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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	514	Press.
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Dated	4-5-1880	197

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514

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

4th May 1880, No. 514.

No. 23. READ THE FOLLOWING PAPER:—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 3rd April 1880, No. 441.

ABSTRACT.—Submitting to Government letter from Collector forwarding Acting Sub-Collector Mr. Lister's report on the state of Vilatikulam Division in Tinnevely District.

No. 29. ORDER THEREON, 4th May 1880, No. 514.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government concur with the Board and direct that the Tahsildar, Venkatesa Lingam Aiyengar, be informed that his careless conduct is viewed with much displeasure and will be noted against him.

2. The Collector should have more carefully tested the Tahsildar's report. Both Mr. F. E. Gibson and Mr. Pennington have failed to justify the confidence of Government in their treatment of this case.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, with eight Enclosures.

Exd. W. H. French.

40 Copies

No. 441.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 3rd April 1880.

Read the following letter from J. B. PENNINGTON, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, to C. A. GALTON, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 17th March 1880, No. 172:—

I HAVE now the honor to submit the report called for on the state of the Vilatikulam Division.

2. As the Board required an immediate report, and I was engaged with Major Campbell Walker when I received their Proceedings, No. 213, dated 10th ultimo, I was obliged to ask Mr. Lister to make the inquiry, though I had made my arrangements for going to the division myself after my other work was over.

3. Mr. Lister's careful scrutiny and analysis of the accounts alone as contained in his letters, Nos. 119 and 178, of the 17th February and 12th March 1880, is sufficient to show that there has been a good deal of exaggeration as to the condition of the people this year, and that the ryots would have been quite capable of paying this year's assessment at any rate. The only question is as to the expediency of realising at once the suspended collections of last year. It is the same thing to the ryots, of course, if we remit part of this year's assessment on account of the failure of the crops last year.

4. I can vouch for the disastrous character of the season last year, especially in Kila Vilatikulam; but it is evident that much more of the assessment might have been collected had any attention at all been paid to the orders that collections were not to be suspended in the case of ryots who had means. It is quite evident there can have been no sort of scrutiny of individual balances either by the Deputy Tahsildar or in the taluk, and the officers concerned must be called to account for their neglect of this most elementary duty.

5. Until the collections have been properly pressed in such cases, I should be unwilling to recommend any remission, though I do not altogether accept Mr. Lister's rather sanguine view of the season this year as contained in paragraph 14 and elsewhere. The crops may have been, and no doubt were, good enough to pay the assessment this year, but the real question is whether it is expedient to collect what is practically in many cases double assessment.

6. The enormous increase in the cultivation of such a very inferior grain as varagu (especially in Vilatikulam itself where almost the whole increase occurs) is, in my opinion, a very bad sign, and a proof that, for some reason or other, Vilatikulam itself does really suffer more than other villages. I noticed this myself last year and found several of its hamlets almost depopulated.

7. It will also be observed that there is a very considerable falling off in the cultivation of cotton in the same village, whereas there is a decided increase in most other villages. Mr. Lister's description of the cotton crop agrees exactly with my own experience in the neighbourhood of Sator which has been even more unfortunate in the matter of rain than Vilatikulam itself. In many villages I am afraid it will pay nothing unless there should happen to be good* rain this month. The high price of cotton will be no advantage to those

* There was none at Sator or Otapidaram on the 11th and only 20 at Vilatikulam.

whose crop fails to pay even its cultivation expenses.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From A. L. LISTER, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector, to J. B. PENNINGTON, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 17th February 1880, No. 119.

I HAVE the honor to submit my opinion that no remission for dry lands in Vilatikulam Division for last fasli is necessary.

Original

Copy of (1880) 20th Nov.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

17th Nov 1880.

17th Nov 1880.

17th Nov 1880.

17th Nov 1880.

17th Nov 1880.

17th Nov 1880.

Concerning with the Board that there is no occasion to grant any remission for the current year in the -- and that the orders for the past year should be collected forthwith showing that the Tahsildar, Vachasa, Baram, Alagun, is informed that his careless conduct is viewed with much disapproval and will be noted against him; observing that the Collector should have carefully tested the Tahsildar's report, and that both Mr. R. E. Gilson and Mr. Pennington have failed to justify the confidence of the Government in their treatment of this case.

2. The division consists of twelve villages with an aggregate beriz of Rs. 23,863, of which Rs. 15,644 have been paid and Rs. 8,219 are uncollected.

3. Of the uncollected balance no less than Rs. 4,250 is due from Puttadars paying Rs. 50 and upwards.

4. Collections have been made in an inverse ratio to means; that power of resistance and not inability to pay has secured the indulgence is pretty clear from the following figures; in Kila Vilatikulam, the largest village of the group with a beriz of Rs. 7,000 which was represented to have suffered much, Puttadars of Rs. 10 and under have paid 80 per cent., Puttadars between Rs. 10 and Rs. 50 have paid 67 per cent., and Puttadars over Rs. 50 have paid 58 per cent.; four defaulters owe the large sum of Rs. 1,000.

5. There are 1,291 Puttadars in the division, of whom 851 have paid in full against 440 defaulters.

6. I beg to enter an earnest protest against the principle of treating defaulters with greater indulgence than those who have honorably fulfilled their engagements; if it is decided, contrary to my recommendation, that remission should be granted, it must take the form of a general remission too; this would involve refunds being made to about 900 Puttadars: the fallacy of crediting the amounts remitted for last fasli for the collections of the present one is too transparent to require demonstration.

7. As permission to suspend collections was only asked for until this month, and as I see no reason to apply for an extension of the indulgence, I have directed the collections for last fasli to be promptly made.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. B. PENNINGTON,
Collector.

Enclosure No. 2.

From A. L. LISTER, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector, to J. B. PENNINGTON, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 12th March 1880, No. 178.

In continuation of my letter, No. 119, of the 17th ultimo, I have the honor to report that I returned to-day from a tour of inspection into the Vilatikulam Division made in accordance with the instructions contained in your endorsement of the 20th ultimo on Board's Proceedings, No. 213, of the 10th idem.

2. On the 10th January, the Tahsildar of Otapidaram (Singanaiyangan) came to see me and produced Enclosure A; what is written on that paper in English is in my hand-writing, and you will see that I noted the Tahsildar's recommendation that the whole of the uncollected balance, Rs. 8,880, should be remitted; now that this recommendation has been proved in my view to be unworthy of acceptance, the Tahsildar urges that he did not come with the express purpose of making this proposal, but that it was the outcome of the conversation on the subject; this no doubt is true, but he came fresh from the inspection of the division, and he voluntarily brought the subject to my notice, and he distinctly recommended that this sum should be remitted; he had, too, in his last interview with Mr. Gibson urged the necessity for remission.

3. I immediately pointed out to the Tahsildar that without seeing the collection in each village the incidence of remission granted in this offhand way might be very unequal, whereupon he commenced to combat the objection by saying that there were different degrees of agricultural distress; as he had only ten days before returned from a prolonged inspection of the division, I asked him to state which villages had suffered most; he named four villages which were better than the others, and those you will see I have marked, "best; 2nd best, 3rd best, and 4th best;" the other eight villages he said were alike; he further broached the singularly unfortunate view that larger holdings enable better collections to be made, and I recorded this remark with pleasure in the hope that the first Tahsildar I had seen in my new sub-division was one who secured for small holders their full share of a special indulgence.

4. I told the Tahsildar at once to let me have a list of the village collections; he asked to be permitted to take Enclosure A away with him, and I allowed him to do so.

5. On returning to his cusbah he fell from his horse and broke his arm; as I merely, however, wanted figures which a Gunastah could prepare in a couple of hours, and no further report, I sent an order on the 28th January expressing my displeasure at the delay, whereupon he wrote his report of the 28th January, Enclosure B.

6. In this report you will see he recommends an all-round remission of 25 per cent. for ten villages and 33 per cent. for the cusbah, Vilatikulam; if at this distance of time remission is to be given on what the Tahsildar chooses to say was the different outturn last year in the several

villages, I can say nothing except point out the discrepancy between his recommendation of the 28th January and his statement to me on the 10th idem; then four villages were better than the eight others which were alike; now ten villages are to have the same treatment, and two only are to have special extra remission, though three have suffered most with equal severity. I do not find in Mr. Gibson's letters of February and May in last year any attempt to distinguish between the different villages in this small division.

7. The cusbah village (Vilatikulam and Kila Vilatikulam were one and the same three years ago) can make itself heard and can secure an adequate amount of any indulgence that is going; in the real famine year it secured 69 per cent. of panch remission against 45 per cent. given to the other villages in the division; and I am constrained to state that I look upon this recommendation of the Tahsildar with the gravest suspicion, as being made to back and bolster up the poor collections in cusbah Vilatikulam for last fasli, of which I will do him the justice to say I believe he was entirely ignorant until he had to prepare for me a village list of collections; if Hlandaikulam suffered equally, what reason can there be for giving less remission except that the collections have been better.

8. I enclose a statement (Enclosure C) of collections to date from which you will see that out of 1,288 Puttadars 957 have paid in full, while 331 defaulters owe Rs. 5,845; of these defaulters, 53 with beriz over Rs. 50 owe Rs. 3,256—56 per cent. of the outstanding balance.

9. Still more unequal have the collections been if we look at villages; Rs. 4,665 are owed by the cusbah village, Vilatikulam and Kila Vilatikulam; this amounts to 80 per cent. of the balance, although the beriz of the village is only 59 per cent. of the division; three villages have paid in full, and four others have paid upwards of 90 per cent.

10. Nine Puttadars in their single and joint puttas owe Rs. 1,837—31 per cent. of the balance; the Zemindar of Etaiyapuram owes Rs. 214; one Saudra Redli now owes Rs. 417, having paid only Rs. 60; and in furtherance of my view that the arrears have accumulated owing to the culpable neglect of the Tahsildar to collect from persons who are well able to pay, I would to the culpable neglect of the Tahsildar to collect from persons who are well able to pay, I would name Vishvanada Pillai, your own Village Munsif, who owed the whole of his beriz, Rs. 93, until the 7th instant when he paid Rs. 50; what the effect of remitting the outstanding balance would have been is clearly apparent.

11. These figures seem to show conclusively that, when the Tahsildar ventured the suggestion that larger holdings enable better collections to be made, he was describing his administration as it ought to be and not as it was. I would here ask your attention to his remarks about the collections of kists in his report of the 21st August; he explained the rules, he writes, to the village officers who were about to commence the collection from ryots who had means; no system of administration is more feeble and mischievous than that which only issues orders without taking any steps to see that they are carried out; a quarter of an hour's inspection once a month of Village Account No. 3 would not have been too much to expect of the Tahsildar himself, neglect to examine these books during his tour in the division in December requires explanation.

12. I think it quite impossible to give any remission for last fasli; but if contrary to my recommendation any remission is given all must share it, and refunds must be given to the 957 Puttadars who have paid in full.

13. For the current fasli, I have the Tahsildar's reports of the 8th August and the 26th December, Enclosures E and F; they are the reports of a theorist, rather than of a practical observer, and I am not disposed to attach much weight to them; the statement that "the number of ryots who are able to pay is very small" is not sustained by the figures which show that 75 per cent. have paid in full without issue of any coercive process, and that the gloomy fear that the cattle "are not sufficient to till the land" is happily dispelled by Enclosure G which shows the cultivation to be 450 acres in excess of last year.

14. Enclosure H shows the acreage under different crops this fasli; the large extent under varagu is a gratifying feature in a year of scanty rainfall, as it requires less rain than any other crop; cumbu, the principal food-grain, suffers less than most crops from the failure of late rains as it is mostly sown early.

15. There has undoubtedly been a failure of the late rains here, and the dry crops have consequently given a yield below the average; there has, however, been no total loss of crop, and I should not feel justified in recommending any remission of assessment on unirrigated land for this year.

16. I am afraid I cannot add much to what is known about the crops as they have all been reaped, except cotton which is languishing for lack of rain; there are absolutely no signs of distress; cumbu is being stored in the three villages which are said to have suffered most, and this year's straw is being stacked alongside of last year's straw which is not yet consumed; people and cattle are well and in good condition; water here and there is scarce, but this can be remedied without troubling the Board of Revenue, and I am issuing orders in necessary cases; yesterday was cloudy and overcast, and there was a good shower in the afternoon.

17. Prices are lower than they have been for years; cumbu is selling at Vilatikulam 20 measures a rupee and rice at 8 and 9 measures, while the price of cotton is exceptionally high for the commencement of the season.

18. The country is prematurely parched and dried up to a certain extent, that is to say, in March it is presenting the normal appearance of April.

19. The Deputy Tahsildar of Vilatikulam performs the duties of a Revenue Inspector in this division; not a single petition has been presented to him complaining of short crop this season; not a ryot has asked him to examine his field; except the periodical season reports, the village officers have made no special representation of failure of crops; no petition complaining of short crop or of total failure has been received in this office.

20. I do not consider the circumstances of the division justify any revenue being foregone either for last year or for this unless the conditions under which unirrigated land is held are to be altered. I am a firm believer in the soundness of the Board's Standing Order, which directs that their sanction for the remission of assessment on this land should be applied for before the end of January; the state of these crops is then known; posthumous inquiries into their condition embrace a wide range of conjecture which may be more or less intelligent.

21. As the Tahsildar Singamaiyengar has been promoted out of the Sub-division, I hardly know whether I am called upon to express any opinion about his conduct in the matter, about the character of his reports, and about the nature of his recommendations. I think, however, that in the circumstances it is better for me to leave the plain facts for the judgment of my superiors.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. B. PENNINGTON,
Collector.

ENCLOSURES Nos. 3 to 10.—Statements, Arzis, &c.

SUBMITTED to Government with reference to G.Os., dated 2nd July 1879, No. 1,406, and 27th February 1880, No. 246.

2. Mr. Lister's clear and practical letters of the 17th February and 12th March disclose the true state of affairs and show that the condition of the Vilatikulam Division has been misrepresented as the Collector himself admits. If the late Sub-Collector had investigated the matter as carefully as Mr. Lister has done, no application for special concessions would have been deemed necessary; the Board consider that there is no occasion to grant any remissions for the current year and that the arrears for the past year should be collected forthwith. The conduct of the Tahsildar in the matter of collections is deserving of grave censure.

(True Copies and Extract.)

Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
Collector of Tinnevely.

with eight original enclosures to be returned.

Exd. A. Grubert.

No. 2191.

From

The Board of Revenue -
25 April 1894

FOR ORDERS.

402-206179 Mr. -
27-4-20-342-2

George Washington
Dec 2/91

1880.

Board of Revenue;

MADRAS.

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THE SECRETARY TO GOVT.,
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

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Dated April 3rd.

Printed 811.

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PROCEEDINGS, 3RD APRIL 1880, No. 441.

APRIL 29/48

No. 441.

State of Villukulam Division—in Tinnevely District. — Submitting to Government letter from Collector forwarding Acting Sub-Collector Mr. Lister's report on the —.

C. & G. 574

[illegible]

FOR ORDERS.

Revenue Department
Recd: Govt: 8/10/80
No 5/4

Case 10
R20-1-80
R20-1-80
R20-1-80