Revenue (1891) Department.

ROUTINE SERIES.

G.O., No. 2302

DATED 13 Decr.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Disposing under Para II of C Rules.

the letter from Mr E. E. Perrett, subsg: a copy of his letter to Mr Brasier, D. F. O Salem & requesting to destroy such of the records as ~~have his~~ have his name in Con: with the dispute between Messrs Moss & Cornilius.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

O 4,000-19-7-97.
18

Revenue (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 10417

From

Mr. E. E. Perrett
Salem.

Secy
Encl
~~Order~~

Transferred to the Board of Revenue

No.

Dated 25 Novr.
Received 1 Decr.
Registered 3 "
Enclosures/
Spare copies.

Ad Under Secy to Govt
Fort St. George
Decr. 1897

To
The Board of Rev: and Rev:
Sir
Encl - 23 Dec 13 Decr '97
Para II of the C Rules
(Bond)
18/12/97

To Petr. Dec. 14-12-97

SUBJECT.

Submitting for perusal a copy of letter addressed to Mr. Brasier, Dist. Forest officer of Salem, re: the introduction of his name in the official records in connection with a dispute between Messrs Moss & Cornelius.

2 12/97

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Salem
24th November 1897

To
The District Officer
Salem

Sir,

Cornelius, your Head Clerk now under suspension, came to me on the 2nd instant and, much to my surprise, told me that you had called upon him to explain what conversation he had with me, and that you had called for this explanation because of a communication that Mr. Moss, your Extra Assistant Conservator, had made to you with reference to a conversation between Mr. Moss and myself. Cornelius came to me again on the 22nd instant with papers shewing that you had suspended him and that one of the grounds of his suspension was that he had made known to me the details of a quarrel between Mr. Moss and himself.

2. I have no doubt that you will be good enough to accept my assurance that, until the 2nd instant, I had not had any intercourse whatever, direct or indirect, with Cornelius and that, as far as my memory serves me, I had not either seen him or spoken to him before that date, when, as your records will shew, the quarrel between him and Mr. Moss was ended.

3. Mr. Moss and you have been pleased to introduce my name into this matter, an action on your part, which is the key-note and the cause of this letter and against which I most emphatically protest.

4. You will probably remember that Mr. Moss made a complaint to you against the Head Clerk, that in this complaint he characterised some portion of the Head Clerk's conduct as "dishonest", that the Head Clerk retorted the charge of dishonesty and that, in support of his countercharge, he alleged that Mr Moss, in order to obtain the Madras Mail at the "reduced rate" subscribes to that journal in the name of one of his clerks.

5. In my opinion both the charge and the countercharge of dishonesty, whether true or false, is not creditable to either party. I long ago gave up feeling astonished at anything said or done by officers of the Forest Department; but your introduction, unwarrantable to my thinking, of my name into one of your unsavoury disputes has revived my astonishment and has also roused in me a feeling of resentment to which I am going to give expression.

6. Of Mr. Moss I know but little. My attention was first attracted to him by seeing him pass my house on his way to office at ½ past 5 P.M. an hour, when all officers with whom I am acquainted, are thinking of going home, with the happy consciousness that their day's work is ended.

7. The first and only conversation I have had with Mr. Moss was at Surumangalam Wood Depôt a few days after the great fall of rain we had on the 15th ultimo. The records of your office will probably furnish the exact date. The conversation lasted about two hours and it afforded me, as it also seemed to afford to some gentlemen that heard it, considerable amusement. There was a good deal of what I thought was good humoured banter, or, to put it in the vulgar tongue, "chaff" on both sides.

8. I will here mention that I have always admired, in the Miltonic sense of the word, the Forest Department; but never has my admiration of the Department been carried to so high a pitch as it was by this conversation, and has been since I have learnt its results.

9. Never in my long life, with 33 years of residence in India, have I met with a man more "simple" than your Mr. Moss. The youngest member of the Primrose family was a veritable sharper in comparison with that officer. Pardon me the expression, I pumped your Mr. Moss as dry as a lime-kiln. The following are some of the facts he communicated to me.

10. That you, Mr. Brasier, had been to the Depôt that morning, that you, himself, a Ranger and a lot of coolies had

been weighing fuel to be supplied to the Railway Company, that after your departure, he and the others had continued this in-teresting occupation, that when I commenced my conversation with Mr. Moss, the united efforts of the Forest Department had succeeded in weighing 20 tons of fuel for which the Railway Company would pay Rs 100, that the scales in use would weigh only half a ton at a time, that the united monthly salary of you three superior officers engaged in this important work is Rs 1,300, that you, Mr. Brasier, draw a monthly salary of Rs 900, that you live in a Government building for which you pay a monthly rent of Rs 15, that you take advan-tage of the position of your bungalow to pounce out upon women coolies, carrying wood and call upon them to pro-duce their permits though you have a Thanadar close to your gate, that a Ranger named by Mr. Moss and myself is a "blackguard" and "thief" and that a Forest Guard, whose name also occurred, has been suspended.

II. There was one incident in this conversation that I consider grave. In order that you may understand its gravity I will draw your attention particularly to the facts that when this conversation took place between Mr. Moss and me, the quarrel between Miss Moss and Cornelius was ended, that the papers in connection with the quarrel were in your possession and that I had not yet seen or had anything to do with Cornelius. With this prelude I will affirm that, in answer to my questions during the conversation, Mr. Moss distinctly and repeatedly denied that there had been any quarrel between himself and your Head Clerk. Unfortunately for Mr. Moss, the fact of the quarrel was then a matter of common talk in the town. I myself had heard the particulars from I do not know how many people, among them was, as I then believed, Cornelius and I gave his name to Mr. Moss, as one of my informants. It was only afterwards when Cornelius came to see me on the 2nd. instant, that I discovered my error. It was a case of mistaken identity. I will however

remark that in the circumstances, it would be possible to apply to Mr. Moss's denial of the existence of the quarrel an emphatic little Saxon word of three letters.

12. At this moment, 12.30 of the 24th instant, I am interrupted by another visit from Cornelius and he has handed to me no fewer than 26 stamped papers bearing your signature under date 22.11.97. On page 23 of these papers I find the following remarks :- "It would appear that this man (Cornelius) ------ must needs go to the house of Mr. Perrett the local correspondent of the Madras Times and Standard and make a request that he (Mr. Perrett) should write to the papers about Mr. Moss, the Head Clerk it must naturally be presumed supplying all details. Vide statements of Mr. Moss and Salem East Ranger Mr. Daly regarding a certain conversation with Mr. Perrett at the Railway Fuel Depot Sunnangalam on the morning of 19.10.97. ------ It is then (sic) the Head Clerk is guilty of giving official information to outsiders".

13. This somewhat curiously worded statement of yours furnishes me with the date that was wanting and to which I refer in para 7 of this letter. I am not the local correspondent of the Standard. As to your other statements, what I have already written, is I think a sufficient answer to them. The value of your Mr. Moss's statements may be tested by what I have said about him in para 11 of this letter.

14. With the suggestion that you might well regard as "official information to outsiders" the facts given to me by Mr. Moss and recorded in para 10 of this letter, I will continue my letter and what would have been, but for the interruption, para 12, will now be para 15 &c.

15. Mr. Moss appears to have had nothing better to do the day this conversation took place between him and me than to go and report some portion of it to you. Until I learnt this fact I had looked upon the whole conversation as a bit of amicable "chaff", about which nothing was to be said afterwards. I am now using all means at my disposal to make

public impression of the story. You will probably see a reference to the subject in tomorrow's issue of the Madras Times.

16. It is well known that I am a newspaper correspondent but your knowledge of me in that capacity is not accurate. I wonder if you know, I can only from your action suppose that you do not, that no official in the District, from the Collector downwards has ever refused me any information that I have asked for. I remember one of these gentlemen saying to me a little time ago something to the following effect:- "Government has nothing to conceal; it wants to take the public into its confidence" and then he added a little compliment to myself which I need not repeat.

17. The very raison d'être of your Department is the public good, present and future; what then have you to conceal?. We will suppose that Cornelius came to me and gave me every detail of the dispute between himself and Mr. Moss, what rule of Government has he infring-ed, and by what rules of interpretation do you dignify the details of this dispute by calling them "official information?" It is hardly possible that you can believe that a man labouring under a grievance, real or imagi-nary, will not speak of it to his friends and his neighbours. What have you and your Mr. Moss done in this very case? Your Department (not Government mind) makes it difficult for us in Salem to get a piece of wood for our ploughs and now, it would seem, that you, Mr. Brasier, wish to deprive us of the use of the power of speech. Depend upon it, you will not succeed.

18. Now I will make a few remarks about you, Mr. Brasier and your administration in Salem, and my remarks shall be based on the public records. With a passing reference to what took place in Salem, when His Excel-lency the present Governor favored us with a visit last year, I will proceed to the records of the Criminal Courts. At the time of that visit, I believe, that throug

the efforts of the Hon'ble Mr. Vijiaraghava Chariar, it was shewn that your Department and Sruthi are not always on terms of amity. The result was that His Excellency was pleased to order an inquiry that has produced great benefit to the poor ryots of Harur, who still speak with gratitude of his Excellency.

19. I will venture to say that hardly a week passes that you do not officially appear in our Criminal Courts as an accuser or as an accused and I will add, as a well-known fact, that in neither character do you always appear with advantage.

20. I will take the latest important case, that of Eliya Thambi and the man Ajju, who is known in Salem as your favorite Forest Guard. There were other parties, but these two were the principals. At the beginning of the present year Eliya Thambi was accused of transporting timber without a permit and he was brought before Ranger Ramaswami Iyah. In the same transaction, Eliya Thambi brought against Ajju a charge of assault and robbery committed in the presence of his Ranger. The Forest Department brought its charge against Eliya Thambi some days after Eliya Thambi had lodged his complaint against the Forest Department. Eliya Thambi was convicted and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. Your Department was jubilant; but the jubilation was of short duration. The conviction and the sentence were reversed on appeal and the Appellate Court made the following remarks, which it might be worth your while to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest:- "The Ranger's evidence goes to establish that the accused (Eliya Thambi) had a permit. It is eminently clear that the Forest subordinates have acted in this case not only in excess of, but even without authority. The Ranger has not only neglected his duty but he has proved himself incapable of managing his men. It is actions like these that expose Departments like the Forest Department to popular odium". The judgment also contains a severe criticism of the

Original Court, but with that, neither you nor I have anything to do.

21. I do not think I need say anything more about Ajiji, except to mention that much of his history is to be found in the records of our Criminal Courts.

22. I will now give you a piece of information about myself which may be of use to you. In both sides of the house the Perrett have acknowledged claims to respectability and they figure among the "worthies of Devon". I am living in Salem in my own house on my own ground and I am a law-abiding citizen. What I want to impress upon you is that I will not patiently submit to your placing my name on your records in connection with the names of your subordinates who, rightly or wrongly, apply to one another such epithets as "dishonest", "blackguard" and "thief", with a freedom engendered by forest life.

23. I shall apply for redress to His Excellency the Governor, to whom I send a copy of this letter. I enclose for your information a copy of my petition to His Excellency and, in return, I pray you of your courtesy to furnish me with a copy of the statements made to you by Mess Moss and Daly, to which you refer in your proceedings quoted in para 12 of this letter.

I have &c

(signed) E. E. Perrett

True Copy E. E. Perrett

CHIEF SECRETARY
20 NOV 1897
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

To

His Excellency
The Right Honorable
The Governor in Council
Fort St George

May it please Your Excellency,

I venture respectfully to submit for Your Excellency's perusal a copy of a letter I have addressed to Mr Brasier, District Forest Officer of Salem, as I feel personally aggrieved at his introduction of my name into his official records in connection with what seems to have been a somewhat unseemly dispute between Messrs: Moss and Cornelius, two of his subordinates.

2. I respectfully pray that Your Excellency will be pleased to express an opinion on the following points:-

(1) Whether the details of a personal dispute between two Government officers is to be regarded as "official information".

(2) Whether Mr. Brasier was justified in bringing my name upon his official records in connection with a dispute between his subordinates, some of whom freely apply to one another, rightly or wrongly, such epithets as "dishonest," "blackguard" and "thief."

3. I further respectfully pray that Your Excellency will be pleased to call for the records of the Forest Department, that deal with the somewhat unseemly dispute between Messrs: Moss and Cornelius and that Your Excellency will be pleased to direct that such of these records as refer to me by name in connection with that dispute, shall be destroyed.

I am,
With all due respect,
Your Excellency's
Most obedient humble Servant
C. C. Perrett

Salem
25th November 1897