BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
500/00							

Political

Revenue (1899) Department.

17 DEC 1899

CURRENT No. 1551

CHIEF SECRETARY
29 NOV 1899
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

P

Note please

Circle

9.12.99

From The Collector of Malabar.

Order

No. D. 161 Dec 99

Dated 24th November 1899.

Received 29 } 30.

Registered 30 }

Enclosures One

Spare copies —

SUBJECT.

Submitting report on ten Complaints against the Karnavathas of Maini Cary.

R&A
GO 726
11-12-99

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
mis	86	P&L	26-1-99
"	7	"	3-1-99
"	606	"	31-7-97
"	316	"	12-5-97
"	311	"	11-5-97
"	250	"	13-4-97
"	841A	"	7-[illegible]
"	287	"	29-4-97

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Malabar Sub Collector's Office,

Camp Minicoy, 1st October 1899.

To

The Collector of Malabar,

C A L I C U T.

Sir,

In item No.12 of the matters to be disposed of on this island I am instructed to inquire into the charges of extortion in the sale of Government rice in 1897 on the part of the rice contractor Poker Haji and the Gumasta Gulam Kadir, and also to report upon the damages done by the cyclone and fire which occurred in the island at the end of 1896. Accordingly I have the honour to report as follows:---

(1) 2. I deal first with the sale of Government rice in 1897. On 8th November 1897 a petition was put in to you by 31 Minicoy islanders, then living at Bombay, stating that the islanders were reduced to extreme poverty by the action of their "Village Official" It proceeds:---

"We were ordered by the Government Official of our village to unload a large quantity of Bengal rice and also informed that the merciful Government of India has granted to sell to us at 8 (Bengal) seers per rupee, but it was not the case, and afterwards to our great sorrow and disappointment we were obliged to pay or sell a tola of silver for 4 seers of rice and to add to our great sorrow we were obliged and forced to part with our one tola of gold for 2 seers of common rice."

These are the only specific allegations made. The same persons petitioned again in January 1898 for a favourable reply to the above.

3. On 15th February 1899 one Hussain Ismail Serang living at Bombay petitioned you, stating that he had addressed the Government of Madras on the subject of the islanders' distress, and praying you for a favourable reply to his petition.

4. This refers to a petition put in by Hussain Ismail and 6 others, all living at Bombay, to the Government of India, about the middle of 1898. The Government of Bombay caused a statement to be taken from petitioners by the Commissioner of Police, Bombay

in July 1898. In this they refer to the cholera and cyclone, which occurred in the latter half of 1896 and which were followed by famine in consequence of which the "Kanakkapulla" (Gumasta) went to Calicut and returned "with 2000 bags of coarse black Malabar rice and a trader from Calicut."

5. The statement proceeds:---

"These bags ought to have been stored on arrival at the Government depot, but the Kanakkapulla stored them at his own place and the Calicut trader who had come with him put up with him. He then invited the people and ostensibly read out to them a sham paper from the Collector announcing that the food had been sent by Government for their relief and he had been ordered to sell at 8 seers per rupee. So those who had money bought at 8 seers per rupee. This rate only lasted 3 or 4 days and the Kanakkapulla started giving 6 seers per rupee which rate lasted 5 or 6 days. He forced people who had no money to bring coir yarn bundles longer by one third than usual, and gave only one seer in exchange for 12 such longer bundles. For a good box or copper or brass pot or hanging lights worth about 13 or 14 rupees he began giving 6 seers. Then he gave only half a seer for new pieces of cloth used for covering corpses, costing Rs.4 ½ a seer also for each tola of silver ornaments, and by and by, one seer only for a tola of gold. This dire state of affairs due to the Village Officer had lasted about 2 months when the fire occurred and made the islanders extremely destitute." When the islander at last went to Calicut to see the Collector, the Gumasta, it appears, went with them and on his representation the Collector told the people that they must supply their own rice. "This was about November 1897." - Petitioners go on to inveigh against the fraudulent and extortionate conduct of the Gumasta and his misrepresentations that caused the "subsequent inaction of the Collector" and pray for help as the islanders are destitute.

This apparently refers to the Collector's Order dated 1-5-97 accompanying the rice.

6. Yet another petition was put in in September 1897 from ten so-called "Moopans or representatives" of the islanders, whose right to any such title is extremely doubtful. They state that the 1000 bags of rice already sent are exhausted, and pray that rice be granted to

petitioners for the islanders' use, and one year's time allowed for repayment. They object to rice being sold by an outsider, for "the contractor Poker Haji at the instigation of his friend Gulam Khadir" abused his contract. Instances are given. 12 or 14 bundles of coir "of unusual length and thickness" were demanded for one seer. Rice was sold at 6 and 7 seers per rupee. Boxes, utensils, cloths &c., were only received for one tenth of their value in rice.

Gulam Khadir was then on leave, he is the present Gumasta.

7. Lastly, the women of the island came en masse to me at the cutchery on the 28th.ultimo and complained amongst other things of Poker Haji's extortionate prices.

8. In reviewing the above allegations it is significant that the most detailed and specific allegations, and the loudest cries for relief, come from the men established in lucrative positions at Bombay, who presumably were not on the island at all. They have not returned to the island yet, and permanently reside at Bombay. I could not therefore examine any of them. It is noteworthy that they date the arrival of the rice between the cyclone and the fire In reality the cyclone was in November 1896, the fire in January 1897 and the rice arrived in May 1897, which is additional evidence that petitioners knew nothing of what they stated.

⊗ This was a second consignment. One was sent in September or October 1896, I think, and injured by the Cyclone. (Signed) G.V. Vance. 21-11-99.

9. Of the island petitioners referred to in para 6 I examined all except No.2 who was absent. They are very hazy about the details of their petition. They complain that rice was sold at 7 and 8 seers a rupee, (which is about the mainland price of the rice) instead of from 8 to 10 seers; but their real grievance is that domestic utensils, cloths &c. purchased a very small quantity of rice. Boxes worth Rs.12 fetched only Rs.2 worth. They do not know anything about the barter of jewels, "the women must be asked." Petitioners say they have no grievances against the then Amin, Mahomed Didi, but they have two against the Gumasta; one he and the contractor were together when the latter charged these extortionate rates, the other that the Gumasta promised them pay for landing the rice, but they did not get it. I heard no complaint from any other islanders that they were not paid for landing the rice, and the Collector's Order (dated 1-5-99) was to the Amin, to pay the landing charges out of island funds. The connection

of the Gumasta with the contractor becomes very shadowy when compared with the allegations in this and other petitions. I shall however refer to it later.

10. The women represented their grievances very freely. It appears that Pokor Haji sold a seer of rice (1) for 12 hanks of yarn (2) for 1 aduba of jaggery and (3) for 12 pieces of mas fish. Nothing was said about the bartering of domestic utensils or of jewels, silver or ~~or~~ gold or of the extra ~~/~~ length or thickness of the hanks given. I am convinced that this is not an oversight, as the women came prepared with sample ~~of~~ hanks of yarn, sample pieces of mas fish, and a sample aduba measure to display their grievance~~/~~.the more ~~graphically~~. If there had been any question of unfair bartering, I have nodoubt samples of the jewels and utensils would have been brought. The women were specially asked whether they had any grievance against the Gumasta and said they had not. Reference was made by the women in their written petition that articles bartered by them, cloths, boxes and domestic - utensils fetched a small amount of rice. No reference was made to the bartering of silver and it must be remembered that the other articles bartered, though no doubt valuable to their owners, will fetch a very small price on the coast.

11. To the best of my belief the 12 hanks of yarn shown me will be worth 12 annas or a little less. Jaggery runs from 7 to 8 adubas per rupee. The seer alluded to throught the above petitions is the Bengal seer, which quantity of the rice supplied to the islanders is worth a pie or two over two annas in Calicut. These prices are not therefore extravagant. Mas fish is said to be worth 6 pies per piece so that a seer for 12 pieces was an exorbitant price. The women admit however that there were other traders selling rice at the time on the island and that they also demanded 12 mas pieces for a seer of rice. Possibly the fish was badly cured or kept too long.

12. Pokker Haji died in the latter half of 1897.

13. I conclude that there is little or no foundation for t h e charge of extortion against the deceased contractor and none whatever against the Gumasta whose intrigues with Pokker Haji could not have - been effective unless he managed to gain over the other traders on the

island. My opinion is that after their misfortunes at the end of 1896 the islanders hoped to get a supply of Government rice free or on easy terms (which in the hands of easy going Amin would mean - gratis) and conceived a grudge against the Gumasta who in t h e early part of 1897 told the Collector that the alleged destitution and want of rice were exaggerated. Hence the petitions from Bombay were instigated. The Gumasta admits that he came over in the contractor's boat with the rice. The rice was refused shelter by the then Amin who was living in his wife's house and making every effort to leave Minicoy for the Maldives where he now lives. There is no Government depot except the cutcherry which is not big enough to contain 1000 bags of rice. The rice had therefore to be stored in the Gumasta's house, and the contractor lived with him. These I believe to be the sole foundations for the charge against t h e Gumasta.

x x x x x x x

~~(xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)~~

(Signed) R. F. Austin,
Ag. Sub Collector.

(True Extract.)

~~for~~ Collector.

CURRENT No. 1551

No. D. 161
Jdc. 99

Malabar Collector's Office,
Calicut, dated 24th November 99.

From

G. W. Dance Esq., I.C.S.,
Collector of Malabar.

To

The Chief Secretary to Government,
Political Department,
M A D R A S.

Sir,

BD 86 mis
26-1-99

In continuation of my letter dated 12th January last No.D 7 Isl. 99 I have the honor to submit herewith an extract from Mr. Austin's report on the complaints against the Gumastha of Minicoy. Mr. Austin is of opinion that there is no foundation for the complaints, and I agree with him.

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

Collector.

Encl. No. 1 & Pol. Cons. 1551

C- 14 12. 99.
R. 15 12. 99

[G / 24]

500—1/[illegible]-99.

Political Department

MINICOY ISLANDERS

C. No. 1551 From the Collector of Malabar D No. 161, dated 24-11- 1899.

" " " , " , " 189 .

" " " , " , " 189 .

" " " , " , " 189 .

FOR ORDERS

In G.O.No.736 Poll.,d/ 11-10-98, the Board of Revenue was requested to obtain and forward, with its remarks, a report on a petition from certain inhabitants of Minicoy Islands of the Laccadives, then living in Bombay, which had been forwarded to this Govt. by the Govt. of India for such action as might be necessary regarding their distressed condition and complaints against the Gumastay. The Board's reply was considered in G.O.No.7, Poll., dated 3rd January 1899, and it was decided that the matter should be inquired into on the next inspection of the islands.

The Collector now submits the further report. He forwards an extract from Mr. Austin's report on the subject and states that he agrees with Mr. Austin in the opinion that there is no foundation for the complaints against the gumastha. .

Submitted

See also G.O.86 Poll.,d/28-1-99

Submitted that the correspondence may be recorded and a copy forwarded to the Govt. of India for information. A draft order is submitted for approval.

Cur S.
12. 12. 99

9

for the Comm. of Police Bombay to whom the previous order (No 7 Pol P) dated 3. 1. 99 was sent.

[G/24]
500—14-99.

10

Political Department.

K Read again G.O.No.726 Poll., d/11-10-98 (P)
D ,, ,, ,, No. 7 ,, d/3-1-99 (P)
N ,, ,, ,, No.86 ,, d/26-1-99(P)

C. No. 1551 From the Collector of Malabar D, No. 161, dated 24-11- 189 9. (A) with enclosure

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ORDER Mis. No 8169 20. 12. 99.

Recorded.

Cur S
12. 12. 99

To

The Collector of Malabar
(Q of all & O)

Copy to
18/12/99.
D. S.
20. xii. 99.

7.2.4.
14.12.99
J

Cur S
12/12/99

Endt. No 817 Copy to the Comm. of Police, Bombay
Cur 12/12/99 8169

Copy to the Govt. of India, Department of Revenue & Agriculture, with reference to Mr. Maconochie's letter No. 1836/5-19, d/29-8-98.

12-12-99 Cur 12/12/99

*When given for copying*_____
*When copied*_____ } 189 .
*When examined*_____
*When signed*_____

READ AGAIN G.O., No. , DATED
189 ,

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.								
STATEMENT WITH DITTO.								
PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DESPATCH IN ORIGINAL.								

N.B.—

A = Copy in full.
B = Not to be copied.
P = Copy abstract only.
Q = Copy heading only.

C.F. 73.

Date taken out.	For what purpose.			Initials of clerk taking the paper or of attender.	Date returned.	Initials of attender.
	Department.	C. No.	Year.			

[Poll. 8]

500—15-4-96.

Political (1899) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 816-7-8

DATED 20.12.99.

INDEXED.

8-8

[Despatch Abstract.]

Amir of Mincoy. Recording letter from the Collector of Malabar reporting on the Complaints against the ——. Copy to the Govt. of India

18-7-18

[G/40]

5,000—13-11-99.

P&C DEPARTMENT.

Paper taken out of the Records from the charge of the Referencer.

Press / Miscellaneous / Routine No. 876-1720 dated 12 1899

Date taken out.	For what purpose. Department.	C. No.	Year.	Initials of clerk taking the paper or of attender.	Date returned.	Initials of attender.
3 & a Gul 500 for PF					5	
22/12/99 Police No 2242/99					14/2/00	
17/99	DD 30 Ufg				29-11-18	

Date taken out.	For what purpose.			Initials of clerk taking the paper or of attender.	Date returned.	Initials of attender.
	Depart-ment.	C. No.	Year.			

[G/40.]

5,000—13-11-99.

Department.

Paper taken out of the Records from the charge of the Referencer.

Press / Miscellaneous / Routine No. 899 dated 20-12-1899

Date taken out.	For what purpose.			Initials of clerk taking the paper or of attender.	Date returned.	Initials of attender.
	Depart-ment.	C. No.	Year.			
6-1-00	P&M	850	00	WK	22/1/00	
17-3-00	Pol	415	00	ICA	21 3 00	
21 2 00	Pol	453	00		27/3/00	
21-11-00	Do	1652	00	MP	26/11/00	
28/3/01	Do	458	00		2/11/01	
9/1/02	Pension	18	02	MS	23/1/02	
17/12/02	Pen	1148	02	MP	26/12/02	
24-1-03	Pen	1148	02	MP	14/2/03	
21/3/03	Pol	397	03	MP		
19/May/04	Pol	1225	04	MP		
16 9 13	Pen	1075			4-10-13	
	Pol	3363	13			