Revenue (1897) Department.

PRESS SERIES.

G.O., No. 427-427A.

DATED 3rd June 1897.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Outturn of Cotton.

Recording, with remarks, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue reporting the steps which it has taken or proposes to take with reference to the observations made by the Madras Chamber of Commerce in regard to the official estimates of the — in Madras Presidency.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
Cro 4004/98.							

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1897.

Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

MADRAS.

Recd. } 1897. *Enclosures*

Regd. } *Spare copies*

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS
16 MAY 97

Printed May th.

Proceedings, 26th April 1897, No. 316.

ARRIL.

Outturn of cotton.—Stating that the remarks of the Madras Chamber of Commerce in regard to the official estimates being low are unfounded.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE

REVENUE SETTLEMENT, LAND RECORDS AND AGRICULTURE).

READ—again the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R. S., L. R. and Agri.), dated 11th January 1897, Mis. No. 211 :—

Read—the following G.O., Mis. No. 1363, Revenue, dated 5th November 1896 .—

Read—the following letter from the Hon'ble Mr. G. L. CHAMBERS, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Secretary to Government of Madras, Revenue and Agriculture, Ootacamund, dated 6th August 1896 :—

In July last year some communications passed between this Chamber and the Government of India on the subject of the Crop Forecasts issued by the Department of Revenue and Agriculture. In forwarding for your information copies of this correspondence, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to forward the enclosed further letter to the Government of India on the same subject.

ENCLOSURES.

Correspondence referred to above.

From the Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, Calcutta, to the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, Madras, dated 22nd January, 1895.

In examining some of the preliminary (crop) forecasts which we issue in this department, I have been struck with the fact that we have no fixed standard of comparison for areas. Such passages as the following, for instance, occur—"In the Punjab the area sown is 10 per cent. in excess of the normal, while in the Central Provinces it falls short by nearly 25 per cent. of the area sown last year." Now the "area sown last year" in the Central Provinces may have been nearly double the normal; and it seems to me that vagueness on this point must detract from the practical utility of these forecasts.

It may be that the figures of the preceding year really form the most useful basis of comparison, those who are interested in the matter having a very fair idea of what the last year's crop was like. Or it may be that both forms of comparison would be useful. But if a comparison is to be made with a normal area, the normal must, I think, be constantly re-adjusted; as to compare present areas with (say) the normal of 10 years ago in a Province where the cultivation of a particular staple is rapidly extending would clearly be misleading. Perhaps a good normal to adopt would be the average area of the 5 years immediately preceding that to which the forecast refers.

I should be obliged if you would favour me with the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the above points, that is to say—

(1) whether the comparison should be with last year, or the normal, or both;
(2) if with the normal, how it should be calculated.

And as we are considering the subject, I should be glad to receive any other suggestions for rendering these forecasts more practically useful to those whom they concern.

From the Hon'ble Mr. G. L. CHAMBERS, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agricultural, Simla, dated 5th July 1895.

I have the honour to inform you, in reply to Mr. Ibbetson's demi-official letter No. 124/18-1 of the 22nd January last—which, as I have already informed you, was unfortunately mislaid—on the subject of the adoption of a fixed standard of comparison for areas in forecasts of crops, that this Chamber is of opinion that both forms of comparison should be given, viz., with the preceding year and with the normal. The latter might be the average area of the five years immediately preceding that to which the forecast relates, provided that the rainfall during each of these years has not been seriously deficient, in which case the figures of the year preceding the quinquennium might be taken in conjunction with the other years in which the rainfall has been normal for the purpose of calculating the normal area under crop.

In compliance with the request contained in the last paragraph of Mr. Ibbetson's letter, the Chamber would suggest as one means of rendering the forecasts more practically useful that so far as cotton is concerned, an improvement might be effected by separating the "crops" or "Market descriptions." For instance, in what is now termed the "Southern Districts," "Tinnevellies" and "Salems" are lumped together, but as each crop is grown in a distinct district, the statistics would be of much greater value if those relating to each description of crop were given separately. Similarly the statistics relating to "Cocanadas" and "Westerns" and "Northerns" should be given separately. The Chamber fears it would be impossible to satisfactorily sub-divide "Westerns" and "Northerns," but in any case means should be devised to give also the area under crop in the Nizam's Dominions, without which no estimate of the "Western" crop is of much value.

Read—also the following letter from DENZIL IBBETSON, Esq., C.S., C.S.I., Officiating Secretary to the Government of India (Department of Revenue and Agriculture—Agriculture), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Department, dated Simla, the 17th October 1896, No. 1815—2A-12 :—

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3322, dated the 18th August 1896, and of the letter from the Chamber of Commerce of Madras enclosed in it (of which a copy was also received direct from the Chamber), on the subject of the forecasts of the cotton crop issued by the Government of India.

2. The Chamber mentioned two matters for the consideration of Government. It is represented—

(1) that the outturn of cotton in ryotwari tracts is much under-estimated, and that the reason for the under-estimate is that the officers immediately concerned in the collection of the facts do not take sufficient interest in obtaining accurate figures;

(2) that the returns would be more practically useful to merchants if the different "market descriptions" of the crop were shown separately.

3. The Governor-General in Council is not aware whether there is any foundation for the suggestion of want of care in the preparation of the estimates, but, looking at the forecasts for all parts of India as a whole, the collation of the facts regarding import production, consumption, and export of cotton, leaves little doubt that the returns of production are exceedingly incomplete. Much, if not most, of the incompleteness is no doubt due to the omission from the returns of the zamindari portion of Madras, and to the entire or partial exclusion of many Native States in other parts of India. It is possible, however, that the returns and estimates for the ryotwari area in Madras may also be lacking in accuracy and completeness; and having regard to the great importance of the estimates of the cotton crop to merchants—cotton being the most important article exported from India—I am to suggest that the matter should be inquired into, and if it should appear that the suggestion of the Chamber is in any degree well founded, that steps should be taken to secure closer attention to the correctness and completeness of the district returns on the part of the officers responsible for them.

4. As regards the second point, I am to say that as the published returns give separate figures for each district, and as the Chamber mention in the list appended to their letter the growth peculiar to each district, it would seem practicable, with a very

small amount of trouble, to specify the growths against the districts as suggested by the Chamber. This would assimilate the practice in Madras to the practice in Bombay, where the final forecasts prepared by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, contain a statement showing the variety of cotton grown in each district or Native State, with the area and estimated outturn of the crop in the year under report. I am to suggest therefore that, if the Madras Government see no objection, a statement similar to that appended to the final memorandum on the cotton crop in the Bombay Presidency might be introduced into the final forecast issued by the Board of Revenue, Madras, to meet the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce. The insertion, after the column specifying the districts, of another column stating the description grown in each district, and the re-arrangement of the order in which the districts are shown, so as to bring together those in which the same description is grown, would probably suffice.

Read—Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), dated 24th October 1896, Mis. No. 5203.

Order—thereon Mis. No. 4363, Revenue, dated 5th November 1896.

The letter from the Government of India read above will be referred to the Board of Revenue for report.

2. It is observed that in the second of the papers the Board states that the grouping suggested by the Chamber will be followed in future.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Ag. Under Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement.

Resolution.—dated 11th January 1897, Mis. No. 211.

Before submitting its reply to the reference made in the last paper read above, the Board resolves to request the Chamber of Commerce to be so good as to state the grounds on which it considers that the official estimates of the outturn of the cotton crop in the Government villages of this Presidency are too low. In order to enable it to understand the basis for these estimates a copy of B.P., No. 39 of 1890 wherein the standard yield of 50lb. per acre all round was arrived at will be furnished. All subsequent estimates have been calculated with reference to that standard.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, Madras,
with a spare copy of B.P., dated 12th February 1890,
No. 39, and Government of India letter No. 1815/2 A-12,
dated 17th October 1896.

READ—also the following letter from G. G. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue (R. S. L., R. and Agri.), dated 2nd March 1897:—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the B.P., dated the 11th January 1897, No. 211, in which the Chamber is asked to state the grounds on which it considers that the official estimates of the outturn of the cotton crop in Government villages in this Presidency are too low.

The main cause the Chamber had in view was the almost notorious fact that native village officials habitually under-estimate crops. The Chamber, for instance, can call to mind hardly any occasion when a crop has been estimated to be a 16-anna one. The tendency, no doubt, is to estimate on the safe side, and if it were generally made known to the subordinate officials concerned in the preparation of the estimates that under-estimating is as much to be deprecated as over-estimating, a much closer approximation might be arrived at. In any case, a very close check by the superior district officials appears to be necessary.

With reference to this matter I would draw the attention of the Board to the remarks of the Hon'ble Mr. A. F. Beaufort, Chairman of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, at the Annual Meeting of that body held on the 3rd ultimo. Mr. Beaufort is an accepted authority on Cotton Statistics, and dealing with the subject of crop reports he is reported to have said:—"The worst compiled and most unreliable estimates are those of the Madras Presidency, where not only is no attempt made to ascertain the area under cultivation and the probable yield in the zamindaris, but the outturn in British territory is absurdly under-estimated."

The Chamber believes that the Agricultural Department in Bombay under Mr. Ozanne has, of late years, effected considerable improvements in its estimates of cotton crops, and no doubt a reference to that Department would elicit some valuable hints.

I am desired to add that the Chamber has perused with much interest the copy of the B.P., dated the 12th February 1890, No. 39. The question of average outturn per acre of clean cotton is one that presents much difficulty; but as estimates will in future be prepared according to the grouping of crops, as suggested in the Chamber's letter of the 6th August 1896, to the Government of India, I would point out that the old average unit for the Presidency (whether it was correct or not) will now be of no value. For instance, the Chamber is informed that in Tinnevelly the outturn per acre varies from 70lb. to 120 lb. according to the quality of the land. Probably 90lb. would be a fair average for this district. In portions of the Bellary district, on the other hand, the outturn per acre can hardly exceed 20lb. It stands to reason, therefore, that if an accurate estimate of each separate crop is to be attempted, a different unit for each must be adopted.

RESOLUTION—dated 26th April 1897, No. 316.

In the letter of the Government of India referred in the Government Order read above to the Board for report, attention was invited to two matters mentioned by the Madras Chamber of Commerce in its letter to the Government of India, dated 6th August 1896, namely—

(1) that the outturn of cotton in Government villages in this Presidency was much under-estimated.

(2) that the returns would be of more practical use if particulars for the different market descriptions of the crop were shown separately.

2. The Board has already adopted the grouping of districts suggested by the Chamber in connection with the second matter noted above.

3. As regards the first point it will be seen from paragraph 2 of the letter of the Chamber of Commerce read above, that the Chamber's main reason (other reasons have not been stated) for its remark to the effect that the official estimates of the outturn of cotton in this Presidency were too low, was the notorious fact, so says the Chamber, that the village officials habitually under-estimate yields. As a matter of fact, the village officials have nothing whatever to do with the estimates of yield in question; the superior revenue officers being alone responsible for them. The village officers merely furnish particulars of area. It is, however, quite possible that even the officers concerned do understate the yields, owing to the difficulty they labour under of comprehending the Government of India system of anna-notation, under which an average

and not a full crop has to be treated as 16 annas. By way of corroborating its remark made on 6th August 1896, the Chamber quotes a remark to the same effect made by Mr. Beaufort, Chairman, Bombay Chamber of Commerce, quite recently, viz., 3rd February 1897. In B. P., dated 28th November 1894, No. 7202, it was pointed out to the firm of Messrs. Lyon & Co., Bombay, of which Mr. Beaufort is a member, that the estimated average annual yield of cotton for the previous five years fell short of the total average quantity annually consumed and exported during that period by about 20 per cent., owing either to the area figures for zamindaris being under-estimated or to the actual average outturn per acre having exceeded 50lb. taken as a full (16-anna) crop in the calculation for the forecasts. If Mr. Beaufort's remark is based on the concluding remarks in the Board's Proceedings above referred to, or in the final forecasts of the cotton crop for 1893–94 and 1894–95 which were supplied to that firm, his remark appears to the Board to be of too sweeping a character.

4. Collectors will be enjoined to pay closer attention than hitherto, to the correctness and completeness of the district returns.

(True Copies and Extract.)

R. Srinivasan
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, Madras.
" the " " " Bombay.
" all Collectors, except Malabar, South Canara, Nilgiris and Madras.

Exd P. Seetharam.

P.S.

The Hon: Mr Grose C.S.I

Issued 1/6/97

1/6/97

Perused
Chief Secy's
25/6/97

To the Board of Revenue &c
Rev: Agri: Dept.

Dated 1-7-97.

Ref: No 427 A.
Copy to the Govt of India

Read this No 4211 of 97

with Order No 427 of 3rd June 1897.

Recorded

2 The Govt observes that in the B.P. read above G.O. No 4363 dy 5th Nov: 1896 has been wrongly printed. The necessary correction will now be made and a copy of the present Proc forwarded for the information of the Govt of India

28/5/97

28/5/97

Note

The Board's Resolution gives a short precis of the case and as the Board has taken the necessary action in giving effect to the suggestion of the Govt of India regarding the grouping of districts and has also instructed Collectors to pay closer attention to the correctness

a

and completeness of district returns no further action has, it is submitted to be taken now except to forward a copy of the Proc. for the information of the Govt. of India

25.VI.97

Government (1897) of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd.	1897.	*Enclosures*
Regd.		*Spare copies*

G.O., Nos. 427, 427A, 3rd June 1897.

JUNE.

Outturn of Cotton.

Recording, with remarks, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue reporting the steps which it has taken or proposes to take with reference to the observations made by the Madras Chamber of Commerce in regard to the official estimates of the — in Madras Presidency.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 26th April 1897, No. 316:—

Read—again the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R. S., L. R. and Agri.), dated 11th January 1897, Mis. No. 211:—

Read—the following G.O., Mis. No. 3321, Revenue, dated 18th August 1896:—

Read—the following letter from the Hon'ble Mr. G. L. CHAMBERS, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Secretary to Government of Madras, Revenue and Agriculture, Ootacamund, dated 6th August 1896:—

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Order—No. 3321, Revenue, dated 18th August 1896.

The letter from the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Madras, will be forwarded to the Government of India.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. T. ARUNDEL,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.

Copy to the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).

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(2) that the returns would be more practically useful to merchants if the different "market descriptions" of the crop were shown separately.

3. The Governor-General in Council is not aware whether there is any foundation for the suggestion of want of care in the preparation of the estimates, but, looking at the forecasts for all parts of India as a whole, the collation of the facts regarding import production, consumption, and export of cotton, leaves little doubt that the returns of production are exceedingly incomplete. Much, if not most, of the incompleteness is no doubt due to the omission from the returns of the zamindari portion of

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4. As regards the second point, I am to say that as the published returns give separate figures for each district, and as the Chamber mention in the [illegible]ended to their letter the growth peculiar to each district, it would seem practicable, with a very small amount of trouble, to specify the growths against the districts as suggested by the Chamber. This would assimilate the practice in Madras to the practice in Bombay, where the final forecasts prepared by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, contain a statement showing the variety of cotton grown in each district or Native State, with the area and estimated outturn of the crop in the year under report. I am to suggest therefore that, if the Madras Government see no objection, a statement similar to that appended to the final memorandum on the cotton crop in the Bombay Presidency might be introduced into the final forecast issued by the Board of Revenue, Madras, to meet the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce. The insertion, after the column specifying the districts, of another column stating the description grown in each district, and the re-arrangement of the order in which the districts are shown, so as to bring together those in which the same description is grown, would probably suffice.

I am, &c.,

[illegible], dated [illegible].

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(True Extract.)

(Signed) LIONEL DAVIDSON,
Ag. Under Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement.

Resolution—dated 11th January 1897, Mis. No. 211.

Before submitting its reply to the reference made in the last paper read above, the Board resolves to request the Chamber of Commerce to be so good as to state the grounds on which it considers that the official estimates of the outturn of the cotton crop in the Government villages of this Presidency are too low. In order to enable it to understand the basis for these estimates a copy of B.P., No. 39 of 1890 wherein the standard yield of 50lb. per acre all round was arrived at will be furnished. All subsequent estimates have been calculated with reference to that standard.

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(1) that the outturn of cotton in Government villages in this Presidency was much under-estimated.

(2) that the returns would be of more practical use if particulars for the different market descriptions of the crop were shown separately.

2. The Board has already adopted the grouping of districts suggested by the Chamber in connection with the second matter noted above.

3. As regards the first point it will be seen from paragraph 2 of the letter of the Chamber of Commerce read above, that the Chamber's main reason (other reasons have not been stated) for its remark to the effect that the official estimates of the outturn of cotton in this Presidency were too low, was the notorious fact, so says the Chamber,

that the village officials habitually under-estimate yields. As a matter of fact, the village officials have nothing whatever to do with the estimates of yield in question; the superior revenue officers being alone responsible for them. The village officers merely furnish particulars of area. It is, however, quite possible that even the officers concerned do understate the yields, owing to the difficulty they labour under of comprehending the Government of India system of anna-notation, under which an average and not a full crop has to be treated as 16 annas. By way of corroborating its remark made on 6th August 1896, the Chamber quotes a remark to the same effect made by Mr. Beaufort, Chairman, Bombay Chamber of Commerce, quite recently, viz, 3rd February 1897. In B.P., dated 28th November 1894, No. 7202, it was pointed out to the firm of Messrs. Lyon & Co., Bombay, of which Mr. Beaufort is a member, that the estimated average annual yield of cotton for the previous five years fell short of the total average quantity annually consumed and exported during that period by about 20 per cent., owing either to the area figures for zamindaris being under-estimated or to the actual average outturn per acre having exceeded 50lb. taken as a full (16-anna) crop in the calculation for the forecasts. If Mr. Beaufort's remark is based on the concluding remarks in the Board's Proceedings above referred to, or in the final forecasts of the cotton crop for 1893–94 and 1894–95 which were supplied to that firm, his remark appears to the Board to be of too sweeping a character.

4. Collectors will be enjoined to pay closer attention than hitherto, to the correctness and completeness of the district returns.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
„ the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, Madras.
„ the „ „ „ Bombay.
„ all Collectors, except Malabar, South Canara, Nilgiris and Madras.

Order—No. 427, Revenue, dated 3rd June 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

2. The Government observes that in the Board's Proceedings read above, G.O., No. 4363, dated 5th November 1896, has been wrongly printed. The necessary correction will now be made, and a copy of the present proceedings forwarded for the information of the Government of India.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).

Endorsement No. 427A.

Copy to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

(Signed) G. STOKES,
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