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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Cons. 21-4-57

G.O. No. 727	Press Mis.
147-48	
Dated 21-4-	1857.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 147. Read the following Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in the Military Department, dated 1st April 1857, No. 1123.

Read the following letter from Colonel F. A. REID, Quarter Master General of the Army; to Colonel C. A. BROWNE, Secretary to Government, Military Department, dated 31st March 1857, No. 120.

SIR,

I have the honor by order of His Excellency the Commander in Chief to forward for submission to Government, copy of the Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry, assembled to investigate the cause of a fire, which occurred in the Parcherry of the 74th Highlanders at Jackatalla.

Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry held at Jackatalla on Thursday the twelfth day of February 1857, by order of Colonel John MacDuff, 74th Highlanders, Commanding, to investigate into the cause of a fire which took place in the Parcherry, 74th Highlanders, on the night of the 11th February 1857.

President.

Lieutenant Colonel J. Monkland, 74th Highlanders.

Members.

Captain J. Falconer, 74th Highlanders. Captain F. R. Thackeray, 74th Highlanders.

The Court having assembled pursuant to order proceed to receive evidence regarding the origin of the Fire.

1*st. Evidence.*—Bridget Nelson, wife of Private Robert Nelson of the 74th Highlanders states. My husband Private Robert Nelson left his room in the Parcherry last night the 11th Instant about a quarter past eight o'clock to answer his name at Roll Call in the Company barrack room, I was standing outside the Parcherry at the same time, when I discovered smoke issuing from my room, I ran in and discovered the thatch on fire and gave the alarm. I had no fire in the room at the time, except a lamp burning near the window on a table. I consider that the fire was caused by the wind blowing through a broken pane of glass in the window and driving the window curtain against the flame of the lamp which was within reach of the curtain.

2nd Evidence.—George Bason, No. 2284 Private in the 74th Highlanders, states. I live in the room of the Parcherry next to that of Private Robert Nelson. About a quarter past eight o'clock on the night of the 11th February 1857, while sitting in my room, I discovered smoke coming through the thatch, I immediately went into the room occupied by Private Robert Nelson, I discovered a Cotton box cover on fire which had apparently in some manner, which I cannot account for, set fire to the roof.

Question by the Court.—When you entered Private R. Nelson's room did you discover a lamp burning, and if so, in what position was it placed.

Answer.—I did not see a lamp burning nor any light which could have caused the fire.

3rd Evidence.—James Aitkin, 1929 Private in the 74th Highlanders states, about a quarter past eight o'clock on the night of the 11th February 1857, I heard that the Parcherry was on fire, on going to look where it was, I found that it was in the room of Private Robert Nelson, I went there and met Private George Bason at the door, and on going in discovered the roof on fire, I cannot account for the origin of the fire, as I discovered nothing which could have caused it.

The Court after having made every enquiry are unable to collect further evidence as to the origin of the fire.

Opinion.—The Court having maturely considered the foregoing evidence, are of opinion, that the fire which occurred in the Parcherry at Jackatallah on the night of the 11th February

1857, originated in the room occupied by Private Robert Nelson of the 74th Highlanders, and was the result of accident and not of design.

(Signed) G. MONKLAND, Lieut-Colonel, 74th Highlanders,
President.

Jackatallah, 12th February 1857,
(„) J. FALCONER, Captain 74th Highlanders.
(„) F. W. THACKERY, Captain 74th Highlanders.

Approved.

(„) J. MACDUFF, Colonel, 74th Highlanders.

(A true Copy.)

(„) H. O'CONNELL, Captain,
Acting Dy. Assistant Quarter Master General of the Army.

Communicated to Department Public Works.

(Signed) H. MARSHALL, Lieutenant Colonel,
Dy. Secretary to Government.

No. 148. ORDER THEREON, No. 727; dated 21st April 1857.

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer with reference to the order of Government dated 27th March, No. 564.

(Signed) H. FORBES,
Acting Secretary to Government.

12

Military Department

No. 1129.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation

Under date the 1st April 1857.

Read the following letter

Quarter Mr Genl's Office

No. 126.

From

The Quarter Master General

of the Army.

To

The Secretary to Government

Military Department

Sir,

I have the honor by order of His Excellency the Commander in Chief to forward for submission to Government, copy of the Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry, assembled to investigate the cause of a fire, which occurred in the Fore Berry of the 74th Highlanders at Jacktallah.

Fort St George
31st March 1857.

(Signed) F. A. Thesiger
Dy Mr Genl

Proceedings

Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry held at Jacobabad on Thursday the Twelfth day of February 1857, by order of Colonel John Macbean 7th Highlanders Commanding to investigate into the cause of a Fire which took place in the Barrackroom 74th Highlanders, on the night of the 11th February 1857.

President.

Lt Colonel J Monteland 74th Highlanders

Members

Captain J Falconer 74th Highlanders

Capt & Lt Finnemore 74th Highlanders

The Court having assembled pursuant to order proceed to record the evidence regarding the origin of the Fire.

Bridget Nelson Wife of Private 1st Evidence
Robert Nelson of the 74th Highlanders
states. My husband Private Robert
Nelson left his room in the Barrackroom
last night the 11th Instant about a
quarter past eight O'Clock to answer his

his name at Roll call in the
Company barrack room, I was
standing outside the Barrackroom
at the same time, when I observed
smoke issuing from my room, I ran
in and discovered the blanket on
fire and gave the alarm. I had no
fire in the room at the time, except
a lamp burning near the Window
on a table. I consider that the
fire was caused by the blanket
blowing through a broken pane of
Glass in the Window and closing
the Window curtain against the
flame of the lamp, which was within
reach of the curtain.

1st Evidence

George Bason No 2284 Private in the 74th Highlanders states.
I live in the room of the Barrackroom
next to that of Private Robert
Nelson about a quarter past eight
O'Clock on the night of the 11th Inst/57
while

while sitting in my room, I discovered smoke coming through the Thatch, I immediately went into the room occupied by Private Robert Nelson, I discovered a hollow box over the fire which had apparently in some manner, which cannot account for, set fire to the roof.

When you entered Private Nelson's room did you discover a lamp burning, and if so, in what position was it placed.

Question by the Court.

I did not see a lamp burning nor any light which could have caused the fire.

Answer

James Arthur 1929 Private 3rd Evidence on the 74th Highlanders states - about a quarter past eight O'Clock on the night of the 11th February 1857. I heard that the Barracks were on fire, on going to look where it was. I found that it was in the room of Private Robert Nelson, I went there and

met Private George Mason at the door, and on going in discovered the roof on fire, I cannot account for the origin of the fire as I discovered nothing which could have caused it.

The Court after having made every enquiry are unable to collect further evidence as to the origin of the fire.

Opinion

The Court having maturely considered the foregoing evidence are of opinion, that the fire which occurred in the Barracks at Jacktatallah on the night of the 11th February 1857, originated in the room occupied by Private Robert Nelson of the 74th Highlanders, and was the result of accident and not of design.

Jacktatallah, 12th February 1857.

Sgt. G. Mountland Sr. Colr. 74th Highlanders President

Sgt. J. Falconer Cap. 74th Highlanders

" F. W. Thackery Captain 74th Highlanders

Approved

Sgt. J. Mac Duff Colr. 74th Highlrs

(A true Copy)

Sgt. D. O'Connell Captain ag. Dy. Asst. Qr. Mr. Genl. of the Army

Communicated

Communicated to de-
partment Public Works
Signed H Marshall Sec Colly
by Secy to Govt

D
Lewis Smith

Cons: 21st March/57 Nos 45-46

Public Works 1857 Dept.
Cons 21st April.

No. 704

Extract from the Minit. of Cons. in the Military Depart.

Dated 1st April 1857
Rec'd 6th " "
from Chief Engr. 27th April/57 Cl. 865 Cons 22nd

Communicating a Letter from the Dy. Mr. Genl. of the Army forwarding copy of the Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry, assembled to investigate the cause of a fire which occured in the Barrackery of the 74th Highlanders, at Jaskalla.

With an order No. 727 - 21st April.

No 47 & 48

No. 727

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer with reference to the order of Government dated 27th March No. 564.

Fort St. George
21st April 1857

1 Copies to the Chief Engr. Cirp. 22nd.