M.R.O. 14—13,000—27-9-24.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 2631 — Press / Mis.

256 257

Dated 18 12 19 1862

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 18th December 1862.

No. 256. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Department, dated 11th December 1862, No. 1,447 :—

Deciding that the order issued by the Director General of the Post Offices in India, regarding the reduction of the pay of runners in this Presidency should be brought to the notice of the Government of India in the Revenue Department, with reference to Mr. Pelly's report on his revision of the District Postal establishment.

(Vide Public Proceedings, 11th December 1862, Nos. 68—70.)

No. 257. ORDER THEREON, 18th December 1862, No. 2,631.

Recorded with reference to the letter to the Government of India, No, 2,583, dated 11th December 1862.

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

PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers :—

From R. H. WILLIAMSON, Esq., Postmaster General ; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 28th October 1862, No. 5,054.

With reference to the Order of Government, No. 1,133, of the 26th ultimo, I have the honor to state that the pay of the Post Office runners on the line to Nellore, has not yet been reduced. Orders however have been issued to the Inspecting Postmasters under my control to carry out the instructions of the Director General of the Post Office in India, conveyed in his letter No. 82, dated 9th May last, copy of which I beg to annex for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council.

2. It will be seen by Government on a reference to my letter* No. 1,425, dated 4th July 1862, that I had the honor of communicating the instructions of the Director General when reporting on the subject of the District Posts of this Presidency.

* To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

3. In explaining to the Director General the difficulties that presented themselves in attempting to carry out his wishes, I took the precaution to address the several Collectors within whose limits it would be necessary to introduce the change, and their replies† have generally been to the effect that the measure would be inexpedient. I have, however, no alternative, and the Inspecting Postmasters have been instructed to carry out the measure cautiously.

† Copies appended.

4. With respect to the robbery of the Banghy Mails, which led to Mr. Robinson addressing Government, I beg to annex copy of a report‡ to this Office from Mr. T. Rhenius, the Inspecting Postmaster of the Nellore Postal Division, in reply to my requisition addressed to him, to proceed to the spot and institute a searching Departmental inquiry into the robbery in question. From the confident assertions of the Inspector General and his Officers, both written and verbal, as to the guilt of the runners, though some of the grounds on which their opinion was based did not seem to me particularly strong. I felt compelled at the time to accept their opinion on the point as likely, especially as I was given to understand that one of the runners was on the point of confessing and becoming approver; and if not very much mistaken as to Mr. Robinson's meaning, that a portion of the stolen property had been discovered in runners' huts. I was thus waiting for the evidence of the approver and further information from the Police, when I was surprised to learn through the Inspecting Postmaster of the Division, that the Magistrate had released the runners, on which I addressed the Superintendent of Police, Nellore District, requesting to be informed if the runners' houses had been searched, and if any portion of the stolen property had been found in their possession. I append his reply.§

‡ No. 174, dated 4th October 1862.

§ No. 86, dated 1st October 1862.

5. About the same time I received Mr. Rhenius' report, who appears to me to have made a much more effective inquiry into the case than the Police have done.

6. Mr. Rhenius certainly did not go to work on his inquiry with the fixed determination of clearing the runners from the guilt of the robbery, for I have it under his hand, that on commencing it, he was strongly under the impression that the runners were the guilty parties. I quote marginally ¶ his words from his letter addressed to me.

"¶ Robberies are so numerous in the Nellore District that it is really difficult at present to come to a decided conclusion whether the runners were the perpetrators of the act or if they had a hand in it, though the Assistant Superintendent of Police has in his communication to my address of the 4th instant, stated that there are strong grounds for suspecting that the crime was committed by some runners of this Department in collusion with the actual carriers of the Banghy ; this appears to me to be a very natural conclusion, for the Banghy was last known to be in the hands of runners. The latter runners I have directed to be suspended, and have asked the Assistant Superintendent to favor me with his reasons for suspecting the other runners alluded to by him."

7. The Police authorities make out that, with the connivance of the runners conveying the Mails, the robbery was actually committed by the runners of the Naidoopolliem stage, to the south of Ongole. The ground for this supposition being that the footsteps of the thieves were traced to the high road in the neighbourhood of this stage. From the first I thought

such a short distance from a head quarter Station of the Police. I have also ascertained from the Overseer, whose word I have no reason to distrust, that the regular runners of the Naidoopallium stage, with one exception Gara Pitchenah, who was absent on sick leave and had been so 7 days up to that time, carried the mail twice themselves that day, Pitchenah's substitute having done likewise; also that no relationship exists between any of them, and the men who carried the Banghy from Ongole. I also questioned the runners on these points.

That the runners on the Northern line are very discontented is true, but I cannot agree with the Assistant Superintendent of Police that on that account they would plunder a Government Mail; ignorant persons as they are, they know the consequences of such an act—loss of appointment and freedom.

Under the above circumstances I must claim exemption from suspicion on behalf of the runners and, whilst owning that Vencatasawmy's conduct alone is suspicious, to observe that if he had a part in the plundering of the Banghy it was in collusion with others than persons of this Department.

In conclusion, I beg, with reference to my letter of 29th ultimo, No. 168, to add that I have ascertained the causes of absence as therein given of the 2 regular runners Cotipah and Vencatadry to be true.

The Overseers of the 4th and 5th Division have been strictly instructed to use further and utmost endeavors to gain more intelligence respecting the robbery, and to render every assistance in their power to the Police.

From Lieutenant C. L. HIGHMOOR, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Nellore; to the Postmaster General, Madras, dated Camp Dursi, 1st October 1862, No. 86.

In reply to your letter No. 4,212 of 25th ultimo, I have the honor to inform you that the houses of the runners were searched, but no property supposed to have been stolen from the Banghy Mail was found.

From T. RHENIUS, Esq., Inspecting Postmaster, Nellore Division; to R. H. WILLIAMSON, Esq., Postmaster General, dated Camp Nellore, 15th October 1862, No. 184.

I have the honor with reference to Order No. 4,240 of 26th ultimo, to report the result of my inquiry into the alleged attack on the Banghy Mail on the 28th August last.

Shaik Davood.
Venka Narridoo.
Bagavathoola Vurdiah.

I summoned the 3 runners who conveyed the Mail that day between Ukkagaree, Chelevenda and Boodamum, and questioned them on the subject.

As the runners were near the 77th mile stone, some persons, about 8 in number, came from the jungle on the east side of the road, and one struck the hindermost runner B. Vurdiah, who struck the thief in return which made him drop the stick he had in his hand, and Vurdiah took possession of it; the other 2 runners also stopped, and all put down their loads and stood on the defensive.

On seeing some lights advancing about ¾ of a mile in the rear, the thieves crossed the road and went into the jungle whence they began to throw stones, by which Vurdiah was struck in the leg and blood came from it; the party whose lights were seen approaching proved to be Kullapully Rama Row to whom the runners told all that had happened, and Rama Row took the trouble of even looking at Vurdiah's hurt leg and had one of the lights brought close for that purpose.

Rama Row then told the runners to accompany him to Boodamum, which they did, and thence to Goodoor; the Banghy was taken by the relief in Rama Row's company.

The Naidoopett Deputy Postmaster's assertion that Vurdiah's load was taken to Boodamum by one of Rama Row's men is not true, but he appears to have made it from hearsay.

The runners admit that Rama Row did not see the thieves nor the stones thrown; but surely that can be no evidence that the Banghy was not attacked.

The following morning the runners gave a deposition of the above facts to the Police Goomastah of the Cuddivade station, who proceeded to Boodamum for that purpose and also took charge of the stick, rather club, which Vurdiah had got possession of. With this information in possession of the Police authorties of the District, I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at the Superintendent asserting that the runners did not see the persons who threw the stones, and that the thieves did not attack the Mail.

Now with respect to the alleged attack on the 29th of that month noticed in my letter of 3rd September, No. 138, to your address, that was no insinuation on my part as remarked by the the Superintendent of Police. I simply laid before you what was reported to me by my subordinates; but it is evident the Postmaster of Nellore confounded dates and localities in his report, for there was no attack on that day; he is a stranger to this part of the country and is not well acquainted with the Teloogoo language.

In conclusion I have no desire to make any insinuations but simply to bring facts to notice. I would respectfully observe that the insinuations are on the part of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Police, who in their Diaries, you will observe, wish to make it believe that because the runners are discontented and their pay reduced they may either be tempted to rob the Mail or make false reports, a stigma I cannot allow to be thrown on this Department; for however poor and hardly treated the runners may be I will venture to assert that with very rare exceptions a more trustworthy body of men cannot be found. Even granting the Superintendent's remarks to be true, it is a great pity the Police do not use their ability in detecting the actual robbers, though runners, and what would be still better recovering the property. To bear out my assertions I would respectfully request the Magistrate of Nellore may be asked for a list of all the robberies that have taken place in the District during August and September, when it will be shown that runners are not the only offenders, for if they rob the Mail who robs the towns and villages. I make no insinuations, these are undeniable facts.

(True Copies.)

(Signed) R. H. WILLIAMSON,
Postmaster General.

From Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. PEARS, Postmaster General; to A. J. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 13th November 1862, No. 5,214.

In continuation of letter No. 5,051, dated 28th ultimo, I have the honor to furnish herewith copies of the reports of the Collectors of Salem and Coimbatore, respecting the payment of 4 Rupees a month to runners.

ORDER THEREON, 11th December 1862, No. 1,447.

1. Robberies of the Mails on the Northern Road have been of late of very frequent occurrence. A few weeks ago an attempt at robbery having been reported by the Postmaster General, and the attention of the Inspector General of Police having been drawn to it, and to the frequency of the attacks on the Mails on the road in question, the latter Officer expressed his conviction that the robberies were committed by the runners, stating that much discontent prevailed among them in consequence of a recent and very sudden reduction in their pay. On reference to the Postmaster General the Government learn that some months ago the Director General of the Post Office ordered that the pay of the runners in this Presidency should be reduced to Rupees 4 per mensem, the standard rate in the North West Provinces, Punjab and Bengal. The Postmaster General appears to have remonstrated against the order on the ground, it is presumed, that with reference to the rates of wages for labor prevailing in this Presidency, the proposed rate of pay was insufficient. In reply he was informed that "if the "Overseers and Inspecting Postmasters in his Division cannot or will not exert themselves to "procure able-bodied runners at 4 Rupees per mensem, they will be superseded." He thereupon referred to the several Collectors for information as to the possibility of obtaining runners at the reduced rate, and from their replies it appears that in 18 out of the 20 Districts in this

Presidency it is the opinion of the Chief Executive Officers that able-bodied and trustworthy men cannot be obtained for less than Rupees 5 per mensem. In fact in many Districts the ordinary wages of labor exceed that rate, and in some rise to Rupees 7 and Rupees 8 per mensem. The instructions however which the Postmaster General has received from the head of his Department are so peremptory, that although it must be obvious that the carriage of the post cannot be efficiently conducted at a rate of wages below that which can be earned by any daily laborer, he has considered it his duty to order the reduction.

2. The order issued by the Director General on this case will be brought to the notice of the Government of India in the Revenue Department, with reference to Mr. Pelly's report on his revision of the District Postal Establishment.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue Department.
" Postmaster General.

12/12/62

Exd. T. McMootry.

Pro 11th December 62 Nos 152 @ 154

Revenue 1862 Octr.
Pro: of Govt for December
No. 3422.

Proceedings of the
Madras Govt in the
Public Dept.

Dated 11th December 62
Recd 12th " "
No. 4447.

Deciding that the
order issued by the D. General
of the Post Offices in India
regarding the reduction
of the pay of runners in
this Presidency should be
brought to the notice of
the Govt of India in the
Revl Dept. with reference
to Mr Pelly's report on his
revision of the District
Postal Establishments.

No 256 & 257.

No 2631. 18 Dec
with enclosure

No. 2631-631

Recorded with re-
ference to the letter to the
Govt of India No 2588 dated
11th December 1862.

Govt. of St. George
18th December 1862