

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	659	<u>Press</u> <u>Mis.</u>
	431.432	
Dated	24. 3 -	1865.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
21th March 1865.*

No. 431. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 8th March 1865,
No. 1,326.

Read the following letter from the Honorable D. ARBUTHNOTT, Collector of Salem, to W.
HUDLESTON, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 17th November 1864,
No. 216:—

1. Adverting to the Board's Endorsement on Petition No. 3,344 of 1864, presented by certain inhabitants of Mohanur in the Namkul Talook, I have the honor to submit the following report.

Petitioners complain of the abolition of the Sookhavasi remissions while they were denied the benefit of the recent reduction of assessment, and pray that these Sookhavasi remissions may be granted them.

3. The Government, in their Proceedings dated the 11th May 1859, No. 648, ordered, on the recommendation* of the Board, the discontinuance of the Sookhavasi remissions wherever they existed in the District, and the order was accordingly applied to the lands under the Cauvery Channel irrigation, of which the Petitioners' holdings form a portion.

4. It appears from the records, and according to Petitioners' own showing, that during the days of Mr. Hargrave, about Fusly 1228, the original survey assessment having been found heavy, an abatement was allowed to the then holdings of the lands now in possession of the Petitioners. Hence the claim of the Petitioners for a further reduction seems to be untenable.

Paragraph 10 of letter from the Sub-Collector in charge to Board, dated 23rd July 1859.
Paragraph 6 of Board's Proceedings, dated 2nd September 1859, No. 3,473.

5. I beg to refer the Board to the correspondence noted in the margin on the subject matter of the petition under report.

6. With reference to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the petition, I beg to state that in Fusly 1269, the year in which the Sookhavasi remissions were done away with, Mr. Brett, on the representation of the Petitioners, ordered the collection of the amount to be suspended till he looked over the orders doing away with the remissions. He, however, gave no final orders in the matter, and when it was brought to my notice, I saw no reason, in the face of the order of the Board, dated the 2nd September 1859, paragraph 6, to continue the remissions, and accordingly ordered the collection of the amount.

ENCLOSURE No. 1—Petition.

1. Submitted for the consideration and orders of Government.

2. The foregoing letter from the Collector of Salem is a report on a Petition presented to the Board of Revenue by certain inhabitants of the village of Mohanur in the Namkul Taluk of the Salem District, praying that the "Sookhavasi assessment," which the Collector has required them to pay in arrears for the past four years, on account of their lands under the Cauvery Channels may be remitted; that the amount of 500 Rupees and odd, already collected from them in 1859 on this account, may be refunded; and that no higher rate than 14 Rupees per acre may be collected from them until the assessment of the District is revised by the Settlement Department.

3. The present Collector reports that the prayer of the Petitioners cannot be complied with, as the Sookhavasi remissions, to which the Petitioners refer, were discontinued under the Orders of Government, No. 648, dated 11th May 1859; and as regards the heavy assessment to which the lands of the Petitioners are said to be subject, a reduction was made once before in Fasli 1228 (1818-19), in the assessment of the Petitioners' lands.

4. The Board are, however, of opinion that the remissions referred to ought, in fairness to the holders of the lands concerned, to be continued to them until the assessment of the District shall be finally revised by the Settlement Department.

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5. They observe that Mr. Brett, when Collector of Salem, in a letter, dated 1st November 1858, submitting certain propositions regarding the reduction of the assessment in his District, reported as follows in respect to the remissions now in question.

Paragraph 96.—“Hitherto a reduction has been made in the District on the Survey rates of ‘assessment in favor of Bramins and Mahomedans. This reduction termed ‘Sookhavasi,’ is at the rate of 20 per cent. Colonel Read explains that a reduction has been usually allowed to these two classes, because they ‘cannot, on account of their religious tenets of cultivation in the, hold the plough themselves, which obliges them to employ Sookhavas, or the cultivating class of the inhabitants.’ The system had its origin, I believe, in the mistaken notion that the Government tax never, in any case, allowed more to the cultivator as his share than what was usually sufficient to cover the cost of production. But many means of livelihood are open to these two classes, which are not open to the common cultivator. In that respect, therefore, they are better off as members of the community than the lower class; and secondly, when, as residents of villages, they form a portion of the agricultural class, they have been, and always will be able, through their superior influence, to obtain their full share of the better class of lands, i.e., the lands which must yield more than the ordinary returns required by the actual cultivator. I therefore recommend that this privilege be no longer continued. The sum remitted on account of ‘Sookhavasi,’ in Fasli 1267, amounts to Rupees 750. This remission ought, I think, to merge in the general remissions.”

6. The Board, in their Proceedings No. 949, dated 19th March 1859, submitting the Collector's propositions to Government, supported the Collector's recommendation, observing that to do away with such remissions would be in accordance with the practice pursued in other Districts under similar circumstances. (Paragraph 38.)

7. The Government, in Proceedings No. 648, dated 11th May 1859, passing orders on the Collector's report, directed that, “the favorable rates of assessment allowed to certain classes of Ryots will be discontinued, as recommended by the Board in paragraph 38.” (Paragraph 16.)

8. Subsequently Mr. Smith, the Sub-Collector in charge of Salem, in a letter to the Board dated 25th July 1859, No. 148, submitted that the greater portion of such remission existed in the Talooks under the irrigation of the Cauvery Channels, where no reduction was to be made in the assessment; that the Sookhavasi remissions might be properly abolished where the assessment had been reduced, but, with regard to the Cauvery Channel lands, that the case stood on other grounds, as the holders of those lands would have to pay, if the usual remission were disallowed, a higher rate of assessment than what they had been paying hitherto, without any benefit in return.

9. The Board in their Proceedings, dated 2nd September 1859, No. 3,473, replied that it was the intention of the Collector that the “Sookhavasi” remissions should cease altogether, that the Government had ordered these remissions to be discontinued, and that the Board saw no reason why some persons should still be favored.

10. The Board, as at present constituted, are also opposed to class remissions; but where, as in the present case, parties have been in the authorized enjoyment of such remissions for a long period, it appears to the Board to be a very arbitrary proceeding to increase the public demand on the lands concerned, merely because such remissions are no longer granted elsewhere. When the Collector recommended that remissions on account of Sookhavasi should no longer be allowed, he assumed that all existing remissions of that kind were “to merge” in the proposed general reductions. But no reduction was made in the village in which the Petitioners' lands are situated, and consequently, as represented by Mr. Smith in his letter, dated 25th July 1859, referred to above, the Petitioners will have to pay a higher rate of assessment than what they have been doing hitherto, without any benefit in return. It is true, as stated by Mr. Arbuthnot, that a general reduction was made in the assessment on the Cauvery lands in Fasli 1228, and if at that time the Sookhavasi reductions had been made to merge in the reduction, the Petitioners could not have complained, as now, that they had been called upon to pay absolutely

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24th March 1865.*

higher rates than the lands were charged with when they acquired them. The Government lost the opportunity, for they did not see then as they see now that such class distinctions are unnecessary and objectionable.

11. The Board, therefore, request the sanction of Government to their allowing the Sookhavasi remissions as hitherto, on the ground that these lands did not participate in the reductions sanctioned in the Government Order adverted to above. They observe that the amount of remission in question does not exceed Rupees 750 per annum.

12. In the event of Government granting their sanction to this proposal, the Collector will submit a Statement, for the Board's orders, showing the amount to be refunded to the parties concerned, on account of these remissions. The Petitioners state that upwards of 500 Rupees have been already collected from them on account of these remissions, and that four years' arrears are now demanded.

No. 432.

ORDER THEREON, 24th March 1865, No. 659.

Land Revenue.

The Board's recommendation for the continuance of the Sookhavasi remission of Rupees 750 until the assessment of the locality is revised, is accordingly sanctioned.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

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(A true Copy and Extract)

W. D. Sim

Acting Secretary.

To J. D. Sim, Esq., Secretary to Government, R. D.

Copy to C. N. Fochin, Esq., Acting Collector of Salem.

W-087

*It is the Board's recommendation
for the continuance of the Sookhavasi remission of Rs. 750 until the agreement of the locality is revised is accordingly sanctioned.*

*For Mr. George
24-3-1887*

*It is the Board's recommendation
14-3-1887*

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

No. 691.
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Date 8th March 1865.

8th March 1865.
21.02.
13.02.13

No. 1326.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Submitting report of the Collector of Salem on
Petition No 3314 of 1864, and requesting sanc-
tion to remit the Sookhavasi assessment on Po-
titioner's lands.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Pro M. May 1. 1864.
1864.

Exd. J. Wright.