

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
3rd February 1873.*

No. 8-A. From the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce, (Land Revenue and Settlement,) to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Calcutta, 20th January 1873, No. 67.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1,700, dated 20th ultimo, addressed to the Government of India in the Financial Department, stating that the proposal to offer certain Zemindars a deduction from their assessment in consideration of their relinquishing all claim to collect the Muhtarafa tax within their estates, was based on orders of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India dated 15th February 1862.

2. In reply I am to request that as no inconvenience has arisen from the omission for 10 years to act upon this sanction, all further action may be suspended for the present, at least until the Government of India is placed in possession of complete information on the subject.

3. The Governor-General in Council will further be glad to be furnished with an explanation as to the manner in which the Government of Madras proposes to secure the released ryots from the exactions of the Zemindars in some other form. It is understood that in Western India the result of similar action has been, that while Government revenue has been remitted, the Zemindars have continued their exactions, though under different names and in different forms. *Prima facie* it is not clear why Government revenue, the property of the State at large, should be sacrificed to relieve a limited number of cultivators of particular payments, (which are certainly not oppressive or the Government of Madras would not have allowed them to be continued for 10 years after their discontinuance had been sanctioned,) if it is a fact that these ryots pay nothing to Government, and that no direct benefit will accrue to the State from their release from these payments. There are doubtless good reasons for such action, and His Excellency the Governor-General in Council would be glad of the fullest explanation of the whole subject.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. T. Cartledge.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT,
FORT ST. GEORGE.
3rd February 1873.

No. 137.

No. 9.

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

REVENUE, AND COMMERCE,

Miscellaneous.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter No. 67 of the 20th January ultimo, stating that the

Government of India would be glad of the fullest explanation of the whole subject, before the Governor in Council carries out his proposed action in the matter of a remission of their assessment to certain Zemindars in consideration of their relinquishing all claim to collect the Muhtarafa tax within their estates. His Excellency the Governor-General in Council has observed that there are doubtless good reasons for such action, but that *prima facie* it is not clear why revenue should be sacrificed for the relief of the Zemindars' tenantry from payments which cannot be oppressive, especially as no direct benefit will accrue to the State from the ryots being released from such payments. Inquiry is also made how the Government of Madras propose to secure the ryots from future exactions which, it is suggested, may continue to be made under a different name, in spite of the agreement now entered into by the Zemindars.

2. I am first to explain, though it is not of much importance, that the Muhtarafa is not levied from ryots; it is paid by weavers, oilmongers, petty traders, shop-keepers, and artisans of all classes. When the British Government first assumed the Carnatic, it was found in every village of the country. In making the Permanent Settlement, the Government very generally reserved it along with the Sayer or transit duties, the Abkari or tax on the sale of spirituous liquors and some other articles of revenue; but in some cases it was not so reserved, and the Zemindaries under notice belong to the latter class. For 60 years these Zemindars levied the Muhtarafa in their estates, and the Government levied it in those estates where they had reserved their right to do so, and in all parts of the Presidency which were not under Zemindari tenure. Act XVIII. of 1861 abolished every form of the Madras Muhtarafa, and in anticipation of its coming into operation, Her Majesty's Government in the despatch cited in my letter

To Government of India, Financial Department, No. 1,700, dated 20th December 1872.

marginally noted was pleased to approve the proposal of the Governor in Council that a fair compensation should be paid to those Zemindars who had theretofore lawfully levied Muhtarafa, by a reduction of the annual pesheush payable by them to the State.

3. The propriety of awarding this compensation has now been doubted, but the Governor in Council must express his inability to conceive a stronger case for it. The levy of Muhtarafa is now illegal : to demand it is therefore an attempt at extortion ; but until these Zemindars are compensated, how is it possible for the Government to direct a prosecution for a breach of the law ? On the other hand, with compensation granted or at least offered and refused, the Government will be free to act without any danger of placing itself in a false position. ~~The Governor Council is not acquainted with the particulars of the case which is said to have occurred in Western India, but he is confident that no ryot in this Presidency need be under any apprehension in petitioning for justice against his Zemindar ; and those who pay the Muhtarafa are, as has been already stated, not even ryots, but a more independant class.~~

4. The present state of the question between these Zemindars and the Government, I am to state in conclusion, is this. All have accepted the compensation tendered except one, and corresponding deductions have been formally made in their several assessments accordingly. The recusant has been informed that the offer made to him—a deduction of Rs. 6,000 per annum—has been withdrawn and will not be repeated.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

15-February/62 No 338-329
 13-1720-156-157
 20-139-640

Revenue 1873 Dept.

No 250

From
 The Govt of India
 Dept. of Agri. &c.

Dated 20 Jan'y 1873.
 Recd. 29.

No 64

S.L. No 107. 5 February 1873

Requesting for stated reasons,
 that all further action in regard
 to the proposal to offer certain
 zamindars' deduction from their
 assessment in consideration of their
 relinquishing all claim to collect the
 Mohanpura tax within their estates,
 may be suspended for the present
 until complete information is fur-
 nished on the subject, &c.

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20 Jan'y/73 R3? Feb/73

Feb 87

Feb 1873

The Secy. Govt of India
 Agricultural Dept.

I have the honor to acknowledge
 your letter No 67 of the 20th Jan'y
 instant, stating that the Govt of India
 wish to place of the fullest explanation
 of the whole subject, before the Secy. in C.
 carries out his proposed action in be-
 half of a remission of their share
 to certain zamindars in consideration
 of their relinquishing all claim to collect
 the Mohanpura tax within their
 estates. This the Secy. in C. has
 thought that there are doubtless good
 reasons for such action, but that
 further facts are not clearly known
 and to be satisfied for the relief of
 the zamindars' remission from pay-
 ment cannot be oppressive, &c. &c.
 and that any such relief will accu-
 mulate from the Ryots being released
 from their payments. Regarding is also
 the fact of the Govt of India's proposal
 to release the Ryots from future cash
 payments, it is suggested, may continue to
 be made under different names, &c. &c.
 in agreement with the Govt of India.

I am first to explain,
though it is not of much
importance, that the Muktanaga
is not derived from Ryots; it is paid
by weavers, oilmengers, petty traders,
shopkeepers and artisans of all
classes. When the British Govt first
assumed the Province, it was
found in every village of the country.
In making the Permanent Settlement,
the Govt very generally reserved it
along with the Sayer on transit
dues, the Abkari on the sale
of spirituous liquors & some other
articles of revenue; - but in some cases
it was reserved, and the
Zamindars under certain things
to the latter class. For 60 years
the Zamindars lent the Muktanaga
in many estates, and the Govt levied
it in some estates where they had
been long right to do so, and in
some parts of the Presidency which were
under Zamindari tenure.
The system of 1861 abolished every
form of the Muktanaga, and
in anticipation of its coming into
force, the Govt in the

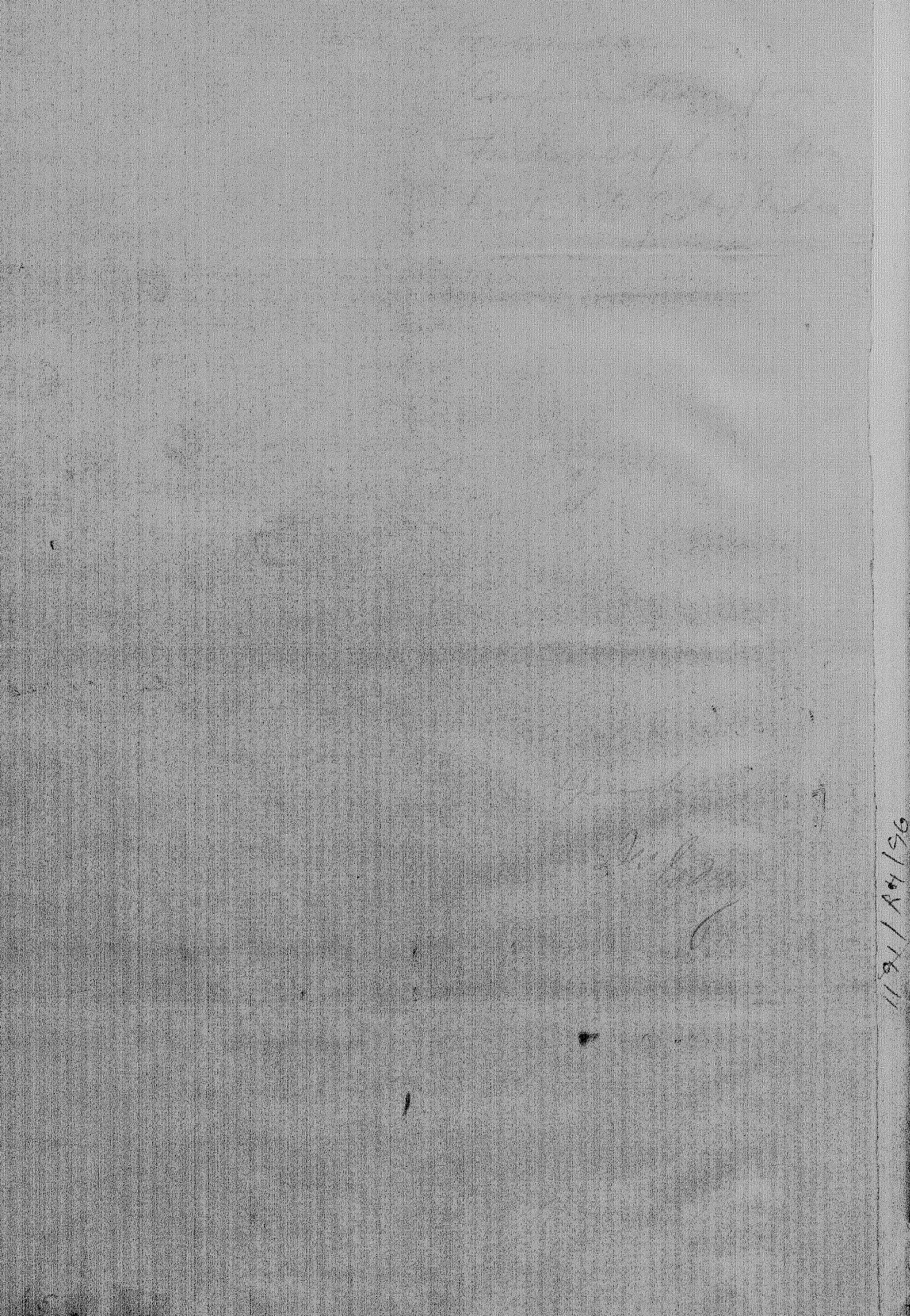
To Govt of India
From Secy to Govt
27th Dec 77

marginally which was pleased to accept
from the proposal of the G. in C. that,
as full compensation should be paid
to those Zamindars who had the right
to levy Muktanaga, by a
reduction of the annual peshkash pay
payable by them to the State.
The propriety of awarding this compensation
has now been doubted, but the Govt
must express his inability to concede
a stronger case for it. The levy of
Muktanaga is now illegal & to demand
it is therefore an attempt at extortion;
but until these Zamindars are compen-
sated, how is it possible for the Govt
to direct a prosecution for a breach
of the law? On the other hand, with
compensation granted or at least offered
if refused, the Govt will be free to act
without any danger of placing itself
in a false position. The G. in C. is not
acquainted with the particulars of
the case which is said to have occurred
in Western India, but has confidence
that the Ryot in his Presidency will
be under any apprehension in petition-
ing for justice against his Zamindar,
and those who pay the Muktanaga
are, as has been already stated, not even
Ryots, but a more independent class.

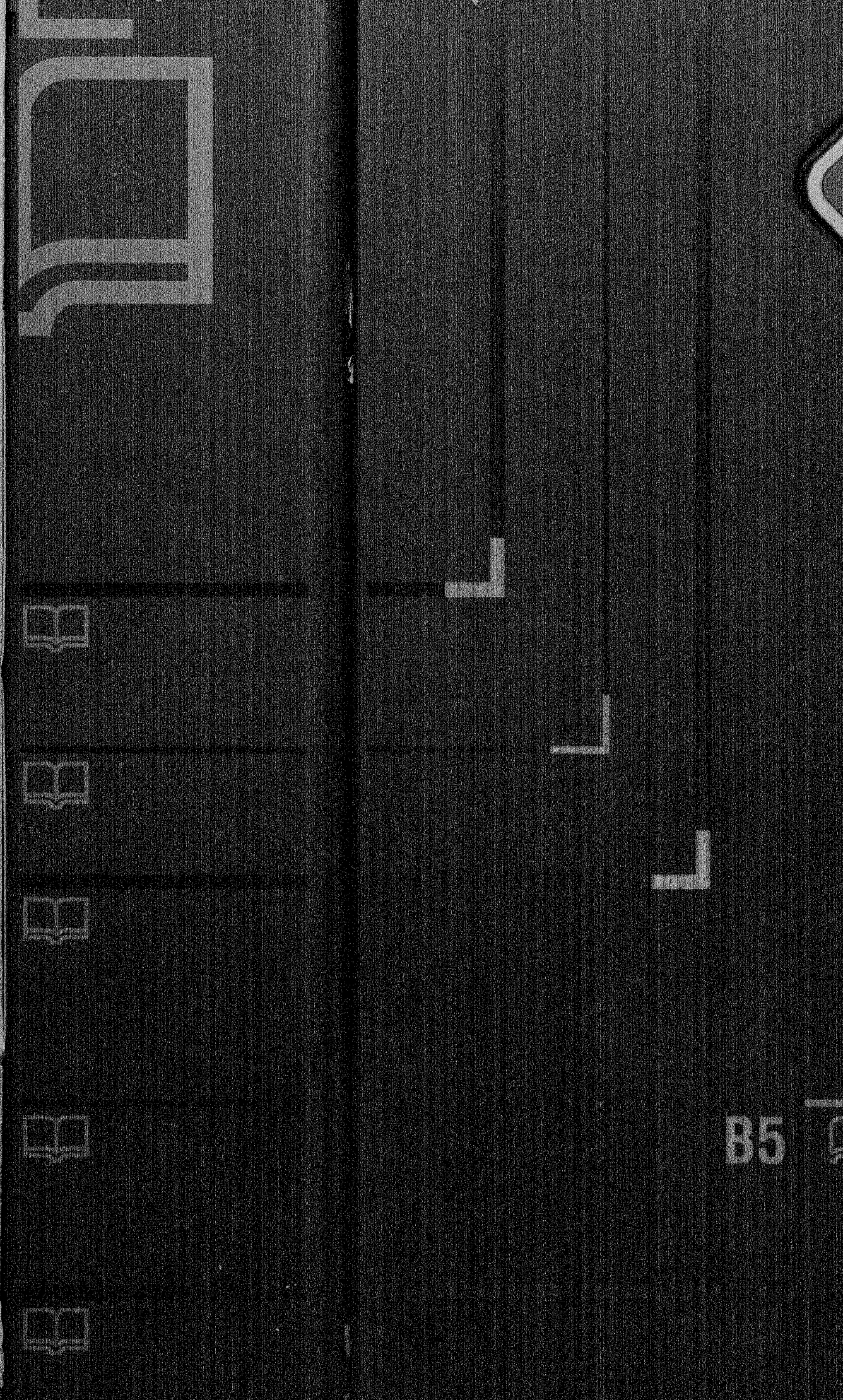
The present state of the question is
known from the grounds & the fact,
I am to state in conclusion, is this.
All have accepted the compensation
tendered except one, & corresponding
deductions have been formally made
in their several agreements accordingly.
The defendant has been informed
of the offer made to him - a
deduction of Rs 6000 per annum -
has been withdrawn & will not be
repeated.

Sd/- 29/1/73.

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