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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Comm. 10-2-1860

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
for the month of February 1860.*

No. 81. Read the following letter from H. D. PHILLIPS, Esq., Commissioner of Tanjūr; to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated 9th January 1860, No. 643.

I have the honor to reply to the order of Government, dated the 21st December 1859, No. 2962, calling on me to report the circumstances under which, at the close of 1858, the export of grain, from Nágūr and Negapatám, was prohibited by Mr. Whiteside, then acting Head Assistant Collector; how long the prohibition lasted and whether the acting Head Assistant had been empowered by me to issue such an order, without my sanction, as it seems he did.

2. I have been unable to answer this communication so soon as I could have wished, owing to the necessity of an application to the Collector of Tanjūr for all such particulars as I could not recollect after an interval of a twelve month.

3. On the 6th instant, I received from the Collector copies of the only two papers which are in his records relative to Mr. Whiteside's prohibition. These consist of a vernacular memorandum from the latter gentleman addressed to myself as Collector, of date the 1st December 1858, in which Mr. Whiteside reported the fact of his having, on the previous 25th November, issued orders to the Negapatám and Nágūr Sea Custom managers prohibiting the export of grain from those ports.

4. Immediately on receipt of this communication on the 5th December, I appear to have replied also by vernacular Yád-dásht, which was the mode of communication then in force in the district, directing the immediate cancelment of the prohibition order; and I apprehend that my instruction must have reached the Head Assistant Collector's Kacherí at Negapatám, on the 7th or 8th idem; so that the prohibition may have lasted 13 days.

5. The circumstances under which Mr. Whiteside was compelled to adopt the course taken by him, are stated in the enclosed translation of his Yád-dásht; and Mr. Cadell, the present Collector of Tanjūr, observes in the letter transmitting the copies of the Yád-dásht in question, that Mr. Whiteside's order was published just after the occurrence of the grain riots at Combaconam and at a time when the roads, throughout this and the adjoining districts, were tendered altogether impassable by the heavy and unprecedented inundations, which then took place,

6. Speaking from my own knowledge of the condition of the district at the close of 1858, consequent on an excessive rise in the prices of grain and the deficient crops of that and the previous two years, I may safely say that grain riots were impending in every direction, and, judging from what seemed sympathy on the part of the sepoys, with a starving population, I am sensible that Mr. Whiteside was placed in a position of extreme embarrassment. I apprehend, also, he acted with a view to keep the peace in the two towns of Nágūr and Negapatám. He had not, however, my sanction for passing an order of so important a character, the ordinary duties of the Head Assistant Collector on the coast, being simply those which arose in connection with the realization of taxes on the export and import trade of the two places and other ports of the seaboard.

7. Judging from the temper of the lower classes at Nágūr and Negapatám, excited, as they then were, by the supposed retention of grain in the stores of the principal merchants, I am myself quite satisfied that no attempt would, at that time, have been made by the wholesale grain sellers to ship their stock; or if, acting under the impression that the Police authorities would protect them and secure the passage of rice or paddy to the cargo boats, the merchants had attempted its shipment, I have no doubt whatever that it would have been carried off into the town and its suburbs, by the hungry people, who were then crying out for grain. An attack of the kind on grain only, might have been the signal for other robberies, and grave difficulties would perhaps have been the result.

8. Although, then, Mr. Whiteside's intervention was beyond a doubt in the teeth of the non-interference principle, which a Government official should uphold and enforce, it is a matter for consideration whether, in this instance, a departure from it may not have tended to prevent much popular tumult and serious disorder.

... copies of the only two papers which are

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
for the month of February 1860.*

Memorandum from Mr. W. S. WHITESIDE, Head Assistant Collector; to the office of the Magistrate, dated Negapatám, 1st December 1859, No. 159.

The people living in Negapatám and other places having complained that, in consequence of the high price (of grains), the paddy and rice merchants have closed their godowns; and do not sell paddy and rice to the poor people; I issued a takí to the Police Amín of Negapatám enclosing therein a proclamation to the effect, that the paddy and rice merchants living in Negapatám, Valipaliem, Nágúr and other places should have their godowns open and sell paddy and rice to the poor, without the least delay; and continued to take due care and precaution to avoid any out-break. On the 25th November, the said Police Amín sent an arzi No. 311, accompanied with a list of the merchants and brokers in Negapatám, who continued to sell paddy and rice as per the order, stating that, as given out by the people, the merchants were going to export the rice in reserve, and the absence of rice, here, would bring on distress, that besides the high price of rice, there are breaches here and there full of water, which would prevent, for the present, bandies and rice getting in from the villages; that if the article in hand should be exported, the people would cause a riot in their eagerness to get it; and that an order should be issued that very day to the Sea Custom Manager at Negapatám, not to export rice, and to ask the merchants to sell the article here only without any delay. The Tahsildar of Kívalur was directed to take care in the sale of rice; and he informed me in person, that till the present breaches should be filled up and the road repaired, no paddy and rice could be procured from other places; that there would be no riot if the article in hand should continue to be sold up to that time; and that the exportation of rice should be postponed. Thereupon, I directed the Tahsildar to bring all the merchants to the Huzúr Kacherí on the 26th and issued orders on the 25th to the Sea Custom Managers of Negapatám and Nágúr, ordering them not to allow exportation of rice and paddy till a second order, under the impression that, on ascertaining from the merchants the quantity of rice in hand, I might give an order to export rice and paddy, if it should be advisable. Besides, having been informed on the 26th by the Commanding officer, that the poor people were crowded together for want of rice, because the merchants did not open their godowns and sell rice, I went in company with that officer to the godowns and took care to avoid the occurrence of a riot by ordering the merchants to open their godown and sell paddy and rice. As the Tahsildar brought the merchants on the 27th as ordered, I enquired them (if they had rice) when some of them said they had no rice whatever in hand, while others said they had but within one, two or three garces of Kadapa rice. I, thereupon, took from them with their signatures, a list of the names of the rice said to have been in hand; and they agreed to sell it to the people in small portions. I directed them to do so, and they continue to sell rice up to this day. Hence the absence of any riot. As it appeared from the said list that there was but a small quantity of rice measuring 15½ garces, no order has been given for exportation. I herewith submit the three arzis of the Police Amín and the three arzis of the Head of Police. The said arzis should, after a perusal, be directed to be returned.

(A true translation.)

(Signed) H. D. PHILLIPS,
Commissioner.

No. 82. ORDER THEREON, 6th February 1860, No. 296.

The views of Government on the subject of this letter are expressed in the order of the 23rd ultimo No. 174 a copy of which will be forwarded to Mr. Phillips.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Handwritten notes and signatures:
No. 643. *Commissioner's Office*
9th January 1860.
From, H. D. Phillips Esq.,
Commissioner,
To The Secretary to Government,
Revenue Department,
Fort St. George.
I have the honor to reply to the order of Government, dated the 21st December 1859, 22962, calling on me to report the circumstances under which, at the close of 1858, the export of grain from Nagas and Negapatam was prohibited by Mr. Whiteside, then Acting &ud- Assistant Collector, how long the prohibition lasted and whether the Acting &ud Assistant had been empowered by me to issue such an order, without my sanction, as it seems he did.
I have been unable to answer this communication so soon as I could have wished, owing to the necessity of an application to the Collector of Tanjore for all such particulars as I could not recollect after an interval of a twelvemonth.
On the 6th instant, I received from the Collector copies of the only two papers which are in

in his records relative to Mr. Whiteside's prohibition. These consist of a vernacular Memorandum from the latter Gentleman addressed to myself as Collector, of date the 1st December 1858, in which Mr. Whiteside reported the fact of his having, on the previous 26th December, given orders to the Negapatnam and Nagore Sea Customs Managers prohibiting the export of grain from those ports.

4 Immediately on receipt of this communication on the 5th December, I signed a reply, also by vernacular *Yiddist*, which was the mode of communication then in force in the District, directing the immediate execution of the prohibition order; and I apprehend that my instruction must have reached the Assistant Collector's *Cutchery* at Negapatnam, on the 7th or 8th instant; so that the prohibition may have lasted 12 days.

5 The circumstances under which Mr. Whiteside was compelled to adopt the course taken by him, are stated in the enclosed translation of his *Yiddist*, and Mr. Cudell, the present Collector of ^{Nagore} *St. George*, observes in a letter transmitting the copies of the *Yiddists* in question, that Mr. Whiteside's order was published in the *Yiddist* after

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after the occurrence of the grain riots at Combaconam and at a time when the roads, throughout this and the adjoining Districts, were rendered altogether impassable by the heavy and unprecedented inundations, which then took place.

6 Speaking from my own knowledge of the condition of the District at the close of 1858, consequent on an excessive rise in the price of grain and the deficiencies of that and the previous two years, I may safely say that grain riots were impending in every direction, and, judging from what seemed sympathy on the part of the rebels, with a standing population, I am sensible that Mr. Whiteside was placed in a position of extreme embarrassment. I apprehend, also, he acted with a view to keep the peace in the two towns of Nagore and Negapatnam. He had not, however, my sanction for passing an order of so important character, the ordinary duties of the Head Assistant Collector on the coast, being simply those which arose in connection with the realization of taxes on the export and import trade of the two places and other ports of the seaboard.

7 Judging from the temper of the lower classes at Nagore and Negapatnam, excited, as they

they then were, by the supposed retention of grain in the stores of the principal merchants, I am myself quite satisfied that no attempt would, at that time, have been made by the wholesale grain sellers to ship their stock; or if, ^{under} the impression that the Police authorities would protect them and secure the passage of rice or paddy to the cargo boats, the merchants had attempted its shipment, I have no doubt in whatever that it would have been carried off into the Town and its suburbs, by the hungry people, who were then crying out for grain. An attack of the kind on grain only, might have been the signal for other robberies, and grave difficulties would perhaps have been the result.

8 Although, then, Mr Whitesides intervention was beyond a doubt in the rank of the non interference principle, which a Government official should uphold and enforce, it is a matter for consideration whether, in this instance, a departure from it may not have tended to prevent much popular tumult and serious disorder.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

H. D. Skidmore
Commissioner.

Memorandum.

To, The Office of the Magistrate,
Nagapattinam 1st Nov 1857.

The people living in Nagapattinam and other places having complained that, in consequence of the high price (of grains), the paddy and rice merchants have closed their Godowns, and do not sell paddy and rice to the poor people; I issued a letter to the Police Commr of Nagapattinam enclosing therein a proclamation to the effect, that the paddy and rice merchants living in Nagapattinam, Talipalam, Nagore and other places should have their Godowns open and sell paddy and rice to the poor without the least delay; and continued to take due care and precaution to avoid any outbreak. On the 25th November, the said Police Commr sent an order No. 311, accompanied with a list of the merchants and Brokers in Nagapattinam, who continued to sell paddy and rice as per the order, stating that as given out by the people, the merchants were going to export the rice in reserve, and the absence of rice, here, would bring on distress; that besides the high price of rice, there are reaches now and there full of water, which would

would prevent, for the present, bandies and
rice getting in from the villages; that if
the article in hand should be exported, the
people would cause a riot in their re-
gerness to get it; and that an order should
be issued that every day to the Sea Custom
Manager at Negapatam, not to export rice,
and to ask the merchants to sell the
article here only without any delay. The Sah-
sildar of Nivahur was directed to take care in
the sale of rice; and he informed me in per-
son, that till the present breaches should be
filled up and the road repaired, no paddy and
rice could be procured from other places; that
there would be no riot if the article in hand
should continue to be sold up to that time, and
that the exportation of rice should be postponed.
Thereupon, I directed the Sahsildar to bring all
the merchants to the Bazar Cateharry on the
26th and issued orders on the 25th to the Sea
Custom Managers of Negapatam and Negore, or
ordering them not to allow exportation of rice and
paddy till a second order, under the impression
that, on ascertaining from the merchants the
quantity of rice in hand, I might give an
order to export rice and paddy, if it should
be

be advisable. Besides, having been in-
formed on the 26th by the Commanding officer,
that the poor people were crowded together
for want of rice, because the merchants did
not open their Godowns and sell rice, I went
in company with that officer to the Godowns
and took care to avoid the occurrence of a
riot by ordering the merchants to open their
Godowns and sell paddy and rice. As the
Sahsildar brought the merchants on the 27th
as ordered, I inquired them (if they had rice)
where some of them said they had no rice
whatsoever in hand, while others said they
had but within 1, 2 or 3 Pares of Nidappia
rice. I thereupon, took from them with their
signatures, a list of the names of the rice
said to have been in hand; and they agreed
to sell it to the people in small portions.
I directed them to do so, and they continue
to sell rice up to this day. Since the ab-
sence of any riot, as it appeared from the
sail list that there was but a small
quantity of rice measuring 1538 Pares, no
order has been given for exportation. There-
with submit the 3 Arrees of the Police
Commissioner and the 3 Arrees of the Secd of Police.
The

The said Axes should, after a perusal,
be united to be returned.

Negapatam } Signed: M. P. Whiteise
1st December 1858 } via 24 Am. St. Coll.

Free Copy

Signed: H. M. Edwell
Magistrate

A true translation

A. D. Smith

Commissioner

1858/1859

1858/1859

1858/1859

1858/1859

1858/1859

Mr 296.

Y^{rs} Geo

The mine of Govt
on the subject of the letter
are referred in the order
of the 23rd inst. 1814th a copy
of which will be forwarded

to Mr Pitt Rivers

Wth
T^h 1814th: 6th July 1800

Mr Pitt Rivers Esq^r
well known to you. Dear Sir

Mr 310 (June 1799) 1814th.

Mr 310 (June 1799) 1814th.
1814th: 6th July 1800

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