*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 10th May 1872.*

No. 83. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 23rd April 1872, No. 644 :—

Read the following letter from R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelly, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 15th February 1872, No. 49:—

As the earthwork of the tanks and channels under the Strivycuntam Anicut is now almost completed, I am about to accompany Lieutenant Shepherd over the works to fix on the sites for sluices and make all needful arrangements for the distribution of water.

2. The map, bound up in the volume of reports on the Strivycuntam Anicut Project, now in the Board's Office, shows the area affected by the anicut, the small figures on the lines of levels representing so many feet below the floor of the head sluice on either side of the river, and judging from these, and the lie of the country, it is certain that the irrigable area, on the north side especially, is much in excess of the estimate. The large tank on the north side is 14 miles long, and of considerable depth, and is not only supplied by the river but by the drainage of a very large tract of country stretching back to the black cotton plains. This drainage supply has not been taken into consideration, though it will add greatly to the volume of water that we shall have to distribute; at any rate, the entire area between this tank and the sea and between the river and Tuticorin or 60 square miles of country is commanded by this tank, and as nearly the whole of this area is occupied by a population unused to wet cultivation, the treatment of this particular tract will require the greatest attention.

3. It is not sufficient to build a sluice and cut a main channel here and there, every village and every field must be visited, and detailed arrangements must be made with every cultivator regarding his water-supply and the assessment to be fixed on his land.

4. Though the population is scanty, the dry land assessment is so light that thousands of acres of waste land are held on putta, and with the exception of salt swamps by the sea, nearly the whole of the area indicated is occupied and paid for by a class of people, too poor to turn into Nanja a tenth part of the area for which we can furnish the water. Foreseeing the difficulty of dealing with lands thus held, I some time ago (as explained in my letter of 6th December 1870, No. 598) prohibited any further grant of Government waste on darkhast. The Board however in their Proceedings, No. 1,327, dated 25th February 1870, reversed my decision on this point, and much of the Government waste has since been taken up.

5. Under these circumstances, and accepting the state of things as we find them, I think it absolutely necessary to lose no time in revising the assessment of the lands under the Strivycuntam anicut. The water will be delivered in October next, and by dint of great exertions, it will be just possible to register and settle the lands before the water arrives. I am ready to do the work, but as explained in my letter, No. 521, dated 11th December 1871, I have lost both my Settlement Assistants, and my field hands have been reduced to the lowest possible figure.

6. In anticipation of the Board's sanction, however, I have now commenced the registry of fields and the collection of needful data. Some of the villages lie in the tract included in the river valley and were thus reported on in my Settlement scheme of 11th September 1868, but others have yet to be classified. There is no

time for the preparation of a separate scheme for this tract, and I therefore propose to treat it in the following manner:—

(1.) Its present revenue for land and trees is 1,78,169 Rupees and the additional revenue estimated to be brought in by the anicut is 1,52,385 Rupees. Taking 3,30,000 Rupees as a minimum, I would make such a settlement of the lands and palmyras as would yield the Government an income of 3,30,000 Rupees, plus such an additional sum as I find I can fairly impose. The dry land assessment I would raise at once to such a figure as would render the needless occupation of waste land prohibitory, and I would treat the palmyras in the mode proposed in Board's Proceedings of 20th March 1871, No. 1,206.

(2.) The assessment of the *bona fide* Nunjah now existing may well be raised in places in consideration of the improved water-supply, the dry lands to be converted into wet I would assess at such rates as would be at the least equivalent to the revised dry land assessment, plus an acreage charge of 4 Rupees for water; a second crop to pay half the charge for a first crop.

7. On such principles, I feel confident that it cannot be said hereafter that I have fixed the assessment unduly low or have jeopardized the Government revenue; but if immediate steps are not taken, the water will be there in October, but the lands will not be prepared to receive it.

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The Board understand the Collector to propose that he should be allowed to settle a tract of country, containing sixty square miles on the north of the river, alone, which will be affected by the Strivycuntam anicut at his discretion, provided that the total revenue is not less than a certain amount.

2. This course would be inconsistent with the recognized principles of Settlement and the Board cannot advise Government to sanction it.

3. Mr. Puckle urges that revenue will be lost unless the present settlement is revised within the next six months because existing wet land ought to pay higher rates, and the dry land which can be converted into wet ought to be assessed with a consolidated wet assessment when the anicut water becomes available in October.

4. With regard to the wet land, which will be more copiously supplied with water, it will be impossible to revise the assessment satisfactorily before it has been carefully classified and the assessment has been calculated in the usual manner. The enhancement of revenue expected on this species of land is not so great as to make a too hasty settlement desirable.

5. The great difficulty with regard to dry land seems to be that an enormous extent of it "is occupied and paid for by a class of people too poor to turn into Nunjai a tenth part of the area" for which water can be supplied. The Board doubt the expediency of forcing resignation of this land by a prohibitory assessment. If the labour and capital necessary for turning it into Nunjai are available, richer men will purchase it from the present owners. If not, the resignation of the land will add nothing to the profits of the anicut.

6. Definite proposals for settling all land commanded by the anicut (and not yet reported on) should be prepared and submitted as soon as possible, and until they are sanctioned a water-rate of 4 Rupees an acre should be charged on all dry land converted into wet.



*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,*
*10th May* 1872.

7. It is undesirable to interfere with the palmirah revenue until Mr. Puckle's proposals with regard to it, which are now under consideration, have been disposed of.

8. These Proceedings will be submitted to Government.

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No. 84. Order thereon, 10th May 1872, No. 747.

Land Revenue.

The Board's proceedings are approved. The orders of Government on the proposals for the settlement of the "River valley" and the palmyra-tree revenue will shortly reach the Board.

2. The Government observe, with reference to the latter part of clause 1, paragraph 6, of Mr. Puckle's letter, that half the net produce is the measure of the Government demand on the dry lands, and that such considerations as he mentions cannot be suffered to influence the settlement.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

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Revenue Department.

No. 747.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 10th May 1872.

Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue.

Passing orders on letter from Collector of Tinnevelly submitting proposals for revision of present settlement of lands under Sriveycuntam Anicut.

(G. O. 23rd April 1872. No. 644)

The Board's proceedings are approved. The orders of Government on the proposals for the settlement of the "River valley" and the Palmyra tree revenue will

Revenue.

1872.

Board of Revenue,

MADRAS.

PROCEEDINGS, 23RD APRIL 1872, No. 644.

Encl.

Received 27th April

APRIL.

No. 644.

*Sriveycuntam Anicut Lands under.*—Order passed on letter from Collector of Tinnevelly submitting proposals for revision of present settlement of,—These Proceedings, submitted to Government.

will shortly reach the Board.

2. The Government observe with reference to the latter part of Cls 1 para 6 of Mr Puckle's letter that half the net produce is the measure of the Government demand on the dry lands, and that such considerations as he mentions cannot be suffered to influence the settlement.