

ORDINARY, MS.

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Public DEPARTMENT.  |
| G.O., DATED 20-3-90 |
| No: 218/9           |

*When given for copying*

[Despatch Abstract.]

*Acknowledging receipt  
from the Govt. of Victoria  
of the Report regarding the  
Madras jugglers who  
emigrated to Australia  
and forwarding copies of the  
correspondence to the Govt. of  
India.*

READ AGAIN ORDER OF GOVERNMENT, DATED  
188, No. MISCELLANEOUS.

ENCLOSURES.

CURRENT No.

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DESPATCH  
IN ORIGINAL (not pagod).

N.B.—

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

657

From  
The Premier  
Melbourne

No 275-90

24 Janr 1890

R 4 March 1890

Encls: one

Subject

For? Minute by the Chief Commr  
of Police regarding the alleged ill-  
treatment of certain Indians, sent  
to Melbourne.

15/2/90 22/20/1 22/20/1  
4/11/89 22-919 20-4—  
22/1/90 22-41/2—  
4/3/90 22-17/2—  
letter of 20/3/90, No. 218.

To the Premier  
Colonry of Victoria  
Melbourne

Hon. Sir,

I am directed to  
acknowledge with thanks  
the receipt of the report  
transmitted with yr  
No 275 d/24 January'90.

Note for C.S.  
Orders are requested whether a  
copy of these papers need go to India  
in contr of No. 174 d/4.3.90.

Submitted that they should be sent

No: 219 d/20/3/90. U.C.O. JG  
203 the diary to the G. of India.  
Rev. & Agri: Dept (Emigr.)

Sir: In continuation of my  
letter No: 194, Public, d/4.3.90,  
I am directed to forward  
copies of  
from the Premier, Mel-  
bourne, No: 275 d/24  
(with enclosure) 90  
to the - 22 - No. 218  
d/20 March 1890  
the further  
corresce  
margin  
ally noted  
regarding  
the Madras jugglers who  
Emigrated to Australia.

JG 1573



C. No 657



Premier's Office.

Melbourne 24 January 1890

No 275 90

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th November, requesting the good offices of this Government with regard to certain Madrassi Emigrants who were employed here by a Mr Roberts.

I have made enquiries on the subject, and have received from the Chief Commissioner of Police a report (copy of which is forwarded herewith) respecting the case of the Indians referred to.

From this Report it would appear that the Indians were grievously ill-treated by their employer, but that the latter imposed

The Chief Secretary  
to the Government  
of Madras

4992. Sir - St George

Pub. 657 of 90  
In 60. 218-197 20.3-90 2m

imposed on them by means of their ignorance  
so as to prevent the true state of affairs  
becoming known. The actual facts, however,  
at length came to light, and the unfortunate  
people were then provided with passages  
to India at the expense of this Government.

As it is mentioned in your letter  
that the Australian Colonies are not countries  
to which Emigration from India is lawful,  
under Act XXI of 1889 of the Governor  
General in Council, I presume that  
vigilance will, in future, be exercised by  
the Indian Police, so as to prevent the  
occurrence of similar cases in future.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

  
Premier.

( Copy )

VICTORIA POLICE.-(47).  
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No 1 Division - Russell Street Station- Melbourne Police  
District.

4th January 1890.

Report of Const. Wardley, 3492. relative to alleged ill-treatment of Indians lately performing and being exhibited at the Palace of Amusements, Melbourne.  
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I beg to report that in accordance with the wishes of the Chief Commissioner of Police, I have made special inquiries regarding the alleged ill-treatment of the Indians lately employed at the Palace of Amusements in Melbourne. Although complaints of ill-treatment were made to the police during the time the Indians were being exhibited by persons unconnected in any way with the exhibition, it was found utterly impossible to obtain any particulars from the Indians themselves, their reasons being, as was subsequently ascertained, that they were completely under subjection to Mr Bastard alias Roberts, and Mr Washburn but principally the former.

The statements furnished by Mr Syed Teeepoo, in his attached communication to the Government of Bengal, are not in my opinion exaggerated in any way.

It will be remembered that some time ago, a complaint was received from Mr Gilbert Smith, the Indian interpreter  
of

of this City, and Const. Stokes of this station was instructed to visit the Indians during the time they were being exhibited, and ascertain from them whether they had any complaints to make regarding their treatment, food, &c, and that Dr Shields also paid them a visit a few days subsequent, but no tangible complaint was made by them to Const. Stokes, whilst Dr Shields reported them to be in good health, and that the sleeping accommodation provided them was of a satisfactory nature. ( I do not know the exact nature of Dr Shields ' report, but I believe it was to the above effect ). But I am now prepared to show on reliable authority, that ( although Const. Stokes was accompanied by a competent interpreter ), the Indians were afraid to make a single complaint to him, because Mr Roberts, the proprietor of the show, accompanied by his Hindoo interpreter, would always remain somewhat convenient, whilst the Indians were being questioned, and thus their mouths were virtually closed so far as making complaints were concerned. I do not for a moment intend to insinuate that Const. Stokes displayed any laxity in making his inquiries, because I know full well that the information to be obtained now, was not obtainable at that time. When Const. Stokes first visited the Palace of Amusements, he found the Indians in an apparently healthy state, although the rooms in which they dined and slept were not by any means in such a cleanly condition as they might be; but Mr Roberts was evidently put on his guard, and before the arrival of Dr Shields, nearly all his employes, including the Indians themselves, were set to work to thoroughly clean and scrub out the whole place. Probably the fullest attention was not paid to Mr Smith's complaints, because in the first place it was evident they could not be substantiated and secondly, because he had a motive in bringing them forward, namely, that of remuneration.

When

When the Indians were first engaged by Mr Roberts in India, the various agreements stipulated that on arrival in Australia:-

|                                               |     |                  |     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| The 3 Queens were to receive                  | 100 | rupees per month |     |
| The 2 Old Indian soldiers                     | 25  | " each,          | do. |
| The Indian Juggler                            | 50  | " ,              | do. |
| The Basket-trick Indian &<br>his two children | 70  | "                | do. |
| The 2 monkey boys &<br>their father           | 70  | "                | do. |
| The Contortionist boy and<br>his mother       | 50  | "                | do. |
| The Big-headed man and his<br>brother         | 20  | "                | do. |

A little boy was also brought from India by Mr Roberts as a servant at a salary of 20 rupees per month.

The Indians were not allowed to go out into the streets with the exception of going to the baths on two or three occasions under the care of Mr Davidson, their interpreter, and this was only to go and return again, no liberty being allowed them. Regarding the food given them, Mr Davidson, who was in Mr Roberts' employ, admitted to me that lard, and also meat slaughtered by a Christian, was given them to eat, this being against the precepts of their religion; but there was no alternative, they must necessarily accept it or go without. They were often subjected to ill-treatment, and the mother of the boy contortionist was on one occasion cruelly beaten. Both money and food was often supplied by spectators at the exhibition. As the agreements under which they were engaged were made in India, the Indians naturally concluded that they would be paid in accordance with the nominal value

of a rupee, namely 2/-, but when they did receive their pay, which was not until four months after their arrival in this Colony, they were paid at the Colonial rate, namely 1/5 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The delay in the payment of their salary, combined with the reduced rate of a rupee, and also the manner in which some of them were beaten, caused great discontent amongst them, which resulted, as is well known, in some of their number being brought before the City Police Court, and fined, on account of their alleged mis-behaviour. No one knew anything of their conduct except those closely connected with the exhibition, therefore no refuting evidence could be given. Mr Roberts frequently threatened them, by stating he would fetch in the police, and as they were unacquainted with the laws of this Colony, and cognisant of the fact that some of their number had been fined, this had a very tyrannical effect over them. On one occasion Mr Roberts himself was summoned to the District Court and fined 20/- and 3 guineas costs, for assaulting one of the Indians under his control, the Indian himself having initiated the proceedings at the Court. Mr Gilbert Smith, the Indian interpreter of this City, was summoned before Mr Panton, and fined for using insulting words in the exhibition, Mr Smith was in the habit of visiting the exhibition, and the Indians soon recognised him as being an interpreter of their native tongue. They conversed together on two or three occasions, but at length <sup>Mr. Smith was</sup> peremptorily spoken to by one of the attendants for conversing with the Indians during the entertainment. No doubt this action was a trick on Mr Roberts' part to prevent the Indians ventilating any of their grievances. The Indians themselves allege that the death of one of their number ( the juggler who committed suicide by hanging), was due to the worry and treatment he had received at the hands of Mr Roberts. According to agreement, he was required to conduct two performances

performances during the evening of the week days, but Mr Roberts desired him to conduct three, and on refusing to accede to Mr Roberts' wishes, he was grossly assaulted. When Mr Roberts became bankrupt, of course the Indians lost what salary was due to them, and nearly all of them proceeded to the Melbourne Court of Petty Sessions, in order to have some action taken against Mr Roberts, but their efforts were futile. They refused to leave the precincts of the Court, and were subsequently arrested by Senior Const. Byrne of this station. Considerable difficulty was experienced in arriving at a conclusion as to what was to be done with them, but at length they were shipped to India by the S. S. Bucephalus, at the expense of the Victorian Government. Prior to their departure, they were discharged from custody at the City Police Court, and when informed that they were to be returned to India, their joy was unbounded, and it was very evident that their sojourn in this Colony had been anything but a happy one.

(sgd) Thos. Wardley.

Const. 3492.

The Officer in Charge

No 1. Division.

MINUTE BY THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

I now beg to submit a report furnished by Constable Wardley, who has a personal knowledge of much that took place in connection with the Indians while they were in Melbourne.

(SD) H.M. Chomley.

Chief Commissioner of Police

7.1.30.