

(1) Number of Pages 18
(2) Date of repair 14-6-68
(3) Initials of the Referencer 23.68

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

792

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Mis.

Dated 19-4-1875 1968.

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Report on the Settlement
of
69 Villages of the
Sydney District

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No. 1,099 A.
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REVENUE SETTLEMENT OFFICE, ON CIRCUIT,
CHITTUR, 9th June 1875.

From

R. K. PUCKLE, Esq.,
Acting Director of Revenue Settlement.

To

H. E. STOKES, Esq.,
Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report the results of the Settlement of a portion of the Principal Division of the Chingleput District, sanctioned in Government Proceedings, No. 295, dated 24th February 1875.

2. The area settled is small, consisting of 69 villages near Madras lying between the Ennore lake and the Kodambakam and Punamali Road, and forming the Northern half of the old Sydapet Taluq, but this is all that I am able to settle myself just at present, and I report on it separately, not only to illustrate my views as to the best method of making a Settlement, but to show how the wishes of Government have been carried out in the recognition of the Merasidars' claim to a Swatantaram fee, in the division of common lands, the treatment of Manawari, &c. The reorganization of the Village Service Establishment of these villages has been separately reported on.

3. The tract selected for this specimen Settlement embraces the entire area to be irrigated from the Red Hill tank, and all that lies between Madras and the skirt of the irrigation from the Chembrambakam tank.

4. Though near Madras, this is perhaps the poorest tract in the Chingleput District; the lands lie low and are subject to inundation, and are entirely deficient of drainage—the consequence is that the deleterious washings of the

upper lands are precipitated in the lower levels, and a considerable area is rendered almost unfit for cultivation.

5. The dry lands were formerly rated high. The Manawari, which as a rule is situated at the tail of the irrigation under each tank, and grows a scanty rice crop with the aid of soakage and falling rain, was avowedly over-assessed, and received a permanent remission of 20 per cent in 1870; while the sandy tracts on the coast and the poor clay soils inland were assessed at rates that could not be maintained in a Settlement, the result of my revision has been therefore to raise the assessment of the better irrigated lands under the Red Hill tank and elsewhere by Rs. 1,312, and to lower the assessment of dry lands by Rs. 3,609—total decrease by Settlement Rs. 2,296.

6. This reduction must not be regarded as a sample of the results to be expected from the Settlement of the rest of the Chingleput District, as on the whole there will be an increase of revenue, but it is attributable solely to the impoverished condition of the tract that happens to be the first selected. For to treat the lands fairly, it is very essential to afford some relief to the dry—the dry assessment when reduced is still high, averaging Rs. 1-9-9 an acre for Manawari, and Rs. 1-0-4 for the rest, while the wet assessment, even when raised by my Settlement, averages but Rs. 3-0-10 an acre.

7. The reduction of Rs. 2,296, is the equivalent of 4 per cent on the revenue of Fusly 1284 which was Rs. 62,993, but the annual remission for waste and withered crops has averaged Rs. 7,558, for the last 5 years, and, as mentioned above, my reduction was unavoidable; for instance, I found it impossible to charge the poor tract of blown sand between the sea and the Ennore lake the same rate of assessment as that imposed on the richer lands of Tiruvottiyur, and there was therefore an unavoidable loss of Rs. 204 in Kativakam; while the salt clay marsh along Cochrane's

This tract is only nominally cultivated, being held on cowle free of assessment for 20 years, and all attempts to plant it have failed, but the full taram assessment is taken into account both as an asset of the revenue of Fusly 1284 and of the Settlement.

Canal was so manifestly over-assessed at Rs. 2-8-0 an acre, that I had to lower it to 12 annas an acre and thus lost Rs. 1,081 in Satankadu alone. The revision of ayacuts and the transfer of lands to their proper head, as in Padi, where the tank bank has been swept away, or in Villivakum, where a thorn jungle that has never been cultivated and can never be irrigated was held and paid for as Nanjai, necessitated some concession, Rs. 651 in these 69 villages, while the allotment of grazing ground and the registry of certain lands as building site, threshing floor, road, &c., involved a reduction of Rs. 589. In some of the villages too between the two high roads from Madras to Punamali the old assessment was very high, and treating these villages on a comprehensive system with reference to what had been done in like villages elsewhere, entailed an unavoidable loss of Rs. 1,240.

8. As a set-off, however, against the present loss of 4 per cent of the revenue of these 69 villages, all that can be done has been done to further the interests of Government and of the ryots, and to render this Settlement complete in

every respect. The long-standing grievance of the Merasi shareholders has now been redressed, and the Swatantaram fee has been recorded against every field on

Vide Specimen Register enclosed.

Virugambakam.

which it is leviable, the Samudayam or common lands have been divided in every village but one. The tenure of every field, whether Merasi or Durcast, has been recorded in the Settlement pattahs. The names and shares of the Merasi shareholders of each village have been entered in the Descriptive Memoirs prefixed to the Settlement Registers. The area required as grazing ground has been set aside in 26 villages, the discrepancies between occupation and registry have been corrected, where all parties agreed; for it often happened that the entries in a pattah represented no portion of the pattahdar's holding. 61 joint pattahs have been divided and 417 pattahs have been transferred at the request of the parties concerned, and descriptive memoirs and eye sketches have been prepared to show at a glance what was done, and to furnish a standing record of the condition of each village at Settlement.

9. *Swatantaram fee to Merasidars.*—To determine the amount of this fee, the old panguvali or sharing accounts were referred to; in these, the share of the gross produce payable to "Landholders" is distinctly recorded for each separate hamlet, as one of the items formerly paid by the Government and the ryots conjointly. Besides this, something additional was usually paid to the landholders "prior to winnowing and treading the corn." The figures, however, vary exceedingly; in some hamlets, the landholders' share amounted to 5, 6 or even 7 per cent, while in others it was but 1 or 2 per cent of the gross produce. An average struck on the ryots' share of the payment is as, nearly as possible, 3 per cent of the gross produce throughout the Sydapet Taluq, but as the ancient hamlets cannot be traced in all cases, and a varying fee in each village, or even in parts of some villages that may now include several hamlets, would give rise to dissatisfaction, and occasion jealousies and disputes among the parties concerned, I have thought it better to fix a uniform Swatantaram fee, and have adopted the average of 3 per cent of the gross produce accordingly.

10. Converting this gross produce into money, and applying it to the Settlement rates, gives 1 anna 9 pice per Rupee of assessment for irrigated, and 2 annas 5 pice per Rupee of assessment for dry lands; and merging fractions of annas, which no longer exist in this Settlement, the average arrived at is 2 annas per Rupee of assessment for irrigated and dry lands alike. As this is a very fair rate and one easily understood by the ryots, I propose to adopt it throughout the Chingleput District.

11. When making this calculation, I assembled the Merasidars of the villages under report and explained the method pursued. The Merasidars seemed perfectly satisfied, and later when they were in receipt of their pattahs, exhibiting the Swatantaram applied to the fields, they raised no objections whatever.

12. In those pattahs the fee is recorded against Merasi pangu lands only, except in one village, Koratur, where the Durcastdars have been hitherto paying

21. The advantage of repairing the minor tanks and restricting their capacity to their deep water bed is the more apparent from the fact that the shallow waterspread of many of these tanks is already cultivated, and only the deep bed is available for the extension of cultivation: if these deep beds are defined and the cultivation above them embanked, a high level channel from the Red Hill tank might not only irrigate the cultivation hitherto periodically submerged, but might furnish the rain-fed tanks with a regular supply for the better cultivation of the lands below them.

22. If the Red Hill tank water is brought to these lands, the assessment of the existing Nunjai may be raised by at least half a water rate, or by Rs. 2 an acre. This will give Rs. 21,666 on the 10,833 acres now cultivated, and if to this be added Rs. 40,000, at a full water rate of Rs. 4 an acre, on the 10,000 acres of dry land to be irrigated, the total results will be Rs. 61,666 for one crop, plus Rs. 11,772, the present single crop assessment of the 3,585 acres now irrigated by the Red Hill tank.

23. *Kudi Maramut*.—The customary labor of each village has now been recorded in detail; at first the ryots objected to what they considered to be the imposition of a new charge, but when they were assembled for settlement and asked who cleared obstructions from sluices, led the water to the fields and provided a free vent for the surplus, they readily conceded that they did, and that they must continue such work as no one else could perform it. The clearance of the sluices they named, the repair of distributing channels and keeping the drainage open have thus been recorded as *Kudi Maramut*, and the ryots have signed detailed lists specifying the work to be done.

24. I have not included ring bunds in front of breaches as Kudi Maramut, as such works are specially provided for by Act I of 1858, and the ryots cannot be expected to close breaches of any great size or in situations that do not affect the interests of any particular village. The formation of ring bunds in breaches formed part of the Kudi Maramut registered in Tinnevely, but the registry had hardly been made when a disastrous flood occurred, and the Engineer expected the ryots to close numerous breaches in the main irrigation channels according to recorded agreement. Of course it was never intended that breaches in the main channels should be closed by Kudi Maramut, and I have therefore thought it better to omit the closing of breaches altogether from this agreement.

25. *Alterations in Mr. Banbury's scheme.*—When making this Settlement in detail, I found it necessary to make some slight alterations in the table of rates and the grouping proposed to be used. In four cases Mr. Banbury's table provided varying rates for the same tarum in different groups.

This must have been an oversight, and the needful adjustments were made as shown in red ink below.

26. In 18 villages, experience showed that the grouping required correction. It was accordingly raised in nine villages and lowered in nine other villages for dry lands, and lowered in six villages for wet lands.

27. The following statement shows the area under each money rate.

IRRIGATED.							DRY.						
Rate.		Extent.	Assessment.	Average rate per Acre.			Rate.		Extent.	Assessment.	Average rate per Acre.		
Rs.	A.	Acres.	Rs.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	Acres.	Rs.	Rs.	A.	P.
6	4	187	1,168				2	8	1	2			
5	0	561	2,806				2	0	1,317	2,635			
4	0	2,108	8,434				1	8	2,631	3,948			
3	8	2,775	9,716				1	4	3,667	4,585			
3	0	3,097	9,293				0	12	3,051	2,289			
2	8	4,126	10,316				0	8	1,530	766			
2	0	1,821	3,643				0	6	9	4			
Total...		14,675	45,376	3	1	5							
Baling.....		539	1,091	2	0	5							
Total...		15,214	46,467	3	0	10			12,206	14,229	1	2	8

28. *The second crop.*—The second crop area in Fusly 1284 was 2,353 acres assessed at Rs. 4,168. Application was made to compound in several of the villages under the Red Hill tank, but I refused compliance as I thought it better to leave the second crop lands to be charged as at present pending the extension of the system of irrigation; but in one village Tundalam, beyond the influence of the Red Hill tank, a block of 29 acres 10 cents was compounded for at quarter additional to the single crop assessment.

29. *System of Settlement pursued.*—Though these villages had been already classified, I revised the work throughout, and visited every village applying the tarams myself to blocks, or tracts of similarly circumstanced lands, rather than to individual fields. The result was most satisfactory, and I have absolute confidence in the relative correctness of the assessment of every village. The accompanying Map shows the mode in which the villages were laid out in tracts and the taram assigned to each tract. The descriptive memoirs and eye sketches, moreover, furnish details of the treatment of each field in each tract.

30. This mode of Settlement is so incomparably superior to the earlier system of classifying by native subordinates and working up results in office, and is, moreover, so cheap and expeditious and so satisfactory to the people that I venture to think that every Settlement should be made in this manner hereafter.

31. This specimen Settlement was commenced on the 8th of March and was completed within three months. During much of this time I had to give my attention to other duties, but I was able to visit the villages, to lay out the tarams myself, to train an establishment new to the work, to instruct several of my deputies and many of their subordinates in this method of making a Settlement, to supervise details in office, to hear all complainants myself, and to write the descriptive Memoirs; while the total cost excluding the cost of my supervision and that of my office establishment was but Rupees 3,336 or Rupees 43 per square mile, or less than one anna an acre. A similar Settlement can be made in any District at about the same cost plus supervision without any preliminary operations whatever. The cheapened cost is the more remarkable when it is borne in mind that preliminary operations in most Districts cost from Rs. 27 to upwards of Rs. 100 per square mile.

32. The basis of the Settlement system devised by Mr. Newill in 1858 was and still continues to be the classification of fields. For this work classifiers are deputed to visit the villages and register the soils according to a tabular form prescribed. The work of several classifiers is supervised by a Head Classifier and his work again is tested by the Supervisor at the head of each party. Two such parties form a Deputy Director's charge and the Deputy Director does his best to check this field classification in places, but he cannot see all the fields, and he is obliged to content himself with exacting a certain acreage outturn of work, with generally directing the labors of the Classifiers, with checking their work in office and examining periodical returns. The Classifiers are strictly enjoined to register their valuation of the soils according to a formula given, without any regard to former assessment, or any consideration beyond the supposed intrinsic value of the soil itself, and each man works independently in the village allotted to him without reference to what is being done by his fellow-classifiers in other villages. This crude classification is cast into form by the Deputy Director and modified by grouping with reference to situation, irrigation, &c.

33. From the results thus obtained a Settlement scheme, embodying a table of rates, is prepared and submitted for the sanction of Government. When sanctioned, the rates are applied to the areas of holdings and the Settlement is at once introduced by the issue of rough pattahs or tickets. As might be expected such serious discrepancies often occur between the former and the revised assessment of fields that relief has to be furnished in individual cases by spreading the increased demand over a series of years by gradual increments of assessment. The consequence is that the ryots are sometimes greatly dissatisfied, and address complaints to higher authority for years after such a revision of rates has been made.

34. The system that I advocate is briefly as follows. The officer making the Settlement should lay out the lands himself, after a personal inspection of each village. The classifiers should follow his steps, instead of preceding him, and should take his orders regarding the detailed information that he requires for each of the several blocks in which he lays out his villages. Each block should comprise a tract of but one description of soil, so similarly circumstanced in regard to cultivation, distance from village, tank, or channel, &c., &c., that it may safely be charged at one and the same average rate. In forming such blocks the general lie of the country, the nature of the irrigation, the soil, situation, &c., have all to be considered together, so that in like villages similar blocks may be similarly classified and such rates of assessment may be imposed as will apply not only to existing circumstances, but to the former assessment, and the future requirements of the people.

35. The information required for each separate block is quickly given in this way, and the officer can pass through a Taluq, keeping the whole scheme of operations before him, preparing a Map to illustrate his work as he goes, and checking, revising and reconsidering his arrangements, till by the time he has inspected a Taluq he has his scheme so far matured as to be able to submit an estimate of what he proposes to do within a few days after the completion of field work. The Classifiers are thus kept in their place, and instead of being spread over the country to work up mysterious and technical details, they merely follow the officer and fill in details of registry for the lands that he has inspected and laid out in consultation with the ryots. There is comparatively no room for fraud, the people are directly interested, the officer has a perfect knowledge of every detail of the tract of country with which he is dealing, and the mass of weekly and monthly returns from the working parties, intricate classification statements, registers, kyfiats and other technical forms devised as checks by Mr. Newill, but which occupy so much time and cost so much money, are got rid of, and in lieu of the voluminous scheme of Settlement that has hitherto been submitted for sanction, a simple estimate of results proposed, with a narrative sufficiently full to explain how these results are obtained, illustrated by a Map shewing the tarams applied to the ground is all that is really needed to enable Government to sanction the table of rates and the mode of operation proposed.

36. As explained above under Mr. Newill's system, the Settlement is thought to be made when a table of rates is sanctioned. Under my system, however, the Settlement is really a Settlement and comprizes the disposal of every item that the villagers have to complain of, and it practically only commences with the sanction of a table of rates. For, when a table of rates is sanctioned, the officer should revisit the villages, revise his proposals once more, arrange for the transfer of pattahs, divide common lands, modify registry to suit the exact state of affairs for that year, allot grazing ground, &c., &c., and then issue rough pattahs naming a date for the final settlement of each separate village.

37. As each village comes up for hearing, all further complaints should be attended to; palpable overcharge should be corrected, difficult cases of pattah transfer should be heard and decided before the collected villagers, wrong entries in pattahs should be rectified, and second crop should be compounded for; and when every ryot has had his turn, and the last complaint has been heard, then, and then only, can the village be considered to be finally settled. Subsequent operations are merely mechanical; the pattahs needing correction are rewritten, the final abstract of results, the descriptive Memoir and eye sketch, the chittah or office copy of the pattahs and the Settlement register are prepared, and that village is then disposed of.

38. The result of such a system is most satisfactory, the Deputy Director knows throughout all that has been done and what the results should be; the ryots are entirely satisfied, and the Revenue Officers of the District are so greatly assisted that at the Jamabandy following such a Settlement there is literally nothing to do, and no further changes are asked for. As proof conclusive of the advantage to the ryots from such a Settlement, I may here mention that though the assessment of two of the Taluqs of the highest assessed District in the Presidency was lately revised on this principle, and the revenue was actually increased, only two appeals to my knowledge were made, and at the following Jamabandy but few of the ryots appeared. Such a Settlement can be made, moreover, at the rate of two Taluqs per annum, in each District, at a much less cost than under the old system,

Vide accompanying Volume of Descriptive Memoirs and eye sketches for the Tinnevely Taluq.

and such descriptive Memoirs and Maps can be placed on record as will render a revision of Settlement 30 years hence very easy, and will afford a full explanation of our mode of procedure even to those who know nothing of Settlement.

39. If the Government approve of this system, I request orders on the following points:—

I. The system of classifying in blocks by a responsible officer should be substituted for classifying in fields by minor subordinates.

II. As each District is taken up for Settlement in future, an estimate of the results for one or at the most two Taluqs should be submitted for sanction.

III. When the sanctioned Settlement of the one or two Taluqs estimated for has been made and reported on to the satisfaction of Government, the Deputy Director should be empowered to continue the Settlement of the other Taluqs of the District on the same principles with the same approximate results without further preliminary estimates.

IV. The Deputy Director, who is in every case a Special Assistant in the District in which he is serving, should be empowered to transfer pattahs, divide common lands, allot grazing grounds, set aside lands required for public purposes, &c., &c., with the consent of the villagers, subject to the general control of, or appeal to, the Collector.

Such forms of application for transfer as are now required by the Board of Revenue from Collectors can of course be submitted as usual.

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40. I have made arrangements for Vencata Chariar, the Special Assistant in Tinnevelly, who has worked with me for many years, and knows every detail of this system, continuing the Settlement of the Principal Division of Chingleput as soon as he has completed a Taluq of Tinnevelly that he is now engaged on; but Major Stuart, Assistant Director, who has been with me throughout this Settlement and is now employed in Chingleput, has two Taluqs of the Sub-division ready and he might commence their Settlement at once without any preliminary report on the understanding that there will be no loss of revenue. By this arrangement the Chingleput District will be completed in two years, or by the end

Director's letter to Government, No. $\frac{1127}{16}$, dated 28th May 1874.

of Fusly 1286. The early orders of Government on the proposal to constitute Major Stuart's establishment, a Deputy Director's party, are solicited.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. K. PUCKLE,

Acting Director of Revenue Settlement.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
15th April 1875.

No. 378. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. FISCHER, R.E., District Engineer, Madura, to Colonel G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madura, 22nd March 1875, No. 5,278:—

REFERRING to paragraph 10 of my report No. 4,746, dated 16th February 1875, I have the honor to forward, for the sanction of Government, the accompanying plan and estimate of Rupees 800 for constructing a cook-room and stables to the public bungalow proposed to be built at Cumbum.

1 Estimate of Rupees 800.
1 Plan.

No. 379. ORDER THEREON, 15th April 1875, No. 1,041.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 23.

SANCTIONED.

(True Extract.)

G. W. Walker Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Madura.
" Controller of Public Works Accounts.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. E. C. Shuckler.
Spare Copies

No. 1406

Revenue Department
Govt. of [1875] Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, MADURA,

cc. cc. cc.

Dated April 15th.

Issued

17^a.

Encl.

G. O., 15th April 1875, No. 1,041.

For Memo

APRIL

Nos. 378-379

Cook-room and Stables.—The estimate for constructing a — to the public bungalow proposed to be built at Cumbam, sanctioned.

No. 792
Comm. to the
Board of Revenue

19 April 75

14. To the Board of Revenue 20 April 1875 -