

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 888

Press
~~Mis.~~

274.275

Dated 23-5-1918

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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

No. 274. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel C. WOODFALL, to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Coonoor, 19th May 1864:—

SIR,

1. I beg to bring to your notice the following facts connected with the sale of a piece of land in this place, for the information of Government.

2. It appears that some person, either Mr. E. Smith of the Hotel, late Travellers' Bungalow, or a Mr. Lovett, formerly Inspector of Police, but who afterwards opened a shop here, applied for seven Acres of land lying to the west of the property of the Roman Catholic Priest, Captain Mann's and possibly my own. But as (so I am informed on the authority of the Deputy Tahsildar) the land has neither been surveyed nor "permanent boundary marks erected," as is required to be done prior to the sale by Rule V of those laid down for the sale of Government waste land on the Neilgherries, it is impossible to define it with any exactitude.

3. From Mr. Smith himself I learnt that he purchased the land at auction, more than a month ago, for Rupees 30, and so quietly was the matter managed that, I have it on good authority, the only person present at the sale to bid for it was a Mr. Hillin who, I believe, is Mr. Smith's Agent.

4. By Rule VIII it is directed that "after the receipt of the deposit required under "Rule VI the Collector shall, as soon as possible, cause the land applied for to be surveyed and "marked out, and further that he shall advertise the lot for sale on a certain given day to be "fixed so as to admit of the notice required in Rule IX being given." In accordance with which it has been customary for an advertisement, in the form W. laid down in the Rules, to be circulated amongst the European inhabitants of Coonoor whenever it has been intended to put up land for sale. But this was not done in the present instance, as will be seen by the paper appended marked A. And it, at least, looks suspicious that whilst notices of the intended sale of sundry lots of land, in different directions, and at considerable distances from hence should have been so circulated, no one should have seen that of a piece of land situated in the centre of the place.

5. It appears to have been the custom to give notice also to the Native inhabitants prior to the day of sale, which was likewise omitted in the present instance, as shown by the letter marked B.

6. By Rule IX it is necessary that the advertisement should "be posted up for three clear "months on the land itself" and sundry other places, and further that "a Notification of the "intended sale shall also be inserted in the District Gazette."

7. From Mr. Smith's statement it appears that the former of these requirements was complied with; so far at least that "a placard was stuck up for a long time on the ground." It was fixed to a bamboo which being only $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the ground lowered it quite out of the ordinary line of vision. But though the board is still there, the advertisement, which was pasted thereon, has been so carefully effaced that it is, now, impossible to ascertain either the date of the Notice itself, or that fixed for the sale. As regards the Notice required to be inserted in the District Gazette, I have myself carefully examined the file for last year, and for the first quarter of the current one without finding any thing of the kind.

8. Should then the case prove, on due investigation, to be as I have stated, I trust Government will direct the sale of the land to Mr. Smith to be cancelled, and that it be put up again, after the Rules have been complied with, so as to enable any other parties to bid for it who may be inclined to do so. Should it, however, be proved that all that is required by the Rules was done, it will show that the doing may be so contrived that whilst the letter is adhered to their spirit and intention may be altogether violated to the serious detriment of Government. And the occurrence of such cases is calculated to give the impression that, whilst those in the higher rank of society often find obstacles thrown in the way of their obtaining land, those of a lower station who, may perhaps, enjoy the advantage of personal intimacy with subordinate officials, sometimes obtain undue facilities.

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9. I would therefore respectfully suggest that it would be for the interest of both Government and the public, that the intended sale of land on these hills should be advertised in the local Newspaper, and those of the Presidency; the circulation of the "District Gazette" being confined, almost exclusively, to the European and Native officials, and that they should be put up in the Museum, Public Library and principal Shops in Ootacamund as well as the Cutcherries and Police Station, which are not, generally, places of resort for the European portion of the inhabitants. A Reading room is in the course of erection at Coonoor which may be availed of for the same purpose. And further that the sale of land situated in this place, or its vicinity, should take place here instead of Ootacamund, which would have prevented Government selling land for 30 Rupees for which the person who bought it now asks Rupees 2,000.

10. In conclusion I beg to state that in the early part of 1862, I myself sent an official application to the Collector to be allowed to purchase a portion of the land immediately adjoining my property, to which I never received any reply. After what I said in my letter giving cover to the correspondence regarding the land I applied for near Lamb's Rock, it is scarcely necessary to explain "the reason why" I did not renew my request. Besides so long as it remained the property of Government I was not particularly anxious about having it, as I could not be inconvenienced by my neighbour, and I thought I was at least sure of the opportunity of trying to obtain it, should it be put up for sale, but it has turned out that "I reckoned without mine host!"

A.

HILGROVE HOME,
13th May 1864.

Lieutenant-Colonel Woodfall heard yesterday that a piece of land immediately adjoining his property was sold by, so-called, "public auction" a month or more ago; though not the slightest intimation of what was intended was afforded him. He will therefore feel greatly obliged if the undermentioned residents of Coonoor will kindly let him know whether they received any notice of the intended sale of the land in question or not.

Reverend I. V. Bull. ...	No—I. V. B.
Mr. Gray. ...	No—C. Gray.
Mr. Salmon. ...	Absent.
Rev. H. B. Addis. ...	Seen No—W. B. Addis.
Mr. Darling. ...	No—M. B. Darling.
Mr. Hayne. ...	No—E. Hayne.
Mr. Malpas. ...	No—J. Malpas.
Captain Gerrard. ...	No—J. Gerrard.
Mr. Thomas. ...	I saw no notice, but I am often absent—E. T.
Mr. J. Groves. ...	No—John Groves.
Mr. F. Groves. ...	No—F. A. Groves.
Mr. W. H. Stanes. ...	No—W. H. S.
Captain Fuller. ...	Received no notice.
Captain Treanne. ...	No—E. S. T.
Mr. Sanderson. ...	No—C. S.
Mr. Hunter. ...	No—J. Hunter.
Reverend W. W. Wait....	No—W. W. Wait.
Mr. T. Stanes. ...	No—Thomas Stanes.
Mr. J. H. Hayne. ...	No—J. H. Hayne.
Major Sweet. ...	No—H. B. Sweet.
E. Smith. ...	A placard was stuck up for a long time on the ground—E. S.

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B.

From T. MOOTOOSAWMY, Agent to R. STANES, Esq., to Colonel C. WOODFALL,
&c. &c. &c. dated Coonoor, 16th May 1864.

SIR,

I beg leave to state for your kind information on looking over the Coimbatore Gazettes (of this year, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th January; 6th, 13th 20th, 27th February; 5th, 19th, 23rd March; 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd April) there is nothing about the land in question purchased by Mr. E. Smith, no notice whatever. It is usual on such occasions, before the auction takes place, proclamation and notice is sent round apprizing. I further beg to state that myself and the stonecutters had a great desire of purchasing that land, and we were ignorant of the time of the sale; and had we known it, we would certainly purchased the said land. I have bought a small piece of ground, 60 feet long and 30 feet broad, for Rupees 140, near that land for Mrs. Williams (the ladies' nurse), but of such extensive land we would not let go in the auction.

No. 275.

ORDER THEREON, 23rd May 1864, No. 888.

Forwarded to the Collector for report through the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Collector of Coimbatore.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

