Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 15th March 1871.

No. 4. Read the following letter from the Acting Director of Revenue Settlement, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Madras, 2nd March 1871, No. 432-12:—

REFERRING to my letter of the 3rd instant, No. 232, recorded in Proceedings of Government, dated 18th idem, No. 304, I have the honour herewith to submit in original (to be returned) two letters from the Deputy-Director of Cuddapah, dated, respectively, 26th January and 7th February, Nos. 203 and 318, reporting the circumstances under which Peon Avvaru Ponkalu absconded with certain public money entrusted to him.

2. It will be seen that whilst at Muddanapally, on the 18th ultimo, the Supervisor I. Lukshmikanta Row drew from the Tahsildar's Treasury Rs. 1,117-4-7, comprising the pay of the establishment and contingent charges. This sum the Supervisor entrusted to three Peons, named Avvaru Ponkalu, Chokalu Kondalu, and Avvidana Ramadu, for conveyance to his office at Tumbalapally, a village 14 miles distant, and which was then his head-quarters. The Peons divided the money into convenient shares for carrying, each taking charge of one portion, and obtained the Supervisor's permission to start on their journey next morning, as it was then late in the afternoon. The Supervisor cautioned them to be careful, and, as deposed by one of the Peons, told them that they might stay where they liked for the night, but that they were all three to remain in charge of the money, and then dismissed them. The Peons appear to have proceeded to the residence of Gumasta G. Vasanta Row, and there to have remained together for some time, until they obtained the Gumasta's consent to take their nightly meal, provided only one went at a time. The Gumasta further avers that he directed the whole of the money to be left in charge of the two Peons that remained, whilst the other went to eat, and likewise appointed Peon Pakeer Saib as an additional guard. Subsequently, the Peons arranged among themselves to meet at the house of Head Classifier Ragavachary for the night and separated, each man taking with him the portion of the money allotted to him. They were not missed by Gumasta Vasanta Row until about 6 o'clock in the evening, and he appears to have made no inquiry about their absence. There is nothing positively to show where each Peon lodged for the night, and Pakeer Saib seems also to have disregarded the orders given him, for he made no report of the separation of the Peons, and there is every reason to suppose that Chokalu Kondalu and Avvidana Ramadu started for Tumbalapally in the morning without inquiring for Avvaru Ponkalu; for had they done so, it is most probable that the belt and badge, which were afterwards brought to the Supervisor by the owner of the house in which the fugitive was lodging, would have been handed to them. Pakeer Saib appears to have given no information about the irregularities that had taken place, but immediately the theft was discovered, the Supervisor communicated with the Police, and took the necessary steps for the apprehension of the delinquent.

3. The proper course would have been for the Supervisor to have lodged the money at the Police Station or Taluq Cutcherry; and he alleges that he told the Peons to go and sleep at the latter, but this the Peons now deny, fearing, as the Supervisor represents, the consequences of thus neglecting his instructions. Even

supposing these instructions were given, the Supervisor might have taken means to see them properly carried out; very probably, as conjectured by Mr. Cox, the Supervisor was anxious for the Peons to start early the next morning, so as to reach their destination in good time, and thus trusted to their honesty. In favour of the Supervisor it must be stated that whatever arrangements may be made, it is practically impossible to prevent trusting to some extent to these Government messengers, and that Avvaru Ponkalu, who absconded with the money, was a Peon who had been employed for a little more than a year in the Kistna Party, and had hitherto borne a very good character. Mr. Cox is apparently in error in stating that the "Supervisor's Gumasta never gave the Peons to understand that "they were jointly responsible for the whole sum of money," as this is not only deposed to by the Gumasta but admitted by Peon Pakeer Saib. The conduct of these Peons will be duly noticed departmentally, as well as the neglect of the Gumasta in not seeing the orders he gave carried out, as the Peons were in the house in which he was staying.

4. I regret to add that no trace of either the Peon or money has yet been found.

No. 195. ORDER THEREON 15th March 1871, No. 454.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government consider that the Supervisor was guilty of gross carelessness in not retaining the money in his own charge until the morning when the Peons were to start. Had he done so the money would probably not have been stolen, and, pending further orders, he should be held responsible for the amount. The Government await further explanation, and desire to know what notice has been taken of the Peons' neglect of orders to remain together.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government

To the Acting Director of Revenue Settlement.
,, the Accountant-General.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revenue Department.

No. 454

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 15th March 1871.

Read the following letter from the Acting Director of Rev: Settlement.

Reporting circumstances under which Peon Avvaru Ponkalu of the Cuddapah Government Party absconded with the public money entrusted to him.

H. E. 2d March 1871. No 432/12

The Govt consider that the Supervisor was guilty of gross carelessness in not retaining the money in his own charge until the morning when the Peons were

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been taken of the Lions'
neglect of orders to remain
together

No 195

Ltr from Lt Col Commg Royal Malta Artillery to Colonial Secretary

Re loss of certain money in the Custody of the Lions - and Penalty

Govt. of Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF

REVENUE SETTLEMENT,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated March 15*th*.

Recd. *Exd.*

G. O., 15th March 1871, *No.* 454.

Title No 1817 from the Secretary Board of Revenue & Com. Settlt. dated 16th May 1871.

MARCH.

Nos. 194-195.

Money stolen by a Peon in the Settlement Department.—Passing orders with reference to the carelessness of the Supervisor in connection with it, and holding him responsible for the amount, pending further orders.