M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 122 Press ~~Mis~~

46-47

Dated 25 — 1 — 1860.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 46. Read the following letter from J. SILVER, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelli; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 6th January 1860, No. 5.

In continuation of my letter to Mr. Bourdillon of the 29th December, I have now the honor to request that you will lay before the Government, the enclosed copy of a report from my Assistant, Mr. Garstin, dated Tutícorin, the 3d January.

2. In my letter of the 29th ultimo, I gave a positive contradiction to the allegation of three merchants of Tutícorin, that their cotton carts were seized and forced to carry Government salt. I had taken every precaution against impressment, both by orders to the subordinate native servants, and by sending my Assistant to the spot, expressly to superintend the shipment of the salt, and be a check upon any thing like compulsion.

3. Although quite satisfied that the allegations were untrue, I considered that they shuold be met by a specific answer from Mr. Garstin, who was the immediate responsible officer on the spot, and this I now beg to lay before Government. Among the papers sent to me by Mr. Garstin, is a declaration from the bandymen employed, stating that they were not only willing to work, for there was no compulsion and good wages, but begging they might be employed again, if another vessel called for salt; and a declaration from the Chetties or brokers who supply cotton to the merchants, that the cart drivers had refused to bring their cotton into the town through ignorance and fear of impressment, but as for themselves, they had explained matters to the cartmen, and would supply carts for Government work, for there was no compulsion and good pay. I am sure the Government will read this with pleasure.

4. I further beg to request the marked attention of Government to the manner in which this complaint has been made. The merchants at Tutícorin have been at all times, willing and ready enough to address me, on any subject requiring my attention. These three merchants well knew, that had even one single cart been impressed, a statement from them posted at Tutícorin in the evening, would have been in my hands the following morning; and that the subject would have met with immediate redress. Two out of the three, were at that very time constantly corresponding with me, both publicly and privately, but neither officially nor unofficially, was so much as an allusion to this subject made by them. Had their complaint had the slightest foundation, I would have been the first person to have heard of it. Besides this, as Mr. Garstin remarks, it appears to be the act of a small clique, for it is not signed by the other merchants of the place.

5. Mr. Garstin's indignation at these groundless allegations is very natural, and if the Chamber of Commerce have any respect for the credit of the mercantile community, they will not pass over without their marked reprobation, such misrepresentations being made over to them.

From J. H. GARSTIN, Esq., Assistant Collector; to J. SILVER, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelli, dated Tutícorin, 3rd January 1860.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th instant, No. 1181, and beg to state that the complaint made by three merchants of Tutícorin, is entirely without foundation, and altogether false. Last year, and the year before, which were I believe, the two first years during which any salt was exported from this place, the bandies were seized if wanted, wherever they could be found, and compelled to do the work; they were, moreover, paid extremely badly (at the rate of one anna per trip, during the year before last, and two annas last year,) when the fact is taken into consideration that food for bullocks and water are not easily procurable in this place, and in addition, that the ground over which the bandies have to travel is a deep sandy soil, very difficult to move through, and exhausting the bullocks very much, and although the distance is short, viz. from 1 to 1½ miles, yet such were the difficulties of the transit, that the bandies seldom made more than three trips a day, and for this they got six annas. But this has now become obsolete; and on my arrival here, the first order I gave was, that no force of any sort was to be used, and that, if I got any complaint of ill usage or extor-

tion on the part of peons or other subordinate officials, that I should have such persons at once dismissed. The salt Chowkeydar, the Tahsildár, and the Police Amín, can corroborate these statements. Seeing that under the forcible system the work was unwillingly done, it became under the new rules not only a matter of policy, but one of necessity to raise the rate of pay, which I accordingly did, giving a verbal order to the Police Amín to that effect, and engaging for the first day's work some twenty bandies that had come in from the northern táluqs with cotton for Mr. Hardy. These bandies were standing outside Mr. Hardy's screwhouse when I went to call on him; and as I took my leave I said to him, that I should endeavour to persuade them to undertake the transit of salt. In this, I was seconded by Mr. Hardy's writer, who interpreted for me carefully to the bandymen, that they would be paid at the rate of four annas per trip, and that if they would like to gain that, that they had better be present at the salt pan the next morning. This they accordingly did, and engaged to work for the one day only. To this I agreed, and went the next morning to see the work begun. In the evening some of the bandymen complained to me, that they had only had two annas a trip given to them. I told them, "I had ordered the Police Amín to give them four annas a trip, and I would see that they got it." The next morning I saw the Police Amín, and asked him why he had not given the money as I directed; and he said he had only given them half, as he was waiting for a written order from the Collector. I then learnt from him, that these bandies had gone away, during the night, saying, that on their return with more cotton, they would ask for the remainder. They have not as yet returned; but I deny most emphatically, that any force at all was used to compel these bandymen to do what they did of the work; they were allowed to come and go, as they liked. I then sent the Police Amín, a written order to pay at the rate of four annas per trip, and reported what I had done to you. It was no fault of mine, that some bandies laden with cotton threw down their bundles at night outside the town, and ran off. They used to do so during the impressment days; and they were not aware of the new rules in force. On hearing that such was the case, I gave stricter orders, that no force was to be used to persuade the bandymen to work at the salt; and in a very short time, I had plenty of bandies volunteering first for one trip, then for two, then for a whole day, and so on till lately, I have had as many as 100 and 130 bandies working at once, and indeed so many were there, that I had to get a fresh supply of gunny bags. The salt Chowkeydar has informed me, that at no previous time has salt been shipped with so little trouble. The bandymen were of course shy at first, but directly they saw that they got their money when they had done their work, they were only too glad to be steadily engaged at it. Whenever a bandyman wanted to go away, he was discharged at once. I have told the Police Amín to furnish me with a detailed list of the number of bandies discharged, during the time the ship was being laden, which statement I enclose, together with one from the salt Chowkeydar, and a mahazurnamah from the bandymen who are here now, to the effect, that they have worked willingly and of their own accord.

I have, since writing the above, called on Mr. Hardy for explanation, and he says that he was told by some Chetties, that the bandies were seized; and that he one night on issuing from Mr. Kinnear's premises about 12 o'clock, saw a large number of bandies about 100 in number, collected there, and two peons watching them; and on the strength of this, he calmly asserts that they were seized and forcibly detained by the peons, whom he declares, were Government peons. Now it so happens, that Mr. Kinnear's premises adjoin the Police Amín's Kachahri, and all the bandies employed in salt transit were collected there every night, when they did not encamp near the salt pan, which was often the case. Therefore, I think that the sight of two peons on guard there, is rather easily accounted for; besides if these two gentlemen saw those peons in such a questionable position, what was easier than to get their numbers and names, or to find out from the bandymen, if they were really detained against their will, and in that case to report it. It is odd too, that these three gentlemen did not choose to consult the other merchants of the place, who do a larger business in cotton than themselves. Mr. Cocq with whom I was staying, never made any complaint to me about his bandies being seized, thought he it was, who brought to my notice the fact that the bandymen threw down their bundles outside the town, rather than bring them inside, thinking that they would be seized as last year, and on his informing me of it, I gave the strictest orders that no impressment was to be allowed.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, for the month of January 1860.

I have called on Mr. Hardy to make good his statements and should he fail, he will, I believe, lay himself open to an action for libel, in which case I shall proceed against him and his friends in the Civil Court. It is impossible for me, when ordered to proceed to Palamcottah, or Chippecolum, or else where, on urgent business, to personally superintend the behaviour of peons at Tuticorin. I do all I can by giving orders, and if no complaints reach me, I naturally suppose that my orders are attended to. I must protest both in your name and in my own, against the unfair manner, in which this complaint has been forwarded to Government. I believe I am not wrong in stating, that some little time ago, Government issued an order that no anonymous petitions would be received, and that no petitions would be attended to, unless forwarded through the Collector. But these three gentlemen, in any thing but a straight forward manner, sent their complaint to the Chamber of Commerce, and whilst we are in total ignorance of such a proceeding, an angry dispatch from Government arrives, to know our reasons for setting at nought their proceedings. Mr. Hardy very philosophically says, that it is impossible to put a stop to the extortions and irregularities of the subordinate native servants. Why then do they make a complaint about what cannot be helped. But I am determined, that I *will* put a stop to these kind of things, whenever they come to my notice; and I shall feel grateful to these gentlemen if they can make good their statements, so as to enable me to do so. It is no doubt annoying to these gentlemen, to have their cotton bales thrown down outside the town; but why then do they not use their influence with the bandymen to assure them, that Government will protect them. Surely these gentlemen have some little faith in Government's assertions, if the bandymen have not and to protect their own interests, they should endeavour to assure them, that they will be always allowed to come and go as they like.

Mr. Hardy says that he can prove his statements through the Chetties, who are the contractors for the conveyance of the cotton to the screws, and who complained as he says, to him of the annoyance they were put to by having their bandies seized. I have summoned all the chief Chetties in the place, and they have told me that on the salt being begun to be exported, they were afraid their bandies would be seized as formerly, and at once complained of the hardship, which they had formerly suffered on that account, and which they imagined would happen to them again; but that in two or three days, seeing that the bandies were not seized, they were quite at their ease on the point. I have taken a deposition from them to that effect, which I enclose. I think, I have shown as clearly as possible that the complaint was quite unnecessary and unfounded, and I hope that the gentlemen who have fancied themselves aggrieved, will have the candour to acknowledge their error, as I have no wish to be litigious until all other endeavours have failed to vindicate my own actions.

No. 47. ORDER THEREON, 25th January 1860, No. 122.

Communicated to the Chamber of Commerce, in continuation of the order 7th January 1860 No. 48.

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Deputy Secretary to Government.

Had their complaint had the slightest foundation, I would have been the first person to have heard of it. Besides this, as Mr. Garstin remarks, it appears to be the act of a small clique, for it is not signed by the other Merchants of the place.

5. Mr. Garstin's indignation at these groundless allegations is very natural, and if the Chamber of Commerce have any respect for the credit of the Mercantile community, they will not pass over without their marked reprobation such misrepresentations being made to them.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obed.t Serv.t

Tinnevelly
6th. January
1860.

J. Silver
Collector

Ed.
A.R.E.

R. 10th Jany/60. Nos. 96-97.

Rev. 1860 Depart.
Pro: of Jan 31st No 84.

No 122.

Communicated to
the Chamber of Commerce, in
Continuation of the order
7th January 1860 No 28.-

Fort St. Geo.
25th Jan.y 1860.

From the Chairman of the
Chambers of Commerce
8th March/60 C. No 498 in
Rec. 3rd April.

From the
The Collector of
Tinnevelly
To
The Chief Secretary
to Government
Fort St. George
Dated 6th
Recd. 11th } January 1860

Forwd.
No 5
d/7 Jany. Encs: 1
C. No 93/60 in Con 31 Nos 48-49
No 122-25th January
Forwarding copy of
report from Mr Garstin
the Assistant Collecto
on the subject of forcible
seizure and detention o
Carts complained of
by 3 Merchants at
Tuticorin.
With an order

Copy to the Chamber of Commerce Dispd 26.

Nos 46 & 47.

C. 16th June/1820.