

Marine
Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No. *176 mar*

DATED *2 March 1897*

[Despatch Abstract.]

Blackmailing of immigrant Coolies: Pros:
Judicial Dept transferring letter from the Ceylon
Govt inviting the opinion of this Govt as to
the adoption of certain precautionary measures
against the — to Ceylon, Govt to the P. P.
Officer for remarks.

T.C. 2/3/97

4/3/97

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
	227	mar.	07				
			25-5-91				

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
33	467						
208	E 7	20-3-97					

CURRENT No. 227

From
The Judicial Dept

Order N^o 176 Mar of 2.3.97
Communicated
to the Presidency Lab office
for remarks.

No. 227

Dated 16th February 1897.

Received 20.2.97

Registered _____

Enclosures one.

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Transferring them from the
Ceylon Government inviting
opinion of the Govt. as to
suggestions made ~~in~~ regard
ing the blackmailing of
immigrant coolies -

FURTHER PAPERS.

Recd.

1896.

Enclosures

Regd.

Spare copies

G.O., No. 1830, 18th November 1896.

NOVEMBER.

Black-mailing of Cooly-recruiters for Ceylon.

Communicating report from the Inspector-General of Police on the alleged — to the Public Works Department and the Board of Revenue with the request that orders be issued to prevent the practice by certain subordinates of the Salt and Railway departments; and ordering that the Government of Ceylon be addressed.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—again the following papers :—

G.O., No. 1034, Judicial, dated 19th June 1896.

Read—the following paper :—

From the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Colombo, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 5th June 1896.

I have the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copy of letter and its enclosures from Mr. W. P. Metcalfe, of Dunsinane estate, Punduloya, relative to the alleged black-mailing of certain immigrant coolies, and to state that this Government will feel obliged if you will, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor of Madras in Council, be so good as to cause inquiries to be made into the complaints of black-mailing which have been addressed to this Government.

Order—No. 1034, Judicial, dated 19th June 1896.

Communicated to the Inspector-General of Police, with the request that the result of the inquiries made may be reported to Government.

(True Extract.)

(Signed)

J. F. PRICE,
Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Police, Madras.

G.O., R. No. 1232, Judicial, dated 21st July 1896.

Read—the following paper :—

From the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Colombo, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 8th July 1896.

I have the honour to transmit, for your information, the accompanying copies of correspondence relative to the alleged black-mailing of coolies at stations of the South Indian Railway, and to state that this Government would be much obliged if steps could be taken, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council, to remedy the grievance of which complaint is made.

Order—R. No. 1232, Judicial, dated 21st July 1896.

Communicated to the Inspector-General of Police, in continuation of G.O., No. 1034, Judicial, dated 19th June 1896.

(True Extract.)

(Signed)

J. F. PRICE,
Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Police.

READ—also the following paper :—

From M. HAMMICK, Esq., I.C.S., Inspector-General of Police, Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 26th October 1896, No. 4190.

With reference to G.Os., No. 1034, Judicial, dated 19th June 1896, and No. 1232, Judicial, dated 21st July 1896, dealing with the black-mailing of coolie recruiters for Ceylon, I have the honour to say that I communicated the orders to the Superintendents of Police, Trichinopoly and Tinnevely, for report. I enclose their replies.

2. In this question we are dealing, on the one side, with an unscrupulous class of men, the Ceylon recruiters, who as a rule are men of indifferent character and not likely to stop at trifles in the matter of recruiting, and, on the other side, with several classes of men, officials and others, who are not likely to be over-scrupulous in the matter of making money when possible out of the recruiters.

3. The recruiter takes minors away occasionally without the permission of their guardians; he also takes away farm labourers and other workmen without the consent of their masters. He is opposed by both guardians and masters. Besides this, he has to run the gauntlet of the police who, no doubt, are not always honest, the subordinates of the Salt Department who personate police officers, and the Railway officials who find it easy to make a small income from the ignorant recruiters by issuing tickets for shorter distances than those for which the coolies and recruiters have paid.

4. It is useless to inquire into the special cases referred to by the Ceylon planters in the accompanying papers in the absence of the recruiters themselves. The charges, of course, would be met by a flat denial. The Superintendents have therefore inquired generally into the matter of black-mailing.

5. As to kidnapping by these recruiters, there has recently been a conviction in Salem district. Mr. West in Trichinopoly speaks of three convictions there in this year and one case under trial. He also refers to the case of six minors being kidnapped from the Native State of Pudukkottai. The Assistant Superintendent of Police at Tuticorin, who has written a very good report on the matter, refers to three recent cases of ill-treatment at the hands of recruiters at Tuticorin, in two of which attempts were made to kidnap minors. The Tinnevely Superintendent says that when in Salem he had reason to believe that much kidnapping was going on, and that in Tinnevely there were three prosecutions in 1894 and one conviction. All this shows that there is another side to the question, and that our police on this side are right in not allowing recruiting parties to pass down the line of rail to Tuticorin without inquiry.

6. On the other hand, there is, no doubt, plenty of evidence that black-mailing has been carried on. The opportunity offered has been too good to be resisted. The ticket clerk at a small station on the South Indian Railway combines with the police to fleece the unfortunate recruiter and his party, and the evidence of this given by the letters from the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent need not be repeated here; it is undoubtedly true.

7. It may be hoped that, now the attention of all officers has been drawn to the matter by a special notice in the Police Gazette, the instances of black-mailing will become less frequent, and I do not believe myself that the cases have ever been of sufficient frequency hitherto to be of any real check on the number of immigrants into Ceylon. It is only a few recruiters who have complained and most of their complaints appear to be of petty pilfering.

8. Besides, however, warning the police, I think it would be well to warn the South Indian Railway authorities of what is said to go on at the stations on that line, and also to ask the Commissioner of the Salt and Abkari Department to warn his superior officers to be on the look-out for cases of extortion by Salt peons. A Salt peon in Trichinopoly was lately convicted and sentenced for petty extortion from some Ceylon coolies.

9. The only other step I can suggest is the appointment of a special agent to watch over these coolies at Tuticorin and the institution of some plan under which, as in the cases of recruiting for Natal or the French Colonies, recruiters should be bound to produce their recruits before the nearest magistrate and obtain from him a pass for them which would convey them safe through all the police and railway stations to the steamer. Probably, however, for the present it will be thought sufficient that special orders have been issued to the police on the subject. The result of another year's work may be awaited.

ORDER— No. 1830, Judicial, dated 18th November 1896.

The Inspector-General's letter will be communicated to the Public Works Department (Railway Branch) and to the Board of Revenue (Separate Revenue), with the request that they will take action to prevent the molestation and black-mailing of recruiters of coolies for Ceylon which appears to be at present practised by subordinates at certain stations on the South Indian Railway and in some cases by Salt peons passing themselves off as police constables.

2. The Government agrees with the Inspector-General in the conclusions in paragraph 9 of his letter.

3. The following letter will be addressed to the Government of Ceylon.

(True Extract.)

A. T. ARUNDEL,
Ag. Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Police.
" Public Works Department.
" Board of Revenue (Separate Revenue).

Exd A. Raiff.

Exd A. Raiff.
227/87



PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following paper—

From the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Colombo,
dated 1st February 1897:—

In continuation of my letter of 31st December 1896, I am directed to inform you that it has been suggested— as a further precautionary measure against the blackmailing of immigrant coolies— that the Port Officer at Tuticorin should be appointed by the Indian Government to be Protector of Emigrants.

2. It also been suggested that the South Indian Railway authorities be moved to erect a shed for coolies in the Railway Compound at Tuticorin where they may stay, leaving it only to purchase rice or other necessaries thus preventing any interference with them from persons outside. It has further been suggested that a truck for coolies be attached to the train the Railway authorities propose running to the pier at Tuticorin for 1st and 2nd Class passengers, in order that the coolies who book through may go straight to the pier and to the steamer, should they wish it, without going into the town.

3. I am to ask the Government of Madras to be so good as to favour this Government with its opinion regarding the above proposals and, if there should be no objection, with the continuance of the good offices of your Government in securing their adoption.

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ORDER,

ORDER No. 227, dated 16th February 1897.

The foregoing letter will be transferred
to the Marine and Public Works Departments for remarks.

(True extract)

Ranis

for Chief Secretary.

To the Marine Department (with copy of G.O., No. 1830 J., d/18-11-96). ✓

" " Public Works Department.

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