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LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE^{B.}
Sir Charles Trevelyan, K. C. B.

on the 1st June 1860.

BY

THE then Dy: COLLECTOR OF TANJORE

DEWAN BAHADUR

R. RAGOONATH ROW

on

THE LAND TENURE OF TANJORE

AND

Mirassidars' right in the Land.

By

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1890.

Letter to the Right Honorable Sir Charles Trevelyan, K. C. B.
on the Land Tenure of Tanjore: shewing also that the
Merassi Right in the land is vested in the
Merassidar and not in the Sovereign.

To.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE,
SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, K. C. B

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

1. When I had the honor of waiting upon your Excellency at Combaconum, your Excellency was pleased to inform me that it was your intention to introduce in the District of Tanjore a settlement by which landed property might be rendered secure, interference of Government Servants with the Merassidars avoided, and no just opportunity for augmenting the Government Revenues lost. You further commanded me to offer my suggestion on the subject to the Collector Mr. Cadell.

2. Having studied the different tenures prevalent in India, and already formed my opinions as to the settlement that would best suit the existing circumstances, I beg to take this opportunity of respectfully submitting to your Excellency's consideration the details of my proposed settlement.

3. Before entering however upon the subject, I think I must say a few words about "Merassi" or the ownership of the land, in order that I may be properly understood in the use of the word throughout this paper.

4. Who is proprietor of the soil, the Sovereign or the Merassidar, was a question that for a long time taxed the skill of eminent writers on India, but it has at last been set at rest by the following authorities, which show that the Merassidar is the sole proprietor of the soil, and not the Sovereign.

5. "Cultivated land is the property of him who cut away the wood, or who first cleared and tilled it."
Hindu Law Menu, &c.

"Land and slaves employed in the cultivation of it, a man shall neither give away nor sell, even though he has acquired them himself unless he convene all his sons."

6. "For four months the Magistrate shall not collect tribute from the subjects, but shall give them free agency and endeavour by promoting their satisfaction and content to cause them to cultivate and improve their lands. During the remaining 8 months, he shall collect the settled yearly tribute."
Code of Gentoo Law by Halhed, Page 58.

7. This theory of proprietorship was always acknowledged and enforced by the Hindu Sovereigns.
Hindu Practice.

8. "The Native Governments have invariably upheld the Merassi Right, even when they created Zemindars." (Vide a Paper on the land Revenue of India by A. D. Campbell, Esq.)
A. D. Campbell, Esq.

9. This fact can be clearly proved from the old records which show that whenever the Rajahs wanted to grant to charitable purposes, not only their Sircar share of the produce, but the right to the soil also, they invariably bought the latter of the Merassidars.

10. Captain Robertson states that even the Peshwa, the Maratta autocrat, once purchased this right to the soil of the Merassidars.
Captain Robertson.

11. George Campbell, Esq., observes that the Village Communities found in the North and South of India assume and possess the strongest proprietary right to the soil of which they are not to be dispossessed nor have ever been by any

Native Government.

12. Mr. A. F. Tytler plainly tells us that the Merassidars, under every former Government, whether Hindoo or Musselman, have always been esteemed the very soul of the estate; their rights will be found to have been respected under every arrangement of the Native Princes, however arbitrary or capricious in other respects.
A. F. Tytler, Esq.

13. The Honorable Walter Elliot in his Minute on the Enam Commission confirms this position, observing, that the "existence of such right can be proved not only from the privileges still claimed by the Merassidars which we have used our best endeavours to cancel and destroy, but from numerous ancient Grants of land which record that even the Sovereign when desiring to appropriate a piece of land permanently for the site of a temple or other building, purchased it for so much money from the inhabitants."
Walter Elliot Esqr.

14. It is often alleged that under the Mahomedan Law the king owns the soil, that the Mahomedan Sovereigns of India fully enforced that Law, and the British Government, as successors to them, have inherited the right to the soil.
The Mahomedan Law.

15. This appears to me to be a fallacy; for it is stated in Page 133 Vol. I. of Wilk's Mysore that according to the Mahomedan Law, "Inheritance is annexed to property, and he who has the tribute from the land has no property in the land. Hence it is known that the king has no right to grant the land which pays tribute, but that he may grant the tribute arising from it."
Modena Shanhi Rauz.

16. Sir William Jones says that "nothing can be more certain than that land rents and goods are, in the language of all Mahomedan Lawyers, property alike aliena-
Sir W. Jones.

ble and inheritable."

17. Mr. Rickards observes that "In the appendix to Rouse's Dissertation of the landed property of Bengal, a translation is given of two Firmanas by the Emperor Aurengzebe, addressed to provincial Devans. In these the proprietary right of individuals to landed estates, is repeatedly mentioned; in one instance the right of a proprietor even to sell his land is adverted to."

18. Mr. George Campbell, the author above quoted, adds his testimony to the fact that the Mahomedan rulers respected the Merassi Rights. For he states in his Modern India that Malik Amber, Minister of the great Mogul, revived and confirmed the Merassi tenures.

19. I beg to add that the British Government and British authors have also recognized and respected the right of Merassidar to the soil, as will be seen from the following authorities.

20. The supreme court of Madras recognized without reserve the proprietary right of the Merassidars to the soil in a decision passed by them on the 25th September 1806.

21. "The Governor in Council proposes that the Ryotwary Settlement should not be attended with any infraction of the rights of Merassidars or others in the soil.

22. "It is particularly necessary to caution the local Revenue officers against any infraction of individual rights, which the Board observe that it is the particular desire of the Honorable the Court of Directors to uphold."

"In Tanjur, Merassi right remained universal throughout the province and continued a very valuable property."

23. The Marquis of Hastings remarked that the rights of the former cultivating proprietors had

Marquis of Hastings. been suffered by the Regulations to pass away sub silentio.

24. The only proprietors, generally speaking, are the village Zemindars or Hiswahidars (Merassidars). The pretensions of all others are prima facie doubtful.

25. "These people," the village communities, "to be found in the extreme south of India, are generally regarded as absolute proprietors of the soil, and are admitted wherever they exist to have an hereditary and transferable interest in it."

26. He is quoted by Mr. Dykes as having said "I wish to see the usages of each country or province adopted as the basis of our Revenue System, and to protect landed property as we find it."

27. "It is impossible that I should sit in a Civil Court and daily have causes brought before me in which it appears that the unhappy ryots still cling to their property, still in their necessities dispose of the property by sale, mortgage and other methods,—it is impossible that I should see this, and yet believe that in this they have no right."

"We too, when we took possession of the country, promised most solemnly to protect them (Merassidars) and for a long time we did support them, as the proprietors of the land.

They daily sell the proprietary right, and call it selling their lands.

If we preserve these rights, we have nothing to fear."

28. "In England, a proprietor of land who farms it out to another, is generally supposed to receive as rent, a value equal to about one-third of the gross produce; this proportion will

vary in different countries according to circumstances ; but whatever it may be, the portion of it which remains, after the payment of the demands of the public, may safely be described as the Proprietor's share of the produce of his own land : that which remains to him, after defraying all public taxes, and all charges of management. Wherever we can find this share, and the person entitled to receive it, him we may, without the risk of error, consider as the proprietor ; and if this right has descended to him by fixed rules from his ancestors, as the hereditary propriety. Proprietor may be limited by many other conditions; but "dominion so far absolute as to exclude all claims, excepting those of community which protects," conveys a general idea of the most perfect kind of property that is consistent with the restrictions incident to a regulated Society : always supposing, in the case of land, the existence of the proprietor's share which have been described. There is perhaps no single criterion by which the existence of such share is so distinctly ascertained as by the fact of land being saleable. When unoccupied land is abundant (as it is in most parts of India,) and all lands are taxed in proportion to their value, we do not hear of men purchasing the privilege to become tenants ; to obtain that which is open to all, and even court the acceptance of all : men do not give a valuable consideration for a thing of no value ; the fact of purchase shews that there is something to sell, that there is a Proprietor's share. If the demand of Government become so heavy as to leave no such share, the Sovereign may then be named the proprietor, or the usurper, or any other more imposing or more gentle term which eastern courtesy shall invent. It is plain that the former proprietor is reduced to the condition of a tenant ; he may cling for a time to the possession of his fathers, and this attachment may survive the existence of that which created it : but he is in effect no longer a proprietor of land, it is no longer saleable ; there is no proprietor's share, the value and property have ceased together ; and there is no longer a question about exclusive dominion, because no person will contend for that to which no value is attached.

Before dismissing this branch of the subject, it is worthy of remark, that according to the Roman lawyers the power of

alienating land was the criterion of property ; possession without such power being described as merely the usufruct. The inference appears to be irresistible, that the fact of land being saleable ascertains the existence of property, and that the right to sell identifies the proprietor. "

29. "The great difference between the lands in those two (Canara and Malabar) provinces is, that, here it (the proprietary right in the soil) is vested in individuals, there in communities."

Mr. Thackery

30. "A fourth form of joint responsibility found to exist in India is where each individual is landlord of a small estate, but has a joint responsibility in discharging the Government assessment, and a joint interest in the ownership of waste or lapsed lands."

Examination of the Principles and Policy of the Government of British India.

31. "Merassai right to land exists in Canara, Malabar, North Arcot, South Arcot, Chingleput, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Dindigal, Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevely."

Mr. Hodgson.

32. "The old Hindoos most assuredly were absolute proprietors of their land, though they called their Sovereigns Lords of the Earth."

Sir W. Jones.

33. In the Districts to the Southward of this presidency, the Merassai Tenure has from time immemorial been transferable by sale, gift or otherwise. It is universally the case in Tanjore.

A. D. Campbell, Esq.

The Zemindar possesses a valuable and often hereditary contract interest in the land revenue of the state, the collection of which alone was thus transferred to him, but he possesses no right whatever in the soil itself, which subject, to the payment of that revenue, was held in fields exclusively by

the cultivators.

At Madras, indeed the now possessor of the Zemindary, except when he might be also the head of the village, or one of its Merassidars, had in fact not a single field to sell. Every field there, had, where saleable at all, immemorially been sold by the Merassidars who are the owners of the soil.

The Courts at Madras have generally supported the right of the cultivator to the soil.

"The actual immemorial sale of Merassi fields by the cultivators exposed, the absurdity and falsity of the Regulation, theory (that the soil belonged to Government who made the right over to the Zemindars) and it has been, only in spite of the local code, that the same rights have been generally preserved from destruction.

Vide As : No. 11-1843 on the Sub Court file Combaconum— As : No. 106-1844 Civil Court.

34. The right of property in the land is unequivocally recognized in the present agricultural inhabitants by descent, purchase or gift."

Fortescue.

35. "But it is an ascertained fact, that there is not a foot of land, in the long settled Districts of India that is not claimed, and probably the lawful, property of some individual or of some village community.

Mr Rickards.

The tenures discovered in various parts of India, establish beyond all dispute, the important fact that the real property of the land was formerly vested in individual Landlords, whose exclusive right of selling, mortgaging, leasing, bequeathing or otherwise disposing of their lands, no Hindu Sovereign, Viceroy or other person in authority, ever thought of disputing, that this was consequently, a hereditary right and in full force and invariable usage.

The existence of private property in the soil, perfectly independent of control and interference on the part of the

sovereign, was first discovered in Malabar.

The first mention we find of it, is in a report of Mr. Place. The term used to express it is Merass or Merassy.

The same or similar rights were afterwards traced in Tanjore, Tinnevely, Canara, and other Provinces where the titles to private property in land were ascertained to be as full and clear, and supported by deeds more ancient and probably more perfect than in Europe.

The Peninsula of India being for the most part divided into villages and village communities, this right is found very generally to exist in three distinct states.

That these proprietors formerly existed, and perhaps universally in India, there cannot be the least doubt.

Merassi estates are of various amount and value. In the provinces of Tanjore and Trichinopoly they are found to exist from 4000 acres down to one acre of land."

36. "The Vellalars formed large communities of a purely democratic constitution, and alleged that they were the originators of the democratic Merassi Tenure in the South which is described as existing in their villages word for word as I should describe the constitution of a Jat or Rajput village of the present day. They claim and exercise a very strong proprietary right in each village over the whole land, cultivated and uncultivated, and divide the cultivated land in fixed shares."

George Campbell Esq.

37. "The ryot cultivating his own (meaning the Merassi dar) has a hereditary interest in the soil his title is much more ancient than our and has survived through every variety of change and convulsion."

Tornton.

38. "By some writers it has been stated that the ryotwar system is founded upon the assumption that Government is possessed of the entire property in the soil and may dispose of it at their pleasure."

Sketch of the Ryotwar system of Rev. Admta: apparently by a friend of Sir Thomas Munro.

It is surprising that such misconceptions should have been entertained, and that Sir Thomas Munro who was distinguished for sagacity and for comprehensive and liberal views of policy, and who had obtained from the Natives the protecting designation of Father, should have been considered the patron of a measure so much calculated to have paralyzed industry and to have kept the great mass of people in perpetual bondage and pauperism.

In every part of the Province wherein the ryotwary is introduced, the ryot is the complete owner of his land, and sells, mortgages and alienates it as he may think proper without any interference from Government.

Sir Thomas Munro did not aim at the introduction of any new plan, but at the restoration and improvement of that which he found to have been the ancient system of the country, the principal feature in which, was the settlement with the proprietors themselves and the direct collection of the public revenue from the proprietors themselves.

The system meddles not with rights, with tenures or with occupancy. Its leading principle is, recognition of proprietary right.

39. "In Tanjore the land is in the hands of proprietors, where therefore property in the soil has not to be created but actually exists."

40. "There is not an acre of land in Southern India which does not belong, however much the title may have been impaired, to a recognized proprietor or municipality subject only to the payment of a land tax."

Honorable Walter Elliot.

The very idea of a sovereign being sole proprietor of all the land in his dominions is opposed to reason and experience.

Many of the original titles still survive both in India and England to demonstrate the fallacy of the assumption."

41. "Without entering on the question of who is proprietor of the soil, I will content myself with stating that immemorial usage has established both in Tanjore and Trichinopoly, that the occupants, whether distinguished by the names of Merassidars, or Mahajanams, have the right of selling, bestowing, devising, and bequeathing their lands in the manner which to them is most agreeable."

42. I humbly trust that the above extracts will satisfy your Excellency that the soil in India belongs to the ryots and that their right of proprietorship is called Meerassy.

43. I fancy I have further proved that Tanjore is a Meerassi District.

44. Now I beg to add that the Meerassi right is not limited to cultivated lands only, but extends to all sorts of land and property within the village. A Meerassidar therefore, whether in Tanjore or elsewhere, not only owns his cultivated fields but also the uncultivated, rocky, wet, &c., portions of the village to which these belong.

45. To prove this position I beg to be permitted to quote a few passages from authors of unquestionable authority many of whom have already been referred to, as also extracts from Government records.

46. "As regards this particular Merassi right, the lands of every Tamil village may be divided into two distinct kinds. First not paying revenue, 2nd, paying revenue to Government. In the first class are included lat Porumpoke or lands incapable of cultivation, and 2nd Taras or Waste land.

Board of Revenue,
5th January 1818.

In the second are included all the cultivated lands in the Village. The Merassi right extends to all these different descriptions of land; but each must be enjoyed according to its peculiar nature.

The Porumpoke consists of rocks, public roads, the beds of rivers, tanks and water courses, the burial and burning grounds, Parachary, sites of temples, and sites of houses.

Indeed their (Merassidars) title to erect their dwellings on that, (Nuttum) particular spot, and their right to control the affairs of the Village Pagodas, and to appropriate the produce of quarries, mines or fisheries, are the chief privileges they possess in the Porumpoke which is not liable to any tax.

The Taras or waste land consists chiefly of tracts of Common on which the Merassidars graze the cattle employed by them in agriculture, or of jungle in which they cut the firewood used by them for fuel, and both are held free from tax.

In all Tamil Villages the Porumpoke, the Tareesee, are held in common joint property by the whole of the Merassidars, each in proportion to his share in the Merassi being entitled to participate therein.

When a Merassidar sells his Merassi he transfers to the purchasers not only his common right to participate to the extent of the share he holds in the Porumpoke, Tareesee, &c., other collective property in the Village, but his individual right to certain particular and defined cultivated lands."

47. Mr. Hodgson determines the property in uncultivated land to be the right of the Merassidars of the Village.

Mr. Hodgson.

48. "At one time I was disposed to think that, besides the name of contractors of Revenue, they, Zemindars, might, also claim the title of Lords of the waste, but even this right is indisputably shown by the able Report* above quoted to be the corporate property of the township."

Wilk's Mysore

* I think the 5th

Report.

49. "The democratic tribes, meaning the Merassidars, have been mentioned as possessed of much stronger rights. With them the whole land of the country was divided among the different communities. They claim the proprietorship not only of the cultivated but also of the uncultivated land, within their limits.

When the communities are so strong, independent and well organized, there can be no doubt with whom the proprietary right rests."

50. "The waste land is a common pasturage for the cattle of the village.

Mr. Rickards.

To show the sense which the Natives themselves entertain of their own right in the common property in the village, the Collector (of Tanjore) gives the translation of a deed of sale of one of the Shares, which runs as follows; I, A, B. of the village of C. containing 28 shares, do hereby execute to D. E. of the same village, this deed of sale that is to say, having sold to you in this village one share of my own six shares therein, I do hereby execute to you this deed of the full and absolute sale thereof; and you having further paid and I having actually received 100 chuckrums duly shroffed in full value thereof, you are accordingly, to the extent of the share now transferred and sold to you, fully to possess and enjoy all Nunjah, Poonjah, islands, water, stone, topes, jungle, riches, treasures, and every well which sinks beneath or every tree that rises above the earth, with every general benefit of every sort, from father to son, through every generation, as long as the waters of the Cauvery flow, vegetation lasts or until the end of time, with the fullest liberty, likewise, of alienation by gift, bequest, sale or otherwise, and may you enjoy all prosperity therewith. Thus, with my fullest approbation, I do hereby execute to D. E. this deed of sale which is written by Peramal Pillay, village Conekapillay, and this requires authentication from all the other proprietors of the village—signed."

51. "Merassi right, wherever it

Mr. Ellis. exists, extends certainly to waste lands.

52. This right of the Merassidar to every inch of the soil in his village is not a nominal right but one yielding him a clear landlord's rent, called *Swamy Bogam* or *Toondavaram*. This varies in different places. It is the loss of this that the Merassidars represent as an encroachment upon, nay annihilation of, their immemorial Merassi right."

53. Mr. G. Campbell says that, "in the first instance they probably themselves retained the whole or part of the rent, but the greater part of this they have eventually been obliged to pay to some Government. They generally however retain some marginal portion of it as their profit and for local expenses especially, and where there were inferior holders, a portion of the rent levied from them reverts to the superiors. This then was a much stronger and more decided proprietorship."

54. In speaking of the North West Provinces, where the Merassi right is found, the same author says, that the Collector 'taking everything into consideration fixes the assessment. If the proprietors object, he hears their objections; but if these avail not they must either agree to the terms or give a written refusal. In the few cases in which all negotiations end in the latter result, the proprietors are entitled to 10 per cent of the Revenue, and sometimes get more and the village is rented to a farmer."

55. "The Board of Revenue, however, apprehending, and as we certainly think, with good reason, that this (the rule that the ryots obstinately refusing to take up rents, must be given only 10 per cent, instead of his *Toondavaram*) might be considered as an invasion of the Merassi rights, were of opinion that Government would not be justified, for the purpose of giving general practical effect to any plan of administration, in reducing the allowance of any Class of Merassidars beyond the lowest standard authorized by past experience, which is stated to have been $\frac{3}{8}$ of the actual produce.

In this opinion we entirely agree and we cannot too strongly express our disapprobation that it had been acted upon."

56. Mr. J. F. Thomas bears evidence to the fact that the Merassidars of Tanjore do not themselves till the land but enjoy a landlord's rent; that the gross produce of the wet land in Tanjore irrigated by Government works is divided upon an average nearly as follows; 50 percent the Government tax; 25 per cent. Charges of Cultivation or an allowance to the actual cultivator; 12 per cent. Village cesses; and 13 per cent. Merassidar's rent. & that the Merassi is a Tenure which allows a proprietor's rent as well as a Government tax.

57. The Board of Revenue in their Minute dated the 5th January 1818 observe that "from the numerous deeds of sale still extant, throughout the Southern provinces, there is no doubt that at one time Merassi was universally a saleable and transferable property, and that the Merassidars every where enjoyed a *Toondavaram* or clear landlord's rent from all the lands cultivated by their *Payacari* tenants, and both a landlord's rent and farmers profit, from the lands which were cultivated by their own labourers or slaves."

58. Mr. Harris, a late Collector of Tanjore, estimates the Merassidar's *Toondavaram* at somewhat less than 25 per cent.

59. Mr. Wilks in his History of Mysore observes that the Merassidars have clear, ample and unquestioned proprietor's share, amounting, according to the same authority to the respectable proportion of 27 per cent. of the gross produce, a larger rent than remains to an English proprietor of land who had tithes and land tax to pay, even before the establishment of the revenue tax.

60. Mr. Hodgson in his report on Tinnevely estimates the *Toondavaram* at $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the gross produce.

Non-perishability of
the Meras

61. Further, the Meerassi right is not perishable and has been held as such even by the British Government.

62. In the North West Provinces, it is a rule "that when a Meerassidar leaves his kists in arrears, the Collector lets the estate temporarily to a farmer, the rights of the proprietor being in abeyance till better times, but not extinguished."

Mr. Campbell.

63. M. Thornton says that "the right of the ryot appears as expressed by one witness to be the greatest right in the Country and a right which never seems to die."

Mr. Thornton.

"He may quit his land for any period of time and the cultivation may be assumed by others, but if he or his heir return and reclaim the land, he has only to come to a compromise with the party in possession for the value of the crop on the ground, and his inheritance is restored to him immediately."

64. This characteristic of the Merassi appears to have been recognized by the Legislative Council of India; for a few months ago Mr. Leget moved in the Council the adoption of the Report of the select Committee on the Bill to limit the period within which a Merassidar may assert his claim to lands which he may have abandoned or for which he may have failed to pay assessment.

Legislative Council.

65. Mr. Ellis observes that the Merassi right is not forfeited by the discontinuance of collection for a single year or any longer period during the life of the Merassidar, his son or his grandson.

Mr. Ellis.

66. The late Honorable Court of Directors have condemned in the strongest language possible the proposal of the Madras Government to

The Court of Directors.
Madras Revenue Sections, Vol. I.

Letter to Madras
Government, August
1804, November 1805.

give land in Tanjore to others than the Merassidars when they do not come to terms with Government as to assessment.

67. Having thus shown what the Merassi or the ownership of the land is, I now beg to proceed to the details of the settlement above alluded to.

68. It appears to me to be impossible to make rules that can be applicable to all parts of the District of Tanjore, for it consists of two grand divisions essentially differing in character namely, the irrigated and the non irrigated, the first lying between the rivers Coleroon and the Vennar, and the other to the south of the last mentioned river.

I would therefore propose different sets of rules for each of these divisions.

The maximum amount of Revenue which could be collected has been brought to account in the 1st Division, and it is therefore useless to expect any addition to it by the introduction of any new settlement. There is not in it much waste that may be recovered, what little there is being indispensably required for grazing cattle, &c. I would therefore propose,

1st. To clearly ascertain what portion of any waste in a village might without inconvenience to the villagers be brought under cultivation.

2nd. To find out the Tarum assessment thereof or fix one on it from that of the neighbouring fields.

3rd. To add this to the Jamabundy amount and make the sum thus obtained the maximum amount of tax that the Government would always demand of the ryots, allowing, at the same time, in particular cases, such deduction from the amount so added as the well being of the ryots may appear absolutely to demand.

4th. To apportion this settled amount among the several

Punjoo or shares of the village, and thus determine what each ryot will have to pay.

5th. To give the ryots distinctly to understand by proclamation that no remission will be granted them except in seasons of very extraordinary distress, but assuring them at the same time that they might enjoy untaxed the benefit of any improvement they may effect in their holdings, whether it be the conversion of one crop land into two crop, of dry into wet or the like, except where such improvement is directly owing to important hydraulic works executed by the Government, in which case an additional water tax might be levied.

It may perhaps be objected that the last mentioned rule will deprive the Government of any legitimate increase of revenue. But I believe that the loss the Government may thereby sustain will be more than counterbalanced by the saving that would result from the removal of that host of officers who are now paid to watch cultivation, the encroachment of wet and dry land, of two crop on one crop, &c. And even supposing this not to be the case, what is the sacrifice of revenue that the proposition involves but as the dust in the balance compared with the numerous and important advantages that will flow from it—the improvement in the condition of the land which would add to the stability of the Revenue, the removal of every baneful interference with the ryots, the creation of a respectable and independent body of Land-lords the great supporters of Government, and the development of the resources of the country resulting from the vigorous stimulus which would thus be administered to industry.

As regards the Second division I would be more liberal. Lands under this section depend entirely upon rain for cultivation, and not even in a single year has the full demand on a village ever been collected in this District. Large tracts have been waste from time immemorial. The soil I think is fit for more planting trees than for any thing else,

I have reason to believe that there were more topes or

groups of trees on this land than that may be seen now, and attribute the decay of the plantations to the system of taxing trees introduced by our Government.

I would propose that these lands be also completely and for ever made over to the ryots for a fixed amount of Revenue—which should be the average of the collections of the last 20 years with an addition varying with the ratio of extent of culturable waste to that of the cultivated land according to the following scale.

PERCENTAGE TO BE ADDED TO	
RATIO OF CULTURABLE WASTE TO CULTIVATED LAND	THE AVERAGE COLLECTION OF 20 YEARS.
Exceeding 2.....	40
Between 1 & 2	30
1.....	20
Between 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$	10
Less than $\frac{1}{2}$	5

The assessment thus fixed would be distributed upon the registered proprietors either according to their shares in the village or according to the extent of their holding in each village.

I would apply the 5th Rule for the 1st Division equally to lands in the 2nd, but would not force this condition of the ryots who will be allowed the option of either agreeing to this settlement or coming to an understanding with Government as to what extent they would wish to keep on which no remission or any account should ever be allowed.

I am confident that the ryots will heartily agree to the proposed arrangement provided it is not forced on them, and that if the carrying out of this scheme be entrusted to efficient and judicious hands, it can be effected with perfect satisfaction

to the people and to the Government.

In conclusion I beg to assure your Excellency that my proposal if ordered to be carried out would not tend to lower Government revenue, would make it certain and permanent and would make the land-lords wealthy and independent and great assistance to Government.

How delighted I am to find that the people of this country now enjoy the privilege of freely submitting their views, insignificant as the individuals may be, to the Head of this Government whose enlightened views, never failing courtesy, and unprecedented activity have no example in the annals of the Madras Presidency.

Whence do we enjoy such rights? From the happy circumstance of this once famous country falling under the Government of the British constitution, a noble fabric, as was observed by our late Advocate General Mr. George Norton, raised by the labor of many centuries, the pride of our nation and the envy of our neighbours.

That this country may for ever remain under the protection of this constitution, and that our beloved Sovereign may live long and exercise sway over these wide domains diffusing happiness and prosperity all over her boundless Empire, is the fervent prayer of

Your Excellency's most obedient and humble and greatly obliged Servant,

R. RAGOONATH ROW,

Deputy Collector of Tanjore.

COOMBACONUM, }
1st June 1860.

Galle 27th June 1860.

67. MY DEAR SIR,

Accept my thanks for your interesting and intelligent Pamphlet several copies of which you were so kind as to send

not then time to acknowledge. I entirely agree with you. Where it does not exist every effort must I would do all I could to create it. I see no objection by you for the completion of the of Tanjore. But I will not enter upon in the honorable duty which has in North Arcot and Cuddapah and remembered to your Brother Hari Row.

I Remain

Very kindly yours

C. TREVELYAN.

R. RAGOONATH ROW,
Deputy Collector of Tanjore.
Coombaconam.

