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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.

B.P. No.

1716

Press

Mis.

Dated

30.11.1875 196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
30th November 1875.*

No. 339. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 2nd November 1875, No. 3,021:—

Read again Board's Miscellaneous Proceedings, dated 2nd August 1875, No. 6,936.

Read also the following letter from J. HOPE, Esq., Acting Collector of Kurnool, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 6th October 1875, No. 352.

I AM very sorry to have to trouble the Board with the enclosed mass of correspondence, but as the Acting Head Assistant Collector, Mr. Farmer, has requested me, on personal grounds, to submit his letters and their enclosures, I, of course, have no option but to do so. As they contain many unfounded charges against me, and statements replete with inaccuracies and misrepresentations, I have written out a memorandum of reply which will also be found enclosed. Many points not referred to in this memorandum are explained in marginal notes and in appendices.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.—Memorandum by Collector.

ENCLOSURES Nos. 2 to 10.—Correspondence.

THE Proceedings above quoted relate to a letter from Mr. Farmer, Acting Head Assistant Collector, Kurnool, to Mr. Hope, Acting Collector, dated 6th July 1875, No. 207, in which, in reply to a call for certain records connected with an appeal case, the former criticizes the latter's treatment of pseudonymous petitions, and intimates the existence of a wide-spread belief that Mr. Hope's action in official matters is based on information received through suspicious channels. For this grossly insubordinate production, Mr. Farmer was severely censured and ordered to remove the letter from his records.

2. Mr. Hope in communicating the Board's decision, directed Mr. Farmer to remove from his records three other insolent and offensive communications subsequently received, dated 10th and 24th July and 2nd August respectively, as he was unwilling to trouble the Board again. Mr. Farmer thereupon, in reporting that he had complied with these instructions, states that he regrets extremely that he should have been forced to address his Collector in objectionable language, but that he was driven to adopt this attitude by the treatment he has experienced at Mr. Hope's hands, and by the trying circumstances in which he has been placed; and he refers to previous correspondence as evidencing the treatment to which he has been subjected during his service in the district (Enclosure B) with the request that the whole matter may be laid before the Board.

3. The grievance to which most prominence is given is the course adopted by the Collector in disposing of a pseudonymous petition received during Mr. Farmer's temporary absence from the district, containing charges of corruption against a Revenue Inspector named Somaya, and alleging that the Revenue Inspector's influence in the taluq was due to Mr. Farmer's favor having been secured in a manner which it is unnecessary to repeat. This petition was referred by Mr. Hope to the Nundial Deputy Collector, who appears to have been performing the duties

of the Head Assistant Collector during the latter's absence, for report as to the truth of the charges against Somaya. On his return to the district shortly afterwards, Mr. Farmer heard of this petition, and addressed the Collector, insisting on its being sent to him. Thereupon a correspondence ensued, which is forwarded complete together with the original petition and a translation thereof. Not content with obtaining the petition, Mr. Farmer affected to believe from an expression in the Collector's letter of the 11th February 1875, which does not in the least warrant the construction placed upon it, that the petition had been sent to the Deputy Collector for report by mistake, that officer being at the time in charge of the Head Assistant Collector's office; he demanded certain other papers, and cross-questioned the Collector as regards the action taken by him in the matter in a manner which led Mr. Hope eventually, after a correspondence which the latter should have terminated long before, to decline any further correspondence on the subject.

4. The question is, however, repeatedly alluded to in subsequent letters; and in lengthy Proceedings, dated 10th July 1875, No. 2, Mr. Farmer took occasion to explain in detail his views in regard to the proper course to be pursued in dealing with pseudonymous petitions, and though he is apparently putting a purely hypothetical case, there can be no doubt that he refers therein to his own relations with the Collector. This effusion he had the impertinence to send to Mr. Hope, with an endorsement requesting the latter to state how far he approved of the views therein expressed, and intimating his disapproval of the course adopted in Somaya's case. This is one of the documents which the Collector desires to be expunged from the records, and the two others are equally objectionable. The production speaks for itself and comment is superfluous, the tone alone being sufficient to condemn the writer.

5. In his letter of the 16th September 1875, No. 305, requesting the Collector to lay the matter before the Board, Mr. Farmer states that he considers that he has been treated in a manner the reverse of straightforward and ingenuous, and that he has been wronged as a public servant. He persists in asserting his belief that Mr. Hope's object in sending the petition to the Deputy Collector for report was with a view to the publication of the defamatory matter contained therein, and that Mr. Hope withheld information which he might have furnished. He states that he selects this case as one of the clearest on record, and as he has certainly written at sufficient length to place the matter in all its bearings before the Board from his point of view, they are in a position to judge how far Mr. Farmer has ground for complaint in this particular instance, and to estimate what his grievances generally are worth.

6. Mr. Hope has summed up the whole case clearly in a memorandum which treats of Mr. Farmer's complaints under three heads:—

1st.—The action taken on the pseudonymous petition, to which Mr. Farmer specially refers.

2nd.—The action taken on pseudonymous petitions generally.

3rd.—The general treatment complained of.

As regards the first point, Mr. Hope sets forth in detail every circumstance connected with the receipt and disposal of the petition in question, and explains that

he regarded it merely as a petition against the Revenue Inspector, and that as the charges were specific, he considered it necessary to ascertain how far the writers were prepared to substantiate them, which, of course, he was perfectly justified in doing. He further states that until the petition was returned to him by Mr. Farmer with a translation, he was actually unaware that it contained the scandalous imputation against the latter, and that had he been aware of this, he would probably have acted differently. It is, therefore, clear that the motives attributed to Mr. Hope in this matter are purely imaginary, but, even were it not so, the peremptory tone of Mr. Farmer's correspondence with his Collector would be quite unjustifiable.

7. In dealing with this subject, Mr. Hope explains the reasons which induced him to prefer entrusting the inquiry to the Deputy Collector instead of to Mr. Farmer; and gives particulars of the latter's proceedings in two magisterial cases as indicating intemperate haste and prejudice in the conduct of another inquiry entrusted to him. The records are not before the Board, nor is it their province to review magisterial proceedings, but the facts stated amply justified Mr. Hope in his determination not to refer the matter to Mr. Farmer, and indeed that officer's proceedings appear to have been so arbitrary that the Board do not understand why Mr. Hope did not carry out his intention of reporting the case to Government with a view to the curtailment of Mr. Farmer's powers.

8. The Board are decidedly of opinion that there was nothing in Mr. Hope's treatment of this matter which warranted Mr. Farmer in his repeated demands for information concerning the petition, or in the inferences which he drew from the Collector's reticence about it.

9. It is unnecessary for the Board to discuss with the same detail the charges made regarding the disposal of pseudonymous petitions generally, or concerning Mr. Farmer's general treatment at the hands of the Collector. He seems to have taken offence where none was intended, and to have imagined that disagreement with his views was groundless opposition. He has failed to show in the Board's opinion that he has any cause for complaint, and, even if he had, his insubordinate and impertinent language would go far to prevent the possibility of granting him redress; Mr. Farmer's conduct cannot be passed over without severe notice; the only excuse that can be urged on his behalf is that he has suffered in health, and that he has been long isolated from all communication with other European officers. He seems to have contracted a morbid view of his position, and has exaggerated every act of his superior until it assumed the appearance of a wrong aimed at himself; he has no doubt suffered much anxiety from the condition of those around him, and has felt that his efforts to ameliorate their condition have not been forwarded as fully as he desired. The Board give Mr. Farmer credit for considerable zeal and energy; he has done good service, but is not fitted for an isolated post like Cumbum. Although ready to make every excuse for Mr. Farmer on the above grounds, the Board deem it their duty to bring his misconduct to the notice of Government, and to recommend that he be moved from Cumbum, and placed in some post under the immediate control of an officer who will enforce discipline and promptly check insubordination. From the position of the individuals, the matter cannot be treated as a mere personal one, but acquires grave public significance; and were the state

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30th November 1875.*

of the relations between ~~district~~ ^{district} ~~officers~~ displayed in the papers before the Board to become general, the administration would be seriously affected.

10. Whilst censuring Mr. Farmer, the Board cannot acquit Mr. Hope of all blame. He was doubtless placed in an unpleasant position by the attitude of his subordinate, but he should have evinced more tact and firmness. A sharp reprimand on the first symptom of insubordination would probably have been effectual; if not, Mr. Farmer should long ago have been reported to the Board. In allowing Mr. Farmer to continue to address him in the insolent tone which appears to have become habitual with him, Mr. Hope suffered his own authority to be lowered, and encouraged Mr. Farmer to persevere in a course which must sooner or later lead to disgrace.

11. It appears from Mr. Hope's memorandum that Mr. Farmer has been two years and a-half at Cumbum, and that during that time he has not once visited Kurnool. The Board strongly disapprove of the want of personal intercourse between the Collector and his Assistant. Had Mr. Farmer been required to visit Kurnool once or twice a year, he would possibly have been disabused of his morbid delusions. A Collector should periodically call in his divisional officers from distant out-stations for short periods to confer with them personally on the state of their divisions, and to give them the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the principal officers of the district. The Board trust that few Collectors need to be reminded of their duty in this respect, but they take this opportunity of impressing on them the necessity for personally conferring with their divisional officers occasionally. In the present case, it appears to be a fact that Mr. Farmer had been actually eighteen months in the district without making the acquaintance of his Collector personally. He was appointed to the district in April 1873, and until Mr. Hope visited Cumbum in September 1874, it appears that the Collector and Head Assistant had never met. The Board are of opinion that the Collector should make a point of visiting the Cumbum Division at least once a year.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

No. 340.

ORDER THEREON, 30th November 1875, No. 1,716.

Miscellaneous.

It appears to the Governor in Council that the remarks recorded by the Board of Revenue in transmitting this correspondence sufficiently dispose of the whole case. They are accordingly endorsed by the Government, who desire that Mr. Farmer may be informed of the extreme regret and displeasure with which his conduct is viewed by them. They have considered whether it is not their duty at once to remove him from the post of divisional officer, relegating him to the grade of Assistant Collector; and they have been induced to abstain from this action solely in view of certain mitigating circumstances which are pleaded by the Board of Revenue in favor of a milder course of proceeding in the case of a young and zealous public servant.

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2. It is observed that Mr. Hope, the Collector, has recently been allowed to exchange districts with Mr. Foster, late of the Godavari, who will adopt the instructions of the Board in their concluding paragraphs, to promote a better understanding between Mr. Farmer and the head of the district.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. W. H. French.

Further Case 4701/75

Read also the following letter from J. HOBE, Esq, Acting Collector of Kurnool, to

H. E. STOKES, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated

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(A true Copy and Extract.)

C. H. Allen
Acting Sub-Secretary.

To the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with ten enclosures to be returned, and copy of Board's
Proceedings, dated 2nd August 1875, Miscellaneous
No. 6,936 (enclosures to be returned).
,, all Collectors.

Exd. W. H. French.

8th 17/16

Rev. Sept 2

N^o 4468
 Revenue 1875. *Sept*
 Board of Revenue,
 MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 2ND NOVEMBER 1875, No. 3,021.

Desp^d 18 Nov 75

Encl.

12

S.O. 1716 - 30 November 1875

Received 19 Nov 75

NOVEMBER.
 No. 3,021.

Farmer, Mr.—Acting Head Assistant Collector of Kurnool District.—Bringing to the notice of Government the conduct of — towards the Collector, and impressing on all Collectors the necessity for personally conferring with their divisional officers occasionally on the state of their divisions.

N^o 339

N^o 1716 *Rev. Sept 75*
 Read Prop. Bd. Rev. No. 3021
d/2-11-5.

It appears to be *un* *after* *to* *be* *in* *remarks* *recorded* *by* *the* *Bd* *Rev* *in* *transmitting* *his* *correspondence* *sufficiently* *dispose* *of* *the* *whole* *case*.
 They are accordingly endorsed by the Gov^t, who desire that Mr. Farmer may be informed of the extreme regret & displeasure into which his conduct is viewed by them. They have considered whether it is not their duty above to remove him from the post of Divisional Officer, relegating him to the grade of Asst. Comm^r; and they have been induced to abstain from his action solely in view of certain mitigating circumstances which are pleaded by the Bd of Rev. *at* *the* *form* *of* *a* *milder* *course* *of* *proceeding* *in* *the* *case* *of* *a* *young* *&* *zealous* *public* *servant*.
 It is observed that Mr. Hope, the Asst. Comm^r, has recently been allowed to exchange districts with Mr. Forbes, late of the Godavari — who will adopt the instructions of the Bd in their concluding paragraph, to promote a better understanding between Mr. Farmer & the Head of the district. *Sgt. 22/11/5*

14. The Board of Rev. 1 Dec 75

30 Nov 1875

To Bod Ker

From order of journal

22/11-5

Dr