M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1633 — Press Mis.

363-364

Dated 18—9— 1869.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th September 1860.

No. 303. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 24th August 1860, No. 3,872:—

Read Proceedings of Government, dated 15th May 1860, Revenue Department, No. 780, calling for the Board's opinion on the matter treated of in paragraph 9 of the Despatch of the Secretary of State for India, dated 29th March 1860, No. 22.

(In Cons., 16th May 1860, No. 2,279.)

1. The only question on which, in the above Order, the Board are instructed to report, is the eligibility of the 30th April as the date on which Raiyats desirous of reducing their estates must relinquish their lands so as to relieve themselves of liability for assessment in the ensuing year.

2. The question being one of importance, the Board thought it right to consult the Collectors, and the following is the result of the reference.

3. The Collectors of nine Districts* are in favor of the 30th April.

* *Ganjam.* *Vizagapatam.* *Nellore.* *North Arcot.* *Kurnool.* *Tinnevelly.* *Salem.* *North Canara.* *South Canara.*

4. The Collector of Nellore consulted his Tahsíldárs on the subject, and of these Officers (13 in number) two were in favor of the 30th April, six preferred reverting to the date formerly usual in the District, viz., 31st May, and five suggested the 30th June. Mr. Dykes gives a decided preference to the 30th April.

5. The Acting Collector of Kurnool, while assenting to the 30th April, proposes giving Collectors discretionary power to accept later relinquishments in special cases.

6. To North and South Canara the 30th April is peculiarly suited, private transfers of lands being usually made at that period.

Godavery District.

7. The Collector of the Godavery District states that the 31st March is quite late enough for the Delta Táluqs, "owing to the facilities afforded "by the anicut-irrigation"—the 30th April suits the upland Táluqs, but if only one date is to be allowed, he prefers the 31st March.

† *Cuddapah.* *Tanjore.* *Krishna District.* *Bellary.* *Madras.* *Madura.* *Coimbatore.*

8. The Collectors of four Districts† recommend the 30th June as on the whole the best.

9. The Collector of the Krishna District advocates the 31st May.

10. The Collector of Bellary proposes the 15th July.

11. The Collector of Madras suggests two dates, viz. June for unirrigated and August for irrigated land, or if only one date be allowed, then July for both.

South Arcot.

12. The Collector of South Arcot names the 30th July for irrigated and the 15th October for unirrigated, but adds that, so far as the Government revenue is concerned, the date is immaterial, for land is in such request that whenever relinquished it is immediately taken up.

Trichinopoly.

13. The Acting Collector of Trichinopoly proposes the 31st August. The late Collector Mr. Bird suggested the 30th June for unirrigated and the 31st August for irrigated lands.

Malabar.

14. The Collector of Malabar considers the 30th April unsuited to that District, and has been requested to name specific dates, which he has omitted to do.

15. Thus it will be seen that of the twenty Collectors, nine are in favor of the 30th April, one of the 31st March, and ten of varying but later dates. The numbers are thus equally divided between the 30th April and some later date.

16. The selection of the 30th April proceeded mainly on the ground that it would discourage the retention of land on the mere chance of the season proving favorable in expectation of remission, if the season proves adverse, and thus indirectly induce land-holders to confine their estates to the extent which, under all ordinary circumstances, they could afford to hold permanently, and that it would thus operate also to prevent persons, without capital or means, from taking up land and becoming pauper land-owners to the disturbance of the labor market.

17. The creation of permanent estates is undoubtedly a most desirable object, but great caution is necessary in endeavoring to attain this result, by the operation of other than the natural causes which lead to the accumulation of wealth. The direct interposition of Government with this view is attended with a certain degree of hazard and needs careful deliberation. Assuming the guiding principle in the case under discussion to be correct, the important question is its applicability in the present condition of this Presidency, in which upwards of 90 per cent. of the revenue is derived from land and where, from the operation of the Hindoo law of inheritance and other circumstances, there must be a large number of petty land-owners.

18. The rent roll of Fasli 1266 (the latest available in consequence of this return being only quinquennial) is given in the margin. This return, which does not include sub-tenants, shows that out of 1,843,765 landholders, 1,008,024 pay less than 10 Rupees yearly assessment. It is of course impossible to determine the yearly profits of land with accuracy, but the revised assessment is to be fixed on the principle of leaving the land-holder one-third of the net produce or profit and taking two-thirds as the Government assessment. Calculating on this principle a Raiyat who pays 10 Rupees assessment has a net profit of only 5 Rupees, or 10 shillings per annum, and one who pays Rupees 100 a similar profit of Rupees 50, or £5 annually. Dividing the land-holding community into two classes, those paying 100 Rupees and less, and those paying upwards of that sum, as yearly assessment, and for convenience of argument omitting those who hold lands jointly (though a very large proportion of these must manifestly belong to the former class), we have the followingstriking result :—

Assessment.	Number of Raiyats.	Total Assessment.	Average Assessment. of each Raiyat.
		Rs.	Rs.
Under 10 Rupees per annum..	1,008,024	36,35,523	3
Rupees 10 to 30.....	3,98,029	68,49,683	17
,, 30 to 50.....	1,14,127	43,36,652	38
,, 50 to 100.....	77,408	52,75,621	68
Total 100 Rupees and under..	1,597,588	2,00,97,479	13
Rupees 100 to 250... ...:.....	31,180	45,35,135	145
,, 250 to 500.....	5,635	18,82,960	334
,, 500 to 1,000.....	1,530	10,27,434	671
,, above 1,000.....	431	6,78,771	1,575
Above Rs. 100...	38,776	81,24,300	209
Joint Puttahs....	2,07,401	38,39,998	18

	Number.	Total Revenue.	Average of each.
		Rs.	Rs.
Land-holders paying Rupees 100 and less...	1,597,588	2,00,97,479	13
Do. paying upwards of 100 Rupees.....	38,776	81,24,300	209

19. It will be seen from this that by far the largest number of our land-holders are comprised in the class whose profits are under £5 per annum, but who still contribute fully five-sevenths of the Revenue. To such persons it must obviously be a matter of serious moment, that the date for relinquishing land should be so fixed, as to enable them to judge, in some degree, of the prospects of the ensuing season; for their capital can be only their own labor and the profits of the past year. The failure of a single crop must trench greatly on the latter, for even if the Government assessment be remitted, they have still to bear the loss of seed, labor, &c.

20. It may indeed be urged that such persons, or at least the lowest class who pay only 10 Rupees yearly, are mere laborers, improperly raised by the present system of land tenure to the grade of land-holders, and that it would be better that they should be thrown back to their proper position, but the number of even the lowest class is larger than the aggregate of all the other classes, and the revenue they contribute is considerable: moreover, it is obvious that the position they voluntarily occupy at present is, in some way or other, more profitable to them than that of laborers or under-tenants would be, for, if it were not, they would relinquish it for the latter; and, if more profitable to *them*, it must be so also to the State, whose prosperity is identical with that of the people. At all events, it is dangerous for the State to interpose, in order to prevent its agricultural, any more than other classes of its subjects from exercising their own judgment, as to the mode in which they should employ their labor and means.

21. Nor should it be assumed, that, if by the operation of this or any similar rule, the class of petty land-holders was thrown back into that of laborers, the lands they now occupy would speedily be taken up by the more substantial proprietors, for it by no means follows from their cultivation by small proprietors appropriating their *whole* net produce, that they would be profitable in the hands of those who must resign a portion of that produce to sub-tenants. The probability in fact is that much of it would not support a proprietor *and* a sub-tenant, though it does suffice for a proprietor *only*.

22. Again from the peculiar state of Indian Society, the agriculturalist has little outlet for his increasing capital, except investment in land; independently, therefore, of the limited means of a considerable portion of the agricultural community, this circumstance will also tend to the annual occupation of a fluctuating extent of land, on the speculation of the season. The Board apprehend that a considerable portion of the land, which now annually changes possession, is the fluctuating extent thus held. In England, much of this surplus capital would be lodged in Banks or invested in other ways; here, for the great bulk of the agricultural community, such modes of temporary or subsidiary investment do not exist, and it seems to the Board questionable, whether the main outlet for agricultural capital and enterprise should be closed by such a rule as that proposed.

23. The legitimate extent to which Government can interfere is to secure its revenue, and this would not be hazarded by selecting a later date, which, while it would give the Raiyat in possession reasonable facility to decide for himself, would still leave sufficient time for others to take up relinquished land without the loss of a season.

24. So far as freeing the Raiyats from official interference is concerned the main point is to have a fixed date for relinquishments, and it is obvious that an early date with its necessary concomitant of liberal discretional remissions will place the Raiyat more in the power of the Revenue servants than a later one which, from better suiting his means and requirements, renders him less dependent on their good offices.

25. The most important consideration, and that which certainly exercises the greatest influence on the extent and permanency of landed estates, is the rate of assessment. That the present assessment is not generally so moderate as to admit of land being continuously held subject to full payment every year, is clear from the fact of its having been found necessary to rescind so soon after its issue the Order of Government which discontinued remissions for loss of produce, &c. On the revision of assessment now in progress no argument can yet be based. What has hitherto been done in the way of reducing the assessment has chiefly been to lower it where it was so excessive as to keep land out of cultivation, but an assessment, without being so excessive as this, may still leave a land-holder too small a margin of profit to admit of sub-tenancy, or to enable him to sustain ordinary losses for successive seasons without its remission, wholly or partially. Whether even the revised assessments will admit of these essentials to large and permanent holdings remains to be seen, for it has not yet been tried in a single District, and its general introduction will be a matter of time. Consequently the adoption of measures, the success of which may be dependent on the moderate character of that assessment, must of necessity be postponed.

26. The conclusion at which the Board have arrived, after careful consideration of the subject, is that the 30th April is too early a date in the present state of the country and with the existing rates of assessments.

27. On the understanding that remission will continue to be conceded to the Raiyats, the Board consider that if one uniform date is desired, the 30th June may be adopted. The advantages of this date over the 30th April, are that the Raiyat will be able to form a more correct notion of his own means and of the prospect of the ensuing season; that the settlement of the year will then be finished and his account with Government closed; and that the Revenue year which, whether the English official year be adopted as that of account or not, must still be adhered to in transactions between Government and the Raiyats will then terminate, and with it the period of occupancy for which the Raiyat has paid.

28. It merits consideration, however, whether there should be but one date of relinquishment to be rigidly applied in Tinnevelly as in Ganjam, in Madras as in Canara. At first sight the adoption of a different date for each District may seem inconvenient, but the Districts of this Presidency range in area from 3,000 to 12,000 square miles and in population from 500,000 to 1,700,000. The same date would serve for several contiguous Districts, and there would thus be uniformity over very large tracts though not throughout the Presidency. In more important respects—such as the peculiar tenures of Malabar and Canara, the Mirási right of Chingleput and Tanjore—want of uniformity is of necessity tolerated, and it deserves consideration whether it might not be admitted also in this matter, which is of comparatively less consequence, and the necessity of which is not indicated by the condition of the revenue or the wishes of the people.

(A true Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM, *Secretary.*

No. 304. ORDER THEREON, 18th September 1860, No. 1,633.

The reasons given by the Board of Revenue in these proceedings for fixing the 30th June in preference to the 30th April as the latest date on which Raiyats may be allowed to relinquish land, appear reasonable and just. But the course suggested in paragraph 28 seems preferable, that is, as the seasons vary in the several parts of the country, to fix a suitable date for each group of Districts. The Board will therefore report the dates which they would recommend, and the Districts to which they are severally to be applied.

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

The reasons given by the Bd. for fixing the 30th June in preference to the 30th April - latest date on which Raiyats may be allowed to relinquish land - appear reasonable & just - But I prefer the course suggested by them in para 28 - I would have a fixed date - for ranges of districts suitable to the requirements of each range - but where it was manifestly desirable I would have liberty for any one District the period that may best suited for the well being of that district - If a fixed date in each district is decided on - the best is needed will be obtained - which is generally throughout the Presidency is early July or July 30th

I concur in the above views - It is more essential to consult local circumstances than to attempt to force one general rule.

Rev Depart.

№ 1633

Proceedings of the Madras Government

Under date the 18th September, 1860.

Read the following Pro

ceedings of the Board of

Revenue

Reporting the Board's
opinion on the matter treated
of in paragraph 9 of the Dis-
patch of the Home Govt. Vy.
eligibility of the date fixed
(30 April) for relinquishments
of land.

(Here enter 26 Aug 1860 № 3572)

The reasons given
by the Board of Revenue
in these proceedings for
fixing the 30th June in
preference to the 30 April
as the latest date on
which ryots may be
allowed to relinquish
land, appear reasonable
and just. But the course
suggested in para 28
seems preferable, that is
as the seasons vary in
the

(4) Rev. 1860 Dated 24th Aug
Rec'd 30th Aug
Read 31st Aug
№ 3872.

Reporting the Board's
opinion on the matter treated
of in paragraph 9 of the
Despatch from the Home Govt.
Vy's dispatch of the date
fixed (30th April) for
relinquishments of land.

Rec'd 24 Aug 1860 № 3572
" 29th July " 18-19
" 12th August " 7-8
" 10th March 1860 " 77
" 20th May " " 57-58
" 9th July " " 93-94

Mis. Rec: 26th July 1860 № 314

Copy of Letter to Govt
Dated 23rd April 1860 № 52.

A.16033.

A.16033-18th Aug 1860

C.S. Regd. 2 Nov.

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Relinquishment of Lands by Ryots.

Revenue 18th Sept.
Pro: of Govt for Septr.

No 1633.

Pro: of the Madras Govt
Dy 18th Septr 60.

From B of Rem 5th Camp 1st
No 54 in Pro 13th July No 161.

Copy in a Letter to Govt
Of 23d April 1862.

10 — 0 — 0

8-7-0
29-11-07
22-5-08
23-1-12

Sist mem on Lands —

On the subject of fixing a suitable date for each group of Dists for the relinquishment of land by Ryots.

No 303 & 304.

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