

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2057

Press
~~File~~

305.306

Dated 13-8-1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
13th August 1866.*

No. 305. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 1st August 1866, No. 5,282.

Read the following letter from the Acting Collector of Madras, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Sydapett, 6th July 1866, No. 231 :—

1. For a great number of years, probably for the past thirty years, the shell quarries at Chunamkolum and Ealavoor have been rented out. These quarries are scattered over a considerable space. They are not uniform or continuous, and their position is discovered by boring. After a time a quarry becomes exhausted, and is abandoned; the sites of the exhausted quarries are large holes. In these holes, earth salt effloresces, and used to be collected and carried away by the villagers. In order to put a stop to the practice and protect the salt revenue, about ten years ago a clause was introduced into the contract, requiring the renter to fill up each exhausted quarry. The condition has never been carried out. Recently the Mhsildar of Ponnery brought the subject to notice, and requested instructions. On several previous occasions he has brought it to notice, and the renter has been addressed by this Office. For the last eight years, at all events, the shell contract has been taken and held by the Public Works Department.

2. It has just been sold by auction for the ensuing three years, and Captain Goddard has bought it. Before knocking it down to him, I explained the difficulty in regard to the exhausted holes, and Captain Goddard agreed I should insert in his contract a clause binding him to abide by any orders respecting them the Board of Revenue or any other constituted authority might think proper to issue. This was done.

3. Captain Goddard now presses for instructions. He had a plan to obviate all difficulty. It was that a trench should be dug in a quarry, and when the trench was exhausted a similar trench should be begun, and excavated in its rear; the debris being cast into the first trench to fill that up, and so on, all over the quarry ground. But the plan is impracticable owing to the deposits of shells lying in patches. Captain Goddard, accordingly, is at a loss what to do. He says the exhausted quarries are numbered by millions, and extend over thousands of acres, and that to fill them up would cost "lacs and lacs of Rupees." It appears from his remarks that no attempt has ever been made to close the holes. They are filled with water when the Pulicat lake rises in the monsoon; and when the lake subsides after the rains, the water in them soaks down, and salt is left behind.

4. Such is the description of these quarries. It would seem that, after the monsoon, most salt is deposited. Each hole is six feet deep and forty feet in circumference. The shell is found four feet below the surface, and is in beds two feet thick.

5. Until definite instructions are issued, Captain Goddard states that the working of the quarries are at a stand still, as no sub-contractors will contract with him until they know what will be required of them. I have, therefore, the honor to solicit the immediate orders of the Board.

6. From all I can learn, the stipulation as to filling up the holes, is not of any real importance. The efflorescence of salt in them cannot be great, nor can the quantity of salt, by the subsidence of the waters of the Pulicat lake after the monsoon, be of moment.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
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7. I think all that is requisite is to issue instructions to the Salt Superintendent of Chunamkolum, who is a servant on the Nellore Establishment, to look after the old pits and have them cleared at such times as he may think necessary. He might employ a few extra hands to do the work, if in any particular year it seemed to be greater than usual; but under ordinary circumstances, his establishment would suffice. It has sufficed apparently in all the past years, because the Tahsildar talks of the salt having been removed as it cropped up.

Submitted to Government, in continuation of Board's Proceedings, dated 30th July 1866, No. 5,222, now under the consideration of Government.

No. 306. ORDER THEREON, 13th August 1866, No. 2,057.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded with reference to G. O. dated 8th August, No. 1,989.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,

Under Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Ed. S. T. Aug.

Pro. 8 Aug. 1866 No. 172-173

*Rev. 1866. Department.
Pro. of Govt for August*

No. 2447.
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

*Dated 1st August 1866.
Dep. Secy.
Rev. Secy.*

*Pro. of the Board of Rev.
2/18 Aug/66 No. 205
No. 5,282.*

Submitting letter from Acting Collector of Madras reporting on shell curries at Chunamkolum and Ealavoor.

*W. 2057.
Recorded in the file
5/20 & 8 August 1866
13 Aug/66*

A. 305 & 306

14th Dec. 1866 of Board of Revenue