

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

1471

Press
Mis.

102-103.

Dated

16. 10. 1885

19

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
16th October 1865.*

No. 102. Read the following Proceedings of Government in the Military Department, dated 14th October 1865, No. 3831.

Respecting the enlistment of a certain } (Vide Pro., Military Department, dated
class of men in the Native Army. } 14th October 1865, Nos. 346 & 347.)

No. 103. ORDER THEREON, 16th October 1865, No. 1471.

Communicated to the Inspector General of Police, and to the Acting Commissioner of Police at Madras for report, as desired in paragraph 2.

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Inspector General of Police.
" Acting Commissioner of Police.

Exd. J. Tulloch.

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers :—

From the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, Simla, 27th September 1865, No. 417; to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Fort Saint George.

I am directed to enclose for the perusal of His Excellency the Governor in Council, copy of a letter, dated 14th ultimo, and of the memorandum alluded to, received from a Mahomedan Nobleman in the Madras Presidency, on the subject of ceasing to enlist Wahabees in the Native Army, and am to invite the attention of His Excellency in Council to the subject, in view to his considering whether it is desirable to discourage or stop the enlistment of men of this sect.

2. I am further to request information as to the probable number of Wahabees in the Native Army of Madras.

From SHURFOOL OOMRAH, Bahadoor, Member of the Legislative Council, the Adyar, Madras, 14th August 1865; to His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir J. L. M. LAWRENCE, Bart, G. C. B., and K. S. I., Viceroy and Governor General of India.

MOST HONORABLE SIR,

I beg to do myself the honor to hand you enclosed copy of a memorandum, I have addressed to their Excellencies the Right Honorable Sir Charles Wood, Bart, Secretary of State for India, the Governor of Madras Sir W. T. Denison, K. C. B., and the Commander-in-Chief Sir Gaspard LeMarchant, embracing what I know of the Wahabees, a sect, I am sorry to say, of the Mahomedan Religious community which requires carefully to be watched and looked after; and if what I have stated induces to action which will arrest the growth and progress of this sect, and thus to a considerable extent destroy one of the disturbing causes of the peace of India, I shall feel myself sufficiently rewarded.

MEMORANDUM FOR PRIVATE INFORMATION.

I beg respectfully to submit the following for your consideration, and I hope I may be excused if, in so doing, it be deemed that I have exceeded my duty; but the subject to which it refers is one that has always caused me much anxiety, and I and all the members of my family for the past three generations have been faithful and loyal subjects to the British Crown, devotedly attached to their rule, than which we can never expect, nor do we hope for, a better. It has, therefore, always been a cause of sorrow to me that there should be any, the least disaffection evinced towards the British rule, and more so that that stigma should rest in a great degree on a section of the Mahomedan Religious community.

Any suggestion offered towards removing a threatened danger or a public evil will, I am sure, on the principle of "*forewarned forearmed*" be well received, and under this impression, I venture to express my sentiments.

It cannot but be held by all, that much depends upon securing first the entire undivided allegiance of the Native Army; and this effected, the whole country will to a man, as a consequence, remain loyal and faithful.

The suggestions I have to offer, therefore, are mainly in connection with the Native Army. I shall detail them first, and then give my reasons.

1st. That particular care be taken to exclude, as much as possible, the class or sect of people called "WAHABEES" being enlisted in Regiments.

2nd. That this class of people be also excluded from being employed as Moonshees in Regiments, or from going amongst the men of a Regiment in the character of priests, ostensibly with the view of preaching to them and giving good advice, but really with most designing and dark designs.

3rd. That Officers in Command of Regiments be called upon to furnish Returns, shewing the number of Wahabee Sepoys in their respective Regiments, with the view of gradually getting rid of them.

My reasons for making the above suggestions are as follows:—

The Wahabees are a sect not perhaps generally known to Europeans. They are quite distinct from the orthodox Mahomedans, though they conceal their real faith and assimilate themselves with Mahomedans.

It is necessary that a short sketch of the origin and progress of Wahabeeism should be here given. The following account is taken from a public writer.

"Abdul Wahab, the founder of the sect, was born at El Howa in the province of Nejd, in Arabia, more than a century ago, and was of the tribe of Tomya. He studied at Russora, Bagdad and Damascus, and ultimately returned to Nejd and settled at Dirryah. Connecting himself by marriages there with the Chief resident Mahomed-inb Sawd, he gradually obtained influence over the surrounding Bedouin tribes; but his son being blind, this ultimately passed to the Dirryah family, of whom Abdul Azez and his son Saoud were the most distinguished. Under them the whole of Nejd was subdued, the forces sent for its recovery by the Pacha of Bagdad, twice defeated, the Beni Kaleb and Attubi tribes converted and confederated Kurbela, containing the tombs of Hussan and Hosein, the sons of Ali plundered, the Sharif of Mecca defeated, the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, together with Taif taken, and the entire Hedjaz reduced. The Piracy of the Jowasin tribe, who had become Wahabees, led to the despatch by the Bombay Government in 1809 of an expedition to the Persian Gulf, and to the reduction, after a desperate resistance, of their principal stronghold Shinaas, on the Coast of Kerman."

Some of the followers of this religion also introduced Wahabeeism into India; they hoped, by the aid of Persia and Cabul, to establish themselves at Lahore; but the Lion of the Punjaub, Runjeet Sing, drove them out of the Rawul Pindee and Peshawur Districts. But though Wahabeeism received such a repulse, its followers were nothing daunted. Entertaining, according to their faith, a systematic and uncompromising spirit of disaffection, and thirsting for supremacy, they spread themselves over the country preaching a "Jehud," and stirring up their co-religionists against the British Rule; organizing associations, breeding plots and conspiracies. "Such," says a writer, "is the unity of this sect, so complete is its organization, and so entire is the subserviency of their numerous disciples to their spiritual leaders, that there is not a man, however distant may be his abode, or, however small his income, who does not contribute a small per centage to the common store, to be used for what they all consider the common weal." The Sitana and Patna conspiracies sufficiently prove this; and the struggle at the Umballa-pass shews how ready the Wahabees are to avail themselves of every opportunity to awaken rebellion, and stir up hostilities against the British Rule. It therefore behoves the British Government to take all possible means to arrest the evil influence of the sect, and to crush its power over the people.

The presence of these men in the Military service cannot but be injurious. With the facilities afforded in a Regiment, they can easily injure the British power in the East. I have the best grounds for asserting, that they go about amongst the men of the Regiments in the character of priests, giving them very objectionable advice, tampering with their fidelity, and teaching them to be discontented with the British Rule. As moonshees, the Wahabees come into almost daily contact with the European Officers. They make careful observation, ascertain well their prejudices and predilections, and store up every thoughtless word and expression which they (the Wahabees) take advantage to retail, in their character of priests, to the men of the Regiments, considerably magnifying and misconstruing words and acts. These men are really the chief, if not the only, cause of all disaffection; they have their several agents all over the country, so that one, however distant, well knows what another is doing; and they are, at all times, ready and prepared, pecuniarily, to assist each other. As schoolmasters also in Regimental Schools, they exercise no small degree of influence both over old and young, and they even instruct their children to sow the seeds of hatred against the British among their fellow pupils.

In another way also, they are a source of great mischief. They not unfrequently assume the character of some great person, surrounding themselves with the pomp and paraphernalia of nobles and princes, and, by largesses and gifts and acts of hospitality, attract to their side large numbers of followers, whose allegiance to the British Government they gradually tamper with, and succeed eventually in altogether withdrawing. I may say, in a word, that so dangerous are they considered that in all independent countries in the East, where the British Rule does not extend, they are never permitted to take up their permanent abode, nor encouraged to become settlers; nor are they permitted to remain therein without being closely watched. In Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Bokhara and Mecca, if recognized, they are punished and sent beyond the limits of those countries. The Wahabees were one of the chief causes of the lamentable Indian mutinies, and from the published Reports it will be found that of the numerous conspirators that have been tried and hanged, they were all, with one or two exceptions, of the Wahabee sect. They are gaining ground in Southern India; and, if inquiry be made, they will be found in considerable force in Vellore, Arcot, Wallajahbad, Vaniembaddy and Bangalore.

In offering the above suggestions, I beg that inquiry be instituted relative to what I have mentioned; and if there be some degree of truth in the same, that circumstance will, I trust, be deemed a sufficient apology for my having intruded the subject on your attention, and addressed you relative thereto.

THE ADYAR, } (Signed) SHURF-OOL-OOMRAH, Bahadoor,
MADRAS, } Member of the Legislative
11th August 1865. } Council of Madras.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) H. W. NORMAN, Colonel,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

ORDER, No. 3831, 14th October 1865.

Communicated to the Commander-in-Chief, (Adjutant General's Department) for His Excellency's observations, and in view to the submission of a Return of the probable number of Wahabees serving in the Native Army of Madras.

2. The papers will also be communicated, through the Judicial and Revenue Departments, to the Inspector General of Madras Police, and to the Acting Commissioner of Police at the Presidency, for remark, and for the submission to Government, at an early date, of such information on the subject of the Wahabee sect generally in the Districts of this Presidency, as may be available.

3. Copy of the papers will also be furnished to the Political Department.

(True Extract.)

Marshall
Secretary to Government.

To the Adjutant General.
" Judicial Department.
" Revenue Department.
" Political Department.

With 5 spare copies.

16. 10
W. L. P. in Comm. & Insp. Gen. Police
& Chief Police Madras
for report as desired in para 2.
16/10

Order thereon 16 Oct 1865 No 1471.

*Communicated to the Inspector General
of Police and to the Acting Commissioner of Police
at Madras for report as desired in para 2.*

LG

*To the Insp Genl of Police
Acty Com of Police, Madras, Sept 17-10.*

No 2529

Post at 14:30 Oct 17 1865.

*Proceedings of Council
Military Department - 2831*

Madras 1865 Depant

Exd. J. E. C. Hart

No 2190.

*Respecting the
conduct of the
in the Madras Army.*

Madras 1865.