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Not to be folded or roughly handled

31/1

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Political Department,
21st March 1872.*

Read the following:—

No. 56. To THE RIGHT HON. FRANCIS BARON NAPIER, K.T.,
Governor and President in Council of Fort St. George.

The humble Petition of BOMMADERARA
VENKATA NARSIMHA NAIDU
BAHADAR, son and successor of the
late RAJAH BOMMADEVARA
NAGANNA NAIDU BAHADUR,
Zemindar of Valloor, Vasantawada, and
Gudur, in the Kistna and Godavery
Districts.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I venture to approach Your Lordship in Council with a grievance which, I feel assured, has only to be stated to be redressed, because of the generous and tender consideration which you have been pleased so conspicuously to evince in the treatment of all matters concerning the dignity of the landed aristocracy of the country.

2. From before the beginning of this century my family has continued to enjoy the highest regard of Government as one of its most useful and trusty servants

* NOTE — A Peishcush of Rs 70,000 is annually paid to Government. in times of war, and as a peaceful and a loyal landholder* in times of peace.

3. During the troublous times of the mutiny, the loyal services rendered by my father met with the public recognition of Government as their records will show.

4. While the family was thus confidently conscious that they were more than ever in the enjoyment of the high regard of the ruling authorities, a most sudden and unaccountable misfortune befel them in the year 1863.

5. From the beginning of this century, the family enjoyed the honorary title of "Rajah," both in consideration of their distinguished services in the field and of their position as one of the Zemindars of the country, and were so addressed in all communications of State as well as semi-official and private correspondence, of the Civil and Military Officers of Government, as the annexed file of documents will testify.

6. In the year 1863, the then Government of the day, without any reason and, as far as my family is aware, without any occasion, were pleased to direct that the title of "Rajah" shall cease with the then holder, my late father.

7. It is needless to say, my Lord, that this order fell like a thunderbolt on a summer day. There was no war around—no political strifes—no disaffection—not even the shadow of a reproach on the loyalty of the family—and scarcely had three years elapsed since Government rewarded my father with a golden bracelet for loyalty and distinguished services, and yet it pleased the Government of the day to inflict on the family a punishment before which extinction were a mercy.

8. This calamity—for it was no less to us—weighed down so much on my father that he died a premature death, though not without expressing his confident belief that this injustice would not long remain unredressed.

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21st March 1872.*

9. But the real bitterness of this misfortune it is my lot to experience. What has this family done, my Lord, that it should be thus disgraced before the world and deprived of honours which have been undisputedly conceded to it by Government and all its public officers including numerous military gentlemen of high rank from generation to generation?

10. Granted, my Lord, that there exist no "Royal Letters Patent" under which the title of Rajah was conferred on this family. Is this the only title so situated in world's history? It is, my Lord, invidious in the extreme, at all times and in all countries, to go back and inquire into the origin of "titles," and it would be extremely ungentlemanly on my part to say how my neighbouring Zemindars came by their titles. While such are respected with the utmost scruple, what cause was there that this one family, which laid the foundation of its greatness in those glorious military campaigns which resulted in the establishment of British supremacy in South India, should, after a lapse of seventy years, be singled out for a description of punishment which is reserved only for those guilty of disloyal and treasonable acts?

11. In these circumstances, my Lord, I do confidently hope that Your Lordship in Council will be pleased to reconsider and cancel the order which has inflicted an unparalleled hardship on a distinguished family noted only by its faithful services to Government in times of war, and restore to it the honorary title of "Rajah" which it has borne and dearly cherished for so many generations.

12. Before concluding, I crave Your Lordship's permission to trouble Your Lordship in Council with a subject, also connected with the dignity of my family. From the times of those military campaigns at the close of the last century, already alluded to, Petitioner's great-grandfather was allowed an honorary military escort of troopers and sepoy, which has also been hereditarily maintained by the family ever since, for our connexion with the commissariat of the Army has not to this day ceased. This escort always accompanied the head of the family on all occasions, public and private, both in Civil towns as well as in Military Cantonments, and was taken to the Presidency when my father went to visit the Governor, and the Magistrates of the Districts as well as of the Presidency, never refused them a pass during the last seventy years.

13. On the complaint of some evil disposed Police Officer, in 1869, objection was taken, and on some representations made to Government, of which we have no knowledge, the District Magistrate informed us that the troopers and sepoy should be reduced to a small number and should not wear the uniform of Her Majesty's troops.

14. This privilege was conceded to us in the field of battle and continued in times of peace, by the highest Military Officers, without question, for they well knew that it was nothing but a pageant and a historic reminiscence of the ancient connexion of the family with military campaigns. In this light only the family prizes this otherwise expensive honour, and I pray that Your Lordship in Council will be pleased to direct this being left unmolested by the District authorities; for the men are not drilled fighting men, but consist mostly of artizans and farm-labourers who, for the greater part of the year, pursue their own peaceful avocations on my estate.

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21st March 1872.*

15. Craving Your Lordship's pardon for thus taking up your valuable time, and in the confident hope of obtaining justice at Your Lordship's hands,
I beg to remain, &c.,

MADRAS,
26th January 1872.

బొమ్మదేవర వెంకట సరస్వతీనాయుడు,
బహదూరుమండల గారి తరఫు ముక్తావళిలు భవనం వా
మహామయ్య గారి.

No. 57. ORDER THEREON, 21st March 1872, No. 103.

The Honourable the Governor in Council is pleased to maintain the previous recognitions of the services rendered to the State by the Bommadevara family, by directing that the representative member of that family shall be addressed with the honorary prefix of Rajah.

2. He will also be allowed to travel with a reasonable number of armed followers, not exceeding 30, as an escort. These may be dressed in uniform, but this uniform must be entirely distinct from any dress worn by any of Her Majesty's troops.

3. In communicating this order to the petitioner, the Magistrate will explain to him that, under the altered circumstances of the country, the large body of armed retainers who, with the permission of the Government, were allowed to accompany the representatives of the Bommadevara family has become unnecessary, and that the distinction which it is the desire of the Government to continue to the family will be sufficiently marked by a small escort.

(True Extract.)

31/3/72
[Signature]
Officiating Chief Secretary.

To the Magistrate of the Kistna District,
with a file of documents for delivery to petitioner.

" Inspector-General of Police.
" Revenue Department.

Encl. J. Wright.

20/3/72

