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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Pension DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	63	Press Mis.
Dated	8-2-	18 67.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

for

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
23rd January 1867.*

Read the following papers :—

No. 474. From VADEVUMMAL, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 23rd November 1866.

I, Vadevummal, a deplorable widow of the late [Comarasawmy, a tin-man employed in the Mathematical Instrument Maker's Department of the Public Works Stores and Workshops, respectfully beg to state that on Friday last, the 16th instant, (November,) at 5 P. M., Mr. Moncrieff, the General Superintendent of the Department, ordered a number of Artificers to remove the punts lying at the Cooum bar higher up the stream near the Wallajah bridge. My poor husband, who was one of the number to do this fatal duty, went swimming with a second set of persons to go to the punt in the presence of Mr. Moncrieff, who was on the spot, and who not wishing to disobey the orders of his superior Officer, he had gone with the others, and whilst thus engaged my poor husband got drowned, and thus ended his career in this life. Now, as he has left a family, consisting of myself, (his widow,) an aged mother, and six young and orphan children without any support whatever, we have therefore to appeal to your humane consideration, and crave that you will be graciously pleased to recommend our distressed case to Government, with the view that some allowance in a pecuniary way might be made to us, having in view that my late husband's death was caused under execution of duty imposed by his superior Officer for the interest of Government, whose benevolence is so largely known throughout the British empire, and will not, it is hoped, be denied to a distressed widow with her orphans.

Referred to the Officer in charge of the Store Department for report.

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

FORT SAINT GEORGE,
26th November 1866.

No. 475. From the General Superintendent, Public Works Stores and Workshops, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Chepauk, 6th December 1866, No. 1,168.

In continuation of my letter No. 1,080, dated 19th November 1866, and with

reference to paragraph 5 of the Public
Works Code, Chapter X., I have the honor
to enclose the accompanying Proceedings

drawn up in the prescribed form. The deceased [Comarasawmy has left a mother, wife, and six children, of whom four are boys and two girls, the eldest of the boys not more than thirteen years old, and, as the family appear at present to be dependant for support on the brother of the deceased, I beg to solicit that the Government will be pleased to accord their sanction to a gratuity of Rupees 58-8-0, equivalent to three months' pay of the deceased, being granted to Valoydum, the eldest son.

—

*Madras }
to Wit. }* **INFORMATIONS** of Witnesses severally taken and acknowledged on the behalf of our Sovereign Lady the Queen touching the death of Comarasawmy at the Island near Sir Thomas Munro's Statue, within the limits of Madras, on the Eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, before me, John Urquhart, Esq., Her

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Majesty's Coroner for Madras, on an Inquisition then and there taken on view of the body of the said Comarasawmy then and there lying dead as follows to wit, Saravanen on solemn affirmation in Tamil saith : I am a Bellow's boy, and deceased was a Tin smith. I am his son. His name was Comarasawmy. The chief gentleman at the Chepauk Workshops after the work was over, at five p. m., on Friday last brought the workmen to the Island to the sheet of water near the bar near the barges; and then he said to a Peon in the works to tell all the people to get down to this water. We came about twenty persons. When we came near the water the Ironsmith Maistry, not now present, told "all who can swim get down." Then the deceased, who cannot swim, was up to his knees in water when the Maistry cried out. Then my father went in further and up to his neck. He had to walk three yards to do this. Then he got beyond his depth, rose three times, and then disappeared altogether. Deceased had his cloth tied round his ears. I do not myself know when it was I was turned to the fort side, and did not see where my father was when the order was given "all who can swim get in." Deceased was not subject to fits. He was quite sober.

(Signed) SARAVANEN.

Annasawmy on solemn affirmation in Tamil saith : I am a Tin smith, and live at Choolay. I was with deceased at the barges by Mr. Moncrieff's order with the others, to take the barges away after 5 p. m. I did not hear anything about those being able to swim going, but I saw some swimming. Deceased went too, and I saw him go down. It was no part of our duty to go to the barges after hours, and we were to get nothing for it, only to oblige Master. Every one came. I do not know why coolies were not engaged. Three men had got into the barge by swimming.

(Signed) ANNASAWMY.

Mudderay Achary on solemn affirmation in Tamil saith : I am Iron smith Maistry at the Government Engineering Shops, Chepauk, and live at Chintadrepettah, about 5 o'clock evening last Friday part of the workmen of the works were directed to take these barges to the Wallajah bridge, and about half past 5 another part of the workmen were also told to come here. This was after the work was over. I came here and saw three gone into the water swimming. Then I saw two getting in. When I came to the water I heard Mr. Moncrieff say "all who can swim get down." This was before deceased got down, then deceased got down and went swimming, and finding he could not reach, he returned towards the beach and was drowned. None were compelled to go into the water. Deceased had nothing but a turban on his head. He had not his head tied round with cloth.

(Signed) MUDDERAY ACHARY.

Samuel Jesudasen, Esq., being duly sworn depose and saith : I am Native Surgeon, and live in Tondearpett. I have examined the body which is that of a man about 39, in good condition, and free from marks of violence. Limbs slightly rigid, teeth clenched, tongue not protruded, white froth from mouth, and bloody discharge from nostrils. From the external appearance and the evidence there is no doubt deceased died by drowning. There is nothing suspicious, and no necessity to open the body.

(Signed) S. JESUDASEN,
Native Surgeon.

Francis Moncrieff being duly sworn depose and saith : I am Superintendent of Stores and Workshops Public Works Department, Chepauk, and live in Nungumbakum High Road. Deceased on Friday evening last and others were leaving the works about 5 when I went down, and thinking the punts should be removed I directed those who could swim to go down. There seemed to be no time to send for other men, and was quite voluntary on their parts. Mr. Gray was there and could speak Tamil, but I did not hear him speak. I did not see deceased drowned. I did not see deceased. I did not see him go in. I heard that some one was drowned, looked round and saw a splutter in the water, and then all was still. I do not know any thing more. No man was compelled to go. It was necessary to do the works on Friday, as then only the river rose enough.

(Signed) F. MONCRIEFF.

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James Gray being duly sworn depose and saith : I am Storekeeper, Chepauk, and live in Town. I was present on Friday when deceased was drowned. On that evening after 5 the last witness ordered me to take the work people and remove the punts to higher up near Wallajah Gate. I went with Mr. Doderet and some of the men followed. Three of the men swam to the boat and reached, they could not lift the anchor and called out "they could not pull up." Then deceased and another went in and one reached, and deceased two-thirds of the way, when he turned, coming towards shore he sunk. The man accompanying him tried to keep him up, but let him go; no one was forced to go; no one was asked to go who could not swim. The reason these men were asked was that no better men were available, the Store staff Lascars having gone to launch a punt and not returned.

(Signed) JAMES GRAY,
Storekeeper, Public Works Department.

Govindoo on solemn affirmation in Tamil saith : I am a hammer man, and live at Triplicane. I went with others to launch the boats last Friday evening. Three of us went first, we got in by swimming, then we, viz., myself and two men now present tried to hoist the anchor but could not, and we called out: "Those who can swim come." Then deceased and another came. Deceased could not reach though he could swim, and he turned round and went down. I tried to save him but could not, no one was forced to go. Mr. Gray told him in Tamil "those who could swim could go."

(Marked) GOVINDOO.

Referred to the Officer in charge of the Store Department in continuation of previous endorsement.

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
FORT SAINT GEORGE,
8th December 1866.
Secretary to Government.

No. 476. From the Under Secretary to Government in charge of the Public Works Store Department, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Chepauk, 13th December 1866.

1. With reference to the papers which have been referred to me for report, on the subject of the death, by drowning, upon the 16th ultimo, of a man named Comarasawmy Naick, a Tinsmith employed in the Chepauk Workshops, I have the honor to state that I was not present at the accident, and that I did not hear of it until I visited the Workshops on the following morning.

2. From inquiries made by me then and subsequently, I have reason to believe that the main facts of the occurrence are contained in the evidence taken at the Inquest held before the Coroner upon the 18th ultimo, and that no blame whatever is to be attached to the deceased, who lost his life when engaged in the discharge of a duty which he was suddenly and unexpectedly called on to perform.

3. I regret to say that, after making careful inquiry, I am by no means satisfied that any necessity existed for calling upon the workmen to perform such an unusual duty at such an hour. Mr. Moncrieff did not reach the Workshops until after 5 p. m., the evening was cloudy and stormy, and it must have been nearly dark when the deceased lost his life. I am aware that Mr. Moncrieff was under the impression that the Cooum bar might be opened during the night, and that the punts would in that case be in danger of being carried out to sea. Even supposing that

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there had been reason to anticipate this, I am clearly of opinion that action should have been taken at an earlier hour. Rain had been falling during the whole day, there was no sudden change in the weather in the evening, and if the orders had been given at an earlier hour the Store Lascars, who are accustomed to work of that nature, would have been available, and there would have been no necessity to call on artizans to perform a task to which they were wholly unused.

4. The deceased was a clever workman, and bore an excellent character. He lost his life in the discharge of his duty, under very exceptional circumstances, and through no fault of his own. His claims upon the bounty of Government are very strong, and taking everything into consideration, I am inclined to recommend that a gratuity of Rupees 117, equal to six months' pay, instead of Rupees 58-8-0, as suggested by Mr. Moncrieff, be given to his family.

No. 477. ORDER THEREON, 23rd January 1867, No. 233.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 36.

Ordered that the following letter be sent:—

(Here enter No. 234, dated 23rd January 1867.)

(True Extract.)



Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the Officer in charge of the Store Department,
" General Superintendent, P. W. Stores and Workshops,
" Controller of Public Works Accounts,
" Pension Department, } With copy of letter to Government of India.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.
FORT SAINT GEORGE,
23rd January 1867.

No. 234.

No. 478.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 37.

1. I am directed to forward, for the favorable consideration of the Government of India, the accompanying papers relating to the claim to pension of the representatives of a man named Comarasawmy Naick, who, having been employed as a Tin-man in the Public Works Workshop at the Presidency, lost his life by drowning on the evening of the 16th November last, in assisting to shift, to a safe position, two boats the property of Government, which, being moored near the mouth of the Cooum, were exposed to the liability of being swept to sea on the opening of the bar of that river.

2. It will be observed that, as there was every indication on the evening in question of the bar being opened by the rise of the river during the night, the Superintendent of Public Works Stores was anxious to secure the boats, and, taking as many persons as he could collect in the Workshops, ordered such of them as could swim to effect the object. Amongst the latter happened to be this Tin-man, who, in carrying out the orders of his superior, met his death under circumstances which appear to His Excellency the Governor in Council to be such as to entitle his family to more than the bare gratuity which, under ordinary circumstances, is given to the heirs of persons in the temporary employment of Government who have the misfortune to be killed in the execution of their duty. It was no part of the duty of a Tin-man to assist in such an operation as that in performing which, without the prospect of remuneration, the deceased lost his life, and as it is certain that he would not have been engaged in it whether he could swim or not but for the order of his superior, an Officer of Government whom he was accustomed implicitly to obey, his case is exceptional, and appears to His Excellency in Council deserving of special treatment.

* Rupees 20 per mensem.

I am accordingly to request that a pension at the rate of one-fourth of the salary* which deceased was earning, or

Rupees 5 per mensem, may be granted to his widow.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Depare Copy

London 1867 Department

W^o 418.

Proceedings of Government

F. 2419
W. 233.
W. 233.

Dec 25th January 1867.

Communicating papers
regarding the death by
drowning of a Hindoo
employed in the Public
Works stores, while in
the execution of his
public duty, and the
application made to
the Govt of India for
a pension to the widow
of the deceased. -
With an order of the

Order thereon 8th February 1868.

Order thereon with

the reply of the Government of India

is communicated to the British Agent

W. 3.