

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	2	Press
		~~Mis.~~
	6-7	
Dated	3-1-1860.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 6. Read the following letter from J. D. ROBINSON, Esq., Acting Magistrate of North Arkot; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, dated Chittúr, 15th December 1859, No. 67.

1. Some very unfavorable reports, reflecting on the honesty of the servants attached to the Yaumia department of my office, having recently reached my ears, I took the opportunity of Mr. Elliott's resumption of the Head Assistant's charge from Deputy Collector Narasingha Puntula, to request this latter officer to scrutinize the records and ascertain what foundation there was for these rumours.

2. The accompanying memorandum, drawn up from my deputy's report of a preliminary enquiry, will show Government that there is unfortunately only too much reason to believe that their indulgent recognition of the gosha privilege has been grossly abused, as well by their own employés, as by outside parties.

3. The Yaumia Sadr and his assistant Subbia have been suspended, and are under surveillance. The two vakéls Pundi Abdulkadir and Syed Homeed, and the Kaji of Arkot are likewise in custody. The Head Clerk is absent on sick leave at Madras, but a warrant has been sent for his apprehension.

4. Other parties both in and out of the Kachahri are likewise probably implicated, but at the present stage of the enquiry, I am not in possession of sufficient evidence to justify my taking active measures against them. My object in troubling Government with a reference on a matter which might be dealt with under the ordinary criminal regulations is to solicit their instructions as to how I am to proceed in the case of the gosha women, who are mixed up with the matter.

5. False personation having been already proved in two cases taken up, I may say at random, it is not unfair to assume that it has likewise been extensively practised in the cases of many others of these gosha females.

6. These women having by the mal-practices of some, become suspected as a body, and a full exposure depending on their public examination and identification, there is I submit no option in the matter, but that the gosha privilege be disallowed, and their attendance required, and examination conducted on the ordinary terms.

7. I am told that in the Military Department no female pensioners are exempted from personal appearance before the disbursing officer on the plea of gosha seclusion. With this fact before my eyes, and a recollection of the numberless frauds to which the Government recognition of the gosha privilege has subjected them, I cannot but think that the present system of paying by proxy such stipendiaries is dangerous and demoralizing in the extreme.

8. In this district, the sums* of money paid away in the Yaumia and Pension Department are enormous, and no amount of vigilance and care on the part of the disbursing officer would suffice to defeat the fraudulent machinations of interested parties in and out of the office.

9. I venture, therefore, to express my earnest hope that Government will at once, and for ever, disallow gosha exemption from personal attendance, and will authorize me to proceed in the case of the Arkot female Yaumiadars in such manner as circumstances may render advisable, and in fact, just as I should act in ordinary judicial enquiries.

10. All the precautions prescribed in the Yaumia rules for such cases have been observed. The attestation by witnesses of the life certificates has been insisted on, and the vakéls themselves have stipends of half and upwards of the value of the allowances drawn by them for their female clients.

11. It will be plain, however, from the accompanying memorandum that all such checks avail little against possible collusion between the servants of the department and outside parties; and I have therefore, as disbursing officer, the honor most respectfully, but earnestly to solicit that

Government relieve me at once from a responsibility, which no amount of vigilance and precaution on my part can possibly make safe in mine, or any other hands. I have of course stopped all payments until this enquiry is terminated.

12. Most of the larger arrears were disbursed in Mr. Whittingham's time.
13. Enclosed is a statement showing the account as it now stands.

Memorandum drawn up on a report from Narasingha Puntula, Deputy Collector in temporary charge of the Yaumia department.

1. On being relieved of the charge of the Head Assistant's office, Deputy Collector Narasingha Puntula was directed by me to scrutinize the records of the Yaumia department and ascertain from them and outside enquiry what foundation there was for certain recent rumours of fraud in connection therewith.

2. On entering on this duty, Narasingha Puntula at once found it would be necessary to go to Arkot, where the majority of those female pensioners reside, to whom disbursements have been made under the sanction of Government conveyed in Extract Minutes of Consultation, dated 30th September 1858. Narasingha Puntula started accordingly on the 6th instant, and on the evening of the very same day took possession of the daftars and papers connected with the department then in the custody of the Kaji of Arkot. On looking over these papers, Narasingha Puntula found some private letters in the hand-writing of Mahomed Habeebulla Sadr Yaumia in the Collector's office to the Kaji, containing directions as to the mode and form in which he (Kaji) should conduct and forward to the Húẓúr his proceedings in the case of female Yaumiadars.

3. Narasingha Puntula then and there took a statement from the Kaji, who admitted without hesitation that the letters above alluded to had been written to him (Kaji) by the Sadr Yaumia and were in his (Sadr Yaumia's) own hand-writing. This statement the Sadr Yaumia himself on the 12th December confirmed in Narasingha Puntula's presence.

4. A perusal of these letters satisfied Narasingha Puntula that their purpose was to direct the commission of a fraud. This conclusion received further support from an admission made in his presence by the Kaji, in which he said that all the female Yaumiadars except some seven or eight, were dead, that he (Kaji) himself had acted in the affair under the sole direction of Sadr Yaumia, whose influence in the Collector's office was all powerful, and rendered it unnecessary for him (Kaji) to use his own judgment.

5. On the morning of the 7th, Narasingha Puntula procured the attendance of one Pundi Abdul Kadir, who as vakél had drawn money from the treasury in the names of some ten or more of these female Yaumiadars. Narasingha Puntula asked him to point out the houses of all the women for whom he had appeared at the treasury, as he wished to ascertain whether their marks corresponded with the descriptive rolls in the Collector's office.

6. Having selected at random the name of one Moidinbi, (No. 416, to whom Rupees 793-14-1 were said to have been paid), Narasingha Puntula proceeded with Abdul Kadir to her (Moidinbi's) house at Arkot. On arrival at the house, Narasingha Puntula himself called out the name Moidinbi, and a woman from behind a parda answered to it. Having given her distinctly to understand that he had come there to find out the truth, Narasingha Puntula warned her that if she continued her false personation, he should be compelled to disallow her the privilege of gosha. Although thus warned, she still persisted in representing herself to be Moidinbi, when one Hyatbi,* who happened to be with her at the time, and is a neighbour, interrupted her and prayed her to be careful what statement she made, in case she brought disgrace on herself.

* 1st witness.

7. Hearing this, Narasingha Puntula at once took a statement on oath from Hyatbi, who very reluctantly, and with much trepidation allowed that the female behind the parda was not Moidinbi, who had died some twenty years previously, but Moidinbi's daughter-in-law.

8. On this, Narasingha Puntula sent for another neighbour, a Hindu female of the name of Kristnabai who likewise reluctantly deposed on oath to the same effect as first witness. Narasingha Puntula then caused both (Hyatbi and Kristnabai) to describe the female behind the

screen. They both said she was *fair and without marks* on the face, whereas in the roll, Moidinbi is described as *dark and pock marked*. Narasingha Puntula directed them to measure her: they returned her height as 5 feet 1½ inch, Moidinbi's height being given in the roll as 4 feet 6 inches.

9. Having thus satisfied himself that Moidinbi was falsely personated, Narasingha Puntula next went to the house of Husainbi and Rajan Bibi, (No. 639, on account, of whom had been disbursed Rupees 661-9-2 and Rupees 595-6-8, respectively.) On his way thither, the vakél Pundi Abdul-Kadir, fearing probably that a domiciliary visit might lead to an unpleasant exposure, informed Narasingha Puntula that the two women in question were not then in Arkot, but had gone to Madras. Narasingha Puntula went to the house notwithstanding, and calling out the two names, two women from behind a curtain answered to them. Just as Narasingha Puntula was about to put a further question, the vakél interfered and in a loud voice said, "these are not the women you seek, they are at Madras." On Narasingha Puntula repeating his question, he found that the females had taken their cue, for they answered as the vakél desired. Being satisfied that the existence of Hussainbi, and Rajan Bibi was also most doubtful, Narasingha Puntula went thence to the house of Kyrúnissa, (No. 4) whose age is entered in the roll as 96, whose death was reported some three or four months back and after the disbursement of arrears of Yaumia drawn on her account amounting to Rupees 2,183-2-9.

10. To Narasingha Puntula's verbal enquiries respecting the date of this female's demise, the Kaji and other by-standers replied that Kyrúnissa had long been dead, and that the report of her recent decease was a mere fabrication, got up for fraudulent purposes. The vakél himself, so far supported these admissions as to allow that he had heard likewise subsequently to the payment to the heir Alli Hússain Sahib of the arrears of pension drawn on her account, that Kyrúnissa herself had been long dead. The vakél added that more than half of the money disbursed to him on account of these female Yaumiadars had been spent among the Kachahri servants, and that he had acted solely in the matter out of good faith towards two former vakéls* who had

*1 Abdul Rahimjúnodin.

2 Sied Mohamed Hússain.

given him vakolatnamahs for the women for whom he acted, on the express condition that they all three should share equally in the arrears disbursed thereon, but that they two (Abdul Rahimjúnodin and Sied Mohamed Hússain) alone should be responsible if any thing went wrong. Narasingha Puntula then and there took a statement from him to this effect. In it he gives particulars as to how the money was finally disposed of and admits that he does not know whether the women for whom he received money are alive or dead. Narasingha Puntula then closed proceedings at Arkot and directed the vakéls and others to attend at Chittúr. He visited Vellúr en route on the morning of the 8th and seized the Daftars of the Kaji of that place. The parties having arrived at Chittúr on the night of the 9th, Narasingha Puntula proceeded with his enquiry.

11. In the case of Kyrúnissa, (No. 4,) Súltan Sahiba and Hyatbi state on oath, that the female, on account of whom the Yaumia arrears for Kyrúnissa were disbursed, is still alive, that nobody has died in that house for the last 8 months and that no death, as reported some 3 or 4 months back, ever took place.

12. Sied Hamed and Mohamed Alli Peish Imam, who attested the life certificate in the name of Kyrúnissa, were next examined, they stated that although they had their suspicions at the time, they were persuaded by the vakéls to sign the paper on the assurance that the Sadr Yaumia had so directed it and that they would be paid for the service thus rendered. These witnesses distinctly state that they are unable to vouch for Kyrúnissa being alive, and add that for the last three days, Sholi Hússain Kadri, a relative of Kyrúnissa's has been trying to induce them to give evidence that she (Kyrúnissa) is still alive.

13. Sied Hamed, moreover states that the woman who falsely personates Kyrúnissa is the wife of the said Sholi Hússain Kadri's maternal uncle. Both witnesses add that they declined to act upon Sholi Hússain Kadri's corrupt instigations.

14. Sholi Hússain Kadri was next examined.

He states on oath that Kyrúnissa is not dead, that his object in making a false report of her recent death was, that when the descriptive roll was first prepared, Kyrúnissa's age was

incorrectly entered as fifty, (Tamil Ānbathū) instead of nine, (Tamil Onbathū) and that as the accounts would show her to be very old when she really yet was young, he would come under suspicion, and be liable to punishment.

15. The quibble which this witness bases on the similarity of sound between the two tamil figures is ingenious certainly, but it will scarcely tide him over this scrape, as he appears not only to have sent in a duly attested report of Kyrūnnissa's death, but made a special application to the Collector by petition for a transfer of a portion of the Yaumia to his name in consequence of that very demise.

16. Finding now that his allegation of her recent death is not likely to have acceptance, Sholi Hússain Kadri tries to make out that she is still alive, instead of adopting the more facile expedient of a false personation as has, it is to be feared, been practised in the cases of many others of these suspected female Yaumiadars. His explanation admitted he had an easy remedy, and might by representing the truth, have had the age of Kyrūnnissa corrected in the descriptive roll. There can, therefore, be but little doubt that the real Kyrūnnissa is long since defunct, and the falsehood of Hússain Kadri's allegation would unquestionably be fully exposed were the female now personating Kyrūnnissa, examined and her 'personal' compared with the description in the roll.

17. The female personating Kyrūnnissa has aided in defrauding Government by false pretences of the large sum of Rupees 2,183-2-9, and is therefore no longer entitled to claim the gosha privilege in bar of her open and public trial as an accomplice.

18. Narasingha Puntula is now prosecuting his enquiries into the case of each individual Yaumiadar, and will report results from time to time. Sufficient, however, has already been elicited in the cases of Moidinbi and Kyrūnnissa to establish to some extent the existence of systematic fraud in the department.

19. It becomes necessary to the success of this examination, and to the full exposure of a long and daring series of abuse in the department, that the privilege of gosha be in each case disallowed, and that all the parties on account of whom these large disbursements have been made be subjected to a close comparison with the descriptions in the rolls on which they have claimed those allowances. Without such open and public identification, the enquiry must of necessity stand still at its present stage.

20. There is further documentary evidence gravely criminating the Sadr Yaumia, Mu-shruff Subbia and Head Clerk of my office, but enough has been already stated to prove the necessity of prompt action in this matter, and to enable the Government to decide in what manner it is advisable to deal with the other suspected female Yaumiadars.

NORTH ARKOT,
Magistrate's Office
Chittūr 15th Decr. 1859.

(Signed) J. D. ROBINSON,
Acting Magistrate.

No. 7. ORDER THEREON, 3rd January 1860, No. 2.

The Collector requests orders on two points, in connection with investigations going on in his office respecting alleged frauds in the Yaumia department. First, he asks (paragraph 6) how he is to proceed in those enquiries, as respects women to whom the gosha privilege has been allowed; Second, he recommends that Government should at once and for ever disallow gosha exemptions.

2. With regard to the first enquiry, the Government resolve to inform the Collector that they are not of opinion that criminal proceedings ought to be taken against females personating Yaumiadars. Though the act is undoubtedly criminal, yet the offenders, it may be assumed, are in every case mere tools. The parties really culpable, and who should be prosecuted with rigour, are the official persons concerned, and the vakéls, attesting witnesses, and other male offenders.

3. The course pursued by the Deputy Collector in the cases of impersonation investigated by him is approved, and the same may properly be adopted in all similar cases. The Deputy Collector should remain outside the curtain and a confidential female within should des-

cribe the person then before her. This description the Deputy Collector will compare with the muster roll as it is stated in paragraph 8 of the memorandum he did in the case there referred to. The female examiner will know nothing of the contents of the muster roll and thus a most complete and satisfactory test will be applied.

4. With respect to the second recommendation, the subject of the gosha exemption of female Yaumiadars formed the subject of correspondence for several years from 1850; and the result was the order referred to in the preceding paragraph. The Governor in Council is not prepared to re-open the question. The provisions in rule 5, if strictly and properly acted on, afford considerable security against fraud.

5. The Government will be glad to learn at a future time the result of the investigations now proceeding. The acting Collector deserves great credit for the active measures which he has taken; and the Governor in Council observes with pleasure the zeal and intelligence displayed by the Deputy Collector Narasingha Puntula, in tracing out these frauds.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

Copy in a letter to the
23rd Oct 1858.

See letter from the
Acting Magistrate of the
District to the Chief Justice
to Government dated 15th Dec 1858
No 2422

Letter of payment
made to the Government
- which was to work on the
privilege of occupation
has been recorded in
Board's Proceedings
dated 28th January 1859

23rd Oct 58
29th Dec 58

1835 Dec 18 59 41 9 6 11.

John in Letter to Geo^d
Oct 23^d Oct 27/60 No. 119.

L. Hartman
 2734 1/2 1st Ave. S. W.
 Dept. of Justice
 D. C. 20542

63 Green Mountain
Valley Camp

228 = 238.

Handwritten: 10-8%
Laid down
2058

Dear Lady of Marlboro.

Callina capensis
H. Baker, n. 100

the distance

ing *Callispermum*

James Fenimore Arthur

1863

Ms 2-3 January 1860

55.