

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
11th March 1871.*

No. 159. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 27th February 1871, No. 861:—

Read the following letter from the Collector of Tinnevely, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Tirukurungudi, 10th January 1871, No. 20.

As required in Board's Proceedings, No. 6,021, dated 7th October 1870, I have the honour to submit proposals for the better management of the Tirukurungudi chuttrum in this district.

2. Tirukurungudi is situated by the side of the old Madura and Travancore road, where it crosses the Nambayar river, near the foot of the western mountains; it is an out-of-the-way place, and the large funds of the choultry have been systematically despoiled and wasted.

3. The building is very dilapidated, and the neighbourhood is neglected and filthy. Successive Sub-Collectors have made various attempts with greater or less success to check fraud and waste, and to improve the chuttrum estate.

4. In 1868 some irrigation works were repaired, and an addition was made to the building, and in 1870 Mr. Stuart contracted with a Brahmin to feed the poor at 893 Rs. per mensem for six months; this term expires at the end of the current month, but the contract has not worked satisfactorily. I propose, therefore, reverting to a system of direct management, which will, I am sure, work sufficiently well under the following checks:—

5. The present income of the chuttrum lands is Rs. 16,727-3-4, the rents are paid in grain, and the ryots are rack-rented to the uttermost.

6. Taking the Motafysal commutation rate of the Government lands in this neighbourhood, namely, 3 Rs. per cottah, the Inam Commissioner valued the chuttrum revenue at 7,000 Rs.; the difference between 7,000 and 16,727 Rs. is, therefore, the excess that the chuttrum ryots are paying over and above what the Government ryots pay under similar circumstances.

7. There is no excuse for this rack-renting system, while the chuttrum is under Government management, and we cannot expend some portion of our revenue better than by improving the condition of the chuttrum ryots, and making them contented and happy; to this end I have laid out the lands in blocks by the ordinary Settlement process, and after equalizing the rental of the several fields within each block (now charged with various Varam or Patam or Izarah rates without any good reason for difference) have struck a uniform grain assessment per acre, aggregating for the entire block the precise grain rental paid at present, and have commuted the same for a money rental at the rate of 5 Rs. per cottah of grain.

8. The present market rate is 6 Rs., but this is not likely to stand, and 5 Rs. is the rate adopted throughout the district for the commutation of Zemini rentals for the Local Road Fund. The application of a 5-Rupree rate will reduce the present assessment of the irrigated lands of the chuttrum by exactly 1/4th, or by 2,500 Rs.; but this reduction is only nominal, as far as the chuttrum is concerned, for the grain rental has hitherto been a fruitful source of speculation, and vast quantities of the grain stored up have been damaged or wasted, so that it is not too much to

say that $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the grain collected from the ryots has been actually lost to the chuttrum.

9. The money-rental that I propose to substitute for the present grain assessment may thus be considered the equivalent of all that the chuttrum has actually got, or is likely to get, from its lands, and the ryots will directly benefit by a reduction of 2,500 Rs., or 5 Rs. an acre, on an assessment now averaging 30 Rs. an acre. There will, moreover, be 2,500 Rs. less to plunder; and as the excess of income over *bona fide* chuttrum expenditure will still be 30 per cent., there is no reason whatever why we should not let the ryots benefit to some degree by our surplus wealth.

10. Having thus cut down the income to a money-rental of 13,750 Rs., I propose to limit the expenditure under the head of Charity to 8,650 Rs.

11. There are exactly 50 pensioners, the lame and blind of surrounding villages, now drawing an uncertain dole from the chuttrum in kind, and this, by the chuttrum accounts, amounts to 234 Rs., or 4 Rs. 11 Annas a-month per head. Now these pensioners are no doubt defrauded of much that they are supposed to receive, and what they do get has to be carried in bulk to some distance once or twice a-month, which, to cripples and invalids, must be a great inconvenience; this pension in kind they would gladly commute for a certain fixed sum, say 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ Rs. a-month, to be paid at the Taluq Treasury, and the chuttrum would save the difference, or 69 Rs. monthly.

12. I next ascertained the number of north country pilgrims (Ladar) passing along this road to average 20 daily; these people cook their own food with the observances of their several castes; and thus instead of maintaining a vast establishment to issue provisions in kind, when there are sufficient bazaars within a few yards distance, it would be far easier for the chuttrum Manager to issue twenty tickets from a regular Cheque book daily, to enable a certain number of pilgrims to buy what they please for a certain amount (say 2 Annas 6 Pies each) in the bazaar for their several tickets; the cost of this would be, in round figures, 100 Rs. a-month.

13. The number of *bona fide* travellers requiring assistance I have ascertained to be 40 daily; of these $\frac{1}{4}$ th are Vaishnavars who will not eat food cooked in a chuttrum. Ten tickets might be issued to these in the same way as to the pilgrims, and the actual cooking required might thus be reduced to what is required for 30 travellers and say 20 chuttrum servants or neighbours, whose abuse of the charity we must overlook for the present. This, for 50 people, would cost, in round figures, 250 Rs. at 2 Annas 6 Pies each, and an establishment of 100 Rs. would make up a total of 675 Rs. per mensem, or 8,100 Rs. per annum; to this add 522 Rs. now paid to the Pagoda and 38 Rs. for conjee for low caste people, and the total expense amounts to 8,650 Rs. We have thus a surplus income of 5,000 Rs. per annum, and this I propose to spend as follows:—

14. A school and hospital might well be endowed with 100 Rs. per mensem each, and the school should be on the spot, so as to give the neighbourhood all possible benefit; there is a separate building near the river that might be very well applied to this purpose. The hospital should, I think, be more centrally

situated, and be more within reach of supervision than it could be at Tirukurungudi.

15. Tencasi would be an excellent site, as it has no hospital within 30 miles, and is a somewhat feverish neighbourhood; it stands on the junction of several lines of road, is within reach of the Sub-Collector, and is usually visited by the Zillah Surgeon once a year during the Courtallum season. With these grants, we still have 2,600 Rs. for repairs and the improvement of the building and neighbourhood.

16. The chuttrum buildings, as I mentioned before, are very much dilapidated, and need a thorough repair and extension; this will cost 5,000 Rs., and a detailed estimate is now being prepared, the work to spread over two years. The Pagoda adjoining the chuttrum, and with regard for which the chuttrum was built and endowed, is now half buried in sand, and raising the walls and enclosures round it will cost another 5,000 Rs., and this work might spread over two years.

17. The town is a very poor one, but has wide streets, and is capable of great improvement; another year's surplus revenue laid out on this will (with the impetus trade will receive by the substitution of money for grain rents and the adoption of the ticket system) make it quite a different place, and thus in five years the chuttrum and all its surroundings will be put into thorough good order, and it will then be time to consider whether we shall extend the charity or make some further reduction of rental.

THE Collector shows very clearly that the assessment of the lands, which form the endowment of the Tirukurungudi chuttrum, is unduly high; his proposals for revising it are fair both to the chuttrum and the people, and the Board resolve to sanction their being carried into effect.

2. The Board also approve of the proposal to give the 50 permanent pensioners of the chuttrum Rs. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ a-month instead of rations. This number should never be increased, and no new pensioner should be admitted, unless he or she is disabled by mental or physical infirmity from earning a livelihood, and really belongs to the neighbourhood. The difficulty of conducting a charity of this description arises from the fact that it attracts beggars from a distance, who come and reside near the chuttrum for the sake of the alms.

3. The system of feeding by contract was not a very promising experiment, but the Board wish the Collector to explain how and to what extent it has failed. The information may be of use in other cases. The proposal to issue tickets entitling the bearer to supplies in the bazaar will need careful watching, for there will always be a tendency on the part of the shop-keepers to give less than they would give for hard cash. The ticket-holders will not be so inclined to insist upon getting full value as if they had money which would be equally valuable 20 miles away, and the bazaar-men will not dread exposure or prosecution from pilgrims who are anxious to pursue their journey. The evils of the system of feeding at the chuttrum have, however, been so glaring and so difficult to check that the Board are desirous that the ticket-experiment should be tried.

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4. The Board approve of the improvement of a building in the neighbourhood to fit it for a school, and the endowment of the school from chuttrum funds with Rs. 100 a-month. They also approve of the institution of a hospital or dispensary, but it would be a questionable alienation of funds belonging to the chuttrum to build one so far away as Tencasi. The Collector will consider and report whether the hospital could not be located at Nanguneri.

5. Estimates of the cost of improvements for the school and of a building for the hospital should be submitted for sanction.

6. With regard to the repair of the Dagoda the Board must have further information before them as to the connection of the chuttrum with it, and the wishes of the people regarding it, before they can decide on the propriety of devoting chuttrum funds to its restoration.

7. These proceedings will be submitted to Government, in continuation of those disposed of in Government Order, 24th October 1870, No. 1,622.

No. 160.

ORDER THEREON, 11th March 1871, No. 436.

Miscellaneous.

ORDERED to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) H. WELLESLEY;

Acting Under-Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

G.O. 24 October 1870 No. 21, 6-7

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Board of Revenue,
MADRAS. 7762.

PROCEEDINGS, 27th FEBRUARY 1871, No. 361.

Dep. 28 March 1871.

Encl.

Received

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FEBRUARY.

No. 361.

Tirukurungudi Chuttrum—in Tinnevely District.—Orders passed on Collector's proposals for better management of,

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D., 11th March 1871, No. 435.

MADRAS.

Nos. 159-160.

Tirukkurugudi Chattram in Tinnevely District.—Proceedings Board of Revenue passing orders on the Collector's proposals for its better management, recorded.