

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,

7th June 1865.

No. 54

Following letter from His Excellency M. BONTEMPS, Com-
mandant, and Governor of the French Settlements in
the Honorable the Governor of the Presidency
dated Pondicherry, 25th May 1865, No. 13.

TRANSLATION

to Bishop of the Mission Vicar Apostolic of Pondi-
I have the honor to transmit to your Ex-
cellency, written to you, for the purpose of complaining of the
harsh proceedings which the Taluq Magistrate of Trichinopoly adopted towards
many Catholic subjects and many natives of their communion. The details of this
affair I learned by the Trichinopoly journal, in the month of April.
I intervene with great diffidence on the subject of acts of justice,
and which I earsay, yet, Monsieur le Gouverneur,
it appears placed before me, that the proceedings
are not in conformity with the liberal spirit of the British
Government, nor with the sound yet kindly discretion of which its functionaries
habitually give proof. On the other side, my Lord Bishop Godelle is personally
worthy of a consideration, and the Missionaries who assist him recommend
themselves by their many virtues. It is on these different grounds, Monsieur le
Gouverneur, that I call for the high intervention of your Excellency on behalf of
these Missionaries, who are French, but who labor loyally for the intellectual im-
provement of a great number of Her Britannic Majesty's subjects. I shall be very
happy if you give a good reception to the annexed application from my Lord
Godelle.

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The Right Reverend J. J. GODELLE, Bishop of Pondicherry and Vicar Apostolic of
Pondicherry, to His Excellency the Honorable the Governor of Madras; dated May-
varam, 18th May 1865.

A prosecution directed against two Catholic priests, a catechist, and a horse-keeper, on the
charge of having carried away by force a minor, was lately carried on before the *Taluq Magis-
trate* of Trichinopoly. The accused have been pronounced innocent, it is true; but the manner

Taluq Magistrate has proceeded appears to me so arbitrary, so contrary to the
principles of justice and to the rights of the subjects of Her Britannic Majesty in India, as well
as of French Missionaries who labor to evangelize the country under the protection of British
I consider it a duty to bring the circumstance to the notice of your Excellency.

Here is a summary of the principal circumstances of the affair. A young man
neighbourhood of the village of Porthagudi, in the District of Trichinopoly, who had been attend-
ing for two or three years, with the consent of his father, the school attached to the Catholic
Church of the village, conceived the desire to become a Christian. He spoke to his fa-
ther on the subject, and in order to turn him away from the idea, ill-treated him in different
ways, forbidding his return to the school. Then the young man applied to be
baptized by M. Selvanader, Native priest of Porthagudi, but the Reverend M.
Selvanader refused to baptize him. After some fruitless applications, he betook himself to the
Reverend M. Riencon, French Missionary, residing at Kandamungalum, in the District of Tan-
jore, whom he had known at Porthagudi. The Reverend M. Selvanader, on being informed of
his departure for Kandamungalum, thought it would be useful to acquaint the Reverend M.
Riencon with the position of the lad, and sent him a letter by his horse-keeper.

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to the letter, at least to the spirit of all British legislation to refuse his friends, and above all a Priest of his communion, permission to visit him.

5th. — I believe I can even complain of the manner in which the young convert has been treated. No charge was laid against him, and yet the Taluq Magistrate detained him illegally in prison, for eight days, and the intervention of the superior Magistrate was necessary to set him at liberty.

6th. All these things occurred in broad day. Some have been proved in the very Court of the Taluq Magistrate; the others can be easily proved, if necessary. They show that the Taluq Magistrate of Trichinopoly has displayed in this affair an arbitrariness and a partiality unworthy of a Magistrate. The French Missionaries, just as well as the native priests, are without doubt subject to the laws of the country, in which they exercise their sacred ministry; but that is not, I think, any reason and they should be made to undergo a rigor and humiliations which the laws do not impose, and which the circumstances of the case do not justify. I venture to request, Monsieur le Gouverneur, that you will give, or cause to be given, to the native Magistrates instructions, with the view to preventing a recurrence of such outrages so prejudicial to the honor of the British Government itself, and so disagreeable to the persons who are the victims of them.

(True Translation).

(Signed) J. W. LYONS,

French Translator.

Transferred to the Chief Secretary to Government.

(By Order).

GOVERNMENT HOUSE MADRAS,

27th May 1865.

(Signed) C. DENISON, Colonel,

Private Secretary.

No. 55. To His Excellency M. BONTEMPS, Governor of the French Establishments in India, dated Fort Saint George, 7th June 1865, No. 818.

In acknowledging the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 25th ultimo, bringing to notice the conduct of the Sub-Magistrate of Trichinopoly, with reference to a charge preferred against the Reverend M. Riocot, I have the honor to inform you that, previous to the receipt of your letter now under acknowledgment, the Madras Government, on full consideration of the circumstances of the case, directed the removal of the Sub-Magistrate in question from his office, and his transfer to an appointment of a lower grade.

Accept Sir, &c.,

(Signed) W. T. DENISON.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

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Judicial Department
No. 818.

To His Excellency M. Bontemps
Governor of the French Establishments
in India

Sir,

In acknowledging
the receipt of your Excellency
letter of the 25th ultimo,
bringing to notice the
conduct of the Sub Magis-
trate of Yichinopoly,
with reference to a charge
preferred against the Rev.
Mr. Riocot, I have the
honor to inform you that
previous to the receipt of
your letter now under
acknowledgment the
Madras Government, on
full

M
J
Wdy

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Ad St George
y^r. humble ob^t

