M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-22.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2324 Press ~~Mis.~~

1160-61

Dated 18-12-1861.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 18th December 1861.

No. 160. Read the following letter from C. PELLY, Esq., Member of the Board of Revenue, to J. D. SIM, Esq., Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Ootacamund, 16th November 1861, No. 1,087:—

SIR,

Order of Government, dated 23rd April 1861, No. 917.
Letter from Collector of Malabar, dated 25th July 1861, No. 2,135.

1. With reference to the Order of Government as per margin, I have the honor to report further on the subject of the revision of the Village Establishment in Malabar.

2. In his letter dated 25th July 1861, Mr. Grant strongly deprecates any interference with the Village Establishments, at all events until the new village land Registers are completed. I have since been in personal communication with Mr. Grant, and after much deliberation on the subject I have come to the same conclusion, that it is inexpedient at present to attempt a revision of the Village Establishments. It is better that Mr. Grant should complete the Register of land holdings in which he is engaged with the aid of the village (or Amshum or township) staff, as it now stands. To attempt to remodel and reduce the establishments until this work is done, would greatly embarrass the Revenue authorities in the prosecution of this most important and urgently required reform in the Revenue administration of Malabar, on which all the energies of the Hoozoor, Táluq and Village Establishments are now concentrated.

3. But when this work is completed (which it will probably be during the current Revenue Fasli), Mr. Grant should take up the matter of village administration vigorously, and submit a plan for putting it on a perfectly satisfactory basis.

4. I do not consider, from all I have heard, that it will be desirable to make any considerable combination of the present Amshums, which are generally large enough for the efficient working of the system, but some few of the smaller Amshums may probably be joined together.

		RS.
* Adhigari's salary generally		5¾
Curnum	do	6
Peon	do	2½

5. With the present Amshums it will not be necessary to increase the salaries* generally of the Adhigari and Curnum. The former office is no doubt sought for, not so much for the pay (for the holders of the Adhigariship are frequently wealthy persons), as for the influence and power it gives the incumbent. But it is nevertheless said that the office is not held now in such request as it used to be, in consequence of the requisition of a more exact performance of their duties on the part of the higher authorities. But it should be the aim of the Collector to prevent as much as possible unnecessary interference with the Adhigari, and uphold the respectability of the office, and it would tend to raise the respectability of this officer, if, instead of paying him a monthly salary, as at present, the plan of deducting from his Patta at the end of the year a round sum, as an acknowledgment of his services (as I have recommended for other Districts), were adopted in Malabar. The remuneration would be far more acceptable to a wealthy man, if received in this shape, and Mr. Grant will be directed to consider this proposition in submitting his scheme.

6. The duties of the Curnum will be much lessened by simplifying the land Registers, so that the pay they now receive will not probably need to be increased. But it should be carefully considered by Mr. Grant, whether it would not be practicable, without impairing the efficiency of the Curnum's office, after the new Registers are completed, to reduce the number of Curnums, allowing one only for two Amshums in many cases, and paying them better, at the same time effecting a saving for supplementing the pay of the Peons. This suggestion I am fully aware cannot at present be entertained, but when Mr. Grant has finished the land Registers and put the accounts into proper order, he may possibly find it feasible to adopt it in somemeasure.

7. The pay of the village Peons (2½ Rupees a month) is undoubtedly too small, considering the price of labor now ruling in Malabar. They certainly should not have less than 3 Rupees each man, and even at this rate nothing more than the ordinary village duties now performed by them can be expected from them. I am assured that they would not at all undertake the duties of village watchmen under the Police for this pay; and that it would be necessary to pay a village watchman in Malabar at least 5 Rupees.

8. The Collector is also very decidedly of opinion that the number of Peons for each Amshum cannot be reduced below two, except in a very few villages; and considering the size of the Amshums or townships, the distances from each other of the several families, the amount of revenue to be collected and the number of tax payers, I am disposed to agree with Mr. Grant that it will be inexpedient to reduce the number to any considerable amount.

9. The Government observed* that as the Revenue Establishments are to be relieved of Police duty, the same strength of Establishments would be unnecessary, and especially that the number of Peons might be diminished. But as regards the Village Establishments of Malabar, the Police will, I apprehend, relieve the present Peons, and the Revenue Establishment generally of nothing. I understand that it is not now contemplated to introduce the expensive Establishment of a separate Village Inspector and Peons. It is found that this proposed scheme is not likely to work well; and the present Superintendent of Police, Mr. Menzies, has informed me that the pay originally proposed for the Village Police system is utterly inadequate in Malabar to procure men to fill the situation.

* Order above, paragraph 6.

10. The plan at present in vogue is as follows:—There are several Police stations in each Táluq, one for every two or more Amshums according to the locality. A Constable from these stations goes his rounds, and *daily* visits *every* Amshum, and receives from the Adhigari a report of Police matters in the Amshum. And this system it is, I believe, intended to continue for the present at least.

11. The watching of the villages at night is done by the people themselves; that is the poorer classes are made, by the more powerful inhabitants, to patrol in a body about the township; but this patrolling of the parish is falling into desuetude, as the people object to be made the unpaid watchmen of their richer neighbours. But the Police stations dotted over the country, and the daily round of the Constable to each township, seems to provide for the present requirements in giving security to the people in the generally prosperous state of the province. The work of watching is not performed by the Amshum Peons, who are engaged, and will be engaged, chiefly in collecting revenue, taking messages, and attending to any orders they receive from the Adhigaris, and amongst other duties they will still have to convey to the Police stations information of any kind that it may be necessary to send.

12. The head man of the village will probably likewise have as much work of a Police nature, as he had before as head of Village Police. He will not have the duty of apprehending criminals, but he will be expected to give, and it is desirable that he should be encouraged in giving every aid to the Police, in the detection of crime; and he will still have to dispose, as Village Magistrate, of all petty assaults and brawls, so that I do not clearly see that in Malabar the village Peons will be relieved to such an extent of Police duties, as to make that relief a ground for the reduction of their number.

13. Considering therefore the difficulties which present themselves at the present time, owing to the work imposed in all the Collector's Establishments, the village included, in the preparation of the Revenue Registers, in addition to the work thrown on every one by the introduction of the new taxes, and the unsettled state of men's minds at the present moment by the changes going on, I would not press the Collector to revise the Village Establishments until he has concluded the work he is now engaged in, and I have accordingly acceded to his request to postpone the measure for a year.

14. In the meantime Mr. Grant will be requested not to lose sight of the question of extending the 10 per cent. assessment, levied in some parts of the District for the payment of the village servants, to those parts where it has not hitherto prevailed, as directed in paragraph 7 of the Order of Government above referred to, and which (paragraph 19 of his letter) is now engaging his attention.

15. I would remark with regard to paragraphs 12 and 13 of Mr. Grant's letter that Act XXXIX of 1858 gives the Revenue authorities power to charge the costs of collection to revenue

defaulters, and that when Kists are not punctually paid attachment and sale with all its costs may issue against the defaulter.

16. Mr. Grant (paragraph 22) explains the cause of delay in acting up to the instructions of Government.

From P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Malabar, to C. PELLY, Esq., Member of the Board of Revenue, Chepauk, dated Calicut, 25th July 1861, No. 2,135.

Sir,

1. The Proceedings of Government, Revenue Department, and their Order thereon, dated 23rd April 1861, No. 917, were received on the 29th April.

2. The subject of the amalgamation of the Amshums has now engaged my attention for more than a year.

3. You are already aware of my opinions regarding it, namely, that no reduction in the Village Establishments should, for the present, be attempted, or at all events until the village Land Registers are completed, so that we may feel that we have a firm basis of operation for Revenue purposes, independent of the village Accountants on whose personal and local knowledge we must greatly rely until the Registers are finished.

4. Holding these opinions I delayed replying to the Proceedings now under reference, until further experience confirmed or modified them. In the meantime I have been engaged in and completed the Jamabandy of six Táluqs. All their accounts have been compared with the lands and Pattas, for the first time in the experience of Malabar I believe, issued representing the actual holdings. What has been done is a great advance in the right direction, but it will require another year of careful adjustment to bring things to their correct bearings, and I think it requires but little argument to show how very unadvisable it will be to attempt to interfere with the existing Village Establishments until the accounts are strictly correct.

5. The ignorance displayed by the Ryots as to the correct amount of the demand against them is astounding. This arises from the fact that parties had sold, re-sold, mortgaged and transferred lands without any corresponding change in the entries in their Pattas, the result of this was that the demand entered in the Patta, was payable by three or four people, and their respective amounts of payment were known to the Accountants only, who naturally encouraged this state of things. The satisfaction that the new order of Pattas has introduced is very great. No changes in Pattas are now allowed, and the demand against a Ryot is to be collected from him until on his application an order is issued from the Collector's Office permitting any change. The Ryots have this year got their Pattas; they will, on comparing them with their actual holdings, no doubt discover, as they have already done, many inaccuracies which will require to be remedied.

6. There are still five Táluqs in which the old *régime* holds good, but we have broken ground in them, and next season I hope, we shall be able to send up to the Board a fairly correct Land Register for Malabar.

7. In the course of this past season's work, I have come in contact with thousands of the people, conversed with them publicly and privately and in every way endeavoured to elicit their sentiments as to past and proposed changes. On the following point there can be no doubt, viz., that the great size of the new Táluqs is looked on with distaste by the Adigharies who have to send in the collections. Many people preferred complaints to me, and on being questioned as to the reason they had not gone to the Tahsíldár, they stated that they would sooner forego the chance of justice, than undergo the trouble, expense and loss of time incurred thereby, that a poor man going a distance to complain would probably lose a week, whilst his family in the meantime are hard put to for the means of livelihood. Certainly on the east coast a poor man's case is far different; if he is wronged, that wrong becomes the subject of discussion in the village on the day the wrong is perpetrated, and the wrong doer, although he may have a party on his side, cannot deprive the injured man of the moral support of the many whose opinions

strengthen the hands of the village authorities. In Malabar how different; an injured party can receive but slight support from his neighbours unless he starts on a circuit of some miles to rehearse his grievances, after visiting them one by one, the consequence is that such a course is rarely attempted, and the Adighari is consequently had recourse to. Under these circumstances to reduce the number of these officials will be much felt.

8. The Adigharies themselves feel the responsibility of the collections, as the least delay in realizing them is at once remarked on, and defaulters residing at a distance of six, seven and eight miles are not easily commanded.

9. It may be remarked that the people can have recourse to the Police when they have complaints to prefer, but it is to be observed that the Police stations are few and far between, and that they are precluded from taking cognizance of petty complaints, but are to refer the parties to the Adighari and Sub-Magistrates.

10. The Adighari has his civil and criminal power to exercise, hitherto they have been allowed to rest much in abeyance, but the daily tendency is to cause them to be exercised. The new Police have directions to refer parties with petty complaints to them, and the Sub-Magistrates have orders to do the same. Hitherto the Adigharies have done much in an arbitrary way, which will entail no inconsiderable amount of personal exertion and trouble to execute in accordance with existing Rules and Regulations, and which are being daily acted up to more and more.

11. With regard to the Adigharies' Peons, I give it as my decided opinion, that without their aid the Revenue cannot be collected with any regularity, and that there is a danger of an irregularity increasing at a rapid pace.

12. With several defaulters distant some miles in different directions, the Adighari must have Peons, otherwise the impunity of one man from a legal demand for a protracted period encourages his neighbour to try the same process.

13. According to the powers with which a Collector is vested for the distraint of property, it may be safely advanced that it is to the advantage of a man to keep his tax in arrears as after considerable delay, especially if several parties held back the tax, the utmost that can be charged on unpaid balances is 12 per cent. whereas a higher rate of interest is obtainable in every part of the country. The defaulter can also pay his balance at the last moment after Government has been put to the expense of perhaps two or three references about his affairs.

14. It must be obvious that a very few cases of this kind in a large Amshum or Parish, supposing two of the present Parishes to be amalgamated, would create much trouble if not tend to confusion, and if with this is considered the unsettled state of our accounts the difficulties become greater.

15. Another difficulty, which is to be considered with reference to these balances, is that the Táluq servants have to distrain and sell property, and be thereby drawn away perhaps, to a distance from their more legitimate duties. The employment of batta Peons has been allowed in cases of distraint, but the regulated batta according to Regulation 27 of 1802, Section 4, is only $1\frac{3}{4}$ Anna per diem, a rate at which it is impossible now-a-days to engage a man. The present rate allowed to Peons accompanying Court Ameenahs is 4 Annas a day.

16. Lastly as regards the Adigharies' Peons, without their aid it would be perfectly futile to attempt to carry out the Income Tax Act; in fact with their aid, some of the Assessors are in the greatest straits.

17. Malabar was formerly divided into Hoblies, each comprising two, three and four Amshums, and it was on account of their unwieldy size for practical purposes I believe, that the present division into Amshums was adopted.

18. I trust I have shown that at least until our Land Registers are completed, it is inexpedient and highly unadvisable to interfere with the existing Village Establishments.

19. As to the 10 per cent. Assessment in those parts of the District where it has not yet prevailed, the subject has engaged my attention, and I hope next season to be able to give correct

information on it and to submit a plan for its imposition, but as yet our information is incomplete, and considering that the arranging of the accounts and lands has issued in the addition to the permanent Revenue of about Rupees 34,361, in the Táluqs on which it is proposed to lay the cess, Wainád excepted, I think both policy and expediency indicate that things should be left as they are for a time.

20. In paragraph 5, Government take exception to my apparent dilatoriness in replying to their Judicial Proceedings, No. 672 of the 30th May 1860.

21. To this I beg to remark that I addressed the Chief Secretary to Government on 6th June 1860, informing him that I was about to submit a report to you on the subject of the Village Establishments, and that until its receipt I requested that Mr. Robinson's suggestion that 20,000 Rupees of the cess levied for the maintenance of the Village Revenue Establishments, might not be carried to the credit of the Police, as in such event the Village Establishments would be thoroughly crippled.

22. My report to you was despatched in July 24th 1860, and between that period and the final date of your letter to Government, references, requiring lengthened answers and entailing no small amount of trouble and consideration, were made, so that I trust you will disabuse Government of the impression apparently entertained, that I was dilatory in acting up to their instructions conveyed through you.

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No. 161. ORDER THEREON 18th December 1861, No. 2,324.

Ordered to lie over.

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

R 23 April 1862 Nos 390 & 391

Revenue Dept.

1862

Proc. of Govt. for December.

No. 2778

From

C. Pelly Esqr.

Member of the

Board of Revenue

To

I. D. Sim Esqr.

Secretary to Government

Revenue Dept.

Dated 16th November 1861

Recd 24th "

Read 27th "

(Encl 1)

Proc. of Govt. 8 April 1862 No. 787

Submitting a

further report on the

subject of the revision

of the Malabar Village

Establishments.

No 2324

Ordered to lie

on Rec.

I. D. S.

Govt. St. George

18th March 1863

Nos 160 & 161.