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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2420	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	26-8-	C874 195

Not to be folded or roughly handled

113

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
26th August 1874.*

No. 641. Read the following letter from R. E. NORFOR, Esq., District Engineer, South Arcot, to Colonel G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Cuddalore, 21st April 1874, No. 17:—

IN compliance with instructions conveyed in paragraph 4 of G. O., No. 330, of the 11th February 1874, I have the honor to forward herewith a list of public documents, reported by Mr. Hicken to be missing from the records of the Office of the No. III. or Virdachellum Range. Subsequent to the despatch of this list by the Range Officer certain vouchers called for by the Deputy Controller of Accounts, Captain Christie, R.E., are also, when searched for, found to be missing; a list of these has been furnished to that officer.

2. Mr. Bell states that no records were ever removed from the Range office with his cognizance; the accompanying papers, marked A, will show that office duties were conducted for a time at least in a building other than the Range office; in fact, Mr. Bell himself, while denying that records were taken away from the office, goes on to say that the Head Accountant admitted that a portion of the current work was conducted in a vacant house in the town of Virdachellum; this was done at a time (to quote his own words) "when there was a great amount of business to be disposed of," and (again to quote his own words) "at a time when the freshes in the river which divide the village from the office were frequent." As regards the freshes in the river preventing the members of the office establishment attending the office proper, the same papers, marked A, will show that such was not the case. If this is not considered sufficiently conclusive evidence, the

• Marked B. accompanying registers* of water for March and April, kept at the Mahmatoor

Anicut, situated about seven miles above Virdachellum, will, I trust, show unmistakably that the state of the river certainly could have caused no interruption. It is difficult also to reconcile the fact that a "great amount of business was disposed of on the other side of the river," with the statement that "no office records were removed from the Range office."

3. It has subsequently come to my knowledge, as also to the knowledge of Government, that Ponoorungum has had a great deal to do with accounts and records of the range in connection with works executed during my administration of the range; there is, therefore, strong presumptive evidence that these records had been for a long period in his keeping; that they had been taken to his own dwelling house I have not the slightest doubt of.

4. Mr. Bell states in regard to Overseers making advances for public works from their private means, that I had become acquainted with this fact through anonymous letters, and that he was not aware of this practice till I first informed him of it. He also states that Overseers were sent for to my house and privately interrogated, and made to sign certain statements of the contents of which they were ignorant. This is a serious reflection on my character, and I feel that in justice to myself I should refute these defamatory allegations.

members

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5. In the first place, I did not obtain the knowledge that Overseers were making advances from private funds through anonymous letters; how I did get this information is as follows:—By a weekly report* of the Anicut Overseer A. Cooposawmy I found that the number of coolies working on the main Pelandorai Canal were small; and in No. 414 of 25th March 1873, I called upon the Overseer to report how often the coolies were paid, and the system adopted, in paying, telling him at the same time that if weekly payments were made, it was likely the number of coolies would increase; in reply to this I was informed, in No. 354 of 28th March 1873, that the coolies were paid about twice a month, and "in the meanwhile the maistry in charge is instructed to supply with the necessities to the wudders so that they may not feel any want." On receipt of this, I in No. 1 of the 2nd April 1873, called for explanation relative to the supply of necessities by maistries to the wudders; and in No. 2 of 5th April 1873, A. Cooposawmy tells me that as there was no possibility of procuring wudders without advances, he was compelled to borrow 200 Rupees from one Soobroyah Pillay, a Vakeel in the Munsif's Court at Virdachellum, for the purpose of advancing to wudders, and that he subsequently borrowed a further sum of Rupees 60 of the same man for the same purpose, and stated also that D. Cooposawmy Moodelly adopted the same course. This is how I got the information, and if the Government wish to see the original letters I will send them up.

6. I respectfully beg the Government will do me the favor to peruse the papers accompanying this, marked C. With these before me it is difficult to understand how Mr. Bell asserts that he was ignorant of the fact that Overseers were making large advances from private means, and that this was done through his Head Accountant Ponoorungum too; these are copies from the Overseer's Office letter book, the originals, which ought to be on the file in the Range Office, are not to be found; it is not likely Ponoorungum would have left them there; however, as this correspondence relative to the advances took place in September and October 1872, it is clear that my bringing the improper practice to Mr. Bell's notice in March 1873 was not the first knowledge he had of these irregular proceedings.

7. That the Overseers were sent for to my house and made to sign papers of the contents of which they were ignorant the Overseers themselves (see paper A) have denied, and the clerks in my office will be prepared to disprove this. All I did was done openly and in the public office with the Head Clerk present in the room.

8. That I sent for these Overseers without consulting Mr. Bell I fully admit; there would be little use my applying to him, as he did nothing he was ordered and thwarted me in every possible way.

9. Mr. Bell, with reference to the second charge, says that he disbursed large sums through the Overseers to Contractors in March, "as he knew by Overseers' reports that work for these large sums had been done;" these reports are not recorded in the Range Office, and the Overseers deny having made any such reports; in fact, they cannot have done so, as the cheques were given them in the beginning of March (see papers A.) in anticipation for work to be executed in March

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as their indents for funds will clearly show. One Overseer, Valoomyloo, who states that money was forced upon him, produces the accompanying rough draft* of a

* Marked D.

letter in Mr. Bell's handwriting, says he complained to Mr. Bell that he had too much work, and could not get through the full allotments he had originally engaged to spend on the Pelandorai and other works; that Mr. Bell got very angry, threatened to dismiss him and drafted a letter which he insisted upon his writing him; the draft is certainly in Mr. Bell's handwriting; whatever may have prompted him to write it I cannot tell, but it certainly is not what a Range Officer should have done.

No. 642. ORDER THEREON, 26th August 1874, No. 2,420.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 49.

ORDERED that the list of missing papers forwarded with the above letter be sent to the Controller for examination

and consideration by Lieutenant Christie, R.E., when inquiring into the charges against Mr. Norfor and Mr. Bell.

2. In the meantime Mr. Norfor having charge of the range will complete the list for information of the Controller, and collect all papers that may be required for the investigation ordered.

3. The Government resolve to direct the Collector of South Arcot to associate himself with Lieutenant Christie in the inquiry into the charges above alluded to.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, South Arcot.
" Officiating Controller of Public Works Accounts.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

Spare Copies

With reference to the
wording of the accompa-
nying Revised Draft,
The Secretary respectfully
submits that Mr. Dieter,
who has personally in-
terested ^{himself} against Mr.
Norris is not a fit per-
son to consider changes
against that gentle-
man - He has brought
forward changes him-
self, has written
privately about them,
and is not on speak-
ing terms with Mr.
Norris, though they
reside at the same
Head Quarters -

Under these circumstances
-stances, if anything
more is required than
a strict scrutiny of ac-
-counts and report on
the same by Officers of
the Control Dept (which
is doubtful) it is re-
spectfully submitted
that the Collector should
replace his Subordinate.

G.W.W.
S. D. 74

Note. The matters which
it was intended to have
disposed of in the origi-
-nal Draft are not the
same as those regarding
which the Controller or
his Deputy was ordered
to inquire -

G.W.W.

Sept.
As suggested by Mr. C.
I think that the Coll.
should be associated
with the inquiry.
The object is to
have a fair but clear
a full inquiry into
matter at. which so
much mystery has
4/8/21

9/13
With reference to inquiry
made by the Right Hon.
the Governor as to the cause
of delay in the inquiry
to be made by L. Christie Esq.
into certain charges brought
against Mr. Dorfer in
South West, the Secretary
has the honour to state
that L. Christie's first at-
tempt to go into these
charges was baffled by
the imperfect state of the
Vridachellum Range Ac-
counts - He was
then suddenly obliged
to go to England on three
months leave, on re-
ceiving a Telegram that
his father was danger-
ous.

members of his office
Establishment habitually
conducted much of their
work in other places
than the Range office;
and there is little doubt
but that they were
also in the habit of
taking public records
out of the office to en-
able them to carry on
such work elsewhere.
So much indeed fol-
lows from Mr Bell's
own statements; and
his plea that this was
done only in March,
is inconsistent with
the statement that

they had no option
because the river was
in flood. Mr Bell there-
fore must share the
responsibility for the
missing documents;
Mr Horfor now ^{charge} having
of the Range will com-
plete the list for in-
formation of the
Controller; and collect
all papers that may
be required for Deane's
Christie's further in-
vestigation.

Mr Horfor has en-
tirely failed to prove
that Mr Bell was cog-
nizant of advances
being

Business of our
bridge is made of
cable to a man
the conduct of
a lot of
the

[illegible]

The whole inquiry into these matters has shown great faults on both sides; gross insubordination and ill mannerly conduct on the part of the junior, for which he has met with deserved punishment; and indiscreet, hasty, and sometimes unjust action on the part of

of the error, success.
- being upon weak
inaction which brought
down the notice of
Government both
combining to prove
his unfitness for a
district charge.

CMW

If Lieut. Christie is
about to make the
enquiry I think that
it had better be
stated from the com-
mittee or expression of
opinion: pending the
etc.

I O L

6th 20/11/94

to be done?
where is it
31/7

P. W. D.

Proceedings of the Madras Government,
Under date the 187 .

Read the following:-
The Lt. Col. South Arcot / P. O. & Co. dated
21 July 1874

2420

Ordered that the
list of missing papers
forwarded with the
above letter be sent
to the Controller for
examination and
consideration by
Lieut. Christie P. O. and
the Sub. Collector of
South Arcot when
enquiring into the
charges against Mr.
Confor and Mr. Bell.

to be done?
where is it
31/7

In the meantime
Mr. [unclear] having charge
of the Range will com-
-plete the list for in-
-formation of the
Controller; and collect
all papers that may
be required for the
investigation ordered.

Copy

Mr. [unclear]
The Mr. [unclear] & the
rect- the Coll. of [unclear]
Associate himself with
L. [unclear] in the inquiry
into the charges above de-
luded to M
11/8.

To the S. E. [unclear] ✓
" Controller with 13 [unclear] ✓
" Revenue Dept. ✓
1. Copies despatched 31/8/74.

641-642

Re 17th [unclear] 11/74
Circ 11/8/74, Retd 14/8/74

2417
Govt. of Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

To
The District
Very Great.

Dated

Recd.

Encl.

G. O. 21 Aug No. 2420

Nos. 641. 642

Mr. R. S. Narayan

~~Certain papers sent~~ A
List of certain missing
papers sent to the Controller
to be rectified for examination
consideration by the
District R. S. when inquiring
into the charges against
Narayan & Mr. Bell.
Col. of South Arcot
to associate
self with the District
to inquire into the
charges against Mr. Narayan.