

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Indrial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1254A	Press Mis.
147-1474		
Dated	15-8	19-86

Not to be folded or roughly handled

5/5

No. 147. Read the following letter from the Inspector General of Police, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Kotagherry, 27th July 1866, No. 1221.

General Department.

I have the honor to submit Captain Drever's report on the recent outbreak of a gang of Malabar Convicts near the Central Jail at Coimbatore.

2. Two are still at large.

3. The outbreak was a deliberately planned one; the guard was suddenly overpowered, and 23 men broke away. The guards were posted too close to the convicts (the requisite judgment in posting watchmen is frequently wanting amongst the Deputy Head Constables), a circumstance which made the surprise complete.

4. The men deserving rewards and punishments will be dealt with departmentally.

From Captain W. S. DREVER, Deputy Inspector General of Police, in charge of Coimbatore, to the Inspector General of Police, Kotagherry; dated Coimbatore, 24th July 1866, No. 76.

I have now the honor to report the details of the convict outbreak which occurred here on the afternoon of Thursday the 19th, the delay in the submission of which has been caused by the extended nature of the inquiry which it was found necessary to make, and the great number of witnesses to be examined; but the Superintendent of the Jail and myself are now both satisfied that we have fairly got at the real facts of the case.

2. A batch of 64 convicts were a short time ago transferred from Calicut to the Central Jail at Coimbatore, and the recent change of their diet from rice to cholum led to a conspiracy among 25 or 30 of them to break away. So secretly was this arranged, that even the Convict Maistries to which these men belonged knew nothing of it, although it had been talked of among those initiated for 10 or 15 days.

3. The leaders appear to have been [1] Koyeemoo (killed), [2] Ootam, (Moplas), and [3] Koda, a Tean, and with them were associated other Moplas, Teans, and Nairs, who eventually took more or less conspicuous parts.

4. On the evening of the 18th, it was agreed that the attempt should be made on the day following; one or two, however, showed the white feather, and went into hospital that morning, and it was from these men that I first obtained any information on the subject.

5. On the 19th, gang No. 2 (of 60 convicts), among whom were at least 25 of the conspirators, was sent to work on the road leading into Coimbatore from Unnoor, not half a mile from the Jail itself.

6. So early as 9 o'clock, some of these convicts objected to work; complained to their Maistries of getting cholum to eat instead of rice; and otherwise showed ill-humour. The Warder, to whom their conduct was made known, half took down their names, but seems to me to have erred in judgment in not at once marching the gang back to Jail.

7. Shortly before noon, those concerned were informed by the ring-leaders that, while at rest between 12 and 1, the attempt was to be made; they were to rush on the Police watchmen, overpower and dis-arm them, and make off across country towards the neighbouring hills, and finally try and reach Cochin Territory, the signal being two of them tying their cumblies on their heads.

8. At noon the gang was taken to a well, close by the road side, just on the out-skirts of Upilipolliem, one of the hamlets adjacent to the Cantonment of Coimbatore. Here they drank and lay down to rest as usual, in a close compact body, under the shade of some trees, five Constables and lay down to rest as usual, in a close compact body, under the shade of some trees, five Constables out of the six who formed the Police guard with the gang, being posted round them; of these, three men were armed with swords, two with muskets—the Acting Deputy Constable in charge had likewise a sword.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
15th August 1866.

9. I may here observe that had these men been properly posted, or had they been inspected by a competent Officer after they were posted by the Acting Deputy Constable, the issue must have been different. As it was, they were generally much too close to the convicts; the natural advantages of the position (in itself an excellent one) had not been turned to use, and in one, if not more instances, the watchmen were grossly negligent.

10. After an interval of half an hour the signal was given; three or four convicts rushed at each man of the guard, over-powered and dis-armed them. One of the muskets was, however, immediately re-taken by a Constable, and was shortly after used with effect against them.

11. My own opinion is that the surprise was complete, and that but little vigorous efforts were made to defend themselves by any one of the guard, save the Acting Deputy Constable, who cut one of his assailants on both arms, though to little purpose, as three men soon had him on the ground.

12. The convicts, of course, used their cumbries as shields, and it may be as well now to let the Police know that, under similar circumstances, thrusts are much more effective than cuts with blunt weapons.

13. In this case, also, there is no reason whatever, had they been alert, why two of the watchmen (distantly posted, one with a sword and the other with a musket) could not have fallen back, the former raising an alarm, the latter firing; but it is only practical experience which will teach Natives, and this is the first lesson the Coimbatore Police have had. I merely note these points for the benefit of those who have yet to learn.

14. The guard thus over-powered and dis-armed, 23 convicts made off with one musket and three swords. Two immediately came back on being called to, and 5 more were re-captured by either convicts or Police, before they had gone a few yards; and it seems scarcely necessary to prosecute these men for the attempt at escape. I shall accordingly leave their punishment to the Superintendent of the Jail, one of them having more especially given us both much useful information.

15. The other 12, keeping well together, took off across country, pursued by a Head Constable of the Reserve named Seeva Singh and two other Constables of the guard. The former was in undress and without arms; his house was close by, and hearing the row he had rushed out as he was. One of the two Constables had with him the musket he had recovered from the convicts, but it was some little while ere three other men (Head Constable Nuraimooloo and two Constables) of the Reserve off duty, having heard the alarm, came to their aid with a few cartridges and caps, though otherwise unarmed.

16. The convicts were followed and called to by these men to stop and surrender, but would not listen, and pelted them with stones when they approached, continuing to make off as hard as they could.

17. Head Constable Nuraimooloo accordingly fired, shooting Koyeeamoo the leader, dead. The only effect of this was to quicken their movements, and three more shots had to be fired ere the last of them was re-captured.

18. One of these (fired by Constable Abdula Saib, of the Reserve) proved fatal to Convict "Mamoo," a man who had taken a conspicuous part in the outbreak; and by the other two, Convicts Oly Cooty and "Koya" were shot through the shoulder and leg, respectively, the former being severely, and the latter very severely, wounded.

19. However much this loss of life and blood-shed is to be regretted, it does not appear, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to have been avoidable. Had a competent European Mounted Officer headed the pursuit, no doubt it would have been less, but it was particularly unfortunate that Captain Weldon should have left Coimbatore an hour before the outbreak, Lieutenant Simpson have been sick, and myself in Perundooray, whence I could not return till Friday afternoon.

20. The last of the fugitives were re-captured fully seven or eight miles away; but before this, they had scattered considerably. Some were picked up in the grain and cholum field, by villagers and other Police Officers who had followed the first named Head Constables.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
15th August 1866.

21. I regret to say that two are still at large; they probably concealed themselves somewhere, and were over-looked in the chase. I would strongly urge a reward of Rupees 100 being offered for each.

22. On the outbreak the Convict Maistries, and several of the convicts themselves, materially aided in the re-capture of the first five, and by their good conduct probably prevented others from going. The Superintendent of the Jail will bring their names, as well as those of deserving villagers, to the notice of the Inspector General of Jails, with a view to remission of sentence, &c. The behaviour of two of the Maistries was most highly commendable.

23. It only remains for me to bring favorably before you the names of the Police Officers most conspicuously deserving of reward; these are

Head Constable Seeva Singh.

" " Nuraimooloo.

Constables, Abdoola Saib, Rawaniah, and Cooposawmy,
all of the Reserve,

and I would recommend that a *dowceur* of Rupees 20 be granted to each of the two Head Constables, and Rupees 10 to each of the three Constables, for meritorious conduct on this occasion.

24. I shall departmentally deal with the other Police Officers concerned in the affair.

No. 147A.

ORDER THEREON, 15th August 1866, No. 1254A.

To be recorded.

(True Extract).

A. J. ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. H. Burns.

Does the hospital
by Captain Diner
to offer a reward
of 100 M. for the
apprehension of
each of the two criminals;
I left at 10:30,
advising
you here.

bauf: WY

Running
no. 1. I hope
will see bit.
WY

4
Ld = 1866 Department
Prans
15th August 66
The Inspr Genl of Police
P^o The Agt Chief Secy
to Government
Port of Spain

Dated 27th
Recd 31st } July 1866.

N^o 1221.
Enclosure (1)

N^o 1548
Submitted to the
Governor's Report on the
Circ on the R of a Gang of
Chalabhar Cannibals near the
Central Jail, Port of Spain
15 August 1866 N^o 1254A

c. 3 Aug 66
Rb

7