

(1) Number of pages 2

(2) Date of repair 7.7.65

(3) Initials of the Referencer JS

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.

B.P. No.

168

~~Press-~~
Mis.

Dated

29.1.1872

195

Not to be folded or roughly handled

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 9th January 1872.

Read the following replies to Board's Proceedings, dated 7th February 1871, No. 581:—

From Collector of Ganjam,	dated 11th March 1871,	No. 239.
„ Commissioner of Nilgiris,	„ 15th „ „	No. 24.
„ Collector of Vizagapatam,	„ 6th „ „	No. 192.
„ „ of the Godavery District,	„ 10th „ „	No. 76.
„ „ South Canara,	„ 8th „ „	No. 314.
„ „ of the Kistna District,	„ 1st May „	No. 1,292.
„ „ Trichinopoly,	„ 12th „ „	No. 130.
„ „ Coimbatore,	„ 10th „ „	No. 132.
„ „ Salem,	„ 8th „ „	No. 141.
„ „ Tanjore,	„ 29th „ „	No. 159.
„ „ Madura,	„ 4th March „	No. 61.
„ „ Nellore,	„ 29th May „	No. 978.
„ „ Malabar,	„ 27th February „	No. 56.
„ „ Chingleput,	„ 16th May „	No. 203.
„ „ Bellary,	„ 20th April „	No. 142.
„ „ South Arcot,	„ 1st „ „	No. 78.
„ „ Tinnevely,	„ 30th March „	No. 124.
„ „ Cuddapah,	„ 31st May „	No. 114.
„ „ North Arcot,	„ 14th March „	No. 150.
„ „ Kurnool,	„ 1st „ „	No. 57.

These papers relate to the alleged difficulty experienced in the district of Tinnevely by Native Christians in obtaining sites for Schools and Churches.

2. The Government requested the Board to report whether there was any peculiarity in the tenures of Tinnevely to preclude Government from granting unoccupied sites in Government villages for any useful public purpose. 2ndly, to give their opinion as to legislating for the removal of disabilities which, if general, would seriously interfere with the comfort and advancement of a large class of the people.

3. In regard to the 1st point the Board observe that building sites are, wherever space is available in the 'Nattam,' granted in Government villages by the local officers to applicants as they come forward, free of all charge or rent. The villagers have no vote in the matter; but, of course, social and caste distinctions are maintained; e. g., as remarked by the Collector of Tinnevely, "a low caste man would not be allowed to build in the Brahmin street." In regard to the 2nd point, grievances do certainly prevail, but they are partial in their operation, and no where insuperable. They can exist, or ought to exist, only in Zamindari or in other proprietary villages. In Vizagapatam and Nellore, the large landowners treat Missionaries with marked liberality; and where the reverse is the case, the papers disclose several instances where a beneficial change has been brought about by the friendly intervention of the Collector. The Converts of course are frequently proprietors of the houses they live in and the lands they occupy, and it is not too much to expect that they should assign the required area, themselves, for Chapels and Schools; should they fail to obtain it from the principal landowner of the vicinity. Apart from this consideration, the paucity of their numbers as compared with the general population, and the absence (even in the most unfavourable quarters) of anything like a virulent and systematic form of persecution, altogether, in the opinion of the Board, forbid recourse to legislation in these cases. Some of the Missionaries appear to desire it, but the Board are confident that the ultimate injury of their own cause would be the result. Nor are separate buildings for Churches and Schools absolute essentials. Any private house or other building can be consecrated as a Church if it is found absolutely impossible in any case to acquire land to build upon.

4. There remains one point, however, involving considerations of public decency, the settlement of which cannot be left to indirect influences. The Board allude to *Cemeteries* for Native Christians. In Tinnevely, up to the year 1851, owing to the refusal of certain landowners to sell

waste land for the purpose, the dead were buried on the side of the public roads. At last a charitable Brahmin presented the Mission with a small strip of land; but the hardship may occur in other districts at any time. A most disgraceful and almost incredible instance is narrated by the Reverend J. E. Clough, of the American Baptist Mission, as having occurred at Valsura, of the Narearowpet taluq, early in the present year. It appears that there are some 60 or 70 Christians in this village, and they "buried a child in the ground they formerly (i. e. as the Board suppose, before they became Converts) used for that purpose; but because the child's parents were Christians, the Moonsiff made them disinter it, and bury it again in the father's own doorway," telling them that Christians could not be buried in the village, unless in their own houses. The Collector has forwarded this letter without stating what notice he has taken of the matter. A report will now be called for and submitted for the information of Government. The village, it may be added, is a Government village. Nothing worse could possibly have happened in the estate of the most bigoted Zamindar.

5. It is only reasonable and proper that Native Christians should be able to bury their dead in a field consecrated or set apart as a Cemetery out of the waste land of the village, not otherwise appropriated. The Board consider this a "public purpose" sufficient to justify the acquisition of land, (wherever necessary) by the procedure laid down in Act X of 1870; but as "converts" are not a "Company" within the meaning of that Act, and payment of compensation out of the public revenues would be preposterous, the only course open is to extend the Act specially to this purpose. It is true that a man's change of religion could never be held, in British India, to preclude his right of sepulture in the village burying ground; but, as the maintenance of this right is offensive to the adherents of the old religion of the country and cannot be acceptable to Native Christians from choice, the special remedy proposed becomes necessary, not only out of consideration for prevailing prejudices, but to prevent any breaches of the peace which might otherwise arise.

(A true Extract.)

F. P. Ramiah

for Sub-Secretary.

To the Chief Secretary to Government, with file of replies.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

.. to all Collectors.

Exd. G. A. Turton

1 For the Board of Revenue, 21 Jan'y

1872.

BOARD of REVENUE,
MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS 9TH JANUARY 1872, No. 65.

Order: 26 Jan'y 1872.

Encl.

Received *27th Jan'y 1872*

JANUARY.
No. 65.

Sites for Schools and Churches.—Papers relating to alleged difficulty experienced in Thiruvelli District by Native Christians in obtaining—submitted to Government, with recommendation that Act X. of 1870, be extended to acquisition of land for burial grounds for Native Christians.—Collector of Krishna District requested to report what notice has been taken by him of conduct of Village Moonsiff of Valsura in directing body of a child buried by a Native Christian in a burial ground of village to be disinterred and buried again in his own doorway.

RECORDED

P. H. 168

29-1-72