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Revenue (1898) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

G.O., No. 2389

DATED 3rd June 98

[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording with remarks, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue issuing instructions for the destruction of records under the disposal/weeding system.

BACK PAPERS.

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

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

Revenue (189 8) Department.

CURRENT No.

Order

From Board of Revenue

No. 108

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Enclosures

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SUBJECT.

Issuing instructions for the destruction of Records under the different number system.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
G.O.	437	98	

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1898.

Board of Revenue

(Land Revenue),

MADRAS.

Printed April th.

Proceedings, No. 101, 18th April 1898.

APRIL.

Issuing instructions for the destruction of records under the disposal number system.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE
(LAND REVENUE).

READ—the following letter from SYED MUSTAFA SAHIB, Bahadur, Deputy Collector, Tinnevelly, to the Secretary to the Commissioners of Land Revenue, dated 5th June 1897, No. A :—

With reference to the Board's Proceedings, No. 5, Land Revenue, dated 6th January 1896, I have the honour to submit the following report on the question of destroying records under the disposal number system and to state that the report from the Collector of Gódávari was received only on the 23rd April 1897.

2. Three points raised in the above Proceedings have to be considered, viz., (1) retention of disposal files for a certain number of years; (2) reduction for this purpose of the number of periods of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428, Land Revenue, dated 21st July 1893, and Board's Proceedings, No. 389, Land Revenue, dated 11th September 1894; (3) safe guards to be adopted when files are withdrawn for destruction.

3. A précis of the Collectors' replies on these points is enclosed.

First.—The Collectors of the districts marginally noted * suggest the retention of records for a definite period before sanctioning destruction, though some of them differ in opinion as regards the period for which they should be retained. In the opinion of the majority, however, the records should be retained for five years; whilst Malabar is in favour of longer period, viz., seven years; Nilgiris would reduce it to three; Tinnevelly to six, or three, if six be considered too long a period. In the opinion of the Collector of North Arcot no system is feasible for destroying records under the disposal number system. The Collector of Tanjore would make out list of papers as the files grow, and classify and note against each paper R or D and separate each D paper and destroy when the time arrives. The Collector of Trichinopoly advocates the system of maintaining two disposal lists, permanently retainable and destroy. The remarks which he makes in support of his proposal lend weight to the opinion regarding the retention of records for a fixed period. The Collectors of Chingleput, Coimbatore, Kistna and Vizagapatam furnish no definite reply on this point. The Collector of Gódávari is of opinion that the retention of all disposal files for any period irrespective of their importance is quite unnecessary and that there is no reason why destruction should not commence earlier according to the nature of the papers.

*Anantapur.	Madras.
South Arcot.	Madura.
Bellary.	Malabar.
South Canara.	Nellore.
Cuddapah.	Nilgiris.
Ganjám.	Tinnevelly.
Kurnool.	

4. With reference to the second point regarding the reduction of the number of periods prescribed in Board's Proceedings on the subject of destroying records, the Collectors of the districts noted in the margin † recommend reduction in the number of periods though some difference of opinion exists as regards the exact number of periods; five years is proposed by some ‡ as the initial period for destruction to be taken in hand and to rise by multiples of five years as 5, 10, 15, &c., and a suggestion is made to classify the Board's lists of records under one or other of these periods

†Bellary.	Kurnool.
South Canara.	Madras
Chingleput.	Madura.
Coimbatore.	Malabar.
Ganjám.	Nellore.
Gódávari.	Salem.
Kistna.	Tinnevelly.
	Vizagapatam.

‡Anantapur.	Ganjám.
North Arcot.	Kistna.
Bellary.	Madura.
South Canara.	Nellore.

according to the nature of the correspondence involved. In other words, the proposal is to the effect that all papers destroyable after five years or fewer years are to be destroyed after five years; and papers destroyable between 5 and 10, to be destroyed on the expiry of the ten years, and so on. Other Collectors would have only 3 or 4 periods—5, 10, 20 or 25 (Ganjám and Madura); 3, 10, 15, 25 or 50 (Gódávari) if reduction absolutely necessary; or 3, 5, 15 (Kistna), 3, 6, 12 and 20 (Salem) or 6, 12, 18 (Tinnevelly). The Collector of Bellary would reduce some of the ten years' records to five, Anantapur and Madras would reduce all other records than those specified in lists furnished by them to a uniform period of five years. The Collector of South Arcot would club all records not destroyable at the first sorting of five years and keep the 10, 11, 12 or 15 years' records under only one period, viz., fifteen years. The Collector of Coimbatore forwards a list of reductions proposed by him in the period of retention which comprises one and two years also. The Collector of Cuddapah fixes five years as the maximum limit up to which all disposed files should be retained inasmuch as in the majority of cases the period for papers eventually destroyable is, he says, five according to Board's Proceedings, No. 428, Land Revenue, dated 21st July 1893. He proposes to destroy papers within one or two years after the expiry of this five years' limit according to the importance of the subject. Kurnool and Chingleput make no definite recommendations. The Collectors of Gódávari, Nilgiris, Salem and Vizagapatam, though in favour of reduction of retention periods, if absolutely required, are nevertheless against any reduction as in the opinion of the first three officers, no object is served in keeping records for unnecessarily long periods; and because the destruction after a time will have to be annual in any case according to the last Collector (Vizagapatam). North Arcot, Tanjore and Trichinopoly offer no remarks for opinions expressed on the first point.

5. It will be seen that taking the remarks of the Collectors on heads one and two which are so inseparably connected together, an overwhelming majority is in favour of simplification of the Board's list of destroyable papers and consequently in favour of keeping files for a fixed period though they are not unanimous as to details of years for which to be kept. The exceptions are North Arcot, Tanjore and Trichinopoly. North Arcot considers the destruction of records not feasible under the disposal number system; Tanjore and Trichinopoly, as already observed, offer their own systems.

6. From the enclosed analysis (enclosure B) of the Board's list of destroyable records it is observed that all the fifty years' papers are correspondence registers; that District Gazettes, Pay Abstracts and Treasury (Permanent Pay Orders) and Taluk accounts (cowle No. 14) alone are retainable for twenty-five years; Customs Registers, Pay Abstracts, Irrigation Registers; Registers of Remittance transfer receipts and counterfoils of Remittance transfer receipts are retainable for twenty years; monthly demand, collection and balances (Abkári and Land Revenue), accounts current and sub-treasury chittas and certain other treasury items have to be kept for fifteen years. These are clearly items excluded from the operation of the disposal number system. Of the papers between ten and fifteen years may be enumerated papers relating to escheats (twelve years), papers relating to census (eleven years), orders relating to suspension of public servants (20 years), papers relating to inam quit-rent and lapsed inams (twelve years); records of suits under the Rent Recovery Act (twelve years); Court of Wards, Famine and Loan papers, contractor's agreements have got special periods of retention. The six years' papers are but very few and all accounts, special and pound funds; that one and two years' papers are mostly accounts or are those which go under the "lodged" item. The two periods that remain are three and five; and it would appear from the same enclosure that there are very few subjects whose destroyable records cover these two periods or more. Thus most of the records fall to be destroyed under three or five years.

7. The question then is whether three or five years should be taken as the initial period up to which the records have to be retained. The majority of Collectors are in favour of five years. Experience has shown that for any system of record keeping to be successfully carried out in practice must be based on simple and clear principles entailing as little labour as possible so that the system may work almost mechanically. For once the work of record begins to accumulate from some cause or other, confusion

and mistakes are the inevitable result. More than one officer who has had to sanction lists of correspondence records would more or less confess to having fallen into the same mistakes which the Collector of Trichinopoly does of having destroyed as time-expired papers which might have usefully remained longer on the shelves. I must own that errors like these are unavoidable under the condition of things which now govern the procedure of destroying records. The Board's list, though it contains 160 sub-heads, is still defective. Owing to this difficulty of classification and to the numerous divisions into years that have to be made, or to pressure of work, or to some other cause, the work of destruction is more often than not neglected and hurried through in the end so that the officer passing these lists is unable to exercise effective check over their work. Seeing therefore what a small fraction the three years' records bear to the entire bulk of the records falling under the disposal number system and what a convenience it would be to merge the three years into five years' records in respect of facility and accuracy of classification, I would recommend the acceptance of the proposal for five years' retention advocated by the majority of the Collectors. I am aware of the objection which has been advanced in respect of retaining records which might be destroyed earlier. I beg to submit as an answer to this that the advantages of a system which saves labour and ensures accuracy more than counterbalances the slight disadvantage of keeping papers a little time longer than necessary, if it can be called a disadvantage at all, because there is not likely to be any practical difficulty in finding space for these records. If I may be permitted to note, I may say that even with the existence of these various periods of destruction very few officers had availed themselves of this facility in any tangible form at the time of my inspection. Correspondence records used to be, and were, kept for several years together regardless of the period of retention prescribed and were then thrown aside for purpose of destruction, because it was easy to do so, the necessity for any kind of classification not then existing. What the Collector of Trichinopoly says of his district that "during the past few years no fewer than 444,052 time-expired non-magisterial papers—the accumulation of years—were set aside for destruction"—is, I may say, without fear of contradiction, true of many other offices also. The root of all these evils lies, as I have said, in the want of a simple list of destroyable records and want of method and ineffective supervision.

8. The remedy which I would propose for approval is to do away with the classification of records at present existing for purposes of destruction under so many heads and ranging over so many various periods and to substitute instead one simple list classified under major heads alphabetically arranged as there are, I have already said, very few subjects the records of which extend over five years, and to keep all the records and destroy them once in five years. The ten years' papers will, under this arrangement, fall to be destroyed in the second sorting and the exceptions such as those dealt with in paragraph 6 above may be kept for the third sorting or may be destroyed under special orders. The first sorting will clear away nearly half the files of a year and much room will be available for records, the second sorting at ten will reduce the bulk still more; and once the arrears now accumulating are cleared off the work of subsequent sortings will become more automatic and easy.

9. Thirdly, in regard to procedure and safeguards to be employed when withdrawing files for destruction, the Collectors of the districts noted in the margin* advocate one or other of the following: (1) the maintenance of a separate register for papers destroyed showing the number and date and abstract of each file withdrawn; (2) the affixing of destroyed stamp against the particular item in the disposal list under the initials of an Assistant Collector or a Deputy Collector, or the English head clerk of the Collector's office; and (3) the substitution of a dummy slip or the retention of record docket in the place of the file withdrawn. Of the Collectors mentioned, the Collectors of Gódávari, Kistna, Malabar and Salem are opposed to the placing of docket sheets or dummy slips as unnecessary and as tending to overload

*Anantapur.	Gódávari.
Bellary.	Kistna.
South Canara.	Malabar.
Chingleput.	Nellore.
Coimbatore.	Salem.
Ganjám.	Tinnevelly.
Cuddapah.	Vizagapatam.

records with useless papers while the object aimed at is reduction; since any one who removes the file can as easily substitute the docket sheet or a dummy slip.

10. The proposal I make on this head is that the drafting clerks who know the details of a file dealt with by them should note on each disposal docket, which they prepare, whether the closed file is a R or D according to the new classification above mentioned. If a file were to contain a single paper to be classed as permanent the whole file will be treated as permanent. If it is a D paper the period of retention which under the classification proposed can be easily remembered, and the year in which it will be ripe for destruction, as D. 1902, will be noted thereon in a conspicuous place. The manager or other responsible official should be required when marking papers for the Index to verify the accuracy of the entries of the drafting clerks from day to day and will be held primarily responsible for the same. As soon as these files are handed over to the record-keeper he will enter in a register to be specially maintained for the purpose and kept by him under lock and key and containing the following particulars. He will be held accountable for any wrong or additional entries therein.

(1) Year of the current record.
(2) Disposal number of paper to be destroyed with branch as denominator, if necessary.
(3) Period of retention.
(4) Year in which to be destroyed.
(5) Initials of the checking officer.

This register which is a simple one should always be kept up to date, so that a perusal of it will at any time show what papers in the record are liable to be destroyed in any particular year. Once a month this list should be placed before the officer to be appointed by the Collector to sanction destruction of records. He will verify at least 10 per cent. of the files entered in the register and certify under his signature at the end of the entries of the month that the entries have been correctly made. This register which will continue to be written up from day to day will after the expiry of each year and on a specified date be laid before the Collector together with the register for according sanction to the destruction of papers. On sanction received, and not till then, the disposal list in which three additional columns will be newly opened for the purpose to indicate whether the disposal is R or D, and if D, the year in which it should be destroyed, will be written up and the stamp "destroyed" affixed to each entry under the initials of the English head clerk with date added, and the papers will then be destroyed after retaining the docket sheets where these are available or substituting a dummy slip of a distinctive colour containing all the particulars found in the docket square with the word "destroyed" affixed at the foot of the slip under the initials of the English head clerk. Some additional care will no doubt be necessary in respect of past records in which this arrangement is absent. The register of D papers will remain with the record-keeper. The stamp "destroyed" and the dummy slips will be in the custody, under lock and key, of some other responsible official as the Deputy Collector or the English head clerk and will be issued on indent once in a year and for the purpose mentioned and will be accounted for. These precautions in respect of the custody, issue and use of the register of D papers, the dummy slips and destroyed stamp remove all apprehensions as to the fraudulent abstraction of files and placing of substitute slips by any one intending to do so. The use of dockets or "dummy" slips in the place of files withdrawn is, at present, while the scheme is in its experimental stage, absolutely indispensable and the question as to when they should be destroyed in their turn might be decided later on when sufficient experience has been gained of the working of the arrangement. They might be removed at the second or third sorting.

ENCLOSURE A.

A précis of replies from the Collectors on the question of destruction of records under the disposal number system:—

Collector of Anantapur, No. 1054, *dated* 20*th March* 1896.—States that all destroyable disposal files except certain important records as per list enclosed may be destroyed after an uniform period of five years, this being the longest period allowed in Board's Proceedings, No. 438 of 1893, for retention of destroyable records.

As regards the records excepted he does not recommend any reduction in the period of their retention.

With regard to the safeguards to be adopted when files are withdrawn for destruction suggests the maintenance of a register to contain the abstract of each file withdrawn with number and date.

2. *Collector of North Arcot, No. 307-Eng., dated 24th February* 1896.—Does not consider any system for destroying records feasible under the disposal number system.

3. *Collector of South Arcot, No. 887-Ver., dated 21st May* 1896.—Suggests that records under the present rules required to be retained for 10, 11, 12 and 15 years may all be clubbed together and ordered to be retained for a period of 15 years and the rest destroyed after 5 years.

As regards the safeguards states that he cannot add to Mr. Doutre's notes on the subject.

4. *Collector of Bellary, No. 744, dated 27th February* 1896.—Suggests that all destructible disposal files may be retained for five years and recommends a reduction from 10 to 5 years in the period of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428, L. R., of 1893, in the case of certain records.

As regards the safeguards to be employed the Collector offers the following suggestions, viz.:—

(*a*) The selection of papers for destruction by some gazetted officer with his initials in the disposal lists.

(*b*) The stamping of the word "destroyed" against each entry in the disposal list after destruction.

(*c*) Substitution of docket sheet or dummy slip for files withdrawn, the same to be initialled and stamped by gazetted officer selecting the papers for destruction.

5. *Collector of South Canara, No. 507-Eng., dated 4th May* 1896.—As regards the reduction of records in the periods of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428, L.R., of 1893, the Collector is of opinion that to fix one period for all papers is inadmissible as then the period will have to be sufficiently long and record shelves will be encumbered with papers unnecessarily long. He therefore proposes to reduce the number of years for which papers under Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, are retainable to, viz., 5, 10, 15, 20 and 50, all papers now destroyable after 5 or fewer years being destroyed after 5 years, and papers destroyable between 5 and 10 years after 10 years, and so on.

With regard to the safeguards to be employed when files are withdrawn for destruction the Collector suggests that disposing clerks are to mark each disposal with "R" and "D" as it is disposed of, and the record clerk after noting the classification "R" or "D" in the last column of the disposal list is to prepare a list of all destroyable papers and lay it before the Collector for orders; and when the files are actually destroyed under Collector's orders the fact of such destruction should be noted on the list as well as in the last column of disposal concerned, the dockets or dummy slips proposed by Mr. Doutre being however substituted in the place of files withdrawn for destruction.

6. *Collector of Chingleput, No. 1068, dated 8th April* 1896.—States that as certain definite periods have been already prescribed for the retention of different kinds of papers he is unable to understand the meaning of the first question.

As regards the reduction in the periods of retention of records ordered in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, he merely says that they may be reduced but does not say to what extent.

With regard to the safeguards to be employed against the withdrawing of files for destruction, he says that the suggestion of Mr. Doutre may be adopted and that columns 4 and 6 of the statement proposed by him may be omitted as the information required by these columns is to be found in the disposal list.

7. *Collector of Coimbatore, No. 1559-Rev., dated 13th May* 1896.—Forwards a statement of reductions in the periods of retention of records as proposed by him and suggests that it may be made a disposal system rule, that disposing clerks should mark on the disposals the number of years for which they are retainable under the rules and the record-keeper should check the entries and enter them in a ledger to be opened by him for each year showing the papers which will become ripe for destruction in each year. After the end of each official year all papers ripe for destruction should be withdrawn from the record-room and destroyed in the presence of Deputy or Assistant Collector, the word "destroyed" being stamped against the entry in the disposal list.

8. *Collector of Cuddapah, No. 3193-Rev., dated 16th July* 1896.—Suggests that the maximum period for which all records should be retained may be fixed at five years, that being the period in which the majority of the records fall to be destroyed under Board's Proceedings, No. 428, L. R., dated 21st July 1893.

As regards the reduction in the number of years prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428, he is of opinion that there is no need to retain the papers longer than two years after the five years limit above referred to, for over one year more, for papers which have now to be retained for less than five years, *i.e.*, a paper now destroyable at the end of five years, will be ripe for destruction at the end of 7th year and that now destroyable after three years will be destroyable at the end of 6th year. Submits also a list of other items the present periods of retention of which can be reduced

As regards the safeguards to be employed he suggests that list of papers ripe for destruction may be prepared in the form suggested by Mr. Doutre (columns 4 and 6 being omitted) and laid before a Deputy Collector to be named by the Collector, for examination, who will check 10 per cent. of the records and send up the list with his recommendation to the Collector for sanction. After the receipt of Collector's sanction the records may be destroyed, dummy slips being substituted for the files withdrawn for disposal.

As a safeguard against abstraction or clandestine removal of records, he further suggests that the dummy slips may be printed in counterfoil on thick badami paper bearing printed serial numbers. These foils may be kept in the custody of the record-keeper and as a precaution against his abusing the slips, the initials of Deputy Collector may be obtained at the end of the foils removed from the file when the papers are destroyed.

9. *Collector of Ganjám, No. 293-Eng., dated 9th March* 1896.—Suggests that the periods of destruction prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, may be reduced to three, viz., 5, 10 and 20, so that papers destroyable after 5 years and below may be destroyed at 5 years, those after 10 years and below at 10 years, and those between 10 and 20 years with sortings after the 5th, 10th and 20th years, the papers that remained after second sorting being retained permanently. This will practically reduce the number of sortings to two, the 2nd sorting at the 10th year being dispensed with.

As regards certain registers and accounts that have to be retained for periods ranging from 20 to 50 years, the Collector suggests that the period of retention may remain unchanged as they have nothing to do with the disposal number system.

As to sorting and destruction of papers relating to famine and census he suggests that the present rules may remain unchanged.

With regard to correspondence relating to estates he is of opinion that sorting should take place once in ten years, the destroyable papers of all estates handed over three years previous to the date of sorting being taken out for destruction or to be handed over to the minors.

As regards the safeguards to be employed, the Collector suggests—

(1) That the number, date and branch of each file sorted for destruction be entered in a bound book and the Collector's signature obtained in it once a year at the end of each year's entries, the book being kept with the English head clerk or some other officer to make it inaccessible to record-keeper.

(2) To mark the entries in disposal list with a "D" stamp with the English head clerk's initials.

(3) To substitute the docket or dummy slips with the stamp "D" marked on it in the place of files withdrawn for destruction and suggests the employment of docket sheets in all cases as that will facilitate the tracing of previous and subsequent correspondence through back and forward numbers.

10. *Collector of Gódávari, Cur. No. 2133-Ver., dated 21st March* 1897.—States that no reduction in the number of periods is necessary on the score of security of records as bundle cannot be more frequently disturbed by such reduction than they are for purpose of dai reference and adds that classification for destruction has to be made by the record-keeper as soo as the files are received in the record-room by marking the files "R" or "D" and the number of years for which "D" papers are to be retained ascertaining the period on examining each paper in the file and with reference to the paper that has to be retained the longest.

Suggests also the removal of unimportant papers from the permanent files with a view to their being destroyed and a renumbering of the pages of the files so cut open.

Suggests the selection of papers for destruction from the index, as papers relating to the same subject are likely to be destroyable at the same time.

Modifies Mr. Doutre's form by substituting in column 2 "the year to which the disposals relate" for the "date of disposal," by the omission of columns 4 and 5 and by substitution of column 6 "nature of records" for "abstract of disposal."

Separate lists are to be prepared for each year, and the list with the file will have to be gone through again by record-keeper to check the accuracy of the list. Such lists are to be placed before the manager for scrutiny and submission to the Collector for sanction.

"Destroyed" stamp with the date of order to be put in the disposal list and the index against the entries concerned.

Sanctioned list to be bound once in two years.

Unindexed disposals may be destroyed at the end of two or three years as "lodged" paper.

If reduction is absolutely necessary, he suggests five periods at the end of the 3rd, 10th, 15th, 25th and 50th years.

Does not want to retain docket sheets.

11. *Collector of Kistna, Dis. No.* 919-*Eng., dated 9th August* 1896.—Suggests only on disposal list and the marking by drafting clerks when putting up a final draft, the period for which the file should be retained and to open an additional column in disposal list to note such periods. Would not put off preparing the list of papers to be destroyed till the time of destruction. Suggests the opening of books wherein to enter papers destroyable every year and the writing up of such books by the record-keeper as papers are received into the record-room. Suggests to stamp the word "destroyed" against the entry in the disposal list. Would not retain the docket or dummy slip.

Suggests reduction of periods in Board's Proceedings, No. 428, dated 21st July 1893, to only three, viz., 3rd, 5th and 15th year, and re arranges the items.

12. *Collector of Kurnool, No.* 878-*Eng., dated 30th June* 1896.—Suggests that general limit for retention of records may be fixed at five years and that the period of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, being unnecessarily cumbrous may with advantage be curtailed, but does not say to what extent.

As regards the safeguards to be employed the Collector is of opinion the initials of some responsible officer such as Treasury Deputy Collector in the disposal list against the entry of the file withdrawn for destruction is all that is necessary.

13. *Collector of Madras, Ref. No.* 302-*C. and B., dated* 12*th May* 1896, *embodied in Board's Proceedings, No.* 1402, *Routine, dated* 21*st May* 1896.—Recommends that in the case of certain records specified in his letter the period of retention may be reduced to five years and states that all the records except those for which a longer period than five years is fixed may be destroyed after five years.

14. *Collector of Madura, No* 2284, *dated* 8*th July* 1896.—States for a major portion of disposal files the period of retention of ten years is too large.

As regards the reduction in the number of periods of retention the Collector is of opinion that they may be reduced to four, viz., 5, 10, 20 and 50 years, so that those records that are destroyable under the present rules within 5 years may be retained for 5 years, those between 5 and 10 years for 10 years, those between 10 and 20 for 20 years, and those between 20 and 50 after 50 years. With regard to the procedure preparatory to the destruction of files he approves the proposals in paragraph 3 of the Deputy Collector's remarks on Mr. Doutre's notes.

As regards the safeguards to be employed he proposes the substitution of docket or dummy slips for the files withdrawn for destruction.

15. *Collector of Malabar No.* 405-*Pub., dated* 28*th February* 1896.—Recommends that the various periods of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, viz., 3, 5, 10 and 12 years, may be replaced by one definite period of 7 years; the records retainable for longer periods under the Board's Proceedings being mostly statements and accounts excluded from the operation of disposal number system rules.

As regards the safeguards to be employed the Collector suggests that the record clerk may make the revised classification and mark the letter "D" in some conspicuous place on the files selected for destruction under his initials with date. A list of all such papers selected for destruction will also be prepared by the record clerk and laid before the Collector for sanction, and after the records are destroyed the word "destroyed" with date will be stamped or written over each disposal entry in the disposal list.

The Collector does not recommend the substitution of docket or dummy slips as the sanctioned list is available for reference.

16. *Collector of Nellore, No.* 1203-*Eng., dated* 11*th July* 1896.—With regard to point (1), retention of disposal files for a definite period, suggests the periodical destruction once in every five years, intermediate destruction being made if space be required in the record-room.

As regards the reduction in the number of periods prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, suggests an arrangement of the period into five classes, each being a multiple of five years grouping the list of records printed in the Board's Proceedings under one or other of five classes according to the character of the correspondence and then marking the class number both on the files and disposal list with a bold "class stamp." This will facilitate selection for destruction at quinquennial periods. These destructions, he says, should be supplementary to those ordered by office rule 174 in Board's Proceedings, No. 762, dated 26th December 1892, which will gradually shroff out surplus records and should be carried out every year.

With regard to the safeguards to be employed he proposes that the record-keeper should prepare a list of destroyable papers and submit the same to some responsible officer to be selected by the Collector, for sanction, who, after approval, should stamp each entry in the disposal list with the stamp "destroyed" under his initials with date. He further suggests the substitution of docket or dummy slips in the place of files withdrawn for destruction with date and initials of the record-keeper and the supervising officer. In the way of additional security he suggests also the initials with date of record clerk against the numbers in the disposal list. For dummy slips to be substituted he gives a specimen.

As regards statements and other accounts which do not go to disposal list, he suggests that a separate list under the signature and date of the officer should be placed on record.

17. *Collector of Nilgiris, No.* 1125, *dated* 1*st May* 1896.—As regards the definite periods of retention of disposal files the Collector suggests that at least three years should expire before the destruction is thought of.

With regard to the reduction in the periods of destruction of records prescribed in Board's Proceedings, No. 428 of 1893, the Collector is not in favour of any.

As regards the safeguards to be employed, he suggests—

(*a*) The retention of docket slips of files to be destroyed.

(*b*) The sanction of some gazetted officer for destruction to be noted in the disposal list under his initials with date.

Stock files and circulars of the Accountant-General, he proposes, may be destroyed after thirty years.

18. *Collector of Salem, No.* 3422, *dated* 1*st July* 1896.—Suggests an additional column to the disposal list form in use for entering "R" or "D" with year of destruction in the case of "D" files to be noted at the time when the disposal entries are made. To this end, he proposes that the clerk disposing of the papers should be made to mark "R" in the case of papers to be permanently retained and "D" with the year of destruction in the case of destroyable papers on the docket slips. This should be verified by the counterinitialling clerk and then passed over to the record-room. The record clerk at the beginning of every year should go through the disposal list and prepare a list in the form enclosed of all destroyable papers in that year and submit the same for approval and signature of the Collector. When the list is sanctioned the files should be destroyed, the entries in the disposal list being stamped "destroyed." He does not recommend the retention of docket or dummy slips as the required information is available in the disposal list or sanctioned list.

As regards the reduction in the period of retention of records he is not in favour of disturbing the existing orders. If a simplication of the number of periods laid down in Board's Standing Order No. 226 is desired, he suggests that they may be reduced to 3, 6, 12 and 20 years, respectively, to suit the Limitation Act.

19. *Collector of Tanjore, No.* 65-*Eng., dated 7th March* 1896.—Simply proposes the maintenance of a list in the case of every file showing all the papers contained in it. In it the letter "R" or "D" should be marked by the disposing clerk at the time of disposal and submitted to the officer ordering record of the current who should write "approved" under his signature. It shall then be the duty of the record clerk to separate all the disposal into two parts and to get destroyed after the fixed period the destroyable part of it.

20. *Collector of Tinnevelly, Dis. No.* 1812-*Gl. Rev., dated* 12*th October* 1896.—Suggests one disposal list and destruction of records at the end of 6th, 12th and 18th years and at the 3rd year for some papers if *sic* is considered an unnecessarily long period. The period is arrived at, with reference to the statutory limitation period of twelve years to which some records are to be retained.

Suggests that no separate list is necessary as proposed by Mr. Doutre and that orders may be passed in the disposal list itself for which two additional columns are necessary, the one to indicate the period of destruction and the other for showing orders as to destruction.

Would retain the docket sheets or dummy slips and would impress on those the word "destroyed."

21. *Collector of Trichinopoly, No.* 597-*G., dated* 6*th April* 1896.—Proposes the division of all disposals into (1) to be permanently retained to be styled "final disposals" and (2) those to be destroyed after ten years to be styled "lodged papers," thus doing away with the various periods of retention. These two classes he proposes to keep totally distinct with separate serial consecutive numbers.

As regards destruction he proposes to take out the register of lodged numbers of ten years old and lay it before the head of the office for sanctioning the destruction of all records (with exceptions if any) contained therein, to remove the records the destruction of which was thus sanctioned. While effecting the destruction he proposes that either the record clerk or the head clerk should be made to read through the "purport" column and to see if for any special reason any files should be further retained and to obtain orders of the head of the office for such retention, it being left to the option of the head of the office to give a final disposal number to a "lodged" disposal and *vice versa*. The classification of each file (disposed or lodged) should (subject to the supervision of the head of the office) be done by the disposing clerks (subject to the control of the head clerk) who is familiar with the whole correspondence and who is therefore best qualified to give it its proper head and write a proper abstract on the wrapper (docket sheet).

As regards accumulation of unimportant papers for ten years he further proposes to make provision for their destruction before time. To this end he suggests that each office should have a classified list of papers that may be "excluded" from the above such as "cholera reports," &c.,

of unimportant nature. To such classified papers and to such others as the destruction of the head of the office might allow the disposal would be "excluded" in the final column of the current register.

Such papers might be kept in a box with two divisions one of which would be emptied and destroyed at the end of each year.

22. *Collector of Vizagapatam No. 539, dated 21st April* 1896.—Proposes that the clerks putting up the drafts for approval should mark them in red ink "R" or "D"; subject to the approval of the passing officer. The record keeper should prepare an index of all papers marked "R" and a separate register for "D" papers. The "D" series should be destroyed after the prescribed period subject to Collector's sanction, the word "destroyed" being entered against the entry in the disposal lists under the initials of some responsible officer, such as Head Assistant Collector or Treasury Deputy Collector. In the case of files destroyed he recommends the preservation of docket sheets.

As regards the reduction in the period of retention prescribed in Board's Proceedings No. 428 of 1893, he is not in favour of any such reduction.

As a further safe guard against withdrawal of disposal files for destruction he proposes that the disposals be withdrawn in the presence of Treasury Deputy Collector according to the sanctioned list.

ENCLOSURE B.

TABLE showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure, relating to destruction of records.

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
Agriculture	1. Crop Experiments			•									
	2. Miscellaneous			•									
	3. Statement of cotton			•									
	4. Farming				•								
	5. Statement of wages		•		•								
Archæology	1. Routine			•									
Assessed Taxes ..	1. Collection list	•											
	2. Income-tax, Routine			•									
	3. Q Q	•											
	4. Demand, Collection and Balance ..				•								
Books and Periodicals.	1. Superseded ones			•									
	2. *Fort St. George Gazettes* to subordinate Revenue officers.						•						
	3. Other District Gazettes		•										
	4. District Gazettes in Divisional Tahsildars' and Deputy Tahsildars' offices.											•	
	5. District Gazettes to other Subordinate Revenue officers			•									
Census	1. Correspondence							•					
Coffee stealing ..	1. Routine				•								
Commissariat ..	1. Price lists, Q and M	•											
Currency notes ..	1. Circulation or loss			•									
Customs	1. Pay abstracts												
	2 and 3. Books and General register ..										•	•	
	4 and 5. Cash accounts and shipping bills.				•						•		
	6 and 8. Customs accounts and Routine correspondences.			•	•								
	7. Shipping bills				•								
Ecclesiastical ..	1. Reports on burial grounds			•									
	2. Other correspondence..			•									
	3. Marriage notices	•											
Education	1. Result grant statement	•											
	2. School reports			•									
	3. Routine			•									
Emigration	1. Annual returns			•									
Escheats	1. All papers												
Establishments ..	(*b*) 6. Security bonds	•							•				
	55 years' list	after lapse.											
		•											
	1. Pay abstracts											•	
	3. Suspensions, dismissals, &c. ..										•		
	2, 8, 9. Appointments, Travelling allowance bills, Routine correspondence.				•								
					•								
					•								
	Carried over ..	7	1	15	10	..	1	1	1	..	3	3	..

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure, relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	7	1	15	10	..	1	1	1	..	3	3	..
Establishments—*cont.*	4. Land possessed or acquired by public servants.												
	7. Examination of civil servants ..												
	(*a*) 1. Suspension of village officers.												
	2, 3, 5. Leave, Records of inquiries under Regulation IX of 1822 and VI of 1831, Miscellaneous.												
Abkári	4. Pay abstracts												
	1. Agreements												
	2, 3. Reports, Accounts, &c.												
	4, 5. Still head and collection statement.												
Opium	6. Comparative statement												
	1. Statement of ganja												
	2. Agreements, lists												
Salt	3. Reports												
	1, 2. Correspondence and returns connected with supply of salt for curing fish and Routine.												
Factories	Routine												
Farm stock	1. Cattle disease reports												
	2. Cattle breeding												
Forest	1. Routine												
	2. Return of criminal prosecution ..												
	2, 4, 5. Forest revenue												
	Grazing fees												
	Budget												
Inams	1, 4, 5. Correspondence and accounts concerning disputed inam quit-rent, statement of lapsed inams, cultivation accounts of attached inams.												
	2. Correspondence regarding distribution of inam title-deed.												
	3, 6. Accounts current of inam villages and all other accounts and other correspondence												
Irrigation	1. Minor irrigation repairs statement ..												
	2. Routine												
Jails	1. Routine												
	Carried over ..	12	1	26	18	2	6	1	4	..	3	3	..

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure, relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	12	1	26	18	2	6	1	4	..	3	3	..
Khazis	1 and 2. Correspondence regarding appointments, and reports upon the working of the Act.												
	3. Papers relating to emoluments ..												
Loans	1, 2, 3. (Omitted)												
	4. Correspondence connected with rejected applications.												
Local Fund	Routine												
Medical	Do.												
Military	1 and 3. Correspondence regarding cantonments, &c., and Miscellaneous.												
	2. Correspondence regarding supplies to troops.												
Minerals	Routine												
Mint and Coinage ..	Annual reports of Coins cut												
Miscellaneous ..	1. Routine, correspondence, reports, &c. not otherwise specially provided for.												
	8. Statement of stamping weights and measures.												
	9. Statement of destruction of wild animals.												
	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13	********											
	3. Taluk Inspection notes			**********									
Miscellaneous Magisterial.	1 to 10												
Municipalities ..	....												
Pensions	1. Vakalatnamahs, receipts, &c. ..												
	2. Other correspondence and accounts regarding disbursement of pension.												
Printing Presses ..	1. Accounts and correspondence of the District Press.												
	2. Routine												
Post	1. Papers connected with District Post.												
Public Works ..	1. Irrigation registers, &c.												
	2. Public Works reports												
	3. Progress reports and all other correspondence including repair of civil buildings and rent of Government bungalows occupied by public servants.												
	4. Papers connected with petty construction and repairs.												
Railways	Routine												
	Carried over ..	23	1	47	25	2	11	1	4	..	4	3	..

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure, relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	23	1	47	25	2	11	1	4	..	4	3	..
Records	1. Registers of correspondence ..				*								*
	2 and 4. Orders and correspondence about the production of records, &c., and registers of search fees.				*								
	4. (Omitted)												
Registration ..	1. Routine			•									
Rent Act	1. Record of suits				•				•				
	2, 3. Periodical returns connected with Act VIII of 1865, attachment, &c., reports.				•								
	4. Routine				•								
Revenue Recovery Act.	1. Routine, attachment orders, sale and proclamation lists, &c.			•	•								
	2, 3, 4. Demand applications, register of persons confined in jail and correspondence regarding revenue recovery in other districts and taluks.			•									
Revenue—Land ..	1 and 4 Records of darkhast cases and papers relating to Sub-division of survey fields.						•						
	2. Refunds of excess collection ..						•						
	3. Correspondence connected with applications for land and rentals of fisheries, pasture, &c.			•	•								
	6. Waste lands sold	•											
Special Fund ..	1. Ferry renter's engagements												
	2. Pound repairs			•									
	3. Pay abstracts of pound-keepers ..				•								
Stamps	10, 11. Return of postal transactions and balance certificate of stamps, postage and service labels.	•											
		•											
	2, 3, 4, 7. Correspondence relating to impounded documents, refund of value of stamps, correspondence regarding refund of stamp duty and routine.				•								
					•								
					•								
					•								
	1 and 6. Annual accounts and reports in Divisional and Taluk offices and chittahs of deposit, sale and expenditure.						•						
							•						
	8. Routine accounts			•									
	9. Engagements executed by stamp vendors.			•									
	Carried over ..	26	1	55	36	3	15	1	5	..	4	3	1

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	26	1	56	36	3	15	1	5	..	4	3	1
Stationery and stores	1. Indents, &c.				*								
	2. Routine			•	•								
Statistical	1, 7. Periodical returns and statements and Miscellaneous.				*								
	2. Birth and death, &c.		•		*								
	5, 6. Season reports, returns of jute, cotton, &c.						•						
Stock Notes	....						•						
Suits	1. Papers other than judgments in suits against Revenue officers.				*								
	2. Annual return of suits for transfer of pattas.				*								
	3. Papers in pauper suits after claims are satisfied, &c.		•										
	4. Notices of application to sue *in formâ pauperis* and records connected therewith.			•									
Taluk accounts ..	1. Cowles No. 14						•					•	
	2.						•						
	3.						•						
	4.												
	5.				*								
	6.				*								
	7.				*								
	9.				*								
	9-*a*.				*								
	10.				*								
	11.				*								
	12.				*								
	13.				*								
	14.				*								
	15.				*								
	16.				*								
	8.				* after the accounts are adjusted.								
Trade	1. Monthly statements of sea-borne trade and land trade to the Board of Revenue.				*								
	2. Register showing the arrival and departure of ships in the port.				*								
	3. Register of export cargo				*								
	4. Routine correspondence connected with land trade.				*								
	5. Other accounts and correspondence.		•										
	Carried over ..	26	4	58	59	3	20	1	5	..	4	4	1

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	26	4	58	59	3	20	1	5	..	4	4	1
Treasure trove ..	1. Correspondence relating to Treasure trove.			•									
Treasury	(a)—1. Monthly accounts current ..									•			
	2. Sub-treasury chittahs				•					•			
	3. Saderward accounts of petty transactions.				•								
	5. Accounts of salaries held in deposit.				•								
	6. Returns of collection and balance of arrears.				•								
	4. Accounts of contingent charges.			•									
	9. Chittahs in Deputy Tahsildars' offices.			•									
	10. Other accounts			•									
	7. Covering lists of accounts and vouchers sent to Treasury Deputy Collector.	•											
	8. Daily sheets of Branch Bank of Madras, &c.						•						
	11. Contingent bill vouchers ..		•										
	(b)—2. Register of P.P.O.											•	
	3. Register of R.T.R. issued ..										•		
	4. Counterfoils of R.T.R. ..										•		
	5. Treasury chittahs									•			
	6. Chittahs of deposits									•			
	7. Do. of expenditure ..									•			
	15. Loan register									•			
	16. Ledger postings									•			
	17. Registers of all deposits ..									•			
	8. Office copies of T. W. schedules of receipts.												•
	9. Check register of R.T.R. ..												•
	10. Budget statements and correspondence.												•
	11. Counterfoils of cash orders in taluks.												•
	12. Abstract accounts of receipts and expenditure and probable estimates.												•
	13. Civil, Military and other fund statements.												•
	14. Daily sheets of Branch Bank of Madras.												•
	Carried over ..	27	5	62	62	3	21	1	5	8	6	5	1

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major head.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	27	5	62	62	3	21	1	5	8	6	5	1
Treasury—*cont.* ..	(b)—18. Saderward accounts of petty receipts and disbursements.				•								
	19. Fine statements				•								
	20. Account particulars of contingent charges.			•									
	21. Other accounts			•									
	22. Contingent bill vouchers ..		•										
	(c)—1. Stamp and form registers ..				•								
	2. Daily cash account, permanent advance account and contingent register.				•								
	3. Miscellaneous accounts ..			•									
	(d)—1. Periodical accounts received from taluks—												
	(a) Account of P. A. fund.	•											
	(a) Daily cash balance report, &c.	•											
	(p) Minimum balance ..	•											
	(c) Statement of subscription to District Gazette.	•											
	(f) Statement of sale of service registers, &c.	•											
	(g) Statement of cheques cashed of postal letters of credit, &c.	•											
	(h) Statement of amounts realized on account of survey advances.	•											
	(j) Public Works Department receipts.	•											
	(l) Quarterly statement of currency notes.	•											
	(m) List of outstanding balances of criminal, &c., deposits.	•											
	(n) Statements of copper and silver coins, &c.	•											
	(o) Imperial, Provincial, &c., account currents.				•								
	(k) Deposit accounts ..				•								
	Carried over ..	38	6	65	68	3	21	1	5	8	6	5	1

Table showing the number of years for which records have to be retained under existing procedure relating to destruction of records—*cont.*

Major heads.	Sub-items.	1	2	3	5	6	8	10	11	12	15	20	25	50
	Brought forward ..	38	6	65	68	3	6	21	1	5	3	6	5	1
Treasury—*cont.* ..	(d)—3. Register showing the disbursement and balance of the pay of village establishments.													
	4. Register showing the talukwar demand, collection and balance of fasli rents.													
	1. (c) Monthly Land Revenue and Abkari demand, collection and balance statements.													
	(d) Probable estimates ..													
	(e) Statement of sale-proceeds of fallen trees.													
	(g) Budget statement of Land Revenue.													
	(r) Statements of receipts and charges under Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans Acts.													
	(t) Process fees statement ..													
	5. Routine													
Trigonometrical Survey.	1. Routine correspondence about repairs of stations.													
	2. Periodical returns showing condition of stations.													
Village Accounts ..	1. Important descriptive accounts, 2, 3, 8-3, 10 and 12.													
	2. Others													
Wards Estates ..	1. Other correspondence, estimates, &c.													
														* after the estates are handed over to the wards
Weights and measures	1. Register relating to weights and measures.													
	2. Statements of receipts and charges incurred for stamping weights, &c.													
	3. Routine													
Wild beasts ..	1. Annual and quarterly returns													
	2. Accounts and receipts of rewards paid.													
	3. Routine correspondence ..													
	Total ..	38	8	76	72	9	21	21	1	5	3	6	5	1

ENCLOSURE C.

From J. ANDREW, Esq., Collector of Trichinopoly, to the Special Deputy Collector on Record Duty, Trichinopoly, dated 6th April 1896, Dis. No. 597-Rev.

With reference to your Ref. No. 12, dated 8th February 1896, I have the honour to inform you that whatever arrangement may be finally decided upon, the simpler it is the better it will be. Under the present Board's list, papers coming under the disposal system have to be retained for varying periods (about twelve in number) ranging from one year up to twenty-five years. The subjectwar system is now very properly out of use. The present system is that all disposals should be chronologically arranged and tied up in conveniently-sized bundles in chronological order; thus Dis. Nos. 1 to 100 and so on. The consequence is that each such bundle will contain files to be destroyed, some after three, some after five, some after ten years, and so on. The almost inevitable result will be, as every one will probably argue who has paid much attention to the record work of different offices, that in the course of a few years work will get into arrears, time-expired files will accumulate and then when some one takes the matter in hand, files which are not time-expired will be, through mistake, destroyed. It must be remembered that the taluk and other record gumastahs of the future will not be much more intelligent or methodical than those of the past. It has also to be remembered that the present Board's list contains something like 400 sub-heads, of which about 240 are for periodical destruction, and though *all* of these latter do not come under the disposal system, a very great number, perhaps 100 of them, do. The consequence is that, as each file is closed, the disposing clerk (or the Recordkeeper if the work is left to him) has to decide as to the major and the minor head to which the file belongs, and the number of years for which it has to be kept. This in itself—especially when we consider the amount of intelligence of the ordinary taluk gumastah, and the pressure of work thrown on him that leaves him but little time to think—is no inconsiderable work, and if, in the pressure of work, he does not keep his entries up to date, the filing and indexing get into arrears, and once this happens confusion results, and this confusion gets worse and worse. The result has been seen over and over again. This may be seen in this district where, during the past few years, no fewer than 444,052 time-expired non-magisterial papers—the accumulation of years were set aside for destruction. This was owing to the fact that the work of destruction was not systematically taken in hand year by year and I mention this here as an illustration of the fact that once things get into arrears in this particular branch of record keeping and sorting, it is bound to accumulate till utter confusion is the certain result. Of this, I feel absolutely convinced, and therefore I urge that any system of record-keeping must be based on as simple a principle as possible. I look on this as a *sine qua non*. In this connection I would also say that the system to be adopted should be one which will work as *automatically* as possible—*i.e.*, should leave as little as possible to the discretion or intelligence of the clerks who will have to see to the destruction of the papers when the time comes, and should give such clerks as *little* labour as possible. There is more chance of keeping up to the mark the clerks who are attending to the current papers (*i.e.*, to the disposal and recording of papers as fast as disposed of) than the clerks whose duty it is to go back and sort and arrange old records. In other words, let the rules be such that a file cannot get into its place in the record-stand without a strict observance of the prescribed rules, and the subsequent stages, *i.e.*, for destruction become automatic and easy.

2. As to Board's Proceedings, No. 5, Land Revenue, dated 6th January 1896, paragraph 2, clause (2), I am not at all in favour of docket slips or dummy sheets. A careless clerk will frequently not attend to them and confusion will ultimately be the result. Using dummy slips is also an unbusiness way of doing business. It is the registers that should show whether a paper has been destroyed or not, and not slips of paper. I also disapprove of the proposal to write or stamp "destroyed" over each disposal entry. The certain result is that the officers concerned will often do it hastily without considering carefully whether the paper is time-expired or not. Under the system that was in force I have myself often had to sign "destroy" opposite entries in registers, but must admit that after signing in some dozens of places, one after another, one is apt to take it on trust as being all right, it is difficult to bear in mind the correctness of the recommendation, remembering the numerous sub-heads and periods of retention for each. Similarly I am not in favour of having to prepare *lists* of time-expired papers for destruction. It becomes difficult for the superior officer to be sure that all the papers are time-expired or that the list has been correctly prepared by the clerk. Sometime ago I came across a list in which some very important papers which should have been retained were thus destroyed.

3. The system I propose is as simple as any that I think can be devised and it has the merit that it works more or less automatically and is as little as possible dependent on the carelessness or vagaries of the future record clerks. It is this. I would do away with the various periods of retention, and order that all disposal files be divided into (1) those to be permanently retained and (2) those to be destroyed after ten years. Papers under (1) might be called "final disposals" and those under (2) "lodged papers," the quotations being thus "in reply to your Dis. No. " or "in reply to your lodged No. ." The two files should be kept totally distinct with separate serial consecutive numbers. As to (1) space should be left sufficient to last for a great number of years. As to (2), space should be left to last for ten years. At the end of each year,

all that would have to be done would be to take out the register of the lodged numbers of ten years' old, obtain an order on it signed by the head of the office sanctioning the destruction of all the records contained therein (with exceptions, if any), and then to remove and destroy all the records the destruction of which was thus sanctioned, and to fill up the place in the record-stand thus vacated with the lodged files of the in-coming year. As all the records would be ten years' old, it is not likely that any of them would be required for further reference, but if thought desirable, it might be ordered that the Recordkeeper or head clerk should read through the "purport" column of the lodged register for the year to see if for any special reason any of the files should be further retained and the orders of the head of the office should be obtained. The latter officer, might also, if thought advisable, be obliged to read over a small percentage of the entries in the register after the clerk has done it as a sort of check on his doing it properly. Probably but few files would have to be further retained, and simple rules could be framed for the mode of retention of such files. If this proposal is accepted, it would be very easy to draw up a list of heads of final disposals for permanent retention, all others coming under the periodical destruction list. It would be open to the head of the office to order a final disposal number to be given to any file which should, under the rules, come under the lodged series and *vice versa* if he thought fit.

4. This system has the distinct advantage that the work of proper classification of each file (disposal or lodge) has to be done (subject to supervision of the head of the office) by the disposal clerk (subject to control of the head clerk) who is familiar with the whole correspondence and who is therefore best qualified to give it its proper head and to write a proper abstract on the wrapper. There is thus much less risk of improper classification than if this work is left to the Record-keeper who would be sure in the long run to frequently do it hastily and incorrectly, after glancing at a few of the papers. The other advantage of this system (read with office disposal rules in force) is that a final disposal file cannot get into the record-room until classification and numbering is all complete and hence the record clerk cannot well get into arrears,—for once a record clerk does get into arrears with records or registers, confusion is the certain result, especially where there is a change of clerks.

5. I am aware that an objection may be raised to the proposed system on the grounds that it necessitates the retention of papers permanently which need not be so retained although their destruction immediately on the expiration of ten years is objectionable, and that it necessitates the retention of papers for ten years which might safely be destroyed after two or three. My answer is, in the first place, that the advantage of simplicity far more than counteracts those slight disadvantages. In the second place, disposal files occupy but a small portion of most record-rooms, and there is not likely to be any practical difficulty in finding space for ten years' lodged papers; and if there *is* space, then there is no harm in retaining them for ten years. It causes no inconvenience. As for the papers to be permanently retained, they will not take up very much space, the older they get, the less frequently will they be required for reference and consequently the more tightly they may be packed so as not to take up much space. Further after quarter or half a century, further eliminations might be made from the final disposal files, if want of space should render this necessary.

6. I would, however, make provision for destroying the very unimportant papers before the expiration of ten years. To this end each office might have a classified list of papers that may be "excluded" from the above, such as cholera reports and other papers of such an unimportant nature that their destruction at the close of each following year might be safely permitted. To such classified papers and to such others as the discretion of the head of the office might allow, the disposal would be "excluded" in the final column of the current register. Such papers might be kept in a box with two divisions, one of which would be emptied and destroyed at the end of each year.

7. I am aware, as pointed out by you in paragraph 17 of your note, dated 5th July 1895, embodied in Board's Proceedings, No. 5, Land Revenue, dated 6th January 1896, that I have applied the term "lodged" in a somewhat unusual sense. It is all, however, a question of words and I would not object to any other suitable word. For "disposal number" and "lodged number" might be substituted "permanent retainable disposal number," and "periodical destroyable disposal number," but these are cumbersome expressions. Possibly "permanent disposal number" and "destroyable disposal number" might be considered more suitable.

8. I think I have in the foregoing paragraphs considered the three points mentioned in paragraph 2 of your letter under reply.

ENCLOSURE D.—Replies of other Collectors.

RESOLUTION—No. 101, dated 18th April 1898.

The paper read above is the reply of Deputy Collector Saiyid Mustafa Sahib Bahadur, lately on special duty in connection with the disposal number system, to Board's Proceedings, No. 5, dated 6th January 1896, regarding the destruction of records.

2. It must be premised that the old Standing Order No. 219, prescribing the classes of papers which should be destroyed, and the various periods after which they should be so destroyed, contemplated the conditions prevailing *before* the introduction of the disposal number system. Records were generally divided according to subjects and were not kept in the chronological order of receipt and disposal. It was, therefore, easy to prescribe rules for their destruction according to subjects, and the security of the permanent records was not seriously endangered.

3. This is not the case under the present system. The guiding principle of the disposal number system is that the records are kept by consecutive numbers and not by subjects, and any proposal which involves interference with the serial chain of numbers must necessarily detract from the safety of the record-room.

4. This fact was fully recognized in Board's Proceedings, No. 218, dated 29th May 1894, which declared that "the retain and destroy system (formerly followed) could not be satisfactorily worked conjointly with the disposal number system, and must be given up." It was added that "surplus records," *e.g.*, spare copies of Board's Proceedings and Gazettes and the like, could be got rid of in accordance with rule 174 of the Nellore Rules. Up to the date of this order, very little had been done in any district to destroy useless records of the period following the introduction of the disposal number system, and since the issue of the order no such records appear to have been destroyed anywhere.

5. The Deputy Collector on special duty visited several offices in each district, and having done so, reported that some system of destruction other than that contemplated in rule 174 of the Nellore Rules, must be introduced if the record-rooms were to be kept from being over-crowded. Some correspondence ensued, and in Board's Proceedings, No. 5, dated 6th January 1896, the Board expressed itself in favour of the system of making lists of the records for destruction, the whole body of the records being first of all kept for some ten years. The Deputy Collector was requested to consult all Collectors and to submit a special report on the whole question.

6. This report was not drawn up till June 1897. The delay was partly due to the non-receipt of replies from Collectors, but chiefly to the fact that Saiyid Mustafa Sahib's special duty had come to an end in May 1896 and the ordinary duties of a Divisional officer kept him otherwise employed. The report contains a précis of the Collectors' replies and the Deputy Collector's own suggestions.

7. The questions arising in connection with this subject are :—

I. How papers to be destroyed are to be distinguished from papers to be retained at each of the following stages of their history ?

A. When drafting.
B. In the disposal list.
C. At the time of destruction.

II. How papers to be destroyed are to be distinguished *inter se, i.e.*, what should be the various periods after which papers should be destroyed ?

As regards I-A, the clerk who deals with a paper and his superior officer or officers should know at a glance whether the file is one for retention or not, and the selection must be made by them before the papers reach the recordkeeper's hands. As suggested by the Deputy Collector, drafting clerks and assistants should mark each paper they are drafting on as either "Retain (R)" or "Destroy (D)" (entering the year of destruction, *e.g.*, 1902). These entries can be made most conveniently on the disposal docket which contains the disposal number, date of despatch, &c., and which would eventually be retained for some time after the paper is destroyed. The entries should be made by means of appropriate Rubber-stamps. They will be checked and, if necessary, altered by the head of the branch and of the office.

8. As regards I-B, the Board has to choose between the following two courses : either (1) to show all papers in one disposal list, distinguishing those to be destroyed by an appropriate stamp and indicating at the same time the year of destruction against each paper to be destroyed; or (2) to have two disposal lists—one for permanent papers and the other for those which are to be destroyed at some future date.

9. The Board is in favour of the second alternative, for the reason, chiefly, that the system would work automatically and leave hardly any room for the errors, which must necessarily exist under the other system. This point is clearly pointed out by the Collector of Trichinopoly (Mr. Andrew), who advocates the maintenance of two lists. Under this system one disposal list will show all papers to be destroyed, and the great majority of the papers in that list will be destroyed after ten years—*Vide* paragraph 13 below. When the time arrives for their destruction, the few files which are to be retained for a longer period than ten years, as well as those which either subsequent correspondence or some special reason has shown to be suitable for permanent retention, can be picked out and carried forward, as indicated below, either to the "retain" list or to an appropriate "destroy" list. Thus the "destroy" papers listed in 1898 will be taken up for destruction in 1909 and the bulk of the papers will be destroyed in that year. But supposing the following papers are then left over, *i.e.*—

(*a*) Papers of 1898—to be destroyed after 12 years, *i.e.*, in 1911.
(*b*) " " " " 15 " " 1914.
(*c*) " " " " 20 " " 1919.
(*d*) " " —to be permanently retained, *i.e.*, those which have been wrongly entered in the "destroy" list, or which the officer in charge considers it inadvisable to destroy;

Now the papers in (*a*) will be attached as a supplemental list to the "destroy" list of the year 1900 which will be ripe for destruction in 1911.

The papers in (*b*) will be attached as a supplemental list to the "destroy" list of 1903 which will be ripe for destruction in 1914.

The papers in (*c*) will be attached as a supplemental list to the "destroy" list of 1908 which will be ripe for destruction in 1919.

(This process will ensure the papers being destroyed in the years originally intended).

Lastly, the papers in (*d*) will be attached as a supplemental list to the "retain" list of the year 1898 and will be referred to in correspondence as D.R. No.——(*i.e.*, "Destroy" No.—, since converted into "Retain").

The transfer from the "destroy" to the "retain" list will be sufficiently indicated by stamping an additional *R.* after the *D.* on the disposal docket.

10. Papers on the R list will, as a rule, be indexed, while those on the D list will be indexed or not according to their importance. But in all cases it is advisable that some simple convention should be employed by drafting officers in order to indicate whether a D paper should be indexed. Thus [D] might serve to indicate that the paper will be indexed, whereas a plain D would mean that it will not be indexed.

11. As regards question I-C.—At the time of destruction the fact that a paper has been destroyed and the year in which it was destroyed should be noted in the "destroy" or D disposal list under the initials of the chief ministerial officer. This might also be done by a rubber stamp bearing the inscription "Destroyed——18". The same stamp should also be similarly affixed on the docket sheet which should then be detached from the file and put away in the record-room. Such docket sheets should not be put in the place occupied by the original record, because so long as they are kept with large bundles of papers they are very liable to be mislaid. They should all be tied in convenient bundles which may be destroyed in turn after a further period of five or ten years.

12. Collectors and Conservators of Forests are requested to inaugurate the new system in their offices as soon as possible.

13. (II) As regards periods of destruction the Board considers that, with the exception of the papers to be presently mentioned, all others now on the destruction list may be kept for ten years and then destroyed. The papers which, under present rules, have to be kept for more than ten years are as follow:—

	YEARS.
Census.	
(1) Correspondence and orders regarding the taking of the census ...	11
Escheats.	
(2) Papers relating to escheats other than final orders and any important correspondence	12
Inams.	
(3) Correspondence and accounts concerning disputed inam quit-rent ...	12
(4) Tabular statements of lapsed inams on which orders are passed to discontinue the inam or allowance	12
(5) Cultivation accounts of attached inams	12
Rent Act.	
(6) Records of suits under Act VIII of 1865 with exhibits filed in them.	12
Treasury—(a) Taluk Treasury.	
(7) Monthly accounts current	15
(8) Sub-treasury chittahs of receipts and disbursements	15
(b) Collector's Treasury.	YEARS.
(9) Treasury chittahs (English)	15
(10) Chittahs of deposits	15
(11) " of expenditure	15
(12) Loan register	15
(13) Ledger postings	15
(14) Register of deposits, Revenue, Civil, Criminal and Personal ...	15
(d) Accounts.	
(15) Monthly land revenue and abkári demand, collection and balance statements with appendices	15
Customs.	
(16) Books containing office copies of reports sent or orders received ...	20
(17) General register of correspondence	20
Establishments—(b) Public Servants.	
(18) Suspensions, dismissals, &c.	20
Public Works.	
(19) Irrigation registers, estimates, reports and measurements of ordinary works	20
Treasury—(b) Collector's Treasury.	
(20) Register of remittance transfer receipts issued	20
(21) Counterfoils of remittance transfer receipts	20
Books and Periodicals.	
(22) District Gazettes in Divisional, Tahsildars' and Deputy Tahsildars' offices	25
Customs.	
(23) Pay abstracts	25
Establishments—(b) Other Public Servants.	
(24) Pay abstracts, leave statements and the April list	25
(25) Leave register	25
Miscellaneous.	
(26) Lists of securities in trust	25
(27) Stock book (Government Order, No. 843 F.D., dated 23rd July 1887)	25

Taluk Accounts.

(28) Cowles No. 14 25

Treasury—(a) Taluk Treasury.

(29) Cheque counterfoils 25

(b) Collector's Treasury.

(30) Register of permanent payable orders 25
(31) Receipts for re-payment of deposits 25
(32) Cheque counterfoils 25

(c) Cashkeeper's Records.

(33) Cash book 25

Establishment (d) Other public servants' establishment orders — 35
(5 3/5: Educational revenue) Records. — 35

(34) General registers of correspondence received and despatched in Huzur, Divisional, Tahsildars' and Deputy Tahsildars' offices (including Sub-Magistrates' and Sea Customs offices) 50

14. In the above list only items 1, 2, 18 and a portion of 3 and of 19 belong to the disposal number system and the rest need not at present be noticed. The correspondence under items 1, 2, 3, 18 and 19 may be retained as a rule for 20 years and the entries relating to them in the disposal list may be carried forward at the end of the first ten years to an appropriate D list as shown in paragraph 9 above.

15. Under the system now inaugurated some papers will have to be retained for a longer period than is contemplated in the rules hitherto laid down. This is, however, inevitable, and any disadvantage in retaining such correspondence for an extra period is outweighed by the advantage of a simple and uniform rule ensuring the eventual destruction of useless records without unnecessary labour on the part of the office staff.

(True Copy and Extract.)

Acting Secretary.

To all Collectors (D. Os.—T. D. Cs.—D. F. Os. Tahrs.).
" Conservators of Forests.
Copy to Forest Section.
" the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Ed. A. F. Eccleston.

Code Class. | INDIAN TELEGRAPHS. | Monthly Number.

To (Office) Talpalam | From (Office) Cuddalore

Words | Day. 26 | Hour. 16 | Minute. 56 | Official Instructions.

To (Person) Revenue Board | From (Person) Deputy Collector

White referring to Govt. Telegram
dated 21st instant regarding
the circulation of certain letters from
the Board's proceedings of 18-4-98 I am to state
that the circulation has been expedited
and that an extract with shorter
letters

26-3-98

64 Word Form. F.C.2.

Recd. from LN. | Sent to LN.

At Hrs. Mts. by | At Hrs. Mts. by

Telegraph Master.

G @ F—No. 161 T—5 13 97—2000000

Read C.C. 101 d) 18.4.98 (cu
3324 of 98)

L.O. (Gen) No 2387 of 3rd June 189
Recorded.

2. The following items appearing
in the Appendix to standing orde
No 219 (2nd edition), have been
omitted from the list of papers
to be kept for more than 10 years
detailed under para 13 of the Pro-
ceedings read above:—
(To be destroyed)

Establishments. (6). Other public
Barracks.
Item 18. Establishment orders.
" 16. Annual returns of establishment
College accounts.
" Birth and Death Registers No 19
Parts I & II.

Mem
26/5/98

Please see telephone attached.
25/5/98

The draft may issue
Mem
26.5.98

24/5/98.

To the Board of Rev (Gen.) Dated
6.6.98

Mem
20.5.98

When given for copying _____
When copied _____
When examined _____ } 189
When signed _____

READ AGAIN G.O., No. DATED
189 ,

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO C. No.

BODY OF GOVERNMENT	A A A A A A A A
LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.	
STATEMENT WITH DITTO.	
PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DEPUTATION IN ORIGINAL.	

N.B.—
A = Copy in full.
B = Not to be copied.
P = Copy abstract only.
Q = Copy heading only.