

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1875	Press <u>Mis.</u>
Dated	9-10	19-1866

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
9th October 1866.

No. 80. Read the following Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, in the Foreign Department (Judicial), dated Simla, 5th September 1866, No. 216.

No. 214.

Read an Extract from the Proceedings of His Excellency the Governor General of India in Council, in the Military Department, under date Simla, 17th August 1866, No. 136.

From R. SIMSON, Esq., Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department, Simla; dated Nynce Tal, 7th August 1866, No. 587A.

I am directed to forward the accompanying copy of a letter* from the Personal Assistant to the Inspector General of Police, North-Western Provinces, for

* No. 2541, dated 13th July, and enclosure.

submission to his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, with the view that such measures may be adopted as are considered necessary for checking the extensive and apparently increasing sale of Government Arms in Native States.

From Lieutenant C. A. DODD, Personal Assistant to the Inspector General of Police, North-Western Provinces, to the Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces; dated Nynce Tal, 13th July 1866, No. 2541.

Referring to the correspondence ending with the Junior Secretary's letter, No. 146A, dated 2nd March last, on the subject of the seizure of Government Arms in Ajmere, as reported by the Officiating District Superintendent, in his letter, No. 239, dated 16th December 1865, I have the honor, by desire of the Inspector General of Police, to submit a Memorandum drawn up by Captain Dennehy, District Superintendent, and showing the result of further inquiries up to date, for the information of Government.

2. It is very evident that a very extensive trade in Government Arms has been going on for some time past with the Native States of India, but, at the same time, all efforts of the Inspector General have as yet failed to prove how and whence these Arms were obtained. As shown in the Memorandum submitted, the presumption is that almost all these Arms have been stolen from the Agra Magazine, having been collected piecemeal, and afterwards put together by clever workmen at Jeypore, and other places in the Native States.

3. Condemned Arms, no doubt, have often been sold at auction, without being properly broken up. Orders have been issued, it is believed, since January last, in the Ordnance Department, to prevent such irregularities in future; and European Serjeants are now told off to see that the condemned Arms are properly broken up, and rendered useless, before they are sold. The Magistrate of Agra has also adopted special measures to see that no unlicensed Arms vendors trade in what really are serviceable Arms, sold under the name of old iron.

4. Another available means of obtaining Arms from the Arsenal has been pointed out to the Inspector General, and would seem to require the adoption of stringent preventive measures, and that is, on the occasion of Arms being sent into the Arsenal by different Regiments for repair, and there and then condemned and sold, without being brought on the books.

5. The Inspector General thinks it advisable to submit this Memorandum to Government, without waiting for further report from the District Superintendent of Ajmere, and recommends, as suggested in Captain Dennehy's Memorandum, that application be made to the Agent of Jeypore, with a view to his making local inquiry as to how these Arms come to be disposed of in Jeypore. The Inspector General would further urgently advise that the attention of all Political Officers in charge of Native States, in different parts of India, should be drawn to the matter through the Supreme Government.

9th October 1866.

MEMORANDUM.

On the 16th December 1865, the Superintendent of Police, Ajmere, reported that an important seizure of Arms and Ordnance Stores, appearing to be the property of Government, had been made in the shop of Kesa Aheer. The articles seized were as follows:—

- 1st.—Waist-belts, marked 100th Regiment.
- 2nd.—One Sharp's Carbine, complete.
- 3rd.—Several Carbine barrels and stocks, some complete, and others incomplete, but all belonging apparently to different weapons, and not matching one with the other.
- 4th.—Nine Enfield Rifles, complete, but made up of parts which did not originally belong to the same weapons,—the stocks, locks, and heel-plates showing that they had been filed down and adjusted so as partially to fit together,—the ramrods being in most cases not of the Enfield Rifle, but of the old musket pattern.
- 5th.—Several brass heel-plates.
- 6th.—Enfield Rifle barrels, some complete, and others incomplete.
- 7th.—Stocks and portions of stocks—Enfield Rifle and old musket patterns.
- 8th.—Locks, both for Enfield Rifle and Sharp's Carbine.
- 9th.—Ramrods for Enfield Rifle and old musket.
- 10th.—Three old Curry-pattern Carbines, complete.

2. All these articles bore evident traces of being, or having at one time been, Government property; in some instances the numbers and dates of issue had been effaced, in others the number of the Regiments to which the articles had been originally issued, as well as the dates of issue were plainly legible.

The numbers of Regiments were marked on the heel-plates; those which could be made out were H. M.'s 30th, 42nd, 60th, 82nd, and 84th Regiments, which are still in this country, and 8th Muzaffars, 78th, 81st, 82nd Regiments, and 3rd Company 9th Battalion, Royal Artillery, all of which have either left India or are no longer in this Presidency.

The dates of issue traceable varied from 1846 to 1853—issues of 1857-58 were in the majority.

The District Superintendent communicated at once on the subject with the Officers Commanding those of the above-named Regiments still in India, and forwarded descriptions of the remaining articles to the Inspector General of Ordnance.

3. Kesa Aheer, on his examination before the Assistant Commissioner, Ajmere, admitted having himself purchased the waist-belts (probably from men of the 100th Regiment), and deposed that he had obtained the remaining articles at different times from the unmentioned individuals at Jeypore:—

Elihee Bux, Bazaar Chokpur.

Gulam Nabbee, Songanah Gate.

Moolah, Lohar Mistree, Songanah Gate.

Munnoo and Bhoora, Mistrees, Songanah Gate.

Kesa also stated that these persons informed him that they had got these Ordnance Stores from men who brought them in carts from Delhi and Agra; Mohun Banniah of the Tripolia, as well as Elihee Bux and Bhoora Mistrees, residing outside the Songanah Gate, had acted as his (Kesa's) intermediaries in the transaction, and he had casually heard that one of these individuals, Bhoora Mistree, had been engaged in the purchase of 500 Enfield Rifles for the Rajah of Sekur.

4. On the 19th January 1866, this communication from the District Superintendent, Ajmere, was forwarded by the Inspector General of Police to the Inspector General of Ordnance, with a request that he would afford any information that he could on the subject.

5. On the 23rd January 1866, the Magistrate of Agra reported the seizure at Agra of a quantity of Arms, under most suspicious circumstances (Captain Harward's case).

6. On the 1st February 1866, the Inspector General of Police forwarded all the correspondence for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, North-Western Provinces.

7. On the 5th February 1866, the Inspector General of Ordnance sent, in reply to the Inspector General of Police, a Memorandum to the following effect:—

No positive information had been elicited in his office regarding these Arms and components. The Corps named by the District Superintendent, Ajmere, has, with three exceptions, at different times returned Arms to the Agra Magazine—these exceptions were H. M.'s 42nd, which had returned Arms to the Ferozepore Magazine, H. M.'s 78th to Mhow, and the 3-9 Royal Artillery to Fort William.

Sixty Rifles and 22 Carbines had been lost by other Corps, principally by thefts; and thefts and petty pilferings were constantly committed by Native followers from Corps and Magazines, and were very difficult to repress.

Numbers of Rifles, &c., had been lost by European troops in action. Several Arms had been issued from the Agra Magazine for the protection of European residents of the Station and others during the Mutiny—these were never recovered.

A few implements, Arms, and components had been stolen from the Agra Magazine in the latter part of 1858.

Thousands of small Arms and components were, in 1857, taken by the Mutineers from the Magazines of Delhi, Lucknow, and Cawnpore; it was, therefore, probable that the Arms seized by the District Superintendent, Ajmere, had come into the possession of Natives in the Mutiny; at any rate, no trace could be found in the Ordnance Department of these particular Arms.

8. The Deputy Inspector General of Ordnance was also addressed on the subject. He replied that, as no record was kept in Magazines of regimental or distinguishing marks of Arms returned into store, no clue could be given as to the receipt or disposal of these particular Arms.

9. The District Superintendent, Ajmere, was, on the 14th June 1866, called upon to report the result of his further inquiries; no answer to this letter has as yet been received.

10. On the 10th June 1866, the Inspector General inquired from the Magistrate of Agra whether he could now throw any further light on this case, with reference to the supposed trade in Government Stores at Agra and other places. In reply, the Officiating Magistrate stated that he had up to date been able to obtain the positive identification of one heel-plate only, among the articles in the list forwarded from Ajmere; this heel-plate had been traced as having been at one time in the Agra Magazine; but heel-plates were sold by the maund as old brass, and it was impossible on this clue alone to form any conclusions. Inquiries would be continued and the results reported. The Officiating Magistrate clearly shows that, previous to the month of January 1866, great facilities existed in the Agra Magazine for the secret disposal and concealment of unserviceable Arms ordered to be converted. Musket barrels, &c., were directed to be broken up and disposed of by auction as old iron; but this order had probably been in many instances evaded, and the peculiar facilities afforded at Agra for such evasion, as well as the remunerative prices obtainable for Ordnance Stores of this description when unbroken, as compared with their value when properly broken up and converted, had possibly tempted many, themselves to practise this fraud, and connive at its practice by others.

11. As the case now stands, it is difficult to say, with any degree of certainty, where these Arms seized at Ajmere really came from, or how they got into the hands of the persons who sold them to Kesa Aheer. The recent discoveries and seizures of Arms at Agra, the peculiar facilities for theft which, until lately, existed at the Agra Magazine, and the fact that the greater number of the heel-plates found at Ajmere belonged to Regiments known to have returned Arms to Agra, point strongly towards that Arsenal as the place from which the greater part of the Arms must have come; but, on the other hand, the regimental number would appear to have been found only on the heel-plates, which articles are known to have been habitually sold as old brass at Agra. Besides this the heel-plates on the Arms found at Ajmere did not certainly belong to the weapons to which they were then attached, the components had evidently been collected piecemeal, and then fitted and put together, so that the identification of one part does not give any clue towards the tracing of the other parts. Again, some of the Arms found could not have had any connection with the Agra Magazine, as the Regiments whose numbers were marked on them had returned them into store

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at Ferozepore, Mhow, and Fort William. It is probable then that the trade is not confined to one Magazine, but that it is common in a greater or less degree to every Arsenal in the country. The explanation furnished by the Inspector General of Ordnance is unsatisfactory. The greater portion of these Arms are shown to be issues of 1857 and 1858; they could not, therefore, have been in the Magazines of Delhi, Lucknow, and Cawnpore in May and June 1857, and thus become the spoil of the Mutineers.

12. In the absence of any late report from the District Superintendent of Ajmere, it is impossible to say what he has done in the case. The question is not, however, merely a local one, affecting the Ajmere District only; it is of great and general importance. The circumstances of the seizures at Ajmere and Agra would lead to the supposition that an organized system, with extensive ramifications, exists for obtaining unlawful possession of Arms and components in our territories, and from our Magazines, with a view to their being subsequently disposed of in Native independent territory. It would appear impossible now to get a clue to this system from the individuals resident at Jeypore, who are named by Kesa Aheer, and who, if his statement is to be believed, must be concerned largely in these transactions. I would propose, therefore, that the Political Agent at Jeypore be directed to make inquiries as to the character, pursuits, ostensible means of subsistence, absences from home, relations, and business connections of these persons; that he should also interrogate them on the substance of Kesa's statement, and so endeavour to obtain information which would enable us to trace these sales of Arms to their source.

13. The incidents brought to light on Captain Harward's trial will have certainly induced the authorities of the Ordnance Department to issue directions, and take precautions, sufficient to guard against the future occurrence of these thefts and culpable evasion of orders; but, in order completely to break up the system, the attention of all Political Officers in charge of Native States in different parts of India should be drawn to the matter through the Supreme Government, as no where, but in independent Native territory, will Arms, in any numbers, find a ready market at remunerative prices.

NYNKE TAL,
9th July 1866.

(Signed) F. DENNEHY, Captain.
District Superintendent.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the foregoing correspondence be forwarded to the Foreign Department, for consideration and orders.

(True Extract).

(Signed) H. K. BURNE, Lieut.-Col.,
Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

RESOLUTION.

Though doubtful whether any inquiry which can be instituted, through the Foreign Department, is likely to be productive of much practical result, the Governor General in Council will cause the attention of all Political Officers throughout India to be drawn to the subject; and, in particular, the Governor General's Agent in Rajpootana will be required to investigate and report the circumstances connected with the alleged sale of Arms at Jeypore.

ORDER.—Ordered that extract, paragraph 1, of the foregoing Resolution, together with a copy of the papers received from the Military Department, be forwarded, for information and guidance, to the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and the Punjab; to the Governor General's Agents in

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Rajpootana and Central India; to the Residents at Hyderabad and in Nipal; and to the Political Agent in Munnipore.

(True Extract).

(Signed) J. W. S. WYLLIE,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

ORDER THEREON, 9th October 1866, No. 1575.

No. 81.
Ordered to be communicated to the Resident in Travancore and Cochin, to the Political Agent at Poodocottah, and to the Military Department.
(True Extract).

Secretary to Government.

To the Resident in Travancore and Cochin.
" Political Agent, Poodocottah.
" Military Department.
" Inspector General of Police.

Exl. J. H. Burns.

9th October 1866 v^e 1875

Orders to be communicated
to the President in Paramore and
to the Political Agent at Bodoo
cottah and to the Military Dept.
WON

F.B.

To the President in Paramore & Bodoo
- Political Agent, Bodoo cottah }
- Military Dept. }
- Super. Genl. of Police. }
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