

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Indial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 922	Press ~~Mis.~~
32-35	
Dated 30-7-19 (85)	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 4th August 1857.

No. 34. Read the following letter from J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector of Prisons; to E. MALTBY, Esq., Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, Palmanair, dated 11th July 1857, No. 256.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge instructions conveyed by Extract from the Minutes of Consultation 25th June, No. 726, requiring information relative to the escape of Vamoola Nursegadoo, from the Jail of Masulipatam, and to state that this prisoner with others was sent in a gang of 32 Convicts to dig gravel in the rear of the Masulipatam pettah, that 21 of the gang thence escaped and were followed, as soon as intelligence reached the Jail, by the Jailor and by the Sessions Judge.

2. I forward copy of the Sessions Judge's letters, from which it will be seen that two of the peons were acquitted on the ground, apparently, that they were only acting; the sentence is a judicial one, but I have requested the Sessions Judge's attention to the fact that a substituted peon is still a peon and liable in my opinion to all pains and penalties prescribed for culpable negligence. The other 6 peons have been severally sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment with hard labor in irons.

3. I have again written to request information relative to the cause of death of one of the Convicts.

(Signed) J. ROHDE,
Inspector of Prisons.

From J. J. COTTON, Esq., Session Judge of Masulipatam; to J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector of Prisons, dated 25th May 1857, No. 207.

SIR,

I regret to have to report the escape of a large party of 21 (out of a gang of 32) Convicts from the Jail under my charge while employed in digging Kunker at the back of the town on the evening of Saturday last, the 23rd Instant.

2. I have as yet had little time to make the investigations necessary to ascertain the full particulars of the escape, these will be subsequently communicated, but as far as I have been able to ascertain them, it would appear that about 5-20 P. M. on the evening in question, some of the gang threw themselves upon the Duffadar in charge, from behind, while he was inspecting the baskets, to see if they were properly filled, and wrenched his sword from his hand, which was the signal for a general revolt.

3. A report was instantly made to the Jailor, and by him communicated to me at 6 P. M. Within 5 minutes, (as I was at the time at the Racket Court,) I had mounted my horse and galloped off, first to the Talook Cutcherry to call in aid the Police authorities, who however I found, had already been alarmed; and thence towards the scene of the revolt, where I learnt that the whole 21 Convicts had decamped across the swamp (at the back of the town) and were making the best of their way in a westerly and northerly direction, followed by the peons and a large number of villagers.

4. After an hour's gallop, during which I picked up such stray information as I was able, it gradually grew dark; but having received intelligence of the direction the escaped Convicts had taken, I continued following up the trail until at about 8 P. M. I came up with a number of villagers and a few peons, who had apprehended five of the Convicts, whom I saw lying on the ground pinioned, as the rest of the gang were said to be close at hand in a small patch of low jungle, I took a Duffadar, and as many Villagers and peons as I could find and directed them to search diligently through this patch of jungle. While waiting to have my orders carried out, a 6th Convict was seized and brought out of the jungle. It was too dark to see any thing at 5 yards distance, and I entirely failed to get any further co-operation of the Villagers, who sullenly returned to their homes, though I endeavoured to encourage them by the offer of the rewards for the re-apprehension of escaped Convicts.

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5 Finding that I could effect nothing further by my presence, I turned home-wards, and having met the Masulipatam Tahsildar and one of my own Deloyets, (D. Ramasawmy, whose conduct on a late occasion I brought to your notice in my letter of the 8th September 1856,) I renewed my instructions and orders to them, and reached my house only at 11½ P. M.

6. The above 6 Convicts and 3 others apprehended on the 24th, were brought back into the Jail yesterday, but one of the 6 was brought in *dead*, the other 5 all more or less wounded and injured.

7. I cannot sufficiently stigmatise the gross cowardly conduct of the guards in charge of the above gang, the climax of their dastardly behaviour is to be found in the way in which the above 6 Convicts have been maltreated after their apprehension, I will allude to their cases in a future communication, as I have placed the whole of that guard under arrest for trial.

8. I do not hesitate to say that had one single arm been raised in the first instance by the guard to arrest or cut down the run-aways, the whole emente would at once have been checked; but instead of this, from enquiries I made at the time, it appears that the order of march was, first the 21 Convicts who had possessed themselves of two swords, and a few bits of Kunker, soon expended, and clods of earth tied in cloths as means of offence, next a large party of villagers, and last the peon guard, and in this order they seem to have proceeded for a distance of fully 10 miles before a single arrest was made, and over open country the whole way!!

9. I ought to have mentioned that I overtook Mr. Harrison the Jailor some miles away in full pursuit of the run-aways, (leaving the Jemadar in charge of the Jail to lock up;) he having started off at the first intimation of the standard guard, who were at the time drilling with Muskets &c., in the Jail compound; in the hope of speedily arresting the fugitives. Neither Mr. Harrison or I were able to reach the gang by day-light, who had been allowed to travel over too extensive a tract of country as shown above, or I venture to say the results of capture would have been different from those now exhibited.

(Signed) J. J. COTTON,
Session Judge.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. ROHDE,
Inspector of Prisons.

From J. J. COTTON, Esq., Session Judge of Muslipatam; to J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector of Prisons, dated 26th May 1857, No. 215.

SIR,

1. In continuation of my letter of the 25th Instant, No. 207, reporting the escape of a gang of Convicts on the 23rd Instant, from work at the back of the town, I have the honor to transmit for your information, and for publication in the Fort St. George Gazette, Descriptive Rolls of 11 of them, (one having been since captured) exhibiting the rewards authorized for their apprehension respectively, by the orders of Government in the Judicial Department, dated 14th September 1855, No. 656.

2. Letters were addressed on the 25th Instant, to the neighbouring Magistrates, forwarding copies of the above Descriptive Rolls.

(Signed) J. J. COTTON,
Session Judge.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. ROHDE,
Inspector of Prisons.

From J. J. COTTON, Esq., Session Judge of Masulipatam; to J. ROHDE, Esq., Inspector of Prisons, Madras, dated 25th June 1857, No. 257.

SIR,

1. In continuation of my letters to your address of the 25th and 26th Ultimo, Nos. 207 and 215, reporting the escape of 21 Convicts employed at work at the back of the town, and the

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re-apprehension of 10 of them; I have now the honor to state that the Duffadar in charge of the gang, has been since dismissed, and six of the peons charged with culpable neglect of duty have been sentenced to (6) six months' imprisonment each with hard labour in irons, two other peons, being substitutes, have been dismissed.

2. Of the 10 Convicts re-apprehended, one was brought back dead, and five slightly wounded.

3. Of the four unwounded, one was a life Convict, and sentenced to (50) fifty lashes. The other three were sentenced to an additional year's imprisonment, as well as (50) fifty lashes each.

4. Of the 5 wounded, one who had previously effected his escape on a former occasion and re-apprehended, was sentenced to (50) fifty lashes, and one year's additional imprisonment. A recommendation of banishment to another distant Jail has been submitted for the approbation of the Higher Court. Two others were sentenced to one year's additional imprisonment without lashes, in consideration of the wounds received.

5. The remaining two are still in hospital, and have not been sentenced.

(Signed) J. J. COTTON,
Session Judge.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. ROHDE,
Inspector of Prisons.

ORDER THEREON, No. 922; dated 30th July 1857.

No. 35.

The Government desire to know from the Inspector of Prisons whether there is not a general rule in his Department that desperate and accomplished villians like *V. Nursegádoo* should not be sent out with working parties; and, if not, whether it would not be expedient to declare that such notorious characters should be kept wholly within the walls of the Jail. The repeated escapes effected by such Convicts is highly discreditable to the present discipline.

(Signed) E. MALTBY,
Acting Chief Secretary.

34035

Wm Lloyd Garrison
Jas. L. Smith
No. 922.
Robertson & Co. Printers
of Council Bluffs
Iowa
30th July 1857.

3
No. 922.
The Govt. desire to know from the Inspector.
If it is desirable to make a general rule in the
Prisons whether there is not a general rule in the
Prisons who are sent out with working parties
that desperate and accomplished villains like
V. Sturtevant should not be sent out with working
parties; and, if not, whether it would not be
expedient to declare that such notorious characters
should be kept wholly within the walls of the jail.
The repeated escapes effected by such convicts is
highly discreditable to the present discipline.
To the Inspr. of Prison. Dir. 30th
J. L. Smith

Just. Lr. to Engd No. 29

10/11/57

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24-12-57

Para 43

Repd to inc 12 57 of 1258 C. 24