

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1146	Press Mis.
Dated 12. 3. 1866	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
12th May 1866.*

No. 249. Read the following letter from the Collector of Tinnevelly, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Tinnevelly, 30th April 1866, No. 168 :—

1. I observed in the "Fort Saint George Gazette" of the 24th of this month, received by me on the 28th, an official announcement that I was removed from the Collectorate of Tinnevelly, and transferred to a distant Collectorate, just vacated by the death of the Collector Mr. Hathaway. On the same date I received a private communication from the Chief Secretary, informing me that the Government had, with great reluctance, been compelled to take this step from a strong representation of the Board of Revenue of my incompetence to hold my present office during the revision of the settlement, owing to ignorance of the Tamil language; and that consequently the Government were compelled either to postpone indefinitely the revision of the assessment, or to appoint another Officer than me to conduct it. The letter concluded with an assurance that no reflection was cast on my efficiency by my transfer. I despatched, by return of post, a demi-official in reply to Mr. Arbutnot's private letter, which I requested to be laid before His Excellency the Governor in Council. In that demi-official I pointed out that the letter of the Board of Revenue, on which the Government had acted, was never communicated to me; that I was consequently unaware of its existence or contents, deprived of the chance of answering its allegations, whatever they may have been; and that the sudden and summary removal of a public Officer under such circumstances was, to say the least, unusual; that as regards the actual result the consequences to me were as penal as if I had been removed for misconduct, being compelled to take a journey from the most southern sea-coast District of India to the most northern inland District of the Madras Presidency, and to exchange a cool and popular District for a hot one during the hot season, and with my health impaired by a long residence of thirteen years in the Ceded Districts, which necessitated my leaving them on sick certificate only two years previously. As I had served the long period of thirteen years in the hottest and most unpopular, unhealthy, and shunned Districts of the Madras Presidency, the late Governor, in consideration thereof, and of the injury thence arising to my health, transferred me on a vacancy arising to the healthy and cooler District of Tinnevelly, which I accordingly joined after my return from leave about ten months ago, as permanent Collector.

2. The reason for the cancelment of the boon I had fairly earned, alleged in the private letter of the Chief Secretary, was a certain representation from the Board of Revenue, which not having seen, I cannot reply to. I gather from the Chief Secretary's letter, however, that ignorance of the Tamil language is alleged. I requested to be informed on whose authority this statement was made, for it was not founded on fact. Whoever made that statement, made it on imperfect information. If it was assumed that because unlike Telugu and Hindustani, in which I obtained the highest honorary distinction, the Tamil language was not added to my studies, and therefore I was ignorant of the language, that statement was made in ignorance of a fact, namely, that on being appointed to a Tamil District in 1843, I studied the Tamil language grammatically with a teacher, and practically conducted business

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in it in the years 1843-44, and 1846-47, and in 1848, in the Tamil Districts of South and North Arcot.

3. As regards the allegation that Government, in consequence of the Board's representation, were compelled either to postpone indefinitely the revision of the settlement or entrust it to another Officer, I point out that so far from the settlement being postponed it has been in as forward a state of progress under me for the last three months, from which date the establishment was entertained, as was possible under the circumstances of having to wait for maps and field registers from the Survey Department, whose operations are not so far advanced as could be wished.

4. I challenge proof that the *slightest act of dilatoriness or omission* in pushing on the revision can be attributed to me. I call attention to the correspondence shewing the rate of progress, which establishes the fact that the settlement *is in progress*. I demand an enquiry of the most rigid description as to the inference drawn from the Board's letter, that the settlement must be indefinitely postponed if I remain here as Collector.

5. I have not only pushed on the classification with the most economical staff of classifiers ever entertained, but with that staff I have out-run the progress of the survey in its issue of maps (demarcation sketches they cannot spare). The delay of the survey is a question for Government. It does not concern me.

6. I look to His Excellency, Lord Napier, in Council, to render me justice, to make a full enquiry into the subject, to suspend my transfer until the matter has been examined. I am convinced that the just claim of every subordinate Officer, however humble in position, will obtain a fair hearing. I am unavoidably absent, at a distance of 400 miles. I demand a careful and deliberate enquiry before my prospects are injured, my reputation for efficiency lowered, myself put to great pecuniary loss and inconvenience, my health endangered, and the boon of a healthy District given me by Sir William Denison, and which I had fairly earned by patient endurance of, and good service in, bad climate elsewhere, taken away from me without preliminary notice, or hearing, or time for appeal.

7. The settlement is now in good train. I have had hundreds of experiments of out-turn of grain, made by my Sub-Collector, Head Assistant, Assistant, Tahsildars, and Head Classifiers. I have considered and settled in my mind the rates to be proposed. I wait for the survey to give me the rest of the maps of the Talook, and I look forward to presenting a scheme of settlement which will meet the satisfaction of Government.

Transferred to the Revenue Department.

FORT SAINT GEORGE,
5th May 1866.

(Signed) A. J. ARBUTHNOT,

Chief Secretary

No. 250.

ORDER THEREON, 12th May 1866, No. 1,146.

Miscellaneous.

1. The Government observe that Mr. Wedderburn's transfer from Tinnevely was ordered entirely on public

grounds. They had determined that the duty of revising the settlement of the

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District should be conducted by the Collector, and they considered it of the first importance to nominate, for the double duty of revising the settlement and carrying on the ordinary administration of the District, an Officer who combined thorough knowledge of settlement operations, with intimate acquaintance with the language, tenures, &c., of Southern India. The nomination of Mr. Puckle, who possessed these qualifications, involves no slur on Mr. Wedderburn, whose general capacity and merits are fully recognized by Government, but whose service for many years has been confined to the Ceded Districts, and who has had no experience in Settlement operations.

2. The Government claim and must exercise the power of employing their Officers wherever they think fit. They regret that, in the present instance, a measure adopted solely on public grounds should be productive of so much personal inconvenience and disappointment, and this consideration has led them to state their reasons as well as to over-look the tone of Mr. Wedderburn's letter.

3. Mr. Wedderburn will join the Bellary District as soon as he conveniently can.

(True Extract.)

Secretary to Government.

To the Collector of Tinnevely.

~~By the Board of Revenue.~~

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

88-1146

12th May/68

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For the Collection of Government Despatches

J. D. P.

Revenue 1866 Depy
Pro of Govt for Navy

172/146

Pro of the reduced
Government 697
12th May 1866.

Mr. Wetherburn
informed that Mr. Paddy
had been taken to the
hospital. no other on hand
and that he had been
from the hospital to
Hull and was ordered an
order for the same.

172/146-250