Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
28th October 1872.

No. 260. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 30th August 1872, No. 1,736 :—

Read the following letters :—

From A. MACGREGOR, Esq., Collector of Malabar, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Palghaut, 14th June 1872, No. 144 :—

I HAVE the honour to make the following report regarding certain transactions in the Ponani Salt Gollah. Katchipuratha Kunhi Ramen Nambiar, a Nair, 54 years old, who had some time filled the post of Sub-Magistrate of Tellicherry, was removed, because he was unable to pass the prescribed examination, and was appointed by me Superintendent of the Ponani Salt Gollah in April 1871.

2. The yearly supply of salt from Bombay had been almost all stored, and he had at first only to superintend the wholesale and retail sales.

3. In April, the contents of two large rooms were sold wholesale to two Brahmins named Vishwan Putter and Pitchu Putter, the latter an agent of one Nanjee Makhanjee, a leading merchant on this coast.

More than three months afterwards, in the beginning of August, when the time arrived for the whole of the salt from these rooms to be cleared, the above mentioned Brahmins complained, one that he had paid the Superintendent 500 Rupees, the other that he had paid Rupees 190, for which the Superintendent had not given them credit.

Some time before this dispute, an order had been passed that the wholesale purchasers should make all their payments direct into the Taluq Treasury, but the payment had been made, it was alleged, before this order came into force.

The Treasury receipts and the Accounts of the Brahmins and the Superintendent were carefully gone into by Mr. Hannyngton, who was then in charge of the District, but the accusation could neither be proved nor disproved.

4. This however was a reason for keeping a careful eye on the Superintendent, and was the origin of an enmity between the Brahmins and the Superintendent, the result of which will be seen further on.

5. When the season for bringing fresh supplies of salt from Bombay arrived, many complaints were received concerning the vexatious delay occasioned by the Superintendent, but no additional grounds appeared for suspecting him of dishonesty until the end of December last.

The Superintendent then wished to open Room No. 1 for retail sale, and this room was also applied for eagerly by the Brahmins, who hinted that it had been over-stored.

6. On January 5th, an order was sent to the Superintendent, directing him to open Room No. 11, for retail sale; but on January 8th, a report dated January 4th was received from the Superintendent, to say that as No. 1 had been given to the Brahmins, he had opened Room 13A for retail sale.

This unauthorized opening of the room aroused great suspicion.

7. On January 18th, the Assistant Collector visited Ponani, and the Brahmins told him secretly that Room 13A had been greatly overstored, and that the Superintendent had on the previous day taken out 300 Maunds which had not been credited in the Accounts.

The Superintendent had such abundant opportunity to remove any surplus, that the Assistant Collector considered it would be useless to weigh the salt remaining in the room, and contented himself with issuing strict orders that the Brahmins and wholesale purchasers should have free access to the gollah when salt was being stored.

8. The result of this check upon the Superintendent was, that on February 26th, the Brahmins sent a petition stating that the Superintendent had on that day overstored Room No. 2, and that they were willing to pay the expense of weighing out the salt, in order that the truth of their accusation might be tested.

9. Instant orders were sent to the Deputy-Collector at Ponani, to seal up the two suspected Rooms 13 A and 2, and test their contents by weighing, but in the meantime the Superintendent had got wind of the matter and entered the excess in No. 2 in the Accounts.

He first explained that the excess in No. 2 was caused by the partition between Nos. 2 and 3 having fallen. He subsequently stated that his enemies the Brahmins had caused the excess to be put in, while his back was turned.

10. On March 4th, further explanation was called for, and the Superintendent was directed, under due supervision, to open Room No. 8 for retail sale.

On March 6th, he wrote a reply refusing to open the room or to have anything further to do with the gollah.

An hour after the receipt of this letter, a telegram arrived, stating that the Superintendent had hanged himself on the night of 7th March.

11. He left behind him a written statement of which the following is a translation:—

"I bring my folly to a close at two o'clock on the night of Siva Ratri. There is no use in my living longer.

"It was my own fault that I fell into the sin which Ukkomu Menon and Chatthar entangled me in. The knife which Pangu was caused to give me, and the rope which Paran was caused to give me remain (or are unnecessary). All god-made men from Macgregor to Krishnan Nair here, who brought about this league (against me) and my outlawry, are good; I am bad, I am not wanted on the earth.

"Rupees 125 of Nanjis Rupees 500, are with Ukkomu Menon, and Vishuvan's Rupees 190 are with Chatthar; are they not?

"Oh! P. Komu Menon, who hast but just now parted from me, let all that you all have got done to me here pass! Do not get put upon me, my friends, the responsibility of the 600 Maunds in the Salt Gollah.

"It will be well if the Tahsildar gives over to Nanjee the note for Rupees 500, which the devil, which tormented me, would not allow me to give up, and which I have stuck in the cover of this book, and (thereafter) set matters right."

"When, having confided every thing to God, I was meditating to-day on the deity, I was troubled (with this thought) and the time (for meditation) passed. have no debts to pay. Raking up nothing against me, remember the saying that enmity endures only to the grave, and let all come straight. I put the keys of the gollah in this box. I am now going to abandon thoughts of the world, and after

sitting for 20 minutes with the rope round my neck in prayer to god, shall exhale my breath, and draw tight the noose, such is my lot. Forgive all my sins."

(Signature)

"If you think this is folly, tear it up. Do as you like.

"I have already instructed Komu Menon, as to what is to be done with my corpse."

12. Ukkomu Menon and Chatthar are the Clerk and senior Peon in the gollah. Pangu and Paren are coolies employed in the gollah. P. Komu Menon is the Sub-Registrar at Ponani, a friend of the deceased.

The references to the money will be intelligible after a perusal of the account given above of the accusation made against the Superintendent by the Brahmins. No five hundred rupee note was to be found. A servant of the deceased and a Police Constable who lived with him were the first persons who entered the room in which the deceased's lifeless body hung.

13. Since that event, I have been having the salt carefully weighed under the supervision of the Deputy-Collector. Room No. 8, which the Superintendent had refused to open, was first weighed, and a trifling deficiency of 11 Maunds, sufficiently accounted for by wastage, was discovered. Room 24 was next weighed, and a deficiency of 42½ Maunds, rather less than 2 per cent. was found.

Room 13A, the sealing of which had produced such an effect upon the Superintendent, was then weighed, and when on May 7th the weighment was completed, there was found to be in it an excess of 531 Maunds.

14. It was doubtless the knowledge that this large excess would be discovered, that drove the Superintendent to escape the shame of the discovery by the crime of suicide, and on this supposition the whole matter becomes intelligible.

Whether any further excess or deficiency exists in the other rooms, remains to be seen. I think it better to weigh the salt as purchasers come to take it away, rather than put Government to the useless expense of weighing and re-storing it. As the rooms are gradually weighed out and sold, the results will be carefully watched and any extraordinary excess or deficiency reported.

15. It would appear that in the present case, the Superintendent was exasperated at what he probably considered the injustice of his removal from his appointment for not passing, though ample extension had been allowed him of time to pass, and that he determined to revenge himself by a fraud on the Revenue, and for that purpose over-stored 600 Maunds of salt, which after suspicion had been aroused, he was unable to get rid of or conceal.

From the same Officer, dated Calicut, 15th August 1872, No. 194.

With reference to the Board's Proceedings, dated 28th June 1872, No. 4,568, I have the honour to report, that since the date of my letter therein referred to, eleven rooms of salt have been sold out at Ponani, and no notable deficiency or excess has been discovered. I take this opportunity of pointing out with reference to paragraph 13, that an excess and not a deficiency was reported.

2. The total contents of the eleven rooms, according to the Accounts, was 37,743 Indian Maunds.

In six of the rooms a slight excess amounting altogether to 44 Maunds was found.

In the remaining five, there was a slight deficiency, amounting to 164½ Maunds.

There are still 22 rooms stored by the late Superintendent remaining to be sold, containing 70,115 Maunds.

3. It was of course impossible to continue entering into contracts with wholesale purchasers in the ordinary way, when it was a matter of uncertainty what the contents of the room would turn out to be, and the arrangement accordingly made with purchasers on discount was, that they should pay the expense of weighing the salt, the Government undertaking to make good any deficiency in excess of 1 per cent. and taking credit for any excess that might be discovered. Under this arrangement, which it appears necessary to continue until all the salt stored by the late Superintendent is sold, the loss which Government has to bear in the 11 rooms is 6 Maunds in the entire 37,743.

4. As mentioned in paragraph 8 of my former letter, the Putters who accused the late Superintendent of over-storing, agreed to pay the expense of weighing out the salt in order that the truth of their assertion might be tested, and were taken at their word.

5. They have applied for re-payment of the sum thus expended, Rupees 30, as well as for the grant of a reward, inasmuch as their information led to the discovery of an excess of 531 Maunds, which sold at the wholesale price, resulted in a gain to Government of Rupees 1,009.

6. As stated in my letter of June 14th, 1872, No. 144, there is reason to believe that both the informers suffered from the Superintendent's dishonesty, and apart from that I think a reward should be given them. I beg to recommend that in addition to Rupees 30 which they paid for weighing the salt, each of them be given a reward of Rupees 200.

7. It does not appear any further special report is necessary, unless some particular circumstance comes to light with regard to the remaining balance.

SUBMITTED for the information of Government.

2. In the first letter the Collector reported that, owing to complaints that some of the rooms in the salt stores at Ponani had been over-stored, he had suddenly directed the Deputy-Collector to seal up the suspected rooms and test their contents by weighing; that the Superintendent hearing of this had entered the excess storage in one room in the Accounts but had been unable to alter the Accounts of the other. He was subsequently, on the 4th of March, ordered to open another room for sale under supervision; he declined to obey this order and on the day following committed suicide by hanging himself.

On the suspected room being examined, an excess of 531 maunds was found.

3. The Collector was directed to report further after some more of the rooms stored by the deceased Superintendent had been tested and in his second letter 15th August he states that eleven more rooms have since been weighed without any beyond a trifling excess being found. He is satisfied that the over-storage was confined to a few rooms.

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4. In paragraph 6 he applies for the refund of 30 Rupees expended by the informers themselves in weighing out the salt and for a reward of Rupees 200 each to two men who gave the information which led to the detection of the fraud and to a saving of Rupees 1,009 to Government: the Board sanction the payment of these sums and in submitting the letters for the information of Government point out that this case affords further evidence that the appointment of a Deputy-Collector to superintend the Salt and Customs Departments in Malabar is necessary.

No. 261. ORDER THEREON, 28th October 1872, No. 1,494.

Separate Revenue, No. 19.
Salt.

ORDERED to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

7X

MISCELLANEOUS No. 4,568

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

Dated 28th June — 1872.

Read letter from the Collector of Malabar
dated 14th June 1872 No 144 reporting on the
decrease of Salt found in the Ponany
Salt Gollah and the death of the Salt
Superintendent of the Gollah.

The Collector's report on the
outturn of the remaining rooms is
awaited.

(True Extract)
(s) H E Stokes
Acting Sub Secretary

To The Collector of Malabar
(True copy)

H E Stokes
Acting Sub Secretary

No. 3011
Rev. 1872. Sept

Board of Revenue,

MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 30TH AUGUST 1872, No. 1,736.

Despd 11 Sept. 72 Encl. 1

Received 16th Sept. 72

AUGUST.

No. 1,736.

Salt.—Report of Collector of Malabar on excess salt stored in one of rooms of Salt Gollah at Ponani by late Superintendent, submitted to Government, with remarks; and necessity for appointing a Deputy-Collector to superintend Salt and Customs Department in this district, again brought to notice. Refund of Rupees 30, paid for weighing the salt by the two parties who gave information of over-storage, and payment of reward of Rupees 200 to each of them, sanctioned.

No. 1494 Recorded 28 Oct. 72

11 Bds Sept Mise. Dr

No 260–261

2. 18. Sep: 1872 R 23d Sep: