

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 188

Press

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15-16

Dated

17-2-1857.

Not to be folded or roughly handled*De*
188

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 17th February 1857.

No. 15. Read the following letter from C. WHITTINGHAM, Esq., Magistrate of North Arcot; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Judicial Department, dated 4th February 1857, No. 7.

SIR,

Magistrate's Department. I have the honor to report for the information of Government, the circumstances attending a highway robbery committed on some men and recruits of the Queen's 43rd Regiment, on their way from Amoor to Bangalore.

2. The copies of Depositions taken from Corporal George Taylor, and Private John Gordon, which are herewith transmitted, narrate the particulars of the robbery. Four men were permitted to go in advance of this party in charge of 8 bandies, two of which contained property of some value, which was supposed by the robbers, who were apparently in communication with persons at the railway terminus, to have been of greater value. These four men, as well as the rest of the party, were unarmed. It is to this latter circumstance that I would beg to call the particular attention of Government. Had the party been armed, the result might have been very different, and the robbers would, in all probability, have learnt a lesson such as it is most desirable they should be taught. Their recent success against European Soldiers, even though unarmed, is not calculated to lessen their audacity.

3. I have not considered it necessary to forward translations of the other Depositions taken from the Conicopillay, and the two bandy men. They corroborate the statements of the Corporal and Soldier. The Conicopillay states that the value of the stolen public property entrusted to his care is Rs. 154-7-9, and that of his private property Rs. 439-8. The total value of the property stolen is not yet known.

4. The Head Assistant Magistrate, and the Head of Police of the Talook in which the robbery occurred have been requested to inform me of the result of the investigations they have been pursuing since the robbery took place.

(Signed) C. WHITTINGHAM,
Magistrate.

The Information and Deposition of GEORGE TAYLOR, Corporal in Her Majesty's 43rd Regiment, taken on oath before me GEORGE BANBURY, Acting Additional Joint Magistrate of North Arcot, this 2nd February 1857, at Chittoor.

Question.—Please relate the circumstances of the robbery near Raneepett?

Answer.—On Saturday the 24th January last I left Madras with the Details commanded by Ensign Livesay, we arrived at the Railway Terminus at Amoor, on the evening of that day, and halted there Sunday and Monday, on the night of the latter day, at about 11 o'clock, we started en route to Bangalore, I was in front with 3 "forty-third" men in charge of 8 bandies, the others being about an hour's march behind, we proceeded through Raneepett, and when about two miles and a half from that place, 3 parties of robbers who were apparently laying in wait for our approach, attacked us simultaneously, one party in the front, another in the rear, and another in the middle, there must have been about 30 persons in each gang, they came on with a loud screech, and pelted us with stones, they knocked me down, overthrew the first bandy, a camp follower, one of the Cooks' wives happened to be taking shelter, by the side of this bandy, and was crushed by the fall of the same, this killed her at once, as she was quite dead when we lifted her from under the bandy afterwards. The robbers after having thrown all the bandies into confusion in front, went to the rear, found out the Officer's (Mr. Livesay's) bandy, this and the Commissariat bandy they took to the opposite side of the road, all gathered round them, broke open the boxes; and took therefrom the Commissariat tea and sugar and the Conicopillay's money, the Officer's boxes were also broken open, his money taken away, clothes, and other effects, being strewn about, as it was no avail my remaining there, I with my wife and child went through the paddy fields, gained the road by a circuitous route, and retraced our steps towards Raneepett, we met the remainder of our party at the Post Office where they were halting. Ensign Livesay at once made known the circumstance to the Commandant at Arcot, who subsequently sent us six armed veterans; at about 3 A. M. I returned to the scene of the robbery with the main body, and found the boxes broken

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 17th January 1857.

open, and their contents strewed about, also the native woman killed as above stated, we remained until daylight collecting the things scattered around and then proceeded on to Trivellum, remaining there all Tuesday 27th and marching to Sereaud on the evening of the following day where we halted until Saturday in order to obtain a Sepoy guard from Vellore; we arrived at Chittoor this morning.

Q.—When you were knocked down, what became of the other 3 Europeans?

A.—We were all separated by the confusion, and rush of the robbers, I did not see my companions at the time, 2 were knocked down and severely wounded, but managed to make their escape, the other man named Gordon joined me after the first attack and seeing that we could do nothing against so large a body, we retraced our steps as above shewn, I now bear the marks of the assault, viz. a blow from a stick on my side, and wound from a stone on my shin.

Q.—Were none of you armed?

A.—None, had we had weapons the result would have been different; I heard that the Officer had applied for a Sepoy Guard but that it had been refused.

Q.—Could you recognize the thieves if you saw them again? and do you know who they were?

A.—I could not recognize them again, they were nearly naked, and appeared to me to be greased, they spoke no particular language but communicated to each other by signs and whistles, my wife who is country born could not understand any thing that they expressed.

Q.—Can you tell me what things were finally taken?

A.—No I cannot, but the Conicopillay could state what was taken from his bandy and the Officer (Mr. L.) could say what he lost, the other bandies were not plundered.

Q.—Do you think the thieves were really awaiting your arrival especially, and do you think they were in any way connected with your party?

A.—They must have been awaiting our arrival especially and must have known beforehand where the money was, as they at once singled out those two bandies and when they had found the money they made off. I should say they were Pariahs. I have been through the Caffir war, and certainly never saw there such savage looking fellows. Our bandy men all ran away at once.

(Signed) Lance Corporal GEORGE TAYLOR,

Given before me

43rd Light Infantry.

(Signed) GEORGE BANBURY,

Acting Additional Joint Magistrate.

Chittoor, February 2nd, 1857.

(True Copy)

(Signed) C. WHITTINGHAM,

Magistrate.

The Information and Deposition of JOHN GORDON, Private in Her Majesty's 43rd Regiment, taken upon oath before me GEORGE BANBURY, Acting Additional Joint Magistrate of North Arcot, this 2nd day of February 1857.

Question.—Please relate what happened to you when you were attacked by robbers on the road to Bangalore.

Answer.—I was returning to join my Regiment at Bangalore and came with the Recruits under Ensign Livesay by Railroad to Amoor, I left there on Monday night at about 11 or $\frac{1}{2}$ past en route to Bangalore. I came on with Corporal Taylor and two other 43rd men in advance with the baggage bandies, we were more than an hour's march in advance of the Detachment. After having passed through Raneepett we were attacked at about 3 miles from that place by a gang of nearly 100 men, they attacked us front, rear, and centre simultaneously, they overturned the front bandy thereby killing an old woman, a camp follower, who was by the side of the cart. I don't think

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 17th February 1857.

they knew she was there. I was twice knocked down by stones, and my stick taken from me; they at once selected the Officer's bandy and that belonging to the Commissariat, these they took to one side of the road and plundered, breaking the boxes, and throwing about their contents. Finding it was no use my remaining, I joined Corporal Taylor and we going by a circuitous route passed the robbers, reached the main road and found the Detachment at Raneepett near the Post Office. I told what had happened to Mr. Livesay and we went back to the scene of the robbery finding all the things scattered about. The Officer's and Commissariat bandies were the only two plundered, the others were left unmolested; this makes me think there was treachery, as in those two bandies the money was kept. I cannot say what was taken but the Officer in command, and the Conicopillay would be able to state exactly what was lost. The other two Europeans were knocked down, and severely wounded, they managed to escape; we were all separated when the attack began.

Q.—Were you armed?

A.—No. None of us were armed neither had we a guard. After my stick was taken from me I drew my clasp knife.

Q.—Could you recognize your assailants again?

A.—Yes, I shall be able to recognize one of the party, as I was close to him, and stuck him in the breast with the said knife, the robbers were naked and oiled. I don't know what language they talked, neither do I know what caste they were, they were fine tall men.

Q.—Do you think that they were purposely waiting for you, and that there was treachery in your party?

A.—I believe they were waiting for us alone, and there must have been treachery somewhere, or else they could not have selected the bandies with money at once.

Q.—Do you think the robbers came from Arcot?

A.—We were attacked between Trivellum and Arcot, so I cannot say from which place the robbers came, we found part of the things scattered about the rocks, a revolver was also picked up belonging to Mr. Livesay. I got two blows on the leg, the marks are now clearly perceptible. I lost no property.

(Signed) JOHN GORDON.

Given before me, February 2nd, 1857.

(Signed) G. BANBURY,

Acting Additional Joint Magistrate.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) C. WHITTINGHAM,

Magistrate.

No. 16. ORDER THEREON, No. 188; dated 13th February 1857.

The Magistrate of North Arcot will inform Government of the result of the inquiry, which is being made by his Head Assistant and by the Head of Police of the Talook, regarding the highway robbery reported in the above letter. Mr. Whittingham will also report what measures he has himself adopted to trace the robbery, whether he has offered any rewards for the detection of the offenders, and what steps he has taken for the future protection of travellers. He will also intimate whether any thing has been done during the last 6 months towards suppressing these highway robberies on this frequented route.

2. These papers will also be communicated to the Military Department.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,

Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

The Master of the
sloop seems to take
the matter very quietly
I think he should be
asked what measures
he has himself adopted
to trace the robbery
whether he has offered
any rewards for
the detection of the
offenders - what
he has done for

the future protection
of Isaacles - Has
He increased the Police
Force, Has He called
upon the villagers
on the line of road
to maintain a watch
within their respective
limits - Has He
employed any other
agents in seeing

4-
that the ordinary
Isaacles Persons are
sufficient - Has He
in fact done any
thing in the last
six months towards
suppressing these highway
robberies on this
frequented route -

11/2/57

M. H. M.

To be added to para 1.

Mr Coltham will also report what measures he has himself adopted to trace the robbery - whether he has offered any rewards for the detection of the offenders, and what steps he has taken for the future protection of travellers. He will also intimate whether any thing has been done during the last 6 months towards suppressing these highway robberies on this frequented route.

JP

No. 108

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The Magistrate of K. A. will
 inform ^{of} the result of the
~~report to~~ ^{the} inquiry, which is being made
 by his Honor Ass. & by the Honor
 of Police of the Taluk regarding
 the highway robbery reported

in a letter.
 Their papers will also be
 communicated to the Hon.
 Secy. of the Govt.
 J. P.

For George, 3
 13th February 1857 3
 Mr. N
 and Dispt. 20th
 and Dispt. 20th

They have been pursuing since the
robbery took place.

Off have the horse & the

Don't

Your most obedt servant

Wm. L. Garrison

Jan 4. February 1837

Wm. L. Garrison

Massachusetts

Wm. L. Garrison
Chief Secretary to Government
West Hill