

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 827

Press
Mis.

640-641

Dated 24th March 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 640. Read the following letter from the Officiating Conservator of Forests, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Camp at Mysore, 12th March 1869, No. 1,239:—

1. In reply to paragraph 1 of the Government Order, No. 594, of the 6th instant, I have the honor to report that our checks and rules as in force in districts worked departmentally are sufficient to bring to light any attempts at peculation or fraud on the part of Executive Officers, but they do not guard against the thing occurring and escaping detection for a period, if accounts are falsified and false returns sent in, and other rules disregarded. Officers in charge of these ranges are generally responsible, tried men, who have been a considerable time in the Department and a certain amount of trust must be placed in them. They draw large sums of money for working operations and receive large sums for the sale of timber, the accounts shew the amount of timber felled and brought into depôt, the rates paid for felling, carting, floating, &c., (which are regularly checked) they also shew the cubical contents stored in depôt, the amount sold, and the rates realized, &c.; but if these accounts and returns are falsified, more timber might be felled and sold than the returns shew, and peculation might be carried on; but unless the whole establishment was in league, and all the vouchers for payment of work performed falsified, which would also necessitate the connivance of all the contractors for felling and carting, &c., transactions of this nature could not be long concealed and could not escape the Conservator's notice when he visited the district: these checks have been considered sufficient, and we have never thought of guarding against such a contingency as that which has occurred in the present instance, where a large sum of money is suddenly appropriated and decamped with, and any complete check against such a proceeding would completely trammel operations. In the present instance, Mr. Turnbull evaded all the rules, and escaped detection for a time by sending in false reports that no timber was sold; by the peculiar situation of his district he was enabled to go into Mysore and raise a large sum of money, the Sub-Overseer has evidently been in league with him, and the transactions occurring in a foreign State escaped notoriety for a certain time, and appear not to have been known to most of the establishment. The fact of the Mysore Merchants paying these large sums of money before they received the timber is suspicious, as payments in previous instances have not been made until pass-ports were granted and the timber regularly handed over; and one firm of Merchants who state that they have paid Rupees 11,000, have only receipts for 10,500, and say that Mr. Turnbull never gave any receipt for the odd 500, but all the money seems really to have been paid, as we have the numbers of the notes, bills of exchange, &c., and though some large amounts were paid in Mysore town itself where Mr. Turnbull had no right to be, yet other sums were paid at our Humpapore depôt, which is in Mysore territory, and at which place payments have previously been made, so I am afraid we shall be responsible to the amount of the receipts, in all about 33,000 Rupees, and shall have to give up timber to this value, unless further circumstances transpire, which is not likely, unless Mr. Turnbull is apprehended; I have enquired fully into the case here and am proceeding to the depôts.

2. In reply to paragraph 4, I must observe, that directly I learnt that Mr. Turnbull's Madura Accounts had been left in an unsatisfactory state, I re-

At 979 of that date) that he was neglecting

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
24th March 1869.*

commended his removal and applied for an Officer to relieve him, and I was in daily expectation of sanction for this arrangement: there was no suspicion of dishonesty against him with reference to his Madura Accounts but only of carelessness, and when I informed Government that I required a more responsible man for the Wynaad I did not think it necessary to make any charge against Mr. Turnbull before he had been given a chance of explaining matters; but I addressed Mr. Turnbull calling for a full explanation and requested him to make arrangements for handing over charge of his range, he failed to send in the explanations required by Lieutenant Fullerton, but reported that he was very ill with measles (which were to my knowledge very prevalent at that time in the Wynaad) he continued to neglect all his correspondence and failed to send in his diary, and I reported to Government on the 19th of October (*Vide* my letter No. 979 of that date) that he was neglecting his correspondence and that he had left his Madura Accounts in a careless state, and on the 20th of October I called officially for his diary, and on the 4th of November I informed him that on being relieved, he would be suspended, pending a report to Government. I was all this time in daily expectation of the Government Orders nominating a relieving Officer or I should probably have suspended him sooner, but the doing so might have been harsh and would certainly have appeared so to me at the time, particularly as he had reported that he was sick, and I had no one available to relieve him, I should myself have proceeded to Wynaad if I had not been fully engaged with what appeared more important work. I was engaged with Captain Seaton the Conservator of Burmah when Mr. Turnbull's removal appeared advisable, and arrangement had been made for my visiting the Annamallay and Madura and Tinnevely Districts directly upon Captain Seaton's departure; if there had been any suspicion of what was going on, or even if I had known sales had been effected, I should of course have gone to the district to the suspension of any other work, but my presence did not seem particularly called for; beyond a small amount of cutting and floating, operations were at a stand still, and Mr. Turnbull was sending in monthly returns that no timber was sold, which caused no suspicion, as the market was known to be overstocked and Lieutenant Fullerton had not been able to effect sales at a fair price; the price of the timber in depot was fixed and Mr. Turnbull should have forwarded any agreements or contracts for its sale to the Central Office; his sending in false returns, the neglect of rules, his receiving these large sums of money and decamping with them, could in no way have been anticipated, and I trust from what I have stated in my letter recorded in the Government Order now under reply, that Government will allow that I was authorized in placing confidence in him, and both the late Secretaries to Government, in the Revenue Department, can speak to his antecedents in the Department. I was much averse to the removal of Lieutenant Fullerton from this range, as I anticipated the range becoming one of great importance; but when this was settled, Dr. Cleghorn fully approved of an Overseer being appointed here as a temporary arrangement; the recommendation of Mr. Turnbull for the post was my doing, but he was the senior man and apparently the best qualified.

3. I have procured photographs of Mr. Turnbull and forwarded them to the Commissioner of Police at Madras, I have heard no further from that Officer whether Mr. Turnbull's movements have been traced.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
24th March 1869.*

No. 641.

ORDER THEREON, 24th March 1869, No. 827.

Forests, No. 24.

Before passing Orders on the foregoing letter the Right Honorable the Governor in Council desires that Major

Beddome will report in full detail what the rules of his Department are in regard to sales of wood, receipts and payments of money, &c., and will submit copies of the forms of the monthly accounts received by him, with a full explanation of them. It is not clear how the checks have proved so defective as to enable a Range Officer to embezzle so large an amount as Rupees 30,000 without discovery until some months after date, and Major Beddome should, if possible, clear up this point also.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,

Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Officiating Conservator of Forests.
,, the Board of Revenue.

Exd. G. A. Turton.

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Madura Accounts in a careless state and
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to relieve him. I should myself have proceeded
to Myriad if I had not been fully engaged with
what appeared more important work, I was
engaged with Captain Seaton the Conservator
of Burma when Mr Turnbull's removal
appeared advisable and arrangement had
been made for my visiting the Arcamallay &
Madura & Tinnevely districts directly upon
Captain Seaton's departure, if there had been

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being
made

what was
it?

no 236 for order

It seemed perhaps
he would be required
to report to report
to full detail about the
order of the kept one
in regard to sales of
wood, receipts & payments
of money & also to
submit copies of the journals
of the monthly accounts
which he receives

I think so. I don't
see any way through this
matter with the current
information. A.M.

M.A.

W.D.

82-827-1

4/20/04

Before passing action on the foregoing letter to
M. H. Smith the fur in Council decides that Major
Bredeme will report in full detail what the rules
of his Dept are in regard to sales of wood, receipts
and payments of money, &c, and will submit copies
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L. H.
J. H.

24 March 1904

March 17th / 1836
Washington D.C. - 218-219

Received by O.R.

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From the 1836

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March 17th
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