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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	17	Press-
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	1. 9.	1968 24

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
26th August 1874.*

No. 641. Read the following letter from R. E. NORFOR, Esq., District Engineer, South Arcot, to Colonel G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Cuddalore, 21st April 1874, No. 17:—

In compliance with instructions conveyed in paragraph 4 of G. O., No. 330, of the 11th February 1874, I have the honor to forward herewith a list of public documents, reported by Mr. Hicken to be missing from the records of the Office of the No. III. or Virdachellum Range. Subsequent to the

1 List of papers missing. *	
1 Correspondence containing five letters from Overseers, etc., marked A.	
1 Register of water, marked B.	
1 Correspondence containing copies of four letters from Overseer Coopana Pillay, marked C.	
1 Draft letter, marked D.	

despatch of this list by the Range Officer certain vouchers called for by the Deputy Controller of Accounts, Captain Christie, R.E., are also, when searched for, found to be missing; a list of these has been furnished to that officer.

2. Mr. Bell states that no records were ever removed from the Range office with his cognizance; the accompanying papers, marked A, will show that office duties were conducted for a time at least in a building other than the Range office; in fact, Mr. Bell himself, while denying that records were taken away from the office, goes on to say that the Head Accountant admitted that a portion of the current work was conducted in a vacant house in the town of Virdachellum; this was done at a time (to quote his own words) "when there was a great amount of business to be disposed of," and (again to quote his own words) "at a time when the freshes in the river which divide the village from the office were frequent." As regards the freshes in the river preventing the members of the office establishment attending the office proper, the same papers, marked A, will show that such was not the case. If this is not considered sufficiently conclusive evidence, the accompanying registers* of water for

* Marked B.

Anicut, situated about seven miles above Virdachellum, will, I trust, show unmistakeably that the state of the river certainly could have caused no interruption. It is difficult also to reconcile the fact that a "great amount of business was disposed of on the other side of the river," with the statement that "no office records were removed from the Range office."

3. It has subsequently come to my knowledge, as also to the knowledge of Government, that Ponoorungum has had a great deal to do with accounts and records of the range in connection with works executed during my administration of the range; there is, therefore, strong presumptive evidence that these records had been for a long period in his keeping; that they had been taken to his own dwelling house I have not the slightest doubt of.

4. Mr. Bell states in regard to Overseers making advances for public works from their private means, that I had become acquainted with this fact through anonymous letters, and that he was not aware of this practice till I first informed him of it. He also states that Overseers were sent for to my house and privately interrogated, and made to sign certain statements of the contents of which they were ignorant. This is a serious reflection on my character, and I feel that in justice to myself I should refute these defamatory allegations.

5. In the first place, I did not obtain the knowledge that Overseers were making advances from private funds through anonymous letters; how I did get this information is as follows:—By a weekly report* of the Anicut Overseer A. Cooposawmy I found that the number of coolies working on the main Pelandorai Canal were small; and in No. 414 of 25th March 1873, I called upon the Overseer to report how often the coolies were paid, and the system adopted, in paying, telling him at the same time that if weekly payments were made, it was likely the number of coolies would increase; in reply to this I was informed, in No. 354 of 28th March 1873, that the coolies were paid about twice a month, and "in the meanwhile the maistry in charge is instructed to supply with the necessities to the wudders so that they may not feel any want." On receipt of this, I in No. 1 of the 2nd April 1873, called for explanation relative to the supply of necessities by maistries to the wudders; and in No. 2 of 5th April 1873, A. Cooposawmy tells me that as there was no possibility of procuring wudders without advances, he was compelled to borrow 200 Rupees from one Soobroyah Pillay, a Vakeel in the Munsif's Court at Virdachellum, for the purpose of advancing to wudders, and that he subsequently borrowed a further sum of Rupees 60 of the same man for the same purpose, and stated also that D. Cooposawmy Moodelly adopted the same course. This is how I got the information, and if the Government wish to see the original letters I will send them up.

6. I respectfully beg the Government will do me the favor to peruse the papers accompanying this, marked C. With these before me it is difficult to understand how Mr. Bell asserts that he was ignorant of the fact that Overseers were making large advances from private means, and that this was done through his Head Accountant Ponoorungum too; these are copies from the Overseer's Office letter book, the originals, which ought to be on the file in the Range Office, are not to be found; it is not likely Ponoorungum would have left them there; however, as this correspondence relative to the advances took place in September and October 1872, it is clear that my bringing the improper practice to Mr. Bell's notice in March 1873 was not the first knowledge he had of these irregular proceedings.

7. That the Overseers were sent for to my house and made to sign papers of the contents of which they were ignorant the Overseers themselves (see paper A) have denied, and the clerks in my office will be prepared to disprove this. All I did was done openly and in the public office with the Head Clerk present in the room.

8. That I sent for these Overseers without consulting Mr. Bell I fully admit; there would be little use my applying to him, as he did nothing he was ordered and thwarted me in every possible way.

9. Mr. Bell, with reference to the second charge, says that he disbursed large sums through the Overseers to Contractors in March, "as he knew by Overseers' reports that work for these large sums had been done;" these reports are not recorded in the Range Office, and the Overseers deny having made any such reports; in fact, they cannot have done so, as the cheques were given them in the beginning of March (see papers A.) in anticipation for work to be executed in March

as their indents for funds will clearly

• Marked D.

letter in Mr. Bell's handwriting, says he complained to Mr. Bell that he had too much work, and could not get through the full allotments he had originally engaged to spend on the Pelandorai and other works; that Mr. Bell got very angry, threatened to dismiss him and drafted a letter which he insisted upon his writing him; the draft is certainly in Mr. Bell's handwriting; whatever may have prompted him to write it I cannot tell, but it certainly is not what a Range Officer should have done.

No. 642.

ORDER THEREON, 26th August 1874, No. 2,420.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 49.

ORDERED that the list of missing papers forwarded with the above letter be sent to the Controller for examination

and consideration by Lieutenant Christie, R.E., when inquiring into the charges against Mr. Norfor and Mr. Bell.

2. In the meantime Mr. Norfor having charge of the range will complete the list for information of the Controller, and collect all papers that may be required for the investigation ordered.

3. The Government resolve to direct the Collector of South Arcot to associate himself with Lieutenant Christie in the inquiry into the charges above alluded to.

(True Extract.)

C. Munther Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, South Arcot.
" Officiating Controller of Public Works Accounts.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

20 Spare Copies

will file p. 111

No. 2974
Rev. 1874 Dep't.
of (1874) Madras

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, SOUTH AROOT.





Filed August 26th.

5/1/20

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C. O., 261A August 1874, No. 2,420.

AUGUST.

Nos. 641-642

Mr. R. E. Nerfer.—A List of certain missing papers sent to the Controller of Public Works Accounts for examination and consideration by Lieutenant Christie, R.E., when inquiring into the charges against Mr. Nerfer and Mr. Bell. The Collector of South Arcot directed to associate himself with Lieutenant Christie in the inquiry into the charges against

communicated to the Board
of Revenue, for the issue of the necessary
instructions to the Colly of South
West with reference to para 3 of the
order.

7015 B of June 74 22/2/74