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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Rev. DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	150	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	24 - 6 - 1873	196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Read again Proceedings of Government in the Revenue Department, dated 14th May 1873, No. 483.

No. 62. Read also the following letter from Major W. S. DREVER, Acting Inspector-General of Police, to the Hon. W. HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 28th May 1873, No. 28-C :—

With reference to G. O., No. 483, of 14th May 1873, on the subject of the burglarious breaking into the Treasury at Periacolum, in the Madura District, forwarded for my remarks, I have the honour to submit the following observations.

2. I have no doubt the Police watchman who went on duty on the night of the 3rd February at 2 A.M. was either asleep when the offence was committed or was acting in concert with the thieves. He was prosecuted for wilful breach of duty, and, having been sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of three months' pay, was dismissed.

3. Referring to the District Magistrate's suggestion, which is concurred in by the Board of Revenue, "that sentries found asleep should invariably be prosecuted and not fined departmentally," an order to that effect can at once be issued should the Government desire it; but I would respectfully deprecate any attempt to lay down a hard-and-fast rule in such a matter. It would, I fear, be as inoperative as the Magistrate's other suggestion of uniform punishment, which the Board have naturally condemned.

4. The failings in this respect of a Police watchman (who is fortunate if he gets two nights in bed out of thirty) cannot be viewed so seriously as those of a Military sentinel who is in bed five nights out of six, and Magistrates would unquestionably give Police offenders the benefit of these and various other considerations telling in their favour were the proposed rule made absolute.

5. The Government may rest assured that there is no tendency whatever on the part of the superior officers of Police to screen their men by punishing them departmentally rather than prosecuting criminally. The former course is only taken when, from a knowledge of the attendant details, Superintendents believe that no conviction could be obtained or that other extenuating circumstances rendered prosecution undesirable.

6. To those unacquainted with the duties a diminished establishment has to perform it doubtless seems scandalous that a Treasury watchman or any other Police Officer should ever be found asleep on his post, but when, as is not infrequent, the sinner so caught is discovered to have been on beat or other work all day—perhaps to have walked twenty miles—his failure is, to a certain extent, accounted for. No Magistrate would convict a Constable under such circumstances, and I conceive the Government may, therefore, safely and wisely leave the discretionary power of deciding what course to adopt with their District Superintendents.

7. As a matter of fact when sentries are found asleep there is no such practice in the department as Mr. McQuhae was erroneously led to suppose, each case being treated on its own merits, which necessarily include questions of antecedent conduct, character, length of service, &c.—points all bearing on the gravity of the individual offence but inadmissible of proof before a criminal tribunal.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
13th June 1873.*

8. I trust it may not be thought that I desire to treat lightly of these or other similar Police misdoings. Far from it; I would enforce severe punishments where such are clearly deserved, but, on the other hand, I am decidedly of opinion that any exceptional treatment of the question could only end in failure.

9. Police watchmen are occasionally found asleep, and it must sometimes so happen under existing circumstances; but it appears to me the remedy is to place the guards employed on these State services on an efficient numerical footing rather than to adopt special penal measures against such offenders.

10. In conclusion, I have the honour to lay before Government the following extract from the report of the District Superintendent on this case:—

“To effect the entrance into the Treasury itself two padlocks had to be forced, and, as they were very old and of the commonest and roughest description, no difficulty was presented to the burglar; both were simply pressed open.”

No. 63. ORDER THEREON, 13th June 1873, No. 937.

The Governor in Council entirely agrees in opinion with the Acting Inspector-General that guards so overworked as he describes them to be cannot possibly be effective, and that the proper remedy is to place the guards employed on State services on an efficient numerical footing. He requests that a full report on the subject may be submitted with proposals to remedy this cardinal defect. The proposal for criminal prosecution in every case in which a sentry (Police) is found sleeping on guard does not commend itself to Government.

2. The attention of the Revenue authorities should be called to the description of the padlocks which were in use in the Treasury when the robbery was effected, and steps should be taken to ensure the use of properly effective locks in all Treasuries.

(True Extract.)

A. Murthy
Chief Secretary

To the Acting Inspector-General of Police.
„ Revenue Department.

Exd. A. S. Rodgers.

*Com^d to the Bd. of Revenue for the
C^d to the Bd. of Rev for the
issue of the necessary orders in regard
to the supply of proper locks at all
Treasuries*

15/1

1871/12/17/15

13 To the Board of Revs Dec 27/15.

Subt. of 1873

JUDICIAL.

To THE ACTING INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE

Recd. June 23rd 1873

Dated June, 1873.

Recd. June 23rd 1873

Encl.

G. O., 13th June 1873, No. 937.

JUNE.
NO. 62-63.

Passing orders on a letter from the Acting Inspector-General of Police regarding the conduct of Police Guard in the Penitentiary Treasury by

With order

No 150-24 June 1873.