

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1349.	Press Mis.
Dated	1-6-	1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
1st June 1866.*

No. 122. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Financial Department:—

Furnishing to Revenue Board letter from Govern-
ment of India forwarding, with their observa-
tions, copy of a Memorandum of Mr. Foster,
Commissioner of Accounts, regarding the system
of classified Talook and District Accounts at
present in force in the Madras Presidency.

(Here enter 8th February 1866, No. 64.)

No. 123. ORDER THEREON, 1st June 1866, No. 1,349.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,

Under Secretary to Government.

Ed. S. T. Augustin.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
8th February 1866.*

No. 7. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Fort William, 24th January 1866, No. 304.

In reply to your letter, No. 571, dated 12th December 1865, I am directed to forward to you copy of a Memorandum drawn up by Mr. Foster, the Commissioner of Accounts, dated 15th January 1866, and to observe that, in deference to the strongly expressed opinion of the Government of Madras, the Governor General in Council will not now press any modification of the system of classified Taluq and District accounts at present in force in the Madras Presidency. Hereafter, however, the Inspector of Accounts will visit Madras, when, with the aid of the further knowledge which has yet to be obtained on the working of the revised system here, and of the further trial of the system in force at Madras, sound conclusions may be arrived at on the method of procedure that ought to be finally adopted.

MEMORANDUM.

MADRAS ACCOUNTS.

During my interview at Madras with the Members of the Board of Revenue and the Accountant General, I understood that all objections to my proposals regarding the mode of rendering the Treasury Accounts had been removed, and the subsequent note of the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 7th September 1865, to some extent bears out this view, though in a more reserved manner than my impressions of what passed verbally had let me to expect.

2. After this interview, at the request of the Accountant General, I furnished a Memorandum, which were to be founded the recommendations to Government for carrying out my proposals. But after my departure from Madras, objections, which I supposed had been satisfactorily met, were again put forward, and a course was adopted, the reverse of what I had had reason to anticipate. Since the opinion of the Madras Officers is so fixed in favor of their own system, it would probably be useless to urge the introduction of the new system, however desirable it may be, unless some Officer practically acquainted with its working could be deputed to assist in carrying it out.

3. It is not easy, in writing at a distance, to reply fully to objections which might readily be met on the spot, but there are a few points respecting which I wish to make some remarks.

4. The Accountant General states that the Treasury accounts prepared by District Officers would, under the new system, have to be compiled in his office, in precisely the same form as they now are at the Treasuries.

5. There is, however, the important difference that the present account rendered is in lump sums for each head, whereas the new form details the amounts of the vouchers, and checks the correctness of the totals.

6. It is argued that the proposed account being simply a transfer of compilation from one office to another, there would be no saving of labor. Those who have for years been engaged upon these duties under the old system, and whose prejudices are naturally in its favor, admit, after some months' experience, that they can audit and compile under the new system more rapidly than they could audit, check, and correct the classified Treasury accounts under the old system. This being the case, it follows that the District compilation is extra labor, and must cause delay, when, as stated by the Accountant General, the preparation of the Treasury account cannot in many cases begin at the District Treasury till after the 5th of the month.

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7. The Board of Revenue state that the accounts of each Tahsildar must, for departmental purposes, be kept in a classified form. In Bengal, as well as at Madras, Revenue receipts and important classes of expenditure are kept in Registers in a classified form; but there does not appear to be a valid reason for imposing on Tahsildars and other Treasury Officers the labor and responsibility of correctly classifying a number of miscellaneous receipts and payments under a large variety of heads of account. The Tahsildars are sure to fall into error and confuse the accounts. This duty could much more readily and correctly be performed by the Accountant General. However important it may be to have each class of Revenue kept distinct, the classification of these miscellaneous payments under the Budget Heads, sub-heads, and detail items, cannot be of importance to the Revenue Board. If the classification of the latter were omitted, the large reduction of detail work at Treasuries and Taluqs which would follow could hardly take effect without a relative reduction of subordinate establishments.

8. The Board of Revenue state that I have overlooked the very material difference of system as regards the accounts of the subordinate District Treasuries in Madras and Bengal. The Board are in error in this supposition. It was a point that I fully considered and fully discussed with Madras Officers. It was only on the ground of the alleged postal and other difficulties that I abstained from urging the daily transmission of vouchers from the Taluq to the Hoozoor Treasuries. I am, however, still of opinion that, if at the present time a daily transmission would be inconvenient, it would, at all events, be desirable that it should be bi-monthly, so that the vouchers paid during the first half of the month could reach the Accountant General, for audit, and be disposed of by him in advance of the monthly account.

9. The statement by the Board of Revenue, that the Schedules accompanying the new form of account would occupy at least 10 or 15 sheets, shows how easy it is to be misled when there is no practical acquaintance with the matter in question. In Bengal, all Schedules of Revenue are dispensed with, and the Officer in charge of the Bengal Treasury Accounts informs me that the average number of Schedules is about six, some of which do not cover a single page of foolscap.

10. With regard to the date for closing the Treasuries, I may remark that my original intention was to propose that the Taluq Accounts should be closed one or two days before the end of the month, but that it was on the representations of the Accountant General himself that I named the 25th. The Accountant General now objects to the 25th, and proposes the 28th; but in place of closing the Accounts, he would close the Treasuries. This seems objectionable, as it is always dangerous to refuse to receive money when tendered by the public, though the arrangement could no doubt be made without difficulty so far as it would effect Government Officers. The objection that, by the blending together of the two months' receipts and payments, the comparison and check between the Accountants' and the Revenue Accounts would be destroyed, would be met by adopting the same date as regards the Taluq Accounts for both Departments. It is as easy to record the Accounts of a month ending the 29th, as of a month ending the 30th or 31st.

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11. Stress is laid upon the anticipated fact that the Madras Accounts will be transmitted to the Central office as correctly, and at as early a date, as those of other Governments. Even should this be the case, the question would still be open as to whether the establishments of the Treasuries and of the Account office in Madras are not kept up at a greater strength than would be necessary if a more simple mode of Account were introduced. My belief is that the Bengal office of Account, as now constituted, and after relieving Treasury Officers of a large amount of compilation, is carrying on its duties efficiently with a smaller strength of establishment, compared with the amount of Treasury work to be performed, than is employed at Madras, where it is relieved from, and the Treasuries are burdened with, the detail classification of receipts and payments.

12. I may add that in Mysore the system of Taluq Treasuries is much the same as in Madras, and I have reason to believe that, on inquiry, it would appear that the Deputy Accountant General in charge of these Accounts finds no difficulty in adopting, without reserve, the new system of Account.

15th January 1866.

(Signed) M. H. FOSTER,
(A true Copy).

(Signed) J. E. COOKE,
Asst. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Ordered that a copy of the above be sent to the Accountant General, Madras.

No. 8. ORDER THEREON, 8th February 1866, No. 64.

Ordered that a copy of the foregoing letter, and of its enclosure, be furnished to the Board of Revenue, with reference to the Proceedings of Government of the 21st November last, No. 537.
(True Extract).

G. J. Cunningham
Chief Secretary.

To the Board of Revenue.
" Revenue Department.

Erd. J. H. Burns.

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1871 - November 25 1883
1872 - 1873 5746
1874 Dec - 1875 Jan 1883

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1750 = 1866. *Chapman*
 Dec. 1st 1866. to A. W.
 1750 = 1866. 489.
 Surroundings of the
 Hudson's Bay in the
 Province of Ontario.
 Printed &c. 30 N. York
 Printed 165. 1866.

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Thomas King to Beal.
 Boston letter from Govt. of
 Indian forwarding with them other
 waters of the Bureau of Ind. Affairs.
 I am full of accounts regarding the
 system of classification of Indians.
 Records of preservation force in
 the Bureau of Ind. Affairs.

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