Records of Fort St George

DIARY AND CONSULTATION BOOK OF 1704

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

A. V. VENKATARAMA AYYAR, M.A., L.T.
Curator, Madras Record Office

MADRAS
PRESIDENCY
1925
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INTRODUCTION

In the present volume are printed the proceedings of the President and Council of Fort St. George for the year 1704, comprised in the thirty-third volume of the manuscript series "Diary and Consultation Books". The manuscript volume has been mended in this office. We are deeply indebted to the India Office who had the kindness to fill in the many gaps and lacunae therein.

1704 was the sixth year of the famous governorship of Thomas Pitt, well-known as the Great President. The volume before us contains several interesting items of information and a few are noted below:

Doctor Edward Bulkley claimed a palanquin allowance to look after the sick and married soldiers wandering up and down the Black Town, alleging that the same was allowed in other parts of India and considering the reasonableness of the request, he was given a sum of four pagodas per mensem towards the same (page 2).

Daud Khan, the then Nawab of the Carnatic, was given a present of liquors to the value of about thirty pagodas, evidently to keep him in good humour (page 9).

There was a general complaint of abuses in the measuring of grain upon which the Governor got a markal struck according to the custom of England and ordered that all grain in future was to be bought and sold according to the new measure (pages 3 and 12).

Father Michael applied to the Governor for leave to go to Pondicherry, as he had been summoned thither by one who called himself the patriarch of Antioch, the chief priest of the Roman Church. The Governor in Council strongly resented this interference and declared in emphatic terms that he would not allow the patriarch to exercise any authority over the priests that lived under him and enjoined Father Michael not to stir outside the town and even asked officers to see that he did not go outside the gates of Fort St. George (page 6).

We hear of cases of reward and punishment offered to the Company's servants: for example, Ensign Harris who had often been reprimanded for drinking to excess and consequent neglect of duty was, however, later on permitted, provided he mended his ways, to serve as a serjeant in consideration (page 2). Raworth, a sober and diligent man, who promised to be a useful and profitable servant of the Company, was raised from the position of merchant to a Councillor in the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Ellis (page 19).

Peter de l'omera to whom an arrack lease was given was strictly enjoined not to put anything into the arrack, more especially datura, that was destructive to the health of the people (page 23).

Governor Pitt strongly resented the action of the Faujdar at San Thome in imprisoning some of the Company's servants and replied to him in strong and dignified terms, still ringing in our ears: "We would have you to know we are of a Nation whose Sovereign as great and powerful, able to protect his subjects in their just rights over all the world, and revenge whatever injustices should be done them, of which there will be speedy instances given. I am not a little surprised at your saucy expressions, as well as actions in imprisoning my inhabitants, when you know I can fetch you hither and correct you for both . . . " (page 22).
The Governor in Council appointed a Committee of four to enquire into a complaint made by the widow of one Wollaca Chetty against injustices done to her by one Chinandee Chatty and report the result to the Governor in Council with the least possible delay (page 55).

The Portuguese Roman Catholics of Madras petitioned the President and Governor of the Council of Fort St. George that their wills and testaments should, as has been the case for the previous sixty-two years, be approved by the Capuchin Fathers and not at the Court of the Honourable Company, as they had been ordered recently, and requested that they should be judged according to the customs of the Portuguese Nation. They also complained that the new procedure would entail greater cost (page 65).

Yegmore (Egmore), Persiawaeke (Purasawakum) and Tandore (Tondiarpet), the three new towns were leased to Kittee Narrain for even years for thirteen hundred pagodas per annum (page 67).

On the death intestate of a Portuguese Captain Francisco de Saa during his voyage to Batavia, it was ordered that an inventory should be made of all money, goods, books and papers in his hands at the time of his death and that after paying all his debts according to the Portuguese law, a moiety should go to his widow and the remainder was to be in the Company's possession until demanded by his relatives, in Europe, who had a right thereto (page 75).

House-keeper Empson of Fort St. George though he was transferred on promotion to Fort St. David as a mark of favour to be Second in Council there preferred to resign his place, inasmuch as he had settled himself with his large family as a house-keeper in Fort St. George for 11 years and had lived there 18 years. He wanted that the whole affair should be recorded in the Consultation Book so that his Honourable Masters in England might peruse the same (page 75).

A Moor snatched away a candle of a young Portuguese woman as she was walking in procession and from this petty incident a quarrel soon broke out between the two nations, the Portuguese and the Moors, and the Governor of the Portuguese Nation sought the help of the Company's Governor (page 83).

On receipt of a letter from a Gentu contained in a sealed cover dropped in the Company's gardens complaining against the frauds committed by the storekeepers, rental-general, scavengers and cornicoplyes of the Company, a notice was put up in all languages, as the complaint did not contain particulars, inviting the person concerned to appear before the Governor and prove the allegations on promise of a reward of fifty pagodas, etc. (page 98).

The Governor in Council thought it advisable to take some notice of the son of Yassama Naigue (Yachama Nayak) then remaining at Trivilecane (Triplcane) by giving him a small present, as he was in a considerable post and governed a country from which many goods were imported to Madras (page 104).

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE, EAGMORE, Dated 30th March 1928.

A. V. VENkatarama AYYAR, Curator.
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