control.