M.R.O. 1—38,000—16-10-20.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Political DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 285 Press Mis

Dated 18 - 6 ~~11~~ 1861

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 24. Read the following letter from W. M. CADELL, Esq., Government Agent at Tanjore; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 27th May 1861, No. 196.

Paragraph 1. I have the honor to report, for the information of Government, that, as directed in their Proceedings of the 10th ultimo, No. 192, I have opened and examined the contents of all the boxes in the Dástán Mahál, and have verified the contents of each with the Catalogues; these have been all found to be perfectly correct and, as stated in my former communication, there was no reason to believe that this apartment had ever been entered or its contents tampered with. This apartment has now been secured in as secure a way as it admits of; on the three sides it is surrounded by walls common to other apartments and on the remaining side it has three iron doors with wooden shutters within, two of these have been nailed up and the only remaining doors have been secured by a triple set of good padlocks.

2. I have also examined the contents of the Eshwant and Sankeeta Mahals, and the statement which accompanies this communication shews, as accurately as can be ascertained, what articles are missing from among those entered in the Catalogues prepared by Mr. Phillips.

3. I have also to report, for the information of Government, that, previous to leaving Tanjore, I committed seven Sepoys of the 13th Regiment N. I. on the charge of robbery and in all of whose possession property was found as will be seen from the accompanying list. The whole of these Sepoys are Mahommedans and, from the evidence adduced, it appears that the Talim Khanah, or place of wrestling, belonging to the Detachment, was the place in which the robbery was probably planned and to which the gold was brought and melted previous to its disposal. An immense accumulation of ashes and about fifteen of the moulds attached to the State Harness, (and from which the gold had been stripped) were found in this place buried several feet under the flooring.

4. In a well belonging to one of the Sepoys now committed was found a complete set of instruments for picking locks and also a set of apparatus for smelting; there can therefore be no doubt but that the robbery was deliberately and skilfully planned, and looking to the facility with which an entrance could be effected into the Eswant Mahal, I am inclined to think that the robbery has been going on for several months. Regarding this, however, I am not yet in a position to speak positively, but in the Talim Khanah and also in the houses of several of the Prisoners, letters (all in Hindustanee) have been discovered which, though couched in somewhat enigmatical terms, would still seem to shew that property was being abstracted and made away with in February.

5. The outer door of the Eshwant Mahal is a very large high door with a rounded top in eight pieces or folds with hinges, fitting into the arch work; it opens outwards and the hinges (which are also on the outside) are of the commonest description, inside there is a door which opens inwards and is also in eight pieces composed of iron bars fixed in wooden frames, but this door, as far as I have been able to ascertain, was simply closed and not locked or secured in any way. On the outside door there was a hasp and staple in which was fixed a country padlock wrapped round in cloth and tied and sealed with Mr. Phillips' seal in the centre of the padlock.

6. Up to the date of my opening the premises on the 2nd April, this seal remained intact and unless on very close observation it could not be discovered that the lock had been opened or in any way tampered with. On a more minute examination, it however appeared that the cloth opposite the key-hole had been slit and again skilfully sewn up, the place where the opening had been made being again skilfully concealed in the folds of the cloth. From what has been stated it will be thus seen that the effecting an entrance into the apartment was, by no means, a matter of great difficulty and looking to the size of some of the articles found to be missing, I am inclined to think that the abstraction of property must have been going on for some time.

7. With regard to the conduct of the Palace servants and their complicity in the matter, I regret much to state that I have been unable to obtain any satisfactory evidence, at least such as would warrant me in committing them to a Criminal Court. That the Sirkele and his

Subordinate were altogether ignorant of what was going on, I cannot bring myself to believe. The whole of the Palace Subordinates are under the control of the Sirkele and, for the most part, are his own nominees, and, as mentioned in my letter of the 20th April, the Gomastahs and Gollahs attached to the Cloth Department were daily engaged in a room adjoining the Dástán Mahál in the same Court yard. Moreover nothing can pass out of this part of the Palace except by the Sirkele's Office and with the numerous guards and scouts under his control in every part of the Palace, it is difficult to believe that so much property could have passed out of it without some rumour thereof at least reaching his ears.

8. From the statements of the Native officers, it is clear that even so early as the middle of March, the amount of property, of which some of the Sepoys had become possessed, was attracting notice and from the unusual amount of light appearing from within the Eshwant Mahal and which had been brought to the notice of the Sirkele about ten days before my return to the District, it is clear that he must have also had some idea that something was wrong. Instead, however, of taking any precautions or indeed of satisfying himself that the lock had not been touched or tampered with, he seems to have contented himself with merely reporting the matter of the unusual degree of light within the Mahál to Mr. Morris, the Sub Collector in charge.

9. There are also other circumstances which tend to throw strong suspicion on the character of the Sirkele both for honesty and straight forwardness ; it is well known (in fact he has himself told me) that, at the time of his father's death, he was Rupees 15,000 in debt, this debt he has now cleared off, and altogether his circumstances have become so prosperous since he assumed charge of his present office that it is scarcely possible to believe this state of things can have arisen entirely from the emoluments attached to his office. These are facts which have not only been told me by Her Highness Avoo Sahiba and Kamatcheeboye Sahiba themselves, but are matters of which no one entertains a doubt. It is true that, as General Steward and Manager for the Ladies, he has had opportunities of adding to his regular emoluments and that, even presuming he had no connection with or complicity in the abstraction of property now brought to light, the improvement in his circumstances might be otherwise accounted for, from circumstances which have been elicited during this enquiry ; there are however very strong grounds for suspicion against the Sirkele, and amongst others I may mention that, in the house of a creature of his who had lately been re-employed by the Sirkele in the Palace (although dismissed and forbidden its precincts by the late Raja,) there was found a considerable amount of articles of crockery and glass which are beyond question Palace property. It is also very strongly rumoured that in the house of the Sirkele himself, articles of glass, such as globe lamps, lustres, &c., have been broken up and made away with since the investigation into the robbery was commenced and under the fear that his house would be searched.

10. In the present unsettled state of the affairs of the Raj, I am, however, not prepared to recommend that the Sirkele should be summarily removed, but I have thought it my duty to bring these facts to notice so that when the affairs of the Raj are finally settled the Government may have it in their power to determine whether the services of the present Acting Sirkele should be retained or not.

11. With regard to the remainder of the property which has not been discovered, I regret much to state that the efforts of the Police have hitherto not been successful. It is known that the bulk of the property went to Trichinopoly, and Captain Bates was, for some days, at that Station endeavouring to procure evidence in the matter against certain parties who were strongly suspected of having been receivers ; the matter is, however, involved in much obscurity, and the tenacity with which the secret has been kept and the reticence shewn by the parties who have been examined have been very baffling. Should any further discovery be hereafter made I shall have the honor again to address the Government, and would only in conclusion add that, after communication with the Provisional Commander-in-Chief and ascertaining his views regarding the Sentries on guard at the Dastan Mahal on the 31st March as to whether they should be tried by Court Martial or otherwise, I have directed their committal also to the Criminal Court making therefore a total of nine prisoners who have now been committed as being implicated in the robbery.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Political Department,
18th June 1861.

List of articles stolen in the Palace of His late Highness the Raja of Tanjore.

Names of articles.	Probable quantity.		Value.			Remarks.
Gold.	Seers.	Pagoda weights.	Rs.	A.	P.	
1. Plate covers of the Rathum or Car.....	43	5½	15,504	0	0	The plates are almost entirely removed from the top, from the lower parts of all the eight pillars and from the upper part of one of them.
2. Do. of Ambari	56	29½	20,292	0	0	The plates of the top and bottom almost removed. The whole of the ten pillars carried away.
3. Do. of another do.	64	53⅔	23,281	0	0	
4. Ten knobs of the net work Hauda.	2	40	900	0	0	
5. Gold ornaments set in with common stones belonging to a horse head stall.....	1	.....	360	0	0	
6. Do. of Serja belonging to another do.	1	75	697	0	0	
7. Do. of lion's figure belonging to another do.	2	56⅔	975	0	0	
8. Do. of Harusam or peacock's figure belonging to another do.	2	72¼	1,000	0	0	
9. Two Dumchas or cruppers.....	2	.....	720	0	0	One carried away entire and the other entirely stripped of gold.
10. A packet containing small pieces of different gold articles connected with the Rathum or Ambari..	...	39½	178	0	0	
Silver.						
11. Instruments for cleansing birds' cages.....	...	27½	8	0	0	
12. Eight pieces of silver plate belonging to the Tomjan Hauda.....	7	17	185	0	0	
13. Sundry small pieces of silver articles connected with the Rathum Ambari, &c.....	...	45	13	0	0	
Total Rupees...	.....	.....	64,113	0	0	

No.	Arms.
104.	Dagger, agate handle, set with precious stones.
105.	„ „ set with rubies and emeralds.
106.	„ „ set with flat rubies.
107.	„ „ ornamented with gold.
108.	„ „ silver mounted scabbard.
109.	„ „ with silver hilt.
114.	Kuttarah, silver gilt.
115.	„ silver hilt.
117.	„ with gilt hilt.
118.	Battle axe, blade inlaid with gold, handle plated with gold.
119.	„ „ „ recovered.
170.	Tulwah, scabbard ornamented with gold, recovered.
173.	Boys Tulwah „ „
201.	Six Turkish swords with plain handle.
508.	Dagger, with agate handle.
509.	„ „
510.	„ „ set with a ruby.
512.	„ black stone handle.
513.	„ green stone handle.
514.	„ „
515.	„ „
518.	„ „
519.	„ with Vullum stone handle.
520.	„ „
25.	

Tanjore, Government Agent's Office,
Rajah Madam, *27th May* 1861.

(Signed) W. M. CADELL,
Government Agent.

List of articles belonging to the late Raj deposited in the Eswant Mahal and which have been found in the possession of the Prisoners noted below.

No.	Description of the articles.	Number of articles.	Estimated value. RS.	A.	P.
	Found in the Talimkhana or Fencing Choultry where the 1st Prisoner Sheik Budden lived.				
1	Bits of moulds of the golden trappings on the State harness with the gold stripped off.				
2	Do. of small ones of do.	12	0	0	2
3	Do. of do. for watch works, &c.,	13	0	0	1
4	Brick hollowed out for receiving melted gold.	3	0	1	0
5	Upper part of an earthern pot in which gold and silver had been melted.	1	0	0	0
		1	0	0	0
			0	1	3
	Found in the house of the 2nd Prisoner by name Syed Ahomed.				
6	A sword gilt with gold	1	300	0	0
7	Gold Buckle	1	15	0	0
8	Laced handkerchief	1	15	0	0
9	Cash in Rupees, presumed to be the proceeds of gold melted down.	146	146	0	0
10	Calgi made of woven beads, Horse ornament	1	5	0	0
11	A satin chess cover inlaid with gold tissue	1	10	0	0
12	Piece of a mould of one of the gold ornaments on the State harness	1	0	0	1
			491	0	1
	Found on the person of the 3rd Prisoner named Batcha Hussunee.				
13	Pieces of gold newly stripped from the Howdah	17	110	0	0
	Found in the house of the 4th Prisoner named Emam Khan.				
14	A bag containing Rupees, supposed to be the proceeds of melted gold	80	80	0	0
	Found near the hedge in front of the house of do.				
15	A sort of golden ornament called Kuba	2	12	0	0
16	Gold rings new, and of a fine touch	2	9	0	0
17	Other small articles of jewelry newly made up and of fine gold	7	18	10	0
			119	10	0
	Found in the house of Sekh Farith, 5th Prisoner.				
18	One purse containing Rupees, presumed to be the proceeds of melted gold.	234	234	0	0
	Found in the house of Ismal Sheriff, 6th Prisoner.				
19	Rupees found in a pot filled with raw rice, presumed to be proceds of melted gold	110	110	0	0
	Found in the re-examination of the houses of the 6th and 7th prisoners and which are situated in Trichinopoly.				
20	2 Silver pieces	2	8	0	0
21	Roll of silver wire	1	1	12	0
22	Do. do.	1	1	14	0
23	Do. of gold wire.	1	9	0	0
24	Do. of do.	1	7	0	0
25	Battle axe inlaid with gold and partly covered with golden plates	1	300	0	0
26	Glass paper weight	1	5	0	0
			332	10	0
	Total		1,397	5	3

(Signed) W. M. CADELL,
Government Agent.

No. 25. ORDER THEREON, 18th June 1861, No. 285.

The Government Agent at Tanjore reports his further proceedings in connection with the robbery of the Raj property.

2. The examination of the Dástán Mahal has been completed, and it is gratifying to learn that the contents of the boxes, on comparison with their catalogues, have been found to be perfectly correct.

3. The list forming one of the enclosures to Mr. Cadell's letter shows the value of the property stolen from the other Mahals to have been Rs. 64,113, besides twenty-five weapons of various kinds daggers, battle axes, &c. The property recovered is not worth more than Rs. 1,400.

4. Nine Sepoys, including the two who were on sentry on the Dástán Mahal on the night of the 31st March, have been committed for trial before the Combaconum Court. How far any of the Native Officers were found to be implicated does not appear, but as it is scarcely possible that a robbery so extensive and embracing apparently so long a period of time, could have been perpetrated without gross negligence if not actual connivance on their part—the present report with the previous papers will be communicated through the Military Department to the Provincial Commander-in-Chief for such action as he may deem necessary.

Proceedings, 10*th April* 1861, *No.* 192.
Do. 27*th do do.* „ 226.

5. From what is stated in paras. 5 & 6, the Eswant Mahal, from which the property was abstracted, must have been very imperfectly secured. Too much reliance seems to have been placed on the Military guard. The Sepoys invited by the temptation offered by the large mass of valuable property so easily accessible, betrayed the trust and plundered the property which it was their duty to protect.

6. The inquiry has not established such complicity on the part of the Sirkele and his servants as would warrant their committal to the Criminal Court as accessories, but it is clear that no confidence can be reposed in the Sirkele after what has occurred and under the suspicious circumstances reported by the Agent. The Government do not think it desirable that he should longer be retained in the public service and they direct that he be discharged.

7. The efforts of the Police for the recovery of the stolen property have had but very little success. The Agent will report if any further recoveries are made of any moment.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. F, Cartledge.

South

East

West

Garden with high outer walls, beyond that is the Town

Wall 18 or 20 feet high

Unoccupied upstairs apartments.

Open Yard

Gateway bricked up by Mr Sheilds to 15 feet in height.

Upstair. Female Apartments.

Private Circular Stair Case used by Raja to visit his female apartments

Vasavant mahal

a Vaulted roof building

Upstairs buildings occupied by concubines.

Verandah

Sentry's Beat

Alternate I & I strong Wooden door and iron railing door inside

Raj. Treasury formerly now Pulpy.

Palace upstairs buildings occupied by women

Tank round which are 2 Storied female apartments. The North & East sides

Dastan

Mahal

Pandal

Open Yard

High Wall

Palace upstairs buildings occupied by the women

Vaulted room in which the Clothes were placed with a small establishment for looking after them.

Open Yard surrounded by Upstair Apartments

Room for Native Visitors to sit in.

Vaulted passage. dark.

Vaulted passage wide enough for a carriage

Palace upstairs buildings occupied by women

garrison with

A 5.

Political Dept.

Pro. of the Madras Govt.

read the following letter from the Govt. Agent at Tanjore.

(T.C. 27. May 1861. No 196)

Order thereon. 18th June 1861. No 285.

The Govt Agent at Tanjore reports his further proceedings in connection with the robbery of the Raj property.

2. The examination of the Dástán Mahal has been completed, and it is gratifying to learn that the contents of the boxes, on comparison with their catalogues, have been found to be perfectly correct.

3 The list forming one of the enclosures to Mr Caldelli's letter shows the value of the property stolen from

It strikes me that as there is no question of the complicity of the Rikele Ithuth he ought to be dismissed

Mr

Agree with the President in thinking it right both as it is the Rikele - what should be done with Velaiah

2 Aug Revs

Mr

Velle

from the other Mahals to have been Rs 611,113 besides 25 weapons of various kinds daggers, battle axes &c.a. The property recovered is not worth more than Rs 1400.—

11. Nine Sepoys including the two who were on sentry, on the Dástán Mahal on the night of the 31st March, have been committed for trial before the Combaconum Court. How far any of the Native officers were found to be implicated does not appear, but as it is scarcely possible that a robbery so extensive and embracing apparently so long a period of time, could have been perpetrated without gross negligence if not actual connivance on their part — the present report with the previous papers will be communicated thro' the Military Department to the Provincial Commander-in-Chief for such action as he may deem necessary.

Pro. 10 April 1861 N° 192.
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6. The inquiry has not established such complicity on the part of the Sirkele & his servantes as would warrant their committal to the principal

Court

Pol. L. to Govt. 10th Sept.
No. 8 of 1863.

Political 1861 Sept.

Replied to 16th March
1864.

No. 285

Proceedings of the
Madras Govt

Dpt. Home Mor.

Reviewing the report
of the Agent at Tanjore
of his further proceedings
in connection with the
robbery of the Rajah's
property.

Ro. No. 28 - 29
10/4/61
" 54 - 55
27/4/61

24 & 25

it is clear that he conti-
-dence can be reposed
in the Sirkele after
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reported by the Agent -
The Govt do not think
it desirable that he
should longer be
retained in the
public service & they
direct that he be
discharged -

Govt
14-6-
JP

Court as accessories - but
that they must have
been largely implicated
there can be no question
- As in the present
state of the Raj affairs
the Agent does not recom-
mend the removal of the
Sirkele, the Govt will
allow him to remain
for the present - but his
proceedings should be
watched narrowly.

7. The efforts of the
Police for the recovery of
the stolen property have
had but very little success.
The Agent will report
if any further recoveries
are made of any moment.

JP

Govt Agent at Tanjore. — 3
Inspector General of Police. } Desps 19th
Military Dept. with Cos 192 & 226

31 LEVO