

747

11/17/97  
A. J.  
10/28/97

The suggestion is affirmed  
 The necessary instructions will be  
 issued in the due season.

1900 = 1871  $\frac{2096 \frac{1}{2}}{3}$   
 77.1278  
 Proceedings of the  
 Board of Revenue  
 dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 1871  
 Book 21  
 Revised 229  
 W. H. O. R.  
 Opinions expressed  
 that officers command  
 of Cantonments  
 should always be  
 taking the Census  
 in consultation  
 with the Collectors  
 of the District in  
 which the Cantonment

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4. I found to my astonishment that the tank, so far from being merely proposed, was actually finished. It was formed by a very solid strong bund twenty-four feet high, twenty-four feet wide at the top, and about sixty yards long; the inner side of the bund was faced with a cutstone revetment, two stones deep. The bund was erected across a gorge between two steep hills, down which flows the chief supply channel of the large Dusbundum tank of Tirtham. The accuracy of the Tahsildar's statement as to the injury that would be caused to the large Tirtham tank, if the new bund were sanctioned, was apparent; for whereas, at that moment, the old tank was perfectly empty, the new one contained a large quantity of water. The builders of the tank were present, and protested that the water was only ankle-deep, but a man, whom I told to wade through in order to test the truth

of their statement, in two steps went in above his waist, and then declined to go any further. It was then admitted that the water was deep. The whole of the bed of the water-channel below the new tank down to the old tank it used to feed was cultivated with chillies and other garden-produce.

5. A short inquiry on the spot showed me that a gross fraud had been perpetrated. The erection of the tank had been going on steadily for nearly three years, and it had been completed only three or four months before I visited the spot. It was clear, therefore, that its construction had been wilfully concealed.

6. I returned to Bireddipally, and that morning settled the Jamabandi of the Tirtham village, and told my Sheristadar that I intended to hold a searching inquiry into the circumstances under which the new tank had been constructed. That very evening Purushottam Puntulu wrote to me, saying that his health had broken down so completely that he was unable to do any more work, and he begged for a week's casual leave to enable him to get a Medical Certificate preparatory to retiring from the public service. I remonstrated with him strongly against his thus quitting his post at the most critical time of the year when the preparation of the Jamabandi Report was commencing, and particularly because up to that day he had not had an hour's illness, but he continued to insist on the severity of his ailments. Finally, I gave him a few days' casual leave to consult a Doctor, and he at once hurried down to Madras, and there tried in vain to get a Medical Certificate of unfitness for further service. On his return he continued to protest that he was too ill to do any work, and I then had him examined by the Zillah Surgeon who, as I expected, certified that he was in sound health. I at once sent him an official order, dated 18th July 1870, No. 681, calling on him to return to his duty. Purushottam Puntulu thereupon wrote his resignation of the public service ostensibly in consequence of illness, but in reality to avoid the inquiry I was commencing.

7. I found, when I went into the history of the new tank at Tirtham, that the three men who were its nominal constructors were really men of straw, who only hold puttahs for Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 per annum, and are the agents of two rich Sowcars and sugar merchants in Bireddipally, Kottamasi Kamanna and Chengu Chetty. In Fasli 1276 those three men made two joint darkhasts for about 9-14-8 cawnies, assessed at Rs. 12-0-6, of waste land in the Tirtham village, of which  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cawnies constituted the whole of the water-channel leading down to the large tank, and across which the new bund was thrown. The remainder of the land is in the bed itself of the large tank. Each of these darkhasts was accepted, and puttahs were duly issued in Fasli 1277. The Puttahdars, on getting the lands in the channel-bed, at once began to dig a well for their cultivation. Just at that time the Tahsildar Alaghasingary Naidoo, who is now Deputy-Collector in Tanjore, came to inspect the new road that was being made to connect Tirtham with the Venkata-gerrykota road. He was brought to the site of the new work, when the Puttahdars applied to him for leave to raise a bund across the gorge above the land they had got in the channel. The Tahsildar gave his permission, and told them to send in the usual application for leave to build the tank. This they did in the course of a few days, and the work at the tank-bund thenceforward went on steadily. For three successive Faslies did Mr. Robinson come to Bireddipally, and hold the Jamabandi, and no mention was made to him of the important new work going on not

far from his camp, and the construction of which was so injurious to the old large tank of Tirtham.

8. The cost of the work, I am told, was upwards of Rs. 1,500, but my own opinion is that it must have cost very much more.

9. It was clearly proved that, from the moment the erection of the tank-bund was commenced, the Tahsildar, Alaghasingary Naidoo, was well aware of the projected work, and also that he deliberately abstained from bringing the matter to the notice of the Collector as was his duty. I was informed, by several persons who deposed before me upon oath, that Alaghasingary Naidoo, when Tahsildar, had borrowed various sums of money from Yellagari Mooneappa, a wealthy merchant in Tirtham (who had a share in the new tank, towards the erection of which he had contributed Rs. 200), and a connection of his named Kunga Gondu of Timmapally. This last-named individual was in former days a notorious dacoit. He was head of a band of robbers who lived on the Mysore frontier, and committed dacoities in the Mysore territories and Cuddapah and North Arcot Districts; and in the course of time, I was informed, "he acquired much wealth by means of robbery, and then became a respectable man and lived quietly." With this retired dacoit Alaghasingary Naidoo contracted a great friendship, and I was informed that his influence over the Tahsildar was so great that he induced him to allow the new tank to be built without bringing it to notice.

10. Kunga Gondu died about two months before I commenced this inquiry, and the above-named Yellagari Mooneappa was conducting the affairs of his estate, and had charge of his accounts. I saw those accounts, which contain much information of the most interesting kind, for they reveal many curious private pecuniary transactions between the old robber and various Native officials in this district, who seem, in their turn, to have levied a sort of black-mail from him. He had kept a kind of Ledger in which the moneys he thus expended were duly entered, and the names of divers individuals now in the public service figure therein.

11. Along with these accounts were many letters from Native officials asking for presents of various kinds, such as Rs. 100 worth of grain, cows, etc., etc. Amongst these letters were many from Alaghasingary Naidoo, some written while he was Tahsildar, and others after he was transferred to Coimbatore and South Arcot as Deputy-Collector. The tone of them, a <sup>very</sup> <sup>peculiar</sup> is very peculiar. They are not so much the letters of one friend to another, as of a man to one who had a hold over him. They are of some kind upon the writer, so deferential, I may almost say humbly, are they couched. The Deputy-Collector in Coimbatore, and one of the letters invited Kunga Gondu to come and see him at Coimbatore, and another accompanied him to Sirungum. No bond or acknowledgment of money owing by Alaghasingary Naidoo to Kunga Gondu was shown me, but I did not see the accounts until several days after mention of the Tahsildar having borrowed money was made to me. It was, therefore, very easy to keep back any such documents from my inspection. The documents, however, that I saw were sufficient to convince me that Alaghasingary Naidoo when Tahsildar had some private reason which induced him to keep silent about the erection of the new tank-bund.

12. In the year 1869 he was made Deputy-Collector, and left the district. The Taluq Sheristadar Hari Row then was in charge of the taluq for nine months.

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26th April 1871.*

He admits that he knew of the construction of the new tank, and says that when Mr. Robinson came in 1869 to do the Jamabandi at Bireddipally he prepared a sharapati or memorandum bringing the fact to his notice, but the Sheristadar Purushottam Puntulu to whom it was given purposely kept it back. The Sheristadar flatly denies this, and says he knew nothing at all about the new tank being under construction. I do not believe this, and for the following reasons:—The Sowcar and sugar merchants of Bireddipally, who are the real owners of the tank in which they had sunk so large a sum of money, are friends of his, and it is incredible that when he visited Bireddipally year by year, and was often in their company, they should not have said anything to him on the subject, or that no one else on the spot ever mentioned it to him. Then, too, the Revenue Inspector Iyaviah, who admits that he knew the construction of the new tank would be extremely injurious to the old one, says that the Taluq Sheristadar Hari Row, in the presence of Purushottam Puntulu, scolded him once for delaying to report on the application for leave to construct the tank, and he thereupon at once wrote his report, recommending that sanction for the work should be obtained. This was at Bireddipally. Mr. Robinson was there then, and as, when the Tirtham village came up for settlement in the course of a few days, no allusion whatever was made to the new tank, and no application for the Collector's sanction to its construction was put forward either by Hari Row or the late Iluzur Sheristadar, it is, I think, only fair to infer that the matter was being kept dark for some private reason.

13. It is quite clear to me what that reason was. The persons most interested in the new work were, as I stated, rich sugar merchants. If the new tank had been completed, as was intended by them, the large Tirtham tank would never thenceforward have received even a quarter of its full supply, because the new tank would intercept all the water coming down its chief feeder, and the only water that would find its way into the old tank would be the surplus water from the calingulahs of the Poolagunta, Lokonaddi, Korralakunti Naranappa, and Gungadugunta tanks, and the small quantity of water shed from the slopes of the low hills that skirt it on the north and south. The chief portion of the land in the bed of the tank, rich with silt and loamy deposit, would have thus been left available for cultivation. It would all have been commanded by the head of water in the new tank about quarter mile off, and there can be no doubt whatever that, if I had given my sanction to the construction of the new tank as was expected before very long nearly the whole of the bed of the other tank would have fallen into the hands of the sugar merchants, out of whose capital the new tank was made. Their profits, of course, would have been enormous; while the Government would only have realized the king's share on the land cultivated in the bed of the tank, and in return have had to transfer from nunjah to punjah the chief portion of the ayacut under the old Dusbundum tank.

14. It may perhaps be urged, "as put in that case the Dusbundum Inamdars would have complained of the injury to them, and they would not have suffered any such loss. Immediately after inspecting the new tank I rode across the old tank and along its bund, and then carefully inspected the ayacut below it. I found that the Inamdars' lands

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lie all immediately below the bund. They are all extremely fertile, and, beside the tank-water, are irrigated by many wells that are dug close to the bund. The lands from which Government derive revenue under this tank lie at a distance, and it is upon those lands only that remission has been sought and granted every year since the construction of the new bank was commenced. The diminished supply of water then that would come into the tank would have gone to irrigate the Inam lands, whose owners would have had no grounds of complaint; and it is extremely probable that they had been promised a share in the rich land in the tank-bed which was so soon to be available for cultivation.

15. As soon as I discovered the fraud that had been perpetrated, I prepared to report the whole affair to the Board for their orders in regard to the tank that had been thus surreptitiously constructed, and with such injury to an important work of irrigation.

16. Lieutenant Walker, the Range Officer, however begged me to defer my report for a few weeks to enable him to visit the tank and prepare a plan of the locality. I complied with his request, but Lieutenant Walker's visit to the spot was greatly delayed owing to a very severe attack of illness; and, finally, when I was in a position to send in this report, the necessity for obtaining the Board's orders was, in a great measure, obviated by the heavy burst of the north-east monsoon at the commencement of October last, in which the bund of the new tank was entirely swept away. The sugar merchants have consequently sustained a very heavy pecuniary loss, and are thereby sufficiently punished.

17. The only point about which I would now solicit the Board's orders is as regards the puttahs for the nine and odd cawnies of land situated in the bed of the channel and tank which were granted by Mr. Robinson in Fasli 1277. These lands have now all been covered with the debris of the new tank-bund lately washed away, and the holders of the puttahs will most likely be only too happy to resign them; but whether they are willing or not to give up the lands, I propose, with the sanction of the Board, to cancel those puttahs at the ensuing Jamabandi, they having been fraudulently obtained in the first instance, and their cultivation of the lands being highly objectionable.

From this report it appears that in Tirtham, a village of the Palmanair Taluq, there is a large Dusbundum tank, the chief supply of which comes from a channel formed by the gorge of two steep hills.

2. In Fasli 1276 three small Puttahdars presented darkhasts for cawnies 9-14-8 of land, including the whole of the channel and a part of the bed of the tank. The darkhasts were accepted and puttahs were issued in Fasli 1277. Alaghasingary Naidoo (now Deputy-Collector on General Duties in Tanjore), who was then Tahsildar of the taluq, visited the spot soon afterwards, and whilst he was there gave the three men permission to throw a bund across the gorge above the land they had just obtained, telling them at the same time to send in the usual application. The work of erecting the bund was then proceeded with, and by the beginning of 1870 it was sixty yards long, twenty-four feet high, and twenty-four feet broad at the top and faced with stone, and was said to have cost Rs. 1,500.

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3. In the meantime the matter had never been brought to the notice of the Collector, though the bund manifestly cut off the chief supply of the Dusbundum tank.

4. In June 1870 the ryots applied at the Jamabandi for permission to erect the bund, and the then Sheristadar Purushottama Puntulu interested himself to get the Collector to pass orders. Mr. Whiteside refused to do so without inspecting the spot, and when he went there he found that the bund had already been erected, that a large new tank was in existence, and that the old Dusbundum tank was nearly empty.

5. The evidence on which these statements are made seems to be incon- testible. Some doubt is suggested by the fact that neither the Dusbundum Inamdars, nor the ryots holding Government land under the tank, complained of the new bund. Mr. Whiteside believes this to be because the Dusbundum Inams are so close to the old tank, and so well provided with wells, that they did not suffer, whilst it is probable that the Government ryots were pacified by promises of land in the bed of the tank, which would be soon left almost entirely dry. This explanation is hardly satisfactory, but the positive evidence as to the surrep- titious erection of the bund and its effect is so strong that the acquiescence of the land-holders under the old tank, though difficult to explain, does not invalidate it.

6. It is clear, then, that the bund was improperly raised. It was swept away in the north-east monsoon of 1870, and any attempt to restore it must be dealt with severely.

7. The Collector proposes that the puttahs granted for the cawnies 9-14-8 in the channel and tank-bed should be cancelled as having been obtained by fraud. The facts given would not support a charge of fraud against the Puttahdars, and in the absence of proof to that effect it would not be safe to cancel the puttahs summarily. If the channel is kept clear (as it may be), and the restoration of the bund is forbidden, the puttahs will probably be resigned.

8. The public servants who are mentioned by Mr. Whiteside as being to blame in this most discreditable case are Alaghasingary Naidoo and Purushottam Puntulu.

9. It seems clear that Alaghasingary Naidoo must have known that the erection of the bund would injure the Government revenue when he gave provi- sional leave for it to be commenced. Further, it is said to be certain that he knew that the work was going on, and if so, his neglect to take the instructions of the Collector (he did not leave the district till 1869) is inexcusable.

10. Matters are made worse by evidence taken by the Collector, which shows that Alaghasingary Naidoo had borrowed money from ryots interested in the bund, and was on terms of singular intimacy with a noted bad character, Kunga Gondu, who was a connection of one of them.

11. This Kunga Gondu is described by the Collector as being a retired dacoit who had once headed a band of robbers, and had latterly retired from active business, and led a quiet life till he died in 1870.

12. The Collector has since got hold of this man's papers and accounts, and states that they show that various Native officials in the district made the man

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26th April 1871.*

give them presents. Amongst them are letters from Alaghasingary Naidoo which do not mention presents or loans, but show that Alaghasingary Naidoo was in some degree a dependant of Kunga Gondu.

13. It is obvious that the significance of this disclosure depends on the proof that Kunga Gondu was, and was known to be a notorious dacoit. The Collector will report fully on this point, and will give details as to any revelations in the papers which affect the character of men now in the employment of Government.

14. But, however, this may be, Alaghasingary Naidoo has to account for the fact that he accepted darkhasts which he ought not to have accepted, that he knowingly connived at the surreptitious execution of an irrigation work which was manifestly detrimental to the revenue, and that he did so in the interest of men from whom he had borrowed money, and with whom he was on terms of friendship. The Collector of Tanjore will send a copy of these Proceedings to Alaghasingary Naidoo, and require him to submit a full explanation at once.

15. The other public servant whose character is affected is Purushottam Puntulu, the late Sheristadar. This man has left the service without pension, and it is represented that his resignation was prompted by fear of disclosures in this very case. The man being no longer in the service of Government, and having no pension, it is unnecessary to call upon him to explain his conduct, bad as it appears to be.

No. 293.

ORDER THEREON, 26th April 1871, No. 747.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government await the Board's further report.

(True Extract.)

(Signed)

D. F. CARMICHAEL,  
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,  
26th April 1871.*

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To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Rev. 1871. *W. S. P.*  
**Board of Revenue,**  
**MADRAS. H-1282.**

PROCEEDINGS, 14TH APRIL 1871, No. 1,548.

*Duplication*  
 Received 22<sup>nd</sup> — Encl.

APRIL.  
 No. 1,548.

*14 Extra Reg. Rev. Dept.*  
 Dusabundum tank of Tritham and its supply channel—in Palmanair Talook, North Arcot District.—Collector of Tanjore, requested to call upon Deputy Collector, Alaghasingary Naidu, to submit an explanation of his conduct in having improperly accepted Durkhasts for lands in, and permitted erection of a bund across channel, when he was Tahsildar of Palmanair.—Collector of North Arcot, desired to submit certain information regarding late Kunga Goundu, with whom Alaghasingary Naidu was terms of intimacy.

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**Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,**  
**26th April 1871.**

No. 294. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 24th April 1871:—

Read the following letter from the Acting Collector of Chingleput, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Sydapet, 20th April 1871, No. 159.

The officials noted in the margin have asked for two months' leave, each on urgent private affairs, on forfeiture of full pay.  
 2. According to the Circular of the Accountant-General, No. 55, dated 30th January 1871, the sanction of Government is necessary; but as the Circular has been only recently received, and the circumstances under which the leave is required do not admit of delay, and the parties being further entitled to no other kind of leave, I have ventured to grant it in anticipation of the sanction, which I have now the honour to request may be obtained, and I trust the Board will approve of the course I have adopted.

SUBMITTED for the favourable consideration of Government.

No. 295. ORDER THEREON, 26th April 1871, No. 748.

Miscellaneous.

SANCTIONED.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,  
 Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.  
 the Accountant-General.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.