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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 2223 Press
~~Mis.~~
185-59

Dated 8 7 1869.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Read the following papers :—

No. 185. From the Collector of Tanjore, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Madras, dated Point Calimere, 18th June 1869, No. 491.

At the request of Mr. Best, lately Acting Sub-Collector of this district, and also because I am sure the Government do not wish to condemn Mr. Best unheard, I have the honour to forward, for the perusal and orders of Government, that gentleman's statement of what took place between him and Mr. Supervisor Seton on the 10th April last.

2. Captain Oakes, at the end of paragraph 4 of his letter to Government, dated 10th May 1869, No. 178, states that I informed him, after a short tour through Nannilam, only two-and-a-half months ago, that I was very much pleased with all I had seen of Mr. Seton's work.

3. This is true, but it is not the whole truth. I acknowledge that I told Captain Oakes, in a demi-official note, that I was pleased with what I had seen of Mr. Seton's work, but I must inform Government that I also added that it was a pity Mr. Seton was so sadly wanting in judgment. I do not recollect for certain the exact words I used ; but I am sure that if it was not exactly what I have stated, at all events it had the same meaning.

4. The truth is that Mr. Seton, though a good workman and wishing to serve the Government well, appears to me either wilfully or ignorantly to ignore, in every way he can, the rights of the Mirassidars ; and I agree, therefore, with Mr. Best in thinking that he meets with much vexatious opposition, because " the interests and wishes of the people are nothing to him".

5. Captain Oakes, in paragraph 7 of his letter above quoted, states that the removal of Mr. Seton from the Talook of Nannilam would be a positive calamity. I do not concur with Captain Oakes, but consider that, for many reasons, Mr. Seton's removal to another district would be a positive benefit, since the Tanjore Mirassidars are every day becoming more aware of their legal rights, and every day less willing to bear patiently the oppression of any official who ignores those rights.

From J. W. BEST, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector of Tanjore, to the Collector of Tanjore, dated Negapatam, 9th June 1869, No. 92.

With reference to the Proceedings of Government, in the Public Works Department, No. 1,704, dated 25th May 1869, I have the honour to make the following statement of facts, in the hope that, when both sides of the story are before them, Government may see fit to remove the severe censure passed upon me in the above Proceedings.

2. The real facts are as follow :—On my arrival at Kulickarai on the 8th April last, the Tahsildar informed me that he had been desired by Mr. Seton to accompany him on the following morning, to make arrangements for the acquisition of land required for the formation of a road to connect Kulickarai with road No. 23. The Tahsildar stated that the line of road had not yet been marked out, and he wished to know whether, under the circumstances, he should comply with Mr. Seton's request or not. I then advised the Tahsildar to accompany Mr. Seton as requested, and to afford him any assistance that might be requisite and proper. The Tahsildar accordingly accompanied Mr. Seton on the morning of the 9th, and in the course of the same day, informed me of the oppositions of the villagers to Mr. Seton's proceedings, adding that a disturbance was not at all unlikely to result. I then arranged to inspect the locality on the following morning.

3. This I did, accompanied by the Tahsildar. I found that the dispute was between Mr. Seton and the people of the villages, Piliyur and Devarkandanallur, and related to the line of a road to connect road No. 23 with the Kulickarai Railway Station. I found two existing roads which connect this station with road No. 23: the more southern of these passes through the village of Piliyur, while the other, passing through Devarkandanallur, joins road No. 23 at a distance of less than half a mile north of the former road. It appeared that the people of Piliyur had petitioned for some slight improvement in their road, whilst, at the same time, the people of Devarkandanallur had requested that a bridge might be constructed on their road. Mr. Seton had resolved not to comply with the request of either village, but to make a third road between the other two. Against this both parties protested, as it would necessitate the taking up, for the purpose, of valuable land thickly planted with cocoanuts, plantains, &c., and declared that rather than give up this land, they wished things to remain just as they were, and that they would themselves, at their own cost, do any necessary repairs to the existing roads. When, in addition to the above, I learnt that it was in consequence of petitions presented by these same villagers, that Mr. Seton was moving in the matter at all, and as, moreover, it appeared to me that Captain Oakes would agree with me in the opinion that perfect straightness and the saving of a few yards in length of a road of not more than three-quarters of a mile long were too trifling advantages to set against the discontentedness of those most interested, I told the people to present their petitions, and to execute Muchilikas which I would forward to the Superintending Engineer.

4. I then returned to my Camp, when, having to pass by Mr. Seton's tent, I stopped to speak to him on the subject of this road. I remarked upon the very trifling advantage to be gained by the formation of his proposed new road, and suggested that he might have a little more consideration for the interests and wishes of the people; to this he replied that "the interests and the "wishes of the people were nothing to him," and that he had his duty to Government to perform; and on my suggesting that his duty to Government did not require that every road should be made as straight as a railway, he replied in a most offensive manner to the effect that he did not require to be taught by me how to make roads. On receiving this impertinent reply, I told Mr. Seton that he was an impertinent brute, and that I would report his conduct to Captain Oakes. I said thus as I turned to ride away. It was therefore the very last thing that I did say, and can only be admitted in extenuation of the abusive language ("damned Muttal," &c.,) shouted after me by Mr. Seton, and it was because he had this much of provocation that I have hitherto abstained from insisting on this circumstance.

5. I declare that the above is a perfectly accurate account of what passed between Mr. Seton and myself on the 10th April last. In order that Government may be put in full possession of all the circumstances connected with the case, I think it as well to add, that Mr. Seton at once hurried off to Tanjore to anticipate my report to Captain Oakes, having in the meantime (as appears) jotted down the notes in which Captain Oakes has placed implicit belief.

6. I regret having made use of the expression "brute," but I must plead in excuse the provocation that I received from Mr. Seton. I entreat that Government will consider the relative official positions of Mr. Seton and myself, and how improper it was of Mr. Seton to answer me in the insolent manner in which he did, before receiving from me the slightest provocation, unless, indeed, my interfering at all on the part of the ryots, when their grievance was brought to my notice, amounted to provocation, as appears to be in the opinion of Captain Oakes *(vide* paragraph 8 of his letter, No. 178). Whilst, however, regretting that I used the word "brute," I submit that I was under such provocation as would have caused any other man of ordinary temper to make use of similar or even more improper language, and I appeal most earnestly to yourself and to the Government to consider whether that unguarded expression of mine was sufficient to justify Mr. Seton in insulting me so grossly as he thereupon did.

7. I have not seen Mr. Seton's notes of the occurrence; some idea of them is given in paragraph 6 of Captain Oakes's letter to me, No 110. In paragraph 4 of my letter No 90, I

pointed out to Captain Oakes how grossly he had been misinformed. It appears that Mr. Seton has subsequently declared that "there is not a single expression entered in his notes which was "not uttered." To this I have only to reply that if Captain Oakes's letter, No. 110, conveys a correct idea of these notes, Mr. Seton in making this last statement, has *most wilfully and deliberately lied.* I declare upon my honour that I did not say "*damned* impertinent brute," that I did not even once make use of the word "damned;" I declare upon my honour that I did not shake my whip in Mr. Seton's face; I also declare upon my honour that I did not say that Mr. Seton did not know how to make a road; and I may also add that I did not reply to the abuse with which Mr. Seton assailed me in the presence of my Tahsildar.

8. With regard to Captain Oakes's conclusion that Mr. Seton's account of what happened is more correct than mine, because "being in a state of excitement I was not aware of the strength "of the expressions used by me," I beg to state that I was not so blindly excited, and that I have a very clear idea of all that happened; but even supposing that I were in the helpless condition imagined by Captain Oakes, I would ask why should Mr. Seton, in a state of excitement, be able to give a more reliable account of what happened. I am astonished and deeply hurt at the biased and partial representation of the matter made by Captain Oakes in his letter, No. 178, on which the Government have acted, without calling for my explanation.

9. I beg to protest most emphatically against the impropriety of Captain Oakes's remarks in paragraph 4 of his letter, No. 178, as to my having made statements which are unfounded, and also as to my having been influenced by personal feelings against Mr Seton; the insinuation also in paragraph 6 that the Mirassidars are encouraged by me in their opposition to the Public Works Department is most rashly made. I deny the truth of each of these most unfounded accusations, and court the fullest inquiry as to whether any of Captain Oakes's insinuations have the slightest ground of truth.

10. As to the charge of my having been actuated by personal feelings against Mr. Seton, it is sufficient to point out that only four days previous to the 10th April I tried Mr. Seton on a charge of assualt, acquitted him *and punished his accusers.* I maintain that this circumstance is in itself sufficient to show how rashly *animus* has been imputed to me. I beg most positively to deny the truth of this imputation.

11. As to my statements that Mr. Seton's conduct to the people is bullying and tyrannous, and that he is in consequence detested throughout the talook, &c., I have only to say that, if the Government doubt my word, I hope that a local inquiry may be instituted. I am convinced of the truth of what I have said, and also that such an inquiry will not only put me right in the opinion of Government, but that it will also prove a blessing to the Mirassidars of the Nannilum Talook, by resulting in the removal of Mr. Seton. Captain Oakes appears to be as ignorant of Mr. Seton's character, as he is of the state of feeling in the Nannilum Talook; otherwise he would not indulge in such exaggerated expressions as that Mr. Seton is "highly respected by all right-minded Mirassidars," and that his removal from the talook would be "a positive calamity".

12. Captain Oakes quotes you as having lately informed him that you were pleased with all that you had seen of Mr. Seton's work. Mr. Seton's *work* is, I admit, not inferior to that of other Range Officers; but it is not his *work* but his *manner of doing it* that is now in question. I trust that in forwarding this letter you will not object to make any remarks on it that may appear to you to be called for. As to evidence of the correctness or otherwise of my charges against Mr. Seton, I would beg that Mr. Cadell, the late Collector of this district, as also the Tahsildar of Nannilum, and the Sub-Magistrate of Kodavassel, may be questioned; also any or all of the ryots of the Nannilum Talook and the ryots of the Mannargudi Talook in which Mr. Seton was for a time employed previous to his transfer to Nannilum.

13. With reference to Captain Oakes's remarks, in paragraph 4, on the subject of the complaint against Mr. Seton of having prohibited cattle from being taken along the public roads, I beg to state that, when I was in the Nannilum Talook in November last, frequent complaints were made to me on the subject. I particularly inquired whether the prohibition extended any further

than to the grazing of cattle on the sides of roads and the banks of rivers, and was informed by the Petitioners that it was a good deal more than that, and that their cattle were seized and taken to the pound when quietly proceeding along the roads on their way to the fields. The complaints were so numerous and universal that I should be sorry to say that their absurdity was sufficient for their refutation; nor is the fact that no Magisterial proceedings had been taken in the matter proof—positive against the truth of the complaint. It is not customary for the ryots to proceed criminally in such cases: the ordinary and certainly more correct course is, to present a miscellaneous petition to the official superiors of the person committing an irregularity; this was precisely what was done in the present instance. Petitions were not only presented to me, but (as appears from Captain Oakes's letter) also to you and to himself; a petition on the subject was also presented to the Board of Revenue, which was reported on by me in my letter to you, dated 10th February 1869, No. 26. It may be safely presumed that all these petitions would not have been presented without some cause.

14. With reference to paragraph 6 of Captain Oakes's letter, I need only point out that Mr. Hope accompanied Captain Oakes through the talook at the end of 1867, and I took charge of this Sub-Collectorate in March 1868, and not one of Mr. Hope's orders has been in any way altered by me. Captain Oakes admits also that there was *always* opposition previous to the date of Mr. Hope's orders. Does Captain Oakes wish it to be understood that Mr. Hope's predecessors were the causes of the opposition that existed in their days? If not, why should I be held responsible for a similar state of things in my time? That opposition exists, and always will exist, when a work of public utility is undertaken in a country so highly cultivated as the Tanjore District, I freely admit; but I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Seton meets with much vexatious opposition simply because (as admitted by himself) "the interests and wishes of the people are nothing to him"; hence also arise the frequent applications for the assistance of the Tahsildar for the settlement of matters which a more conciliating Range Officer would be able himself to settle.

15. If the Government will order a local inquiry, that indeed will give me the fullest satisfaction, and be my best justification. But whether they may see fit to do so or not I, trust that they will review the whole case with this my explanation, and having a full statement of both sides of the question before them be led to withdraw or modify the severe censure they have passed upon me.

TRANSFERRED to the Public Works Department.

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

28th June 1869.

No. 186. Minute by the Honorable A. J. Arbuthnot.
(Here enter dated 29th June 1869.)

No. 187. Minute by the Honorable H. D. Phillips.
(Here enter dated 29th June 1869.)

No. 188. Minute by the Right Honorable the President.
(Here enter dated 29th June 1869.)

No 189. ORDER THEREON, 8th July 1869, No. 2,223.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 11.

THE Government do not consider that anything Mr. Best has now urged has shown that the censure passed upon him by Government in their Order of the 25th ultimo, was not warranted by the information then before His Excellency the Governor in Council. In the correspondence between Mr. Best and Captain Oakes, which was forwarded with the latter's letter of the 10th May, No. 178, Mr. Best admitted that he had called Mr. Seton "an impertinent brute" in the presence of the Tahsildar and other native officials and villagers, and it was on his own showing, therefore, that he was condemned. In applying such an epithet to any person in the public service, however subordinate his position, Mr. Best did that which was altogether derogatory to his position, and the Government regret that they can find no sufficient ground in Mr. Best's explanation to justify a modification of the terms of the order in which they recorded the unfavourable view they had taken of his conduct on the occasion.

2. As it appears that Mr. Seton, though acknowledged to be an efficient and zealous Range Officer, has made himself so unpopular within the limits of his present charge as very materially to diminish his usefulness in it, the Government resolve to direct his transfer to another district, where the Government trust he will adopt a more conciliatory bearing towards the people.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Collector of Tanjore.
,, Superintending Engineer, 6th Division.
,, Revenue Department.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Govt. of {1869} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE COLLECTOR OF TANJORE.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated July, 8th.

Read.

G. O., 8th July 1869, No. 2,223.

JULY.

Nos. 185-189.

Messrs. Best and Seton.—Intimating that the orders passed in the matter of the dispute between Mr. Best and Supervisor Seton cannot be modified, and directing the transfer of the Supervisor to another district.

No 92. Tanjore Sub Collector's Office
Negapatam, 9th June 1869.

To

The Collector
of
Tanjore

Sir,

With reference to the Proceedings of Government in the Public Works Department No 1704, dated 25th May 1869, I have the honor to make the following statement of facts in the hope that, when both sides of the story are before them, Government may see fit to remove the severe censure passed upon me in the above Proceedings.

2. The real facts are as follows:— On my arrival at Kúlickarai on the 8th April last, the Tahsildar informed me that he had been desired by Mr. Seton to accompany him on the following morning, to make arrangements for the acquisition of land required for the formation of a road to connect Kúlickarai with road No 23. The Tahsildar stated that the line of road had not yet been marked out, and he wished to know whether under the circumstances he should comply with Mr. Seton's request

request or not. I then advised the Tahsildar to accompany Mr. Selow as requested and to afford him any assistance that might be requisite and proper. The Tahsildar accordingly accompanied Mr. Selow on the morning of the 9th, and in the Course of the same day informed me of the oppositions of the Villagers to Mr. Selow's proceedings, adding that a disturbance was not at all unlikely to result. I then arranged to inspect the locality on the following morning.

3. This I did accompanied by the Tahsildar. I found that the dispute was between Mr. Selow and the people of the Villages Piliyur and Devarkandanallur and related to the line of a road to Connect road No. 23 with the Mulicherai Railway station. I found two existing roads which Connect this station with road No. 23; the more southern of these passes through the Village of Piliyur, while the other passing through Devarkandanallur join road No. 23 at a distance of less than half a mile north of the former road. It appeared that the people of Piliyur had Petitioned for some slight improvement in their road, whilst at the same time the people of

Devarkandanallur

Devarkandanallur had requested that a bridge might be Constructed on their road. Mr. Selow had resolved not to Comply with the request of either Village, but to make a third road between the other two; against this both parties protested as it would necessitate the taking up, for the purpose, of valuable land thickly planted with Cocoanuts, plantains &c., and declared that rather than give up this land they wished things to remain just as they were, and that they would themselves, at their own Cost, do any necessary repairs to the Existing roads. When in addition to the above I learnt that it was in Consequence of petitions presented by these same Villagers that Mr. Selow was moving in the matter at all, and as moreover it appeared to me that Captain Oakes would agree with me in the opinion that perfect straightness and the saving of a few yards in length of a road of not more than three quarters of a mile long were too trifling advantages to set against the discontentedness of those most interested, I told the people to present their petitions and to execute Muchilikas which I would forward to the Superintending Engineer.

4. I then returned to my Camp, when, having to pass by Mr. Selow's tent, I stopped to

speak

speak to him on the subject of this road. I remarked upon the very trifling advantage to be gained by the formation of his proposed new road, and suggested that he might have a little more consideration for the interests and wishes of the people; to this he replied that "the interests and the wishes of the people were "nothing to him", and that he had his duty to Government to perform; and on my suggesting that his duty to Government did not require that every road should be made as straight as a railway, he replied in a most offensive manner to the effect that he did not require to be taught by me how to make roads. On receiving this impertinent reply, I told Mr. Below that he was an impertinent brute and that I would report his conduct to Captain Oakes. I said this as I turned to ride away; it was therefore the very last thing that I did say and can only be admitted in extenuation of the abusive language ("damned muttalan" &c.) shouted after me by Mr. Below, and it was because he had this much of provocation that I have so hitherto abstained from insisting on this circumstance.

5. I declare that the above is a perfectly accurate account of what passed between Mr. Below and myself on the 10th April last, by order

Order that Government may be put in full possession of all the circumstances connected with the case, I think it as well to add that Mr. Below at once hurried off to Tanjore to anticipate my report to Captain Oakes, having in the mean time (as appears) jotted down the notes in which Captain Oakes has placed so implicit belief.

6. I regret having made use of the expression "brute", but I must plead in excuse the provocation that I received from Mr. Below. I entreat that Government will consider the relative official positions of Mr. Below and myself, and how improper it was of Mr. Below to answer me in the insolent manner in which he did, before receiving from me the slightest provocation, unless indeed my interfering at all on the part of the ryots, when their grievance was brought to my notice, amounted to provocation, as appears to be the Opinion of Captain Oakes (vide para 8 of his letter No. 1781). Whilst however regretting that I used the word "brute", I do submit that I was under such provocation as would have caused any other man of ordinary temper to make use of similar or even more improper, language, and I appeal most confidently to yourself, and to the Government,

to

to consider whether that unguarded Expression of mine was sufficient to justify Mr. Selon in insulting me so grossly as he thereupon did?

7. I have not seen Mr. Selon's notes of the occurrence; some idea of them is given in para 6 of Captain Oakes's letter to me No 110, In para 4 of my letter No. 90. I pointed out to Captain Oakes how grossly he had been misinformed; it appears that Mr. Selon has subsequently declared that "there is not a single Expression entered in his "note which was not uttered." To this I shall only to reply that if Captain Oakes' letter No 110 Conveys a Correct idea of these notes, Mr. Selon in making this last statement has most wilfully and deliberately lied. I declare upon my honor that I did not say "damned" impertinent brute"; that I did not even once make use of the word "damned", I declare upon my honor that I did not shake my whip in Mr. Selon's face. I also declare upon my honor that I did not say that Mr. Selon did not know how to make a road, and I may also add that I did not reply to the abuse with which Mr. Selon assailed me in the presence of my Tahsildar.

Mr. Selon

8. With regard to Captain Oakes's conclusion that Mr. Selon's account of what happened is more correct than mine, because "being in a state of Excitement I was not aware of the strength of the Expressions used by me" I beg to state that I was not so blindly Excited, and that I have a very clear idea of all that happened, but even supposing that I were in the helpless condition imagined by Captain Oakes, I would ask why should Mr. Selon in a state of excitement be able to give a more reliable account of what happened? I am astonished and deeply hurt at the biassed and partial representation of the matter made by Captain Oakes in his letter No 178, on which the Government have acted without calling for any Explanation.

9. I beg to protest most emphatically against the impropriety of Captain Oakes's remarks in para 4 (of his letter No 178) as to my having made statements which are unfounded, and also as to my having been influenced by personal feelings against Mr. Selon; the insinuation also in para 6 that the Mirasidars are encouraged by me in their opposition to the Public Works Department is most rashly made. I deny the truth of each of these most unfounded accusations, and court the fullest enquiry as to whether any of

Captain

Captain Oakes's insinuations have the slightest ground of truth.

10. As to the charge of my having been actuated by personal feelings against Mr. Seton, it is sufficient to point out that only 4 days previous to the 10th April, I fined Mr. Seton on a charge of assault, acquitted him and punished his accusers. I maintain that this circumstance is in itself sufficient to show how rashly "animus" has been imputed to me. I beg most positively to deny the truth of this imputation.

As to my statement that Mr. Seton's conduct to the people is bullying and oppressive, and that he is in consequence detested throughout the Taluk &c., I have only to say that, if the Government doubt my word, I hope that a local enquiry may be instituted. I am convinced of the truth of what I have said and also that such an enquiry will not only put me right in the opinion of Government, but that it will also prove a blessing to the Inhabitants of the Nannilam Taluk by resulting in the removal of Mr. Seton. Captain Oakes appears to be as ignorant of Mr. Seton's character, as he

is

is of the state of feeling in the Nannilam Taluk; otherwise he would not indulge in such exaggerated expressions as that Mr. Seton is "highly respected by all right minded Inhabitants," and that his removal from the Taluk would be "a positive Calamity".

12. Captain Oakes quotes you as having lately informed him that you were pleased with all that you had seen of Mr. Seton's work. Mr. Seton's work is I admit not inferior to that of other Range Officers, but it is not his work but his manner of doing it that is now in question. I trust that in forwarding this letter you will not object to make any remarks on it that may appear to you to be called for. As to evidence of the correctness or otherwise of my charges against Mr. Seton, I would beg that Mr. Cadell the late Collector of this District as also the Tahsildar of Nannilam and the Sub Magistrate of Kodavasal may be questioned. Also any or all of the Ryots of the Nannilam Taluk and the Ryots of the Mannargudi Taluk in which Mr. Seton was for a time employed previous to his transfer to Nannilam.

13. With reference to Captain Oakes's remarks

remarks in para 4 on the subject of the Complaint against Mr. Seton of having prohibited cattle from being taken along the public roads, I beg to state that when I was in the Nannilam Taluk in November last, frequent Complaints were made to me on the subject, I particularly enquired whether the prohibition extended any further than to the grazing of Cattle on the sides of roads and the banks of rivers, and was informed by the Petitioners that it was a good deal more than that, and that their Cattle were seized and taken to the pound when quietly proceeding along the roads on their way to the fields; the Complaints were so numerous and universal that I should be sorry to say that their absurdity was sufficient for their refutation, nor is the fact that no Magisterial proceedings had been taken in the matter proof-positive against the truth of the Complaint; it is not Customary for the ryots to proceed Criminally in such Cases, the ordinary and certainly more Correct Course is to present a Miscellaneous petition to the Official Superiors of the person committing an irregularity; this was precisely what was done in the present

instance

instance. Petitions were not only presented to me, but (as appears from Captain Oakes's letter) also to you and to himself, a petition on the subject was also presented to the Board of Revenue, which was reported on by me in my letter to you dated 10th February 1869 No. 26. It may be safely presumed that all these petitions would not have been presented without some Cause.

14. With reference to para 6 of Captain Oakes's letter, I need only point out that Mr. Hope accompanied Captain Oakes through the Taluk at the end of 1867 and I took charge of this Sub Collectorate in March 1868, and not one of Mr. Hope's Orders has been in any way altered by me. Captain Oakes admits also that there was always opposition previous to the date of Mr. Hope's Orders to. Does Captain Oakes wish it to be understood that Mr. Hope's predecessors were the Causes of the opposition that existed in their days? if not, why should I be held responsible for a similar state of things in my time? That no opposition exists and always will exist, when a work of public utility is undertaken in a Country so highly cultivated as the Tanjore District

I

I freely admit, but I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Seton meets with much vexations opposition simply because (as admitted by himself) "the interests and wishes of the people are nothing to him"; hence also arise the frequent applications for the assistance of the Tahsildar for the settlement of matters which a more conciliating Range Officer would be able himself to settle.

15. If the Government will order a local enquiry, that indeed will give me the fullest satisfaction and lie my best justification. But whether they may see fit to do so or not I trust that they will review the whole case in the light of this my explanation and having a full statement of both sides of the question before them be pleased to withdraw or modify the severe censure they have passed upon me.

I have &c.

(Signed) J. W. Best
Asst. Sub Collector

(True Copy)

C. Dee Morris
Collector

No. 491 Tanjore Collector's Office

Point Calimere Sirkazi Taluk

18th June 1869

From

G. Lee Morris Esq

Collector of Tanjore

To The Honble R. S. Ellis C.B.

Chief Secretary to Government

of Madras

Sir

At the request of Mr. Best lately Acting Sub Collector of this District and also because I am sure the Government do not wish to Condemn Mr. Best unheard I have the honor to forward for the information and orders of Government that Gentleman's Statement of what took place between him and Mr. Supervisor Seton on the 10th April last—

2 Captain Pakes at the end of para 4 of his letter to Government dated 10th May 1869 No. 178, states that I informed him, after a short tour through Vanniliam only two-and-a-half months ago, that I was very much pleased with all I had seen of Mr. Setons work—

This

Rev. 2065/69

P.R. 2883/69

Sir a letter

from

The Collector

of Tanjore

to the Chief Secretary

Government

Madras

Dated 18th June 1869

No. 491

Copy of a letter from G. Lee Morris Esq Collector of Tanjore to Chief Secretary Govt. dated 18th June 1869 No. 491

3 This is true, but it is not the whole truth. I acknowledge that I told Captain Oakes in a demi official note that I was pleased with what I had seen of Mr. Seton's work; but I must inform Government, that I also added that it was a pity Mr. Seton was so sadly wanting in judgment. I do not recollect for certain the exact words I used, but I am sure that if it was not exactly what I have stated at all events it had the same meaning—

4 The truth is, that Mr. Seton though a good workman and wishing to serve the Government well, appears to me either wilfully or ignorantly to ignore, in every way he can, the rights of the Mirasidars; and I agree therefore with Mr. Best in thinking that he meets with much vexatious opposition, because "the interests and wishes of the people are nothing to him"—

Captain Oakes

5 Captain Oakes in Para 7 of his letter above quoted, states that the removal of Mr. Seton from the Taluk of Nannilam would be a positive Calamity. I do not concur with Captain Oakes, but consider that for many reasons Mr. Seton's removal to another District would be a positive benefit, since the Tanjore Mirasidars are every day becoming more aware of their legal rights, and every day less willing to bear patiently the oppression of any official who ignores those rights—

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your Most Obed. Servant

G Lee Morris
Collector

1869

Proc. of Govt Jo 2nd July 1869

From

The Collector No 2683
of Tanjore 1

To

The Chief Secretary
to Government
Fort Saint George

Dated 18th June 1869

Rec'd 29th do

No 491

Enclosure 1

C. No

Submitting for orders of Government a letter from Mr Best lately acting Sub Collector of this Distt containing a statement of what took place between him and the Revenue Board.

No 2223 - 8th July 1869

Transmitted to the Public Works Dept

Madras
26th June 1869.

for Secretary

No 185

28th June 69

absolutely necessary to this
step. If he came into
it would appear just as if
Parliament & the country
& which I am not prepared,
but we just provocative was
against [illegible] and I am
glad & anxious that [illegible] should
upon us. He knows what
he feels just as little
just as I do
which [illegible] removal & another
Cabinet. Under all these circumstances
I am disposed & think that a more
significant mark of disapprobation
than I am not prepared to say but
he ought for his removal was not
warranted.

This is one of the many cases which
show how undesirable it is to depart
under any circumstances from the
established rule of calling for

explanations from an officer
charged with misconduct
before disposing of the charge
even though this may be
upon the solemn declaration
of the accused which cannot
safely be disregarded & which
ought to be followed by a full
& fair inquiry. The only effect
would be a prolong an unhappy
scandal - but it was clear
that the Select as
well as the Govt should be
at once removed & another

C.B. 1869 Dep.
Proceedings Vol. 2.701

Minute by the Hon'ble
A. J. Arbuthnot.

29 June 1869
Vol 30 " "

Regarding the orders passed in the matter of the dispute between Mr Best and Supervisor Seton—

No 186

During visit on the Boards' letter, I purpose confined my remarks to the mere point of discipline involved in the Bds protest which I considered to be uncalled for and irregular.

As however, Mr Morris' comm^n and Mr Best's explanation thereon will have now brought before the Govt the propriety of an order issuing affecting the latter Gentleman in which, owing to temporary absence at Galle, I took no part, I may without indelicacy towards my Colleagues, offer an opinion.

The wrangle between Mr Best and Supervisor Seton was a wordy dispute only. The worst part of Mr Best's behaviour in it was this:— that feeling irritated at the Supervisors unprecedented rude manner, Mr Best turned away to go home, with the intimation that he deemed Mr Seton to be "an impertinent brute". I will not refer to the epithets which Mr Seton then addressed to Mr Best:— admitting only to what was said by Mr Best, it does seem to me

that the punishment awarded
to him was excessive & cruel.—
The punishment will not, of course, feel
at liberty to recall their steps in this
matter, though Mr. Best may fairly
enough urge that the shortness of
making a defence when afforded to
the meanest criminal, was withheld
from him. It may not, however,
be thought objectionable now to soften
the punishment by agreeing to Mr.
Best's application for a respite
from Lawyer Ram Kellaay.—
When reading this minute originally
recorded, it was not clear to me that
Mr. Nelson should have been left in
the Lawyer Destrict — on reading Mr.
Norris the Collector's opinion of
Mr. Nelson's unpopularity among the
Ryots and the defensive
allegations now submitted by Mr.
Best, I am strongly minded to rescind
and cancel the order directing
him to be provided with a situation
in a Talluckdar's when he can have
fewer sum of wealth & independence
to deal with.—

23 June 1845

P.W. 1869 Dept.
Proc: of Court for July
No. 2,707

Remitted by the Honble
H. D. Phillips.

dy 29. June/69.
Rpd 30th " "

Regarding the orders
passed in the matter of
the dispute between Mr.
Best and Supervisor
Seton. — —

No 187

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The duties of my Colleagues
Lawton & Caffell
interfered by the
transfer of Mr. Best
for Bellary to
Coimbatore.
I must state here
that regular, as Mr.
Assistant Inspectors
to afford Mr. Best
a formal opportunity
of defending himself
before passing sentence
in his absence but I
condemned him as his
non-arrival that
he had called an
officer — the D.C.O.
an "enjoinment
hunter" in the presence
of the Native officials
of the locality. The
outrage on good
manners and
good temper was

be executed by persuasion
but I still think it desirable
that the offender should
be removed for the secu
of this irregularity. With
how stated and better
my opinion on this point.
I quite concur in the
opinion that Mr Setors
Shield have another
destination and that
the incident should
be locally interested
by the disappearance
of both the Agents.

The letter for the
Board of Revenue
had the letter
cancelled for which
it will be written to
take no notice of it.
It may be recalled.

P. W. 1869 Dept.
Pro: of Govt for July
No 2,702

Minute by the Right
Honorable the Governor.

dy 29. June 69.
No 30. " "

Regarding the
orders passed in the
matter of the dispute
between Mr Best and
Superintendent Stokes.

No 188

C. P. W. Dept.
No 2223 22
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Proceedings of the Madras Government.
under date the 8 July 1869.
Read again papers recorded in G. O. No 1714,
dated 25th May 1869.

Read also the following:-
From the Collector of Tanjore - (H.R. No 491 dated 18th June 69)
Minute by the Hon: A. J. Arbuthnot - (H.R. dated 29 — —)
Do — Do. H. D. Phillips - (— Do — —)
Do - Right Hon: the Governor - (— Do — —)

The Government do not consider that anything Mr Best has now urged has shown that the censure passed upon him by Government in their order of the 25th Ultimo was not warranted by the information then before His Excellency the Governor in Council. In the letter from Mr Best dated 29th June which was [illegible] Capt Stokes for-warded with [illegible] of the 10th May No 178, Mr Best
ad-

admitted that he had called Mr. Seton "an impertinent brute" in the presence of the Tahsildar and other Native Officials and villagers, and it was on his own showing therefore that he was condemned.

In applying such an epithet to any person in the public service, however subordinate his position, Mr. Best did that which was altogether derogatory to his position, and the Govt. regret that they cannot find (~~nothing in~~) sufficient ground in Mr. Best's explanation to justify (~~any~~) modification of the terms of the order in which they

re-

recorded the unfavorable view they had taken of his conduct on the occasion.

As it appears that Mr. Seton, though acknowledged to be an efficient and zealous Range Officer, has made himself so unpopular within the limits of his present charge as very materially to diminish his usefulness in it, the Govt. resolve to direct his transfer to another district (~~where he will not be liable as at Tanjore to be brought into collision with as wealthy and litigious class of land holders, and~~) where the Govt. trust he

omit N.

he will adopt a more conciliatory bearing towards the people.

The Collector of Tanjore
To the Supdg Engr 6 Dist
& Revd Asstt Supdg Engr
Despd 9/7/69.

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Govt. of {1869} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To The Collector of Tanjore

Dated

Recd. Encl. 1

G. O. 8th July 1869, No. 2223

Nos. 185 & 189

Despd Asstt & Supdg Engr
Intimating that the orders passed in the matter of the dispute between Mr Asstt & Supervisor Seton cannot be modified & directing the transfer of the Supervisor to another district.