

**REPORTS ON THE SETTLEMENT
OF THE LAND REVENUE
OF THE PROVINCES UNDER
THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY**

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Reports on the Settlement of the Land Revenue of the Provinces Under the Madras Presidency
by Various

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REPORTS
ON THE SETTLEMENT
OF
THE LAND REVENUE
OF
THE PROVINCES
UNDER
THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY,

FOR FUSLY ¹²⁶³
1853-54.

M A D R A S :

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1855.

FROM B. CUNLIFFE, Esq.

Secretary to the Board of Revenue,

TO J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq.

Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

SIR,

I am directed by the Board of Revenue to forward for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, the enclosed Statements Nos. 1 to 28 exhibiting the Settlement of the Land and Extra Revenues of this Presidency for the Fussy year 1853 (1853-54). In accordance with the instructions given by Government in the final para. of Extract from Minutes of Consultation, dated 6th November 1854, the Statements received from the Commissioner of the Northern Circars are blended with those prepared for the districts under the Board's management as far as the differences in their fixed systems permit, so that the general state of the revenues may be seen at one view and observations will be offered on the causes by which they have been affected in the districts under the Board's control. The Report of the Commissioner for the Northern Circars which has been forwarded to the Board for the purpose of being laid before Government contains similar explanation for the 5 districts* comprised in his charge.

Dated 5th May 1855.

A 1347.

- * 1 Ganjam.
- 2 Visagapatam.
- 3 Rajahmundry.
- 4 Masulipatam.
- 5 Guntoor.

2. The Collectorates under the management of the Board are the same as in the preceding year.

<i>Districts.</i>	<i>Number of Talooks.</i>	<i>Districts.</i>	<i>Number of Talooks.</i>
1. Chingleput.....	10	9. Tinnevely.....	13
2. Salem.....	14	10. Bellary.....	17
3. Madura.....	8	11. Cuddapah.....	14
4. Nellore.....	17	12. Coimbatore.....	15
5. North Arcot.....	13	13. Canara.....	12
6. South Arcot.....	13	14. Malabar.....	16
7. Tanjore.....	16	15. Madras.....	1
8. Trichinopoly.....	8	16. Kurnool.....	8

3. In their last report the Board gave a short account of the revenue system which prevails in each district and of the principal sources of irrigation upon which their cultivation depends. They will therefore limit themselves on this occasion to describing the season under review with its effects on the revenues, and then offer such explanation and remarks as the various statements now submitted require.

4. The season in Fussy 1853 was of a peculiarly unfavourable nature throughout the districts in the centre and on the eastern side of the Peninsula. The early showers which are expected in May and June from the South West monsoon proved so scanty that the first dry crops were limited in extent and gave a partial yield. These crops consisting principally of Cumboo, Cholam and Raghy are sown in June and reaped in September, and as they furnish the principal food of the lower orders, their deficiency seriously augmented the distress which the extensive failure of the principal harvest afterwards caused. In October the North East monsoon commences; but though it brought at first an average supply and enabled cultivation to be actively undertaken, it suddenly ceased early in November, leaving the crops on the dry lands to perish from drought, while the tanks, and in some instances the river channels also, received a supply of water insufficient to bring the wet crops to maturity.

5. Of the two districts on the Western Coast where the South West monsoon is never known to fail entirely, Canara enjoyed a favorable season; but in Malabar the rains were less timely and regular; its 2nd crop which depends chiefly on the North East monsoon yielded, in particular, a short out-turn, and the season was regarded on the whole as unusually adverse. Throughout the remainder of the Presidency, commencing with Tinnevely at the Southern apex

of the Peninsula and extending to Nellore on the coast, and Bellary and Kurnool on our northern frontier, the annual rains were seriously deficient. The Ceded districts, the Carnatic and the Collectorates situated in the centre of the Peninsula, all suffered from drought, though in unequal degrees. In Madura, Salem and Coimbatore, the crops were generally secured and high prices compensated the ryots for short produce; but the other districts were less favored, and Tanjore, Bellary and Nellore were conspicuous for their losses. Distress was also great in the two divisions of Arcot, Chingleput, Tinnevely and parts of Kurnool and Cuddapah. Prices rose in some places to a famine height, and loss of life as well as much additional suffering would have ensued but for the liberal measures of Government in opening the ports, giving employment to the poorer classes on public works, and sanctioning remissions in the land revenue.

6. The Board have added to the statements submitted last year, a register of the monthly rain returns for each district,* which in a season like the one under review possesses peculiar interest. It shows that the annual fall in each district was as follows:

Districts.	At Head station.	Average throughout
	Inches.	the District.
1. Chingleput.....	21-762	15-311
2. Salem.....	23-135	23-331
3. Madura.....	29-551	29-081
4. Nellore.....	17-549	9-857
5. North Arcot.....	16-837	23-598
6. South Arcot.....	32-906	30-522
7. Tanjore.....	32-037	34-530
8. Trichinopoly.....	19-675	24-789
9. Tinnevely.....	23-037	22-911
10. Bellary.....	6-813	9-418
11. Cuddapah.....	12-941	14-622
12. Coimbatore.....	22-800	23-530
13. Canara.....	100-045	85-993
14. Malabar.....	50-821	76-315
15. Madras.....	29-846	"
16. Kurnool.....	10-716	5-394

According to the Register kept at the Madras Observatory from 1818 to 1854, the annual average fall on that part of the Coromandel Coast is 49 inches. On the Western Coast 120 inches is considered an ordinary monsoon, though a less quantity suffices for the cultivation if the rains are timely in their commencement and fall at successive intervals. At Bellary the register kept at the Garrison Hospital during the last 13 years gives an annual-mean of 18 inches.

7. It will therefore be observed that in all the districts, except Canara, the rains were scanty, and that an extensive and long continued drought commenced in November, the critical period of the year when the main harvest of the country is at stake. But in some places the rains were even more deficient than this statement shows, and in parts of the Bellary District where the drought was most severe, the fall did not exceed 3½ inches. The season was also marked by its capriciousness. In Kurnool, some heavy temporary rain filled the chief tanks,*

while in the adjoining districts of Cuddapah and Bellary they were left unsupplied. The rivers also exhibited a similar irregularity. The Cauvery which irrigates Tanjore and Trichinopoly came down in an almost unprecedented flood in July, and afterwards had only scanty freshes. The Kistnah which, like the Cauvery, flows from the Western Ghauts, brought a destructive inundation to Kurnool in the same month, while the other rivers and especially those which depend on the North

East monsoon, the Pennaar in Nellore, the Palaar in Chingleput, the Guddelum, Ponneear and Vellaur in South Arcot and the Tambrapoorny in Tinnevely, all failed to furnish the usual amount of irrigation. One alleviating feature marked the season. The early rains of the North East monsoon in October and the beginning of November were sufficient in the Southern Districts to prevent the wells falling until the principal crops dependent on them had been secured. In Tanjore indeed they were injuriously heavy; but from the middle of November to June, a general drought prevailed, interrupted only in North Arcot by a severe hail storm in March which did much damage to the crops then on the ground.

* Tanks which received full supply.

	F.	F.
Bellary	776	21
Cuddapah	3687	317

8. The character of the year being so exceptional, it was to be expected that its sanitary state would not be favorable. Cholera, fever and small pox were prevalent even in places where no want of rain had been experienced as in Canara and on the Neilgherry hills, though most virulent in the districts where the drought and scarcity were most severe. Full statistical details on this subject are not before the Board, and objections might be entertained to making a minute enquiry with the only agency which is now available; but in Tanjore the deaths by cholera are computed at 22,100 and in Bellary at 15,269. The Collectors' reports

Population according to last census.

Tanjore, 1,676,066.

Bellary, 1,229,599.

show that they paid attention to Vaccination and successfully extended its benefits by the aid of the Subordinate Medical Officers who accompanied them on their circuits. Among the agricultural stock of the ryots, extensive losses occurred from murrain as well as from a want of fodder and water. In Bellary, where the greatest loss was sustained, 248,734 head of cattle, or 31 per cent. of the stock of the district, are calculated to have perished.

9. The Board cannot omit adverting in this place to the signal proof which the year under review affords, of the value of works of irrigation and of the encouragement which has been recently given to land holders to sink private wells by exempting them from any extra taxation. Besides the additional produce and revenue which is obtained from irrigated land and which is computed to exceed that from unirrigated land in the proportion of 5 to 1, the greater security of its cultivation in unfavourable seasons makes its aid invaluable in averting or mitigating times of dearth and famine, while the forage which it supplies for the live stock of the ryots is another important benefit. In Cuddapah and the Southern and Northern Divisions of Arcot where private wells have hitherto been either free or taxed indulgently, much produce was saved by their aid, to the enrichment of the cultivators and the relief of the general distress. The same remark applies to tracts of wet land under some of the various river channels and anicuts; for example, the river Talooks in Trichinopoly and the lands under the great tanks supplied by the lower Coleroon and Vellaur anicuts in South Arcot, and though periodical years of distress from the occasional failure of the monsoons must always be looked for, it may confidently be expected that under the improvement which has already been made and is yearly extending, times of dearth and suffering will both be rare and less severe.

10. As the state of the grain markets will be alluded to in a further part of this report, it will only be observed here that the average prices of the principal grains taken for the entire year and throughout the whole Presidency exhibit a rise of from 41 to 62 per cent. But in many places the ordinary food of the people was double its usual price, and in some instances during the greatest pressure of the scarcity, it rose to nearly treble its usual rate. On the whole the distress was borne with patient endurance; but it was necessary in some places to take extra precautions to protect the bazaars and grain when in transit, and food riots occurred in Nellore, Trichinopoly, Madras and some other towns.

11. The disastrous nature of the season attracted the early attention of Government and the Board, and on the sudden cessation of the North East monsoon in the middle of November, measures were taken to prevent and moderate as far as possible the anticipated distress. Reports were obtained of the agricultural prospects of each district and the stock of grain on hand—the ports were opened and periodical statements shewing the range of prices in the different districts and their exports and imports of grain were published for the information of the mercantile commu-

nity. Arrangements were also made for the employment of the distressed part of the population on public works, and Collectors were empowered to grant those extra indulgences in the settlement of the Land Revenue which their reports shewed to be requisite under the peculiarly unfavorable state of the season. After the completion of the settlement also, the two Districts which sustained the greatest loss, Tanjore and Bellary, were specially* reported upon, and Government will therefore be prepared for a large temporary falling off in the public revenue. The settlement of the land and extra sources of revenue are shown in the following statement and give a net decrease of Rupees 32,57,728, or 8½ per cent. on the result of the preceding year.

* From Tanjore 7 in C. 29th June 1854.

	Land Revenue.				Extra Sources.			
	1262	1263	Increase.	Decrease.	1262	1263	Increase.	De-crease.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Chingleput	11,33,238	8,27,227	.....	3,06,011	4,55,772	3,02,346	.....	1,53,426
2. Salem	17,77,985	17,47,994	.....	29,991	2,07,561	2,09,227	.....	1,666
3. Madura	19,47,899	19,11,488	.....	36,411	5,10,867	4,69,945	.....	40,922
4. Nellore	19,36,477	18,49,192	.....	5,87,285	5,70,843	5,17,219	.....	53,624
5. North Arcot	21,60,092	17,15,537	.....	4,44,555	1,72,699	1,77,127	.....	4,428
6. South Arcot	24,91,959	20,75,612	.....	3,45,757	4,56,530	4,34,502	.....	22,028
7. Tanjore	41,64,256	42,89,455	1,25,209	.....	9,41,441	9,35,785	.....	5,656
8. Trichinopoly	18,97,466	18,31,504	.....	65,962	60,341	65,350	.....	5,009
9. Tinnevely	22,37,433	20,56,379	.....	1,81,054	5,72,705	5,87,575	.....	14,870
10. Bellary	22,38,221	16,61,746	.....	5,76,475	6,01,128	5,95,086	.....	6,042
11. Cuddapah	21,74,908	19,59,018	.....	2,15,890	3,10,048	3,16,821	.....	6,778
12. Coimbatore	28,42,102	28,33,608	.....	8,496	1,95,021	1,94,070	.....	951
13. Canara	19,17,441	19,19,284	1,843	.....	9,25,219	7,68,189	.....	1,57,030
14. Malabar	16,47,867	16,09,486	.....	38,381	9,52,755	7,18,165	.....	2,34,590
15. Madras	65,267	70,588	4,321	.....	16,28,325	18,04,896	.....	1,81,571
16. Kurnool	7,26,437	6,39,490	.....	88,947	1,33,191	1,29,000	.....	4,191
Total.....	3,62,91,158	2,74,97,611	1,31,373	29,24,915	86,89,441	82,25,255	2,14,324	6,78,510

Net Decrease Land Revenue.....	27,93,542
Extra Sources.....	4,64,186
Total.....	32,57,728

12. It will be remarked that the land revenue exhibits an increase in the 8 Collectorates of Canara, Madras and Tanjore. In the first, the favorableness of the year maintained the revenue at the high pitch to which it has gradually risen, and in the second, the assessment fluctuates little with variations of season, consisting, as it does, principally of a quit rent levied on ground occupied with houses. But the fact of an apparent increase of land revenue in Tanjore, when that district has been named as one which suffered most from the distress of the year, calls for explanation. The cause is to be found in the peculiarity of the Oolungo a system under which a large portion of its villages are settled. In them the assessment is raised or lowered, according as the price of grain sinks below or rises above the standard price, and in the present year when rice rose 66 per cent. Government were entitled on this account to an increased revenue of Rupees 6,66,688, which sum is accordingly included in the settlement, but in consideration of the losses which the land owners sustained in this and the preceding year when Tanjore was visited

by a destructive hurricane, Government were pleased to remit* Rupees 4,08,010 of this demand, and thus practically instead of an increase of Rupees 1,25,209, the land revenue fell off in this district also to the amount of Rupees 2,82,801.

13. In examining how far the unfavorable nature of the season has diminished the land Revenue, the following statement has been prepared shewing a decrease of Rupees 39,45,989.

	Decrease of Cultiva- tion.	Remission for en- tire loss of crops and short produce.	Total.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	
1. Chingleput	1,68,140	1,19,845	2,87,985
2. Salem	25,921	2,586	28,507
3. Madura	25,893	10,391	36,284
4. Nellore	3,42,235	2,25,453	5,67,688
5. North Arcot	2,65,273	1,79,581	4,44,854
6. South Arcot	1,36,564	2,20,003	3,56,567
7. Tanjore	"	7,08,730	7,08,730
8. Trichinopoly	68,033	16,023	84,056
9. Tinnevely	"	370,697	3,70,697
10. Bellary	6,03,250	1,12,379	7,15,629
11. Cuddapah	2,53,340	20,275	2,73,615
12. Coimbatore	"	2,190	2,190
13. Canara	"	3,482	3,482
14. Malabar	11,212	"	11,212
15. Madras	"	"	"
16. Kurnool	"	51,388	51,388
Total.....	19,02,866	20,43,123	39,45,989

This account does not include Rupees 4,08,010 specially remitted by Government in Tanjore, because this item and such portion of the revenue arrears as it may be necessary hereafter

	<i>Rs.</i>
<i>Bellary Expenditure on Jamins roads till Sept. 1854,.....</i>	<i>12,28,270</i>
<i>Coimbatore.....</i>	<i>10,000</i>
<i>Cuddapah ...</i>	<i>2,72,246</i>
<i>Kurnool</i>	<i>1,28,790</i>
<i>Nellore</i>	<i>17,826</i>
<i>North Arcot ...</i>	<i>21,497</i>
<i>South Arcot ...</i>	<i>29,394</i>
	<i>17,68,027.</i>

to write off, are left to balance the gain which has occurred to Government from the Oolungoo system in Tinnevely and Tanjore, and from the extended cultivation under wells and channels which was called into activity by the exigency of the season wherever irrigation was found available. In the "Extra sources" of revenue, a decrease amounting to about two and a half lacks under the head of Salt, Frontier customs, Exports by Sea in the provinces and Moturpha, is also attributable to the unfavorable nature of the season, which checked trade by causing a deficiency of water and forage for carriage cattle; and as far as the Board have at present information, all the Bills not having yet come in, the expenditure in providing employment for the distressed population amounts to 17,68,027. In the Departments therefore which come under the Board's cognizance, the drought appears to have affected the finances of Government to the amount of sixty lacks or £600,000 sterling.

14. Remarks will now be offered on the statements which are submitted to illustrate the details of the settlement under review; but it seems proper first to notice briefly, the occasions upon which the ordinary rules were departed from, for the purpose of affording the land holders relief under their unusually severe losses.

The remissions for withered crops were granted on a more liberal scale than in ordinary years, and were allowed on unirrigated as well as on irrigated lands. It is not usual to give remission for the failure of dry produce, because the assessment is fixed only for a single crop; and generally when the first sowing fails, the ryot is able to raise some other produce during the course of the year; but on this occasion the season was so disastrous and the produce was so scanty on those lands where the crops were harvested, that remission was allowed for failure of produce on both irrigated and unirrigated lands. In Tanjore full remission was granted in some of the irrigated villages for the unproductive and uncultivated fields on condition that the Meerassidars paid the assessment on their other lands, instead of leaving the crops to be reaped and divided by the Government servants, as they have the power of doing in bad seasons; and the exercise of which privilege on this occasion would have overwhelmed the Collector's establishment, and in some of the dry villages the crops were made over to the land holders on estimate for a similar reason.

In the two districts of North and South Arcot besides the remissions for withered crops, a per centage reduction was allowed, with the sanction of the Board, on all the wet and dry lands on account of the general scantiness of produce. In Tinnevely, permission was given to the ryots to raise dry grain crops in the rice lands for which water was deficient, paying only a portion of the usual assessment.

With the above exceptions, the settlement was conducted in the usual manner, though more than ordinary liberality was shown in allowing reductions for cowle lands left waste and for fields only partially cultivated.

15. Statement No. 1 details the districts under the management of the Board, with the number of their Talooks, and Statement No. 2 shows their villages and hamlets. The latter is prepared in a slightly different form from that of the preceding year, villages under one year's rent being separated from the ryotwary villages in accordance with the instructions of Government. In comparing it with the statement of last year, some fluctuations are apparent, giving a net increase of 10 villages and 845 hamlets. In the previous statement, some of the Tanjore villages were alone entered, their subsidiary hamlets being inadvertently omitted, and the number of Government or ryotwar villages is always liable to vary, as what are termed villages in the thinly inhabited and hilly districts consist often of tracts of land without a single permanent house, and they are brought into or taken out of the statement according as they are partially cultivated by temporary settlers or left entirely waste. The decrease of 1 village and 4 hamlets in Malabar arises from their transfer to the French Go-

Statement Nos. 1 and 2.
6th November 1854, p. 3. Note. Vide Printed Report, F. 1262.

vernment for whom they had been held under management since the peace in 1815, in consequence of a dispute regarding their boundaries. The decrease in the number of permanently settled, Poliput and Shetriem villages is owing to resumptons on account of lapses or their falling into arrears.

16. Statement No. 3 contains a summary of the works of irrigation in each district. Being a quinquennial return, its entries are the same as in the preceding year, except that the Board have been able to add to it the details for Tanjore. It is still an evidently imperfect statement, and exertions will be made to have it prepared with fullness and care on the next occasion. It is a document which will possess much interest as shewing the addition made to the resources of the country by the increase of private wells under the new rule, which allows the land holders who incur the outlay of sinking them to reap the entire benefit. The privilege has already come into active operation, and its benefits are specially alluded to by the Collectors of Madura, Coimbatore, Tanjore, Salem and Trichinopoly. With reference to the remark made by Government on the little difference in the number of wells and tanks entered for the Chingleput district, the Board are led to believe that the entries may not be erroneous, as that district contains an unusual number of small tanks and ponds (tangals), and the land holders have been discouraged from sinking wells by the additional taxation hitherto placed on lands thus brought under irrigation.

17. The next three Statements Nos. 4, 5 and 6 furnish statistical details of the agricultural stock, the general population, and the number of land holders, or Puttadars, in each district. Being prepared quinquennially, these statements correspond with those which accompanied the last report, except that the details for Tanjore are newly given in No. 3, information is still defective for some districts and will be hereafter supplied.

18. The rent roll of the different districts, North Arcot excepted, is given in Statement No. 7; and as this is also a quinquennial return, it is founded on last year's data, but has been expanded for the purpose of showing the different classes into which the cultivators are divisible according to the size of their holdings. The instructions given by Government in Para. 16 of their remarks on last year's report have been followed as closely as the information at the Board's command allowed, and in the ensuing year the details for North Arcot will be included. The present statement shows 12,84,978 single Puttahs or separate holdings, the average payment on each being Rupees 18; but no less than 7,83,765 Puttahs are under Rupees 10, and give an average payment of only Rupees 3. The districts which contain the largest number of substantial proprietors may be thus arranged.

	<i>No. of Proprietors paying above 100 Rupees.</i>	<i>Average of Puttahs or holdings.</i>		
		<i>Rs.</i>	<i>A.</i>	<i>P.</i>
Tanjore,.....	8,710	39	12	8
Tinnevely.....	3,941	22	4	8
Canara.....	3,539	84	2	2
South Arcot.....	2,769	15	13	7
Malabar.....	2,426	8	12	11
Nellore.....	2,389	85	5	5

The Board would however repeat that in reality large properties are more numerous than this return shows, as many individuals and families possess several estates or holdings, for each of which a separate puttah is entered in this return; and it may also be observed that although the ryotwary system is supposed to lead to small holdings, the principal cause of the minute subdivision of land is to be found in the Hindoo law of inheritance, which enables any member of a family to call for a division of its ancestral estate and would therefore have influence under any revenue system. That small holdings are not inconsistent with a value attached to land and may be accompanied by prosperity and comfort is shown by the three districts of Canara, Malabar and Cuddapah where the revenue is collected with facility and the ryots are generally in easy circumstances. The Collector of Tanjore observes that there are several larger proprietors in his