

Indial (1899)) Department.

ORDINARY *Indial*

G.O., No. 8/2

Confidential No. 59

DATED 22-5-99

[Despatch Abstract.]

Fracas between the sepoys and the police
at Vellore. Recording a letter from
the Deputy Assistant General stating
that the necessary enquiries are being
instituted in the matter of the recent —
and that the immediate relief of the
detachment in question by a party belonging
to another regiment has been ordered.

BACK PAPERS.

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SV	313	Pub	19-2-78			
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SV	138		Lodged 4-3-79			

FURTHER PAPERS.

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NORTH ARCOT, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,

Chittoor 29th March 1899

No. 259 OF 1899
D. Magle

FROM

J. K. Batten Esquire,
Collector and District Magistrate,

North Arcot,

TO

The Chief Secretary to Government,
Judicial Department

SIR,

I have the honor to submit my report
in continuation of my telegram
of the 27th February and of my
personal report to Mr. Winterbottom
regarding the fracas between the
Sepoys and Police at Villor.

2. I was in Villor on the
evening of the Sunday, February
26th on my way to Kuppam. At about
7 P.M. I was at the Sub Collector's
house when a Mandidar came and
reported to Mr. Sherrard, the officer
in Command of the Sepoys, of the
28th M. I at the time that a Sepoy

had been knocked down by the
Police and was still in Police
Custody. Mr. Sheeraz, at once
went to see about it; I advised
him if the Sepoy was in Custody
to bail him out quietly and we
would enquire fully into the matter
in the morning. About 8 o'clock
as I was on my way to dinner
with Lieutenant Colonel Lancaster
J. Esq. I met one of the plague
officials who told me that he
heard that Sepoys had wounded
Police with their bayonets but
that all was now quiet. I at once
sent the Joint Magistrate Mr. Dutt
to the spot, and I followed
myself soon afterwards.
When I got to the Sepoy's camp
I found them being called out,
for the 2^d time; and their rifles
and bayonets being examined.
One Sepoy, Private Ghous Beg,
had a severe stab wound, near

across his face, evidently caused
by a violent blow with a stick
and two or three others showed signs of
having been roughly handled. I
got Dr. Edwards, who was at the
spot, being the Medical Officer in
Charge of ^{the} Plague Camp adjoining
the Sepoy's Camp, to take notes of
the injuries, and we then proceeded
to the hospital to see two injured
Police Constables. Dr. Edwards took
notes of their injuries. Constable 1108
Sheik Demail had an incised wound
between his eyes, a cut across the
nose and cheek, and a cut on the
top of the head, besides various
contusions. He was in a weak state,
but has recovered. Constable
1007 Narasimhappa had slight
injuries. I devoted the next three
days to personally enquiring
into the case, as this course was
advisable, the Police ^{being} themselves
parties in the case.

Mr Sherrard on leaving
the Sub Collector's house went to
the Police Station having sent
for 40 men with ^{the} intention of
going and bringing the Sepoy,
said to be still in the hands of
the Police, to the Camp. But when
he got to the Police Station it was
reported to him that the wounded
Sepoy was already back in the
lines, but that 17 men (the correct
number is 19) were still in the bazaar.
So he sent the 40 men in uniform,
with rifles and bayonets (unfixed)
to being in the bazaar in two
parties, each under a Jamadar
and gave them strict orders
not to touch the Police or to have
anything to do with them. The two
parties marched thro' the bazaar
by two routes, the party under
Jamadar Parasuraman going
by the road passing along side
the maidan. And the party
under Jamadar Abdul Gaffar
Khan going by the main bazaar.

The two roads are parallel and
both lead to the street adjoining
the Police lines. A Cooly came
and reported at the Police Station
that the Sepoys were breaking in
the Police lines. Mr Sherrard and
the Police Inspector went toward
the Police lines via the main bazaar,
and met Jamadar Parasuraman
party coming back marching
in an orderly manner. They reported
that they had found no one.
The men were sent back to the
Camp, where the other party
met by Mr Sherrard also
returned. On the Sepoy's
shop close to the Police lines Mr
Sherrard was shown a pool of
blood. Mr Sherrard then went
back to the Police Station and
to the Camp, where he found all the
Sepoys back, except two or three.
He then went and met the Joint
Magistrate, they went to the

Police lines and made enquiries,
and then went to the Camp
(where I met them) and examined
the bazaar to ascertain result. By
this all the Sepoys were back in
Camp. The two Jamanas
reported that nothing occurred
when they went round with the
two parties. After making
the medical examinations
above referred to he returned
home (about 11-30 P.M.) as all was
quiet.

4. To the above extent the facts
are undisputed. I will now
come to the result of my enquiries
which I conducted with every
precaution as regards identi-
fication. Mr Hamilton
the Assistant Superintendent
of Police returned to Peshawar
on the 27th and was present
at my enquiry.

5. There were two series
of events, the first between

5 and 6-30 P.M., with reference to
Sepoys not in uniform, and the
2^d after 7 P.M. with reference to
Sepoys in uniform. It was in
the first series of events that
the Sepoys were injured and
in the second that the two Constables
(1108 & 1007) were wounded.

6. First Series of Events
The Sepoys Shot

Ghouse Beg, (the Sepoy whose face
was wounded) and his companions
say that about 6 P.M. a party of
5 Sepoys were buying plantains
at a shop near the Police lines.
Head Constable Inam Sami
came in uniform and threatened
them saying the townspeople were
afraid of the Sepoys. Then Head
Constable Abdul Ghanikhan
and some other Constables
out of uniform with others

game and abused and beat them.
Ghouse Beg was knocked down
and Abdul Ghaffar Sat on
him. After a while he managed
to get away, and reported
himself at the Camp. No one
supports this story, of the
Sepoys, and the Sepoys say
nothing of any disturbance
at the Police lines.

The Police version -

Second Police Constable
Dewanji Hargan says that
what really happened at the
plaintain Saker's Shop is that
about 5 PM he saw a crowd
of about 20 Sepoys (out of uniform)
round the Shop. Thinking this
gathering might create a ^{riot} ~~riot~~
he asked them to disperse. They
refused to do so but finally
dispersed at the entreaty of
the plaintain Saker.

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Next follows some rather vague evidence
(of Police Constables and others) that at about
5.30 or 6 PM, some sepoy from 5 to 20 in
number, out of uniform, came towards
the Police lines whirling sticks and Chap-
-ping the Police to fight, and then kicked
open some of the doors in the Police lines.
If the evidence is to be believed, of the only
three Constables there at the time two merely
ran away and the other was slightly
beaten and shut himself up in his house.
It is significant that the Police witnesses
say they did not recognize the wounded
sepoy Ghouse Beg as among the attack-
-ing party.

7. Second Series of Events

Mr. Sheppard as stated above sent
out the 2 parties of Sepoys at about
7.15 or 7.30 PM, by different routes
to bring in any stray ^{sepoys} parties from the
bazaar. Jamadar Abdul Ghaffar
Khan's party went by the main bazaar
and returned by the 'long bazaar',
adjoining the Maidan, and Jamadar

Persaraman's party went by the long bazaar
and returned by the main bazaar. The
parties passed each other at the cross
roads adjoining the Police lines. Both
Jamadar says that absolutely nothing
occurred on the way. But the Police
produce an overwhelming mass of
evidence to show that a good deal
did occur. Constable no 1007 was
going to plague duty in uniform
from the lines. He met Jamadar
Abdul Ghaffar Khan's party in the
long bazaar. The Sepoys all raised their
rifles to strike him but the officer (identi-
fied as the Jamadar) prevented them.
But one sepoy (unidentified) prodded
him in the neck with the butt of the
rifle, poked off his uniform, and again
prodded him in the face. Then the party
marched on, in proper rank. As to the
other party, (Jamadar Persaraman's)
Head Constable Munisami Naide says
that directly they left the Police station
they were out of order and marching
out but I do not believe this, as
in a moment of confusion

it is quite against the weight of evidence.
The real mischief happened when the
two parties came close to the police lines.
Persaraman's party appears to have
arrived first. He is alleged to have
said on his arrival "Halt, fix bayonet."
At any rate there seems not to be much
doubt that the bayonets of at any rate
Persaraman's party, if not of Ghaffar
Khan's party, were fixed at the time
the disturbance arose. Constable no 1108
Shank Dombal was in uniform on
beat duty. Hearing a noise he ran
towards the lines, where he was attacked
by the Sepoys (Persaraman's party).
A sepoy jabbed him with his fixed
bayonet between the eyes. The other
Sepoys said, "Don't use the bayonet,
use the butt," and another sepoy
prodded him in the face with the butt,
cutting his cheek and nose. (Dr. Edwards
opinion was that this wound was
caused by a cutting instrument.)
Then others struck him with the butt.
He sat down in the veranda of
a shop, feeling faint and bleeding.

properly. After he recovered a little,
he crossed the street and sat down
in another shop. By this time Jamar
Abdul Ghaffar Khan's party arrived, and
one of his sepoy's prodded the Constable again
on the top of the head ^{with his butt.} causing a severe
wound, and others also struck him with
their rifles. At the same time as this
or a little before, a Constable called Verasami
was sitting in the shop of a shopkeeper
called Krishnaswami. The sepoy's parti-
cularly wanted to get hold of Verasami,
but he managed to escape. A sepoy
struck Krishnaswami in the face with
the bayonet, for helping Verasami to
escape, and caused a slight scratch.
While this was going on and afterwards
sepoy's of both parties seem to have rushed
round the police lines, and kicked in a
few doors. There was a good deal of
hubbub, and the shopkeepers all closed
their shops. One shopkeeper's lantern was
broken by the sepoy's. The whole affair
could not have taken more than a
few minutes, as the parties were back
about 20 minutes after they started.

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8 Summary of what happened, accor-
ding to my view of the evidence.

About 5 o'clock Head Constable Muni-
sami ordered a largish party of sepoy's
out of uniform to "move on". This appears
to have irritated them and though neither
the police nor the sepoy's will say what
really happened next, I have not much
doubt that about 6 o'clock a party of
sepoy's attacked the police lines, and
were repulsed by the police, and Ghose
Beg was wounded and one or two others
roughly handled. There is a ~~strong~~ ^{strong} rumour,
which I consider has some truth in it,
that in repulsing ^{the} sepoy's, the police called
to their aid jatkah drivers' Coolies &c.
The fact is that the sepoy's, from the nature
of their work, are very unpopular, and
the populace naturally side with the police
who are always with them. It is probable
that the police who fought with the
sepoy's were those who the sepoy's in
their version (which I do not for a moment
believe) say wantonly attacked them. The
wounded sepoy's were also no doubt
involved in the same fight, though their

Police witnesses say they did not see them. But there is no hope of eliciting the truth as regards what really happened at this stage, and criminal proceedings taken by either side would be useless.

But what is really serious is the second outbreak, by the Sepoys armed and in uniform who when ordered to go out to bring in quietly any of their men who were still in the bazar, took the opportunity to attack all the policemen they met, and to attack the police lines. It is evident that both parties, especially that of Perse Ramani were thoroughly out of hand. Luckily the harm done was after all not very much.

9. Causes of the Smeute.

The Sepoys are engaged in the very unpopular work of disinfection, and I am sorry to say that many little episodes point to the conclusion that the police side with the populace against the Sepoys. There is always friction between Sepoys and police, and the police have the power to cause much annoyance in petty matters to the Sepoys. Head Constable Munisami ^{himself} an old Sepoy Officer, seems to have been the man

He is a man who
has been
in the
army

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whom the Sepoys felt to be most against them. Initially a Sepoy had a report ^{made} before been arrested by the police and charged before the joint Magistrate with being drunk and disorderly, and had been convicted. The feelings of the Sepoys were greatly excited, and they were especially anxious to get hold of the Constables responsible for the arrest and conviction. The rather indiscreet order of Head Constable Munisami to the Sepoys, to "move on" seems to have been the immediate cause of the smute. I do not in any way defend the Sepoys, but at the same time there is not much doubt that the police had been pursuing a policy of petty irritation, calculated to exasperate the Sepoys. Added to all this is the fact that when this Regiment was last in Vellore they committed a riot which led to their being sent away. The Sepoys have been all along doing speak out plague work, and they are still doing it. At my request they are now confined to Camp except when on duty. There have been no signs of any further tendency to a riot, the

Police and Sepoys leaving each other
separately alone.

10. Course to be taken.

I Very strongly deprecate a prosecution
of the Sepoys. I very much doubt if a
prosecution would result in a conviction.
It would be useless to prosecute for
the first series of events, as the Police
themselves do not say in full what
really occurred. As regards the second
series of events, the action of the
Sepoys is both a military offence
and a civil offence. I am inclined
to think that it was more serious
as a military offence, a breach
of discipline, than as a civil offence.
If I read article 170 of the Indian
Articles of War aright, an offence which
is primarily a serious breach of
military discipline but is also a
civil offence should prima facie be
tried by Court Martial. I have discussed
the question of a Court Martial with
the Colonel of the Regiment. I gather

See p. 107
10/10/9

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from him that very strong evidence
is needed for a conviction. Now I have
a list of both the parties of Sepoys the
were concerned. But as regards indi-
viduals that actually committed
specific acts of violence, there is very
little evidence as to identification.
Constable 1108 has clearly, with every
precaution on ^{my} part, identified
the Sepoy that struck him between the
eyes with the bayonet and also the
Sepoy who cut him on the face with
the butt, but cannot identify the
Sepoys who inflicted the other injuries.
But no other reliable witness can
support the identifications made by
Constable 1108. Constable 1007 cannot
identify the Sepoy who struck him,
but he identifies the officers who tried
to prevent the Sepoys from attacking
him as Jamadar Abdul Ghafoor
Khan. Some witnesses profess to identify
the Subadar Sayid Futtah as the one
who was with the more riotous party of
Sepoys, but I am satisfied that this

Subadar cannot have been these,
and that he has been confined with
Jannadar Perograman who is like him
in build and complexion. There is practically
no other reliable evidence of identifica-
tion of individuals. I understood
from the Colonel that a Court Martial
will not convict on the evidence of only
one man, and that it would not
convict a body of men generally unless
specific acts were brought home to
individuals. A Court Martial would
therefore not be of much use, and
if it did not result in a conviction
would prevent the Sepoys being other-
wise punished. Even if under Article
170 of the Articles of War we can
try the Sepoys for the civil offence
the prosecution would, for similar
reasons, probably fail, in which
case more harm would be done
in good. Fakils would be engaged
on both sides, and much mutual
crimination no doubt indulged
in. As a matter of general policy
I consider a prosecution of the Sepoys

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(Especially a fruitless one) would
handicap severely the usefulness
of the Sepoys on disinfection work,
whether the same Sepoys or Sepoys
from a different Regiment. A prosecution
held in Villore itself would be very
mischievous as regards plague work.
What I recommend is that if Govern-
ment can see its way to such a
course, no criminal Proceedings
may be taken, but that the detachment
be punished departmentally. The
removal of the detachment from
Villore in disgrace, with the consequent
loss of their heavy plague emoluments
might meet the case. In any case
I think the present detachment
should be removed and other Sepoys
preferably of another Regiment
accustomed to plague work, sent
instead. Pending the orders of Govern-
ment I have directed the Police
not to charge the Sepoys before a
Magistrate.

11. I regret the delay in the

A. Pr. + circ

Just 2 DEPA

DEPARTMENT

The recent fracas between the Leveys
2 others at Bell's

C. No. 1537 From the *St. Mary's, Ind. Rev. No. 257*, dated *29-3-1898*.

It is a pity that the report was not more promptly submitted.

I am disposed to agree with Mr. Batten that the best course is simply to remove the Detachment - I concur in the proposed reference to the Lt. Genl. - "

9-4-89 -

For others

Subj. for perusal & orders.
The D. Magistrate's report may
perhaps be referred to the Lt. Col.
Commanding the Force for opinion.

5/4/99
 6/4/99
 7/4/99

read: N. B. K.

Also agree

A. G. H 3.5.99

I agree. The sepoy are in
Kellogg for plague work, but are
now by the Dr. Hughton's desire confined
to their camp - where of course
they are of no use at all. It will
be better to remove them, for
there will be ^{further} friction between them
& the police if they remain.

MA 11.4.29

N. B. Have the troops been removed?

CS

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13
Judicial
C no 1537

Ref. no 1218 d 6-5-99
Referred to the
D.A.G. for favour of
the opinion of the L.G.C.
F. with special reference
to para 10 of the D.M's
report. The reports being
confined to their camp
are of no service for
pleasure purposes.

(from orders)
By
5/5/99
P.
6/5/99

To The D.A.G.
Madras Command
Dated 6-5-99

URGENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

Discipline Native Army 2

Ootacamund,

13th May 1897

No.

11.10.1

Ind. 2100

From

The DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL, MADRAS COMMAND.

To

The Secretary to the Government of Madras
Judicial Department

ENCLOSURES.

SIR,

With reference to your endorsement No. 1218 dated the 6th instant, I am desired to inform you that necessary inquiries are being instituted in the matter and the immediate relief of the detachment in question by a party belonging to another regiment has been ordered.

2. I am further to point out that the fact of the present detachment being confined to Camp when not on duty, has apparently not prevented its being used for plague purposes.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

Your obedient servant,

C. Simpson

Br. General

Deputy Adjutant General

CONFIDENTIAL.