

MAHARASHTRA ADMINISTRATIVETRIBUNAL.

NAGPUR BENCH, NAGPUR. ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO.707/2009.

Madhukar Daduji Lanjewar, Aged about 62 years, R/o Telephone Nagar, Plot No.35, Umred Road, Dighori, Nagpur.

(Since deceased)

- Kamal wd/o Madhukar Lanjewar, Aged about 46 years, Occ-Nil.
- Mohit s/o Madhukar Lanjewar, Aged about 22 years,

Occ-Student,
Both are residents of Plot No.35 Telephone Nagar,
Umred Road, Dighori, Nagpur.
(Legal heirs of the deceased applicant) Applicants.

-Versus-.

- The State of Maharashtra, Through its Secretary, Department of Revenue and Forests, Mantralaya, Mumbai-32.
- 2. The Commissioner, Nagpur Division, Civil Lines, Nagpur.

Respondents.

Shri R.V. Shiralkar, the Ld. Advocate for the applicant. Shri A.M. Ghogre, Ld. P.O. for the respondents.

<u>Coram:</u>- B. Majumdar, Vice-Chairman and S.S. Hingne, Member (J).

Dated:- 9 June,2016.



Per Vice-Chairman.

Heard Shri R.V. Shiralkar, Id. Counsel for the applicant and Shri A.M. Ghogare, Id. P.O. for the respondents.

- 2. The order dated 4.2.2003 passed by the respondent No.1 thereby imposing punishment of compulsory retirement on the applicant is impugned in this O.A.
- Junior Clerk on the establishment of Collector, Nagpur. In 1993, he could reach to the level of Tahsildar. In 1998, he was placed incharge of the post of Chief Officer, Municipal Council, Bramhapuri. On an alleged act of misconduct, he was served with the chargesheet. Following charges were levelled against him:

Charge No.1:- That Mr. Lanjewar while working as a Chief Officer, Nagar Parishad, Bramhapuri from 14.10.1992 to 10.12.1992, by illegal manner appointed one Shri D.R. Raut as an Assistant Accountant and flouted government order. In



this way, Mr. Lanjewar violated sub-rule (3) of Rule 3 of the

Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

Charge No.2:- That Mr. Lanjewar while working as a Chief Officer, Nagar Parishad, Bramhapuri from 24.6.1992 to 10.12.1992, illegally appointed Shri D.R. Raut as an Assistant Accountant and shown him promoted from 20.8.1991 and paid him difference of salary and allowance of Rs. 25,349/-. In this way, Nagar Parishad suffered financial loss. Mr. Lanjewar violated sub-rule (3) of Rule 3 of the Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

Charge No.3:- That Mr. Lanjewar while working as a Chief Officer, Nagar Parishad, Bramhapuri, illegally appointed Shri D.R. Raut as an Assistant Accountant so as to perpetuate misappropriation. Hence, violated sub-rule (2) and (3) of Rule 3 of the Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

Charge No.4:- That Mr. Lanjewar while working as a Chief Officer, Nagar Parishad, Bramhapuri, in an illegal manner granted loan of Rs. 15,000/- on 22.10.1992 to



Mr. R.S. Thombre thereby flouted the order of the Government

dated 26.7.1991. In this way, he violated sub-rule (1) and (3) of Rule 3 of the Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

- 4. On the aforesaid charges, enquiry was conducted. It was concluded on 29.9.1999. He was held guilty of all the four charges. The respondent No.1 served on him a show cause notice to which he replied. On 4.2.2003, the respondent No.1 passed the order inflicting upon him the punishment as stated above. This order was impugned in revision. Because of pendency of revision, the applicant was required to approach this Tribunal to seek direction to expedite hearing of revision application. On 18.5.2007, revision application came to be dismissed.
- Applicant's case is that, findings recorded by the Enquiry Officer is based on "no evidence". It is averred that, while he was holding the post of Chief Officer, Municipal Council, Bramhapuri, the Administrator was appointed to



affairs of Municipal Council, Bramhapuri.

Resolution to appoint Mr. D.R. Raut was passed by the Administrator and being his subordinate, he had to obey it. Further, Mr. Raut was already working as an Assistant Accountant and still he is working without any action against Since he was working on the post of Assistant him. Accountant, he was paid salary with retrospective effect. In that view of the matter, the Enquiry Officer ought not to have held him guilty. As regards the 3rd charge, it is stated that not a single instance of any illegality could be brought on record. As regards the scooter advance sanctioned in favour of one Mr. R.S. Thombre, it is stated that, the amount was paid from his provident fund account and thus there was no financial loss to the Municipal Council. As against limit of Rs. 12,000/-, he was given advance of Rs. 15,000/-. Next ground canvassed on behalf of the applicant is that, penalty of compulsory retirement is shockingly disproportionate to the gravity of charge allegedly proved against him.



The respondent Nos. 1 and 2 have submitted an

affidavit in reply. It is stated that enquiry against the applicant was conducted strictly according to rules. Finding recorded by the Enquiry Officer is based on material placed on record. Therefore, this Tribunal, in its review jurisdiction cannot enter into the process of re-appreciating the evidence. As regards punishment meted out to the applicant, it is submitted that it is commensurate with the charges established in the enquiry.

5. Shri Shiralkar, relied on the applicant's submissions before the Enquiry Officer (EO) as well as his reply to the show cause notice dtd. 24/8/2001. The Municipality's resolutions dtd. 25/10/1991 and 11/9/1992 for appointment of Shri D.R. Raut as Asstt. Accountant with effect from the date of his officiation were approved by the Administrator. Similarly the resolution dtd. 22/10/1992 for grant of scooter advance of Rs. 15,000/- to Shri R.S. Thombre, Health Inspector, was also passed and approved by the Administrator. Thus as the relevant decisions which are the subject matter of the charges were taken by the Administrator who is expected to be better



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informed and aware of the relevant rules and regulations than

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the late applicant. The EO therefore did not consider that the Administrator was responsible to a greater degree for any irregularity with regard to the appointment of Shri Raut and grant of advance to Shri Thombre. He then relied on the communication dtd. 30/1/1997 from the Collector, Chandrapur to the Regional Director, Municipal Corporation, Nagpur, vide which he had endorsed the report of the SDO, Bramhapuri that there was no irregularity in the appointment of Shri Raut as he had previous experience of working in the Panchayat Samiti and Bramhapuri Municipality was a newly created one. He further submitted that the Administrator, Shri P.R. Jamdade, was not examined by the EO presumably because a separate DE was conducted against him. According to him, surprisingly Shri Jamdade was let off with a minor punishment after a DE was conducted against him by the same E.O. on the very charges which are involved in the present case. He further submitted that the applicant was holding the charge of Chief Officer for a short period, i.e. less than 6 months and thus if he



had taken any action inadvertently, the same was required to

be condoned. He thereafter concluded by submitting that in the background of the above, the punishment inflicted on the late applicant of compulsory retirement is harsh and disproportionate to the seriousness of the charges and also as these charges could only be partly proved in the DE.

- 8. Shri A.M. Ghogare, Id. P.O. reiterated the submission of R/1 and 2. According to him, the fact that the late applicant held the charge of Chief Officer for a short period cannot come in his favour for condoning the irregularities that he had committed during that period. The Administrator was bound to trust and rely on the Chief Officer and was guided as per the advice that he had rendered.
- 9. After having heard the arguments on both sides and after going through the documents placed before us, we find that the conclusion reached by the EO in the enquiry report in respect of the 4 charges, which we have reproduced earlier, are as follows:-



Charges 1 and 2:

The charges are that the applicant illegally appointed Shri D.R. Raut as an Asstt. Accountant and that too with back dated effect, when there were orders of the Directorate that the post should be filled in by nomination, and the Administrator had not approved ex post facto sanction to the appointment.

The conclusions reached by the EO that these two charges were proved are contained in the following extract from his report:-

"श्री. डी. आर. राऊत यांना भुतलक्षी प्रभावाने सहा. लेखापाल या पदावर नियुक्ती देण्याबाबत तत्कालीन प्रशासक न.प. ब्रम्हपुरी यांचे आदेश नव्हते. तत्कालीन प्रशासक यांनी टिवणीवर आदेश दिल्यानंतर नियुक्तीचा आदेश निर्णमित करण्यापुर्वी अपचारी अधिकारी तत्कालीन मुख्याधिकारी म्हणुन या संबधाने जिल्हाधिकारी व आयुक्त यांना कळवु शकले असते. परंतु त्यांनी तशी कार्यवाही केलेली नाही. श्री. डी. आर. राऊत लिपिक यांनी दिनांक ३०.७.९२ ची टिपणी स्वार्थलाभाने स्वतःच लिहुन व त्यावर श्री. माकोडे, लिपिक यांची स्वाक्षरी घेवुन ती अपचारी अधिकारी यांचेकडे पाठविली असता त्यांना जवळजवळ दोन महिन्यांचा कालावधी मिळुन देखिल त्यांनी या टिपणीची कोणतीही शहानिशा न करता तत्कालीन मुख्याधिकारी श्री. पत्रे यांचे अभिप्राय



बेकायेदेशीर असल्याचे नमुद करून ती टिपणी तत्कालीन प्रशासक न.

प. ब्रम्हपूरी यांचेकरिता आदेशाकरिता पाठविली. यामध्ये श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, श्री. माकोडे, लिपिक व अपचारी अधिकारी यांचा असाध्य हेत् (Malafide intention)स्पष्ट होतो. कारण अपचारी अधिकारी यांचा जर हेतु असा नसता तर अशाही परिस्थितीत त्यांना महाराष्ट्र नगर पालिका अधिनियम १९६५ च्या कलम ३१८ अन्वये प्रादेशिक संचालक न.पा. प्रशासन नागपूर जिल्हाधिकारी यांचेकडे प्रस्ताव पाठवुन दिनांक २५.१०.९१ चा ठराव रद्द करून घेता आला असता. परंतु अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी तशी कार्यवाही न करता श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांना सहा. लेखापाल या पदावर नियुक्ती देण्याचे एकमेव उद्येशानेच दिनांक ३०.७.९२ चे टिपणीवर त्यांचेशी संगनमत करून अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी नियुक्तीची सिफारस केली असल्याचे चौकशीत स्पष्ट होते. संचालनालयाचे दिनांक २०.८.९१ चे आदेयशाचा अभ्यास करून तसेच सहा. लेखापाल या पदाकरिता आवश्यक असलेल्या शैक्षणिक पात्रतेची शहानिशा करूनच प्रस्ताव सादर करण्याची जबाबदारी तत्कालील मुख्याधिकारी म्हणून अपचारी अधिकारी श्री. डी. एम. लांनेवार यांचेवर असतांना त्यांनी तसे न करता केवळ बनवाबनवी करून तत्कालीन प्रशासक न.प. ब्रम्हपूरी यांचे टिपणीवर नियुक्तीचे आदेश घेवुन तसेच जाणीवपूर्वक संचालनालयाचे दिनांक २०.८.९१ चे आदेशाचा संर्दभ देवुन व त्या आदेशातील तरतुदीचे उल्लंघन करून श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांचे सहा. लेखापाल या पदावरील नियुक्तीचे आदेश काढले. या सर्व असद्ध हेतुने जाणीवपुर्वक मुद्याम घडवुन आणलेल्या बनवाबनवीचे प्रकारांत अपचारी अधिकारी सर्वस्वी जबाबदार असल्याचे चौकशीत



स्पष्ट होत असल्यामुळे अपचारी अधिकारी यांचेवर हेवण्यांत आलेला

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निष्कर्ष -

त्वेचनानुसार अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी त्यांचे दिनांक ११.९२ चे आदेशाने श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांचे सहा. लेखापाल या पदावरील दिनांक २०.८.९१ पासुन भुतलक्षी प्रभावाने कायम नियुक्ती दिली हे कागदपत्री पुराल्यानेच सिद्ध झालेले आहे. त्यामुळे श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांना वेतन व भत्यांच्या थकबाकीची रक्कम रू.२५,३४९ नगर परिषदेला द्याची लागली व आर्थिक भुर्दंड सोसावा लागला. तत्कालीन प्रशासक नगर परिषद, ब्रम्हपुरी यांचे भुतलक्षी प्रभावाने नियुक्ती देण्याबावत स्पष्ट आदेश नसतांना अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी आपले स्तरावर दिनांक ११.१२२ चे आदेश काढल्यामुळे श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांना थकबाकीची रक्कम रू.२५,३४९ द्यावी लागली व नगर परिषदेला त्यामुळे आर्थिक नुकसान सहन करावे लागल्यामुळे अपचारी अधिकारी यांचेविरुद्ध हा दोषारोप बाब क्रमांक २ पुर्णत: सिद्ध होतो..

दोषारोप बाब क्रमांक ३-



बाब कमांक १ चे निष्कर्षातीलदोषारोप विवेचनानुसार श्री. डी. आर. राऊत,लिपीक यांनी दिनांक ३०.७.९२ ची टिपणी स्वार्थलोभाने स्वतःच लिहुन व त्यावर श्री. माकोडे, लिपीक यांची स्वाक्षरी घेवून ती अपचारी अधिकारी यांचेकडे पाठविली असता त्यांना जवळ जवळ दोन महिन्याचा कालावधी मिळुन देखिल त्यांनी या टिपणीची कोणतीही शहानिशा न करता तत्कालीन मुख्याधिकारी श्री. पत्रे यांचे अभिप्राय बेकायेदेशीर असल्याचे नमुद करून ती टिपणी तत्कालीन प्रशासक न.प. ब्रम्हपुरी यांचेकरिता आदेशाकरिता पाठविली. यामध्ये श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, श्री. माकोडे, लिपिक व अपचारी अधिकारी यांचा असाध्य हेतु (Malafide intention) स्पष्ट होतो. कारण अपचारी अधिकारी यांचा जर असा हेतु नसता तर अशाही परिस्थितीत त्यांना महाराष्ट्र नगर पालिका अधिनियम १९६५ च्या कलम ३१८ अन्वये प्रादेशिक संचालक न.पा. प्रशासन नागपूर व जिल्हाधिकारी यांचेकडे प्रस्ताव पाठवुन दिनांक २५.१०.९१ चा ठराव रद्द करून घेता आला असता. परंतु अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी तशी कार्यवाही न करता श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांना सहा. लेखापाल या पदावर नियुक्ती देण्याचे एकमेव उद्येशानेच दिनांक ३०.७.९२ चे टिपणीवर त्यांचेशी संगनमत करून अपचारी अधिकारी यांनी नियुक्तीची सिफारस केली असल्याचे चौकशीत स्पष्ट संचालनालयाचे दिनांक २०.८.९१ चे आदेयशाचा अभ्यास करून तसेच सहा. लेखापाल या पदाकरिता आवश्यक असलेल्या शैक्षणिक पात्रतेची शहानिशा करूनच प्रस्ताव सादर करण्याची जबाबदारी तत्कालील मुख्याधिकारी म्हणून अपचारी अधिकारी श्री. डी. एम.



लांनेवार यांचेवर असतांना त्यांनी तसे न करता केवळ बनवाबनवी

करून तत्कालीन प्रशासक न.प. ब्रम्हपुरी यांचे टिपणीवर नियुक्तीचे आदेश घेवुन तसेच नाणीवपुर्वक संचालनालयाचे दिनांक २०.८. ९१ चे आदेशाचा संर्दभ देवुन व त्या आदेशातील तस्तुदीचे उल्लंघन करून श्री. डी. आर. राऊत, यांचे सहा. लेखापाल या पदावरील नियुक्तीचे आदेश काढले. या सर्व असाद्ध हेतुने नाणीवपुर्वक मुद्याम घडवुन आणलेल्या बनवाबनवीचे प्रकारांत अपचारी अधिकारी सर्वस्वी नबाबदार असल्याचे चौकशीत स्पष्ट झाले आहे."

Thus the E.O. held that the applicant, in connivance with Shri D.R. Raut and Shri Makode, Clerk, had manipulated the case of appointment of the former and prepared a note for approval of the Administrator by keeping him in the dark about the Directorate's order dtd. 25/10/1991 that the post of Asstt. Accountant was to be filled by nomination and the applicant did not take steps to invoke Section 308 (i) of the Maharashtra Municipal Act, 1965. Further, the order dtd. 11/9/1992 for grant of arrears to Shri Raut from the date of his officiation against the post was issued without approval of the Administrator.



The above conclusion, in our view, has to be

examined in the light of the following facts and circumstances:-

- i) The resolutions dtd. 25/10/1991 and 11/9/1992 were passed by the Administrator who was empowered to take such decisions. These resolutions nowhere refer to notings put up by the late applicant. In fact the notification indicates that the Administrator blindly had knowingly passed the resolutions.
 - ii) As regards Section 308(1) of the Maharashtra Municipality Act, 1965, it reads as follows:-
 - 308. <u>Powers to suspend execution of orders</u>

 <u>and resolution of Council on certain</u>

 <u>grounds</u>:
 - "If, in the opinion of the Collector, the execution of orders and resolution of a Council, or the doing of anything which is about to he done or is being done by or on behalf of a

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Council, is causing or is likely to cause injury

or annoyance to the public or is against public interest or to lead to a breach of the peace or is unlawful, he may by order in writing under his signature suspend the execution or prohibit the doing thereof."

We fail to find any provision in the above statute that the Chief Officer has the responsibility or authority to bring the relevant resolutions to the notice of the Collector and seek his intervention. Besides, we have our doubts if appointment of an Asstt. Accountant is likely to carry such purport or significance as to cause injury or annoyance to the public or it will be against the public interest or maintenance of peace.

was completely excluded from the DE, was himself subject to a DE related to the above appointment. We therefore do not understand as to how a common DE could not have been



ordered under Rule 12 of the Discipline and Appeal Rules

involving the applicant and Shri Jamdade.

iv) The letter dtd. 30/1/1997 from Collector,
Chandrapur to Regional Director of Municipal Council,
Nagpur states as follows:-

- ७. "प्रशासक न.प. ब्रम्हपुरी यांचे दिनांक ८.१२.९२ चे अहवालानुसार नेष्ठता यादी प्रमाणे अनुक्रमांक १ ते ३ वरील कर्मचारी हे नरी श्री. राऊत यांचे पेक्षा नेष्ठ असले तरी त्यांना लेखापाल या पदाचा अनुभव नव्हता व ते ग्रामपंचायतीत नियुक्तीच्या तारखेपासून नकात नाक्यावर काम करत आलेले आहे. क्रमांक ४ वरील कर्मचारी श्री. तन्नेरवार यांना संचालकाचे आदेशा प्रमाणे मुख्य लिपीक पदावर मान्यता दिली आहे. त्यामुळे या चारही कर्मचा-यांचा सहाय्यक लेखापाल पदाचे पदोन्नतीसाठी विचार करण्यांत आला नाही. त्यानंतर ५ क्रमांकावर असलेले श्री. दा.रा. राऊत पाणी पुरवठा लिपीक ग्राम पंचाचतीचे काळा पाहून ग्रामपंचाचतीचे हिशेबाचे काम पाहत असल्याने त्यांना सहाय्यक लेखापाल या पदावर पदोन्नतीसाठी निवड करण्यांत आली. या निवडीबाबत संचालक, व प्रादेशिक संचालक यांना कळविण्यांत आली. या निवडीबाबत संचालक, व प्रादेशिक संचालक यांना कळविण्यांत आले असल्याचे प्रशासकांनी अहवालात नमुद केले आहे.
- ७. उप विभागीय अधिकारी , ब्रम्हपुरी यांनी दि. १२.१२.९६चे अन्वये सादर केलेल्या अहवालाप्रमाणे श्री. राऊत यांचे



पदोन्नतीबाबत वरिष्ठ कार्यालयाकडून काहीच आदेश कळविले नाही.

त्यामुळे नगर परिषदेतर्फे केलेली कार्यवाही अगदीच बेकायदेशीर आहे असे म्हणता येणार नाही असा अभिप्राय उप विभागीय अधिकारी यांनी नमुद केला आहे.

८. नगर परिषद, ब्रम्हपुरी "क" वर्ग असून स्वायत्त संस्था आहे. त्यामुळे येथील लेखा विषयक कामकान व्यवस्थीत होण्याच्या दृष्टीने ग्रामपंचायत कालीन अनुभवी कर्मचा-यास पदोन्नती देण्याचा निर्णय त्यावेळचे प्रशासक यांनी केला असल्याचे दिसले. त्यावेळी नगर परिषद नव्याने निर्माण झाली होती."

From the above it is clear that the Administrator had consciously approved the appointment of Shri Raut and the Collector relying on the report of S.D.O. had approved his action. On the basis of the above, we do not agree with the findings of the EO that the applicant was mainly responsible for the alleged appointment of Shri Raut or that he had misled the Administrator in passing of the resolutions dtd. 25/10/1991 and 11/9/2002.

b) Charge no.3: The charge is that Shri Raut on



his appointment as Asstt. Accountant had committed serious

financial irregularities and this happened due to his illegal appointment by the applicant. The finding of the EO is that Shri Raut got opportunities to commit serious financial and other irregularities due to the appointment granted to him by the applicant. He has not stated in the report as to on what basis he has reached such a conclusion. Besides, we find little sense in this finding as Shri Raut's misconduct post his appointment cannot have any nexus with his appointment per se, unless it could be shown that he had past records of similar misdeeds which were ignored while granting him appointment.

c) The 4th charge against the applicant is that he irregularly granted scooter advance of Rs.15,000/- to Shri Thombre in violation of the G.R. dtd. 26/7/91 and while processing his application for the advance, he did not bring the above G.R. to the notice of the Administrator or attach its copy to the proposal. This conclusion appears to have



The applicant has not explained as to how

he had proposed grant of Rs. 15,000/- to Shri Thombre when this was clearly impermissible as per the G.R. Having said so, however, we must state here that what really intrigues us is that the Administrator, who is the sanctioning authority, and also as the senior most functionary of the Municipality did not care to verify whether the proposed advance of Rs.15,000/- was as per the employee's entitlement. We also feel that the gravity of the charge itself that the late applicant had violated the provisions of the G.R. has to be weighed in the light of the fact that the advance was paid from out of the GPF account of the applicant which did not involve utilizing resources of the Govt. or the Municipality, and it was also recovered from Shri Thombre.

On careful perusal of the E.O's report and the various facts on record related to the DE which we have discussed above, we find that the E.O's conclusion that the charges have not been proved in the DE and thus serious



allegations about the late applicant's conduct have been

conclusively proved, is not acceptable without any reservation. We find that the appointment of Shri Raut had the full approval of the Administrator, Shri Jamdade, and it was also approved by the Collector. The payment of arrears to Shri D.R. Raut from the date of his officiation on the post was also approved by the Administrator, who himself passed a resolution to have effect. The sanction of Rs.15,000/- as vehicle advance to Shri Thombre through a similar resolution was also passed by the same authority. By no stretch of imagination can therefore subscribe to the following view that the We. Administrator took these decisions without using his own ראל אל reliad on the applicant. Hence, iudament and by blindly looked at from any angle, it seems obvious that if any irregularity has been committed, as per the charges levelled against the late applicant in the DE, the Administrator, in a large measure has to share it. With regard to Charge no. 3,

we state once again that there cannot be any nexus between

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that Shri Raut had committed on his

appointment and his appointment itself.

11. In view of our observations and findings as above. we hold that as the late applicant has not been proved in the to be guilty of any serious charge, the punishment of compulsory retirement that left him and his family with no retiral benefits is rather harsh. The respondents, who have issued the impugned order of punishment by wholly relying on the findings of the DE, are therefore required to reconsider the quantum of punishment and reduce its severity so that the applicant and his family gets some relief. The O.A. therefore stands disposed of in terms of the following directions :-

- a) The O.A. is partly allowed.
- b) The impugned orders dtd. 4/2/2003 and 18/5/2007 are quashed and set aside.
- c) The respondents are directed to review the above orders and grant a less harsh punishment to the late applicant so that his family gets some reasonable financial relief. This will be done and



necessary orders will be passed in this behalf

within 10 weeks of receipt of this order.

d) No order as to costs.

sd / -

(S.S. Hingne') Member (J)

sd / -

(B. Majumdar) Vice-Chairman.

Skt.