M.R.O. 1—88,000—16-10-23

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1555 Press Mis

58-59

Dated 22nd June 19 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
2nd June 1869.

No. 58. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Works Department:—

Passing orders on the letter from the Superintending Engineer of the 6th Division, relative to an altercation which took place between Mr. Best, the Sub-Collector of Tanjore, and Mr. Supervisor Seton, with reference to the direction of a Railway feeder.	(Here enter 25th May 1869, No. 1,704.)

No. 59. ORDER THEREON, 2nd June 1869, No. 1,555.

Miscellaneous.

COMMUNICATED to the Revenue Board.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) H. WELLESLEY,
Acting Under-Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, with Proceedings Public Works Department, No. 1,704.

Exd. E. C. Shunker.

Received at 1869 20th Dept.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Dated June, 1869.

Recd. do.

G. O., 2nd June 1869, No. 1,555.

JUNE.

Nos. 53-59.

Alteration between Messrs. Best and Seton.
—Order in the Public Works Department on the subject, communicated to Revenue Board.

No. 554. Read the following letter from the Superintending Engineer, 6th Division, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Tanjore, 10th May 1869, No. 178:—

Copy of Notes of a conversation between Mr. Seton and the Sub-Collector.
Letter No. 71, dated 13th April, from Sub-Collector.
Letter No. 110, dated 24th April to do.
,, ,, 90, ,, 27th do. from do.
,, ,, 27, ,, 5th May, from Mr. Seton to Superintending Engineer.
Letter dated 11th April, from Mr. Seton to Sub-Collector.

I HAVE the honour to enclose the papers noted in the margin relative to a conversation between the Sub-Collector Mr. Best, and Mr. Seton, a Supervisor in the Department Public Works, who is also the Range Officer of No. 6 Range, from which it appears to me that Mr. Best took advantage of Mr. Seton's position in society and offered him an insult, to which Mr. Seton replied unadvisedly, but for which he apologized on consideration; and Mr. Best instead of receiving the apology and admitting the provocation he had afforded Mr. Seton, and thus allowing an affair which was not creditable, viewing it from any point, to sink into oblivion, addressed me on the 27th April in a manner reflecting on Mr. Seton's conduct.

No. 90.

2. Before I received the Sub-Collector's letter, Mr. Seton had placed the notes he had made of the conversation, immediately after the interview, into my hands, and had claimed protection from insult from me as the Head of his department. On receiving Mr. Best's letter, No. 71, dated 13th April, and on comparing its statements with those contained in Mr. Seton's notes, I came to the conclusion that though Mr. Seton was in error in replying to the Sub-Collector, that the provocation had been clearly on the Sub-Collector's part; and I informed him of this in my letter No. 110, to which he has replied in a manner which renders it necessary for me to lay the matter before Government.

No. 90, 27th April.

3. In Mr. Best's remarks on Mr. Seton's letter of apology, and from his letter No. 90, it appeared that Mr. Best did not admit the accuracy of some portions of Mr. Seton's notes of the conversation which had passed between them on the 10th April. I therefore informed Mr. Seton of this fact, sent back his notes, and asked him whether it was possible that, in the heat of the moment, he had represented in stronger language than the case warranted the conversation that had taken place between himself and Mr. Best, for an insult may so easily be offered in manner when the words used are comparatively inoffensive. Mr. Seton, in his reply, states that "there is not a single expression entered in his notes which was not uttered."

No. 27, 5th May.

4. I have never had any occasion to doubt the accuracy of Mr. Seton's statements, and the only conclusion I can arrive at is that Mr. Seton having jotted down the conversation immediately after it had taken place, is probably more correct than the Sub-Collector, who probably was not aware of the strength of the expressions he used when in a state of excitement. It is unecessary to draw attention to the animus displayed in paragraphs 4, 6, and 7 of the Sub-Collector's letter, No. 90, or to the impropriety of branding Mr. Seton as "a man of most disrespectable character;" a statement which I believe to be totally unfounded, as well as that, that Mr. Seton is detested in the talook. It is necessary, however, for me to

refute some of the statements made by the Sub-Collector with reference to Mr. Seton in his public capacity, and to point out Mr. Best's credulity, and the facility with which he entertains any statements disparaging to Mr. Seton. He states that Mr. Seton prohibited cattle being taken along the public roads. The absurdity of this statement should have sufficed for its refutation. Mr. Best is probably unaware of the existence of such an order as that noted in the margin, in which grazing cattle on the side slopes of roads is very properly prohibited; and Mr. Seton's orders to his Cavalgars were not to prevent cattle from passing along the roads, but to prevent them from treading over and grazing upon the turfed side slopes and varuppoos, or side ridges. I was examining works in the Nannilam talook from the 5th to the 17th March, and a similar complaint was brought to me, and Mr. Seton denied ever having issued such an order; and I asked the complainant, who was an inhabitant of Kodavassel, a Sub-Magistrate's station, whether he had brought the matter to the notice of the Sub-Magistrate, and he said he had not done so. It is absurd to suppose that if cattle had been pounded for proceeding along a road and redress could be so easily obtained, as at Kodavassel, by an application to the Sub-Magistrate, that such an application should not have been made. I heard that the Collector, when in the Nannilam talook, and a similar complaint was brought to him, asked whether the case had been referred to the Sub-Magistrate, and on being answered in the negative, declined to believe the statement. The Collector also, I am glad to be able to add, informed me, after a short tour through Nannilam only two-and-a-half months ago, that he was very much pleased with all he had seen of Mr. Seton's work.

Paragraph 6.

Miscellaneous Circular XXVIII. of 21st November 1861.

5. As to the Tahsildars being pestered with unnecessary applications from Mr. Seton, I must beg to differ from the Sub-Collector, and to state that Mr. Seton's applications, which are legitimate and proper, do not meet with that attention which they should meet with, and works are delayed in consequence; and of this I have had occasion to complain more than once. I learn from an Arzi from the Tahsildar to the Sub-Collector, that the former is clearly not aware of his duties in respect to informing this Department of the value of land which is likely to be required for Public Works, for he states that sections should be put up to mark the lines of road when estimates are prepared, to admit of his making arrangements to take up the land, whereas in Government Order No. 2,237, dated 24th July 1867, it is distinctly stated that land is not to be taken up till estimates have been sanctioned; however, even when a line is marked out, it is most difficult to get the land taken up in the Sub-Collectorate; for instance a strip of land, about quarter of a mile long, in the Kadambangudi village, is required for Road No. 78, it was marked out in February, and has not been handed over yet; and there has been similar delay in marking out the Government land in connection with Roads Nos. 33, 46, and 79.

6. The Acting Tahsildar of Nannilam has always given this Department a great deal of trouble: so much so, in 1867, that I asked the then Sub-Collector to accompany me over the talook; this he did, and the orders he issued on the occasion prevented the Tahsildar from opposing us again till the present Sub-Collector

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 25th May 1869.

joined the district, and since then I regret to state that the Department has received opposition from Merasidars and others in a manner which was unknown before his advent.

7. Mr. Seton, as I said in my letter to the Sub-Collector, has had a very uphill game to play, and he has by his energy, zeal, and perseverance done wonders for the Nannilam talook, the works in which are in a far superior condition to that which they were when he assumed charge of the Range, three years ago; and I have no hesitation in saying that his removal from the talook would be a positive calamity to that portion of the district.

8. With regard to the subject of the quarrel, viz., the line which the Southern Railway Feeder from the Kulikarai Station shall follow, it is unnecessary to trouble the Government, the matter will easily be settled by the Collector and myself; and I believe there would have been no trouble about it at all, but for the interference of the Sub-Collector; but I think it right to state that the line proposed by Mr. Seton will tap both villages, and thus benefit both instead of passing through one village to the detriment of the other, and of this it would hardly be supposed the Sub-Collector has been informed in my letter No. 110, from his flippant remark in paragraph 2 of his letter, No. 90, dated 27th April.

No. 555. ORDER THEREON, 25th May 1869, No. 1,704.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 56.

THE Government have learned with much displeasure that Mr. Best has permitted himself to be drawn into an unseemly altercation, in the presence of Native officials, with Mr. Seton, a subordinate officer of the Public Works Department, at the close of which Mr. Best was guilty of using expressions altogether unworthy of his position, and calculated to provoke Mr. Seton to an infraction of duty. Mr. Best cannot consistently with the interests of the public service continue to be employed in a locality where this incident must be a matter of public notoriety. He will therefore be transferred to another district.

2. The Government notice with regret that Mr. Seton was betrayed into the use of language towards Mr. Best of a very reprehensible character, but they recognize some excuse for this error in the provocation to which he was exposed; and they trust that he will in future keep a strict guard over his temper and look for vindication to the legitimate intervention of his official superior if he should ever be again exposed to irritation or injustice.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 6th Division.
,, Revenue Department.
,, Collector of Tanjore.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No 1555
No Comm.r to the Revenue Board.
23 June 69

16 Lr. Mr. Best of Nannilam Pro. 25th May 69. Rec.d 27th June

Veromie Dept
H. 1732.

Govt. of [illegible] Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

6th Division,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated May, 25th.

Recd. 27

G. O. 25th May 1869, No. 1,764.

Enc. Sub-Collr Tanjore
D/2 July/69 Cbe. 2483.

XXV.

Nos. 551-556

Altercation.—Passing orders on the letter from the Superintending Engineer of the 6th Division, relative to an altercation which took place between Mr. Best, the Sub-Collector of Tanjore, and Mr. Supervisor Seton, with reference to the direction of a Railway feeder.

Order