

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Rudie DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	368	Press Mis.
Dated	9-4-1867	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
9th April 1867.*

No. 35. Read the following letter from Mr. M. DUNHILL, for self and 214 others, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 28th March 1867.

We have the honor to forward to you the accompanying petition addressed to the Right Honorable the Governor, which we will thank you to lay before his Lordship in Council.

To

THE RIGHT HONORABLE FRANCIS LORD NAPIER, K. T.,

Governor in Council, Fort Saint George.

The Petition of the undersigned, who are proprietors of land and household property, and of others who may become such hereafter, in the city of Madras,

HUMBLY SHOWETH,

1st.—That, adverting to the correspondence and the Order thereon by Government, recorded in M. C., dated 13th February 1867, No. 150, your Petitioners beg most respectfully to dissent from the mode proposed to be resorted to by the Municipal Commissioners for increasing the Municipal funds, viz., by raising the assessment on land and household property to 10 per cent. The assessment, which it should be recollected was originally $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., was afterwards raised to 5 per cent., and subsequently (1862) to the present enormous rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., on the plea of meeting the expenses attending the contemplated construction of works for supplying fresh water for the use of this city, but on the assurance that, after the completion of such works, the assessment would revert to the former rate of 5 per cent.

2nd.—Your Petitioners beg to represent that the benefits which are proposed to be secured by augmenting the revenues of the Municipality will be enjoyed by the entire community of Madras, whereas the assessment for that purpose falls wholly on the proprietors of lands and houses, who constitute only a portion of the community; that every addition to the assessment diminishes proportionately the income of the proprietor from his landed property, and, after providing for all the liabilities incident on the possession of lands and houses, the net income in most cases falls considerably below the ordinary profits derivable from investment of capital in other ordinary speculations; the assessment thus has a tendency to depreciate lands and houses to an extent which must be positively disadvantageous, if not ruinous, to their owners.

3rd.—Your Lordship in Council is aware that the main principle to be observed in devising a scheme of taxation is, that the tax should not fall with partial and unequal incidence on the subjects; but, in the case now complained of, the land and house proprietors are made to bear very nearly one-half of the expenditure of the Municipal Department, while they derive no exclusive advantages, but only participate, in common with the tenants and other of their townsmen, in all the Municipal measures adopted for the benefit of the city. They, therefore, deem it only fair and equitable that all the citizens should equally contribute towards the maintenance of the Municipality within the town of Madras.

4th.—Your Petitioners, however, while protesting against the measure proposed by the Commissioners, on the ground of its falling wholly on persons of the class to which your Petitioners belong, recognize the necessity of raising a sufficient revenue to meet the wants of the Municipality. They would, therefore, respectfully and earnestly suggest that, instead of raising the rate of assessment, a step which is so ruinous to the interests of landed proprietors, your Honorable Council will be pleased to institute equitable taxes under the respective designations of "House Rate," "Lighting Rate," and "Police Rate," all of which are now debited to the assessment, to be levied, as is done in England, on the tenants of houses and lands, at a proportionate percentage

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on the amount of assessed rents paid by them to the proprietors. This, your Petitioners submit, will, in a great measure, equalize the liability of all rates, and the amount of the tax payable will be so very small as to be scarcely considered a burden on the tax-payers. Moreover, without obviating the necessity for an increased rate of a session, the amount proposed by your Petitioners will, it is presumed, more than cover the estimated additional cost, Rupees 64,500, to the Municipal funds, and also enable your Honorable Council to reduce the assessment to its former rate of 5 per cent., if not to do away with it entirely, which, if done, will, in addition, will conduce to the protection of the value of land and household property, and secure the interests of landed proprietors, whose existence in a State contributes materially to its strength.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray

(Signed) M. DUNHILL,
and 214 others.

MADRAS, 28th March 1867.

No. 36.

ORDER THEREON, 9th April 1867, No. 368.
Communicated to the Legislative Department.
(True Return.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Legislative Department,

*Chief Secretary,
to Government
Fort St George*

*We have the honor to forward
you the accompanying Petition addressed
to the Right Honorable the Governor, which we
thank you to lay before his Lordship in Council*

*We have the honor to be
Sir,*

Your Most Obedt and humble Servant

*Mark Dunhill
for self & 214 Others*

to the Leg. Dept. despatch

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