*Proceedings of the Madras ... ment, Revenue Department,*
*30th ... 1872.*

No. 316. Read the following Proce... gs of the Board of Revenue, dated 6th April 1872, ... o. 537 :—

Read the following replies to Board's P... oceedings, dated 10th October 1870, No. 6,04 2:—

Read also Government Order, No ... 61, dated 26th January 1872.

From the Collector of Coimbatore, dated 5th November 1870, No. 281.
,, ,, of Ganjam, ,, 11th March 1871, ,, 242.
,, the Officiating Collector of Kistna Distr ,, 25th February ,, ,, 602.
,, the Acting ,, of South Canar ,, 1st April ,, ,, 444.
,, the ,, of Godavery Dis ,, 3rd December 1870, ,, 392.
,, the Acting ,, of Chingleput, ,, 15th ,, ,, ,, 534.
,, the ,, of Salem, ,, 20th January 1871, ,, 219.
,, the ,, of Nellore, ,, 18th February ,, ,, 309.
,, the Acting ,, of Bellary, ,, 20th ,, ,, ,, 62.
,, the ,, ,, of Trichinopoly, ,, 4th ,, ,, ,, 38.
,, the ,, of Madras, ,, 12th November 1870, ,, 60.
,, the Assistant Commissioner of Nilgiris, ,, 4th ,, ,, ,, 155.
,, the Acting Resident in Travancore and Cochin, dated 1st November 1870, No. 789.
,, the Acting Collector of North Arcot, dated 28th November 1870 No. 545.
,, ,, of Tanjore, ,, 12th December ,, ,, 453.
,, the Collector of Tinnevelly, ,, 22nd ,, ,, ,, 632.
,, the ,, of Malabar, ,, 30th May 1871, ,, 131.

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In their Proceedings, No. 6,042, dated 10th October 1870, the Board requested Collectors (i) to report exactly how the average bazaar prices of grain and salt are now arrived at, (ii) what the native measure or weight used as the unit of calculation at each Taluq head-quarters is, and what its exact equivalent in terms of a tola, (the measures being tested with old rice and salt taken at haphazard from the retail shops,) and (iii) at how many different places the prices are taken, and how they are discovered, whether by a "punchayat" of traders, or on the mere report of a subordinate Revenue official.

2. They were further desired to state the exact cost of the quantity of salt, whatever it might be, which is generally purchased at one time by the poorer classes living by daily labour.

3. The Resident of Travancore was requested to favour the Board with similar information from the various taluqs of that State.

4. The papers recorded at the head of these Proceedings are the replies received to the Board's queries.

5. *The preparation of the Price Lists.*—The information contained in them is exceedingly imperfect;* and very few of the Collectors go at all carefully into the calculations required to show *how*, as a matter of fact, the local measures are converted into terms of the Madras garce in which they are ultimately recorded; and which garce, it should be remembered, is supposed to consist of 3,200 Madras measures of the imaginary standard, viz.,

* *E. g.*—The Collector of Bellary informs the Board that "the prices are *discovered* through the Revenue officials from the *retail* merchants," and adds that "*no* reports are "received from the Tahsildars."

100 cubic inches, or 320,000 cubic inch[es]; or, (in terms of a tola,) (3,200 × 113=) 361,600, and not of 3,200 *customary* Madras measures,* as commonly assumed by the Collectors.

6. *The conversion of the local measu[re] into terms of a Madras garce.*—It further appears that the tables of conversion[s] called for by the Board, in their Circular, dated 10th September 1861, No. 5,508, † have never been received in a complete form from many of the districts, and, as observed† before they are no longer required‡ more especially because, the conversion was unfortunately ordered to be made into terms of the "imaginary" garce of 320,000 cubic inches, and this has actually been done in several distr[icts].

7. As however under recent instructions from the Government of India all future Price Lists are to exhibit the retail price of grain per ser, it is absolutely necessary to frame tables of conversion from the local measure (given in terms of a tola of rice at *each* place where prices are recorded,) into terms of the standard ser (of 2·2046 lbs. av.); and this can probably best be done in the Board's Office.

8. In the meantime Government will be requested to apply for a few standard ser measures for each district, and for the Board.

9. But as it is of the utmost importance that there should be no avoidable error in the size of the unit which forms the very basis of all calculations of prices, Collectors will be requested to examine carefully the lists of measures they have submitted, so as to make sure that their contents have been correctly given in terms of a tola, testing them *personally* with water in the manner describ[ed] in paragraph 7 of Proceedings, dated 29th June 1871, No. 2,613, and also with well dried old rice. They will be good enough to forward the most accurate specimens obtainable of the measures selected as the unit of calculation at each station where prices are recorded, carefully labelled with the name of the station and the recognized capacity of the measure in well dried old rice calculated in tolas. The capacity of each local measure in water being once ascertained none should ever be stamped which are not exactly of that capacity.

10. Their particular attention is called at the same time to paragraphs 6, 8, 9 and 10 of the same Proceedings, and they are requested to report *at once* whether the slight alterations and reforms suggested in paragraph 10 could not be carried out in their districts as they were long ago in Nellore.

11. *The extent to which the prices given in the Returns may be relied on.*—It is unnecessary to discuss here the mistakes that appear to have been made in calculating wholesale from retail prices now that it has been resolved to express the Price lists in terms of the standard ser; but it may be inferred from the communications recorded above that the actual retail prices returned are in many cases incorrectly given, and often purposely so; for Mr. Boswell says he "ascertained "from personal inquiry that the Native grain dealers are very generally under "the impression that the object of enquiring from them their selling prices from "time to time is with a view of keeping down prices, and so fearful are they of

* Of 104½ cubic inches, or 120 tolas of rice when filled to over flowing as usual in the bazaars, and not actually *heaped*.

† Paragraph 5 of Proceedings, dated 29th June 1871, No. 2,613, recorded in Government Order, No. 1,082, dated 26th September 1871.

‡ See G. O., No. 161, dated 26th January 1872, recorded above.



"any return to the old *Nirrak* system [the prices which they furnish to the "authorities are often considerably bel[ow those actually prevailing" (paragraph 6 of his letter). Sir Madava Row, on the [other] hand, (in a communication kindly furnished to the Resident for the [information of the Board,) asserts that in Travancore the returns cannot be dep[ended] on for accuracy; that they are drawn up by the principal dealers with little [control; that the *Nirrak* generally represents prices *higher* than the real [order to defraud the Government; and concludes that the only trustwor[thy information as to (wholesale) prices is to be got from the periodical sales of gra[in by] Government.

12. The Board have no doubt the[re is] much truth in these statements, and they help to account for the extraordin[ary differences hitherto reported in price at places within a few miles of each oth[er, wh]ich are also due in no small degree to differences in the estimated value of [the] standard measure.

13. The facts disclosed in Mr. Fraser['s] letter make it necessary to direct that the price of grain shall *not* be recorded at any place where there is not an officer of Government of the grade of a Deputy Tahsildar at least who can be held responsible for the accuracy of the returns submitted. It is worse than useless to allow the submission of returns that are only likely to vitiate those which are really deserving of credit. It is very discouraging to find that in Chingleput, for instance, the Price-Lists are framed from the *ipse dixit* of a Curnam.

14. The Board would earnestly invite the co-operation of Collectors and their Divisional Officers in the important task of acquiring really accurate returns of retail prices.

15. As to the amount and cost of the salt usually purchased at one time by the poorest classes it would appear that they generally buy it in very small quantities at a time, but that even so they never, (it would seem,) spend more than 3 Pice a day on the condiment or 7 [Rupees] a month, and that for the whole family. The highest price per maund at which salt is sold in these petty transactions would appear to be Rupees 5 (or at the [rate] of 600 Rs. a garce, but the information on this point is exceedingly uncertain, as the purchases made by the poorer classes are seldom measured, (except by handfuls,) or weighed in any way.

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No. 317. ORDER THEREON, 30th April 1872, No. 697.

Miscellaneous.

THE instructions issued by the Board in these Proceedings are approved. Application will be made to the Government of India for 100 sets of the standard Ser Weight.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
*Officiating Chief Secretary.*

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

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Revenue Department,

No. 697.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 30th Apl. 1872.

Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue.

Requesting to apply for a few standard Ser Measures for each district and for the Board &c. } R. E. 6th April 1872 No. 537.

The instructions issued by the Board in these Proceedings are approved. Application will be made to the Government of India for 100 sets of the standard Ser ~~measure~~ bright.

14. To The Board of Revenue - Des 1st May/72