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0-23-11-98.

Judicial (1899) Department.

(1)

ORDINARY Mis

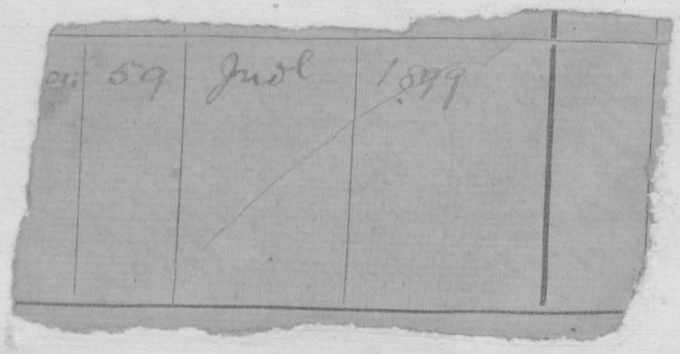
G.O., No. 1009

Confidential No. 81

DATED 28-6-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Fracas between the Sepoys and the Police at Vellore. Recording certain papers forwarded by the D AG, Madras Command, ~~with~~ regarding the recent ——, with the remark that no further action is called for in the matter.



செப்பனிடுபவர் பெயர்
(P) 2063 சுன்ன.

செப்பனிடுவதற்காக எடுக்கப்
பட்ட நாள். 2/05

செப்பனிட்டு முடிக்க நாள் 4/05

சரிபார்க்கும்
மு. நி. பா. எ.
கையொப்பம்

உதவியாள்
கையொப்பம்

[G. 10]

Judicial (189) Department.

CURRENT No.

Confidential No.

Submitted in continuation of the D.A.G's letter dated 13th May 1899 recorded in Fo. No 812 Jud of the 22nd idem E

From

The D. A. G.
Madras Command

Order
Ellis
5-6-99

No. A/N.T: 2966.

Dated 2nd June 1899

Received 5th June 1899

Registered 5th June 1899

Enclosures Judl No 1537 dated 30 and 4 enclosures

Spare copies

SUBJECT

Forwarding with remarks, copies of certain correspondence between regarding the recent fracas between the police & the sepoys at Vellore

For orders.

Sir C. Brooke Anderson

Report further enquiries regarding the conduct of the Police (vide this memo. of) the L. C. C case

No further action necessary.

Submitted with the papers

May be recorded.

AV.

11/6/99

Dept. 13/6/99

Gen. Brooke Anderson's report rather invites & challenges comment but perhaps the less said the better — I think we may concur with the General Commanding that no further action is called for — HL 13-6-99 —

R.H. 13/6/99

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Enclosure No. I.

Report on occurrences at Vellore on the 26th of February 1899.

As far as I am able to ascertain, from careful investigation at the time, and since from repeated enquiries, the facts appear to be as follows:—

At Vellore on the 26th of February 1899 some four or five sepoys had gathered close to a Plantain Bazaar in a lane south of the Police lines.

A Police Head Constable (Muniswami) going his rounds, saw them and told them to move on, saying that "the collecting of crowds of the military frightened the people". The sepoys then said that they were only buying plantains and would move on when they had finished - an altercation then took place and a crowd collected. The Head Constable, then, according to the sepoys told some Constables, who had come up, meanwhile, to hit the sepoys, and one of them hit Private Ghouse Beg and knocked him down - He was much cut and badly hurt - The other sepoys then ran to Camp and reported the matter.

Ghouse Beg states that another Head Constable Abdul Ghani) sat on his chest and hit him He shook him off and got back to Camp about 7.0 p.m.

Meanwhile Subadar Saiyid Fattah reported to me that several sepoys were being belaboured by the Police and townspeople in the bazaar I ordered forty men to be told off, and to meet me at the Police station, about 100 yards from camp - my intention being to take these men with me into the Bazaar and stop any fighting. However on arrival at the Police station I was informed that the only sepoy who had, in reality, been hit (Ghouse Beg) had returned, but six men were still absent.

Learning that these men might be badly treated by the Police and townspeople, I ordered the forty men to go out in two parties and bring in any stragglers, and thus prevent further disturbances

One party under Jemadar Parasuraman Nair went along the main road, in the direction of the Police Lines - The other under Jemadar Abdul Ghuffoor Khan went at right angles into the bazaar.

Both the Jemadars state that no disturbance occurred on the way, to their knowledge and have repeated this on each enquiry. However from what I have heard, I gather that the former party, under Jemadar Parasuraman Nair was met a police constable, who was hit and knocked down, and that there was a good deal of crowding and excitement Meanwhile the remainder of the men having fallen in at the camp under Subadar Saiyid Fattah. I went with the Police Inspector into the bazaar. On my way I met Jemadar Parasuraman Nair's party, they were marching in perfect order, and although there was a large crowd a short distance in rear of them - which had gathered near the Police Lines - while I was in the bazaar I was shown a small stain of blood on a shop front, but do not know whether it was caused by the wounded Sepoy or Constable - When I returned to Camp both parties had returned and the Habildar men, also, were present.

Later on, in the evening, having heard that the sepoys were said to have threatened the Police Lines and kicked in the doors etc, I went down there, but could see no signs of any such occurrence and no doors were broken

Next the Collector held a full enquiry into the matter, during which enquiry the wounded Constable identified two men, both of Jemadar Parasuraman Nair's party (No: 2456 Private Bahadur Sharief and No 2454 Private Kadir Pasha

as having hit him - There was, however, no further evidence against them and no one else could identify either of these two men.
The men have not been allowed to go into the bazaar since this occurrence except on duty which has been carried on as usual, disinfecting the houses.

I had three courses open to me (i) to leave the absent men in the bazaar (ii) to send an unarmed patrol (iii) to send an armed patrol If I adopted the former course I feared that the absent men might be badly treated, if caught, by Police and townspeople - The disinfection work, on which the detachment is employed being very unpopular.

The second course for the same reasons I also considered inadvisable - whereas if I sent a party with rifles, I calculated that the police and people would keep out of their way and thus enable them, easily, to bring in the absent men. This, I believe, was actually the case No official report was sent of the occurrence before, as Lt Battie made a full enquiry and did not arrest any man, or want any man arrested - and stated after his enquiry that there was no evidence on which to try the men. I also understood him to say that as the men had done very good work, he did not want the detachment relieved -

He

54

He asked me in the event of the detachment staying at Vellore, if I considered there would be any further trouble with the police and as I was sure there would not be, I told him I thought he might depend upon there not being any and I understood the matter to have been dropped and then wrote privately to you that everything had ended quietly -

(Sd) J. W. Sherrard
Lieut:
O.C. Detch: 2 8th M.I.
Vellore

No: 59. May 18: 1899. Vellore North Arcot.

From.

Officer Commanding (68)
Detachment 28th M.I.

To.

The Officer Commanding
28th M.I. Madras.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a report on the occurrences of February 26th 1899. at Vellore.

I have &c.

(68) J. W. Sheppard
Lieut.
O.C. Dett: 28th Bn M.I.

Urgent Confidential V

Vellore.
North Arcot.
18th May 1899.

(78)

From. Lieut: Colonel W. H. Lowry
Commanding 28th Madras Infantry

To.
The Assistant Adjutant General
Madras District.

Sir,

In accordance with your No: 447. A.C. of the 16th Instant, I have the honour to submit the following report:-

On the 28th February 1899 I heard from Lieut Sherrard Commanding the detachment 28th Madras Infantry on plague duty at Vellore, that one of the men had been badly knocked about by the Police in the bazaar on the 26th February and one of the Police injured, it was thought by men of the detachment - but that the evidence was very conflicting and that the Collector of North Arcot had taken up the whole matter and was enquiring carefully into it: That no evidence could be produced sufficient to place any one under arrest or in ~~confinement~~ confinement and that I would hear further when the Collector had finished his enquiry.

A few days later the Collector of North Arcot Mr Bulteel, came to see me, and discussed

discussed the case with me. He told me that there was no evidence to convict any of the men in his Court, and that no one had been placed in arrest or confinement. I pointed out that this, more or less, if the men accused continued to be employed might be considered to condone their offence.

After discussing the whole matter together I said to the Collector that, as far as I could see, there were only three courses open:-

1. For the Collector to try in his Court on the spot any man against whom evidence could be found for assault.
2. For any men against whom there was evidence to be placed in confinement and sent for trial by Court-martial.
3. That the Detachment should be at once sent in as a punishment, losing their high Plague pay, and that I would note unfavourably non-Commissioned officers and men against whom there were strong suspicions.

Mr Batten said he particularly did not wish to take the first course, as it would have a bad effect, there was little doubt the Police had also been to blame, and above all, that there was not evidence to obtain a conviction.

I then said that if there was not evidence to convict in his own Court on the spot. If so and even that a conviction could not be obtained from a Court-martial, and that to send men for trial with the certainty of being found not guilty was not advisable.

I then urged the immediate sending in of the Detachment as the only way in which it seemed to me possible to punish men who had caused trouble, but against whom nothing could be proved. Or, if Mr Batten would prefer it, to send in those men who were most suspected.

Mr Batten said he did not wish to lose the services of the detachment, as the men had done excellent work, and had just got to know and understand something about it. But that he would go and see one of the members of Council and see what action was desirable.

Mr Batten left for Vellore the same evening so I did not hear anything further for two days, I wrote to Lieut: Sherrard Commanding the Detachment at Vellore to let me know the moment anything was settled, and to take

a

Summary of evidence if any men were injured.

Lieut: Sherrard wrote to me that he had seen the Collector on his return from seeing me at Madras, and that he did not think any further action was to be taken in the matter, that the men were being employed as usual, and that the Collector had asked him whether he thought there would be any likelihood of any trouble between the men and the Police if the Detachment were kept on? Lieut. Sherrard thought he could assure the Collector that there would not be. I wrote to Lieut: Sherrard to take every possible precaution to get a Bazaar established at the Camp and to prevent the men from going at all into the town except on duty or in parties of four with a Non-Commissioned officer

Since then I heard nothing further as to the case till your memo: No: 447/11-C now under reply.

I had, shortly after hearing of the ill feeling sent the senior native officer

91

of the Detachment an excellent old Subadar, who told a long tale of the unpopularity of the work in the town, and the provocation of the Police and I cautioned him as to keeping the men together, and especially not letting them wander about alone, or argue with the Police. On receipt of your memo: I proceeded to Vellore, I saw all concerned, and made the most careful enquiry I could after this interval.

The facts are, I quite think as stated clearly and admirably in his report from evidence taken at the time, by Mr Buttrue. I could get nothing further, though I naturally heard more of the men's side of the story.

All the native officers, Non-Commissioned officers, and the men of the detachment whom I saw one by one and together, repeated the same story i.e. that "nothing happened" to either of the parties sent out after Private Ghang Beg had been hit that no man was struck by any of the men composing either party. I could not shake this in any way one and all stick to it. Though I told all

that

that it seemed to me a very probable story but one and all gave the same evidence: they marched out, the people cleared away they marched back. no police man was struck.

I saw the police constable who was hurt - No: 1108 Shaik Ismail - He stated as deposed before Mr Batten, and was quite positive in identifying the same two men. He never no one else could identify them and all the men of the party stated that the constable was not hurt at all, and that the two men struck no one. - I must say that the Constable's evidence was weakened, in my opinion, by his identifying with equal confidence and repeatedly, the subadar (who admittedly was not with either party but with the guard in Camp the whole time) as the Jemadar in command of the party. The subadar is a Mussulman, a Syed, an oldish stout man; the Jemadar is an exceptionally black Tamil and the youngest in the regiment.

This certainly caused a doubt in my mind as to the man's evidence, and though he said there was a crowd all round,

(103)

he could bring no one to identify any of the party, or say that he was struck. Also, as far as I can form an opinion it would be difficult for a man, even very slightly angry and excited, to stab a man between the eyes with a fixed bayonet on a heavy rifle, (110) and inflict only two slight scar, which the police Constable shewed?

I would write to say that I think Lieut: Sherrard acted with good judgment in sending the parties out armed. Vellore is a large and rather turbulent town with a considerable Mussulman population who were extremely angry at the disinfection measures and plague precautions and expenditures, and we had had many anonymous letters threatening the plague be witty -

I attach a report by Lieut: Sherrard on the occurrence of the 26th February.

I have &c

(Sd) W. H. Lowry.

Lieut: Col

Comdg: 28th Bde. I.

Confidential

No 453 A.C.

D.A.G. M.C.

I have gone carefully into this case and regrettable as the incident is I can only come to one conclusion viz: that a great deal has been made out of practically nothing - As pointed out by the Collector the work on which the sepoys are engaged makes them eminently unpopular He goes further in para 9 of his report, and not only says that the police can "cause much annoyance in petty matters to the sepoys" but that they have "been pursuing a policy of petty irritation calculated to exasperate the sepoys" No discipline what it may, human nature is much the same all the world over, and I think that a great deal hinged on the way Head Constable Ismail Khan told the sepoys "move on" which appears to have been the spark that caused the conflagration. That a row then took place is evident. The result of this fracas was that one or two individuals on each side were hurt - These have however since recovered, and the worst result

that

that can now be produced by the occurrence
can only be that relations between the
police and the sepoys becomes more s
trained, and in this as I have shewn
above the sepoys can hardly be considered
originators. The evidence, carefully
taken as it has been, is very conflicting,
and from it as now given, I too am
strongly of opinion that any attempt
at a conviction either of sepoys or police
would fail, and that if this be the case,
there is no course open but that which
has already been taken, viz to let the
matter rest as it is, and to treat it as a
case in which both parties are equally
to blame. I think however that it
would be satisfactory to know whether
the police have been punished in any
way for their share in the transaction,
as two parties are a necessary in-
gredient to any fracas or disagreement
I mention this as the Military have been
publically punished in the eyes of the Vellore
community (police included) by "removal"
(apparently) "in disgrace", and this too
before any of their own authorities higher
than Lieut. Shepherd have been enabled

1

to make a full enquiry on the spot, or in
other words, that they have been almost
if not quite condemned unheard. Such
an impression can I think only tend
to seriously increase any ill feeling
that may have hitherto existed, and
shew the police and towns people of Ve
that, in the event of sepoys evening other
regiments making themselves unpopula-
their removal can reasonably be counte
on by a little judicious use of "abuse on"
etc.

2. I can't reconcile the "removal of the
detachment from Vellore in disgrace" etc
recommended in para 10 of the Collectors
report, with the statement that "the sepoys
have been all along doing excellent plague
work, and they are still doing it," made
in para 9 of the same report*. These two
statements are made, practically at one
and the same time, and under the same
date. The former seems to me to be a
somewhat drastic remedy (if no worse
term can be applied to it) for an apparently
trifling breach of the peace, in which although
sepoys were concerned on the one side,
the police on the other would appear to be
just as much, if not more to blame,
and in which they seem to have got off
scot free.

* Dated 29th March or more than a month after the fracas.

2

3. I see that the Collector brings to notice in his report that this Regiment appears to have been somewhat unfavourably connected with Vellore on a former occasion

[illegible] he has good grounds for this statement, though personally I omit to mind the occasion alluded to, but if it is intended that that the present instance is to be remembered in connection with the previous one, and as an argument therefore for the removal of the detachment "in disgrace", it is I think inflicting a punishment on the Regiment as a body, and a punishment which to me seems inordinately severe for a petty brawl in which at the very most, half a dozen men all told were hurt, the injuries in the majority of the cases being but little more than bruises. Discreditable as the occurrence undoubtedly was, and much as I deprecate it, I don't think that it could have been very serious, (judging from Lieut:Col: Lowry's report on what transpired on the occasion of his interview with Mr Buttrey at Madras almost immediately after the occurrence) and I cannot quite understand what necessity can have existed for recourse to a Brawler

4. I would now invite attention to the following facts:- (13B)

(a) That the fracas took place on the 26th February 1899.

(b) That it was inquired into on the spot by the Collector, and by Lieut: Sherard.

(c) That from Lieut:Col Lowry's report the withdrawal of the detachment was suggested by that officer as soon as he heard of the occurrence from Mr Buttrey and within a few days of its occurrence.

(d) That Mr Buttrey in reply expressed his unwillingness to lose the services of the detachment and apparently discouraged its withdrawal.

(e) That there is nothing after this to shew that the detachment in any way misbehaved.

(f) That although partially confined to Cantt viz in their leisure hours there is nothing to shew that this was allowed to interfere in any way with the men in their duty in connection with plague work.

(g) That on the 29th March 1899, i.e more than a month after the occurrence, the removal of the detachment "in disgrace" is recommended.

(h) That even then no action seems to have been decided on for more than another month

month (2.4.99 to 6.5.99) when an urgent necessity appears suddenly to have arisen for a reference in the matter to the military authorities, as to the expediency or otherwise of inflicting punishment, since the men, being confined to Camp, were of no service for plague purposes,

(i) That punishment is decided on and orders issued.

5. These points I think embrace all the prominent features of the case from the time that the fracas occurred, up to the present moment, and there is I think nothing more that I can remark on, unless it be to reiterate my former sentiment viz that it would be satisfactory for many reasons to know whether, in view of the fact that punishment has been meted out to the military, it has also been inflicted on the other side, who can I think only be regarded as being equally, if not more, in fault. This I think if generally known, would tend as much to prevent recurrences of these regrettable incidents, (when military are taken from their legitimate duties to do what apparently civil authorities are unable to do for themselves), as its omission will do to encourage such recurrences.

(14B)

6. The relieving detachment of the 14th Madras Infantry is now in Vellore, and the detachment whose conduct is now under consideration leaves on Monday 22nd instant for Madras.

Madras
20 May 1899

(Sd) E. Brooke Anderson
Br. General
Commanding Madras District

True Copies

Clinkson

Br. General,
Dy. Adjutant General.

CONFIDENTIAL. Judl Pro 2301 Con 205

Discipline-Native Army.

Ootacamund,
24 June 1899.

No. A/N.T-256-C

From

The Deputy Adjutant General, Madras Command,

URGENT. To

The Secretary to the Government of Madras,

Judicial Department.

Sir,

Judl No 2100 D 812 Judl 22-5-99 E

In continuation of my letter No.A/N.T-256-C, dated 13th May 1899, I have the honour to forward herewith copies of the correspondence noted in the margin, and to state that, in the opinion of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the Forces, no further action is called for in the matter.

(1) Letter No.59, dated 18.5.99, from O.C., Detachment 28th M.I., to O.C., 28th M.I., & enclosure. F
(2) Letter No.2/T, dated 18.5.99, from O.C., 28th M.I., to A.A.G., Madras District. H
(3) Memo.No.453-A.C., dated 20.5.99, from G.O.C., Madras District, to D.A.G., M.C. J

This seems a very mild way of describing the offence! HN- 13-6-99-

2. With regard to what appeared to be the most serious feature in the case, namely the failure of the Native Officers in command of the armed parties to report that their men had assaulted the police, it is considered probable that Police Constable SHAIKH ISMAIL was injured in the previous disturbance and that the statements made to Mr BATTEN as to the behaviour of these parties were grossly exaggerated, if not entirely false.

This view is supported by 2nd Lieut.SHERRARD's evidence as to the absence of all signs of an affray at the police lines, which were said to have been attacked by one of the armed parties.

3. The enclosure of your endorsement No.1218, dated 6th May 1899, is returned.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
your obedient servant,

C Edmondson
Brigr-General,
Deputy Adjutant General,
Madras Command.

[G / 24]

1,000—25-3-99.

Judicial Department.

(168)

C. No. 2301 From the Deputy Adjutant Genl, No A/Pr 726 dated 2-6- 1899.

" " " " " " 189 .

" " " " " " 189 .

" " " " " " 189 .

Order
Inio

No 1009 dt 28-6-99

Recorded with the remark that the Govt agrees with the Lt General Commanding the Forces in considering that no further action is called for in the matter

(From orders)

DSec 26/6/99 — AK 27/6/99 — 28/6/99.

To The D.A.G (Q to)

Dospo 30-699