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# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

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## Government of Madras.

Public works **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 135 Press Mis.

259-60

Dated 11 · 1 1870.

***Not to be folded or roughly handled***

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 11th January* 1870.

No. 259. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Revenue Department.—

*Unauthorized exaction of tolls and fees in Kistna District*—Passing orders with reference to its suppression and the issue of a proclamation in connection with it } (Here enter 21st December 1869, No. 3,220.)

No. 260. ORDER THEREON, 11th January 1870, No. 135.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 26.

COMMUNICATED to the Superintending Engineer of the 2nd Division, who will report on the suggestion in paragraph 5 of the Collector's letter.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
*Secretary to Government.*

## *Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 21st December* 1869

No. 290. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 29th November 1869, No. 8,778 —

Read the following letter from the Officiating Collector of the Kistna District, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Narsarowpett, 15th October 1869, Extra No. 184.

In my letter, dated 8th September 1869, No 277, reporting as Commissioner under Act XXXVII of 1850, on certain charges brought against Deputy-Collector V Venkatachelam Puntulu, I made some remarks with reference to the system that prevails in many of the towns of this and, I believe, the Godavery District of raising funds for the support of temples, the feeding of Brahmins, and other similar purposes by the levy of tolls, fees, or russums, on all the produce or goods brought into or sent out of the towns, or on the daily transaction of buying and selling.

2. These fees are introduced in the first place at the suggestion of some influential man He persuades a number of the merchants of the town to give a *Danapatta* or deed of gift, binding themselves to allow these fees to be collected in all transactions in which they are concerned, or on all carts laden with produce or goods coming to them or despatched by them The *Danapatta* is considered binding not only on the parties who sign it, but their descendants to all generations. Once a combination of this kind is established, the voluntary element is very quickly lost sight of The collection of the tolls or fees is commonly leased out to the highest bidder, and it is not to be wondered at that when the demand of such fees is made on strangers, or on parties who were no parties to the *Danapatta*, the lessee of the fee does not explain that payment is entirely voluntary on their part In short, the fees are collected like an authorized cess, and every pressure put on the parties who show any reluctance to conform to the custom of the place.

3. I was recently at Muktiyala, high up on the Kistna River, on the borders of the Hyderabad territory, and found there some half dozen boats laden with salt unloading The salt had been brought from Nizampatam by canal to Bezwada, and from thence the boats were towed up the Kistna—a journey occupying about six weeks I entered into conversation with the trader who was bringing up the salt to take into the interior. There appears to be a large quantity of salt annually taken up by this means in spite of the difficulties of this mode of transit, but what the man chiefly complained of to me was the exactions made upon him in the way of fees when landing the salt at Muktiyala He said he had to pay Rupees 1-4-0 for every large boat, and 12 annas for every small one, which fees went to the Jagayapeta Temple. He had also to give 4 seers for the temple at Muktiyala, four seers for Brahmins, and four seers for Dancing girls He stated that their fees were always collected by the Curnums, and were a great tax on the traders I asked whether the payment was not voluntary. He stated that if the fees were not properly paid on demand the boats would be at once cut adrift from their moorings, and they would not be allowed to land the salt I sent for the Curnum, who admitted the collection of the fees, but pleaded that they were perfectly voluntary, except on those who had signed the *Danapatta* or their children, and the fees he urged have been collected for many years All I could do was to

warn the Curnum, and to inform the traders this that it was perfectly optional with them to pay fees, and that such a demand was in no way authorized by Government as the Komaties evidently seemed to think.

4 It is a question, I think, whether if these tolls and fees cannot be entirely prohibited, they cannot at least be brought under some sort of supervision, and proclamations posted up at every place where they exist, informing the public that the demand has no authority of Government, and that it is perfectly voluntary on all to pay or not, according to their free-will It is intolerable that trade should be subjected to these illegal duties

5. The inland salt-trade is capable of great development All along the southern bank of the Kistna up in the Palnad, I found quantities of salt stored under tents which had been brought from China Ganjam by pack-bullocks, and was waiting for boats to cross to the Hyderabad side The easier means of transporting salt by water would, I have no doubt, be much more largely availed of if some attempt were made to facilitate the means of communication, as for instance, by providing a towing-path if practicable along the banks of the Kistna. I have addressed the Superintending Engineer on this subject. I have myself been up the Kistna to near Tummerkota in the Palnad, and have found navigation quite feasible The going up the river is tedious, chiefly on account of the absence of a towing-path, coming down the river is very easy and rapid as might actually be expected

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The Board resolve to submit this letter for the orders of Government.

2 They concur with the Collector that it is very desirable to facilitate the river-navigation by the formation of a towing path and landing-places The upper course of the Kistna is very little known, and a survey is desirable

3 As regards the system of petty cesses brought to notice, the subject is one which, in the opinion of the Board, calls for decided interference

4 Every small temple can set up a systematic mode of exaction similar to those which have with such trouble been put down in Zemindary tracts

5 The Board suggest that a proclamation should be issued, warning all of the illegality of such cesses, and especially cautioning public servants against the consequences which will result to themselves from complicity with and connivance at such practices

6 In the particular case brought to light, endeavours should be made to bring home the charge to those who threatened to cut the boats adrift, and the Village Officers should be made an example of

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No 291 ORDER THEREON, 21st December 1869, No 3,220

Miscellaneous

FROM the above Proceedings of the Board the Government learn, not without surprise, that a totally unauthorized custom of exacting tolls and fees from traders for the support of temples, the feeding of Brahmins, and other similar purposes, has for some time prevailed in many towns of the Kistna District.



2 The practice, according to the Acting Collector, has its origin in a "Danapatta" or deed of gift, by which certain merchants bind themselves to allow fees to be collected in all transactions in which they are concerned, or on all carts laden with produce and goods coming to them or despatched by them. The scope of this Danapatta is extended until its real purport is quite lost sight of, and it becomes a cloak for extortion. That the imposition of the cess has been to a certain extent systematized is shown by the fact that its collection is sometimes leased out.

3 The Government regret that this practice, which must have been long known to the Police, should not have been brought to their notice before.

4 The Board's suggestion, regarding the issue of a proclamation setting forth the illegality of the cess, should be at once carried out The Acting Collector and Magistrate should promulgate the proclamation in question in all places where the dues are enforced, in order that the true nature of the tax may be thoroughly understood by all classes for the future.

5 With the same object the Inspector-General of Police is requested to issue instructions to his officers

6 The Government concur with the Board as to the propriety of further inquiries in the case mentioned in paragraph 3 of the Collector's letter, with the view of prosecuting the parties implicated for extortion, if there is any prospect of bringing the charge home to them.

7. A copy of these Proceedings should be forwarded to all Collectors, and the Collector and Magistrate of the Godavery District should be requested to state whether a similar abuse exists within his jurisdiction, as is alleged in paragraph 4 of Mr. Boswell's letter.

8. Paragraph 5 of the Collector's letter will receive consideration in the Public Works Department

(True Extract)

H D Saliell

*Acting Secretary to Government.*

To the Board of Revenue
„ the Inspector-General of Police
„ the Public Works Department

Exd F R Bantleman

Con Reg No 906
Govt. of [1869] Madras.

REVENUE.
No. 5361
THE BOARD OF REVENUE,
&c, &c, &c

No 135 - 11th January 1870
ed December, 21st
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O, 21st December 1869, No. 3,220

DECEMBER.

Nos. 230-231.

*Unauthorized exaction of tolls and fees Kistna District* —Passing orders with reference to its suppression and the issue of a proclamation in connection with it.

Letter and Orders

Liai

No 135

Communicates the Superintending Engineer of the 2d Division, who will report on the suggestion in para 5 of the Collector's letter.

Fort St George
11th January 1870

The Supdg Engr 2d Division

Rec'd 13/1/70.

Cue 5361

Govt. of {1870} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To The Superintending Engr.
2d Circle

Dated

Read

G. O., 11th January 1870, No 135

Nos. 259-260

Navigation of the Madras Coast Canal
despatch referring for consideration
the proposal of the Collr of Kis-
to substitute the Navigation
of the Madras ~~Canal~~ by the for-
-mation of a tow-path along
-ing places. Cond Plan &c &c con-
-cerned with instructions -