Revenue Department

Go Inw Ins 1298 of 24-9-1858

Book No 19-20

Diary 28-9-1858

Read again Extract from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue dated 28th June and recorded in Diary to Consultation 27th July 1858, No. 1015.

Read also the following Extract from the Minutes of Consultation in the Military Department dated 17th August 1858, No. 3066.

No. 19. Read the following Papers.

Extract Minutes Consultation Revenue Department.

(Here enter 22d July 1858, No. 1015.)

From Colonel A. McCALLY, Commissary General; to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 18th August 1858, No. 114.

SIR,

No. 1015, *dated 22d July* 1858.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Extract from the Minutes of Consultation referring to me certain correspondence with the Civil authorities in North Arcot on the subject of impressment of carts by the Commissariat Officer at Vellore, particularly in reference to 5th para. of Mr. Sullivan's letter.

2. I believe it to be conceded on all hands that the impressment of carriage ought never to be resorted to except under circumstances which render it unavoidable in order to prevent serious injury to the public service.

3. This is well understood by the Officers of the Commissariat, and in the capacity of Superintendent of Police they are guided by this view of the question.

4. The extraordinary demands of the service within the last twelve months has obliged them in many instances to press carriage within Military limits under orders of the Commanding Officers, and if they had not done so, the most serious consequences might have been apprehended.

5. If pressing takes place at all within Military limits, it appears to me advisable that it should be undertaken by the Superintendent of Police under the orders of the Officer Commanding instead of by the Civil authorities.

6. If owners of carts within Military limits are allowed an immunity from impressment, whilst carts in the Districts are impressed by the Civil authorities, there would be a manifest injustice in the exception made.

7. I know not of any distinct authority granted to the Superintendent of Police or the Commanding Officer to impress carriage, and nothing of course but necessity could extenuate the exercise of so oppressive a practice.

8. The maistries in Military Cantonments alluded to by the Collector, and supposed apparently by him to be able to collect carriage, have no influence in overcoming the extreme objection which the cart owners have to engage their carts on a service to which they find there is to be no term, for the arrival at one destination is followed immediately by impressment for another at a greater distance from their homes.

9. These maistries draw a very small salary for collecting carriage which may be willing to engage, they are supposed to know the owners of carts in Cantonments and the neighbourhood; but beyond this no assistance can be expected from them, there is only one bullock and cart maistry at Vellore on a salary of 7 Rupees per month.

10. I have desired Lieutenant Heath the Commissariat Officer and Superintendent of Police at Vellore to abstain from impressing any carts at Vellore, for the use of his own Department or indeed of any other except under the especial order of the Commanding Officer. It appears to me, that objectionable as is the practice at any Station, it is peculiarly so at Vellore from the circumstances which the Collector has described.

11. In a former communication, I had the honor to advocate the keeping up at least one hundred carts with bullocks at Vellore, and the same number at Bangalore for the transport of Commissariat Stores, and also the establishment of transit carts between Vellore and Bangalore.

12. A similar establishment has answered very well between Masulipatam and Secunderabad, and the necessities of the service have induced me to anticipate the sanction of Government for the formation of such an establishment between Secunderabad and Kamptee.

13. I believe these establishments will not cost the Government much more than what it is obliged to pay now for hired carriage, whilst it will relieve the cart owners from a great deal of wretchedness arising from impressment, and this good result would be greatly assisted by the Inspector General of Ordnance and Magazines having a large number of the best description of bullocks under his own control for the movement of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores as already recommended by me.

14. I called on Lieutenant Heath for his observations on the Collector's Report to Government, and annex a copy of his reply* to this, in which will be seen the extent to which he has obtained carriage with, and without, pressing and the difficult position in which he is sometimes placed to meet the calls on him for carriage.

* *Dated 12th August* 1858.

From Lieutenant G. HEATH, Sub-Assistant Commissary General; to Colonel A. McCALLY, Commissary General; Madras, dated Vellore, 12th August 1858, No. 644.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge Colonel Hill's letter with its annexments, and with reference thereto beg to offer the following observations.

Dated 4th August 1858, *No.* 1843.

2. I am quite at a loss to conjecture on what grounds Mr. Sullivan has arrived at the conclusion conveyed in the 5th para. of his letter now under the consideration of Government, that "pressing is resorted to by this Department on *every* occasion of moving up stores, and that we are never able to secure a single bandy *voluntarily*"; so far from impressment being a practice of constant occurrence, it appears to have been resorted to by my predecessors only in cases of absolute necessity, and to the extent noted in the margin, and of the carts seized in June last more than two thirds were subsequently liberated as unsuitable for the public service after a short detention.

Dated 9th June 1858.

CARTS.

In November 1857.....	17	*For transit purposes.*
In December ,, ...	29	*For transit purposes.*
In May 1858.....	3	*For detail of Recruiting Depôt.*
In June ,, ...	54	*For Ordnance purposes.*

3. I find that within the last ten months during which period the demand for carriage has been greatly augmented, 1174 carts are recorded as having been supplied for the public service through this Department: from the Registers of carts supplied by the Collector filed in this office it appears that for 546 of the above number we are indebted to the Civil power, and from memoranda left by my predecessor I gather that a further number of at the most liberal construction 100 (but for which no official Registers have been furnished to us) were similarly supplied.

Memo. of carts supplied by Commissariat as per record.

In October 1857.....	21
" *November* ,, ...	7
,, *December* ,, ...	308
,, *January* 1858.....	215
,, *February* ,, ...	76
,, *March* ,, ...	276
,, *April* ,, ...	67
,, *May* ,, ...	68
,, *June* ,, ...	92
,, *July* ,, ...	44
Total...	1174
Deduct supplied by Civil powers.....	546
Balance...	628

4. Admitting then that we have been furnished with 646 carts out of the above number by the Civil authority, there will remain a balance of 528 carts supplied by the Department including the small number shown above as having been pressed: it must also be borne in mind that this number only includes carts regarding which actual correspondence has been entered into and is exclusive of those cases in which the means at disposal have been exercised to induce cart owners to convey the private baggage of Troops and others, who under present circumstances are often utterly helpless to supply themselves, and whose applications are cheerfully furthered when it is possible to do so.

5. Considering the local disadvantages of Vellore for supplies of this description as pointed out in para. 3 of Lieutenant Hawke's letter to your address,* the limited range from which carriage must be drawn, the sudden emergent and heavy nature of the demands which allows no time for providing for them in anticipation, and the fact that the Civil power itself notwithstanding the far greater range and influence it commands can with difficulty meet the requisitions upon it as implied in para. 6 of the letter under consideration. I think that the extent of our recent demands on the Civil resources and the number of carts that have been pressed within Military limits can scarcely be held to argue so unqualified a condition of helplessness in this respect as Mr. Sullivan's letter would tend to imply.

* *Dated 11th June* 1858.

6. While on this part of the subject I would further point out that the extent of the demand must not in every case be taken as a criterion of the difficulty of complying with it; an application on another Department for a very small supply may seem to argue want of resources, while in reality it may be more difficult to meet than a heavier one under other circumstances: as a case in point, a demand was made on the 29th July 1858 for but one cart to go to Samulcottah and all my efforts were unavailing to induce a cart owner to undertake so long a journey, the Civil Authority was consequently applied to, and even then the one provided was only as far as Nellore.

7. Mr. Sullivan in paras. 2 and 3 of his letter lays great stress on the fact of grain carts being seized by us within Military limits on the road and at the bandy stand, I am assured that it has never been the practice to press loaded carts, and certainly it appears to make little difference whether the carts be seized on the spot after discharging their loads by the Military servants, or on their subsequent arrival at the villages to which they belong by the Civil power. The locality alluded to as the bandy stand was I am informed selected for that purpose in communication with the Civil power as particularly suitable with a view to requirements of this nature.

8. The great obstacle to cart owners coming forward voluntarily doubtless arises from an apprehension on their parts that on the completion of their contract they may be repressed for further service, this obstacle might be removed by each driver being furnished with a permit on starting to protect him from further impressment: were this plan to be adopted I think we should find little difficulty in meeting ordinary demands, and that applications to the Collector would consequently be much fewer.

9. As regards the subject of impressment there can be no doubt that the hardship which it entails directly on the parties pressed and indirectly but not less surely upon the inhabitants in general as well as the certainty with which it must inevitably defeat its own object if carried on for any length of time, render the practice one to be studiously, avoided except as a last resource in cases of emergency where time is of the utmost consequence and all other expedients fail.

10. But should such contingencies unfortunately render the step inevitable, the department of supply should I think have the power in itself to act with promptitude and decision on the spot, a condition which can scarcely be ensured when a reference to other and perhaps remote authority is required, and without which most serious interests may be imperilled. That this view is not an exaggerated one will be seen on reflection, that when the Head Civil authority is absent on circuit or otherwise an application may take days in reaching him and the carriage have after all to be pressed in the immediate vicinity of the very office requiring it.

11. In conclusion, I would reiterate for consideration the arguments quoted by my predecessor in his letter that, "if the power of impressment be withdrawn "this Department will become utterly and entirely helpless to *ensure* "carriage being provided at any particular time; a mere knowledge that "we possess the *power* to press renders any coercion unnecessary, except in *extreme* cases, and "should this power be withdrawn the difficulty will not manifest itself *in ordinary* times but on "*emergencies* when the safety and health of the Troops might be endangered from a want of the "means of transport."

Dated 11th June 1858.

12. I have submitted the present correspondence to the Brigadier Commanding Vellore who concurs with me in the various points advanced.

Your wishes to refrain further pressing have already been anticipated.

(A true Copy.)

(Signed) A. McCALLY, Colonel,
Commissary General.

Communicated to the Revenue Department.

(Signed) W. H. WAPSHARE, Major,
Ag. Dy. Secy. to Govt.

No. 20. ORDER THEREON, No. 1298; dated 24th September 1858.

Ordered to be communicated to the Board of Revenue, with reference to para. 2 of their Proceedings of the 28th June last, No. 2208.

2. The Government are of opinion that the power to press carriage should be in the hands of the Magistrate, and that the Military Authorities should apply to that officer for aid in cases of emergency only, where there may not be time to procure carriage, and when all other expedients have failed.

3. With reference to para. 8 of Lieutenant Heath's letter, in which it is suggested that carriage could be procured with less difficulty, if exemption from a second impressment were secured to cart owners who had already completed their contract; it is observed that in Extract from the Minutes of Consultation of the 27th April last, copy of which was communicated to the Military Department, the Government consented so far to adopt a similar suggestion made by His Excellency the Commander in Chief, as to direct that the local authorities should always give consideration to the case of cart owners who had but lately been employed, and should in preference make available the carriage of those who had been longest free from impressment. It should also be added that carts should not be forced to proceed on beyond the distance for which they were originally taken, unless in cases of very extreme necessity, when more liberal rates should be allowed for the further distance; and in the relief of Regiments every opportunity should be taken that the carts bringing the baggage of a Regiment should obtain return loads by carrying to the station whence they have come the baggage of the Regiment which is to be quartered there. Thus, if a Regiment at Vellore and one at Cuddapah are to exchange stations, the bandies conveying the baggage of the Vellore Regiment to Cuddapah should bring back to Vellore the baggage of the Regiment that is to march thither from Cuddapah, or vice versâ.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

R. D.

A° 1298

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation
Under date the 24th September, 1858.

Read again Extract
from the Proceedings of the Board
of Revenue dated 28th June and
recorded in Diary to Consultation
27th July 1858 N° 1015.

Read also the following
Extract from the Minutes of
Consultation in the Military
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Then if a regimental
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or to exchange stations the
bandies conveying the
baggage of the station Regt
to Cuddapah should bring
back to the station the baggage
of the Regimental that is
to march thither from
Cuddapah - & vice versâ

10/ Copies to the Bds of Revs Dispd 25th
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3 — a — a Jude — Do

Revenue 1858 Depart.ts
Dy. to Cons: 28th September

No. 1298
Extract Mins: of Cons:
D/ 24th Sept.r 58.

Issuing instruc-
tions on the subject of the
imprisonment of Courts for
public Service -

No. 19820.