M.R.O. 1—3M,6-60—16-10-39.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2357 Press ~~Mis~~

261-262

Dated 18th August 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 231. Read the following letter from the Postmaster-General, Madras, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 30th July 1869, No. 3,118-638 :—

I HAVE the honour to submit the following observations upon the complaint of the Collector of Trichinopoly, regarding the operations of the Postal Department in that district, which is embodied in the Proceedings of Government, Revenue Department, dated 12th ultimo, No. 1,670.

2. I regret that I have been obliged to defer the submission of these remarks so long. The delay has been caused by the absence, on privilege leave, of the Inspecting-Postmaster in charge of the Trichinopoly District, upon whom I thought it necessary to call for explanation upon certain points.

3. I must explain that there are two distinct measures, the effects of which the Collector thinks have been unsatisfactory, and both of which he would wish reversed.

4. The first of these is the extension of the operations of the Imperial Postal Department in the districts by the opening of small Post offices in places previously served by district offices; the latter being thus rendered unnecessary and closed.

5. The second is the placing of the district post of Trichinopoly under the management of the Postal Department.

6. The first of these measures was recommended in a Circular from the Director-General of the Post Offices in India in June 1865, in which he observes as follows:—"It will, I think, be generally found, that on the substitution of a Regular Post Office for a District Post Office Receiving House, the correspondence will increase in the course of six months by about thirty-three per cent." I shall presently show that this anticipation has been far more than realised in the Trichinopoly District.

7. It is quite conceivable and very probable that the Revenue officers of a district may experience some inconvenience from the abolition or reduction of such an establishment as the District Post, which was entirely under their orders, and that whenever such an event might take place, it would be considered premature. But I think there can be no doubt that the advantages which the public derive from the substitution of Imperial for District Post Offices is far more than sufficient to compensate for the temporary inconvenience which such a change may be expected to bring with it.

8. This change has now been in progress throughout India during the last four years. It has been carried into effect in every district in this Presidency; in many to a far greater extent than in Trichinopoly. I have no doubt whatever that it has worked most beneficially for the public, and I have never before heard one word of objection to it.

9. The second measure of which Mr. Banbury complains is the placing of the District Post of the Trichinopoly District under the management of the Imperial Postal Department. This was done, as an experimental measure, two years ago, and I have had every reason to believe during that time, until I received Mr. Banbury's complaint, that the experiment had been perfectly successful;

10. I may here observe that in the Bombay Presidency, in the North-West Provinces, and in the Central Provinces, the management of all District Posts has been entrusted to the officers of the Imperial Post.

11. To these two measures the Collector attributes certain defects, real or supposed, of which he complains in the working of the Post Office in his district. These I will now notice so far as they are definite.

12. First, it is said that there is great delay in the transmission of service covers from one district office to another. For this complaint there has been, I admit, most just ground. The delay arose from faulty arrangement on the part of the Inspecting-Postmaster in regard to the times of making up and despatching Mails. It has been at once rectified, and might have been rectified at any time, if it had been brought to my notice.

13. The next complaint is of the imperfect delivery of the *District Gazette* in the talooks. This also is now, for the first time, brought to my notice. But the fact is that this duty has never been performed by the District Post even when under the Revenue officer, but by village officials and messengers under the orders of the Tahsildars. Upon receiving this complaint, I suggested to the Collector that this same assistance, (which I found had been withheld,) should be continued to the Postal Department as formerly. This he declines doing, and I am therefore taking steps to provide a sufficient delivery establishment for each Post Office in the district.

14. A third complaint is, that the Deputy-Postmasters and Goomastahs feeling themselves independent of the Collector, do not take the trouble to make themselves acquainted with his movements, and to consult his convenience as the Talook Post Goomastahs used to do formerly. Upon receiving this complaint, (for which I have no doubt the Collector has good ground,) I sent strict orders to the Postal officers in the district, pointing out to them the necessity for consulting the Collector's convenience in every possible way.

15. Of the other complaints, some are too general and indefinite to admit of a reply. Others (such as the missending of a letter) are such as could, of course, be often made with justice against any Post Office in the world.

16. That the public generally in the district are dissatisfied as Mr. Banbury thinks I cannot believe. I do not find the public in other districts backward in expressing any dissatisfaction that they may feel, and the complaints I have received from the Trichinopoly District have been extremely few, while the correspondence has increased in a very remarkable degree.

17. I regret that so long a time should have been allowed to pass before these complaints were made to me. I need scarcely say that to a department, such as the Post Office, the co-operation of the officers of Government in the provinces is of the highest value, nor can this be rendered more usefully than by bringing to notice any defects observable in existing establishments or opportunities for their extension.

18. I have already alluded to the great increase which has taken place in the correspondence of Trichinopoly in the last two years. There has been a gradual increase throughout the Presidency, but the increase in Trichinopoly has been far more than commensurate with it; for, while the increase in the number of covers for delivery throughout the Presidency in 1868-69, as compared with 1866-67 is twenty-four per cent., the increase in the Trichinopoly District in the first quarter of 1869, as compared with the corresponding quarter of 1867, is no less than eighty-one per cent., and this increase has been going on steadily month by month during the last two years.

19. Further, of the letters for delivery throughout the Presidency in 1866-67, the proportion returned undelivered to the Dead Letter Office was 1·85 per cent. In 1868-69 this proportion fell to 1·63 per cent., showing an improvement represented by ·22 per cent. I now take three months in the beginning of the year 1867 and the three corresponding months in 1869, and I find that while the proportion of undelivered letters in the Trichinopoly District at the former period was 1·9 per cent., it fell at the latter to 1·56, showing an improvement represented ·34 per cent.; Trichinopoly having in this important particular also more than kept pace with the rest of the Presidency. This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that imperfect delivery is one of the principal grounds of complaint.

20. I trust that these facts will satisfy the Government that the measures complained of by Mr. Banbury have been neither so premature nor so unsatisfactory in their results as he thinks they have been.

21. I must observe in conclusion, that the revision of the District Post Establishment in Trichinopoly, which was recommended in my letter to the Board of Revenue, No. 2,250, of the 24th July 1868, would, if sanctioned, have gone far towards removing the principal grounds of Mr. Banbury's complaint. From the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue of the 21st November 1868, it appears that this measure was recommended for the sanction of Government; but if any orders have been passed upon it, they have not yet been communicated to me.

No. 262. ORDER THEREON, 18th August 1869, No. 2,359.

Miscellaneous.

IN their order, under date 16th March 1867, No. 639, the Government sanctioned the temporary transfer of the management of the District Post in Trichinopoly from the Revenue to the Postal Department as an experimental measure.

2. In his letter, dated 23rd April 1869, recorded in the G. O., dated 12th June 1869, No. 1,670, the Collector of Trichinopoly reported that the result of two years' trial of the change of system had been most unsatisfactory in almost every respect.

3. The Postmaster-General to whom Mr. Banbury's letter was referred now explains that many of the defects pointed out by Mr. Banbury were capable of easy remedy, and states that the general public has benefited by the change, that correspondence has largely increased in the district, and that the per-centage of undelivered letters is very small.

4. Under these circumstances the Right Honourable the Governor in Council sanctions the continuance of the present temporary arrangements until the close of the present official year. The Collector will report again on the matter after a

careful inquiry not later than December next, in order that the Government may determine whether or not it is advisable to re-place the District Post on its old footing.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Postmaster-General.

Ed. F. R. Bantleman.

Revd 1869 Augt
No 2582 Department.

From

The Postmaster General,

Madras.

To

The Chief Secretary to Government,

Department,

Fort Saint George,

No.

Dated

Received 22 August

Answered

261.

12 June/69 No 254/65
3 March — 672-675
22 Dec/68 — 180-182
16 March/67 — 276-277

C[illegible] of (1869) [illegible]

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c.,

Dated August, 18th.

Read. [illegible]

G. O., 18th August 1869, No. 2,3[illegible].

Sec. of State Board of Revenue
7 July 1870 Ct 498

Bd of Revenue
17 July/69 Encl 32 of 70
Bd & Govt

AUGUST.
Nos. 261-262.

Trichinopoly District Post.—Its management by the Postal Department until the close of the present official year sanctioned.

Rameswaram Sub-Office

No. 1/2357

Proceedings of the Madras Govt. under date the 18th May 1869

Read the following letter from the Postmaster Genl. Madras.

Submitting certain observations upon the complaint of the Collr. of Trichinopoly of the unfavourable results consequent on the transfer of the Dt. Post to the General P.O. Septr.

(G.L. 30th July 1869, No. 3148/638)

In this order under date 16th March 1867 No. 669 the Govt. sanctioned the temporary transfer of the management of the Trichinopoly District Post from the Rameswaram to the Postal Superintendent as an experimental measure.

2. In his letter dated 28th April 1869 cited in the 1st para. of the 12th June 1869 No. 1670 the Collector of Trichinopoly reports that the result of two years trial of the change of system

system had been most unsatisfactory in almost every district.

3 The Postmaster General to whom W. Banbury's letter was referred now explains that many of the defects pointed out by W. Banbury were capable of easy remedy, and states that the general public has benefitted by the change and that correspondence has largely increased in the district and that the percentage of undelivered letters is very small.

4 Under these circumstances the Right Honorable the Governor in Council sanctions the continuance of the present temporary arrangements until the close of the present official year. The Collector will report again on the matter after a careful enquiry not later than December next, in order that the Govt may determine whether or not it is advisable to replace the District Post ~~of the District~~ on its old footing.

14 Letter Ord & Rev Dept 20
3 — Postmaster Genl