

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 704

Press
Mis.

379.380

Dated

23-4-191864

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
23rd April 1864.*

No. 379. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 8th April 1864, No. 2,129.

Read the following letter from the Superintendent of Stamps, dated Madras, 4th April 1864, No. 1,418 of Fusly 1,273 :—

1. Referring to the Board's order of 20th February 1864, No. 347, in which reference is made in paragraph 2 to the continuation of my Report on the subject of bribery in the Madras Stamp Office, I have the honor to lay before the Board the result of my inquiry into the matter, the depositions on the subject taken by me having already been submitted to the Board non-officially.

2. In my endeavours to obtain further evidence or proof upon any one of the charges, I have been quite unsuccessful, that which I knew at the time of the disclosures made in the High Court by my Writer Teroovengada Charry remains still all that I do know, and all apparently that I shall know in the matter. The disclosures made in Court have probably enabled all guilty parties to stand on their guard, and to avoid anything that may tend to mutual crimination.

3. In the present review of circumstances it may be sufficient to advert only to the principal parties accused or otherwise in the inquiries that have been made, noting against each my opinion of their respective positions at the close of it, and omitting from report those whose position in the establishment places them under my immediate authority for any purpose.

4. Mr. M. J. Luxa, the Assistant to the Superintendent, was charged upon information given by Singarum Moodelly, one of the oldest Clerks in the office, to Valoo Moodelly, another Clerk employed from the 15th August 1863, to the effect that bribes were paid for obtaining situations in the Stamp Office, that he himself (Singarum) was the recipient of the money, and that Mr. M. J. Luxa received the largest share. On being questioned on the subject, Singarum denied having told Valoo Moodelly anything against Mr. Luxa, or that he had made any statement of his having himself received any monies as consideration for places obtained.

5. Singarum had also stated to Valoo Moodelly his intention of coming to me with presents last Christmas time, and that he intended presenting a ring to me when he got his son into the office. He did not deny these last circumstances, as he had been to me, wishing me to accept of presents last Christmas time, which were of course declined, and I cannot say if the ring was among them. No evidence has been obtained to support in any way the charges attributed to Singarum and afterwards denied by himself; nor has any been obtained calculated to rouse suspicion against Mr. Luxa. The information based upon Singarum's statement is the most important of any that has been obtained, and it is much to be regretted that whilst unsubstantiated, there is nothing by which its falsehood can be established. It appears to me of little worth except for criminating Singarum himself, and for showing that whatever malpractices there may have been in former years, Singarum himself was an active agent in them. I am fully convinced that Valoo Moodelly's evidence respecting Singarum is perfectly true. From the foregoing part of the proceedings I can only report that according to the evidence no criminality attaches to Mr. Luxa in any of the matters with which he was charged by Singarum, and I therefore consider that he stands untouched by any of the allegations made against him. Singarum Moodelly to my mind is, either by his assertion or denial, convicted plainly of falsehood. He is a man of above twenty-nine years' service, and has hitherto borne a good character; but I have against him some circumstances showing his unfitness for duty. I would respectfully recommend that I may be permitted to send him up for pension.

6. Teroovengada Charry, the man under suspension, charged Mr. M. J. Luxa with having employed one of the office workers to purchase goods for him at auction, leaving the man to pay the bill. The charge broke down completely under examination, but Teroovengada still maintained that it was true. Teroovengada is now in the hands of Government upon a charge against himself, but upon this further point I should have strong objections to his continuing in

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the Stamp Office. Mr. Luxa by the result of this inquiry is cleared from Teroovengada's charge against him.

7. Kistnen and Narrainsawmy, workers in the office preferred charges against Ruthnum and Manicum also workers, of paying bribes to Singarum. Three witnesses were called, who denied all knowledge of the circumstances regarding which they were called. I have already dealt with Kistnen and Narrainsawmy, their pay being 7 Rupees a month. I had some hopes that under dismissal I might extract some truth from them, but the result has been that Kistnen has written to me, stating that he said what he did, because he thought I wished him to say it. They both remain discharged.

8. Mr. H. Webber, Head Accountant, was charged by Teroovengada Charry with having arranged by means of a debt he owed to a native Clerk in the office named Chennamully, and which he paid to Mr. Luxa, with assisting to obtain the admission of a relation of the Clerk Chennamully. The depositions on this subject contradicted entirely the accusation. Chennamully, the Clerk in question, stated that Mr. Webber had borrowed from him at times certain small sums of money to be returned on pay day. Mr. Webber denied this, but a subsequent explanation offered by him showed that he had mis-conceived the question, and erroneously supposed that it referred to the general question of bribery.

9. Other minor cases there were of no particular import, referring to workers in the office, which do not seem worth adverting to here. I have my eye upon many persons, and I shall deal with each case as the future may show a necessity for.

10. My inquiry extended over depositions. At its conclusion, Mr. Luxa was told that he could examine any one on the Establishment on his own behalf, and also that he might submit any written statement that he might desire to put in. The depositions given for him have been already seen by the Board, they are twenty-seven in number. Mr. Luxa in his written statement did not appear to me to have put forward a plain denial of the doubts cast upon him. But upon ascertaining now my opinion on this point, he has requested permission to supplement his first statement so as to make plain his consciousness of innocence, and his entire denial of the aspersions cast upon him. Upon my own experience in the office, I can safely say that opportunities for bribery have been very small, and it seems scarcely possible that it can have been practised. I have great reason to be satisfied with Mr. Luxa in the performance of his duties, in the discharge of which he appears to be highly competent, and to merit well the encomiums already passed upon him by my predecessors.

ENCLOSURES Nos. 1 & 2.—Depositions.

1. The Board concur in opinion with the Superintendent of Stamps that no good end will be attained by pursuing his inquiries further on the general suspicion that the practice of paying for appointments and promotion in the Stamp Office has prevailed in past times. It is to be regretted that the matter was prematurely brought forward consequent on the trial in the High Court, but it is evident that however the truth may be, all parties are now too much on their guard to allow of the expectation that good evidence will be elicited by any further general inquiries. Mr. Norfor will, of course, be on the alert to detect any overt malpractices, and in Teroovengada Charry's case, the inquiry will doubtless be prosecuted by the Commissioner of Police.

2. The Board are by no means satisfied that the general charge is untrue. It is notorious that not in the Stamp Office only, but generally, the practice of paying for the good word of those whose recommendation influenced minor appointments and promotion in public offices was formerly prevalent, and much has occurred in the last few years in the Stamp Office to lead the Board to distrust the integrity of some of the officials. Mr. Norfor should keep steadily in view the necessity of securing a thoroughly trustworthy agency in his department, and may rely on the Board's support in his endeavours. The conduct of Singarum appears to have been eminently

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suspicious, and if Mr. Norfor considers it opposed to the public interests to retain him or Teroovengada Charry in the public service, the impracticability of pensioning them off, ought not to afford reason for retaining them in an office where trustworthiness is before all things essential as a qualification for employment.

3. If Mr. Norfor has occasion to record deposition in such matters on any future occasion, he had better take previous counsel with the Commissioner of Police.

No. 380.

ORDER THEREON, 23rd April 1864, No. 704.

The Board of Revenue are requested to state whether they have communicated with the Government Solicitor and Commissioner of Police, as desired in G. O. 21th February last, No. 336, Revenue Department, and if so, to report the result.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

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3. If Mr. Norfor has occasion to record deposition in such matters on any future occasion, he had better take previous counsel with the Commissioner of Police.

(A true Copy and Extract.)



Sub-Secretary.

To R. W. Norfor, Esq., Superintendent of Stamps.

Copy to J. D. Sim, Esq., Secretary to Government, R. D., with enclosures.

to Colonel W. J. Wilson, Commissioner of Madras Police.

Exd. J. Wright.

24. ——— 247 31.5
236. " " 288 269.

John D. Long
in Judicial Office
Feb 17 of 1864

Revenue 1864. Department.
No. of Graft for April.

No. 1008.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Bo. St. of Blue 273 May 1864
 Co. 40 1155 and 60.

Dated 8th April 1864.

Despatched 18th

Received 192.

64

No. 2129.

“ Remarking on the Report of the Superintendent of Stamps detailing the result of his inquiry regarding bribery said to obtain in the Stamp Office

Ms. A.9.2.6 v.38c

From 23rd Sept.
With an Order
of

7th 18th of Nov^r are
reported to state
that the Key has com-
municated with the
Jut. Officer of San Jo-
se, as directed in
G.O. 24 July last No
336 R. S. & to, to
report the result.

Short Saint George
 239. 2/12. 1/64. = 239.

My dearest Mother & Dear Dearest. 25 April
arrived at home