M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22

# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

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## Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

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| G.O. No. 1658 | Press ~~Mis.~~ |
| 57-58 | |
| Dated 8-12-1857. | |

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

No. 57. Read the following letter from H. NEWILL, Esq., Director of Revenue Settlement; to W. HUDLESTON, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue; dated Madras, 23rd November 1859, No. 1021.

Paragraph 1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Board's Proceedings dated 16th instant, No. 4694, reviewing my further communication, dated 31st ultimo, No. 961, regarding the assessment of the Godaveri and Kishna deltas.

2. It does not seem necessary for me to enter further into the general discussion of the subject, as the views both of the Board and myself have been fully expressed and laid before Government, but I may here be allowed to reply to the question asked of me by the Board in paragraph 6 of their Proceedings, where, after quoting the following from my report on the settlement of Chidambram and Manargudi :—" this tract of country, has for the most part, been irrigated for " a long series of years, and it would not be a satisfactory task, under such circumstances, to " attempt to rate the land first for land tax independent of irrigation, and then to impose one " fixed water tax for irrigation, so as to form a consolidated assessment, though it is not beyond " the reach of practicability to effect this,"—they ask " whether the foregoing description of " South Arcot does not apply also to the Godaveri delta,"—adding that " except in the com- " parative magnitude of the areas and of the irrigation works, they see no difference between " the two localities."

3. To this I beg to reply, that the delta in Chidambram and Manargudi under the command of the Colorím anicut has been almost wholly irrigated for many years past, and assessed as a rule with Nunjai rates, while out of the Godaveri delta, containing according to the District Engineer's calculations, a total irrigable area of 12,00,000 acres, only a fraction was irrigated before the anicut was built and assessed with wet rates. The Collector of Rajahmundry gives 1,01,000 acres as the total area imperfectly irrigated in Fusly 1255, (A. D. 1845-46;), and the Collector of Masulipatam gives 24,944 acres as the portion of this delta, including Zamindari and Mokassah lands irrigated before the anicut. The total is thus in round numbers 1,26,000 acres.

4. I would add to this 50 or 60 per cent. for deficiency of areas in the accounts, but the Board in their Proceedings of 27th ultimo demur to such an addition. Taking the revenue accounts then as the basis, the irrigation has increased about 150 per cent. since the anicut was built, it being now 3,13,240* acres, against 1,26,000 acres as given above, and the partial tax this large increased area has paid under the system of joint rents, cannot be said to be in the form of regular Nunjai rates, but part of the general distribution of the joint rents on the ryots, according to their own ideas and arrangements.

* *Vide paragraph* 16 *of my report, dated* 12*th September last.*

5. The relative portions out of each delta constantly irrigated for a long series of years are thus widely different, while for the increase in the extent of the Godaveri irrigation since the anicut, which is far more than a moiety of the whole area irrigated at present, there can be no pretension to paying " a Nunjai assessment time out of mind," as in the case of the Colorím delta."

6. But a more serious fallacy still appears in my judgment to be involved in the expression of the Board that " except in the comparative magnitude of the areas and of the irrigation " works, *they see no difference in the two localities,*" and in the argument founded upon it, that because the Nunjai rates in " Chidambram and Manargudi descend as low as Rupees 2-4-0 " per acre," a water rate of Rupees 3 per acre is not suitable for the Godaveri delta. In my report on the two táluqs of South Arcot, I described the Colorím delta in South Arcot as follows : " the irrigation of these táluqs can by no " means be classed as generally first rate, for it is dependant on the low- " er anicut, which receives only the surplus which passes over the upper anicut above Trichino- " poly, and is, therefore, inferior in this respect, though some lands are favorably situated along " the main feeders, a large tract of land is dependant upon the supply which the Viranam tank, " by no means a perfect reservoir, can afford, and the levels of supply are in some other places " unfavorable, some parts are again dependant mostly upon drainage water, which is inferior in " quality, and much more uncertain than that more directly supplied from the river." A very different character attaches to the Godaveri delta. The soil itself is far superior generally to that of the Colorím delta, the system of irrigation is a much more perfect one, as regards the distribution of the Godaveri water, and the supply itself is far better than the second-hand supply of the lower anicut on the Colorím. In the Godaveri delta also there is a general system of navigation combined with irrigation, which is not the case in the two táluqs of South Arcot, and the advantages of this are felt by every village, and must be rated as something substantial in money calculations of the resources of the land.

*Paragraph* 16.

7. The lower rates proposed for the poorest lands of the two South Arcot tâluqs, with the inferior advantages of irrigation, (amounting in extent only to a small per centage of the whole area), cannot, therefore, be fairly adduced as an argument against a somewhat higher general water rate in the more favored province with its greater fertility of soil, superior irrigation and the additional advantage of water communication.

8. The Board, however, in paragraph 11 are not disposed to admit the substantial advantages to the ryot of water carriage on the ground that "the cheapening of carriage" as regards "one of its ordinary effects must be to lower prices." This might perhaps hold good were the Rajahmundry district to be shut up within its own resources in agricultural produce, as it was a few years ago, but where we find an enormous increase in the exports of such produce, rising from about 2½ lacs of Rupees 20 years ago, to about 30 lacs at the present time, it is evident that prices must be ruled by the demand in foreign markets, and not as formerly, by local circumstances. The last Rajahmundry Gazette gives a list of 17 British and French ships anchored in the Cocanada roads, with an aggregate tonnage of between 9,000 and 10,000 tons, several of which are bound with freight for Bordeaux, Marseiles, Bourbon, as well as other places; this circumstance, which is now of an ordinary character, connected with the fact of several agents for the home or foreign markets having established themselves at Cocanada, forbids the supposition of the increased produce of the delta being materially depreciated in value from a glut of the market. From enquiry in different parts during the recent tour, I found it to be the opinion of those who had considered the subject, that there was a prospect of prices maintaining permanently a very fair standard, higher than the average of the past, rather than of any continued depression; I have ventured to offer these remarks on this point, as it has not hitherto been discussed in this view.

9. I may take this opportunity of removing some misapprehension that appears to exist regarding the proposal for assessment now under discussion. The course pointed out for me is that contained in the despatch of the Secretary of State for India, dated 15th December 1858, paragraph 9. "I desire that the Director of Revenue Settlement may be instructed to bear the "suggestion of water rate distinct from the assessment in mind, with the view of carrying it "into effect in any districts in which such a plan may be found practicable." This principle has been affirmed again and again by the Government, and my object has been to shew whether any or what water rate is practicable in the northern deltas, the water rate itself necessarily involving an inequality of assessment, viewed in connection with the ryots' profits, but an absolute equality, if viewed in relation to the cost of the water.

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No. 58. ORDER THEREON, 8th December 1859, No. 1658.

Ordered that the foregoing letter be recorded.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
*Secretary to Government.*

itself necessarily involving an inequality of assessment viewed in connection with the ryots' profits, but an absolute equality if viewed in relation to the cost of the water.

I have &c
(signed) H. Neville
Director of Revenue Settlement

True Copy

H Neville
Director of Revenue Settlement

To
A. D. Bourdillon Esqr &c
Secretary to Government
Revenue Department
Fort St George

Sno. No.

From the Director of Revenue Settlement B/3120 dt 5th 57
C No 2014 in Rev. 10 Dec 8/57
No 417 to 54

Copy cir a letter to C
dt 5th Febry 1860 with Sketch

20-8-qrs
7-6-12

No 57 & 58.

Copy sent to the Comm. Engr.
I. C. C/4375 Sept. No 1879

Rem 1859 Sept
Proc of Govt No Decr 2161
From
N. Neill Esqr
Director Rem Sy Mty
To
W. Hendleston Esqr
Asst Secretary to Bd of Rem:
Fort St George
Date d 28 & November 59
Recd 7-4 & 25-12-59
No 1021.

Replying to certain points on which information is asked in Proceedings of Board of Revenue dated 16th November 1859 No 4694 regarding the assessment of the Godavery and Kistna.

Settled
No 1658
Recorded

8th Dec 1859.