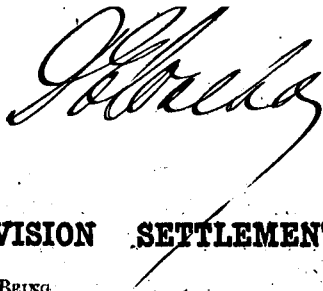


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THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT

BEING

A series of Letters indicating a departure in the Land Revenue Policy of the Bombay Government as applied to the Konkan Districts.

By

RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT,
LANDHOLDER OF AVAS, ALIBAG TALUKA,
KOLABA DISTRICT.

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OF THE

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"When it is considered that every excess of assessment beyond the natural rent of the land is reduction of what would otherwise be the rates of profits and wages, and that these last constitute almost the sole funds from which any additions to the population and capital of this country are to be effected, some conception may be formed of the mighty power vested in the Government of India in virtue of its claim of property in the soil and the heavy responsibility attending its exercise. In every agricultural country such as the Deccan, the general rate of profits on the usual reward of industry, is regulated by that obtained from the cultivator of the soil; and to suppose that while this last is depressed, any considerable advances can be made by the society, would be to disregard the plainest lessons of experience. These general observations will, I hope, have served, in some degree, to show the vital importance of the land assessment, and the fearful consequences of any error on the side of over-taxation. No unnecessary reduction can injure the country, and the Government revenue can only suffer from it to the extent of such reduction. An error upon one side involves the inevitable ruin of the country, an error upon the other some inconsiderable sacrifice of the finance of the state and with such unequal stakes depending, can we hesitate as to which, should be given the preponderance? The line of true policy, under such circumstances, is not shown in an attempt to fix the assessment at what the land will exactly bear but in fixing it as far within this limit as the exigencies of the state will permit."

SIR GEORGE WINGATE.

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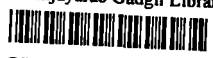
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The following letters on the Alibag Revision Settlement appeared in the two daily English papers of Bombay (the *Times of India* and the *Bombay Gazette*, but more frequently in the former) from time to time between May 1894 and November 1895. Their publication was deemed essential at a time when the papers connected with the settlement of Alibag were believed to be before the Government of Bombay. It is not easy to say how far they have served their object. That object was to call the attention of Government, of the survey Department and of the public generally to the fact so notorious throughout the taluka that the revision settlement was not the result of a careful examination of the different classes of soils classed as warkas, rabi, rice, and garden but that it was a rough and ready valuation of them according to a pre-determined anna-valuation scale based on the 'general position class.' Not the slightest attempt was ever made to ascertain by personal inspection the yield of lands classed as rabi and garden. This is literally the truth, and I challenge Col. Godfrey, the settlement officer, to disprove it. The discussion of these and other points brought forward in the letters arrested public attention to this iniquitous feature of what is known as the partial system of re-measurement and re-classification.

But the letters have done something more. The contention of the writer has received unhesitating support from a quarter the least expected. The letters drew into the arena of public discussion the author of three valuable letters over the *nom de plume* of "C. R. Sail" addressed to the *Times of India*. The writer has thus disguised his real name, but internal evidence goes far to show that the author, if not a survey officer himself, is at all events a revenue officer intimately familiar with the taluka, and, more especially, with the revision work of the survey Department in Alibag. Curiously enough, however, in his very attempt to defend the action of the survey Department, his honesty and familiarity with the work of that Department has led him to give a remarkable confirmation—all the more remarkable because it was unexpected—to my contentions. "I am making no reckless statement," says Mr. Sail, "when I say that unless there is water sufficient to grow a garden crop, the land is not garden at all, and ought not to be assessed as such, and I am expressing what I believe to be the true complaint against the new garden assessments when I add that *no adequate weight has been given to this fact*" Mr. Sail's second point was the tremendous power of 'the position class.' In his opinion the present oppressive power of the 'position class' would have been reduced to proper proportions by applying that 'position class' at one quarter of the whole scale, and with reference to water annas only. Mr. Sail's third point was in respect of the assessment of lands formerly classed as *war-kas* and now classed as *rabi*. Mr. Sail admits that 'this,

though regrettable, is after all not a large matter. It affects only some 17500 acres and an increase of about Rs. 5000 (papers p. 34), ridiculously small proportion of the whole assessment of the taluka about which to make a mighty bother.' The first two points brought out in Mr. Sail's letters are of the highest importance, namely:—(1) the wholly unequitable character of garden assessments in Alibag and (2) the tremendous power of the so called 'general position class' which determines the grouping and valuation of lands. It is thought desirable that the scattered literature on the subject should not be allowed to go to waste but be collected in a connected form for future reference. Hence the necessity of this publication.

Here it is necessary to remind the reader that thirteen years ago the subject of the exact valuation of lands in revision settlements came up before the Government of India in connection with the policy to be carried out in new settlements in the N. W. Provinces. Government found that the attempt to attain an exact valuation of agricultural land involved doubts, difficulties, and delays which lead to so much vexation, costliness and uncertainty in settlement operations that it must in the future be eliminated from the scheme of land assessment. Accordingly, the Government of India announced their decision in the following terms:—*

"The Government of India having decided that settlement operations which have for their main ob-

* See para 10 of the Government of India's letter in the *Revenue and Agricultural Department*, dated the 9th May 1883.

ject the correction of previous valuations of land cannot be undertaken without much harassment to the people and interference with agricultural prosperity, desires that a period should be fixed in the fiscal history of every district after which there should be no further attempts to obtain fresh valuations of the soil. It holds this to be the main object in view. It desires that the agricultural value of an estate having once been ascertained with tolerable accuracy, this value may be taken as a basis for future adjustment."

The Government of India thought that the settlement department would be able to adopt such methods as would enable it to work out a system of assessment which would be to a certain extent self-regulating. They were accordingly persuaded that local Governments would attack the problem successfully, the problem, namely, how to give that assurance of security which is attached to permanency of demands without depriving the State of its unquestioned claim to enhance the land revenue upon defined conditions. Accordingly, in their Resolution dated the 9th May 1883, the Government of India laid down the following principles on which future revisions of land revenue assessments should be made in Northern India:—

(1) That the future assessments of land revenue should be arranged under such rules and in such a manner as will enable the proprietors of land to forecast with tolerable precision and without official aid the enhancement of revenue to which they will in future be subject and would like to see certainty of

assessment become one of the inherent attributes of agricultural prosperity.

(2) That such a system of settlement cannot be satisfactorily established, if any increase of assessment is permitted on other than the three following grounds:—(1) Increase of area under cultivation; (2) Rise in prices; (3) increase in produce due to improvements effected at Government expense.

(3) That the scheme of assessment thus stated would abandon altogether any attempt to value or assess any profits which may, in future, arise from improvements effected by the people themselves, including those made with the assistance of money borrowed from Government. Of such improvements in Upper India, the larger portion consists of wells and other works connected with irrigation. Hitherto these have been too freely assessed. The rules laid down for their exclusion from assessment have often not been liberal, and such as they are, have been greatly neglected. It is true that the right of the state to share in the profits of irrigation under certain conditions may be admitted. But the Government of India considers it so enormous an advantage to offer the strongest possible inducement to the agricultural population to protect the land against draught that it is prepared to surrender the enhanced revenue which might on this account be imposed on land irrigated otherwise than at the expense of Government.

(4) That the assessment of revenue upon profits of other kinds of improvements made by the agriculturists themselves would be unjust in itself and

would involve those difficult inquiries into the valuation of land which it is resolved in future to avoid. This is especially the case in regard to the gradual enhancement of value effected by the application of greater labour and skill to the operations of tillage heretofore an important law in the increment of revenue acquired by the new assessments. His Excellency in Council is convinced that it is false economy to discourage in any way the employment of such increased skill and labour, and is therefore prepared to resign any revenue leviable on the profits of improvements of this kind.

Before the adoption of these principles which should guide future revisions of land revenue assessments in Northern India, the Government of India put itself in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State. The Secretary of State gave his assent to them but in doing so suggested that the Government of Bombay should be addressed with a view to ascertaining whether similar principles, *mutatis mutandis*, might not be applied in the ryotwari districts of Southern India. Accordingly, the Government of India forwarded a copy of their letter of the 19th December 1883 addressed to the N. W. Provinces in which these principles were formulated to the Bombay Government, and enquired if, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the more extended application of them to the Bombay revenue system was considered practicable or expedient. In making this enquiry the Government of India took the opportunity

of stating that it was constrained to admit that the proposals of Sir Philip Wodehouse in respect of the limitations of enhancements made in 1874 had for their main object the removal of the annoyance of the re-measurement and re-classification of land. On the main point, therefore, the Bombay scheme of 1874 touching the limitation of enhancements and that included in the letter of 8th May 1883, agree entirely, viz:—in the desire to do away with the troubles, difficulties, and expense of re-measuring and re-classing land.

The Government of Bombay, in replying to this communication* expressed its entire concurrence with the Government of India on the general principles enunciated above and considered that those principles were generally applicable to the revenue system in this Presidency and explained how and with what modifications of existing arrangements they might be adopted. These modifications were proposed by Mr. Stewart, the survey Commissioner, in his letter which accompanied the reply† of the Bombay Government. The letter of Mr. Stewart is an interesting study as a piece of special pleading. He would be less than the survey Commissioner he was if he did not hold up to admiration the Bombay revenue system as superior to that

* See letter from the Government of Bombay, No. 6340 dated 27th August 1883.

† See the letter dated the 27th June 1883 in Selection No. 278 on the character of land revenue and system of survey and settlement in the Bombay Presidency.

of the North-West Provinces. But even he, while extolling the Bombāy system, is driven to confess that 'if re-valuation of soils is alleged to cause harassment and annoyance to the people, it must be shown to be caused by the single technical operation of re-classification in the field, which is the only one of which the individual ryot has any cognizance.' Mr. Stewart admits that though the classification valuation of the field itself is no guide in deciding the pitch of assessment, 'it is, however, the great factor by which the incidence of the assessment on each field is graduated. When the maximum rate, *i.e.*, the rent charge considered applicable to the best, or what is technically called 16-anna soil, is decided for a village or group of villages, the assessment per acre of the lower classed fields is decided at once by the proportion their valuation in annas bears to 16 annas. The necessity of a careful and accurate field classification cannot therefore be too highly estimated. If the classification is fair and equal, periodical enhancements of the maximum rates may be made upon its basis only without any hesitation; if, on the other hand, it is unequal and ill-balanced, every successive application of an enhancement will add to excessive rating on the one hand or undue elemency on the other.' All this sounds eminently fair on paper. but it is in practice that the greatest deviations from sound principles are perpetrated and permitted without challenge or rebuke. For illustration, I need only point to the entirely new factor in the anna-valuation of soils in re-classification work introduced in revision

settlements in respect of the superiority which one field is supposed to possess over another in regard to position for the reception and retention of drainage or the advantage of what is called the 'general position' class. This ingenious device carries with it a tremendous power of enhancement and gets for Government any amount of excess revenue that a settlement officer chooses to secure. It is an engine of powerful efficacy to work with. And yet it gives no trouble to the survey officer. All he has to do is to know the quantity of soil and water-annas combined, so that on looking at the table specially prepared by the Department for working out the classification annas he is able to tell you what the 'position class' of any field is. With these two factors of soil and water annas, the settlement officer is able to drive a coach and six through any valuation of a field for 'position class.' He has not to visit the field but is able to tell you from his easy chair in his office the 'position class' valuation of any field of which the soil and water annas are known. The device was first carried out in the Khandesh re-settlements. It was applied to Amalner in the first instance. One would fancy from the extract from Mr. Stewart's letter in reply to the Government of India given above that the 'general position' class was intended to be applied to soil re-classification only. But nothing would be a greater mistake than such a supposition. In Khandesh it found application in the grouping of villages. At one sweep, for instance, all the 275½ villages of Amalner were placed in a single group at an enhanced maximum dry-crop rate of Rs. 2-12-0, in Erandole the proposal

to place all the 229 villages under the enhanced maximum of Rs. 3-4 received the sanction of Government. In short, these enhancements in re-classification work would appear to have resulted from

(1) Increase in the relative anna-valuation of soils.

(2) The adoption of the one-group scheme against the many-group scheme in the grouping of villages at the sacrifice on the rock of uniformity of all sound principles regulating the relative valuations of soils.

(3) The raising of maximum rates and

(4) The change of the anna-valuation scale from 32 annas to 24 annas as in the valuation of garden lands in Alibag.

The argument used by the survey Department in defence of the one-group system was the similarity of the villages in each taluka in point of climate, communications and proximity to good markets. The district officer, on the other hand, had regard more for the *effect* which the one uniform grouping would have on the villages of the old lowest groups, especially as compared with those of the highest and which would press on them for the whole period of the coming lease. But the proposal was opposed, not alone by the successive Collectors of Khandesh. Perhaps the strongest condemnation of the one-group scheme came from Colonel Ward, then Superintendent of the Deccan Survey. Commenting on Mr. Stewart's defence of the one-group scheme, Colonel Ward, in his settlement report of Erandole, says :— " I venture to submit that these words amount to a con-

denmation of the arguments which precede them in favour of a one-group scheme. They contain an admission that the scheme is *unscientific, and is recommended only that thirty years hence a fair starting point may be afforded for survey settlement principles being once again taken into consideration.* In the meanwhile it is acknowledged that the old lower groups will suffer in comparison with those originally assessed at a higher rate.* Mark the words italicised in the above quotation.

It has been the fate of the Konkan to suffer perhaps the worst possible injustice at the hands of the Bombay Government, especially, in respect of converted lands. Any student of settlement literature would soon find this out as he proceeds in his study of it. As far back as 1885 converted rice land was assessed in revision at the highest dry-crop rate. But a change seemed to be impending in this respect in the treatment of the Konkan district so far back as 1885. This would appear from the following extract from the Igatpuri settlement Resolution indicating the lineaments of a distinct departure in policy:—

“As regards dry-crop land converted into rice land during the settlement period, His Excellency in Council has approved in this case of the application of the principle that it should be assessed on revision within the maximum dry crop rate. This is the just principle when, as is understood to be the case in Igatpuri, the capacity of the land for growing rice has been almost entirely conferred by the labour

*See para. 14 of the Erandole Settlement Report, Selection No. 239, new series, page 39.

of the occupant in levelling and embanking. There may, however, be cases, such as will probably come in the revision settlements of the Konkan, where the conversion of dry-crop into rice land depends as much on natural advantages of the land converted, such as are not inherent in ordinary dry-crop land, as on the labour of the occupant. If the whole resulting profit is left for ever to the occupant, the assessment will be in fact a *privileged assessment and unfair to the public interests* and it is necessary to consider how the natural advantages of the various rice-plots may be taken into the assessment. The cases to be dealt with will vary from that where natural facilities are turned to account by aid of very little labour and outlay on the part of the occupant, to that where land, having the ordinary natural facilities of dry-crop land, has been converted into rice land entirely by the labour and outlay of the occupant. In the latter case no enhancement of the assessment will be made on account of the profits due to the conversion. The subject will call for the careful attention of the Commissioner of Survey in making his proposals for revision of settlements in the Konkan.*

How was this question of converted rice-plots or *Nowkirda* lands dealt with actually in the Konkan re-settlements? The Resolution on the settlement of the villages of the old Khalapur Petha shows that the survey department found it utterly impossible to assess the natural advantages and determine how much of the natural facilities were due to the inherent

*See para. 10 of the Resolution No. 2451, in the Rev. Dep., dated 4th May, 1885.

nature of the soil and how much to the labour and capital on the part of the ryot. No inquiries were made as to what the ryot had to spend in impounding the water by means of *bunds* and otherwise rendering plots fit for the growth of rice. The result was the adoption, as Mr. Stewart confessed, of a most arbitrary standard of assessment of rice and garden lands. The fact is the survey department makes use of the 'position class' factor as an element of agricultural value on the plea that in the Konkan there are large areas over which there is much land capable of improvement at little cost which has been left in its natural state for want of energy and absence of pressure. These, it is thought, will be opened up as competition and enterprise increase, and the result would be a considerable amount of reclamation of land for rice-growing, in which case it is thought necessary that public interests in these lands should be brought to account.

But it is forgotten that the survey enhancement is based on the present condition. The Department is not supposed to discount future prosperity which may or may not be realized. In short, the 'position class' factor is made to serve as a set off or a counterblast against all claims for improvements effected by the ryots by the outlay of their own labour and capital. That this is really the case would appear from the following passage from the Resolution of Government, dated the 30th August 1888, on the revision settlement of the old Khalapur Petha of the Karjat taluka:—

“It appears preferable, however, to His Excellency the Governor in Council that *all future questions of taxation of improvements should be avoided by assessing the land at once for its present and prospective capacities and regarding the result as the standard assessment in the survey and village papers*; the difference in the rate at which it may be considered advisable to levy at once being in the case of occupied lands treated as a remission during the period of the revised settlement on the distinct understanding that at the next ~~next~~ revision survey the full rate will come into operation, with such increase as may ^{then} be found to be justifiable, whether the contemplated improvement be effected or not. For the ensuing settlement the rate on such lands should be the simple *warkas* rates, plus the small extra valuation for the ‘position class,’ proposed by Mr. Stewart, which it is desirable to retain as a further indication that the *present assessment must be shortly raised and that the difference between it and the full rate leviable after 30 years is a remission granted as an act of grace.*’ The italics in the above quotation are mine. After the announcement of this policy one is tempted to inquire where is this harassment to end, and how far is it reconcilable with the objects which prompted the Government of India to communicate with the Bombay Government and in fulfilment of which the Bombay Government showed its readiness, to adopt measures calculated (1) to avoid as far as possible the harassment and expense inseparable from re-classification of soil, at every recurring re-settlement, and (2) to give the re-

venue-payer a means of estimating beforehand with tolerable accuracy what his enhanced revenue should be, and with this object limiting enhancements to the three grounds of rise in prices, additional cultivation, and improvements made at Government expense?

Thus the landholders of Alibag have, it would seem, done their best to bring their grievances to the notice of the Government and the public. They held public meetings in this connection; formed themselves into Sarvajanik Sabhas for a constitutional representation of their hard case to Government; agitated the matter through the press, English and Vernacular, and got questions to be asked in the Legislative Council but so far as the result goes—to no purpose whatever. To questions asked in the Legislative Council, the answers given were equivocal and astoundingly evasive. Asked, for instance, what was the exact nature of the calculation made in fixing the maximum rate for converted rice lands in regard to profits of agriculture due to natural advantages and what to the labour and capital spent by the ryots in utilizing them, what exemptions from assessments were made in the case of all conversions of land from *warkas* into new rice or rabi or garden land due to the labour and capital of the ryots, the hon. member, replying on behalf of Government, thought fit to entirely evade them by observing a total silence. Asked whether Government would be pleased to place on the table of the Council a copy of the rules regulating classification of rice, garden, rabi, and warkas lands.

in the Konkan districts, framed especially for the guidance of the classing officers, the hon. Mr. Nugent, another master of evasion, replied that 'the principles on which the classification is made are fully shown in settlement reports and other published papers and the rules laid down for the guidance of survey officers in the application of the principles in detail cannot, in the *public interest* be placed on the Table.' Mark the words 'public interest.' How these rules, if published, are against public interest when every classer on the survey establishment on 20 rupees a month possesses a copy of them and how their publication jeopardises such 'public interest' passes one's comprehension.

Failing to receive any redress of their grievances, the Alibag Association, as representing the landholding classes of the taluka, memorialized Government on the subject in January 1894. In this memorial they stated that about 500 appeals against the survey Commissioner's orders assessing their lands were lodged with the Government of Lord Harris and in accordance with the Government Resolution thereon a number of the memorialists deposited various sums of money with the mamlatdar of Alibag with a view to enquiries being held in their cases. It is more than a year since these sums have been deposited and the Association is at a loss to understand why no enquiry has yet been ordered or commenced. The Association wound up by a prayer that Government would be pleased to appoint a special Commission to hear and decide these appeals, such Commission to consist of the Collector of Kolaba, the Deputy Survey Super-

rintendent; the Personal Assistant to the Survey Commissioner, the Mamlatdar of Alibag and a non-official gentleman possessed of local knowledge and representing the views and feelings of the cultivating classes. Surely the constitution of the Commission suggested was such that not even Government would, it seems to me, adopt a better one if disposed to entertain the prayer of the memorialists favourably.

Now the points for settlement are but few and simple. Our first complaint is that the old maximum rate for *warkas* lands was 4 annas per acre, but the settlement Department have unsettled the entire revision work by having it to mean a four anna valuation and having *surveyed the warkas lands of the taluka* by eye only and not by their actual produce, have enhanced the assessment above 300 per cent and in places up to 1,200 per cent, *although there are extensive tracts of warkas lands which cannot even grow a blade of grass, far less any remunerative produce as admitted in Government Resolution, no. 4380 dated 17th May, 1894.* This is a matter to which too much importance cannot be attached.

A second noticeable point is the change made in the new classification of garden lands from the old 32 to 24-anna scale, the effect of which is to distinctly over-class soil and water factors though the intention was to nominally confirm the old classification. On the other hand, the fact of the supreme importance of water in garden lands had had no adequate ^{weight} given to it. It is due to Mr. E. C. Ozanne, the Survey Commissioner, to say that he had no hand in bringing about the newly adopted system of assessing garden lands. 'It was', says he, 'the subject of much discussion and I have accorded my full sanction as I cannot suggest a better method, though personally I do not like confirming the old water assessments, for the water classed was that made available by the enterprise of

individuals, more energetic than their neighbours. Men who had wells at the time of the original classification are therefore taxed more heavily than those who have since them. But the choice lies between total re-classification and some such system as that adopted and I think that total re-classification would run a greater chance of taxing improvements.'

The third point is the exclusion of Alibag from the benefit of temporary remissions under the Igatpuri Resolution in cases where the difference between the old and new assessment is less than 8 annas. This is an instance of manifest injustice to the ryots in Alibag. The Hon. Mr. Nugent admits the exclusion but excuses himself on the plea that the statements for the talukas of Alibag and Pen were prepared before the orders of Government were passed on the draft rules and on the assumption that draft rule 2 would be approved so that the instructions regarding remissions could not be given effect to. But admitting the plea, is it fair. I ask, that the poor and hapless ryots of Alibag should suffer because 'the preparation of new statements would have been a work of much time and trouble'? Is it fair that because the amount involved to individual occupants was in no case large and in many quite insignificant, that therefore Government should direct that the draft rule in question should be held to have been applicable in the case of the Alibag and Pen settlements? I submit the proceeding on the part of Government is indefensible on the ground either of public policy or justice or equity. But is it still not possible to remedy the injustice to the ryots of Alibag and Pen by directing that the period of temporary remissions for the first two years be extended from the next year?

Here, then, stands the case of the Alibag and Pen ryots. The above three points I place in the forefront of their present grievances. The matter is before the Government of Lord Sandhurst, and we may well look to His Excellency for a just and sympathetic treatment of it for the simple reason that these settlement questions have His Excellency's earnest and close attention. In replying to the welcome address of the Poona Sarvajnik Sabha on the 15th June 1895, Lord Sandhurst observed :—"I may say at once that while I trust all sections of the public in the Bombay Presidency will find me, while I have the honour to be Governor of this Presidency, ready to give a patient hearing and sympathetic consideration to their representations, I, on my part, shall expect those who approach me to deal with Government officials as honourable men anxious to do their duty according to their lights. But I will say this. Send me what cases you think are hardly dealt with and support them by evidence, and I can assure you then the most careful investigation shall ensue, but I am convinced that by pursuing a line of that description, we are more likely to attain the end in view, if loose and general charges are avoided." His Excellency will find that in putting forward the hard case of the Alibag people in these letters, I have studiously avoided making loose and random statements and endeavoured to understate rather than overstate the merits of the controversy. May we not, then, look to the noble lord for justice? The spirit in which we pray His Excellency to approach the consideration of the case is the spirit which guided the founder of the Bombay revenue system. It is the spirit of the statesman intent upon fair play more than that of the tax-gatherer bent upon screwing out the uttermost farthing out of the poor cultivator. In course of observa-

tions on the value and importance of the land settlement and the fearful consequences of any error on the side of over-taxation, Sir George Wingate remarked :—‘No unnecessary reduction can injure the country and the Government revenue can only suffer from it to the extent of such reduction. An error upon one side involves the inevitable ruin of the country, an error upon the other some inconsiderable sacrifice of the finance of the state, and with such unequal stakes depending, can we hesitate as to which should be given the preponderance? The line of true policy under such circumstances, is not in an attempt to fix the assessment at what the land will exactly bear, but in fixing it as far within this limit as the exigencies of the state will permit.’ This is the spirit in which the people of Alibag and of the Konkan generally would wish His Excellency Lord Sandhurst to deal with these revision settlement questions which are now or which may hereafter come before His Excellency. We trust and hope that our reasonable expectations will not be disappointed.

Urankar's Chawl,
Kandewadi, Girgaon, }
Bombay, May 23, '96. }

RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT.

THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT.

REVISED RATES.

(2nd. May, 1893.)

The Revision Survey of the Alibag taluka having been completed, the Superintendent issued printed copies of a circular, notifying the increased rates of taxation to the various villages, last November, and called upon them to memorialise the Collector within two months, in case they thought the enhancements inequitable. As elsewhere, the villages of the Alibag taluka (about 200 in number with a population of 78,000) have been formed into several groups, and the maximum old and new rates per acre for kharif (rice-growing), bagayat (garden), and varkas (grass-growing) lands have been given opposite each village of a group. The kharif land has been divided into two classes, sweet and salt. The old rate for salt land was Rs. 5 per acre: the new one, with some exceptions, is Rs. 5½. The old rates in the case of sweet land varied from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7½: the new rates for the same are Rs. 8 and Rs. 8½. It may be safely presumed that under this particular item there will be an increase of about 20 per cent. over the old revenue. Now, the old kharif rates going up as much as Rs. 7½ per acre are already high enough, and to make an increase in them is simply to add an unbearable burden. It is an admitted fact that an investor in land in the Alibag taluka can barely get six per cent. for his money even in years of plenty, and in bad years has little left him after paying the Government assessment. A young man at Avas, on this side of Alibag, paid off his father's debts (Rs. 800), and last year got rice worth only about Rs. 50 from

the redeemed land, the Government assessment on which is Rs. 40! Now, what is the man to do if there are four or five continuous bad years? The Government would in no case remit any portion of their fixed revenue. Those who earn money in Bombay pay the Government dues without a murmur, but the poor ryot, who has no other source of income except the produce of his fields, has either to go to the money-lender or sell off part of his chattel to do it. Tagai advances made by Government are very little understood and availed of in the Alibag taluka. The maximum bagayat rate has been increased from Rs. 10 and Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 per acre, giving on an average about 40 per cent. increase of revenue. The only bagayat produce worth naming is that of cocoanuts in a few villages of the taluka; but since the passing of the Abkari Act in 1878, bagayat of this kind has been far from remunerative. The old rates were fixed when the yield from the cocoanut trees in the form of toddy was considerable. The present enhancement in consequence is quite out of place. In some villages on this side of Alibag it is impossible, owing to scarcity of water, to have any sort of bagayat produce, and pieces of land containing a few tamarind and mango-trees, or sometimes no trees at all, are classed as bagayat lands, no one knows on what principle. The only difference between these so-called bagayat lands and the ordinary jungle lands is that the former are level and the latter raised up. The arbitrary operation of the Survey Department is seen when we come to the re-assessment of varkas land. No one—not even the Survey Department, I presume—has ever tried to collect statistics to ascertain how much grass is imported into Bombay from the Alibag taluka. The survey authorities, however, relying on the simple assumption that because some other places near Bombay do export large quantities of grass here, the Alibag villages also do the same thing, have increased the cess on varkas from Re. 1 to Rs. 3 an acre, or 200 per cent. Another thing worth noticing in connection with this kind of land is, that what was consider-

ed as only fourth class varkas land at the former survey, has been now classed as rabi, or, perhaps, varkas of the first class, so that the increase in individual cases may sometimes be from four annas to Rs. 3 per acre, or more than a thousand per cent. The old maximum rate of Re. 1 per acre seems to be rather imaginary, as it does not appear that more than four annas per acre was ever paid by any one. Rabi, varkas, and rabi or varkas turned into kharif, have all been rated at Rs. 3 or Rs. 2½ per acre. The new rate for rabi or varkas turned into kharif would perhaps be justifiable where the change has not cost much to the owner; but there are cases in which people have expended enormous labour and money to turn the varkas into kharif, and to make them pay at the same rate would be unjust. It seems the survey officers have made no inquiries on this point, but have only taken the present quality of the land into consideration and classed it accordingly. They appear to have satisfied themselves with simply noting that there was so much varkas before which has been turned into kharif now. No doubt, there will be room for individual appeals hereafter; but the worry and trouble will be endless, and the result, in most cases, very dubious. In the majority of the villages the rabi crops are not worth naming; in fact, the greater portion of the land that has been now classed as rabi is utilized as grazing ground by the farmers, there being no public pastures of any importance. Nearly the whole of the varkas or rabi that could be reasonably converted into kharif having been so converted, the farmers, with a few exceptions, find it very difficult to have sufficient hay for *rab* burning. The stringency of the forest laws, together with the insufficiency of grass-growing land, has, to a large extent, retarded progress in agriculture in the Alibag taluka. The sowkars excepted, the condition of the ryot in the taluka is anything but satisfactory.

Shortly after the publication of the Superintendent's circular referred to above, some leading citizens of Alibag issued printed handbills to the various villages of the taluka, inviting

them to send representatives to a meeting to be held in the temple of Shri Vithoba at Alibag in the afternoon of the 25th December last, to consider the form of a memorial to the Collector. In response to this call, a large and representative meeting was held at the aforesaid place under the presidency of Mr. Govind Baba Gurjar, a highly respectable pleader of the place. About 500 persons, representing nearly a hundred villages, were present. A draft memorial was read by Mr. Vithal Mahadev, another well-known pleader, and an interesting discussion, in which several of the gentlemen present took part, followed. It was ultimately resolved to form a working committee from among the representatives of the various villages, authorising it to forward the memorial, which was written in Marathi, with such alterations as it thought necessary, and issue printed copies of it to the various villages for signatures and presentation to the Collector through the village patel. The memorial, which is a lengthy document; full of weighty arguments, embodies most of the reasons indicated above against the enhancements, and has also made frequent references to the remarks of Captain Francis, Superintendent of the first survey of the taluka thirty years ago, distinctly showing that the rates he then fixed were high enough even in his opinion. It may be remarked here that at the time of the first survey, when the old maximum rates were fixed, the price of rice in husks was from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50* per khandy of 20 maunds, and the average net yield to the owner per acre was one khandy, so that taking the mean of the prices and the produce of the field, the classers fixed one-sixth part of the net income, which came to about Rs. 7 per acre as the Government due in conformity to Hindu Law. During the last thirty years prices of rice at Alibag have been on an average from Rs. 25 to Rs. 35 per khandy, while the average net yield per acre is a little over half a-khandy. A few years ago

* It appears from a reference to old survey reports that the prices were not so high as stated.

model farms were prepared at Alibag under the direction of the Director of Agriculture, but as the people of the district are as yet ignorant of the net result of these, it may be presumed, without fear of contradiction, that they must have proved a losing concern to the authorities.

The petitioners have received no reply as yet; there is only a report in the air that in a few days the landholders will be told what increase they will individually have to bear. It is to be earnestly hoped that due consideration will be given to the arguments of the petitioners.

NEW RATES AND THEIR PRESSURE.

(24th May, 1894.)

The rumour I alluded to in the concluding portion of my letter on the above subject, which appeared in your issue of the 4th instant, has turned out to be a fact, and the Survey Superintendent and his subordinates, in conjunction with the district, taluka, and village revenue officers, have been busily engaged since the 7th idem in calling the landholders of the various villages of the Alibag taluka and explaining to them the revised assessments of their individual holdings. The village patel, who has the charge of notifying the particular day on which the attendance of the landholders of his village will be required, tells the people, while giving them the notice, that non-attendance at the Superintendent's office will imply a silent assent to the proposed taxation. Government may have some object in view in this arrangement, but as the notice is given only a day or two before the appointed date, I am afraid it will not be possible for some people at least to be present as required, and it is to be hoped their right of appeal hereafter will not be forfeited only on this account. I also learn that all this hurry in giving out the revised rates is made with the intention of collecting the increased revenue from next January; so that if people may desire to appeal, they will have to do

so during the busy time of the monsoon; and I daresay few, except some of the well-to-do people, will think of seeking redress at the sacrifice of their valuable time, which they will need for work in the fields.

The increase on individual pieces of land appears to vary from fifty to a thousand per cent., varkas (grass-growing), bagayat (garden); and navakirda or varkas or rabi turned into kharif (rice-producing) lands bearing the largest share. It must be admitted that, in a few cases, the percentage of increase has been much lower, while, in some cases, there has been no increase at all, and, in a very few instances, there has been a perceptible decrease. The average increase in a single village seems to be within sixty-six per cent. allowed by the Revenue Code, but the average increase of a single taluka, which by the law ought to be only thirty-three per cent., will, I fear, be in excess of it, while that on individual holdings, which must in no case be more than cent. per cent., has in several cases far exceeded that limit. In the village of Kihim a landholder of the name of Barve will have to pay Rs. 114 instead of Rs. 52. On inquiries I learn that he has a piece of land containing one cocoanut tree and two or three dozen palmyra trees with tufts of thorny shrubs at intervals. This is classed as bagayat and assessed accordingly. In the village of Avas the cess on the so-called bagayat land has been similarly increased, and one holder has to pay Rs. 60 for Rs. 24, where the share of the bagayat will be more than Rs. 40, while the piece was for years let to a farmer for only Rs. 25 per annum. There are several other holdings the increase on which is more than one hundred per cent. One holder has to pay Rs. 102 for Rs. 32, another Rs. 158 for Rs. 47, a third one Rs. 16 for Rs. 4½, and so on; but these are only a few of the several instances I have noted in the aforesaid two villages.

A strange feature noticeable in this revision survey is that although the scheduled maximum rates for kharif or rice-growing lands have been apparently given at Rs. 8½ per acre, several lands have been actually charged at Rs. 10, or even

more. This is explained away in the following manner:—The landholder is told that the rate of Rs. 8½ is for land that is sixteen annas fine, but if his land be twenty annas fine, then he must pay proportionately for it. The rupee being the standard coin of the country and containing sixteen annas, it is natural enough to denote the fineness of things by so many annas; but it certainly looks very curious that there should be some things, the extra fineness of which could not be denoted by the highest standard coin. The additional annas, it is urged, owe their origin to the capacity of the land to grow more things than mere rice, though it matters not if this additional produce requires a great amount of labour and trouble on the part of the cultivator. Let us suppose a farmer has planted one or two cocoanut trees in the immediate vicinity of his rice-field without having any water close by. The cocoanut trees require to be watered in addition to a very careful nursing for several years; but the survey officer is there to add his annas when classing the land, despite the ruling that if the improvement is the result of the farmer's labour, such improvement should not be subjected to fresh taxation. When instances of this kind are seen, one is reminded of the old so-called uncivilized times when useful trees and even animals were separately taxed.

As regards bagayat lands I have already said in my first letter that in most of the villages on the Bombay side of Alibag, owing to scarcity of water and other causes, it is not possible to have any bagayat produce worth naming. It seems, however, the survey officers think another way. They appear to labour under the impression that the people of these villages are too indolent to work like those of the villages on the other side of Alibag. To answer this objection we have simply to consult two landlords, Messrs. Babaji Gopal and Vithoba Govind Patel, who own extensive garden lands on the two opposite extremities of the village of Avas proper, and who have

expended large sums of money on gardening, as to their experiences in this connection. The one distinctly says his experiments in gardening in this village have not at all proved a remunerative concern, while the other loudly complains that all his efforts to get a sufficient quantity of water for bagayat at the cost of enormous sums of money have been only a source of sheer disappointment and disgust to him; and yet it is found that the increase on these so-called bagayat lands is, in most cases, cent. per cent. and even more. Let us, again, turn to the large cocoanut garden at the village of Kihim. This garden, which formerly belonged to the late Captain Dickson, of the Bombay Port Trust, and which is now in the possession of a Mahomedan gentleman of Bombay, contains hundreds of cocoanut trees. A passer-by is struck with the beauty of the garden and the place, but he sees no source of income there except the heaps of worn-out cocoanut branches at intervals. People from Bombay have been lately investing capital in the purchase of lands at Kihim, but it seems they do so more for the sake of the fine sea-breeze and the beautiful scenery of the place. They surely cannot expect a handsome return of interest on their investment. Some people try to grow sugarcane, and *pan* leaves that are eaten with betelnut in some parts of these villages, and the lands on which these are grown are classed as bagayat lands, when, properly speaking, they should have been classed as rabi, for it is well-known that these crops require a great deal of labour and are often most uncertain. They can be had only once in three years in the same place. The original rate of Rs. 3 an acre was quite enough for these, but now it has been doubled or even trebled.

As it was surmised, the increase on varkas (grass-growing) land has been in some cases close upon a thousand per cent. It is worked out as follow: Some varkas which was formerly charged at three or four annas an acre, being turned into kharif, is now charged at Rs. 3 or thereabout per acre. Some

varkas, again, which still remains as such, is classed as rabi and rated at from Rs. 1½ to Rs. 3. As in other cases, the people's indolence plays a prominent part in explaining the reason of the non-growth of any rabi crops on these so-called rabi lands. It would be just to remark here that some of the rabi lands are capable of yielding some kind of rabi crop, but then they are mostly required to be utilized as grazing ground. Another reason for raising the tax on varkas seems to be the supposition that if part of the varkas has been already turned into kharif, the rest also could be so turned; but here the classers appear to have lost sight of the fact that the unutilized varkas is required for cattle and rab. Raising the taxes on the varkas, which is required for the successful cultivation of kharif, is indirectly adding to the cess on the latter. The fairest thing to do for the Survey Department would, in my humble opinion, be to act on the assumption that all the available varkas for conversion into kharif or rabi having been so converted, there was no necessity whatever for raising the varkas rates or calling part of the varkas rabi and thus raising the tax. If it should hereafter be found that part of the remaining varkas is turned into kharif, the land so converted might be subjected to fresh taxation under the Mamlatdar's supervision, even supposing the Survey Department to exist no more. From the above remarks it will be observed that the proposed increase on all the three kinds of land will fall heavily on the people. Before concluding it may not be improper to sum up these remarks by instancing a few facts in connection with the village of Avas, which heads the first group of all the villages of the taluka. In this village, which is on the Bombay side of Alibag, there are about two hundred and fifty houses with a population of a little more than a thousand souls. Insufficient rain, insect pests, and cattle diseases have been working sad havoc in the village during the past few years. Only last cold weather out of about eight hundred heads of cattle more than a hundred died of various diseases. A Parsee Veterina-

ry-Surgeon was deputed to this and other villages by the Collector, I suppose ; but it is said he was not very successful. Perhaps, the people themselves were to blame in this respect in not paying proper heed to his instructions. In the weekly seas on reports of the district, however, no mention of the fact seems to have been made. I understand the cattle disease raged furiously in several parts of the district. Several poor persons, who had only two or three bullocks or buffaloes lost them all, and are now unable to purchase new ones, the prices of a pair of the former being from Rs. 40 to Rs. 80, and of the latter from Rs. 30 to 50. These persons generally own an acre or two or, sometimes even half an acre of kharif (rice-growing) land and about as much of varkas or often no varkas at all. It is absurd to think these people can have spare grass to sell from their little varkas, and yet every one alike will have to pay the exorbitant varkas taxes, it being the case that to these people even two or three rupees are too much. In this village three pieces of varkas land, comprising an aggregate area of about eighty acres, and situated at three different places are nominally owned by three persons, but are actually set apart as common grazing-ground, the assessment being paid by collections annually made by the villagers among themselves. There are two or three other smaller pieces which also serve as common grazing-ground, but the taxes thereon are paid by some philanthropic gentlemen, not necessarily from the village itself. Out of the first three pieces, one measures fifty-two acres and a few gunthas, and it was heretofore assessed at Rs. 13-0-6 per annum. The revised assessment on the same is now Rs. 88 or more than five hundred per cent. One can easily conceive the perplexity and anxiety of the people when one is informed that it was with the greatest difficulty that even this trifling sum of Rs. 13 could be raised in the impoverished village. It is contemplated to approach the proper authorities with the villagers' humble petition to exempt at least this piece of land from any increase, and it

may be earnestly hoped the Government,—the *mabap* or fostering parent of the poor ryot—will not be less philanthropic than some of the ryots themselves. The assessment of the village has been increased from Rs. 4,243-5-3 to Rs. 6,761-10, or nearly sixty per cent. What is true of one village is equally true of most of the villages.

CHARGE FOR A COPY OF A RYOT'S KHATA.

(20th June 1894.)

When the revised assessments on individual holdings in the Alibag taluka were notified last May, the landholders were given to understand that if they thought the assessments inequitable, they should appeal to the Collector within sixty days. To make such an appeal it is absolutely necessary for the landholder to have the fullest details before him in order to find out the particular pieces of land on which the tax has been abnormally increased. For this purpose he has to apply to the Mamlatdar for a copy of his *khata* (an extract from the general register). It seems the fee charged for granting such copies is fixed at Rs. 5 to be paid in advance by all applicants, whatever be the amount of cess paid by them. It is surely impossible for the poor cultivator to pay the sum of Rs. 5 when he has to toil hard for two days to get even five annas. From such a ruling, therefore, and from the fact that the time given for appealing is the busiest time for the cultivator to spend in the field, it may be safely presumed that very few persons will think of appealing, and very likely the fact of there being only a few appeals will be construed into the ryot's approval. Now, as Government have to hear these appeals against themselves, would it not have been very kind of them to make arrangements for the poor ryots to lodge these appeals free of charge? It is to be hoped that Government in their parental care will still re-consider this ruling and arrange to

give the people all possible facilities to have their just grievances redressed.

A WRONG IMPRESSION CORRECTED.

(19th July, 1894.)

In my last letter on the above subject, which appeared in your issue of the 22nd ultimo, I complained about the difficulties the landholders of the Alibag taluka had in making their appeals to the Collector against abnormal revenue enhancements in their individual cases. From the result of my application to get the details in connection with the original and revised assessment on my holding, I find that the fee of Rs. 5 paid in advance for the work was only deposit money. The actual charge having been deducted, the balance has been now refunded to me, and I hasten to correct the erroneous impression the Mamlatdar's wording had made on me and others. At the same time I may mention that several people refrained from applying for details of their *khatas* for the supposed reason that an exorbitant fee was charged for the purpose. I hear that arrangements have been lately made to grant such details without any charge at the Mamlatdar's office. As there are now only a few days left during which the appeals could be made, I respectfully beg to suggest that if the authorities should be pleased to extend the period for the purpose to a further term of two months, and enable the people to come forward with their grievances, they would be evincing a thorough parental concern for the welfare of the ryots. I understand that certain papers relating to the Revision Survey have been recently made over to the village Revenue officers, the *patils* and the *talatis*, and it would be very kind of the authorities to issue instructions to these officers to allow the people to copy out the details of their respective *khatas*. If facilities are thus afforded to the people to make their appeals, they will learn with gratitude that Government are really anxious to

give redress in cases where injustice has been done through the errors of their servants.

That errors have been made, and the Government Resolution No. 7447, dated 21st October, 1886, anent clause 107 of the Land Revenue Code, No. 5 of 1879, giving the occupants of land the fullest opportunities, while classing operations are in progress of representing improvements, has been either misunderstood or misconstrued by the survey-classers, can be easily shown by mentioning a few incidents in connection with the survey operations.

The first notification on the subject which the village *talati* read to the people only informed them that while the revision survey of their village was in progress they would have to supply the officers with a certain number of labourers and to raise certain earthworks in the manner the officers would direct. They were no doubt asked to be present when the work of measuring and classification was going on, but they were never given to understand that it was the desire of Government that the ryots should point out to the officers the improvements they had made. Indeed, very few people were aware that by the exertions of the late Mr. Justice Telang such a resolution had been passed by Government. It was only when the second notification giving the original and revised maximum rates was issued to the villages and a meeting at Alibag was held to adopt a petition to the Collector that the people knew anything of the matter. The five hundred representatives of the various villages of the taluka unanimously declared that the requisite notification was never issued to them. The printed Marathi memorial to the Collector, which each village sent last January, and which yet remains unanswered, distinctly points out this glaring omission on the part of the Survey Department. A landholder from Alibag had applied to the Mamledar for a copy of such a notification, but he was informed by the latter that there was no such notification recorded in his office. A solitary instance of the requisite

notification being fixed on a wall somewhere in the taluka was afterwards discovered, and a slip admitting this instance was afterwards affixed, to the original petition. It seems even the village officers little understood their business, for they are said to have quietly signed the classers' weekly reports stating that every sort of explanation was given to the ryots. The work of these classers was checked by the Superintendent or his assistant, but as he could check only one survey number out of every ten, it was not possible for him to rectify every mistake. I know of an instance in which a landholder had filled in a large pit at an enormous cost and turned it into a rice-field. The native classer had assessed this piece as *kharij*, but the Assistant Superintendent, who was fortunately on the very spot to check the classer's work, detected the error and rectified it. I learn that in a number of cases such errors were rectified by the Superintendent and his assistant while checking the work of their subordinates, and it would be interesting to know, if possible, the exact number of the corrections thus made.

In my next letter I shall give a few instances of how errors of another nature have crept in.

NEW RATES AND THEIR PRESSURE—*continued.*

(23rd August 1894.)

In my last letter on the above subject I shewed how the Survey Department had neglected to acquaint the people of the Alibag taluka with the most important of the notifications. If the ryots readily attended to the instructions they got at the very outset to supply the department with labourers, &c., and without loss of time wrote their petitions to the Collector as soon as the last notification giving out the maximum rates was issued to them, it would certainly be unfair to infer that they took no notice of the intermediate notification which concerned their best interests. Surely the people would most

willingly have pointed out to the classers the improvements they had made if they had known the necessity of the step. One of the questions asked by the Honourable Mr. Javerilal at the last Council meeting referred to this point, and the answer it has elicited from the Hon. Mr. Trevor is as follows:—“The attention of Government has not been drawn to the matter referred to, with which it is understood from the Hon. member's question that the Collector is dealing.” The petitions to the Collector pointing out the omission of the requisite notification were submitted as early as last January, and the revised assessments on individual holdings were given out last May without giving any replies to those petitions. The allegation that the petitions are still under the Collector's consideration will not hold, inasmuch as the inquiry on the point was not a very intricate matter and could have been disposed of in a very short time. Probably the petitions will all be summarily dealt with in a sentence or two in the Government Resolution which will accompany the reports of the Survey and Revenue officers on the Revision Survey of the taluka.

The Hon'ble Mr. Javerilal, in his speech on the Budget discussion, has touched on several points in connection with the Revision Survey Settlement, and it was indeed most unfortunate that he was not allowed to proceed to give out his views on the subject at fuller length. The general public will certainly be anxious to know them, and it may be hoped the Hon'ble gentleman will still make them public through the press. The attention of Government to the peoples' grievances can certainly be better called by the remarks of Honourable members in the Council Hall than by any other means. If the Council meetings are held at long intervals, members can have no alternative but to introduce lengthy statements in their speeches. To the native mind the introduction of the question of the land revenue policy of Government into the discussion of the Provincial Budget would appear to be the most natural course, but should there be any technical difficulties in way of the Honourable members to do this, the sooner the authorities are moved to grant the privilege the better. The land revenue policy of Government affects millions of her Majesty's ignorant subjects, and unless it is discussed in such august bodies, much that Government ought to know in the interest of the ryōts will remain untold.

In this letter I intend to point out a few more glaring errors on the part of the Survey Department. The Hon. Mr. Javerilal in his speech has pointed out the defects of the notification giving us the maximum rates, and I may point out the same in one or two other respects. The following is a synopsis of the notification in question:—

	No. of class according to former Survey.	No. of class according to new Survey.	No. of Villages.	Original maximum rate per acre.	Revised maximum rate per acre.	Percentage of increase.
				Rs. a.	Rs. a.	
Sweet rice land.	1	1	13	7 8	8 8	13.3
	2	2	100	7 0	8 0	14.2
	3	2	14	6 0	8 0	33.3
	4	3	5	5 0	6 8	30
Salt rice land.	5	4	1	6 0	6 8	8.3
	6	5	2	5 8	6 0	11.09
	7	6	20	5 0	5 8	10
	8	6	3	4 8	5 8	22.2
	8	7	24	4 8	5 0	11.1
	9	7	4	4 0	5 0	25
	9	8	4	4 0	4 8	22.2
	8	8	1	4 8	4 8	...
	10	9	3	3 0	4 0	33.3
	Bagayat or garden.	1	1	4	12 0	15 0
2		1	12	10 0	15 0	50
2		2	4	10 0	10 0	...
3		2	5	8 0	10 0	25
2 & 3		...	33	10, 8, 4 & 3	3 0	...
Rabi.	1	1	5	1 8	2 0	100
	1	2	54	1 8	2 8	66.6
	1	3	2	1 8	2 0	33.3
Varkas.	1	1	13	1 0	2 0	200
	1	2	116	1 0	2 8	150
	1	3	68	1 0	2 0	100

A glance at the above table will show that the percentage of increase for the various villages is in inverse proportion to the fertility of the soil, the worst of them sharing the largest increase. In the case of sweet rice land there seems to be no apparent cause for transferring the fourteen villages from third to second class and thus raising the maximum rate 33-3 per cent. It may be noted that, in consequence of this increase in the maximum rate as well as in the anna valuation, the actual percentage of increase has been far greater in some cases. A similar thing has been done in the case of the next five villages. In like manner we cannot understand why an increase of over twenty and up to thirty-three per cent. should be made in the salt rice land. No special causes appear to have arisen for a departure from the general rule. In fact a number of these villages have been now deserted on account of their unhealthiness. The people who formerly inhabited them now live at considerable distances and are consequently put to great inconveniences in regard to the cultivation of their fields. As a rule salt rice lands are subject to great risks and uncertainties of seasons and therefore require the greatest care and vigilance on the part of the cultivators. These things should have formed a sufficient reason to lower the rates for these villages, but no such thing has been done; on the contrary, there has been a considerable increase. Mr. Javerilal's last question referred to the measurement, classification, grouping &c., of 56 of these villages for the third time, contrary to the express provisions of Section 106 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code. The answer to this question purports to say that the first settlement of these villages was based on a rough classification, so that the actual first classification took place in 1872-73. That this is a vague and evasive answer can be seen from the following extracts. In the statistical reports of the Colaba Agency, published in the year 1854, Mr. Hearn, the Assistant Survey Superintendent, says at page 18: "The Government has already taken it into consideration and the Kharapat or salt batty land has undergone a *complete survey and classification*, and before long a new set of fair and

equitable rates will be introduced to the great benefit both of the cultivators and Government." The italics are mine. The same officer in a footnote adds: "The revised and reduced rates here alluded to have since received the sanction of Government and been fixed for 20 years." Then, again, Captain Francis, in his report of 23th January, 1858, says with reference to the same villages: "Fifty-seven of the Government villages, situated in the tract of country called the Kharapat or salt batty growing lands, were surveyed and assessed by Mr. Jones in 1852-53, and as they have a guarantee for 20 years of the rates then introduced, my present proposals will not apply to them." A still more convincing proof of the fact that the 1872-73 was not the first survey, as alleged in the Hon. Mr. Trevor's reply, but the revised one is furnished by Colonel Godfrey's reply to a petitioner from Alibag, who petitioned against a third classification of land in the villages referred to. The following is a literal translation of the reply: "No classification work is in progress in kharapat villages. The Assistant Revenue Superintendent has been instructed to survey the land so far only as may be necessary to rectify any errors through oversight and committed at the former survey and to fix survey stones even at pot numbers in accordance with the rules of revision survey, and this in no way affects clause 106 of Act V of 1879, and clause 1 of Act IV of 1886." The petitioner soon found out that the reply of the survey officer was not worth a straw, for he soon perceived that survey and classification operations had actually begun. The poor landlord appealed to have the orders for classification cancelled, and requested that he should not be required to pay any portion of the expenses already incurred. The appeal was met with this awkward rejoinder:—

"The orders issued before are confirmed. If the expenses for holding stet, flags, &c., are not given by you as per law, the same will be recovered from you."

It will be seen the Survey Superintendent, so far from making any attempt to conceal or misconstrue the fact that

before the present classification two previous ones had already taken place, virtually admits it in his first reply (*vide* his outward No. 10074 of 19th December 1887) when he soothes the applicant with the promise of the Kharapat district now being classified: &c. Somehow or other, however, he falls into the temptation it is true, and has to resort to the 'might is right' principle when he finds no excuse—even that of the first classification being no classification at all—to justify his proceedings. If the present were only the second time of classification, would not Colonel Godfrey have said so? Would he even have gone so far as to deny that any classifications were at present contemplated, though, as was subsequently proved, it was only to parry an immediate attack? From all this it is abundantly proved that the reply to the question is anything but satisfactory.

When we come to the consideration of *bagayat* or garden lands, the first thing that strikes us as very curious is the transfer of 12 villages from the second to the first class and the consequent increase of 50 per cent. in the maximum rates. The actual increase on individual holdings in the case of *bagayat* lands has been in most cases far above 100 per cent., as may be seen from the following few out of a number of instances, viz., from Rs. 4-15 to Rs. 14, Rs. 3-8-6 to Rs. 8, Rs. 3-7 to Rs. 11, Rs. 3-6-6 to Rs. 9, Rs. 1-14 to Rs. 6, Rs. 1-10, to Rs. 5, Rs. 1-9 to Rs. 7. The villages have in no way made any progress in respect of markets, ports or other conveniences. In fixing the *bagayat* rates, Captain Francis, in his report of the 24th February 1857 to the Sub-Collector of Kolaba on the revision of the land assessment, said that he had very carefully considered the capabilities of the villages and then fixed the *bagayat* rates. In para. 24 of his report he says: "My classification has embraced three sources of valuation, and the fixed rate is found by combining their several values in the manner hereafter described. These sources are the soil-supply of water, and number of trees to the acre, estimated on

the plan of assuming a certain number as the quantity for a full planted garden. Further on in his report of the 28th January 1858 he says: "The bagayat lands are of small extent and generally not so well stocked with cocoanut trees, nor so fertile as those of Rewadanda. But as regards cultivation and management, they are in every respect similar. I would, therefore, fix their assessment on the plan of settlement proposed for the latter. A maximum rate of Rs. 12 was applied to two or three villages of Rewadanda, but there are none of the Oondchree villages for which I would propose more than Rs. 10."

It will be noticed that the bagayat rates fixed at the original survey were sufficiently high, and in consequence the recent increase of 50 and 25 percent. seems quite uncalled for. Besides this, when the former survey was made, the income of landlords from cocoanut trees in the form of toddy was considerable. The following are Captain Francis' observations on the point: "First we have to consider that there are two sources from which the profits of this cultivation are derived, or, in other words, that the cocoanut tree produces two kinds of crop. It may be cultivated for the growth of the nut exclusively, or for the production of liquor under the tapping system. The number of trees that may be devoted to the latter source of produce is a matter almost entirely optional with the cultivator, but the profits from the two sources bear no approximate proportion to each other, being at least four times greater when the tree is utilised for the production of toddy." If proper inquiries be instituted, it will be found that in some of the villages the plantation of cocoanut trees, which had been largely resorted to before, was almost entirely given up after the Abkari Act had been applied to the district in 1878. The fall in the number of trees for the purpose of tapping has been from about 20,000 to about 600 or 700. Besides this, those trees which formerly used to be tapped do not now yield sufficient produce in the form of fruit. In the thirty-three villages

under this head the apparent decrease is consequent on the villages being now classed as *varkas* instead of *bagayat*. Most of these villages were formerly called *bagayat* of the last class, and rated at Rs. 4 or Rs. 3 per acre for the simple reason that they had in them some jungle trees or one or two cocoanut trees here and there. The correction appears to be quite sensible, but the same discretion does not appear to have been exercised in individual cases in other villages. In the village of Avas, one, Mr. Nathu Janardan, was fortunate enough to have his former *bagayat* land out of old Survey Nos. 248 and 249 classed at the revision survey as *Varkas* and assessed accordingly. The consequent decrease on his so-called former *bagayat* has been from Rs. 3-9-6 to Rs. 1-7-0. In the same village I can point out scores of instances where the lands, being precisely of the same nature and having the same or even lesser advantages, have been classed as *bagayat*. The assessment on one of my own pieces, which is worse than Mr. Nathu's, has been increased from Rs. 0-6-5 to Rs. 1-0-5. I can point out similar instances even in other villages. The classification of Mr. Nathu's lands referred to above was checked by the Assistant Survey Superintendent. The letter has been rather lengthy, and therefore, I postpone further remarks till my next.

GROUPING OF RABI AND VARKAS LANDS AND THE
INCREASE RESULTING THEREFROM.

(30th August, 1894.)

In continuation of my last letter, I may say that, when we consider the grouping of the villages in connection with rabi and varkas lands, we find that the percentage increase in the maximum rates varies from 33.3 to 100 in the former case and from 100 to 200 in the latter. The following few out of numerous other instances will suffice to show how the percentage in individual cases has reached as high as 1,300:—

Name of Village.	Old Survey No.	Original Assessment.			Revised Assessment.			Percentage of increase.
		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	
Kavir	86	0	6	6	6	0	0	1,376.9
Do.	141	0	7	9	4	0	0	725.8
Vadhav	92	0	8	4	4	9	3	779
Do.	88	0	1	4	0	8	0	500
Khandale	87	1	14	6	15	0	0	686.8
Avas	296	4	6	0	32	0	0	631.4
Dhonkavade	186	1	7	6	9	8	0	546.8

It may be remarked here that, according to the former grouping, only 61 villages were marked as having rabi lands in them, while the whole of the 197 villages were classed as varkas. The maximum rate for both rabi and varkas in the recent grouping being the same, *viz.*, Rs. 3 per acre, it is not possible to know how many of the original varkas villages have been transferred to the rabi class until we have the Green-Book on the subject before us, which, I am officially informed, is not yet published. A remarkable ingenuity has been shown by the Survey officers in proposing the same maximum rate of Rs. 3 for rabi and varkas, for they have thus been able to classify a very large extent of varkas land as rabi and thereby considerably increase the revenue. In proof of this I need only quote the instance of the village of Avas. In this village there were 160 acres and 26 gunthas of rabi land assessed at Rs. 167-5. At the revised settlement the rabi land measures 474 acres and 31 gunthas, with an assessment of Rs. 901-5. This clearly shows how more than 300 acres of varkas land have been classed as rabi, and more than Rs. 700 have been secured under this particular item, to say nothing of the varkas or rabi that has been turned into rice land and assessed at the increased maximum rate of Rs. 3 an acre. The old varkas of the village was 650 acres and 38½ gunthas, assessed at Rs. 146-4-6; the new one is 328 acres and 29 gunthas,

assessed at Rs. 205-8, giving an increase of nearly Rs. 60. The old maximum rate of Re. 1 per acre for varkas lands, which is given in the notification, is certainly misleading, while the transfer of varkas to rabi land is wholly unjustifiable, there being, in fact, no rabi crops of any importance grown in the taluka. But, even supposing the land is capable of producing rabi crops, is it possible to convert it into rabi land? A little consideration would have shown the Survey Officers that one acre of kharif land requires about three acres of varkas land for manuring purposes. Now, the greater part of the already insufficient varkas land is proposed to be set apart for rabi crops. The forest lands—not available for all villages—have ceased to supply materials. It would, therefore, be most interesting to know whence the Survey Department proposes to supply materials for the necessary rabi. It would appear as if the survey officers fixed rates of assessment, not according to the condition of land, but discovered or invented conditions that would best justify the rates they wanted to fix. Thus, in Panwel the Survey Department wanted to fix Rs. 3 as maximum rate for varkas, and they were not slow to report that, as that taluka found an excellent market in Bombay for grass, the rate they fixed was most adequate. In Alibag they found that such reasoning would avail nothing, for there was no perceptible exportation of grass. Their ever-fertile brains, however, never failed them, and they struck the idea that, if they would establish the superiority of land, that would serve their purpose. For what made the lands more fertile now which thirty years back Captain Francis found worse than, or at the most equal to, the lands in Panwel or the other districts? The following extracts from Captain Francis's report speak for themselves:—(1) "There is but a small extent of rabi cultivation which, I think, is not at all more valuable than in other districts. Indeed, I should say it is not so good as in Panwel, I propose, therefore, no change in my maximum rate for this and, which was Rs. 1½ in Nasrapur and Panwel." (2) "I do not anticipate any objections to this in part of the dis-

tract near Alibag or the coast as grass there is valuable, and, as it is, moreover, absolutely necessary for the cultivation of rice, the holders will find it to their interest to retain their rab or *khap* land. As assessment of such lands, whether cultivated (which they will seldom be) or waste, it is expedient that our rate should be low, for the burden of this assessment after all will fall upon the rice, just as much, indeed, as if included in the rates for the latter under the Khalapur plan of settlement above adverted to. Bearing in mind these circumstances, I consider that 4 annas per acre is a fitting assessment for the best level varkas or grass-producing land, and, according to our classification of these soils, the rates will be 3 and 1½ annas, but in that case the assessment will be paid only in seasons when the numbers are cultivated." (3) "I have still to explain the settlement intended for varkas lands. All lands of this description admitting of cultivation or capable of producing good grass, have been measured-off into regular-sized survey numbers." (4) "The maximum rate for this land is 4 annas. It may be thought low, and is so perhaps, but it is fixed as a sum to be paid annually for land which, for the most part, is not used for cultivation, but set apart for the production of grass and rab, the materials with which the manuring of rice lands is effected—a consideration calling for a low rate."

INTRODUCTION AND LEVY OF REVISED RATES.

(12th October, 1894)

Section 104 of Act V. of 1879 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code runs as follows:—"In the year in the course of which a survey settlement, whether original or revised, may be introduced under the last preceding section, the difference between the old and new assessment of all lands on which the latter may be in excess of the former shall be remitted, and the revised assessment shall be levied only from the next following year. In the

year next following that in which any revised survey settlement has been introduced, any occupant who may be dissatisfied with the increased rate imposed by such new assessment on any of the survey numbers held by him shall, on resigning such in the manner prescribed by sections 74 and 76 on or before the 31st March, receive a remission of the increase so imposed." Mr. Sathé, in his edition of the Act, adds: "The announcement and introduction of rates are identical, for the assessment is introduced by being announced. . . . The Code contemplates (1) the year of introduction, and (2) the year of levy. Section 103 lays down that when assessments have been announced in the manner provided, the survey settlement shall be held to have been introduced. Section 104 provides that a revised assessment shall be levied from the next following year. It is therefore clear that the new rates do not take effect in the year of introduction. This view is supported by the speech of the Honourable Colonel Anderson in the discussion of the Land Revenue Code Bill. He states as follows: 'If a settlement was introduced on the 25th August, 1874, the new rates of assessment would take no effect in the year then current, and in the ensuing year 1875-76 the new rates would not be levied from any occupant who resigned his land before 31st March, 1876.'" In the Alibag taluka the revised rates were announced only last May, and in accordance with the provisions of the section above quoted, it would not be just for the authorities to levy the revised rates till after May 1895. There is, however, a thick rumour that the Mamlatdar of Alibag intends to levy them from next January. The *Mumbai Vaibhava*, in its issue of the 6th inst., publishes a letter from its Alibag correspondent who writes that the talatis or village officers are made to work sixteen hours a day in order to have the papers ready by next January. This rumour, of course, does not seem to have been founded on correct information; for in that case the public will naturally have to entertain the most ungenerous thought of Government deliberately adopting an oppressive policy towards the ryots, and the withholding of the papers relating to the

revision survey and settlement of the taluka is calculated to lend additional colour to the belief. If, however, the Mamlatdar, as reported, has proposed to levy the new rates during the current year, Government, it is ardently hoped and believed, will never accord its sanction to such a discreditable step. It would be mere justice on the part of Government to allow a sufficient interval of time between the publication of the green book and the levying of the new rates in order to afford the ryots full facilities for making their objections known.

PAPERS ON THE REVISION SETTLEMENT.

(22nd January, 1895.)

It is now nearly a year since the revised assesment in the Alibag Taluka was announced to the people, and yet the Selection from Government Records on the subject has not seen the light of day. Different constructions have been put by different persons on the action of the Survey authorities in withholding these papers. The only reply we have got is that we can purchase a copy as soon as they are ready. In the absence of these records we cannot approach Government with our petition against the enhancement. It is, therefore, to be hoped that the authorities will soon see their way to the immediate publication of these records.

HIGH RATES NO INCENTIVE TO IMPROVEMENT OF LAND.

(25th January, 1895.)

On our way from Mandwa to the village of Avas, in the Alibag Taluka, last Friday, I took the opportunity to show Mr. Webb, M.P. some of the *varkas* pieces of land which were classed *rabi* at the recent revision survey and subjected to an abnormal increase of assessment. In the village of Avas a piece of *varkas* land, measuring 52 acres and 2 gunthas, is required by the villagers for their cattle to graze upon. I have already

said in one of my letters that the former Government cess, Rs. 13-0-6 on this piece, was paid by subscription raised by the villagers among themselves. The revised assessment on this piece has been Rs. 88, which it is impossible to raise from the impoverished village. The Collector of Kolaba has been approached by the villagers with an humble petition, praying not to increase the assessment on this and two other similarly situated pieces. Although no satisfactory reply has as yet been received from the Collector, we have every hope that our prayer will not go in vain. When I told Mr. Webb that this great increase was due to the fact that the Survey officers considered the major portion of the piece as *rabi* or land capable of growing winter crops and classed it as such, he owned that it was a strange principle on which lands were assessed in this country. In his country they never thought of what the land was capable of producing, but took into consideration only that which actually grew on it. Perhaps Government adopted this principle to make the lazy cultivators active by compelling them to improve their lands in order to be able to pay the enhanced assessment. But this view would be quite fallacious, for the people have already converted all the *varkas* land into *kharij* where it could be reasonably so converted. Do Government intend that the people should not leave even a corner of their former *varkas* without conversion even when they have no other piece of ground wherefrom to get materials for *rab* or grass for their cattle? Surely if such a wholesale principle were adopted, there is every likelihood of serious errors being committed and great injustice done to individual holders. Besides, the conversion of lands is no easy matter, for, although the ground may be flat enough, it requires years of careful manuring to make it productive. If Government should appoint an independent Commission of Enquiry and collect evidence on the subject, they would be convinced of the truth of these remarks. Any inquiry by the Survey officers will be of little use to any one.

KHARAPAT LANDS AND THEIR ASSESSMENT.

(2nd May, 1895.)

In a leading article* in your issue of the 25th ultimo, you have reviewed the report of the Revision Survey Settlement of the Alibag taluka. As there are several points in your article which call for a reply, I hope you will permit me to do so. The various statistical tables given by Colonel Godfrey in his report and the different statements he has made require to be very carefully gone through before they can be accepted as correct premises. The general progress in all material prosperity, which the taluka is credited with having made during the period covered by the old settlement, and which in Colonel Godfrey's opinion justifies the enhancement of the assessment to the full extent allowed by Government, will be found to be far short of what it has been represented to be. Of improved communications of which so much has been made in the report, it may be said that there are only two good made roads, both of which are used for the most part for passenger traffic. Colonel Godfrey himself admits, in para. 24 of his report that, "the export and import trade of the taluka is carried almost entirely by water." Mr. Lamb, the Collector of Kolaba, in para. 3 of his report, conclusively proves the hollowness of reckoning this factor as a good reason for increasing the assessment, and even Mr. Ozanne, the Survey Commissioner, in para. 7 of his report, comes to almost the same conclusion. Out of the five ports of the taluka, Mandwa is admittedly a bad port and has in no way undergone any improvement; Rewas and Dharamtar in their improved condition are more used by passengers than for any export or import trade; Rewadanda is available only to a few villages of the taluka, while Alibag has of late so silted up as to be beyond the reach of even ordinary vessels except at high tide. Both are navigable during fair season only.

* See Appendix A in which the article from the *Times of India* is quoted in full.

As to "Bombay offering an unfailing and remunerative market for surplus produce of all kinds and for labour," I need only point out that in the absence of statistics showing the number of vessels which formerly carried the produce of the taluka, it cannot be safe to infer that the present number of vessels so engaged is in excess of the former one. The steam ferries which began to ply after the introduction of the first settlement carry, it should be remembered, little more than passengers and sometimes fowls in small number. Bombay being a mart for labour is no new thing, and besides, there seems to be no reason why all the cultivators of the Alibag taluka should bear increased assessment, because some of them—chiefly the Abkari-stricken helpless Bhandaris—can earn their livelihood in Bombay.

In my letter which appeared in your issue of the 24th August last, I have shown how the increase in the rates for the various groups of villages has been anything but proportionate. Surely there ought to be a fixed principle—say, so much per cent.—according to which the rates should be increased, so that the various groups of villages may bear a like ratio of increase. The arbitrary method of making a general increase of eight annas, one, one and-a-half or two rupees per acre will not stand to reason. In transferring fourteen villages from the original third to the present second group and making an increase of Rs. 2 per acre on them Colonel Godfrey, in para. 46 of his report, says: "The only objection to this arrangement which has been urged is that some of these villages (Tadwagla, Talset, Bidwagla, and Moranda) are said to be feverish and unhealthy. That is a misfortune, but does not affect the position with reference to rating, and if considered sufficient reason for lower rating, would apply equally to many other second group villages." The argument here used cannot but strike one as indeed very curious. Could not the Survey Superintendent lower the class of those villages which were put in a higher class through mistake rather than raise these fourteen villages to a higher one? Colonel Godfrey has thus not only continued the error committed by his prede-

cessor but has added to it by the transfer of these villages. To examine the actual condition of these fourteen villages, I must point out that three of them, *viz.*, Gan, Dalvi Kharoshi, and Bhond Kharoshi were deserted after the original survey, and there is not a single hut to be found in them at this time. Two others, Nagzari and Wadavli, were also deserted, and the inhabitants have gone and settled on the private lands of Messrs. Kelkar and Tendulkar. Tadwagla, Talset and Bidwagla, the population of which has already considerably diminished, are likely to be deserted at no distant date owing to their unhealthiness. Moranda, Umte, Sudkoli, and Beloshi have equally suffered in their population and number of houses, and we cannot tell to what state they may be reduced in course of time. All the fourteen villages being at the foot of hills covered over with jungle are about six months in the year the home of typhoid fever and other diseases, and for two months before the rains there is great scarcity of water in them. The Arms Act has deprived the people of their weapons, and they find it difficult to protect themselves and their properties from the ravages of wild beasts. The cost of cultivating lands in these villages is consequently very great, and hence the net profit must be comparatively small. In fact in such cases even "the most moderate assessment" will fail to keep the people on the lands. Anyone can go there at any time and satisfy himself of the truth of these statements.

Out of the 198 Government villages mentioned in the report, the following 40 are deserted :—

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Nande. | 21 Gantarf Parhur. |
| 2 Manare Dewatalai. | 22 Belkhar. |
| 3 Tadacha Kotha. | 23 Ghera Sagargad. |
| 4 Sima Devi. | 24 Mauje Sure. |
| 5 Mauje Palhe. | 25 Gam Khar. |
| 6 Mor Vira. | 26 Talaji. |
| 7 Gauli Kotha. | 27 Vaskhar. |
| 8 Khar Sonkotha. | 28 Wagholi. |
| 9 Jui Bapuji. | 29 Navakhar Rayade. |

10 Bhondkharoshi.	30 Durga Prasad.
11 Khar Lonkotha.	31 Nigade.
12 Khar Mor Vira.	32 Dhuvad.
13 Bhangar Dadaji.	33 Dalvi Kharoshi.
14 Varas-gam.	34 Khar Ramkotha.
15 Gantarf Shrigam.	35 Siv Sandha.
16 Kaloshi.	36 Velat.
17 Phansapur.	37 Tujal.
18 Khar Bhivarai.	38 Gam Charvi.
19 Talabaude.	39 Lakshmi Prasad.
20 Kopri.	40 Deva Talai.

All these villages are recorded in the Mamlatdar's office as deserted, and the lands in them are cultivated with great difficulty. This one thing is sufficient to give one an idea of the enormous progress the taluka has been making in prosperity. One-fifth of the entire number of its villages has been actually deserted, and this much alone could have driven off the delicious dreams of any other person than an overzealous Survey Superintendent of a financially embarrassed Government. Are the Survey authorities prepared to refute the allegation as to the deserted condition of villages? If they are, I challenge them to do so. In my next letter I shall turn to the question of prices.

MR. C. R. SAIL ON GARDEN RATES IN ALIBAG.

(13th May, 1894.)

May I ask for space for a few remarks on the Alibag revision settlement, which you reviewed in two temperate and judicious articles published in your issues of April 25th and 30th? Touching the article of the 25th a letter has already appeared from a frequent correspondent, dated Rewadanda, May 2nd, a correspondent who (in a letter on another subject) claims—I know not on what authority—to speak as the representative of the Alibag Taluka. His previous communications have usually been marked by a fair degree of accu-

cy, but on the present occasion his pedagogic pen has strayed into paragraphs which are either barely relevant or else are absolutely misleading. Barely relevant in those opening periods in which he slays again the thrice slain demon of improved communications, which everyone agrees have in the present case mighty little to do with the matter, and absolutely misleading in the parade of two score deserted villages. A few of these are not deserted; on the other hand, a few that are uninhabited have been omitted. But the chief points are two in number. First, it is represented that these forty villages have been deserted since the original survey. It is definitely stated that three named villages "were deserted after the original survey;" then the forty villages are tabulated; and, finally, it is said "one-fifth of the entire number of villages has been deserted." This is not the case. All, or nearly all, the villages named which are now uninhabited have never been inhabited at all. The second point is that more than half the villages detailed—to be accurate, 23—are not villages but salt marshes, "where no man dwells, nor hath dwelt, since the making of the world." (I apologize for altering the verb in this quotation.) And out of these, about a dozen are tiny little reclamations of a few acres each. It is not a dream, delicious or otherwise, but a simple fact, that the habited or uninhabited condition of the majority of these forty named villages has no bearing of any sort on the progress, or the reverse, of the prosperity of the taluk. And it is not a fact that the lands in them are cultivated with great difficulty; it is not a fact that the fourteen hill-foot villages are the home of typhoid fever, which is the child of civilization and sewers; it is not a fact that the Arms Act has deprived the people of their weapons, seeing that 350, or more, gun licenses are granted in Alibag Taluka. What is a fact is that "the most moderate assessment," combined with the other two Fs (fixed tenure and free sale) has caused much land to pass out of the yeoman's hands into the capitalist's, and this has failed "to keep the people on the lands." Instead of

supporting a fairly numerous resident population of cultivating *occupants*, the lands have now to support a few non-resident capitalist landlords and a resident population of cultivating *tenants*.

But all this is more or less by the way. The main subject on which I wish to tender a few observations is the leading article* in your issue of April 30th. The writer has made one or two little slips. He says Captain Francis "described the garden lands of the taluka in 1858 as being not so well-stocked with cocoanut trees nor so fertile as those of Rewadanda." In so writing, Captain Francis was dealing with the then taluka of Anderi. The present taluka of Alibag consists of the old talukas of Rewadanda and Anderi. Consequently the phrase I have just quoted attempts a comparison that is impossible. All that can be said of Captain Francis's opinion is that in 1858 he deemed the Anderi taluka gardens (*i. e.* those in the north of the present Alibag taluka) less well-stocked and less fertile than those in the Rewadanda taluka (*i. e.* those in the south of the present Alibag Taluka). The leader goes on to say that nevertheless Captain Francis fixed the maximum rate at the same as Rewadanda. The fact is that in Rewadanda the maximum rate for *agri bagait* was Rs. 12, in Anderi Rs. 10 only (p. 108, para 23, of the papers). But the main point in which the writer appears to me to have gone astray is this. He assumes the 100 per cent. increase which is the limit of enhancement for individual survey numbers to have been laid down absolutely and without restriction. This is not the case. It is expressly provided in the orders laying down the limit, that the limit does not apply to enhancements which are due to the correction of errors in original survey measurements and classification. This is a very important exception. However much may be said, as a matter of policy, for a limitation upon enhancement which the ryot may know shall in no possible circumstances be overstepped, it must be clearly borne

* See Appendix A in which the article from the *Times of India* is quoted in full.

in mind that, as a matter of fact, no such absolute limitation has ever been held out to the occupants of Government land. It has always been perfectly certain that enhancement due to correction of area or of classification is subject to no limit. If then it can be shown—as I propose to show—that the increase in garden assessments is largely due to the correction of old classification, then it is indisputable that, to that extent, there has been no breach of rule in imposing enhancements of one, two, or perhaps even three hundred per cent. Let me describe very briefly the old and the new classification. The writer of the article admits that the new method is in accordance with rudimentary principles—is better than the old. The old system took the total best possible value of a garden at 32 annas; 8 for soil, 8 for water, and 16 for trees. The new system takes 8 for soil, 8 for water, and 8 for position total 24 annas, as the best possible value of a garden. Thus in the original survey a garden classed at 32 annas would be assessed at the full maximum rate—Rs. 12 in Rewadanda, Rs. 10 in Anderi; a garden classed at 24 annas would be assessed at three-quarters of that rate—Rs. 9 or Rs. 7½. In the revision survey a garden classed at 24 annas would receive the full maximum rate. In classing for the 16 annas on account of trees, the old survey took sixty cocoanut trees to the acre as a best possible; and it converted every other kind of tree into cocoanut—so many mango trees, so many betel palms, so many jack fruit trees, and so on equal to one cocoanut. The new survey takes no count of the trees at all. Now let us see how the correction of the old classification works. For example:—

Original classification:—

	a.	p.
Soil	7	0
Water... ..	2	0
Trees	2	0

Total ... 11 0.

Under a maximum rate of Rs. 10, the assessment will be 11-32 by 10 = Rs. 3-7-0 per acre.

Corrected classification :—

	a.	p.
Soil	7	0
Water	2	0
Position	6	0
	Total .. 15 0	

If the maximum rate remained at Rs. 10, the assessment would be 15-24 by 10 = Rs. 6-4-0.

In this case, the enhancement in assessment due to corrected classification would be less than 100 per cent. If the maximum rate be raised to Rs. 15, the assessment will be Rs. 9-6-0 per acre, which is in excess of 100 per cent. over the old assessment. But we can now see how much of the new assessment is due to the correction of old classification, and how much to the raising of maximum rate.

	Rs.	a.	p.	
Old assessment	3	7	0	
Add on account of corrected classification	2	13	0	or 82 per cent.
Add on account of new maximum rate	3	2	0	or 91 per cent.
	Total new assessment ... 9 6 0 or 173 per cent.			

Here then we have an enhancement of 173 per cent on the old assessment, which involves no breach of the rule regarding the limitation of enhancements. For 91 per cent. increase is due to raised maximum rate; and this increase, which is not covered by the exception provided in the rule, is within the 100 per cent. limit imposed by the rule; while 82 per cent. on the enhancement falls within the exception to the rule, and, therefore, is not to be taken into account in measuring the enhance

ment by the rule. In such a case as this the promise made by Government has in no way been broken. It promised that enhancements due to causes other than correction of old errors should not be over 100 per cent., and it retained perfect liberty to impose enhancement without limit when the cause is the correction of old classification. In the following case, in which the assessment is trebled, the same statement is strictly true. There has been no breach of the promise made by Government.

Old classification: soil, 4 annas; water and trees, nil. Maximum rate, Rs. 10. Assessment, 4-32 by 10 = Rs. 1-4.

New classification: soil, 4 annas; water, nil; position, 2 annas; total 6. Assessment at a Rs. 10 rate, 6-24 by 10 = Rs. 2-8.

Assessment at a Rs. 15 rate 6-24 by 15 = Rs. 3-12.

Hence the increase due to corrected classification is Rs. 1-4 or 100 per cent.; and that due to higher rate is also Rs. 1-4 or 100 per cent. The limit of the rule is reached but not exceeded.

Here, however, is an example of the manner in which the limit may be exceeded.

Old classification: soil, 6½; water, 2; trees, nil; total 8½. Assessment, 17-6⁴/₄ by 10 = Rs. 2-6-0.

New classification: soil, 6½; water, 2; position, 6; total 14½. Assessment at Rs. 10 rate—29-48 by 10 = Rs. 6-0-8. Assessment at Rs. 15 rate—29-48 by 15 = Rs. 9-0-0.

Hence enhancement due to corrected classification is Rs. 3-10-8 or about 154 per cent, and to higher rate Rs. 3-0-4 or about 127 per cent; or 231 per cent. in all. Here the increase of 154 per cent. is covered by the exception expressly laid down in the rule; but the 127 per cent. is in excess of the 100 per cent. limit fixed by the rule.

— An analysis of all the revised garden assessments would probably result in showing that in a few exceptional cases where, owing to there being no trees at the time of the original survey, the original assessments were very low, and owing to

the high position class assigned to the land in the revised survey the enhancement has been in excess of three times the original assessment, *i. e.*, in excess of 200 per cent. In such cases, the promise of Government has not been kept, and that in the great majority of cases, *viz.*, those in which the new assessment is three times the original assessment, or less, *i. e.*, the enhancement is 200 per cent or less, there has been no breach of the limitation rule.

From these considerations it is clear that if, as the leader writer concludes, there are cases of enhancement in which there is room for misgiving, the cause is not that the increases beyond the recognized limit of 100 per cent, are larger and more numerous than may fairly be defended; for the number of such increases is quite small, and the cases in which they occur are quite exceptional, when once the exact orders regarding that recognized limit are fully stated and applied to each case. What the true cause for any such misgiving may be I will endeavour to show further on. Before doing so, I wish to advert to the cocoanut tree question, and the alleged decrease in the value of garden lands. It seems to be assumed that "recent changes in abkari policy" have made palm trees distinctly less remunerative than before. This assumption seems to me to rest on very unsubstantial foundations. It appears to be thought that cocoanut palms are no longer worth planting, because very few are tapped. I do not in the least believe that they are worth little because they are but rarely tapped. I know that in the little bit of garden which is in my occupation there are cocoanut trees which I let out for Rs. 91 this year, and that thirty have been licensed for tapping. Some one, it is clear, finds it worth while to pay me Rs. 3 a tree for tappable trees. He has to pay the abkari tapping fee of course in addition; and he has to earn something for himself, some payment for his labour in tapping and selling the toddy. I do not believe he will pay me more rent for my trees than he will make for himself. Suppose however, that he does; suppose that while paying me Rs. 3 a tree, he makes only Rs. 2

for himself, then clearly the tree produces Rs. 5 a year. Now the original survey—which is held up to admiration as beautifully moderate—took sixty cocoanut trees per acre as a fair number for first class, 32 annas, garden land. Suppose only one-half of these were tappable, surely a very reasonable supposition, $30 \text{ by } 5 = 150$, and on Rs. 150 a year Rs. 15 assessment is but one-tenth of the *net* produce, no just and unprejudiced person could call that an excessive proportion for the landowner (*i. e.* Government) to take. Landholders themselves take up to two-thirds of the gross produce by way of rent from their tenants. It is true that no very large number of trees is tapped nowadays in Alibag; likely enough not 500 cocoanut trees. But it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the cocoanut palm produces cocoanuts, and that both the nut and its envelope are good paying articles. There is no evidence produced to show that cocoanuts and coir do not sell just as well now as they did before 1878. No doubt the prices are higher, like the prices of everything else. So that though the value of the cocoanut tree as the producer of strong drink is no longer to the front, it is not to be concluded that its value as a garden product has diminished. *Non sequitur*; it doesn't follow at all. It is not, in my view, the case that any violent change has taken place, is taking place, or will take place in the character of the garden cultivation of this taluka. If anybody says that it will, let him be sure that he knows before he prophesies. If anybody says that it has taken or is taking place, it is for him to prove it. In what respect is there any difference? Were not betel palms planted before 1878, and are they not planted now? The *Kolaba Gazetteer* was published in 1883, five years after this terrible year of 1878. It says betel-leaf vines, mangoes and pineapples were then produced in the gardens of the taluka. So they are now. And in 1880-81 there were 2754 acres under various vegetables and fruits, besides 2,819 under miscellaneous crops, including sugarcane. (*Op. cit.*; p. 950.) Where then is the "adaptation" of horticulture that is supposed to be necessary? Just as all sorts

of garden produce were grown formerly, so, with a knowledge born of facts, I venture to prophesy will they continue to be grown in future. Where conditions are favourable, and especially where water is plentiful and unfailing, cocoanut and betelnut palms and betel-leaf vines will be fed by the croaking Persian wheels with the morning and evening draughts without which they cannot thrive. Where water does not last, such cultivation never was possible, and there never were any palms or vines. Similarly the value of garden lands is assumed—without any proof whatever—to have diminished. Fifteen acres in thirteen different sales fetched all but Rs. 200 an acre (Papers, p. 48), and 21 acres in 10 cases let for all but Rs. 50 an acre (page 49.) If any one alleges that before 1878 the rates were higher, surely it is for him to adduce just one or two facts, just to afford some show of proof. For on general considerations the thing is impossible to believe. The general rise in prices and the general demand for land render inevitable a rise in the value of garden land as expressed in rupees. And it will take singularly definite and detailed proof to convince any reasonable man that indisputable causes have not produced their inevitable effects.

It will thus be seen that cause for misgiving regarding the new garden assessments does not, in my judgment, find anything to rest on in the character of garden cultivation as affected by the Abkari Act and Rules. But I am now in a position to state where, as it seems to me, such cause may be found.

I have already said that the revised classification is a correction of the old; and it is admitted that the idea of it is in accordance with the first principles of our revenue system. The question is, however, this:—Is this new classification itself correct? Has the idea been embodied in a form which allows due weight to each factor that affects garden lands? The Survey Superintendent and his Deputy no doubt would reply yes; for they gave the principle its existing form.

The Survey Commissioner gives a reluctant affirmative reply, under compulsion. The Collector, probably, with all deference to him without understanding much about it—gave an apparently unqualified approval. Similarly, the Commissioner. Now the reasons for doubting whether the question should not be answered in the negative are these. First, the supreme necessity for water in all garden cultivation such as is here in question; and, secondly, the tremendous power given to the position class.

It will be observed that in the old classification soil stood for 8 annas out of 32, or quarter of the whole classification; water for the same— $\frac{1}{4}$; and the actual crop then growing for $\frac{1}{2}$. In the new classification land and water stand for 8 annas each out of 24, or half of the whole classification; and position for the same— $\frac{1}{3}$. Now it is to my mind open to very considerable doubt whether the *old* soil and water annas, which had reference to a 31 *anna* scale, can be confirmed for the new classification which works on a 24 *anna* scale, without distinctly over-classing the whole of the soil and the water. When the old classer put the land down at 7 annas, and the water at 2, these formed 7-32 and 1-16, respectively, of the figure-representing the best possible garden. In the new classification 7 annas and 2 annas represent—not 7-32 and 1-16, but 7-24 and 1-12 of the figure which denotes the best possible. Thus, though the actual figures of the old land and water classing have been confirmed, the confirmation does not leave them unaltered, but raises them from a fraction having 32 for its denominator to a fraction having 24 for its denominator. The classing, as it seems to me, has been raised by 1-96 in every *anna* of the old scale. What the old classer classed 8 annas, he classed as deserving quarter of the maximum rate; the new classification comes round, and while pretending to confirm the old classification, claps on to that same soil or water *one-third* of the maximum rate.

GARDEN RATES IMPOSED ON LANDS HAVING NO WATER. 41

It is very difficult to think that this can be just. To increase the maximum rate is one thing and may be justified on grounds not now under consideration ; but is it justifiable to make classification annas, desired to bear only a quarter share of the old rate, endure a one-third share of the enhanced rate ? This is in effect to raise the water and soil classification all round while also raising the rate ; and it seems to me possible that others, besides the Survey Commissioner, might, when they grasped this fact, be prepared to listen to arguments against the propriety of the new classification scale.

This objection is preliminary to my first ground for misgiving, which is the supreme importance of water. I am making no reckless statement when I say that unless there is water sufficient to grow a garden crop, the land is not garden at all, and ought not to be classed as such, and I am expressing what I believe to be the true complaint against the new garden assessments when I add that no adequate weight has been given to this fact. Supposing the classification is seven annas soil, water *nil* ; position 2nd class *i.e.*, 4 annas (Papers, p. 146, table in para 11), this would give an assessment of 11-24 by 15 = Rs. 6-14-0. But no water is visible, or it would have been classed ; and if no water is visible, and if on trial none is found, what becomes of the land as garden ? It is not garden and ought not to be subjected to garden rates. Hence I think that to assign one-third of the whole classification annas to soil, and only an equal share to water, is entirely wrong. Without the water, the land is not and never can be garden ; and, therefore, the share of water in the whole classification ought to be double that of soil.

My second point is the tremendous power of the position class. It is added, not as an increment to the normal assessment which would result from multiplying the water and soil classification annas into the maximum rate, but as itself an integral portion of the classification annas ; and not merely as

a subordinate portion of those annas, but on an absolutely equal footing with the soil annas and the water annas, like the water and the soil position is good for 8 annas. There may be some who will think that this is an enormously exaggerated importance to attach to position. A further criticism has regard to the fact that the position class is added on a scale referred to the soil and water annas combined, thus emphasizing and augmenting the undue weight already given to the soil as compared with the water; the anomaly being the more striking since position has especial reference to water facilities. *vide papers loc cit.*

Having explained at length the reasons for which I do not, and those for which I do, think the revised garden assessments in Alibag give ground for misgiving, I would only add two remarks. First, that possibly the whole of the misgiving might be banished if a clear explanation were vouchsafed of the facts which give rise to them; and, secondly, that my own idea of the way in which the revised classification of the Alibag gardens ought to have been carried out is this.

The old classification proceeded on a 32 anna scale. It is essential to retain a 32-anna scale. The old classification assigned quarter of the whole scale to soil; let the new do the same. The old scale gave only quarter to water, but it also gave half to actual crop, none of which was possible without water; moreover, water is of supreme importance to the very existence of garden; therefore half of the scale may in [the new classification be given to water. Actual crop must go out; in its place position class may rightly come in, but it should be allowed only quarter of the whole scale, and should be applied with respect to water annas only, without the soil annas, and not with respect to soil and water annas combined. Thus my scale would have been:—

Soil	8 Annas.
Water	16 ..
Position	8 ..
	<hr/>
Total	32 ..

To carry out this scale, the old soil annas could have been confirmed just as they stood, such confirmation giving them exactly the same proportionate value in the new classification as in the old. The old water annas, framed on a scale of 8 annas for water, could have been doubled to bring them up to a 16-anna scale for water; or, preferably, the gardens should have been re-classed for water. By applying position class at one quarter of the whole scale, and with reference to water annas only, its present positively oppressive power would have been reduced to proper proportions.

Substituting this scale in the three illustrative applications of the present scale, which have been given above, we should have—

I.—Soil 7, water 4, position 4, total 15. Assessment 15-32 by 15 = Rs. 7-0-6, against Rs. 9-6.

II.—Soil 4, water 0, position 0, total 4, Assessment 4-32 by 15 = Rs. 1-14-0, against Rs. 3-12.

III.—Soil 6½, water 4, total 14½. Assessment 29-64 by 15 = Rs. 6-12-9, against Rs. 9-1.

These calculations take the water annas at double their old figure. But it must be confessed that the result would not be entirely satisfactory, and that the gardens would have needed to be reclassified for water. Why they should not have been is not clear, as the the classers had to visit them any way, in order to assign position class to them and to examine the old classification for confirmation.

So much for the garden assessments. Just a few words about the warkas and rabi. In all cases of land formerly classed as warkas and now classed as rabi, most of the enhanced assessment is due to the correction of errors of old classification, and is therefore outside the scope of the recognized limit of 100 per cent.; while the remainder will be found to be due to the raising of the rabi rate from Rs. 1½ to Rs. 2 to 3 (according to group). The enhancement due to higher rate will, as in the case of garden lands, be rarely or never beyond the

limit laid down by the rule. In the case of warkas lands, the enhancement of assessment is due almost wholly to enhanced rates (from annas 4 to annas 8, 10, 12 according to group) and is confessedly in breach of the rule. This, though regrettable, is after all not a large matter. It affects only some 17,500 acres and an increase of about Rs. 5,000 (Papers, p. 34), a ridiculously small proportion of the whole assessment of the taluka about which to make a mighty bother. If there be a departure here from the strict form of the promise, "please, sir, it's only a little one," like the slavey's baby. And it is unavoidable if warkas is to be assessed at its agricultural value, and not at "prairie," value. The rates applied are, as the writer of the article says, low, and they are justifiable by the value within the taluka of the grass which the lands produce without any reference, as the writer fears, to its exportable value. The only reasonable ground for misgiving in regard to the new dry crop assessments has regard to the rabi only and not to the warkas, and it is after all only a surmise. It is this. Seeing the old survey to have gone far wrong in its rabi classification, it is just conceivable that the new classifiers may, with the enthusiasm of reformers, the zeal of the righters of wrongs, have gone a wee bit too far in the other direction, and over-classed rabi lands nearly as much as they were underclassified before.

I have tried to show what the real bearings of this settlement question are. It is devoutly to be hoped that if Mr. Representative Landholder Gharat, or any other person interested, continue the discussion in the papers, he will address himself to relevant points, and not "build a castle in the air by beating upon a bush" like the unfortunate Calcutta pleader of a recent tale.

MR. C. R. SAIL'S CORRECTION.
(16th May, 1895.)

Will you kindly correct an obvious misprint in my letter of 13th published in your issue of 15th? For "In the new classification land and water stand for 8 annas each out of 24, or *half* of the whole classification," please read "or one-third each of the whole scale" The name of the old taluka which, with the old Rewadanda taluka, forms the present Alibag taluka is, by the way, not Anderi, but Underi, or Oondehree as men spelt it before the days of Hunter (Paperas, p. 104). or, more simply, Undry (Bombay Council, A. D. 1686), or simpler yet Henry (Surat Council, A. D. 1672).

REPLY TO MR. SAIL'S CRITICISM.
(7th June, 1895.)

My long absence from Bombay prevented me from giving an earlier reply to Mr. C. R. Sail's letter which appeared in your issue of the 15th ultimo. Mr. Sail says I claim to speak as the representative of the Alibag Taluka, and wishes to know on what authority I do so. Apart from the fact that I have been an Honorary Secretary of an important Association in the taluka, I may say that if certain people furnish me with reliable information I consider it my duty to place it before the public and the Government. When the Hon. Mr. Javerilal U. Yajnik lately paid visits to the taluka, the people spontaneously showed their high marks of appreciation of the service he had rendered to them in the Legislative Council by doing him great honour. I wrote my letter in connection with the University Legislative Council election (to which Mr. Sail evidently alludes when he speaks of my letter on another subject) on behalf of myself and at the request of a number of landholders and cultivators of the Alibag Taluka. It was in this

sense only that I appealed to the voters of the University in the name of that taluka.

Mr. Sail, while admitting the general accuracy of my communications, takes exception to certain statements in my letter of the 2nd ultimo. Even Government with all its vast resources is liable to err, and much more so a private individual like myself, who has to depend upon local inquiry for necessary information. I have no desire to indulge in personal remarks, as Mr. Sail has done. My only object is to place the result of my personal inquiry before the public, and I wish Mr. Sail had abstained from needlessly importing personalities into his otherwise interesting and useful letter. If I am wrong I am willing to be corrected, and I believe if Government explained their methods and principles to the outside public and took them into confidence, their position would be infinitely more clear and intelligible than at present, and there would scarcely arise any necessity for me or Mr. Sail to rush into print. I do not see how my reference to improved communications can be irrelevant when Colonel Godfrey mentions them as one of the chief reasons for increasing the assessment (*vide* para. 44 of his report). The necessity of carefully examining all the arguments brought forward in proof of the general progress in prosperity which the taluka is said to have made will be admitted on all sides. If the reasons given for enhancing the assessment do not bear examination, then it will follow that the enhancement cannot be justified. Mr. Sail says the "demon" has been already thrice slain. Well, it may have been slain in theory, but in practice we find the wounds inflicted by it to be fresh and bleeding, and so long as the deserted or "uninhabited" villages remain subject to excessive enhancements of revenue, and the fourteen hill-foot villages continue to be in the second group, to which they were without apparent justification transferred from the old third group, I cannot conceive how the "demon" can be said to be perfectly annihilated. I am afraid it will have to be slain once

again if the necessity for lodging a petition from the taluka to Government should arise.

Mr. Sail seems to have entirely misunderstood me in regard to the object and force of my argument when I said that out of 198 villages settled 40 had been recorded in the Mamlatdar's office as deserted, and the lands in them had been cultivated with great difficulty, and that one thing was sufficient to give one an idea of the enormous progress that the taluka had been making in prosperity. I never asserted nor intended to assert that the whole number had been deserted after the original survey. I distinctly said that only three villages, *viz.*, Gan, Dalvi Kharosi, and Bhond Kharosi had been so deserted. In connection with these 40 villages it will be noticed that Mr. Sail simply calls my remarks "absolutely misleading," but does not contradict me as to their number or their deserted condition. What he contends is that "all, or nearly all, the villages named which are now uninhabited have never been inhabited at all." His second point is that "more than half the villages detailed—to be accurate, 23—are not villages but salt marshes, 'where no man dwells, nor hath dwelt, since the making of the world.'" Further on he emphatically asserts that "it is not a dream, delicious or otherwise, but a simple fact, that the habited or uninhabited condition of the majority of these forty named villages has no bearing of any sort on the progress or the reverse of the prosperity of the taluka. And it is not a fact that the lands in them are cultivated with great difficulty; it is not a fact that fourteen hill-foot villages are the home of typhoid fever, which is the child of civilization and sewers; it is not a fact that the Arms Act has deprived the people of their weapons, seeing that 350, or more, gun licenses are granted in Alibag Taluka. What is a fact is that 'the most moderate assessment,' combined with the other two Fs (fixed tenure and free sale), has caused much land to pass out of the yeoman's hands into the capitalist's, and this has failed to keep the people on the lands. Instead of supporting a fairly numerous resident

population of cultivating *occupants* the lands have now to support a few non-resident capitalist landlords and a resident population of cultivating *tenants*."

These charges may at first sight look plausible but they admit of a very easy and complete refutation. The writer, in his zeal to point out the looseness or misleading character (as he calls it) of my statement, has fallen into the double error of contradicting his own opinions and admitting mine as sufficiently correct. He admits that there are 40 uninhabited villages in the Alibag Taluka, of which all or nearly all have never been inhabited at all. What does he mean to prove by this assertion? Does he find fault with my using the word "deserted," as he deliberately does, in the case of my inadvertently using the word "typhoid" instead of "malarious?" He seems to play upon the word "villages," and affirms that my designation of 23 salt marshes as villages is not accurate. He also avers that out of these 23 about a dozen are tiny little reclamations of a few acres each. Does he show this by producing any reliable proof? Is he not aware of the fact that these tiny little reclamations have been called all along by the survey authorities and in the Government records as *villages*, and that they form a portion of the number 198 which were settled in the revision survey? If so, what enormous offence have I committed in calling them by the same term in my letter? His second and most emphatic assertion that the habited or uninhabited condition of the majority of these forty named villages has no bearing of any sort on the progress or the reverse of the prosperity of the taluka is simply ridiculous. Can he give us any reason why these villages were left uninhabited for so many years, while the rest of the district is said to have progressed in civilization and prosperity, if the majority of them, according to his opinion, were never inhabited since the beginning of the world? Is this any reason for raising some of them from the third to the second group and increasing the assessment on others? For this state of things there must be some inherent

cause. Unhealthy and malarious climate, scarcity of water, fear from wild beasts, want of easy communication with market towns, bad unarable soil, and scarcity of manure are some of the causes why a village is condemned as being unfit for habitation. And assuredly the presence of many or all of these must be the reason of the uninhabited condition in which these villages have uninterruptedly remained. If, according to Mr. Sail, there are 23 salt marshy villages, the remaining 17 or so must be inferentially taken to be in healthy condition. Is this the case? How can he with reason separate these forty villages from the general progress and prosperity of the taluka? Do they not form a portion of the whole? Did not the survey authorities increase the assessment on the lands situated therein on the ground of general prosperity and improved condition?

It is very amusing to find our able commentator committing so palpable an error, while ostentatiously displaying his accuracy and correcting what he represents as the loose assertions of others. Does he not know that the excessive enhancement in the assessment of the lands in the so-called villages was my chief reason for bringing them to the notice of the public, and that their deserted condition was one of the means to show that there were no legal and equitable grounds on which these enhancements could be justified. There seems evidently an uneasy consciousness of weakness of his cause on the part of my critic, as otherwise I cannot account for his resorting to disingenuous shifts.

When cultivators have to travel some two or three miles from their homes to till the lands pertaining to these villages and go back, can Mr. Sail reasonably maintain that there is no difficulty in their cultivation? Ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, reaping and thrashing operations will assuredly entail greater labour and expense when they are so far from their homes. The tenant who cultivates land in these villages will have to provide himself with water, fire, and every little necessary

of life. Is this not a serious difficulty in his way? How can a holder of land situated in one of these villages expect good rent or income even if he cultivates the land himself? Add to this the necessity of watching the produce night and day from the attacks of wild beasts. Mr. Sail denies the fact that the Arms Act has deprived the people of their weapons, seeing that 350 or more gun licenses are granted in the Alibag Taluka. Why did he not give us the number of licenses for guns issued to the inhabitants of the 24 hill-foot villages, or to the occupants of the lands of the 40 villages separately? That would have been some answer. Does he think that guns and gun-powder are to be had for nothing; that the licenses are granted to every applicant without restriction; that they are issued for very long periods; that a neighbour or a servant of a license-holder can use the gun; or that he himself can carry it to another village and use it without forfeiting his license?

My critic has evidently erred in trying to give an explanation of the fact that these villages have been left by the cultivating classes. Here he has sadly contradicted himself. He has already told us with confidence that all or nearly all the villages named that are now uninhabited have never been inhabited at all; and now he tries to make us believe that the most moderate assessment, combined with the other two Fs (fixed tenure and free sale), has caused much land to pass out of the yeoman's hands into the capitalist's. Mr. Sail here tries to make out something which may look like a defence by resorting to a grotesque hypothesis, for which there is not a tittle of evidence to support his allegations. The story is in itself so improbable that no sane person will place any reliance on it. If the assessment on the land was most moderate, it is inconceivable why the yeoman should part with his valuable property, and on the other hand, if the villages in which these lands are situated were, according to Mr. Sail's opinion, abandoned by the villagers, no capitalist would risk his money with his eyes open and bother himself with the tenants, who, as a

matter of fact, would be loath to rent lands, which required extraordinary labour and expenses for cultivation, unless they obtained them at a very low rate.

I now come to Mr. Sail's criticism on your article of the 30th April last. Mr. Sail finds fault with your comparison of Rewdanda gardens with the other gardens of Alibag Taluka. You said in that article that Captain Francis described the garden lands of the taluka in 1858 as being not so well stocked with cocoanut trees nor so fertile as those of Rewdanda. He argues that as Captain Francis made this observation in the report of Underi taluka, the remark applies in part only, that is, to the gardens of the northern portion; and as the present taluka of Alibag consists of the old talukas of Rewdanda and Underi, the comparison is impossible. I shall try to show, however, how Captain Francis's description of garden lands quoted above applies to the lands of Rewdanda taluka also.

Captain Francis in his report on the assessment of garden lands of Rewdanda taluka (page 74, para. 35 of the present selections) observes as follows: "I propose then to adopt a maximum rate of Rs. 12 for the gardens of Alibag and Rewdanda, which are the best in the district, and besides are more advantageously situated in having respectively the benefit of the market and port of these towns for the disposal of their produce without any expense attending its transport. For the gardens of the other villages I have fixed a rate of Rs. 10 only." If we take this statement in conjunction with the statement with which Mr. Sail finds fault, the comparison is complete. Here Captain Francis compares the Alibag and Rewdanda town gardens with the gardens of the rest of the Rewdanda taluka, and finding the latter inferior in every respect to the former he assesses them at the low rate Rs. 10 only. A short time after this, when describing the garden lands of Underi, he compared them with the garden lands of Rewdanda town, and not of the whole taluka, as it seems to have been assumed. This is clear from Captain Francis's as-

sessing them at the rate of Rs. 10 only. If all the gardens of the Rewdanda taluka were equally well-stocked and fertile, why did Colonel Francis assess the Chawl and Nagaon gardens which formed part of the Rewdanda taluka at the maximum rate of Rs. 10 only, and not at Rs. 12? Does not this clearly show that Captain Francis called only the *town* gardens of Rewdanda and Alibag to be the best in the district? Is it not in itself a comparison? But all this is playing upon words. Your main object in referring to the point in question was simply to show that the general enhancement of Rs. 5 on all gardens of Alibag Taluka, excepting in the case of three villages, where it was Rs. 3, was arbitrary and unjust. Moreover, the comparison which Mr. Sail thinks impossible is adopted by Colonel Godfrey himself in his report (page 29, para. 52 of the present selection). The passage runs thus:—

“ Captain Francis adopted two rates for the coast gardens, Rs. 12 for the best and the most advantageously situated ones of Agarkot, Alibag, and Rewdanda (why he did not include in this rate the very superior, well-sheltered and equally well-situated gardens of Chawl is incomprehensible), and Rs. 10 for the other villages, regarding which he says in his Underi report, ‘the bagait lands are of small extent and generally not well-stocked with cocoanut trees nor so fertile as those of Rewdanda, but as regards cultivation and management they are in every respect similar.’ ”

There are several other points in Mr. Sail's letter on which I can say a good deal, but I shall do that in my next letter.

MR. SAIL ON THE KHARAPAT VILLAGES.

(10th June, 1895.)

I am really very sorry. I had no intention of hurting Mr. Gharat's feelings when I wrote to you on 13th ult. But I seem to have hurt them badly. His letter of the 7th in-

stant shows him very sore indeed. What about I confess myself unable to understand. I was guilty of no personal remarks regarding him, except to question his right to pose as representative of the Alibag Taluka. All else that I said was directed to correcting what seemed (and seem) to me irrelevancies and inaccuracies in his statements; and I did this correcting without any personal reference to Mr. Gharat, except so far as was inevitable owing to his being the maker of the statements corrected. And yet I have, it seems, needlessly imported personalities, and have put Mr. Gharat into such a fine frenzy that he sees improved communications inflicting fresh and bleeding wounds on his adopted taluka, and that all my poor little well-intentioned efforts to get *facts* appear to him ridiculous, grotesque, insane, and (worst of all) disingenuous shifts. This from a gentleman who has no desire, as he takes care to assure us, to indulge in personal remarks is surely a little strong. If only the performance had been as the promise! But the whole effusion is one prolonged concatenation of personalities. It is "Mr. Sail" this, and "my critic" that, "the writer," "the able commentator," all through a a column and-a-half of small print. If Mr. Gharat follows this line the discussion of the Alibag Settlement will degenerate into "Mr. Gharat's *apologia pro hitera sua*, being a replication to the ridiculous (&c., &c., epithets as before) criticisms of one C. R. Sail." This is a consummation devoutly *not* to be wished. I do hope Mr. Gharat, in his threatened next letter, will have recovered his temper, and will devote his ability to discussing facts, instead of wasting his time and your space in hurling anathemas at me. I will admit he has a right to stand forth as the representative of the Alibag Taluka—no small admission when the right is based on such an indefinite ground as the request of an uncertain "number of unnamed landholders and cultivators"; and I will carefully eschew henceforth the very mention of his name, since it displeases him so much, if he will in return stick to the point, and will also be so kind as to refrain from attributing to one, whose

ideas of accuracy are not entirely in accord with his, a resort to dishonest dodges.

As to the points in dispute. The improvement in communications is irrelevant to the Revised Settlement of Alibag, because (whatever the Superintendent may have written) the Collector expressly, and the Commissioner and Government in like manner, leave that improvement out of account in forming their opinions and their orders respectively on the Settlement proposals.

Touching the 40 villages, a "village" in Land Revenue parlance includes the village site (if any) and all the lands belonging to the village. Very often there is not, nor ever was, any village site. The village then consists of lands only (and includes water), and is called an uninhabited village. If there is a village site in which people formerly lived, and in which people no longer live, the village is called a deserted village. There is obviously a marked difference between an uninhabited village and deserted village. To call the former kind of village by the latter name, and to use concerning it language which it is impossible to construe otherwise than as indicating that it acquired that name since the original survey, is emphatically misleading. The mistake may be involuntary, but it is not the less misleading.

About a dozen of the 40 villages are tiny little reclamations of a few acres each. The proof is in the land itself, which those who wish may go and inspect. Or if they cannot do that let them examine the topographical sheets of the Deccan and Konkan Survey, Nos. 75, 76, 85, and 86, especially No. 75. The names of the "dozen" villages, are—

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Durgadarya. | 8. Khar Gauli Khotha. |
| 2. Gandhar. | 9. Khardhurad |
| 3. Shewsand. | 10. Shimadew. |
| 4. Sand Tadacha Kotha. | 11. Lonkotha. |
| 5. Khar Razadi. | 12. Vaskhar. |
| 6. Nankhar Razadi. | 13. Ramkotha. |
| 7. Lakshmi Prasad. | |

This list may be not quite exhaustive, but it gives a baker's dozen of villages, whose very names "Khar" and "Kotba" show them to be salt marsh reclamations, while their area extends to a very few acres only.

These villages are left uninhabited because they are too small to contain a village site, too near to inhabited villages to be worth inhabiting, and too valuable under paddy to be worth building on. Nos. 2 to 7, for example, are all within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the village sites of Koltemai and Chari, which adjoin one another so as to make one "basti." Climate, water, wild beasts, want of roads, bad soil, and no manure have nothing at all to do with their want of population. Nearness of village site within the boundary of another village, their own smallness and the value of the land under crop, are the only causes.

The remaining 10 salt marsh villages are not so small, but with that exception the causes of their houseless condition are the same as in the case of the above 13.

There are yet 17 villages, more or less, which are uninhabited and are not salt marshes. I do not know why they are not inhabited. There is nothing to prevent people living in them, except that they find it more convenient to live elsewhere. Nande, for example, is within 2 mile of Alibag, and with three inhabited sites within $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of it. If more convenient, people would live there. Sagargadh is not inhabited, partly, I expect, because most forts are "deserted" in the present days of peace, and partly because the major portion of its land is reserved forest. Khurosibond also is nearly all reserve, and Velat, which is moreover not uninhabited. The map shows that there are no cases in which lands of an uninhabited village are more than 1 mile from an inhabited village site.

But the whole question of the uninhabited condition of villages which the people find it convenient not to build their houses on is irrelevant to the discussion of the Alibag Settlement, because no officer of Government, no Government itself, has recommended or approved or ordered that Settlement

with any reference whatever to the proportion of villages which have no residents to those which have. The material prosperity and progress of the taluka are measured in the way stated in para. 2 of the G. R. (papers p. 154), and on those measurements the settlement is based. Argument about matters lying outside those measurements may be prolonged till the crack of doom without in the least affecting or even approaching the merits of the settlement.

It is a great pity to spend so much thought and trouble over such bye-paths of discussion, when there are points to which we might with advantage direct our attention.

I did not give the number of guns issued to the inhabitants of the hill-foot villages, because I do not know them. The total for the taluka I have learnt approximately, but the distribution by villages it would take much time to ascertain, unless the District Magistrate or Police Superintendent would inform us. I believe guns and gunpowder are not to be had for nothing, Arms Act or no Arms Act. The issue of licenses lies, I believe, very much in the District Magistrate's discretion.

It may be inconceivable that the yeoman should part with his valuable property; but it is true when a man lives beyond his means, and is sold up by his sowcar, he does not part willingly, but he has to part. And since the property is, *ex hypothesi* valuable, the sowcar does not run much risk.

REJOINDER TO MR. SAIL.

(13th June, 1895.)

I am glad to read Mr. Sail's letter, published in yesterday's issue of your paper. It is strange that he looks upon me as a foreigner, like some Bombay capitalist who has planted himself into the Alibag taluka on a speculative agricultural venture, for he still seems to think that Alibag is my adopted taluka. Such, however, I assure him, is not the case. I am a native of Avas, about 8 miles on this side of Alibag. My inter-

est in the taluka dates back from a remote period. My great grandfather was a well-known *vaidya* or physician, in the time of the Angrias. But, as I said in a previous letter, I was not speaking for myself when criticising the Alibag Settlement Report, but as the humble spokesman of the Taluka Association. So much for personal remarks.

Now to the points at issue. The forty villages named by me are called *pāyakasta* villages in the Government records. A reference to Molesworth's Marathi English Dictionary will show that *pāyakasta* (made up of the two words *paya*=foot, and *kashta*=labour or toil) means "foot labour or toil; trudging, tramping; plodding". I think that with this definition of the word, *paykasta*, the question of the forty villages may well be set aside, as I have already said enough on it in my last letter, and especially, as I believe, like Mr. Sail, that there are other very many more important points to be discussed.

Now to begin with Mr. Sail's remarks on the cocoanut tree question, which, I think, are beside the point. He tells us that he has in his occupation a little bit of garden land containing cocoanut trees which he has let out for Rs. 91 this year, and thirty out of the total number of trees in it have been licensed for tapping. He asserts that some one finds it worth his while to pay him Rs. 3 a tree for tappable trees. With this little bit of knowledge and experience he undertakes to prove that the change in the Abkari policy has not decreased the income of our garden lands in the least. Let me, however, quote his very words to avoid any misunderstanding:—

"It seems to be assumed that recent changes in Abkari policy have made palm trees distinctly less remunerative than before. This assumption seems to me to rest on unsubstantial foundations. It appears to be thought that cocoanut palms are no longer worth planting, because very few are tapped." From these remarks it appears that Mr. Sail's tiny little holding has supplied him with every information necessary to solve one of the most difficult questions

of the day, and he has attempted with its aid to assume any fact without the least fear of contradiction. Further on, he assumes that each tree which is tapped produces Rs. 5 per annum in every case, because his little bit gives him Rs. 3 per tree, and he assumes Rs. 2 to be the profit of his lucky contractor. Mr. Sail's imagination takes him to the date of the original survey some 38 years back, and with the assistance of his vast store of knowledge of gardening he modestly assumes that out of sixty, thirty trees can be tapped with profit. He multiplies the number 30 by 5, and arrives at a big round sum of Rs. 150. Deducting therefrom Rs. 15, the maximum rate of assessment per acre, according to the present revision survey, he appropriates the balance of Rs. 135 to the owner of the garden as his *net* income. Of course no just and unprejudiced mind can call one-tenth of the *net* produce an excessive proportion for the Government, provided the calculations were correct.

There is another assertion which Mr. Sail has made, probably with the enthusiasm of a controversialist, but the experience and knowledge which he seems to have derived from his little bit of garden land have perhaps carried him a bit too far in the opposite direction. Let us have his own words: "It is not in my view the case that any violent change has taken place, is taking place, or will take place in the character of the garden cultivation of this taluka. If anybody says that it will, let him be sure that he knows before he prophesies. If anybody says that it has taken or is taking place, it is for him to prove it. . . . If anyone alleges that before 1878 the rates were higher, surely it is for him to adduce just one or two facts, just to afford some show of proof. For, on general considerations, the thing is impossible to believe. The general rise in prices and the general demand for land render inevitable a rise in the value of garden land as expressed in rupees. And it will take singularly definite and detailed proof to convince any reasonable man that indisputable causes have not produced their inevitable effects."

The above quotation clearly shows that Mr. Sail's experience and knowledge in gardening and its produce are proof against all evidence and argument. I am in possession of reliable evidence, which I propose to place before the public in the hope that it will not only refute the arguments of Mr. Sail, but will definitely tend to show that they are unsound.

Colonel Godfrey, in the 51st paragraph of his report (page 28 of the Selections), while discussing the assessment on garden lands of the Alibag taluka, quotes Mr. Sinclair, the late Collector of Kolaba, who had many years' experience of the district, and whose opinion carried great weight with him: "With regard to these gardens," says Colonel Godfrey, "Mr. Sinclair, the late Collector of Alibag, states in his letter No. 4327, dated 11th December, 1890, that 'the characteristic agriculture of the region is the cultivation of the cocoanut and other fruit trees.' There is no doubt that the value of these cocoanut gardens depends very largely on the Abkari policy of Government, and that the profits made out of cocoanut gardens are, by reason of the recent Abkari legislation, less than formerly, and Mr. Sinclair gave his opinion that 'if the assessments of Colonel Francis had not been extremely low, I do not believe we could have collected them during the period ending with 1887'" . . . He (Mr. Sinclair) further remarks that ". . . the tendency of the local agriculture at any rate is towards varying the yield of gardens . . . besides fruits and vegetables the garden lands export to Bombay bhendi poles, wheel spokes for small carts of the same wood (*Thesperia popilanea*), and bamboo. On the whole, if we set the Abkari question on one side, the garden lands are in a fair and improving condition, and at present by no means over-assessed."

Mr. Hearn, who has exceptional knowledge and experience of the district, who has served Government in the Survey Department for more than thirty-five years, and who was also present at the time of the original survey, states that "he has observed that some gardens are neglected; this he puts down to the fact that Bhandaris, who were the principal

cultivators of the gardens, finding that tapping is not now always profitable, have largely abandoned that business and seek employment in Bombay ; hence the labour-supply is more of the ordinary cultivator class, who are not so clever as Bhandaris in their management of the gardens." (Page 29 of the present Selections.) Mr. Ozanne, the Survey Commissioner and Director of Land Records and Agriculture, in his report to Government (para. 11, page 146, of the Selections), remarks as under : " Further, the character of garden cultivation is undergoing a change which causes a greater utilization of land suitable for garden cultivation to grow sugarcane, vegetables, and other produce in lieu of the former almost universal cultivation of the cocoanut and other fruit trees."

Colonel Francis, than whom no better authority can be adduced on the subject, observes in para. 25 of his report for the Rewdanda taluka (para. 71 of the present Selections) as follows : " First we have to consider that there are two sources from which the profits of this cultivation are derived, or, in other words, that the cocoanut tree produces two kinds of crop. It may be cultivated for the growth of the nut exclusively, or for the production of liquor under the tapping system. The number of trees that may be devoted to the latter source of produce is a matter almost entirely optional with the cultivator, but the profits from the two sources bear no approximate proportion to each other, being at least four times greater when the tree is utilised for the production of toddy."

My last authority is the petition to the Collector of Kolaba, dated 7th October, 1880, from Bhau Har Patel and others from Alibag Taluka. A copy of that petition was appended to a memorial which was subsequently presented to the Government of Sir James Eetgusson by the late Rao Saheb Mandalik on behalf of the Bhandaris of the Alibag taluka. Paras 8, 9, and 11 of the petition, which are relevant, run thus:—

ASKARI POLICY AND ITS EFFECT ON PALM TREE TAPPING. 61

Para 8.—“ In the year 1878-79, the thirty years' settlement was, to a certain extent, broken in upon and the guarantee which your petitioners enjoyed, and in which they trusted, was attacked, and they were ordered to pay at the rate of Rs. 22-8 for every fifteen trees, all round; and their privileges as regards their right to sell their liquor in a portion of the talukas of Underi, and Roha, which were confirmed by Colonel Francis's arrangement, were taken away.”

Para 9.—“ To add to their troubles, a new arrangement was again introduced in 1879-80, whereby a tax of Rs. 6 per tree was imposed for the first time upon your petitioners; a minimum of 100 trees was also laid down under which number no Bhandari was to be allowed a license to tap, and a maximum of 5,000 trees was likewise prescribed, beyond which number the Bhandari community was not to be permitted to tap; and by this last measure your petitioners and their community were deprived of the privilege of tapping as many trees as their means permitted and the number of trees tapped was in round numbers reduced from about twenty-four thousand to five thousand, entailing on your petitioners a proportionate loss of income. The right of selling toddy was also for the first time abolished; and great injury was thereby caused not only to your petitioners by a diminution of their income, but also to the mass of the lower classes of the population, who were deprived of a very healthy beverage, and were compelled to seek recourse to distilled spirits.”

Para. 11.—“ The measures as above detailed will prejudicially affect the interests of your petitioners and their brethren, to the number of about 4,200 people, in the following manner:—

“(a) Under the Survey Settlement of 1860-61 the Bhandaris had the right to tap as many trees as they could at 15 rupees for every fifteen trees. The maximum thus tapped in any particular year was about twenty-four thousand; but had they possessed the appliances, they had the right of tapping

even a hundred thousand ; whereas now they are allowed only to tap five thousand at six rupees per tree, and the minimum number which any one person can tap being one hundred, there is no scope for employment of more than fifty license-holders, with five servants or partners for each, on an average. The loss for each average worker is thus one hundred per annum, or amounting in the aggregate to Rs. 1,70,000."

As if to add insult to injury Government raised the tree tax to Rs. 9 in the year 1882-83, and not being satisfied with that sum enhanced it to Rs. 12 in 1884-85, which rate stands to the present date.

If any one may still doubt the fact that a very large number of trees was tapped for toddy in the taluka before the introduction of the new Abkari policy of Government, I have only to refer him to the 25th paragraph of Colonel Francis's report (page 109 of the present Selections), where that officer puts down 'the sum that would be realised from the trees under tapping' in the old Rewdanda and Underi talukas (that is the present Alibag taluka), at the rate of Rs. 2 per tree, at Rs. 24,552. This gives us the number of 12,276 trees in the year 1858 or thereabout. From personal inquiries I learn that the number of trees now under tapping in the villages of the old Underi taluka is not more than 130, while in 1858 it was more than 4,000 (the estimated income at Rs. 2 per tree being Rs. 8,314).

I think the above authorities are conclusive enough to satisfy any unprejudiced mind that the Abkari policy of Government has worked a marvellous change in the productiveness of palm trees in the taluka, and I may add that the trees, which had acquired the habit of tapping, have become less productive, and it will take years before they will come round and yield as much fruit as their sister trees which were left for producing nuts only. Though nuts and coir are exportable goods, yet the difference between the profits accruing from the two different uses of the tree for produce is monstrously disproportionate, and this is clear from the evidence of so many

experienced and trustworthy officers of Government. That the nut produce is unsteady and shifting in its character, and often entails great trouble and expense in collecting, storing and separating its envelope, is a fact too well known to require evidence. In the case of letting the trees for tapping, the garden owner had nothing to do but to receive from the Bhandaris the net amount of rent monthly or annually as might have been settled between him and his tenants. Deducting about 500 trees, which (according to Mr. Sail) are used for tapping at present from 24,000 trees, which were used for that purpose formerly, the remaining 23,500 trees have become less remunerative; or taking the figures given by Mr. Sail as our standard for calculating profits, the actual loss entailed upon the taluka by the change will be as follows: 23,500 (trees) by Rs. 3 = Rs. 70,500—the net annual income from tapping to the owner. Deduct Rs. 17,625, equal to one-fourth of the above profits derived from nuts, according to the opinion of Col. Francis, and the balance (Rs. 52,875) is the annual loss which our taluka sustains under the change. The above quotations and calculations would appear to be sufficiently clear and convincing to an ordinary reader and there seems to be no reason apparently why they should not be equally clear and convincing to Mr. Sail. I should have been very glad to form Mr. Sail's acquaintance and know something of the mode which he has employed in the cultivation of his little garden, for, according to him, it seems there is not much difference in point of income from a garden whether the coconut trees in it are used for tapping or allowed to produce nuts only, although Colonel Francis and others have taken a different view. Is he an inhabitant of our taluka? Where is his model garden? Why did he keep back its area, assessment, and total number of coconut trees standing on it? Does he get the sum of Rs. 91 that he mentions merely for permitting the tapping of any thirty trees, or does he get it as rent for the whole garden, containing a much larger number of trees, out of which the contractor has selected the best thirty? If

we divide 24,000 by 500, the number of trees now under the tapping system, the average is one tree in 48; therefore, it will require a more convincing and clear proof than the bare statement of a small garden-owner to show that out of 60 trees 30 could be let for tapping. It must be remembered that the former Abkari assessment was one rupee per tree when employed for tapping purposes, while now it has been raised to Rs. 12, and that a tree must be capable of producing toddy worth Rs. 17 per annum, according to Mr. Sail. Such trees are very few in number, and hence the average of one in 48 is approximately correct.

From personal inquiries I have made in some of the villages of the taluka in connection with the tapping of cocoanut trees, I find that a Bhandari in want of some employment sometimes ventures to take out a license for ten or fifteen trees, and having selected the best trees in a garden of a village commences business. When the period of his license expires, he usually finds that he has sustained a loss in the transaction. He then generally gives up the business at once, or, wishing to try his chance once more, continues it for a time, and afterwards gives it up. The few trees now tapped in the taluka belong for the most part to the tappers themselves, who are content if they can just manage to pay the Government tax and have little or nothing left to themselves. In the village of Avas, again, I can point out several gardens in which cocoanut trees apparently planted before the Abkari Regulations have now been totally neglected in spite of a seemingly good supply of water.

As regards the *net* income from a single cocoanut tree, I may say that there are several gardens in the northern division of the Alibag taluka where the owners would be content with an average *net* income of 8 annas per tree.

Mr. Sail has rightly shown where the root of all evil lies, and he deserves our sincere thanks for doing it. It is the change in the anna valuation, which is a large subject, and

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upon it and one or two other points I have something to say. But I must reserve my remarks for another letter.

LIMITS TO ENHANCEMENTS IN REVISION.

(25th June, 1895.)

I now come to that part of Mr. Sail's letter of the 13th May in which he discusses the question of the enhancements in revision settlement. Mr. Sail takes exception in that letter to that noticeable part of your article of April 30th in which you remark that the limit of 100 per cent. laid down upon enhancements of assessments on individual holdings is an absolute one. When a gentleman in the position of Mr. Sail comes forward to contest the statement, you naturally enough remark that it would be well if Government would republish the rule bearing upon this point for public information, for the simple reason that it is doubtful if many of the ryots whose assessments have undergone such large enhancements know that the limit does not apply to enhancements due to rectification of errors in measurement or classification work in original surveys. As a sequel to this remark, you urge very properly, I think, that the errors in original survey must be unconscionably large when a maximum enhancement of a hundred per cent. is not large enough to cover them. You accordingly echo the general sentiment that it was very much to be desired that Government would re-publish the limitation rule bearing upon this point in the next "Selection from the Records." It will interest you to know that your wishes in this respect have been anticipated by the publication of a Selection, No. 278, entitled "Character of Land Tenures and System of Survey and Settlement in the Bombay Presidency." Appendix I of this selection gives a Resolution of Government in the Revenue Department, dated 26th March, 1884. The

Resolution professes to give an exposition of the policy of Government in this matter, and "to make known the grounds of assurance that the land revenue will not be capriciously or excessively enhanced, and that no part of the profits of occupants' improvements will be taken from them in that name." Para. 36 of the Resolution (page 23) notices a part of the celebrated Resolution of Sir Philip Wodehouse's Government, No. 5739 of October 29th, 1874, on the limit which Government imposes on the percentage by which the land revenue enhancements may be regulated by the Survey Department on revision. The limitation orders are:—

"(1.) That the increase of revenue in the case of a taluka or group of villages brought under the same maximum dry-crop rate shall not exceed 33 per cent.

"(2.) That no increase exceeding 66 per cent. should be imposed on a single village without the circumstances of the case being specially reported for the orders of Government."

"(3.) That no increase exceeding 100 per cent. shall in like manner be imposed on an individual holding."

The enhancement on individual holdings was what pressed on the attention of Sir Philip Wodehouse's Government most forcibly and anxiously, and special care was taken to lay down the principles clearly. The Resolution goes on to say:—

"It is desirable here to state the principles which should be adopted in dealing with the last description of increases. Putting fraud or obvious error in the calculation of the original assessments out of the question, these excessive increases in individual cases will be found to be due to one of three causes:—

"1st.—To the assessment of land which was deducted by the original survey as unarable and unassessed, but nevertheless included within the limits of the original assessed number.

"2nd.—To enlargement of the original assessed number by portions of neighbouring lands unassessed at the original settlement having been with or without permission encroached

upon by the rayats and cultivated together with the original assessed numbers.

“3rd.—To the alterations that have been made,

“(1) by the adoption of a different valuation scale and

“(2) by putting a higher value on the soils themselves.

“As regards the second cause, his Excellency in Council is of opinion that lands so appropriated must be regularly valued and assessed, no matter what increase in assessment may thereby result.

“As regards the last cause, it must be borne in mind that the officers employed in the infancy of the survey worked on varying scales of valuation, and that the systems they severally adopted were consequently more or less tentative or experimental. It was not till after the lapse of a few years that the then Superintendents of Survey were able to fix upon a uniform system of valuation, which was subsequently embodied in the Joint Report. However much, therefore, his Excellency in Council would wish to avoid extreme increases in the assessment on individual holdings, there can be no doubt about the superiority of the Joint Report system, and of the absolute necessity for determining and upholding a classification of soils based as far as possible on correct and uniform data.”

The Resolution winds up this part of the subject by the assurance that “if the above rules are adhered to, the cases in which the enhancement of the assessment in individual holdings will be found to be in excess of the prescribed limit will probably be very few. In order to prevent excessive individual increases, the fixed standard of valuation must not be abandoned. It will always be optional with Government to remit wholly or in part, or for a particular period, such proportion of the increase in excess of 100 per cent. as may seem necessary; but the correct value of the land must be carefully ascertained on a uniform basis, and the proper assessment thereon duly calculated and recorded.”

Here you have now the gist of the orders of the Government of Sir Philip Wodehouse contained in the famous limita-

tion Resolution. You will also notice the safeguards by which the orders are hedged round. The plain meaning of these orders is that the limit of 100 per cent. increase in individual holdings shall not hold good in cases of fraud or obvious, that is to say, clerical errors, whatever might be the increase which may result from them. If a field, for instance, registered in the village survey register at the original settlement as containing three acres of ground was discovered in revision work to really contain thirteen acres, the error must be rectified and the correct assessment must be charged thereon, no matter what its rate of increase is. Again, the limit shall not hold good in cases of encroachments. But excesses of assessment in revision operations, besides being due to fraud or clerical errors or encroachments of neighbouring ground, may result from—

(a) The assessment on account of *pot kharab* land unassessed because unarable at the original settlement.

(b) The adoption of a different scale of maximum rates.

(c) The higher classifications of the soils themselves.

It was to guard against *excessive enhancements on account of these three causes* operating singly or conjointly that Government found it expedient to lay down a limit of 100 per cent. It was considered that this limit would be found large enough to cover excesses under one head or another, or all of these heads. In respect of these excesses, therefore, the limit of 100 per cent. should be considered absolute. Otherwise, what, I ask, was the need of laying down such a positive limit? I am prepared to admit that the limit was not absolute so far as fraud or obvious clerical errors or encroachments went, but in all ordinary cases where excessive enhancements resulted from the assessment of the *pot kharab* land, or from the alteration of a different maximum scale, or the adoption of a higher classification of soils themselves, the limit, I maintain, was absolute. I hold that Mr. Sail is wrong in his view that the excessive enhancement due to a higher classification of land was subject to no limit. The whole purpose and object of the

limitation. Resolution would be defeated and become meaningless if the limit was not intended to govern ordinary cases arising out of the altered maximum scales and higher valuation of soils in classification work. The Resolution laying down these limits is the result of the adoption of a deliberate policy in the direction of moderation in enhancements. It forms the charter of the Bombay peasant's rights. That policy was to prevent the sudden breakdown of the ryot by putting the last straw on his back by extreme increases.

I am confirmed in this view when I recall the circumstances under which the laying down of the limit in 1874 was rendered expedient and necessary. Unfortunately the Resolution of 1884, from which I have quoted the substance of the limitation Resolution of Sir Philip Wodehouse's Government, does not give the whole text of it, but I know enough to be in a position to say that the attention of the Government of Sir Philip Wodehouse was anxiously directed in 1874 to the effect of the revised rates of assessment then introduced into certain parts of the Poona and Sholapur Collectorates. For instance, the result of the revision of the Indapur taluka was a percentage increase of 53, those of Shalapur and Madhe 77, that of Bhimthadi 69, that of Pandharpur 77, of Barsi and Haveli, 66, of Paput 48, of Supa, 36, and of Karmala 32.

The credit of bringing the subject to the notice of Government belongs pre-eminently to that distinguished Commissioner of the Southern Division, the late Mr. Havelock. He it was who put up experimental farms on his own account with a view to ascertain for himself how the incidence of the enhanced assessment pressed upon the land. Mr. Havelock was a revenue officer of considerable experience. His study of the question in a practical manner showed that the new or revised assessment pressed relatively more on the medium and lowest than on the highest or even higher classed soils. He attributed this result *not only to the raising of land to a higher class in the new classification, but to the bringing into the new classification of land previously deducted as unculturable.* His view

was that the ryot was entitled to every consideration for the capital and labour on lands which had since the former survey been reclaimed and brought under the plough at his expense.

Meanwhile the state of the collections for 1873-74 showed that in Poona the number of notices served on ryots for recovery of arrears was 19,346 and in Sholapur it was 9,117; the number of cases of distraint was 302, and the balance outstanding was Rs. 86,620; in Poona the cases of distraint being 893 and the balance outstanding being Rs. 20,623. In course of the inquiries pursued into the subject, the attention of Government was drawn specially to (1) the absence of free interchange of opinion between settlement and revenue officers; (2) the failure of the anticipation that prices would rise; (3) the depressed condition of the ryots not, it was admitted, due to severity of assessment, but none the less demanding a limitation of enhancements; (4) the difficulty of realizing the enhanced revenues and the necessity of encouraging the ryots to make improvements by a liberal treatment of land newly brought under cultivation. About this time a most valuable Note by Mr. W. G. Pedder, C.S., on leading points regarding revision settlements appeared. The conclusion at which Mr. Pedder arrived was that "the enhancements of assessment already made have undoubtedly been far too great; and that Government might with advantage lay down as a general rule that the enhancements in a revision of settlement in the total demand on any taluka should not exceed 25 or 30 per cent." Mr. Pedder was a Settlement Officer of many years' experience in Gujarat, and his opinion carried great weight with the Government of the day.

This history gives you the genesis of the first Resolution on limitations of enhancements in revision assessments of the Government of Sir Philip Wodehouse in 1874. It goes to explain why the limits apply to excessive enhancements resulting from the application of new standards of valuation in classification work, as well as to those due to the assessment of *pot* *khara* land unassessed in the original settlement.

LIMITS TO ENHANCEMENTS INSISTED ON AT VARIOUS TIMES. 71

There are still a few points left in Mr. Sall's letter to which I must refer in a further communication.

[We hope that Mr Gharat will be able to bring his argument to an end in his next communication—ED., *T. of I.*]

LIMITS TO ENHANCEMENTS INSISTED ON AT VARIOUS TIMES.

(11th July, 1895.)

In my last I quoted the orders of the Bombay Government in regard to the limits of enhancement in revision settlements, and indicated the circumstances which rendered it expedient to issue them. The resolution embodying the orders gave general satisfaction, not only among the district officials who thought some such measure was sorely needed in the interest of a policy of moderation, but among the general public. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, who had taken up the subject in real earnest, and done much to bring the matter prominently to the notice of Government and the public, spoke approvingly of the new resolution, as it nearly met the demand of the Sabha, who asked for a restriction of increase to 25 per cent. all round when prices had risen 50 per cent. or more. To bring the previous revised settlements into line with the new orders Government decided on the 30th August, 1875, to reduce the Bhimthadi re-settlement of 1872, and brought it considerably within the newly prescribed limits. These enhancement orders have a history of their own. It is a long one. I purpose to give here the most salient points of that history in order to show how the efforts of independent bodies and higher authorities have failed to bring about a loyal obedience to these limitation orders by the Survey Department.

↳ In 1876 a second attempt to inculcate a policy of moderation upon Government was made by the Deccan Riots Commission. Some of the members of that Commission held that the revised settlements of the land revenue were too heavy and the method of assessment faulty. This was notably the view

of Mr. (now Sir) Auckland Colvin and Mr. W. C. Carpenter—two of the ablest and most experienced settlement officers of the N. W. Provinces who sat on the Commission. The masterly minutes which they wrote, and which appear on the records of the Riots Commission, gave an exposition of the defects of the Bombay revenue system which even at the present, after the lapse of 20 years, Mr. Ozanne and Colonel Godfrey would find it to their advantage to study and inwardly digest. But nothing, I regret to say, came out of this enquiry, though the Commission admitted that one general result of enhanced assessments was to curtail largely the ryot's profits.

The third time the subject was brought to the notice of the Bombay Government was in 1879, and that was by the Government of India in connection with the Deccan Relief Bill, when Sir Theodore Hope, the mover of the Bill, admitted that executive as well as legislative reform was needed, and that "*to our revenue system must in candour be ascribed some share in the indebtedness of the ryot.*" A revenue system may be unsuitable owing to (a) the assessment being too heavy; (b) the assessment or the mode of collection being too rigid; or (c) the instalment being payable at inconvenient times. The Government of India accordingly enquired of the Bombay Government (1) whether certain enhancements were absolutely too great; (2) whether considering the results of the famine and the indebtedness of the peasantry in the four districts to which the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act extended, all increases of assessments should not be postponed in those districts; (3) if not, whether enhancement should not be spread over a series of years; and (4) whether this principle of progressive increase should not be made generally applicable throughout the Bombay Presidency. In replying to these queries, the Bombay Government made an elaborate defence of its policy. The correspondence went up to the Secretary of State with the recommendation of the Government of India that revision operations and enhancements in the four districts of Poona, Solapur, Ahmednagar, and Satara be postponed for

a period of five years; also that the revision of assessments made in parts of these districts since the year 1875 be reconsidered, and that, wherever any large proportion of the ryots were in a depressed and indebted state, the collection of enhanced assessments be suspended for a period of five years. The Secretary of State appreciated the justice of these recommendations, but he was loth to overrule the local Government on a matter of internal administration as to which it might be readily supposed that the Government had the best means of forming a correct judgment.

The fourth time the Government of Bombay had this limitation of enhancement question forced on its attention was when the Secretary of State had to consider the renewal of Colonel Anderson's appointment in 1879. Lord Cranbrook was then the Secretary of State for India. His Lordship had before him the proposal of the Bombay Government to be permitted to retain the services of Colonel Anderson for a further period of six months on the ground that the greater part of the original measurement and classification would require to be done over again. The Secretary of State took the opportunity of calling the attention of the Bombay Government to the harassment, trouble, anxiety, and expense to the people which are inseparable from detailed re-measurement and re-classification of land at each revision of assessment. He urged that the ryots should be spared the trouble and annoyance of field operations and of those alterations in the revenue valuations of their lands which the Government of Bombay described in 1877 as "a chief cause of irritation." He next drew attention to the element of uncertainty in the assessment of land revenue, and urged the practical difficulty of securing a proportionate equality of assessment under the law which requires that improvements made by the holder of land shall not be taken into account in revising its assessment. His Lordship thought it would be often difficult to prove that the old classification of any field was originally erroneous, and that its variation from the

new classification does not arise from improvements effected during the term of the expired settlement. The Secretary of State accordingly desired that there should in future be no general re-measurement or re-classification preliminary to a revision of assessment, except in districts or groups of villages or single villages, unless reasons were shown why such operations are needed. On these grounds Lord Cranbrook urged the abolition of the office of Survey Commissioner and restriction of much of the work connected with re-measurements and re-classification, and proposed to revive Sir Philip Wodehouse's scheme for a permanent system of settlement. In response to these views and proposals of the Secretary of State, the Bombay Government urged that they wanted a special officer as a champion to vindicate their revenue system against objectors. If the land revenue system of the Presidency were not properly explained, it was possible enough that changes might be proposed and introduced without adequate consideration in a department so fundamentally important to the State as that of land revenue. In order to afford such explanation technical experience was needed, together with aptitude and readiness in applying it. These qualities were more likely to be found in an officer whose mind was devoted to the consideration of the difficult topics anent the settlement of land, like the Survey and Settlement Commissioner, than in officers like Divisional Commissioners, who have many other subjects pressing on their attention. After much discussion the Secretary of State acceded to the proposal of the Bombay Government to retain the office of the Survey Commissioner, but suggested the appointment of a civilian and the training of young civilians in the Survey Department. To this suggestion the Bombay Government agreed. Meanwhile, Colonel Anderson prepared a long report on the cost and financial results of the revision settlements introduced in his time. In forwarding this report the Bombay Government entered into an elaborate defence of the re-settlements already made and showed that in the districts as yet unrevised, re-

measurements and re-classification would be necessary. In reviewing this report the Secretary of State declared (1) that a general increase of 40 per cent. would add one and a quarter million sterling to the Government demand on the land, and that this was an increase heavier than had been found practicable elsewhere; (2) that this increase must greatly curtail the means of an individual or increase his liabilities and decrease his power of freeing himself from them; (3) that it is urged that what Government does not take, the money-lender will, but as legislation to remedy such a state of things had lately been undertaken, this argument was deprived of any force which it might otherwise have; and (4) that while in no way disposed to abandon the just rights of the State, it was to be doubted if a periodical increase in the State demand of 40 per cent., which it was stated to be the aim of Government, was not higher than is politic or expedient. The only defence that the Bombay Government could make to these points was that prices had risen and that they were unlikely to fall. With this plea the Secretary of State was not satisfied, and warned the Government against the danger of over-assessment. He emphasised the fact which the late Sir George Wingate over and over urged on the attention of the then Government of Bombay, that while the worst effect of under-assessment would be a possible loss of revenue to the State, over-assessment would be sure to produce a material deterioration of agricultural and general prosperity. The lesson to be learnt from the great success of the original settlements was the beneficial effect of strict moderation in the revenue demand on land.

I now come to the fifth proposal made to move the Bombay Government. It came from Dr. Pollen, Special Judge for the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, and an officer who had had exceptional means of forming a correct judgment. The conclusions which the information before him led to were (1) that the ryots are overburdened with an intolerable amount of paper debt outstanding against them, and (2) that *in average years the ordinary Deccan ryot does not gain enough from*

the produce of his fields to pay the Government assessment and to support himself and his family throughout the year, so that really no margin is left for the payment of his debts.

The sixth time the local Government was called upon to consider their land revenue system was in 1883, when the Government of India asked them to report as to whether certain principles laid down for the guidance of the Government of the N. W. Provinces in future revisions of settlement could be made applicable to this Presidency. The two points to which the Government of India invited the special attention of the local Government were these, namely (1) that to avoid the trouble, annoyance, and expense under the present system of revision of assessment, the process of re-valuation of land should be eliminated in future from the scheme of land assessment, or, in other words, that the agricultural value of the land having once been ascertained with tolerable accuracy, that value should be taken as the basis for future adjustment; and (2) that the future assessments of land revenue should be arranged under such rules and in such a manner as will enable the proprietors of land to forecast with tolerable precision and without official aid the enhancement of revenue to which they will in future be subject, so that an element of certainty of assessment may be to some extent introduced into the settlement. In replying to this reference the late Mr. Stewart, Survey Commissioner of this Presidency, remarked that if re-valuation of soils was alleged to cause harassment and annoyance to the people, it must be shown to be caused by the single technical operation of re-classification in the field, which is the only one of which the individual ryot has any cognizance. He believed that much of the odium which had attached itself to the revision operations in Upper India on account of the inquisitorial nature of the local inquiries into rents and the scrutiny of accounts and records involved in the appraisement of the land had been saddled on the Bombay system from an idea that the process of the valuation of the soil must be somewhat similar. In speaking of the Bombay system, therefore

he remarked that the Government of Bombay in settling for the payment of revenue with individual ryots, many of whom are small holders, cannot afford to stay its hand in the matter of the re-classification of the soils until it is assured that the standard of classification is thoroughly fair and equal, and that each holding or recognized parcel of a holding has been subjected to an intelligent estimate of its relative productiveness. Mr. Stewart concluded by remarking that (1) re-measurement and re-classification are not contemplated in the Bombay system, and after the present work has been placed on a satisfactory footing no such operations will be necessary; and (2) in order to place the work on a satisfactory footing in districts remaining to be dealt with no *general* re-measurement or re-valuation is necessary. *Partial re-measurement and re-valuation will ordinarily suffice.* (The italics are mine).

I have thus given you, I trust, with tolerable accuracy, a fair summary of the various proposals brought to the notice of the Bombay Government at different times, chiefly by higher authorities, such as the Government of India and the Secretary of State, pointing out the defects of the Bombay system, the notorious disregard by the Survey Department of the limits of enhancement in revision settlements, especially in the case of individual holdings, and the curtailment of the means of individual ryots and heavy indebtedness directly resulting from excessive increases. A rigid system of collection whereby punctual payments of the Government demand, following closely on the heels of an organised system of heavy enhancements on individual holdings, can have but one result, namely, the rapid impoverishment and the increased indebtedness of the peasantry. As the net result of the above summary of facts you will notice that the whole process of enhancement is comprised in a *partial* re-measurement and re-valuation of land. What that process is and what it involves and how Mr. Sall's views of re-classification work go to confirm the position I have held in this matter, I must leave for consideration in my next communication. With a view to bring my

argument to a close I bear in mind the warning you lately gave as to the prolongation of this correspondence.

A REVIEW OF THE POLICY IN RESPECT OF "THE
GENERAL POSITION CLASS."

(30th July, 1895.)

I now bring my argument as to Alibag revision assessments to a close in this letter. You will have noticed that I concluded my last letter by the remark that the whole process of enhancement in recent revisions consisted in carrying out what is known as the partial system of re-measurement and re-classification of land. It is necessary to understand correctly what this partial method is. Well, then, this partial method utilizes, in the first place, the old measurements and classification in dry-crop lands which have undergone no change whatever in area or character of agriculture during the currency of the last thirty years' leases. Only such survey holdings are taken up for re-measurement, and re-classification as have been broken up and converted into *rabi*, rice, or garden plots, or which have been formed wholly out of alluvium, whether ~~an~~ ^{old} or freshly deposited. As to what is thought of this partial system by the ryots affected by it, you may judge at once by a very significant phrase which passes current among the peasantry in the Deccan, Konkan, and Southern Maratha country. The plain meaning of which is that "he finds his crack of doom who finds his survey number broken up" (*Jyáchá-numar phootlá tyaché nashib phootlé*).

A notable feature of this partial revision system is the introduction, for the first time, of an entirely new factor in the anna valuation of soils in classification work, I refer to what is called the "general position class," which carries with it a tremendous power of enhancement and gets for Government any amount of enhancement they desire to secure. It is an engine of powerful efficacy to work with, as it gives

little or no trouble to the survey officer. Knowing the quantity of soil and water-annas combined, you are able to tell at once, on looking at the table specially prepared by the Department, what the position class of any field is. With the help of these two factors of soil and water the survey officer can drive a coach and four through any valuation of a field for position class. You have not to go to the field, but can say from your easy chair in your office what is the position class of any field of which the anna valuations in respect of soil and water are known. It is well to know how this new factor came to be made an integral part of this new method of working the partial system. It has come into force ever since the law to exempt improvements from taxation was passed. You are aware that for years past it has been contended that public confidence in this Presidency has been greatly shaken by the notorious taxation of improvements in past settlements, in spite of the statutory provision in regard to exemption of improvements. This provision, though loosely worded, had a place in sec. 30 of Act I. of 1865, and subsequently in the Land Revenue Code, Bombay Act V. of 1879. In the latter Act, sec. 30 of the old Act was, with slight modifications, renewed in sec. 107, which reserved to Government the power to consider, in fixing a revised settlement, the increased value derived from certain classes of improvements. But this sec. 107 was somewhat clumsily worded. Its meaning was not very clear, so much so that Government considered that what section of the Code (107), or at any rate clauses (b) and (c) of it were unprofitable to the land revenue. "If, in some cases, not at once perceptible," says the Resolution of Government dated 26th March, 1884 (para. 34), "an increase of land revenue might be claimed under these clauses without violating any of the pledges given by Government from time to time, and this is very doubtful, His Excellency in Council is satisfied that no such advantage is comparable to the disadvantage of retaining on the statute book a proviso which is of such doubtful significance as to be capable of dis-

couraging the investment of capital in agriculture. The repeal of section 107 in whole or part will therefore be taken into consideration." Accordingly, Bill No. IV of 1885 was introduced into the Bombay Legislative Council in 1885. It proposed the repeal of part of section 106 of Bombay Act V. of 1879 and of the whole of section 107 for which another section was substituted. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons it was remarked that "as the Government has not, nor ever had, any intention of using this section to tax improvements, and as it is undesirable that any ground should be allowed to exist for misapprehensions which may discourage the application of private enterprise and capital to agriculture, it is proposed to repeal section 107 and to re-enact the last part of section 106 in a new section to be numbered section 107 in such terms as may set forth clearly, absolutely, and without qualification, the two simple principles, (1) that assessments will be revised on consideration of the value of land and the profits of agriculture, and (2) that assessments will not be increased on revision on account of increase to such value and profits due to improvements effected in any land during the currency of any previous settlement by or at the cost of the holder thereof." The passing of the Bill which ultimately became what has been known as the Exemption of Improvements Act (Act IV of 1886) put a spoke in the wheel of the survey officer, and seemed for a time to give encouragement to the ryots in the improvement of their lands. But the operation of this Act of 1886 has proved abortive. Scarcely had a twelvemonth passed when the ingenuity of the survey officer triumphed in rendering virtually null and void for all practical purposes the operation of the Act, which, excited the keenest discussions both in and out of the Bombay Legislative Council, and which was passed amidst a flourish of trumpets by the then Government of Bombay. And now we find that there has not been a revision settlement since 1886 in which the taxation of improvements is not carried out in broad open daylight under the plea of lands enjoying the advantage of the general position class.

GENERAL POSITION CLASS FIRST CARRIED OUT IN AMALNER. 81

This ingenious device was first carried out in the Khandesh re-settlements. Amalner was the earliest taluka in which it was put into operation. In submitting his proposals for Amalner, the late Mr. Stewart, the then Survey Commissioner, took occasion to explain the scope and object of this new factor in revision. "While," said he, "the joint report and other soil classification rules afford excellent means of obtaining a relative value of surface soils, they do not sufficiently indicate the superiority which one field possesses over another in regard to position for reception and retention of drainage." This would show that the general position class was designed to be used in soil classification only. Such, however, is by no means the case. In Khandesh it found application chiefly in the grouping of villages. In Amalner, for instance, it was proposed to place all the 275½ villages in one single group at a maximum dry crop value of Rs. 2-12; in Erandole the proposal was to place all its 229 villages under a maximum rate of Rs. 2-10; in Jalgaon all its 110 villages were proposed to be put under one single group with a maximum rate of Rs. 3-4. Thus arose the battle of the one-group scheme against the many-group scheme. The chief argument urged by the Survey Department in favour of the one-group system was the similarity of the villages in each taluka in point of climate, communications, and proximity to good markets. The district officer, however, had greater regard than the survey officer for the *effect* which the one uniform grouping would have on the villages of the old lowest groups, especially as compared with those of the highest, and which uniformity he believed would press on them for the whole period of the coming lease. Messrs. Loch and Silcock, who were successively Collectors of Khandesh, condemned the single group scheme. "Uniformity," said Mr. Silcock, "is no doubt very desirable, but anomalies in assessments will exist side by side in neighbouring villages even if the maximum rate recommended by the Superintendent be sanctioned." Unevenness of increases which the proposed uniform rate will

produce in different villages was at the root of the Collector's objection. It was not from the Collectors of Khandesh alone that the new system received consistent opposition. The strongest condemnation the one-group scheme received came from Colonel T. M. Ward, then Superintendent, Deccan Survey. The late Mr. Stewart, in his report on Amalner, remarked (para 6): "We are clearly compelled to remedy, once for all, the defective and obsolete arrangements of grouping prevailing in the present settlement, and if we have to adopt a somewhat drastic remedy at this stage as regards the groups of villages of the lower classes, the advantage will be felt at the next revision, when there will be a starting point for all, and the settlement officer will be able to build up his rates evenly on the then existing conditions." Commenting on this passage, Colonel Ward remarks: "*I venture to submit that these words amount to a condemnation of the arguments which precede them in favour of a one-group scheme. They contain an admission that the scheme is unscientific, and is recommended only that thirty years hence a fair starting point may be afforded for survey settlement principles being once again taken into consideration. In the meanwhile it is acknowledged that the old lower groups will suffer in comparison with those originally assessed at a higher rate.*" Mark the words I have italicised in this quotation. No stronger condemnation of this general position class can be offered than the one here set forth in the words of one of the chief officers of the Survey Department. Colonel Ward warns Government against their committing themselves to the one-group scheme in these words:—"It further appears to me that if the one-group scheme is adopted Government will be then so deeply committed to the system that it will be extremely difficult to escape applying it to the revision in future of all talukas of Khandesh which are commanded by the railway, and quite presumably the very same arguments will be adduced for the extension of the same principle to the Nasik and Satara districts, in both of which are talukas traversed by rail, and shortly

Calling in for revised settlement." But Government, with a more lively solicitude for revenue than for the pressure of the incidence of rates on the ryots, scattering to winds the arguments of the Survey Superintendent, gave their adhesion to the Survey Commissioner's proposals by the decision that they consider that the one-group system should, as recommended by the Commissioner, C. D., and by Messrs. Pitt, Turnbull, Fletcher, and Stewart, be applied to this (Erاندol) taluka. I need not further pursue this woeful tale in reference to the Khandesh district, but will at once revert to the case of the Alibag taluka.

In his letter to you of May 13th Mr. C. R. Sail observes that it has always been perfectly certain that enhancement due to correction of area or of classification is subject to no limit. "If then it can be shown, as I propose to show, that the increase in garden assessments is largely due to the correction of old classification, then it is indisputable that, to that extent, there has been no breach of rule in imposing one, two, or perhaps even three hundred per cent." And Mr. Sail accordingly proceeds to describe the old and the new classification. Now, if, in this description of the old and new classification of garden lands in Alibag, Mr. Sail had succeeded in establishing his premises by showing that the new classification was a *correction* of errors in original survey measurements and classification, his conclusion that there has been no breach of rule, even if the enhancements amounted to one, two or even three hundred per cent. would hold good. But what is the fact? After describing the old classification method with a multiplicity of examples for which one cannot be too grateful to him, Mr. Sail refers to the new classification. His account of it shows that it was by no means a correction of the old classification, but was faulty in itself. The new classification was done upon a basis which is wholly unjustifiable. His major premises being wrong, the conclusion is necessarily unsound. That I am not overstating the position taken up by him I will here repeat Mr. Sail's own words. Mr. Sail says :—

“ The question is, however, this:—Is this new classification itself correct? Has the idea been embodied in a form which allows due weight to each factor that affects garden lands? The Survey Superintendent and his Deputy no doubt reply yes; for they gave the principle its existing form. The Survey Commissioner gives a reluctant affirmative reply under compulsion. The Collector probably, with all deference due to him, without understanding much about it gave an apparently unqualified approval. Similarly the Commissioner. Now the reasons for doubting whether the question should not be answered in the negative are these: First, the supreme necessity for water in all garden cultivation such as is here in question; and secondly, the tremendous power given to the position class.” Mr. Sail then proceeds to show the supreme importance of water in all gardens. “ I am making no reckless statement when I say that unless there is water sufficient to grow a garden crop, the land is not garden at all, and *ought not to be assessed as such*, and I am expressing what I believe to be the true complaint against the new garden assessments when I add that *no adequate weight has been given to this fact*.” The italics are mine. If I had made this statement on my own authority you would probably have waited for its confirmation, but here is an admission by a fair-minded gentleman in the position of Mr. Sail, who seems from his letter to be thoroughly familiar with the condition of garden cultivation in Alibag. That admission ought, in my opinion, to go home even to the mind of the best advocate of the survey policy. The other question has reference to the tremendous power, as Mr. Sail says, of the general position class. In regard to this matter also Mr. Sail endeavours, quite successfully, I think, to establish that the change from the old 32 anna-scale to the new 24 anna-scale in the valuation of soil has the distinct result of raising the classing by 1.96 in every anna of the old scale, so that the new classification while pretending to confirm the old classification claps on that same soil or water *one-third* of the maximum rate. According to the soil, therefore, the revised garden assessments for Alibag give distinct

grounds for thinking that they are unjustifiable. I say it is a matter of great gratification to me that the people of Alibag have in Mr. Sail a gentleman whose testimony in this respect is simply invaluable.

As to the assessment of *rabi* lands Mr. Sail admits that the new classers, with the enthusiasm of reformers and the zeal of righters of wrongs, have gone a little bit too far in the other direction, and over classed *rabi* lands nearly as much as they were underclassified before. Even assuming this to be a fact, which I for one strongly question, is Government, I ask justified in giving their unqualified sanction to the action of such reformers? Mr. Sail's remark that in the case of *warkas* lands the enhancement of assessment is due almost wholly to enhanced rates (from annas 4 to annas 8, 10, 12 according to group) and is *confessedly a breach of the rule*, is quite correct. "But," says he, "this though regrettable is after all not a large matter." And why? Because according to him it affects only some 17,500 acres, and "an increase of Rs. 5,000, a ridiculously small proportion of the whole assessment of a taluka about which to make a mighty bother!" To Mr. Sail this might seem a trifling amount, but for the poor ryots in Alibag it is an excessive burden to bear. It means a burden on the whole taluka of an annual sum which at the end of 30 years from this time comes to one lakh and fifty thousand rupees.

So far for the current revision settlements in Alibag and other talukas of the Konkan districts which have been or are being introduced. The Survey Department uses the position-class factor as an element of agricultural value on the plea that in the Konkan there are large areas over which there is much land capable of improvement at little cost, which, owing to want of energy and absence of pressure, has been left in its natural state. As these are opened up, and competition and enterprise increase, a considerable amount of reclamation of land for rice-growing will no doubt follow, and it is essential that the public interests in these lands should be brought to

account. To do this the ryots are not to be let off so easily with enhancements in current revision settlements merely, but their harassments and annoyance will be continued during the next revision until it is found that a kindly and benevolent Government has sucked the ryots dry of the last drop of blood which may still be left in them. That I am not exaggerating this a bit I quote the following passage from the Resolution of Government, dated 30th August, 1888, on the revision settlement of 116 villages of the old Khalapur Petha of the Karjat Taluka. The passage is significant as showing how the statutory provision as to exemption from taxation of all improvements into land is skilfully avoided or made inoperative. Says this Resolution:—"It appears preferable, however, to his Excellency the Governor in Council that all future questions of taxation of improvements should be avoided by assessing the land at once for its present and prospective capabilities and recording the result as the standard assessment in the survey and village papers, the difference in the rate at which it may be considered advisable to levy at once being in the case of occupied lands treated as a remission during the period of the revised settlement, on the distinct understanding that at the next revision survey the full rate will come into operation, with such increase as may then be found to be justifiable, whether the contemplated improvement has been effected or not. For the ensuing settlement the rate on such lands should be the simple *warkas* rate, plus the small extra valuation for 'position-class' proposed by Mr. Stewart, which it is desirable to retain as a further indication that the present assessment must be shortly raised, and that the difference between it and the full rate leviable after 30 years is a remission granted as an act of grace." This passage deserves to be carefully pondered over. Every word in it is pregnant with deeper meaning than that which appears on the surface. Is the poor ryot to be blamed when, clad in his uniform of a *lungoti* and *kamli*, he appears before the Collector, the representative of the Sirkar, praying with folded hands, "strike me on my back, not on my belly; the

Sirkar is my mother and father* (*Páthiwar mār', pot'avar mārū naká, Sirkar móya báp dhè*). I put it to you, sir to say candidly and impartially whether the meaning underlying the above passage is not to get the utmost amount of revenue from the peasantry not only out of the current but out of *future revision settlements*; whether the passage given above does not suppose the existence of a skilled peasantry which will work out its salvation under a rack-renting landlord by its own skill and energy, and whether, under the existing condition of society, it is not the fact of that condition as they find it in the every day life of the peasantry than by trying to shape it according to their own theories of what that condition should be. Was the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha wrong, I ask, when in its welcome address to his Excellency Lord Sandhurst it said that the so-called Settlement Department unsettles men's minds by reason of the absence of fixed principles which regulate its work? The Sabha has done noble services to the country, and on no question is its opinion more entitled to weight than the land question. I ask you, again, to consider every word of the pregnant passage of the Government Resolution above cited, and to say frankly whether the policy indicated in it is at all adapted to encourage the conversion of *warkas* or *rabi* lands into rice or garden plots?

And now to summarize my points : I have shown—

(1) That the partial method of re-measurements and re-classification of lands contains within itself the germs of a system by which to tax improvements made in the conversion of dry crop *warkas* into *rabi*, rice, and garden lands made at the cost of the labour and capital of the ryot.

(2) That the statutory provision in favour of exemption of improvements by Act IV. of 1886 is rendered inoperative by the new and ingenious device of the general position-class introduced for the first time as a factor in classification equal to soil and water in importance.

(3) That this position class is made to do duty at one time in classification, and at another time in working out the one-group scheme.

(4) That the one-group scheme as against the many-group scheme raised a controversy in which the District Collectors and one eminent member of the Survey Department took a part and pointed out that the scheme was unscientific, inasmuch as it contained an admission that the old lower groups would suffer in comparison with those originally assessed at a higher rate.

(5) That the scheme introduced the very inequality of assessment during the next thirty years on lands which it was specially designed to remedy.

(6) That the garden assessments in Alibag were open to a serious flaw, inasmuch as they, according to Mr. Sail, while pretending to confirm the old classification, introduced a new classification based on a 24-anna scale in place of the old 32-anna scale, the result of which was distinctly to overclass soil and water factors.

(7) That undue importance was attached to the position-class in the new classification.

(8) That the position-class factor was not only made use of in the current revisions in the Konkan, but was reserved for excessive enhancements in future revision operations.

(9) And, lastly, the Khalapur Petra Resolution is a warning to all the peasantry in the Presidency that until land taxation reached the highest standard which the Government fixed for it, they should expect no exemption for land improvements made at their cost.

RISE IN THE PRICE OF RICE NO JUSTIFICATION

FOR LARGE ENHANCEMENTS.

(17th October, 1895.)

In para. 41 of his report on the Alibag Revision Settlement Colonel Godfrey comes to the conclusion that the price of rice in the Alibag taluka has risen by 76·47 per cent. This conclusion is based on the assumption that the price of rice per khandi before the original settlement was Rs. 17, and that at the revision settlement Rs. 30. No reliable proofs have been given for the figure 17. The Mamlatdar's figures are considered to be full of discrepancies. In para. 19 of Captain Francis's report the average prices at different times before the original settlement are quoted at Rs. 18-0-8, Rs. 19-7-4, and Rs. 22. Now if we take these as the former average prices, and Rs. 30 as the present average price, the increase per cent. will respectively be 66, 57 and 36. It was only for a time during the Share Mania that the price of rice had gone beyond Rs. 40 per khandi; but at various times during the currency of the original settlement it was much less than Rs. 25. Last year it was from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, and this year it will hardly exceed Rs. 25. From this it will be clear that even Rs. 30 should be accepted as the present average price with some reserve. The rise in the price of rice, therefore, cannot reasonably be taken at more than 40 per cent. But even supposing that it is a little more than that, and bearing in mind that rice is the only product of the taluka that need be considered, can we reasonably say that Government are justified in demanding as much as 33 per cent. out of it? The rise in the price of rice is attended by a corresponding rise in the prices of the cultivator's necessities. Since the original settlement the following things have pressed heavily on the poor cultivator:—

1. In 1857 salt cost 15 annas per maund; now it costs Rs. 2-8.

2. The Local Fund Act of 1868 added a cess of one anna to every rupee.

3. The Forest Act of 1878 has deprived the cultivator of the right of getting free of charge materials for *rab* manure, wood for fuel and for his plough and other implements, &c., &c.

4. The Abkari Act of 1878 having raised the price of liquor, the wages of labourers required in the field have gone up. Of course the increase in the cost of work is no gain to the workman, but to the liquor contractor.

5. The Municipal Act has made the carriage of surplus produce into towns for disposal a difficult task, the carts having to pay a toll both for the use of the Local Fund Roads and the municipal roads.

6. The octroi duty has raised the prices of all necessary articles, such as oil, ghee, chilis, sugar, tobacco, &c., and thus increased the cost of living.

7. The Stamp and Court Fee Acts have added to the burden of taxation on the indebted ryots, a stamp fee of 8 annas being required to borrow money, where formerly only an anna was sufficient.

8. The Registration Act has made it imperative to register documents pertaining to land when the amount of money involved is over Rs. 100.

9. The price of agricultural cattle has much increased.

10. The prices of all kinds of manure have considerably increased.

11. The Grazing Rules have increased the cost of keeping cattle.

One can easily have an idea of the margin of profit left to the cultivator to enable him to pay the increased assessment after bearing the above charges.

STATISTICS NOT TO BE FULLY RELIED UPON.

(25th October, 1895.)

Considerable importance is generally attached to statistical details in revision settlements. I may, however, state that they cannot always be fully relied upon. Mr. Lamb, the Collector of Kolaba, in forwarding Colonel Godfrey's report on the Alibag Revision Settlement to the Commissioner, S. D., has pointed out certain discrepancies in the figures showing the areas under different kinds of cultivation. In addition to these the following things appear to me to be worth considering : —

1. In paragraph 23 the numbers of passengers carried to and from Dharamtar and Rewadanda, two of the ports of Alibag taluka, are given at several thousands. On inquiries I learn that a large number of them is from the adjoining talukas of Pen, Mangam and Roha, and also from Janjira. Messrs. Shepherd and Co. inform me that they are unable to state what talukas the passengers come from. The amount of passenger traffic passing through the taluka, therefore, cannot be so large as it has been represented to be.

2. Paragraph 26 gives the export trade of the taluka in rice at nearly 4½ lakhs of rupees. I am told, however, that the whole of this export trade does not belong to the Alibag taluka. Entries of the rice from Roha and Pen talukas, which has to pass through the Rewadanda and Dharamtar creeks, respectively, are made—not separately—at the ports of the Alibag taluka. The Hon. Mr. Nugent, as Commissioner S.'D., in forwarding the report to Government, remarks: "Rice alone of the estimated value of four lakhs and a half is annually exported from the Alibag taluka, though a considerable portion of this is believed to come from other talukas."

3. Paragraph 32 shows the percentages of increase in population, houses, live and dead stock, &c. In para. 2 of their Resolution on the subject Government seem to lay much stress on the fact that carts, ploughs, and sheep and goats have

largely increased. The causes of the increase, however, do not appear to have been considered. The goats and sheep are required for manuring the fields in the absence of forest materials for *rab*. Horses and ponies will be found in the possession chiefly of the Abkari-stricken Bhandaris of Alibag, who keep *tongas* for hire. Iron being cheaper, the price of carts has decreased, and with the advent of the English into the taluka, the number of persons keeping bullock carts for pleasure, even without the ability to possess them, has rapidly increased. It is a notorious fact in the taluka that a person in these days will keep a bullock cart even if he may have to mortgage or sell it shortly afterwards. The agricultural cattle in the larger villages not showing any considerable increase, it is of no moment to consider the increase in ploughs. Besides, the plough animals, not getting sufficient fodder now-a-days, cannot do half the work their predecessors did in days gone by.

✓ 4. Para. 34 gives results of crop experiments, and shows incidence of assessment on value of gross produce, but keeps silent as to the cost required to produce the results. Manure of a superior kind may enable a cultivator to obtain a larger quantity of produce.

✓ 5. Details of sales, leases and mortgages given in paras. 35 to 40 do not give average value of land throughout the taluka. The incidence of assessment should be on the value of the produce of any land and not on the price a needy purchaser may have paid for it.

✓ 6. Para. 42 details the revenue history of the taluka. The Government Resolution concludes it to be excellent, and remarks that "the demand has been paid without difficulty and apparently without any very great pressure; remissions have been very small." Independent inquires will show that people pay the assessment with difficulty. I know of cases in which poor people, after pressure from the *talati* and *patel*, have mortgaged their chattel and paid the Government dues. As for remissions the people are distinctly given to understand that they will have none whatever. On more occasions than

one these have been asked and refused, and the people now fully believe there is no use in applying for them. During several years of insect pests, when there was a complete failure of crops in several fields, the sufferers would not believe that anything could be done for them. The following translation of the Collector's reply to a petition for remission in 1872 will be read with some interest :—"There is no rule to give remissions in places where survey operations have been completed. If you do not pay the assessment unhesitatingly, the land will be held responsible for its recovery. You must bear the loss in the same way as you got the profit when prices were high in certain years." On one or two occasions, I am told, some three or four thousand people had gone to the Collector with their petitions for remissions. ✓

7. In para. 55 Colonel Godfrey remarks : " It will be observed that Captain Francis does not speak of rabi ' lands' but of rabi 'cultivation' : this is because in the original classification lands were recorded and classed as rabi only where crops known as rabi crops were found actually growing in the field, and all other rabi lands which were waste or fallow or kept for grazing were thrown out as warkas: hence in the revision survey we have a large increase of 2,174 acres under the head of Rabi. " This is not so. Captain Francis did record even waste rabi lands. The increase is due to a large portion of warkas being now called rabi. Para. 24 of Captain Francis's report on the old Rewadanda taluka (page 71, papers) states: " Its (of rabi) assessment at this rate (Rs. 1½) will amount to about Rs. 353 for cultivation and Rs. 203 for waste. . . . There is, however, no fear of the rates being too high, for they average only about R 1-2 on the acre. " Again para. 22 of his report on the old Underi taluka (page 108, papers) contains : " The rabi lands of Oondehree are unimportant in extent. Their assessment at the usual rate of Rs. 1-8, which I propose to adopt in this case, will amount to about Rs. 965, of which the large proportion of Rs. 696 falls to lands now waste." Colonel Godfrey's table in para. 58, page 34, gives the rabi land of the

two old talukas (now the Alibag taluka) at 1,399 acres by original survey. Only Rs. 624 out of the total income of Rs. 1,523 from rabi lands, which Captain Francis calculated, fell upon lands actually under cultivation; and this at the average rate of Rs. 1-2 per acre gives us only about 555 acres of rabi land; the remaining 844 acres must have consisted of waste rabi lands assessed at Rs. 899, or nearly a rupee to the acre. Warkas was in no case assessed at more than four annas per acre.

THE TREE AND POSITION FACTORS.

(21st November, 1895.)

Paragraph 5 of the Government Resolution on the Alibag Revision Settlement contains the following remarks:—"In the case of garden lands, the plan of assessing them according to their respective capabilities and inherent moisture, irrespective of the kind of produce found in them, has been adopted instead of the plan of fixing the assessment according to the different kinds of garden cultivation in the district adopted by Colonel Francis. . . . The tree factor, which entered into Colonel Francis's calculations, was obviously an unsound factor. The new classification may affect unfavourably individual holders of garden land when such holders have failed to turn their lands to good account, but even in their case the gradual levy of the enhanced assessment will prevent hardship, and will give them time to make the best use of their land before the full effect of the enhancement is felt."

The substitution of the "position" factor for the "tree" factor seems to be based on the supposition that occupants neglected their opportunities to make the best use of their so-called garden lands during the currency of the original settlement. Mr. Ozanne in the 13th para. of his report on the subject says:—"If he (the occupant) persists in holding garden land without making the best of it, he cannot be pampered at the expense of his neighbours, and had better sell his land to some

one who will use it well." Government may think that increased assessment will make the cultivator diligent, but I do not think they have proved that he has been idle at all. Have they shown us any instances in which neglect on the part of occupants has been the cause of real garden lands lying waste? The fact is that in Alibag and in the coast villages on that side of it the gardens are generally full of cocoanut and betelnut trees, but in most of the villages on this side such gardens are few and far between. Colonel Francis, writing on the bagayat lands of these villages, says:—"The bagayat lands are of small extent, and generally not so well-stocked with cocoanut trees or so fertile as those of Rewdanda." It would appear that the Survey authorities, thinking that lands in all the coast villages possess the same capabilities, have devised this "position" factor to drive away the supposed indolence of the cultivator. I can, however, point out numerous instances in these latter villages where attempts were made in right earnest to grow cocoanut trees, but the result was a complete failure. I have already stated in one of my previous communications the fruitless attempt made by the late Captain Dixon to make his cocoanut garden at Kihim remunerative. This garden is now in the possession of Mr. Hassan Ali of Bombay. If I am rightly informed, even Mr. Lamb, the Collector of Kolaba, who visited some of these villages last January, satisfied himself that the so-called garden lands had a very deficient water-supply. Colonel Francis states in his report that he carefully ascertained the quantity of water to be found in the wells of these gardens, and then set his anna-valuation for water on them. It seems that he must have registered the number of the then existing wells, but we are told by Colonel Godfrey that the former number of wells was not recorded. However that may be, it was certainly necessary to find out the newly-built wells in order to avoid taxing improvements. Owing to the refusal of Government to allow cultivators to have access to papers showing the new and old classification annas of their lands, it is not easy to understand how, in spite of the excess

sive enhancements, the old classification of soil and water was confirmed.

The tremendous power of the "position" factor has been well pointed out by Mr. C. R. Sail, and I need only say that the hardship caused by it would have been averted, if Colonel Francis's "tree" factor had not been dispensed with. Properly speaking even the "tree" factor should not have been taken into account, as a source of valuation in fixing the rates of garden lands, for the water-supply and the quality of soil of a garden are enough to enable one to ascertain its productiveness; but Colonel Francis introduced this factor after a very careful consideration to avoid the under-assessment of gardens well-stocked with trees, and the over-assessment of those that had no trees in them. The new "position" factor, which derives its annas from the combination of the soil and water annas, was apparently needless, and, as Mr. Sail has clearly and forcibly pointed out, it has only "clapped on that same soil or water *one-third* of the maximum rate." Colonel Francis's "tree" factor would have enabled the classers to distinguish real garden land from rabi or dry crop land. The number of trees in a garden largely depends upon its water-supply, and where the supply is defective very few trees can be grown. Such lands should have been classed as rabi lands. I may mention here that however unsound this "tree" factor may have been to Government, it had a good deal to do in helping the classers to know the class of land. It was the presence of the *trees* alone that made them class a small piece of land in the midst of a large area of rabi or warkas land as garden land. But because an occupant can grow at considerable cost and labour, a few trees in the midst of a large area of rabi warkas land, it does not follow that the area covered by the trees possesses the capability for a garden; and yet this is done in a number of cases.

The gradual levy of the enhanced assessment will not prevent hardship. Suppose a man purchases an acre and a-half; the quantity assumed by Colonel Francis as the maximum

extent that can be irrigated by a single Persian wheel, of the so-called bagayat land in one of these villages for Rs. 125 (the price of such lands ranges from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 an acre), the first thing he will have to do will be to sink and build a well (not pukka) at a cost of about Rs. 200. If he fails to have a sufficient supply of water, he is of course a distinct loser. But let us suppose he finds water sufficient to give to 90 cocoanut trees. The Persian wheel, its fittings, and a bullock or a he-buffalo together will cost about Rs. 75. Ninety cocoanut plants will cost about Rs. 30 and Rs. 20 will be required for labour to plant them. The whole outlay at the commencement comes to about Rs. 450. Let us put down the cost of watering and manuring the plants at Rs. 100 per annum. Calculating the interest on Rs. 450 at 6 per cent. per annum, and the average assessment at Rs. 8 (the partial remissions being granted only for a few years), we shall find that the whole expenditure for the up-keep of the garden would amount to Rs. 135 at the end of the first year. At the end of the second year the interest on Rs. 135 has to be added to the fixed expenditure of Rs. 108; and carrying on the calculations at this rate for a period of twelve years before which time the trees will not bear fruit, we shall find that the whole amount spent on the garden will be Rs. 2,727. During the first five years the income will be almost nil. During the next seven years the average income derived from the sale of the worn-out branches will be about Rs. 12 per annum, but the whole of it will be absorbed in purchasing the earthen buckets, ropes, and materials for fencing, &c. Even after twelve years one cannot be sure of having an average produce of nuts in these villages. But even supposing that the trees yield the average number of nuts, we shall find that the income from the garden will be Rs. 112-8 (90 trees by Rs. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$). I base my calculation on the statements of Mr. Sail and Colonel Francis. Mr. Sail says that a tree under tapping gives an income of at least Rs. 5 per annum, and according to Colonel

Francis the profit is "at least four times greater when the tree is utilized for the production of toddy than when cultivated for the growth of the nut exclusively. This income, or even a larger income calculated at the average rate of Rs. 2 per tree, is hardly sufficient to pay the interest on Rs. 2,727 at 6 per cent., together with the increased assessment and the cost of maintaining the garden.

In Appendix L. to his report on the Alibag Revision Settlement Colonel Godfrey gives a solitary instance in which three acres of land with an assessment of Rs. 3 have been sublet for Rs. 325. As the land bears an assessment at the rate of Re. 1 per acre it must originally have been *rabi* land, and as it is sublet at the rate of Rs. 100 per acre it must now be garden land, for no other class of land can be sublet for so much. The income in this instance must have been the result of enormous money and labour expended in the manner I have shown above, but it does not appear that inquiries were made to ascertain these things. The instance has been quoted in the official report to show that the land has been sublet at a sum 108.6 times the survey assessment and to prove from such isolated instances how valuable garden lands in the Taluka are.

With the defective supply of water, which Mr. Sail has so clearly pointed out in your columns, it is impossible to have any garden cultivation on a grand scale. With the scanty supply of water the people try to grow in small quantities the *rabi* crops of sugarcane, leaves of *nagvel*, *tur*, *uaid*, &c., and it would have been mere justice to class these lands as *rabi* lands. The Survey authorities, however, have not only not classed them as such, but have imposed on them the highest maximum rate of Rs. 15 per acre. Even the Dongri bagayat rate of Rs. 10 would have prevented the great injustice that is admittedly done in these villages. I have already in one of my previous letters given an instance in which the former bagayat was classed as warkas with the concurrence of the

Assistant Survey Superintendent, but in the same village and in the adjoining villages numerous other pieces much worse than that piece have been classed as bagayat lands. These things can be found out only when a thorough investigation is made. If Government be prepared to appoint a Commission the people would only be too glad to bear their share of the cost of such a Commission. Some of them have already deposited with the Mamlatdar various sums aggregating to about Rs. 500. Then again cannot Government be reasonably expected to spend part of the Rs. 15,000 or thereabout, which they have recovered from the Taluka contrary to their own orders, but which they are unwilling to refund, only because their officers will have to undergo a little trouble in adjusting the accounts?

APPENDIX A.

THE TIMES OF INDIA ON THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT

I.

(25th April, 1895.)

When Lord Harris, in the solid and substantial address at the Byculla Club, in which he bade farewell to Bombay, laid down with confidence the general proposition that the lot of the cultivator in India is distinctly better than that of the British farmer, there came a* voice from beyond the Harbour assuring us that this was not so. The ryot, we were told, might be in possession, as Lord Harris had ingeniously argued he was, of the "three F's" which have been put forward as a panacea for the woes of the agriculturist at home. But he was none the better for two of them, for free sale was useful to him only as proving an alternative to going to gaol at the suit of his creditor, and fixity of tenure was no incentive to him to improve his land unless he were secure against an inordinate enhancement of his assessment at the next revision survey. And as for fair rent, Lord Harris might say what he liked, but such a thing did not exist under our exorbitant revenue system. The recent issue from the Secretariat of a set of papers relating to the Revision Survey Settlement of the Alibag Taluka of the Kolaba Collectorate enables us to judge how far the sober optimism of Lord Harris's estimate will apply to the picturesque coast taluka which has lately been subjected to the attentions of the Survey authorities. And we take up the volume with the complaint that has been made on previous

* See Appendix B in which the communication here referred to is given in full.

occasions, that a "Selection from the Records" which gives only the official papers bearing on a settlement, and excludes even the barest summary of the objections which have been taken to it by the population affected, is an incomplete and unfair selection, is apt to be misleading, and is certain to give the objectors the idea that their representations have not been adequately considered by Government. But for certain communications on the subject of the Alibag Settlement which appeared in our columns at intervals last year, the public might be under the impression that the people of the taluka accepted the new rates as manna from heaven. As a matter of fact the rates have been received with a good deal of dissatisfaction, and Government, who have a good answer to some at least of the complaints which have been made against the settlement, would certainly not have weakened their position if they had given an opportunity of seeing what is said upon the other side.

So far as the old rates are concerned, it would, we think, be exceedingly difficult to prove that they were excessive. Mr. Webb paid an afternoon visit to the taluka when he had finished with the Congress at Madras, saw so much of it as could be seen in the coast village of Avas, and went away. We should be surprised if even Mr. Webb with the memory of the shoeless children and the carpetless floors of Avas in his mind were to assert that the Government was getting more out of the taluka than it was fairly entitled to. Its revenue history is satisfactory. There is, it is true, a conflict of evidence on an important question relating to prices between our correspondent Mr. Gharat, and Colonel Godfrey, the former alleging that at the time of the first survey rice was at forty to fifty rupees a candy, while now it is only Rs. 25, to Rs. 35, and the latter giving the rate for ten years before the original settlement at Rs. 17 a candy, and the present rate at Rs. 30, a figure which Mr. Lamb, the Collector, shows to be rather under than over the mark. But it may be taken that there has been considerable increase in prices of produce during the currency of

the old settlement, and this conclusion accords with other unmistakable marks of prosperity. In the last forty years, for example, wages have risen from two to three to three to five annas a day, and severe labour in the threshing season, which earned four paylis of rice in the early fifties, now earns seven. There are a series of tables in Colonel Godfrey's report which throw a good deal of light upon the profits of agriculture in the district, and show what percentage upon the gross produce is represented by the Government demand. They relate to certain crop experiments carried out at intervals under varied and often trying conditions. Two experiments made in a year of short rainfall showed the incidence of the assessment upon the value of the gross produce to be 7.5 and 11.5 respectively. These were on sweet rice land. Others made on "Kharapat," or salt rice lands, gave incidences varying from four per cent. to eighteen. We leave out some instances of complete failure arising from mildew, or from the inroads of salt water, where the incidence was of course much heavier. It is not clear how far the experiments represent a normal return to outlay; if they were merely isolated instances, we presume they would not have been cited in a report whose object is to show the relation of the Government demand to the returns to agricultural industry. Again, the ease and profitableness with which occupants are able to sublet their land strengthens the presumption against general poverty amongst the cultivating class. Lord Harris, in the speech we have referred to, said that he knew of hundreds of cases in which the most moderate assessment had failed to keep the people on the land, and mentioned an instance in which it had been proved in court that an occupant who paid Government eight rupees for his holding had sublet it for eighty. And if in Alibag we find it a frequent thing for an occupant to sublet his farm at a rate in grain equal to nearly half the gross produce—which means that two men are living out of land assumed to be sufficient only for the maintenance of one—it is difficult to see how the Government can be alleged to be

taking an extortionate share of the earnings of the cultivator. Here again everything depends on how far the phenomenon cited is general, and it is possible that the significance of particular cases might be greatly modified if the whole circumstances were brought into view. But there is a table in the appendix to these reports which shows that subletting at a large profit is not by any means an uncommon thing in the Alibag taluka. Eighty-two cases are named in all, sixty of which were sublet on the average at 3·4 times the Government assessment, and twenty at 7·8 times. The number of sales of land is too small to by itself warrant general conclusions being drawn from it; but it weighs on the same side, those who bought the land considering it worth while to pay more than forty-three times the assessment for it. Other facts which are opposed to the presumption of a heavy assessment are that in the 140 villages first settled the occupied areas largely increased immediately after the introduction of the survey; that, though the revenue demand has steadily progressed from the beginning, it has been collected with ease, and for five years there has not been a single sale of land in payment of the Government demand; and that for more than thirty years there were no balances outstanding at the end of the year. The usual tables relating to the condition of the taluka tell in the main the same story. In one group formed of two-thirds of the villages, agricultural cattle have only increased by about eight per cent., while the population has increased by 26 per cent., but in the remaining fifty-five villages the increase of cattle is nearly seventy per cent., and the number of carts has increased enormously all over the taluka, the result, we must infer, of the greatly improved communications which have been provided during the past thirty years or so. The conclusion which must be come to upon the facts stated is that the Alibag taluka has gone forward during the period covered by the old settlement, and that the Government demand cannot have

been so onerous as it has been represented to be by energetic advocates of the interests of the Alibag cultivators.

This, and much more, might be said, however, without involving an acceptance *in toto* of the revision scheme submitted by Colonel Godfrey to Government and in the main accepted by them. The new rates involve an increase of nearly Rs. 62,000 in the total demand, bringing it up to two lakhs and a half. Those of our readers who have read what has been written on the subject from the other side of the Harbour may remember that it has been alleged against the new rates that they amount to an increase of fifty to a thousand per cent. on individual holdings. There may be literal truth in the statement, but it will not do to base an estimate of the scheme upon isolated cases chosen because they are extreme ones. The first set of rates that may be taken are the sweet rice rates. Here the maxima have been raised from seven and a half rupees in one group to eight and a half; two groups, with maxima rates of seven and six rupees respectively, have been merged into one with an eight-rupee rate; and a small group or five villages has been raised from five rupees to six and a half, the increase on three hundred and thirty villages being twenty-seven per cent. Upon the 101 Kharapat or salt rice villages which have come under revision the increase is a little over twenty-one per cent. In the villages in which the increase is the highest it is well within the 66 per cent. limit laid down for increases in the amount on individual villages. A more difficult problem presents itself in the assessment of garden lands. It is impossible to consider the question apart from recent abkari history. Colonel Godfrey quotes a letter from Mr. Sinclair, in which that well-informed civilian states that the characteristic agriculture of this region is the cultivation of the cocoanut and other fruit trees, and he adds "there is no doubt that the value of these cocoanut gardens depends very largely upon the abkari policy of Government, and that the profits made out of cocoanut gardens are, by reason of the recent abkari legislation, less than formerly." It

is one of the commonplaces of recent abkari controversy that toddy liquor has given place to mhowra spirit, and this must have a direct influence upon the value of the garden lands in a district like Alibag. The large migration of Bhandaris to Bombay which has occurred in recent years is significant in this connection, for it points to a decrease in the cultivation of the gardens of these villages. Colonel Godfrey has certainly not overlooked the abkari aspect of the problem, but it is difficult to see the result in the new rates which he proposes. The average incidence of the new assessment for one class of gardens is Rs. 10-10-3, as against Rs. 2-10-9 in the old, and for another class Rs. 5-5-1 as against Rs. 2-6-0. His justification for these admittedly large increases is founded in great part upon the very low assessment which was placed on excellent gardens in the old settlement. Yet Mr. Sinclair, who knew the district thoroughly, did not go beyond the assertion that "the garden lands were in a fair and improving condition, and by no means over-assessed." This scarcely prepares us for so large and sudden an enhancement as that now proposed and accepted. But we must defer to another occasion the further consideration of the new rates.

THE TIMES OF INDIA ON THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT.

II

(30th April, 1895.)

We showed the other day, in dealing with the papers connected with the Alibag Taluka Revision Survey Settlement, that on the sweet rice lands the increase in the new rates was twenty-seven per cent., and in the Kharapat, or salt rice lands, a little over twenty-one per cent. Upon garden lands the increase is much larger, that in the superior gardens being over fifty-eight per cent. The justification alleged for this large increase is that in the original settlement the rates

were very low. This may be so, but there is no evidence in the reports of Captain Francis, who carried out the survey more than thirty-five years ago, that the survey authorities at that time believed that they were treating the occupants with undue liberality. Captain Francis, indeed, described the garden lands of the taluka in 1858 as being not so well-stocked with cocoanut trees nor so fertile as those of Rewadanda. Nevertheless he fixed the maximum rate at the same as Rewadanda, because the cultivation and management were the same. This certainly does not look like serious under-assessment at the earlier valuation. Colonel Godfrey, nevertheless, finds the greatest unevenness in the old assessment, the rates of garden lands in one group of villages being only half the maximum on rice fields. And so we find increases proposed and sanctioned which upon some gardens amount to considerably more than the 100 per cent. increase which is the limit laid down for the augmentation of assessments of individual numbers. Mr. Lamb, the Collector, who seems to have been by no means unduly disposed to say "ditto" to the Survey Superintendent, calls attention to these frequent oversteppings of the limit, but thinks that they could not have been avoided without continuing to cultivators who have been "monstrously under-assessed" for the last thirty years the privilege of being under-assessed for the next thirty. He, therefore, supports the Superintendent's proposal for the assessment of gardens, believing that the rates are reasonable, and that the classification has been made on more correct principles than in the original survey. Admitting for the purposes of the argument that this is so, it would still remain open to question whether, as a matter of expediency, the limit laid down in this well-known Government ruling ought not to have been adhered to. The hundred per cent. limit may in a very few cases give an individual holder an undue advantage; but as a matter of policy, much is to be said for a limitation upon enhancement which the ryot may know shall in no possi-

ble circumstances be overstepped. It was departed from in the Panwell revision settlement for reasons which, if they had stood alone, might have been accepted as sound, but which taken in connection with the consideration that every departure from this wholesome and reassuring limitation is likely to disturb the ryot's mind, seemed to us at the time to be insufficient. Each departure from the rule—even when warranted—lessens the ryot's confidence in it as a protection against excessive enhancement, and Government would often do better to sacrifice revenue than do that.

In declining to take account of the diminished value and utilization of cocoanut trees in these garden lands Government have gone against the judgment of so experienced an officer as Mr. Sinclair, who reported five years ago that the characteristic agriculture of this region was the cultivation of the cocoanut and other fruit trees, that the value of these gardens depended very largely on the Abkari policy of Government, and that the profits made out of cocoanut gardens are by reason of recent Abkari legislation less than formerly. One of our correspondents, indeed, who complained about the new rates last year wrote that if inquiries were made it would be found that in some of the villages the plantation of cocoanut trees, which had been largely resorted to in former times, was almost entirely given up after the Akbari Act had been applied to the district in 1878, and that the number of trees used for tapping had decreased from about twenty thousand to six or seven hundred. Now if the method which has been pursued in the revision settlement is a sound one, considerations of this kind are irrelevant. Mr. Ozanne says it would have been incorrect in affixing a final valuation, to take into account the variable factor of the number of trees, and that the character of garden cultivation is undergoing a change which causes a greater utilization of land suitable for garden cultivation to grow sugar-cane, vegetables, and other produce, in lieu of the former almost universal cultivation of the cocoanut and other fruit trees. The elements now taken into account

in assessing garden land are no longer, as at the time of the original settlement, soil, water, and the number of trees, but soil, water, and position, this arrangement, as Mr. Nugent points out in his review of the report, having a distinct advantage, as it removes the inequalities of assessment "due, not to inherent superiority or inferiority of soil, but to superior or inferior management and industry." Government adhere to the proposal, accepting the new method of classification as correct, as it takes soil, water, and position equally into account, and "classifies the land according to its capability instead of according to the use a particular occupant may make of it." It is easy to see that the new method is in accordance with the rudimentary principle of the Bombay revenue system, which aims at fixing the assessment in regard to the inherent properties of the land rather than to the particular use which the occupant may make of it. Nevertheless, we must come back to Mr. Sinclair's contention that the value of these gardens has been affected by the Abkari policy of Government. If by that policy what he calls the "characteristic agriculture" of the region has been made less remunerative than it was, and if, as he again says, the assessments on the gardens could not have been collected during the period ending with 1887 but for Captain Francis's low rates, there seems to be something akin to riding a sound principle to death in altogether ignoring the reduction in the value of garden lands which has followed recent changes in Abkari policy. Government admit, in their Resolution, that the new classification may affect unfavourably individual holders of garden land who have failed to turn their lands to good account—that is to say, who have not adapted themselves to the new conditions which these changes may have brought about; but they are told that "even in their case the gradual levy of the enhanced assessment will prevent hardship, and will give them time to make the best use of their land before the full effect of the enhancement is felt." That is to say, the agriculturist of a conservative people is to adapt itself to the arrangements of Government, instead

of the arrangements of Government being adapted to agriculture. It may be doubted if that is sound policy—if, to call in aid the teachings of a master mind, it conforms as closely as it ought to do to the wise teaching of Montesquieu when he defined the most perfect system of Government to be that which arrives at its purpose with least effort, and which guides men in the manner which conforms most closely to their habits and their inclination.

The proposals for dealing with warkas lands were certain of an unfavourable reception, no matter how moderate they might have been. Since the Panwell revision settlement the policy of Government has been to put an agricultural value upon these, instead of treating them, to use Colonel Godfrey's words, "as only an adjunct to rice land, and as profitable principally as producing material for rabi and for grazing purposes." In this settlement, as in that of Panwell, warkas and rabi, or cold-weather crop lands, are included in one class, with a maximum classification scale for warkas up to six annas, the rabi classification following the quality of the soil from that point up to sixteen annas. The maximum rate for the combined class is fixed at Rs. 3 per acre in the first group, Rs. 2½ for the second group and Rs. 2 for the third group, where, from that point although the grass is good upon the hills, there is considerable difficulty in getting it to market. The result of the new rates is to increase the total assessment upon rabi and warkas lands from Rs. 6,073 to Rs. 15,907—a percentage increase of 161. The result is arrived at not only by an increase upon the warkas and rabi rates but by a large addition to the area included in rabi, the warkas area, which pays at a lower rate, being correspondingly reduced. The maxima rates in the case both of rabi and warkas are low, but low as they are it is important to notice that Colonel Godfrey assumes that the warkas lands produce large grass crops and that a profit is got out of them by exporting them to Bombay. It will be remembered that the large export of grass from Panwell to Bombay was cited in justification of the large

increase in the assessment of the warkas in that taluka two years since. Colonel Godfrey, it is true, acknowledges that the grass trade in Alibag is not to be compared with that in Pen and Panwell; but he is satisfied that it is sufficient, taken in conjunction with the low rates at which warkas was assessed in the original survey, to warrant a substantial increase in the assessment. Mr. Lamb approves of the new rates, but it is important to notice that he disbelieves in the existence of a large export trade to Bombay, that the large increase in the stocks of agricultural cattle in the Kharpat villages has created a large demand for grass amongst the cultivators themselves. We can only hope—though the evidence on the point is far from clear—that the assessment of the grass lands in the taluka has not been based upon the assumption of a large and profitable trade in grass in the Bombay market. The conclusion to which the papers as a whole point is that though the taluka has made substantial progress during the currency of the old settlement, and is able to bear an appreciable enhancement, there are cases of enhancement in which there is room for misgiving, and the increases beyond the recognized limit of a hundred per cent. seem to be larger and more numerous than is desirable, even if the objection to exceeding that limit were as a matter of policy less substantial than we have always deemed them to be.

APPENDIX B

LORD HARRIS AND THE BOMBAY LAND REVENUE SYSTEM
(20th February, 1895.)

Lord Harris's defence of the Land Revenue System of this Presidency in his valedictory address last Thursday was rather too late in the day. Had his Lordship expressed an opinion on the policy of Government in regard to this most important subject on some previous occasion, or at least during the discussion on the Provincial Budget last September, he would have known what the other side had to say, and thus got an opportunity to redress during the term of his office the grievances of the voiceless millions whose welfare he appeared to have so much at heart.

Speaking of his Lordship's allusion to the three "F's," I may point out that in spite of the fact that the Bombay ryot possesses the first two of them he is not a bit the better for the privilege. It is not easy to see how the freedom of selling his land can do him any good except that it may prevent his going to jail at the instance of his creditor; but this he will surely not call a boon. The so called fixity of tenure fails to induce the cultivator to effect improvements, for he fears that at the end of the fixed period the Survey officer will not hesitate to enhance the assessment. The method adopted by the Survey officers for arriving at fair rates may be well illustrated by a current local tale. A king anxious to see his army safely cross a river desired an engineer to make a survey of the river and report accordingly. The engineer found that the river was two feet deep in one place, three in another, and seven in a third one, and having taken his average, which was four feet, reported that the army could easily cross the river. The result was that the major portion of the army was drowned. Government want to have a certain percentage of increase over the old assessment in a particular village, the

officers satisfy themselves with carrying out the instructions of Government without any regard to the hardships their action entails on individual holders.

Lord Harris very appropriately brings in the depreciation of the value of the output of the land as a factor to be considered in fixing the rates. I am afraid this wholesome principle has been entirely ignored by the revision Survey Settlement officers, at least in the Alibag and other talukas, if not throughout the Presidency. The Survey officers never cared to inquire what the annual outturn of the lands they were measuring and classifying had been. To take the case of the Alibag taluka, I can speak with certainty that if they had made inquiries, they might have learnt that during the last few years insect pests, insufficiency of rain and *rab* materials and some other causes had considerably depreciated the value of land. Besides this, Captain Francis's rates were admittedly sufficiently high in most cases. As to the plausible excuses that the general prosperity of the people has increased, as seen in their carts, ponies, tiled roofs, brass utensils, &c. I may only say that to go upon such premises would be quite misleading. I shall take the instance of the village of Avas in the Alibag Taluka to show this. The village is put first on the list prepared for the purposes of classification, and has been assessed at the highest possible maximum rates. In it there are only six houses with tiled roofs out of nearly 250. Of these six one belongs to a Bombay engineer, who has lately purchased some lands there, and another to a retired head-cleark from the G.I.P.R. Audit Offices. The latter gentleman is a native of Ratnagiri, but desiring to live in the neighbourhood of Bombay he purchased a few years ago a small estate in this village and has settled down on it. The owners of the remaining four houses, or their relatives, have been earning money in Bombay or elsewhere. Thus it will be seen that the tiled roofs are not the outcome of any gain accruing from the output of the fields. There are no pony carts in the village, and those obtaining in some of the neighbouring ones are of a miserable description and generally ply

for hire. The majority of the remaining houses, as was personally observed by Mr. Alfred Webb, M.P., and the other gentlemen from Bombay, who were there last month, are mere huts—some of them costing not more than twenty-five rupees a piece—covered with thatches or straw. Mr. Webb satisfied himself that in most of these huts the only things seen were one or two *cumblers*, a few ragged pieces of cloth, a few earthen vessels, and, in a very few cases, some copper or brass pots. The total value of the silver and gold trinkets, possessed by a single family of the peasant classes, does not exceed ten rupees in a number of cases. The prices of grain have no doubt increased during the last few years, but the difficulty of procuring manure has caused a considerable reduction in the produce of the fields, so much so that the cultivator has occasionally found it necessary to borrow grain for his maintenance from a creditor.

When people all over the country have been crying for a permanent settlement, the ex-Governor's remark that people would stipulate for six monthly tenancies cannot but strike one as very curious.

Lord Harris frankly admits that the Bombay land revenue system like other systems is imperfect. His Lordship avers that if there are hard cases of assessment, there are also some in which the assessment is very low. We do not deny that there may be cases where the assessment is low, but to make one class of people suffer for the gain of another would surely not read as sound argument. We entreat Government to appoint an independent Commission to investigate into the nature of our complaints and grant us redress. A number of land-holders have already deposited large sums of money with the Mamlutdar of Alibag, and if Government decide to appoint an independent Commission, others will be only too glad to bear the cost of such a Commission, notwithstanding the fact that they have already been saddled with the heavy cost of the revision survey by which Government alone is to be benefited.

ALIBAG IN THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

(22nd August, 1895.)

The Hon. Mr. Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, with his usual solicitude for the welfare of the agriculturists of this Presidency, took the opportunity to interpellate Government on the Alibag revision settlement at the last meeting of the Bombay Legislative Council. His questions Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8 and 11 were admittedly of great importance to the cultivators of Alibag, and it was only to be desired that the answers to them had been a little more satisfactory. Surely, it is the anxious desire of Government to take the people into their confidence, but one cannot help being disappointed at the way in which some of the questions are answered. The Hon. Mr. Nugent's reply to the question as to whether the attention of Government had been drawn to a letter dated the 13th May, 1895, over the signature of "C. R. Sail," published in the *Times of India* of 15th May, 1895, seemed evidently to ignore the traditions of the Council. I venture to say that Government *have* made inquiries and *have* taken notice of statements "made otherwise than in representations addressed to them in accordance with the rules." At the very meeting of the Council on the 7th instant, the Hon. Mr. Bridwood, in reply to a question whether the attention of Government had been drawn to statements in the vernacular press regarding the disturbed condition of a part of the Belgaum district bordering on the Kolhapur State, said that Government had noticed the statements in the native press referred to, and having instituted enquiries into the matter had taken effective preventive measures. Again, at the Council meeting held in Bombay on the 4th February last, the Hon. Mr. H. Batty asked whether the statement in the *Mahratha* of November 25th last, and repeated in the *Subodha Prakash* about Mr. C. B. Kennedy having accepted invitation from the Mahomedans of

Wai to a *pan supari* party was true. The reply to this question was given by the President of the Council, Lord Harris. Then, it is well-known that a question was put by the Hon. Mr. W.R. Macdonell, the representative of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in the meeting of 14th August last, enquiring whether the attention of Government was drawn to a letter in the *Bombay Guardian* of 4th idem, signed "M. S. L." and purporting to be written by one of the persons convicted of defamation in the case prosecuted by the Bombay Opium Farmer, relative to a Bombay Presidency Magistrate having been alleged to have taken the papers to Mahableswar to consult Lord Harris, and that question was replied to by Lord Harris himself. I can thus multiply instances showing that the attention of Government *is drawn* to letters or statements published in newspapers. The Hon. member thinks he is not bound to answer questions inconvenient to Government. In this respect I must say that the Hon. Mr. Trevor was much more considerate and fair, and less autocratic than Mr. Nugent.

Then, again, I am at a loss to understand why the Hon. Mr. Nugent should decline to place on the Council table a copy of the rules regulating the classification of rice, garden, rabi, and warkas lands for the guidance of Survey officers in the application of the principles in detail "in the public interest." Now, if there is one question more than another which deeply interests the public, it is that of the application of the principles of survey in detail in concrete cases in a taluka or group of villages. There can really be nothing of a secret or confidential character in these rules. While the publication of such rules can do no harm, the withholding of them is calculated to engender a feeling of doubt in the public mind, namely, whether there is something in these rules which either cannot bear the light of day or about which Government consider they have something which they had better keep back from the public. The Government in India, as the late Sir George Chesney said, had nothing to conceal from the public. When it is borne in mind that a copy of these rules is in the

hands of every classer in receipt of Rs. 20 a month, does Mr. Nugent mean to say that he is treating Honourable Members of Council and the public they represent with courtesy and good grace, when he declines to give them the opportunity of knowing what these rules are? Proceedings like these have the unhappy result of breeding needless suspicions in people's minds as to the policy of Government in dealing with questions which concern their daily life. Settlement reports do not state how the classification rules are applied. It is to be hoped that his Excellency Lord Sandhurst will interpose the weight of his high authority to discourage procedure like this. The whole controversy regarding revision settlements in the Konkan districts would be shorn of much of its acrimony if the classification rules were better understood among the people. How this secrecy about the rules directly affects the ryots may be seen from the following incident in the revision settlement of the Alibag taluka.

Government have directed that "any petitioner who is desirous of having an inquiry made into the correctness of the classification of his land or the calculation of his assessment might have it made on depositing a sum sufficient to cover the cost." The petitioner is further informed that if he proves his complaint to be well-founded, he would get back the deposit money. In such a case the petitioner naturally enough thinks of ascertaining beforehand the principles which have led to the abnormal enhancement of assessment on his lands; but the refusal of Government to supply him with a copy of the rules regulating these principles discourages him, and he gives up the idea of having the inquiry made. In the Alibag taluka several landholders, who under other circumstances would willingly have lodged their petitions, have preferred to put up with the treatment the Survey Department has accorded them.

With regard to the question as to how the remission rules were applied to Alibag, I am thankful to Government for the partial remission they have been pleased to grant

us. At the same time I cannot but respectfully point out that apparent injustice has been done to the Alibag and Pen talukas in connection with the decision of Government not to refund the money collected in consequence of a rule framed by the Survey Department, and acted upon by the Revenue Department in anticipation of Government sanction. The Hon. Mr. Nugent, while admitting that the rule by which no remission was to be given when the difference between the old and new assessment was under eight annas was disallowed by Government, tells us that because the preparation of new statements would entail additional trouble, and because it was reported that the amount involved to individual occupants was, in no case, large and in many quite insignificant, Government directed that the draft rule in question should be held to have been applicable in the case of the Alibag and Pen settlements. When this question was discussed in March and April last, it was an open secret throughout the Alibag taluka that the remissions on account of the elimination of this objectionable rule would amount to no less than Rs.15,000, and that Government instead of refunding the sum this year would take so much less next year in order to facilitate the adjustment of accounts. It was freely said that the Collector had applied for permission to do this, while the Survey and Revenue Commissioners were in favour of refunding the money at once. Rs. 15,000 is certainly not a trifling sum in the eyes of those who to earn even 15 annas have to toil hard in the sun and rain for 5 days. It may be hoped that Government will yet reconsider their decision on this point.

The Hon. Mr. Nugent does not think that there are several cases of enhancements in excess of 400 per cent. in the Alibag taluka, but when we remember that even a *pot number* may form a "holding," according to the Land Revenue Code, we shall find that such cases will not be few. In the village of Avas old Survey No. 336 is now divided into 9 or 10 *pot numbers* owned by six different persons. As this num-

ber was formerly *warkas*, and the *pot* numbers are now called *rabi* or *rice* lands, the increase on every one of them is from 500 to 600 per cent, and this is only one out of several other instances in one village alone. I feel confident that on inquiry Government will find that the number of such cases is legion. Now, the supposition that the profitable use of *warkas* land involves little or no expenditure is simply erroneous. To turn one acre of ordinary *warkas* into rice land a considerable outlay is absolutely necessary. Even when the land is not required to be dug up, but only common embankments have to be thrown up, an acre of *warkas* land requires from Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 for conversion. When the whole has to be dug up—which is not infrequently the case—a sum of Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 would be necessary for the purpose. The sum of Rs. 60 may therefore be taken as the average outlay necessary for converting one acre of *warkas* into rice land. Now as most of the *warkas* land in the Alibag taluka is mixed up with limestone, it requires to be carefully manured every third year at a cost of about Rs. 25 on three or four occasions before it can be expected to yield an average crop. In the absence of manure the yield is almost *nil*. Conversion of *warkas* to garden land requires even more expenditure with proportionately less return. The sinking and building of an ordinary well costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400. To this is to be added the cost of maintaining a regular establishment of servants, bullocks; and the *rāt* or Persian wheel. Only those who for the better cultivation of their rice fields have to live at a distance from the village think of having water and a few trees around their cottage on a piece of *warkas* land. But the survey authorities, irrespective of the cost and trouble necessary for the conversion of an insignificant number of such pieces, consider that all *warkas* lands are capable of yielding good garden crops and assess them at what they call their natural capabilities. That *warkas* is not easy of conversion to rice or garden land can also be seen from the fact that an acre of *warkas* fetches on an average Rs 37-12-6, while that of rice land as much as Rs. 178-9-7, and of garden land Rs. 196-14-11 (*vide* supplement to Appendix K, page 43 of the Alibag Revision Settlement Report).

MR. GOVIND BABA GURJAR ON THE ALIBAG REVISION
SETTLEMENT.*(21st February, 1895.)*

Kindly allow me to bring to the notice of the authorities concerned and the public the glaring irregularities in the matter of the revision survey settlement in the Alibag Taluka. In spite of the protest of individual landholders against the announcement of the revised rates before their petitions to the Collector on the subject had been disposed of, the survey officers announced the rates last May. Rule 89 under Section 214 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code runs as follows: "When a Survey Settlement shall have received the sanction of Government under Section 102 of the Land Revenue Code, a notification shall be published in the district or portion of a district to which the Settlement extends, in the form of Appendix J and the period for which the assessments have been fixed shall be notified in the Bombay Government Gazette." It is now nearly ten months since the rates were announced and nothing has yet seen the light of publication. The agriculturists, however, fearing that the time for appeal may expire, filed their petitions to the Government of Bombay, and although these petitions were not according to the spirit of Section 204, Government admitted them and it is rumoured they issued a resolution directing the Collector of Kolaba to make inquiries or dispose of them at his discretion referring the applicants for answer to the same authorities. The Collector issued notices through the Mamledar of Alibag to the effect that those applicants who wished to have their appeals investigated should within a fortnight from the date of the service of the notices deposit a sum of money sufficient to cover the expenses of the inquiry in their cases with the promise to refund the whole amount in case the statement in the appeals about the errors proved materially correct. From the mode in which certain applicants were interrogated by the Mamledar of Alibag it

seems pretty clear that the *onus* of proving the errors in the classification and other subjects complained against, will be thrown on the petitioners. Accordingly they made an application through the Alibag Taluka Association to the Collector of Kolaba to grant them extracts or copies or at least allow them to have an inspection of several documents, among which were the Government resolution which sanctioned the revision survey rates and the report of the survey commissioner and the field-books of the classers &c., on the basis of which the *anna*-valuations of the lands in the Taluka had been arrived at. The Collector instead of complying with their reasonable request rejected their application on the ground that several of the documents mentioned in the application were not published and there were several which he was not authorised by Government to allow for inspection. Against this order of the Collector the Association made an appeal to Government in Marathi which was returned, after several days on the ground that it was not accompanied with the authenticated copy of the Collector's order, although a true but not authenticated copy was attached to it. The President of the Association posted the appeal by appending an authenticated copy of the collector's order complained against as required under provisions of Section 208 of the Land Revenue Code, but unfortunately Government seems to be determined not to read their applications in the Vernacular language as the application was again returned for want of an authenticated copy of the application made to the Collector. Now Section 208 of the Land Revenue Code is as follows: "Every petition of appeal shall be accompanied by the decision or order appealed against or by an authenticated copy of the same." It is clear from the above Section to an ordinary reader that an appeal presented to Government or any higher authority should be accompanied with an authenticated copy of the *order or decision* appealed against, and not the copy of the *plaint or application*. It can, therefore, be safely presumed that there must be some material object in returning these

appeals though they are in every way legal. The applicants are afraid that as there is not a scrap of document or any reliable evidence in their possession, to prove their allegations in consequence of the intentional and deliberate withholding of the Government records, which they have a right under the provisions of section 213, rules 1 and 8, of the Land Revenue Code, to be allowed an inspection of or to obtain copies or extracts there-of on payment of fees, their appeals will be rejected for want of evidence which their opponents have in their possession. The question is what legal course they should take under the circumstances. The undersigned will be very thankful if any gentleman well-versed in legal matters will answer this question or suggest means that will help the unfortunate appellants to prove their cases. If the classification, valuation, and results in their revision survey are correct, and if the enhancements made are moderate and beneficial to the public, why should there be the withholding of the report and the resolution of Government on the subject? Are the authorities afraid of the rayats or are their classifications, measurements and calculations faulty, so that if they are brought out in public, the whole system adopted by the survey officers will be disclosed?

On the one hand every evidence necessary to prove applicants' cases is locked up, and on the other, they are told to prove their cases. Are they expected to know the contents of the field-books or the scientific opinions of the survey authorities or the reasons which the survey authorities have put forward to substantiate their views in order that the enhanced rates should be to all outward appearance deemed moderate and wise?

We have asked in our application that an independent officer and not an interested party should be appointed to decide our appeals. At present we are not in a position to draw any conclusions, yet if in accordance with the mode of procedure adopted at present the work is entrusted to subordinate officers of Government, there is scarcely any hope of

justice being done to the poor rayats who are already saddled with the cost of the revision survey, and who to point out the mistakes of the officers are again compelled to deposit sufficient money to cover the expenses of the inquiry.

MR. BABAJI GOPAL ON THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT.

I

(1st June, 1894.)

I have a word to say in respect of the revenue enhancement at Alibag, and I hope you will insert this in your valuable paper. Amongst the few persons who have done either by word or deed anything for the amelioration of the condition of poor ryots is Mr. R. L. Gharat. By the public action of his letters in your columns he has done a great service to the ryots of the Kolaba District. What havoc was created of late in this district by the insect pest the public are acquainted with. If not in all parts of this district simultaneously there has been of late years cattle-disease in some part or other. To this add the effects of insufficient rain. All these causes have naturally tended to impoverish this district. If some farmers have no implements wherewith to farm, others have no cattle. And to crown all some have been reduced to such a state of destitution that they have great difficulties even in getting the seed for sowing. This state of affairs is already existing, and I do not know to what extent this will increase. The ryots will certainly be reduced to a further state of deprivation. The consequence will be that crime will increase. Mr. Gharat has shown how lands containing perhaps a few cocoanut palms are termed bagayat lands and charged with taxes which would be sufficiently heavy for properly-constituted garden lands. For the last ten years I have been spending both energy and money on garden land in this district fruitlessly. If my bagayat experiments have not proved a total failure, they surely have not so far proved to be a paying concern. All this I write both because an allusion has been made to

me in Mr. Gharat's letter, and also because I think it my pleasant duty to support him in all what he says.

 II

MR. BABAJI GOPAL'S REPLY TO THE TIMES OF INDIA.
(10th May, 1895.)

After the correspondence in your columns on the enhancement of assessment in Alibag your two* leaders have come in very opportunely. That the subletting system is common in Alibag is true, but to prove in general "that two men are living out of land assumed to be sufficient only for the maintenance of one" will necessitate a great straining of facts and figures. And it is not an easy business for the subletter to get his dues from his under-tenant. The Government almost always gets its due share without difficulty. The subletter, though he generally gets his dues, has to undergo many difficulties to recover his dues from his tenant. But the *kool*, who actually works on the field, does not get sufficient to maintain him on this farm produce for all the twelve months of the year. The fruits of his labours in the monsoon season are barely sufficient for him for four or five months. For the rest of the year he has to find for himself some other cooly work. That the subletter gets 3 to 4 or 7 to 8 times as much as the assessment is true only when the crops are so good that every bigha produces its full share of two or two and a-half khandis. But, excepting this year and the year before, the crops have failed through some cause or other for the last 7 or 8 years. And what remissions were made then? You have pointed out that an occupant who paid Government Rs. 8 for his holding had sublet it for Rs.80. Who of the thousands of land-holders will not envy this happy possessor of this land of gold? How many other instances of this kind can the sur-

* See Appendix A in which the articles from the *Times of India* are quoted in full.

vey authorities show I ask? But I can assure them that the majority of land-holders will be satisfied if they get 8 to 10 per cent. on the money invested there.

The garden lands were never monstrously under-assessed. And now it would be no exaggeration to say that they are monstrously over-assessed when there can be shown an increment of 219 per cent., as in my own case. The original assessment of my garden was Rs. 27-14-4, it is now Rs. 89. And what has accrued from all the labour, money and time I have spent over it? It barely gives me sufficient to defray the Government taxes, let alone the interest one might expect to get on the money invested there. Many others from Bombay, who have spent on garden lands in Awas, Kihim, Sasawane, and other villages in the neighbourhood, are not much better off. To adapt cultivation to Government arrangements would be impossible in many cases. And where is the necessary capital to come from for the charges for such an adaptation? And with the failures in ventures of this kind before him, no capitalist will like to try the dangerous experiment over again. A monument of failure is the garden near Kihim of the late Mr. Dixon, who had spent over it a sum of about Rs. 60,000. Almost a quarter of a century has gone by, and the profits are, I can safely say, *nil*, and there is no hope of recovering anything like the money spent there. When the garden, with its fine bungalow, was sold to its present owner, it fetched only about Rs. 20,000.

The garden land produce chiefly consists of cocoanuts, betelnuts, and mangoes. An acre of fully-planted garden land, according to Colonel Francis, contains 60 coconut palms, and each tree yields about Rs. 2. The expenses for maintenance are as follows. At least one man and either a woman or a boy to assist him are required to manage this. The man's wages are Rs. 4, and the boy's Rs. 2 per month. A buffalo or bullock is necessary to work the *rahat*, and the maintenance of one animal comes to about Rs. 25 per annum.

Sundry expenses come to about Rs. 5 per annum. Thus the total expenses are about Rs. 102 per annum. Without the Government taxes, the gross income is Rs. 120. And you can judge for yourself what would be left for the owner after paying Rs. 15 to Government. There may be certain rare instances of lands which may give greater profits, but my trees have yielded at this rate and in the best of seasons. And from enquiries I have learned that the general average on this side of the taluka is the same. My mango plantation has proved a failure. A decade has passed, and the trees bear almost no fruit.

Any attempt to show that there is any appreciable amount of export trade in grass must fail completely. The enhancement on grass lands would affect the cultivation of rice-lands in more than one way. The grass will necessarily rise in price, and thus the keeping of cattle will become more expensive. Also the grass which is used for *rab* purposes will become dearer, and this rise in price of *rab* material will affect directly the cultivation of rice fields.

The Survey authorities have not always shown discretion in classing warkas into rabi. The warkas land, which I own, and which according to the new survey is classed into rabi, does not yield rabi crops. I have tried and failed, and I wish very much that some independent person would try for himself and see. Much might be said on both sides, the official and the popular. But any independent person or a committee of independent persons will surely find that there are real grievances.

APPENDIX C.

PETITIONS TO GOVERNMENT FROM THE ALIBAG TALUKA
ASSOCIATION.

I.

(11th January, 1895.)

GRAZING RIGHTS AT ALIBAG.

Most respectfully sheweth,—That your Memorialists, as representing the wants and wishes of the people of the Alibag Taluka, approach your Excellency's Government with this representation on a matter which vitally concerns their daily life and welfare, and which demands the immediate and earnest attention of your Excellency.

2. That by a circular letter No. 32, dated the 10th July last, addressed by Mr. R. A. Lamb, Collector of Kolaba, revised rules for the regulation of grazing in the forest areas in the Presidency Proper were promulgated for enforcement in this taluka, and it was decided to levy fees for the grazing of cattle in the Government forests in this part of the district. The short time within which these rules have been in force have given the village community a foretaste of their rigorous character, and indicated to them the amount of hardship, inconvenience, and annoyance they are calculated to cause. This feeling of annoyance has filled their minds with alarm as to the ultimate result of the enforcement of these rules in their present rigorous character.

3. That the extremely harassing nature of these rules will be manifest from the following facts:—

(a) That by rules Nos. 4 and 6 it is directed that with the exception of cattle belonging to the cultivators resident in the village, used solely and exclusively for ploughing or for drawing water for irrigating garden land, all cattle, whether

they belong to the resident cultivators or are the property of resident professional graziers and others, shall be liable to fees prescribed in rule 12.

(b) That under sections 38 and 39 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code, on the other hand, free pasturage is allowed as a matter of right to village cattle of all kinds. The wide and comprehensive sense in which the expression "village cattle" is used by the Legislature in the Code contrasts strangely and strongly with the narrow application of the phrase to "agricultural cattle." This restriction of the phrase to agricultural cattle is, the Association submits, repugnant to the wording as well as the spirit of the Act, and involves an invasion of the rights of the village community to the free grazing of their cattle, whether agricultural or otherwise, in the Government forests. It is also contrary to the interpretation which the Bombay High Court would seem inclined to put on the above phrase, as may be gathered from a case reported at page 110 of the Indian Law Reports, Bombay Series, Vol. II.

4. That the operation of these grazing rules is calculated to open a wide door to vexation, annoyance, and hardship from lowly paid and petty subordinate officers in the Revenue and Forest Departments.

5. That in proof of this vexatious annoyance and hardship, the Association need only refer your Excellency's Government to the following rules:—

(a) Rule 13 provides that Forest Officers in protective charge of forest blocks shall require the village officers to muster all the cattle in the village in the early morning once a month, or oftener if need be, for the purpose of comparing the cattle census with the permits issued. It is scarcely necessary for the Association to say that this rule clothes petty subordinate officers and their peons with authority to detain at their pleasure all village cattle without exception, including milch cows and their calves, buffaloes and heifers, &c., at any place and for any length of time, thereby inconveniencing and

harassing the village community to a degree which may be better imagined than described in fitting terms.

(b) Sheep and goats are, your Excellency's Government is aware, very necessary for the purpose of manuring the village fields, and yet the Revenue and forest Officers are, under rule 12, vested with full powers in respect of deciding whether or not they are to be admitted to graze in an open forest block. Even then, goats will only be admitted not alone, but when accompanying flocks of sheep only in the proportion of one goat to every fifty sheep.

(c) That under rules 16, 17, and 18 village herdsmen are required to have their names registered in the village, as well as in the forest records, that they are required to wear a badge or leathern belt, with a brass buckle, which shall be provided by the Forest Department; that they are, moreover, required to keep in readiness and carry with them in the jungles permits, of different colours, such as—yellow paper permits, for cattle belonging to village cultivators subject to the payment of a fee; green paper permits, for cattle of resident professional graziers and others, such as the village barber, blacksmith, potter, carpenter, mason, and the patel and the kul-karni, &c., who may have the misfortune of not owning a piece of land in the village for cultivation; white paper permits, for cattle belonging to village cultivators entitled to free grazing; red permits, for outside cattle, that is to say, cattle belonging to outsiders as well as of the persons who, though possessed of land in the village, are nevertheless not fortunate to have houses in the village, but reside in a neighbouring village. It is also provided that the number of cattle to be grazed by an individual herdsman is limited to fifty, and the herdsmen shall undertake the responsibility of observing strictly all the grazing rules in respect of the cattle in his charge, and that no unauthorized cattle shall enter the grazing area open to his cattle, which may mean that he should be ready to fight with depredators from the neighbouring village, or to prosecute them though they may happen to be his

friends, relatives, or neighbours. That the holder of such a permit, that is the herdsman, must be robust, bold, and active enough to assist the Forest officers or their men to extinguish any kind of fire (including wild fire) in the jungle at any time, discarding the protection of the cattle in his charge, and taking care, at the same time, to see that his cattle do not injure the boundary marks or pasturage, or prevent depredations of Government forests. He must also be on his guard that, in his absence, his cattle and the cattle of other depredators may not trespass into the closed portion of the forest, and that for breach of these or any other rules it is not the herdsmen alone but each owner of the village cattle, or, in other words, the whole village community, is jointly and severally held responsible. (*Vide* Rule 21)

6. That the Association entertain strong apprehensions, that with all these precautionary measures, and with all the responsibility thrown upon the village community, the net result to the community will be that the place assigned for the grazing of their cattle in the enclosed portion will be a piece of barren, rocky ground, scarcely possessed of a blade of grass growing upon it.

7. That the statements made above may seem strange but the Association beg to assure your Excellency that they are not by any means exaggerated, but are literally true, as any unprejudiced mind that studies carefully the operation of these rules will at once perceive.

8. That the Association regret in this connection to have to bring to your Excellency's notice the fact that a plague of a virulent type has removed hundreds of cattle heads in the Alibag taluka during the past few months, and that the force of the plague is not yet spent out or abated. In this unfortunate condition of the taluka, your Excellency may judge for yourself whether it is expedient or wise to put the grazing rules into force in so rigid a manner at a time when the whole village community of this taluka expect Government to show pity and sympathy for their misfortune.

Before concluding, the Association solicit the attention of your Excellency to the liberal, humane, and statesman-like policy enunciated in the recent resolution of the Government of India, which declares that the contentment and happiness of the people more than revenue is the object Government have in view in the administration of the forests. The Association, therefore, pray that your Excellency will, on the eve of your retirement from the government of this Presidency, leave the people of this taluka under everlasting gratitude by directing an enquiry to be made into their grievances and giving such redress to them as it may be in your Excellency's power to do, and alleviate their distress by directing that the stringent rules now put into operation in this taluka may be withdrawn or cancelled. By complying with this prayer, your Excellency will earn the blessings of the entire village community of this taluka, and for this act of grace your Memorialists will ever pray for your Excellency's long life and prosperity.

To

HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BARON HARRIS, G. C. I. GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT IN COUNCIL, BOMBAY.

*The humble Petition of the
Alibag Taluka Association.*

REMISSIONS AND EXCESS ASSESSMENT.

(21st January, 1896.)

To

His Excellency the Right Honourable William Mansfield Baron Sandhurst, G. C. I. E., Governor and President in Council, Bombay,

*The humble Petition of the
Alibag Taluka Association.*

Most Respectfully Sheweth,—That at the meeting of the Legislative Council, held at Poona on the 7th of August

1895, the Hon. Mr. Nugent, in reply to a question from the Hon. Mr. Javerilal U. Yajnik, said that the rule, by which no remission was to be given when the difference between the old and new assessment was eight annas, had been disallowed by Government, but because the preparation of new statements would entail additional trouble, and because it was reported that the amount involved to individual occupants was, in no case, large, and in many, quite insignificant, Government directed that the draft rule in question should be held to have been applicable in the case of the Alibag and Pen Settlements.

That as the tabular statements referred to by the Hon. Mr. Nugent in the latter part of his reply were prepared only for two years, and as those for the next two years are about to be prepared very soon, your Petitioners now pray,

1. That your Excellency in Council will be graciously pleased to direct that, in the preparation of the new accounts the excess assessment which will have been recovered for the last and the current years from the landholders, most of whom are very poor persons, may be credited to their accounts, and

2. That fresh calculations for the next two years and all succeeding years may be made in accordance with Government Resolution No. 3541, dated 4th May 1885, if Government think the demands of the ryots just, equitable and in consonance with the spirit of the above Resolution.

III

PRAYER FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
(31st January, 1896.)

To

His Excellency the Right Honourable William Mansfield,
Baron Sandhurst, G. C. I., E., Governor and President in
Council, Bombay

*The humble Petition of the
Alibag Taluka Association.*

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

1. That the Revision Settlement of the Alibag Taluka having been completed, the revised rates were announced to your Excellency's Petitioners in the month of May, 1894. Your Petitioners knew from the announcement made that the assessments on their lands had been very largely increased. About 500 appeals against the Survey Commissioner's orders assessing your Petitioners' lands were lodged with the Government of your Excellency's predecessor in Council; and in accordance with the Government Resolution thereon a number of your Petitioners deposited various sums of money with the Mamulatdar of Alibag in order to have inquiries made into their cases. It is now more than a year since these sums were deposited, and your Petitioners are at a loss to understand why no inquiry has as yet been ordered or commenced, although the collection of the assessment, according to the revised rates, was made last year and has also been begun this year. Your Petitioners are also ignorant as to the manner in which and the officer or officers by whom the inquiries are to be made. Your Petitioners' appeals being made in accordance with the provision of section 204 of the Land Revenue Code against the orders of the Survey Commissioner, the inquiry into their nature cannot, they think, be delegated by law to an officer inferior in rank to the Survey Commissioner.

2. That the old anna-valuation in respect of garden lands having been confirmed by the Survey authorities and sanctioned by Government, the increased assessment on such lands should have been proportionate to the increased maximum rate; but such has not been the case. While the maximum rate in no case exceeds 50 per cent., the total increase on this class of lands is 58 per cent., and that on individual holdings more than 200 per cent. in a number of cases.

3. That in the original survey it is well known that lands, water, and 60 cocoanut trees to the acre were valued at 8, 8 and 16 annas respectively. In the revision survey a new factor, under the name of the "Position Class." was substituted

EXAMPLES SHOWING THE POWER OF "POSITION CLASS." 133

for the tree factor and a reduced valuation of 8 annas was assigned to it. The result of this change from a 32 to a 24 anna-scale was that although the old classification was nominally confirmed, the soil and water annas were distinctly over-classed inasmuch as they denoted a fraction having 24 for its denominator instead of 32 as before.

4. That the combination of water and soil annas as a basis for the "Position Class" annas in accordance with the Survey Commissioner's table given in his report on the Alibag Revision Settlement (page 146), has given the position class a tremendous power for enhancing the assessment. The following examples will illustrate this very clearly:—

First example:—

Original classification :					
Soil	...	...	...	...	6 annas
Water	...	...	...	...	4 annas
Trees	...	...	...	...	4 annas

Total 14 annas.

Under the old maximum rate of Rs 10, the assessment would be $14/32 \times 10 = \text{Rs } 4-6-0$ per acre.

Under the revised maximum rate of Rs 15, the assessment is $14/32 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 6-9-0$.

The same according to Revised Classification :

Soil	...	...	...	...	6 annas
Water	...	...	...	...	4 annas
Position	...	...	...	...	6 annas

Total 16 annas.

Under the revised maximum rate of Rs 15, with a 32 anna-scale, the assessment would have been $16/32 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 7-8-0$, but with the 24 anna-scale it is $16/24 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 10-0-0$.

Second example:—

Original classification :

Soil	...	...	...	...	...	7 annas
Water	...	...	...	...	...	2 annas
Trees	...	...	...	...	...	0 anna

Total 9 annas.

Under the old maximum rate of Rs 10, the assessment is $9/32 \times 10 = \text{Rs } 2-13-0$.

Under the revised maximum rate of Rs 15, it would have been $9/32 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 4-3-6$.

The same according to Revised Classification :

Soil	...	...	...	...	...	7 annas
Water	...	...	...	...	...	2 annas
Position	...	...	...	...	...	5 annas

Total 14 annas.

With a maximum rate of Rs 15 and a 32 anna-scale, the assessment is $14/32 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 6-9-0$, but with a 24 anna-scale it is $14/24 \times 15 = \text{Rs } 8-12-0$.

In the first of the two examples, if the "Position Class" had not come in, the increase would have been from Rs. 4-6-0 to Rs. 6-9-0, and with the position class on a 32 anna-scale, it would have been Rs. 7-8-0, but with a 24 anna-scale, it comes to Rs. 10-0-0, or more than 100 per cent. In the second example, the increase is over 200 per cent. This is an instance of those lands on the northern side of Alibag on which, owing to a defective supply of water, the increase has been over 200 per cent. in almost every case, in consequence of the "position class." Garden cultivation of a superior quality has been tried and found to be a failure in most of the villages to the north of Alibag.

5. That the Survey authorities having found a small portion of a Survey number under *rabi* cultivation have

classed the whole survey number as *rabi* land without testing the quality of the soil. This, in your Petitioners' humble opinion, requires correction.

6. That the old maximum rate for *warkas* lands was 4 annas per acre, but the Survey authorities have, in the opinion of your Petitioners, wrongly taken it to mean a four-anna valuation, and having surveyed the *warkas* lands of the Taluka by eye only, have enhanced the assessment above 300 per cent., and in some cases, even upto 1200 per cent., although the bulk of such lands was on the face of it unsuited for any profitable use as stated in Government Resolution No. 4380, dated 17th May, 1894.

7. That by the substitution of earthen dams for the old stone marks to show the boundaries of survey numbers, the Survey authorities have saddled the poor cultivators with an annual expense to the extent of Rs. 1-8-0 per acre, as the earthen dams occupy a considerable space and are liable to be washed away by the heavy rains of the Konkan, while the stone marks were able to stand the storms and rains of 40 years without being damaged in the least.

8. That your Petitioners, therefore, now pray that your Excellency in Council will be graciously pleased to constitute a Special Court or appoint a Special Commission to hear and decide their appeals.

9. That the inquiry into these appeals may, in your Petitioners' opinion, be conducted on the following lines:—

(a) That at least a month's notice may be given to every appellent, informing him when and where his appeal would be heard.

(b) That every appellent may be given an opportunity to prove his case before the Court or Commission by documentary evidence or by calling witnesses, and the Court or Commission may be authorized to issue summonses whenever necessary.

(c) That the appellent may be permitted to conduct his case in person or by means of an authorized agent or pleader.

(d) That the appellant may be supplied, at least a fortnight before the commencement of the inquiry, with copies of Survey papers, showing the old and new anna-valuation of his land and the corresponding rates at which the assessment was worked out, the cost of such copies being paid by the appellant.

(e) That the appellant may be furnished with the information as to what deductions, if any, were made in regard to improvements made by him in his land during the currency of the original settlement. In case such deductions were not made, the appellant may be given an opportunity to prove at the time of the inquiry the improvements effected by him at his own cost and labour, and the Court may be authorized to make the requisite deductions if the appellant should succeed in proving his case. This inquiry is especially necessary in view of the strong opinion expressed by Mr. E. C. Ozanne on the garden assessment of Alibag in his letter to Government, dated the 31st January, 1894. The following extract from the letter is especially noteworthy (page 147 of the Alibag Settlement Papers):—"Personally I do not like confirming the old water assessments, for the water classed was that made available by the enterprize of individuals, more energetic than their neighbours. Those who had wells at the time of the original classificatin are therefore taxed more heavily than those who have since built them. But the choice lies between total re-classification and some such system as that adopted, and I think that total reclassification would run a greater chance of taxing improvements."

(f) That wherever the original anna-valuation has been confirmed, the Commission may be authorized to give the old anna-valuation its value according to the revised maxima rates and determine the assessment accordingly.

(g) That the Commission may be authorized to deduct water assessment in case the appellant proves that there is no water supply for garden or rabi cultivation,—an ingredient

essentially required in such cases. The same rule may be made applicable to rice and warkas lands.

(h) That it is not for your humble Petitioners to suggest who should constitute the members of the Commission of Inquiry, but they trust they are not out of order in venturing to urge upon your Excellency's Government the need of having on the Commission gentlemen possessed of exceptional experience and local knowledge who, they think, might be invested with powers to pass judicial decisions in the matter of the appeals. Bearing these considerations in mind, and the fact that Civil Courts are deprived of jurisdiction in these matters, your Petitioners beg humbly to pray that a Commission constituted of some such gentlemen as the following is likely to inspire the confidence of the people of this Taluka, namely :—

- (1) The Collector of Kolaba.
- (2) The Deputy Survey Superintendent.
- (3) Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe, Personal Assistant to the Survey Commissioner.
- (4) The Mamlatdar of Alibag.
- (5) A non-official gentleman possessed of local knowledge and representing the views and feelings of the cultivating classes.

10. That the Commission may also, in the opinion of your Petitioners, be authorized to admit fresh appeals from those landholders who, in the belief that the general petitions on behalf of the Taluka Association and their fellow cultivators, may render sufficient redress of their grievances in general, did not lodge any petitions or deposit any money.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

THE KHARAPAT VILLAGES OF THE TALUKA.

PETITION OF LANDHOLDERS.

(Alibag, January 10, 1895.)

To

HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE
ROBERT CANNING BARON HARRIS, G. C. I. E., GOVERNOR
AND PRESIDENT IN COUNCIL, BOMBY.

*The humble Petition of the
land-owners and cultivators
of the 56 Kharapat villages
of the Alibag Taluka in the
District of Kolaba.*

Most respectfully sheweth,

We, the undersigned cultivators of the 56 Kharapat villages of the Alibag Taluka of the Kolaba District, most respectfully beg to approach your Excellency with a representation of our grievances, as under:—

(1) That the introduction of revision rates into our 56 villages was announced in the month of May last enhancing the rates of assessment to a considerable degree over those introduced in 1872.

(2) That, with due deference to this action of the Survey Department, we beg to state that this second revision is arbitrary and illegal on the following grounds:—(a) Section 106 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code says: "Provided that when a general classification of the soil of any area has been made a second time, or when any original classification of any area has been approved by the Governor in Council as final, no such classification shall be again made with a view to the revision of the assessment of such area." Now, it is a fact that 56 Kharapat villages were first surveyed and assessed by Mr. Jones in 1852-53. and the rates then introduced were guaranteed for 20 years, which term expired in 1872. Accordingly the villages

were ripe for revision in 1872; and they were revised in the same year. The revision rates then proposed were guaranteed for 15 years, that is to say, up to 1886-1887, when the term of the period guaranteed for other villages in the Taluka expired under Government Resolution No. 1901, dated 7th April 1873, and further modified in favour of rayats, by a subsequent Resolution No. 3986, dated 11th July, 1873. It is worthy of note that Mr. Jones' measurements and classification of the Kharapat villages underwent subsequent corrections and modifications in 1856, when the rest of the Taluka was surveyed and settled by the Poona and Ratnagiri Survey. It would thus appear that the settlement of the Kharapat villages in 1856 was an original settlement correct in every respect. This statement is confirmed by the report, dated 30th January, 1873, of Mr. Gibson, Deputy Superintendent, Ratnagiri Survey. Para. 18 of this report runs as under:—

“When the survey of the rest of Alibag Taluka was made by the Poona and Ratnagiri survey, the assessments of the Kharapat villages were revised and the land divided into survey numbers, the limits of which were marked in the usual manner with stones. During the present season the classification of the soil in these villages has been revised on the system adopted in other Talukas of the Thana District. This operation was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Hearn, an officer who has had great experience in this branch of the survey work. The average error in the work was 5K (6) pies.” (b) Again, it is worthy of remark that in a resolution of the Bombay Government, Revenue Department, No. 3956, dated 11th July, 1873, the rates of the assessment introduced into the Kharapat villages were called “revised rates of assessment”; and the selections from the records of Government (No. 144 New Series) are called “Papers relative to the revision of the rates of assessment of Kharapat lands of the Alibag Taluka.” It will be clear beyond all reasonable

doubts that the settlement of 1872 was a *revision* settlement. The same view was taken by the Survey Department in 1887-88, when Mr. Mahadeorao Shridhar Kamat, an owner of some of these Kharapat lands, represented by a petition to the Survey Department that any re-measurement and re-classification of the Kharapat villages, after the revision of 1872-73, was illegal and uncalled for. The answer of the Survey Commissioner was as follows:—

KOLABA, No. 1.

From Colonel Godfrey, Superintendent, Revenue Survey, Ratnagiri District, &c.; To Mahadeo Shridhar Kamat, inhabitant of Alibag, in the Kolaba District.

From your two applications, dated 12th October, and 4th November, 1887, to the Survey Commissioner, stating that from the notices served on you you understood that the Kharapat villages are going to be re-classified, and request that the classification having twice taken place already, once in 1852-53 and again in 1872-73, the operation should be stopped. As the applications are forwarded to me, I hereby beg to inform you that neither the work of re-measurement nor that of re-classification is going on in the Kharapat villages. But as the old Survey boundary marks have disappeared at places, and there are other mistakes, therefore the work of re-measurement will tend to rectify those mistakes only, and we are going to put the boundary stones on the sub-numbers, which we are authorized to do under the Revision Survey Rules. Therefore, the authority of the Act which you quoted does not apply. We give you this answer under Commissioner's letter No. 3, dated 2nd January, 1888.

January, 9, 1888.

(Sd.) COL. GODFREY.

The original reply in Marathi is, with English translation, herewith appended.

In conclusion, your Excellency in Council will see that under the provision of Section 106 of the Land Revenue Code a second revision of the Kharapat villages was not only

GOVERNMENT -REPLY TO THE KHARAPAT PETITIONERS, 141

illegal, but if we take the answer of the Survey Commissioner as correct, a second revision, that is to say, measurement and classification for the second time, had never taken place, and yet we are surprised to see that there has been an actual enhancement of rates in the Kharapat lands on their second classification.

Trusting that under the circumstances mentioned above, your Excellency in Council will see fit to direct that the second revision shall be cancelled and all expenses and cost thereof recovered from us on account of such re-measurement and re-classification shall be refunded, for which act of justice and kindness your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray for your Excellency's long life and prosperity.

SIGNED BY TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE.

REPLY OF GOVERNMENT TO THE KHARAPAT PETITIONERS.
REVENUE SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT
KOLABA, No. 1912.

Revenue Department.

Bombay Castle, 7th March 1895.

Petition from Tukaram Dharmaji and others, landowners and cultivators of the 56 Kharapat villages of the Alibag taluka in the Kolaba District dated 10th January 1895—Praying in the circumstances stated, that the Revision Survey Settlement of the aforesaid villages, the introduction of which was announced in the month of May last, may be cancelled and that all expenses and cost recovered from them on account of re-measurement and re-classification may be refunded to them.
Resolution—

The petitioners should be informed that the settlement in force in the villages in question previously to 1872-73 was

one based on a rough classification of entire Khars or Kothas according to the description of rice grown in them and the prevailing character of the soil carried out by the Collector with the aid of Committees of Karkuns and village officers, checked by the Mamlatdar and Daftardar; that the villages were classified for the first time in detail according to the Survey methods and principles in 1872-73 and that no further general classification such as is contemplated in section 106 of the Land Revenue Code has taken place since. The petitioners' request cannot therefore be complied with.

(Signed.) G. S. CURTIS.

Under Secretary to Government

APPENDIX D.

ACCOUNTS OF MEETINGS OF ALIBAG LANDHOLDERS.

I

MEETING AT ALIBAG.

(28th May, 1895.)

In response to the call of several leading-citizens of Alibag, a second large and representative meeting of the landholders of the Alibag taluka was held in the temple of Shri Vithoba, at Alibag on the afternoon of the 25th instant, to consider what further steps should be taken when their former petitions to the Collector had not yet been replied to, and when the Survey Department had already commenced to give out the revised assessments on individual holdings. Mr. Govind Baba Gurjar, pleader, having been called to the chair, Mr. Vithal Mahadev, pleader, rose to move the adoption of the first resolution which was to the effect that, in the opinion of the meeting, the revised assessments were too high for the people to bear; that it was necessary to approach Government with the people's humble

petition requesting them to reasonably modify the rates and that before the general petition could be submitted, individual land-holders, who thought their holdings had been too heavily assessed, should forward their separate appeals to the Collector in accordance with the Government notification. In putting the resolution to the meeting, the mover said that the last Government notification allowed them only two months within which to make their appeals ; but he was sure Government would give their petitions due consideration if they were reasonable enough. He had asked Colonel Godfrey, the Survey Superintendent, why this hurry in giving out the revised taxes was made before their petitions to the Collector had been considered, and that officer had told him that he had received orders by telegram to do so, and that their petitions would be considered afterwards. Mr. Vithal Mahadev further said that the Revenue Code of 1876 had much restricted the powers of Civil Courts in revenue matters, and, therefore, the best course for them to take was an appeal to the Collector. The speaker also pointed out that, although the Revenue Code distinctly said that when the survey of a district was made a second time, it should be considered as final, the last notification said that the present revision survey was to be in force only for the next thirty years. The resolution having been seconded and carried, the chairman declared that out of pure philanthropic motives, some gentlemen from Alibag had expressed their willingness to write out petitions for, and give advice to, those who had no knowledge of these matters free of charge, so that those who wished, might call upon any one of them. The names of these gentlemen having been read out, and the usual vote of thanks to the chair having been passed, the meeting dispersed.

II

MEETING AT AVAS.

(26th October, 1894.)

A largely* attended meeting of the inhabitants of the villages of the northern part of Alibag Taluka was held at the village of Avas on Sunday last.

Mr. Shamrao Vishnu Phansalkar having thanked the visitors proposed that Veda-Shastra-Sampanna Vishveshvar Govind Karve, the venerable old Brahman of Kihim, be elected chairman of the meeting. Mr. Vaman Chintaman Mhaskar having seconded the proposition, the learned gentleman was called to the chair.

Mr. Dabir then rose to propose the first resolution. He dwelt upon the necessity of forming a permanent Association. The ryots, he said, were now placed in a peculiar state. They had no adequate means of placing their side before Government. In fact, they had hardly a proper notion of Government itself. To most of them the Collector and Government were but synonymous terms. But they had even in India the Commissioner, the Governor, and the Viceroy above him, not to speak of the authorities in England. They must carry their grievances as far as the British Parliament, and even when repulsed they must appeal to the public opinion through the press. Then, again, people were ignorant of local and other laws which placed them at a very great disadvantage. A few that had the power to understand them had, at least most of them, taken up service under Government or some one else. The silence through ignorance of the ryots was construed by Government officials into contentment or submission. It was to be the business of the Association that was to be formed to enlighten the ryots and act as their representative before Government. He, therefore, proposed the resolution,

* About three thousand people attended the meeting.

“In the opinion of this meeting a permanent Association is necessary to be formed to petition Government in their behalf in respect of public grievances, such as the enhancements of land revenue, and to do similar public duties.”

Mr. Ganesh Hari Devuskar, in seconding the proposition, remarked that as it was not practicable for all of them to take up any question at any time, a representative Association was quite necessary. *Panchayats, &c.*, were in vogue from early times, but true representation was a thing that had come into existence since the British rule. He cordially supported the proposition. The motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

• Rao Saheb Vaman Dhond-dev proposed, “That the Association be authorised to petition Government in the matter of enhancements in land revenue.”

Mr. Vithoba Sonaji Chavan, in seconding the motion, said that it was incumbent on every one to see that the interest of the agricultural classes was never lost sight of. The motion was carried amid a storm of cheers.

Mr. Ramji Lakshman Gharat proposed the third resolution, “That the Association be asked to petition Government to revise the recently circulated grazing regulations so as to give greater concessions to the ryots.” It was not possible at that stage of the movement, he said, to enter into the legal aspect of the question. The practical inconveniences arising from such regulations they were well aware of, and needed no remarks from him. In addition to the great pecuniary burden imposed upon them, the farmers were now to engage *pattawallas* to look after their herds of cattle. Hitherto this petty business was entrusted to the son, daughter, or wife of the farmer, as it suited his convenience. The qualifications now thought necessary for a herdsman required the farmer either to watch his cattle himself or engage a highly paid *pattawalla*. Anything that could be said would hardly adequately express the injustice of requiring fees for animals that were not immediately required for such agricultural purposes as ploughing drawing water, &c.

Mr. Tukaram Dharmaji Mokul seconded the proposition, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. Nagardas Rupaji Shet proposed, "That Rao Sahebs Babaji Gopal and Vaman Dhond-dev, and Messrs. Pundlik Ganesh, Ramji Laksman Gharat, Tukaram Dharmaji Mokul, Gangadhar Chimnaji Chhatre and a few other prominent persons, with power to add to their number, be formed into a committee and be authorized to elect their own president and secretary to conduct the business of the Association."

Rao Saheb Vaman Dhond-dev seconded the proposition, and it was carried unanimously.

The meeting then elected about twenty delegates for the Provincial Conference, and also some for the National Congress.

Rao Saheb Babaji Gopal then proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the President. Mr. Pundlik Ganesh seconded him, and the proposition was carried with acclamation.

Three hearty cheers were called for the Queen-Empress and one for the Collector, her Majesty's representative in the zilla, which were responded to with great enthusiasm. The proceedings then terminated, and the meeting was dissolved.

III.

THE ALIBAG ASSOCIATION : ITS FORMATION.

(21st December, 1894).

The necessity of a permanent Association at Alibag, to bring the people's grievances to the notice of Government in a thoroughly loyal and efficient way, and generally to watch and advance the political interests of the ryots, having been long felt, some leading members of the Alibag Bar issued invitations to the various villages of the taluka, to send their duly elected representatives to a meeting in the spacious

mandap of Shrimant Biwalkar's *wada* at Alibag, on Sunday, the 16th inst. About 200 delegates of all classes attended. More than thirty members were delegated by the Avas Sarvajanik Sabha, which was established a few months ago, and which represents about ninety-five villages of the northern division of the taluka. The Nagam Sarvajanik Sabha, which represents about twenty villages on that side of Alibag, also sent some representatives to the meeting. Mr. Govind Baba Gurjar, pleader, having been voted to the chair, and the object of the meeting explained, the names of the delegates and the villages that sent them were read, and it was unanimously resolved that these delegates form the Alibag Taluka Association. An influential managing committee was appointed, and to it was left the business of framing the rules of the Association. Mr. Vithal Mahadew Dhamankar, Pleader, who was elected Secretary of the Association, then read the drafts of three separate petitions, two on revenue matters to the Collector and one on forest grazing regulations to the Bombay Government. The first petition refers to the recent Government Resolution anent certain petitions against revenue enhancements in the taluka, and prays that the Collector would be graciously pleased to grant the landholders permission to inspect the revision survey papers showing the methods of classification and the principles on which the *anna*-valuations had been arrived at. This inspection, if obtained, will enable the landholders to ascertain how far it may be advantageous for them to deposit the large sums of money asked of them in order to have the classification of their lands verified. The second petition requests the Collector to grant remissions of the enhanced assessment in full during the current year in accordance with the provisions of Section 104 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code, because the revised assessment was announced only last May. The third petition to the Government of Bombay points out the rigorous nature of the grazing rules recently introduced in the taluka and prays for redress.

The resolutions for the adoption of the petitions having been duly moved and seconded, a deputation to present the petitions to the Collector was appointed on the motion of Mr. Raoji Hari Athavale. Mr. R. L. Gharat moved the last resolution, authorising the Secretary to open correspondence with leading citizens of the other talukas of the Collectorate on the subject of forming similar Associations in their talukas with a view to ultimately establish the Kolaba Zilla Association. A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the day's proceedings.

APPENDIX E.

MR. ALFRED WEBB, M.P., AT ALIBAG.

(19th January, 1895.)

Yesterday morning, at the invitation of some gentlemen from Alibag, Mr. Alfred Webb, M.P., left Bombay in company with the Hon. Mr. Javerilal U. Yajnik, Dr. Deshmukh, Messrs Fattah Ali Sheikh Ahmed, Hassan Ali, Luxmidas Khimji, R. L. Gharat, Samarth, Dharkar, Walvekar, Mhaskar, and others. The party reached Mandva at 9 a. m. They were received there by several gentlemen of Alibag and Pen, and a large number of people, belonging chiefly to the agricultural classes. As Mr. Webb passed through Mandva he inspected some of the huts occupied by fishermen. At Avas, four miles from Mandva, a splendid reception awaited him. There were present there, among others, Agris, Bhandaris, Katkaris, and Dhangars, from the neighbouring villages, numbering about six thousand people. At the house of Mr. Babaji Gopal Mr. Webb witnessed a dance of the women of fishermen class. On going to the *marquee* put up in front of the Nagoba Temple for his reception, he was shown over a few of the thatched huts of the villagers and the village school. Two

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addresses were presented to him, one from the Pen Taluka and the other from the people of Alibag. They are as follows:—

ADDRESS FROM THE VILLAGERS OF ALIBAG
TALUKA.

To

ALFRED WEBB, Esq., M.P.

RESPECTED SIR,

It is with feelings of sincere pleasure and thankfulness that we, the inhabitants of the Alibag taluka of the Kolaba district, welcome your arrival among us this day. We are aware that during your short visit to this country, undertaken mainly for the purpose of presiding over the Tenth Indian National Congress lately held at Madras, you have had opportunities of seeing some of the crowded cities and towns of India and talking with some of the leading men among them. We also know that it has been your wish at the same time to avail yourself of any occasion during your sojourn here to see for yourself something of the agricultural population among us and get an insight into their life and condition. We are glad that our proximity to Bombay enables you to fulfil in a measure this desire on your part. We in this part of the taluka are but within a few hours' sail of Bombay, whilst the marked contrast between wealth and poverty within the distance of a few miles from that city is a feature which will not fail to at once strike you.

2. This part of the Kolaba district presents, as you will have noticed, an endless variety of picturesque scenery. From the sea the eye naturally wanders over a narrow belt of garden land lying along the beach, here and there broken by a few small creeks, behind which is a range of hills stretching from north to south. At first sight one is apt to be deluded by the picturesque scenery and cocoanut and garden plantations. No doubt the soil is rich in some places, but it is a fact that on the eastern side there are detached pieces of land, about 18 miles in length and varying from half a mile to three miles in breadth,

which consist of salt villages, called *lharapat*. There are other descriptions of land called *warkas* which grow grass only. Much of this *warkas* land in the original settlement formed part of the rice lands to which it supplied grass for purposes of *rab* (ash manure). A considerable portion of this *warkas* land was naturally unsuited for any more profitable use, but since the encouragement held out by the Survey Act of 1865 and the Land Revenue Code of 1879, and on the faith of the further assurance given by Act 4 of 1886 that improvements made in land by the ryots themselves shall be protected from taxation, the conversion of a good portion of *warkas* lands into rabi, rice, and garden lands has proceeded apace. Recent survey operations have, however, shown that a Settlement Officer is able to drive a coach-and-six through such improvements and make their protection from taxation a delusion and a snare.

3. A revised settlement has lately been introduced into this taluka whereby the average rates of assessment on different kinds of land have been increased beyond the limits laid down in the Government Resolutions of 1874 and 1884, namely, 33 per cent. in the case of a taluka, 66 per cent. in the case of a single village, and 100 per cent. in the case of an individual holding. The result is that in some cases holders of individual numbers find their assessments enhanced from 200 to 1,300 per cent. No doubt the pressure of population on land has led to extended cultivation, but the condition of the great majority of cultivators is becoming worse and worse every day owing to the severity with which such rates press upon their means of subsistence.

4. From the villages you have just visited you have doubtless been able, we venture to say, to judge for yourself of this condition. We trust you have been able to form some idea of it from the thatched huts they live in, from their scanty stores of provisions, their meagre supply of clothing to cover their bodies, and the small number of brass or copper utensils and other sources of material comforts to be found in their habitations. In the *Mandap* in which you are now

seated you see collected together representatives of the various sections of our village community, from the high-caste Brahman, Shenvi, Prabhu, Bania or Wani and Sonar to Kumbis or Marathas and Agris or workers in salt pans, Bhandaris or drawers of toddy, graziers and the aboriginal classes, such as Katkaris, Kolis, Warlis and Dhangars. We leave them to tell you, in their own way what they have got to say in respect of the life they lead and of the resources at their command.

5. It is only just to the district officers to say that on the whole they sympathise with the hard lot of the cultivating classes, but such officers seem powerless in mitigating it in consequence of their inability to test the technical work of the Survey department and thereby to control its action. When all operations connected with the measurement, classification, anna-valuation, and the fixing of rates on lands are completed by the Survey Superintendent in charge of the revision work, he sends in his report to the district Collector, who has hardly the leisure and much less the means at command of testing the accuracy of the Survey officers' work, and if at times he suggests changes in the grouping of villages, or in rates of assessment, it is seldom that his suggestions meet with favour from Government, should the Survey Commissioner disapprove of them. In short, the Survey department, as one of the great earning departments of the State, holds too powerful a sway over the provincial Government, in the present embarrassed state of Indian finance, to allow of its work being called in question. The result is, as you see before you, the impoverished and abject condition of the peasantry. We leave it to you sir, to say whether the contentment and happiness of these people should not be an object of much greater concern to Government than the addition of a few thousand rupees to the revenue by rates enhanced beyond the limits laid down deliberately by themselves. We say this because we are fully conscious of the blessings of security of life and prosperity we enjoy under the British Government. But we, of the cultivating classes, seem to be the only unfortunate section of the people

who cannot boast, as other classes do, of prosperity under the British rule.

6. Another circumstance which sorely vexes our souls is the recent enforcement of the revised grazing rules in this taluka. We beg of you to give a patient hearing to what those who are here have got to say on the working of these rules. We trust that the testimony of our condition thus obtained at first hand will enable you to speak with some degree of knowledge from your place in Parliament, should an opportunity present itself in any debate in the House of Commons on the condition of the agricultural classes in this country.

7. In conclusion, we beg to offer you our heartfelt thanks for the trouble you have taken in paying us a visit and the interest you have been pleased to show in our welfare.

And with the best wishes for your long life and prosperity,

We beg to remain,

Respected Sir,

Your most obedient and grateful servants,

Avas, 18th January, 1895.

ADDRESS FROM THE VILLAGERS OF PEN
TALUKA.

(January 18, 1895.)

To

ALFRED WEBB Esq., M. P.

DEAR SIR,

We, the inhabitants of Pen Taluka, avail ourselves of this opportunity of sincerely thanking you for the interest which you are kind enough to take in the welfare of your Indian fellow-subjects. We are particularly gratified to see that you have come down to our district all the way from Bombay to see with your own eyes our condition and hear with your own ears the tale of woe of our poverty-stricken agricultural population.

You will have observed, Sir, how life in the districts is in sharp contrast with life in cities. It is this latter which certain politicians in England are in the habit of palming off on the British public as correctly picturing the material prosperity and economic development of India as a whole. If you had time to visit our Taluka, you could have seen poverty on a larger scale than you have seen here to-day. It is this question of widespread poverty that has been exercising the minds of thoughtful men in the country. What with an oppressive increase of assessment, an arbitrary tampering with the rights and privileges of Khots, the want of certainty or permanency about the revised settlement, the absence of grazing facilities for cattle, and the hardship inflicted by the salt tax on the peasant in more ways than one, the life of the agricultural population in our Taluka is a cheerless one. It is not in the interest of good administration and progress that this should continue long; and we trust, Sir, that you will spare no efforts to impress upon the House of Commons the fact that in the interior of India the poverty question is assuming a menacing aspect from day to day.

The remedy, Sir, lies partly in over-hauling the present fiscal system of British India, so as to make the incidence of taxation not equal but equitable. It also lies partly in curtailing Government expenditure consistently no doubt with the maintenance of administrative efficiency. It also lies, Sir, in adjusting the fair shares of England and India in the cost of governing the Indian Empire and of preserving it against foreign attack. We trust this last, among other equally important matters, will engage your earnest attention in and out of the House of Commons.

Again thanking you most sincerely for your sympathy and large-heartedness and wishing you and those near and dear to you a long lease of useful life and beneficent activity,

We remain,

Sir,

Your most grateful fellow-subjects of Pen Taluka.

MR. WEBB'S REPLY TO THE TWO ADDRESSES.

Mr. Webb, in reply to the above addresses, said :—Men of the Talukas of Alibag and Pen,—I thank you heartily for your address—no less for the caskets in which they are enclosed. It is a peculiar pleasure to me to be in your midst, to look into the sea of eager faces by which I am surrounded, to listen to your addresses. The sentiments expressed in these addresses are too kind. I am not to be thanked for being here, for having had opportunities afforded, it may be, of doing good. This is my last day in India. To-morrow at this hour, if you look from the beach, you might perhaps see the smoke of the steamer bearing me to my home, six thousand miles away. I have passed through many and varied experiences in India, but through none more interesting than the experiences of to-day. For here I have been brought in closest contact with the masses of the toiling poor, who find it so difficult to alter their lot, and yet each one of whose lives, each one of whose portions is of as great an amount in the eyes of the Creator as the lives and fortunes of the highest in this land. This day gives me peculiar pleasure for another reason. I came out here to attend the Indian National Congress—a Congress, of the aims and work of which all the inhabitants of India should be proud. One of the charges most persistently brought against the Congress is that it is promoted mainly for selfish objects, by a selfish class. That however much they may desire to raise themselves, to assert their own rights, to maintain their own position in this their land, they are not thoughtful regarding the fortunes of the masses of their fellow-countrymen. I know this charge is false. I judged likely to be so by parity of experience. Against all political movement it has been urged at the outset as the readiest weapon of attack, that those engaged in it are not sincere and true-hearted. It is always a proof of the sincerity and honesty to think only of one's own affairs to side with the Government. But the moment thoughts take a wider circle and men begin to speak on behalf of others as well as themselves, they are likely to be actuated by sinister motives!

Well, I know the Congress movement, to be a sincere movement, an honest movement concerned alike with the fate and fortunes of the masses of the people as with the fate and the fortunes of those who by education have been awakened to the assertion of their rights and the realization of their public duties, and to-day I have proof that the Congress movement is no narrow movement. I am here by the invitation by some of its chief promoters who are desirous that I shall not leave India without being afforded an opportunity of visiting the houses of some of the very humblest of their fellow-countrymen. This gathering rejoices the heart, and gains strength and significance from its comprehensiveness. It is composed of men of all religions and all races—men engaged in the most varied occupations in life all come together for the common weal, not shutting themselves off from each other. That is as it should be, so it is the only method by which peoples in other countries have set out to tread the path of progress. For other reasons this is a specially interesting occasion to me. For years past I have been permitted to take my share in a struggle for life by the Irish people—a people who, like you for the most part depend upon agricultural pursuits for their living. That struggle has been against unjust imposts, against the infringement of old common rights. Whether rent be unjustly taxed by individual landlords or by the State as a landlord, the process is equally unjust. Your position may, however, be more different than that of the Irish people. Against the doings of individual landlords there was an appeal to the state; against the state as a landlord there is only an appeal to itself, and here the state is too much an outside power not as yet instinct with that mature life that will throb through its veins when it has come about, as it will some day, that yourselves will form the state. Too long did our people suffer patiently without protest, but at length the cup of their miseries flowed over. They resorted to protest and combination. Take pattern by us in so far as we acted wisely. Form yourselves into associations; discuss together your rights and grievances; keep

MR. WEBB'S REPLY TO THE TWO ADDRESSES.

Mr. Webb, in reply to the above addresses, said :—Men of the Talukas of Alibag and Pen,—I thank you heartily for your address—no less for the caskets in which they are enclosed. It is a peculiar pleasure to me to be in your midst, to look into the sea of eager faces by which I am surrounded, to listen to your addresses. The sentiments expressed in these addresses are too kind. I am not to be thanked for being here, for having had opportunities afforded, it may be, of doing good. This is my last day in India. To-morrow at this hour, if you look from the beach, you might perhaps see the smoke of the steamer bearing me to my home, six thousand miles away. I have passed through many and varied experiences in India, but through none more interesting than the experiences of to-day. For here I have been brought in closest contact with the masses of the toiling poor, who find it so difficult to alter their lot, and yet each one of whose lives, each one of whose portions is of as great an amount in the eyes of the Creator as the lives and fortunes of the highest in this land. This day gives me peculiar pleasure for another reason. I came out here to attend the Indian National Congress—a Congress, of the aims and work of which all the inhabitants of India should be proud. One of the charges most persistently brought against the Congress is that it is promoted mainly for selfish objects, by a selfish class. That however much they may desire to raise themselves, to assert their own rights, to maintain their own position in this their land, they are not thoughtful regarding the fortunes of the masses of their fellow-countrymen. I know this charge is false. I judged likely to be so by parity of experience. Against all political movement it has been urged at the outset as the readiest weapon of attack, that those engaged in it are not sincere and true-hearted. It is always a proof of the sincerity and honesty to think only of one's own affairs to side with the Government. But the moment thoughts take a wider circle and men begin to speak on behalf of others as well as themselves, they are likely to be actuated by sinister motives!

Well, I know the Congress movement, to be a sincere movement, an honest movement concerned alike with the fate and fortunes of the masses of the people as with the fate and the fortunes of those who by education have been awakened to the assertion of their rights and the realization of their public duties, and to-day I have proof that the Congress movement is no narrow movement. I am here by the invitation by some of its chief promoters who are desirous that I shall not leave India without being afforded an opportunity of visiting the houses of some of the very humblest of their fellow-countrymen. This gathering rejoices the heart, and gains strength and significance from its comprehensiveness. It is composed of men of all religions and all races—men engaged in the most varied occupations in life all come together for the common weal, not shutting themselves off from each other. That is as it should be, so it is the only method by which peoples in other countries have set out to tread the path of progress. For other reasons this is a specially interesting occasion to me. For years past I have been permitted to take my share in a struggle for life by the Irish people—a people who like you for the most part depend upon agricultural pursuits for their living. That struggle has been against unjust imposts, against the infringement of old common rights. Whether rent be unjustly taxed by individual landlords or by the State as a landlord, the process is equally unjust. Your position may, however, be more different than that of the Irish people. Against the doings of individual landlords there was an appeal to the state; against the state as a landlord there is only an appeal to itself, and here the state is too much an outside power not as yet instinct with that mature life that will throb through its veins when it has come about, as it will some day, that yourselves will form the state. Too long did our people suffer patiently without protest, but at length the cup of their miseries flowed over. They resorted to protest and combination. Take pattern by us in so far as we acted wisely. Form yourselves into associations; discuss together your rights and grievances; keep

strictly within the law : put from you all temptations to violence and disorder : be patient and determined : base your pleas for justice upon truth—upon the statement of well ascertained facts, couched in moderate language. Upon the one hand, the rulers of this land will remember that whilst the Empire has been established by adherence to broad principles of consideration and justice regarding the masses of the people, it can duly be obtained by adherence to same. There might, indeed, arise a grave danger in this country through the Government or its officials forgetting that supremacy—rather common rule for the good of all—can be safely maintained only on the same broad lines of consideration and justice as it has been obtained ; but the day is waning, and I must not lengthen out into a speech that which was to be but a few brief words of heartfelt thanks. I shall long remember this day. It will be long before the sympathetic impressions derived from facing this great assemblage will be obliterated from my mind. Your Indian customs are more graceful than ours. I have here often been overloaded with beautiful flowers. I have had to lament the impossibility of preserving and carrying them home to my relatives and friends. But I shall, however, preserve these simple bunches given me by the children in the village school. Far across the sea they will be a reminder, if reminder were needed, of your sunny skies, your paling eaves, your kind welcome, a reminder before everything else that it will be my duty in concert with your other friends in the United Kingdom (able and more influential than myself) to do all in my power to lighten that life of grinding poverty and ceaseless toil to which you as well as such a large proportion of the people of India are condemned. You have wished me long life. I desire life only for so long as I may be permitted to strive to make it useful to others.

APPENDIX F.

SPECIMEN OF AN INDIVIDUAL APPEAL TO THE COLLECTOR.

Urankar's Chawl, Kandewadi, Bombay, 21st July 1894.

To

THE COLLECTOR OF KOLABA, ALIBAG.

Sir,—I respectfully beg to inform you that I own a small landed property in the village of Avas of the Alibag taluka. From the copy of my *khata* that I have got from the Mamledar's office, I find that on certain portions of my land the revised assessment has been abnormally high, and I humbly beg to appeal against it.

As regards *kharif* lands I may say that although the increase on some of them has, in my opinion, been more than what it should be, I am not going to complain against it.

The following are the details of the pieces complained of:—

No. for reference in this Application.	Name of the registered holder.	Original.					
		Survey No.	Pot No.	Class of land.	Contents.		Assessment.
					Acres	Gts.	Rs. a. p.
1	Ramji Laxuman						
	Gharat.....	160	1	Bagayat ...	2	4	4 15 0
2	Do.	163	3	Do. ...	...	5	0 6 5
3	Do.	336	...	Varkas ...	5	6	1 2 0

No. for reference in this Application.	Name of the registered holder.	Revised.					
		Survey No.	Plot No.	Class of land.	Contents.	Assessment.	
					Acres	Gts.	Rs. a. p.
1	Ramji Laxuman						
	Gharat.....	384	1	Bagayat	1	36 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 0 0
2	Do.....	394	5	Do. ....	..	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 0 5
	3	Do.....	324	1	Rabi	13	0 8 0
325			2	Kharif.....	1	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 0 0
325			5	Rabi. ....	..	7	0 4 0
325			6	Do. ....	..	11	0 8 0
326			1	Do.	2	2	3 2 6
		346	6	Kharif.....	..	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 12 0

In the one acre and 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ gunthas of land in No. 1 there are three *und* trees, two *umbar* trees, two *vad* trees, and a small pit capable of holding water, if not used, till the end of February. The whole piece is generally used as grazing ground, but occasionally the rabi crop of *udid* is grown thereon. It is not known why this piece was classed as bagayat at the original survey. About one-fourth of this piece belongs to another man, and has been let by him to a farmer for Rs. 1-4-0 per annum, that is for the value of the Government cess on it. The remaining three-fourth was purchased by me for Rs. 125 in 1889 and I tried to grow sugar-cane and leaves of Nagwel thereon at a cost of about Rs. 100, but the attempt proved a total failure. I intend to see if cocoanut trees could be grown there; but for this purpose I shall have in the first place to spend about Rs. 200 to dig a well with the doubtful result of getting a sufficient quantity of water. I think the former owner of the piece had tried in vain to turn it into bagayat. My present annual income from the piece is from Rs. 5 to Rs. 8. I beg leave to add that the Assistant Survey Superintendent had promised to recommend such pieces to be classed as rabi, but I am not aware of what happened afterwards. I therefore.

pray that this piece be classed as rabi, and assessed accordingly.

The 5½ gunthas of land No. 2 is just behind my dwelling-house, and has only two mango trees and three or four tamarind trees on it. There is no water in the compound, and the ground is generally required for domestic purposes, and yet the increase thereon has been from Rs. 0-6-5 to Rs. 1-0-5. I humbly request that this piece be classed as varkas or bagayat of the very lowest class, and assessed accordingly.

In No. 3, I may be prepared to bear the Navakirda charges for new Survey No. 325, Pot No. 2, and 346. Pot No. 6, although I have had to undergo much expense in turning the original varkas into kharif. In the remaining pieces, however, in this number the Survey Department has, I respectfully submit, been wrong in classing the original varkas as rabi and enhancing the assessment from about 3½ annas to about Rs. 1½ per acre or more than 500 per cent. New Survey No. 324, Pot No. 1, contains a few thorny shrubs, new Survey No. 325, Pot No. 5, serves as a piece for piling up bundles of dry crop for thrashing. New Survey No. 325, Pot No. 6, and new Survey No. 326, Pot No. 1, are used only as grazing ground, and if let to another will hardly yield an income of more than a rupee. No one has ever attempted to grow any rabi crop thereon, as the land seems totally incapable of producing any. Besides, 2 acres and 33 gunthas is hardly enough for 5 or 6 heads of cattle to graze on. For all these reasons, therefore, I earnestly pray that these pieces be classed as varkas and assessed at their old rates.—I beg, &c.,

(Signed) RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT.

No. 4805 of 1894.

Kolaba Collector's Office, 31st July, 1894.

Memorandum.

In reply to his petition, dated 21st July, 1894, Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat is informed that the Collector is unable to admit that there is any error in the classification of the lands referred to. If Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat wishes the classification to be verified, he should deposit a sum of Rs. 50 on the understanding that the Collector will then arrange for the classification to be verified, and that if the classification is found to be correct, the whole of the expenses of the verification will be paid out of the deposit, and the balance (if any) alone will be returned; while if any error is found in the classification the cost of correcting such error will be borne by Government and not deducted from the deposit money to be returned to applicant.

(Signed) R. A. LAMB, Acting Collector, Kolaba.

To Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat, Urankar's Chawl, Kande-wadi, Bombay.

Urankar's Chawl, Kande-wadi, Bombay, 20th August 1894.
To the Collector of Kolaba, Alibag.

Sir,—In reply to your office No. 4805, dated 31st July, 1894, I respectfully beg to say that I shall deem it a favour to be informed beforehand of the manner in which the classification of my lands is to be verified, so that it may be easy for me to deposit the sum of Rs. 50 as required by you. If the proposed verification is to be simply a repetition of the details the Survey Department has gone through, I humbly submit that the process will only entail unnecessary expense and do me little good. I do not say there is any error in the measurement of the lands in question. My only contention is that the classers have erroneously set a high anna-valuation upon them, the percentages of increase

being 1835, 1558 and 6048 respectively. I am prepared to prove the statements I have made in my petition of the 21st ultimo, and thus show that there have arisen no causes for such an abnormal increase.—I beg, &c.

(Signed) RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT

No. 5948 of 1894.

Alibag, 24th September, 1894.

MEMORANDUM.

In reply to his petition, dated 20th August, 1894, Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat is informed that on the money being deposited by him, arrangements will be made for the re-classification in the field of the lands in question by a survey officer of no lower standing than the officer who made the classification complained of.

(Signed) R. A. LAMB,
Acting Collector, Kolaba.

Trankar's Chawl, Kandewadi, Bombay, 9th November, 1894.

To

THE COLLECTOR OF KOLABA, ALIBAG.

Sir,—In thankfully acknowledging receipt of your office No. 5948, dated 24th September, 1894, I beg to point out that it was not the standing of the officers intended to verify the results of the revision survey settlement, that I was so much anxious to inquire about. I rather inquired to know the method that is to be followed in making these verifications. I regret to see that the main points of contention in my last letter remain yet unanswered. I hope to make these points clearer in this letter by proposing the following questions, and shall feel exceedingly obliged if you will graciously be pleased to answer them. I beg to be informed as to (1) whether in spite of the state of income, water-supply, and trees standing upon the two bagayat pieces referred to in my letter of the 21st

July, 1894, and the expenditure already incurred, and that which will have to be incurred to effect improvements, as described by me in that letter, the assessment on these pieces is liable to be raised from annas 6 pies 5 to Re. 1-0-5, and Rs. 4-15 to Rs. 14 as has been done by the Survey Officers and (2) whether, notwithstanding that the different *warhas* pieces referred to by me in the same letter are hardly sufficient for *vab* for the adjoining *kharif* land and for the plough animals of this land to graze upon, their assessment is liable to be raised from about 3½ annas to about Re. 1½ per acre?

I may repeat that if after a through and impartial inquiry, the state of things may not be found as is described by me, I am willing to have the expenses that Government will incur, paid out of the Rs. 50 that they want me to deposit.— I beg, &c.

(Signed) RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT.

Reply of the Collector of Kolaba to letter, dated 9th November, 1894, from Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat.

No. 6996 of 1894.

Camp Achle, 16th November, 1894.

The method that would be followed in making verifications would be the method followed in making the original classification. The steps taken in that original classification would be gone over one by one and each step and its results verified. The answers to the two questions propounded in the letter under reply would depend on the result of those verifications. Should the original classification be confirmed by the verification the answer to each question would be in the affirmative.

(Signed) R. A. LAMB,
Acting Collector, Kolaba.

REFUSAL TO GRANT EXTRACT FROM FIELD-BOOK. 163

Urankar's Chawl, Kandewadi, Bombay, 12th December, 1894.

To

THE COLLECTOR OF KOLABA, ALIBAG.

Sir,—I beg thankfully to acknowledge the receipt of your office No. 6949, dated 16th November, 1894. I shall feel highly obliged by your kindly ordering to furnish me with an extract from the field-book of the survey officers, giving the details of the sources by means of which the classers have determined the anna-valuations of the survey numbers complained of by me in my letter of the 21st July last.

This information will enable me to ascertain the line and principles on which the revision Survey Settlement has been effected, and to decide how far it may be advantageous for me to ask for the classification of my fields to be verified. I am prepared to pay the cost for copying out the requisite details.
—I beg, &c.

(Signed) RAMJI LAKSHMAN GHARAT

Reply of the Collector of Kolaba to petition, dated 12th December, 1894, from Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat.

No. 7809 of 1894.

Alibag, 23rd December, 1894.

The request therein made cannot be complied with.

(Signed) R. A. LAMB,

Acting Collector, Kolaba.

To Mr. Ramji Laxuman Gharat, Urankar's Chawl, Kandewadi, Bombay.

APPENDIX G.

SPEECHES AT THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH PROVINCIAL CONFERENCES IN CONNECTION WITH THE ALIBAG REVISION SETTLEMENT.

Resolution No. 1 (7th Provincial Conference).*

Mr. R. L. GHARAT (Alibag), in supporting the resolution, said :—

This is not the first occasion on which this Conference has selected the subject of Land Revenue enhancement for

* The Resolution was as follows :—

- I. (a) That this Conference strongly deprecates the pronounced tendency of the Survey Department to set at naught the moderating restrictions placed upon excessive enhancements by Sir Philip Wodehouse's Government Resolution of 1874 and the Legislative enactment passed in 1886 by Lord Reay's Government guaranteeing exemption of private improvements.
- (b) That this Conference notes with regret that during the last five years the Local Government has not been careful in enforcing these wholesome restraints upon the work of the department, and it has in many cases over-ruled the more moderate suggestions of its own Revenue officers when they were in conflict with those of the Survey Department.
- (c) That as all recent enhancements relate to the revision of original assessment fixed in times of high prices, when the methods and appliances of the department had received their full development, the only two grounds of rough work and low prices on which enhancements were made in the earlier revisions have ceased to be operative, and that it deserves the most serious consideration of Government whether in the Konkan talukas especially more stringent limitations should not be enforced in regard to all proposals for the enhancement on individual holdings and old village groups, and whether full exemption of warkas cultivation and conversion into rice lands should not as a rule be guaranteed.
- II. That this Conference again urges upon the attention of Government the injustice of fixing the revenue survey assessments in the Deyghad taluka at a rate higher than what the owners of land can recover from their tenants under the Khote Settlement calculated as it is to practically confiscate Khote rights; and the Conference regrets that no steps have yet been taken for remedying this great evil.

its deliberations. Year after year the subject has been discussed, and resolutions pointing out the pernicious effects of the present policy of Government in regard to it and praying for redress have been adopted and passed by this Conference. It is most unfortunate that, in spite of all these representations, the Survey authorities should still persist in their oppressive policy. The subject is of vital importance, not only to the agricultural classes, but to the entire population—nay, even to our rulers themselves. What would be the result if, through any unbearable burden of taxation, the agriculturists should find themselves compelled to give up cultivation and resort to questionable methods of earning their livelihood? The necessity of preserving the cultivators in a state of comfort and contentment has been felt by all enlightened nations, whether ancient or modern. It would be a sad day for India if the agricultural population were to become sullen and discontented. Every attempt, therefore, should be made to watch the interests of this most important class. It may be urged that the enhanced assessment will not materially affect the cultivators inasmuch as the lands are for the most part owned by well-to-do landholders. But this is a mistaken view. We still have numerous small holdings belonging to poor agriculturists, and the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act and the arrangement for *tagari* advances to cultivators are evidences of the solicitude on the part of Government to preserve the remnants of the once flourishing peasantry of this Presidency. Even those who do not possess any land of their own but hold it by lease will indirectly suffer by abnormal increase in assessment. The landlords, in order to be able to pay the increased cess to Government, will undoubtedly demand a larger share of the produce of their fields and leave only a small fraction to the actual tillers.

The most salient points we have to consider in connection with these revision survey settlements are (1) to find out what the provisions of the Land Revenue Code and the various re-

solutions on the subject issued by Government from time to time are; (2) to see whether the Survey authorities in carrying out their operations have loyally observed them; and (3) to examine how any departure from them is likely to affect the interests of the people. (*Cheers.*)

In the Bombay Presidency the law allows only one regular revision survey after a stated period, generally of thirty years. It also authorises the Government to increase the revenue up to 33 per cent. on a taluka, 66 per cent. on a village, and 100 per cent. on an individual holding if such increase may appear Justifiable to Government. Any departure from these principles requires exceptional grounds for justification and cannot be allowed without the special sanction of Government. Any improvements made by the occupants of lands at their own cost during their first occupancy are to be exempted from taxation at the second or revision survey. While the survey operations are in progress, the occupants of lands are to be called upon by public notification to point out the improvements they may have made. The revised rates are not to be levied in the same year in which they are announced, and the ryots are to have opportunities to petition Government when they are dissatisfied with the rates. (*Cheers.*)

So far, gentlemen, the law and Government evince the most anxious concern for the people's welfare. When, however, we come to see and examine the *practical* application of these principles, we have nothing but disappointment. The Survey authorities have, knowingly or unknowingly, disregarded the most important of these regulations. Without giving the people any opportunity for pointing out the improvements they had made, the survey classers unhesitatingly taxed these improvements. In fixing their anna-valuations, they never consulted the holders of lands in order to ascertain what ratio the natural capability of the soil bore to the fertility due to the farmer's labour and expense. In the Alibag Taluka of the Kolaba District, until a public meeting was held at Alibag after the completion of the survey operations, hardly any per-

son had the least idea of the existence of a Government Resolution on the subject of improvements. The Survey officers neglected to issue the requisite notification in accordance with the resolution as they did not care to let the people have any knowledge of it. No copy of it has been recorded in the Mamlatdar's office. If the people readily attended to the instructions they got at the very outset to supply the Survey Department with labourers, &c., and forwarded their petitions to the Collector within two months from the appearance of the last notification, would it be fair, gentlemen, to infer that they took no notice of the intermediate notification which concerned their best interests? The late Mr. Telang (*cheers*) had to work very hard to get Government to insert clauses to this effect, but the ignorance of the people and the apparent unwillingness of the Survey authorities to give practical effect to them have made them almost a dead letter. Thus the amending clauses of 1886, so far from serving the purpose for which they were enacted, may rather be supposed to do mischief, since they are calculated to deceive the superficial observer into the belief that Government must have made an effectual provision against taxing improvements. We have, therefore, to express our emphatic, though respectful, protest and to see justice done to the agriculturists whenever attempts are made by officers of the Survey Department to avoid effect being given to the spirit of the law. (*Loud applause.*) The limit in the percentage of increase is in a number of cases wholly set aside. The circumstances are too well known to need recapitulation. In the Panwel Taluka of the Kolaba District, we find, the percentage going up as high as 44·8 instead of 33 allowed by the law. In the Alibag Taluka the enhancements on individual holdings have, in many cases, far exceeded the legal limit of 100 per cent. In the absence of any report on the operations of the recent revision settlement, the percentage of increase on the whole taluka cannot be determined, but seeing that in a number of villages the increase has been over 40 per cent., and in one case at least over 100 per cent., it may not be far from the

truth to presume that the increase on the whole taluka must have been over 33 per cent.

In the case of *bagayat* (garden) and *varkas* (grass growing) lands, the people of the Alibag Taluka have to make the loudest complaints. It is not easy to guess on what grounds the Survey authorities have raised the assessment on these two kinds of lands at such exorbitant rates. Lands containing a few jungle trees and having no apparent water-supply have been classed as *bagayat* lands. With stringent Forest and Abkari laws even cocoanut gardens leave a very small margin of profit to the holder. In the absence of any considerable *rabi* or dry crop in the taluka, the classing of the major portion of the old *varkas* land as *rabi* passes ordinary comprehension. Hundreds of acres of *varkas* land, where even cattle graze with difficulty, have been classed as *rabi* land and subjected to an increase in assessment of over 500 per cent.!! (*Shame.*)

One of the avowed objects of the revision survey was to ascertain the boundaries of the survey numbers of the *varkas* lands and to define the rights of occupants in them. Practically, however, it has been found that the Survey department has done very little in this direction, and the old uncertainty and confusion as to the rights of individual occupants remain just as they were before.

In the case of the *kharapat* villages of the taluka, the clause enacting that no survey and classification work should be undertaken a third time has apparently been set aside. Although Government may say that the first settlement was based on a rough classification, Mr. Hearn, the Assistant Survey Superintendent, in his statistical reports of the Kolaba Agency in 1854, says:—"The Government has already taken it into consideration and the *kharapat* or salt batty land has undergone a complete survey and classification; and before long a new set of fair and equitable rates will be introduced to the great benefit both of the ^{collectors} ~~Collectors~~ and Government." In a footnote he adds:—"The revised and reduced rates here alluded to have since received the sanction

of Government and been fixed for twenty years. A landlord from Alibag petitioned against a third classification of land in these villages, and here is the reply he got from Colonel Godfrey, the Survey Superintendent:—"No classification work is in progress in *kharapat* villages. The Assistant Revenue Superintendent has been intrusted to survey the land as far only as may be necessary to rectify any errors through oversight and committed at the former survey and to fix survey stones even at *pot* numbers in accordance with the regulations of the revision survey and this in no way affects clause 106 of Act V of 1879 and clause 1 of Act IV of 1886." But this was not so; the classification was a regular one, and the landlord had to pay the expenses and bear the increased assessment.

The revision survey, instead of doing good to the people has been a source of much anxiety to them, for they do not know whence to bring money to pay the Government. A monster meeting of over 3,000 persons was held at Avas on the 21st ultimo. It is a proof of the widespread uneasiness pervading the taluka. Petitions made to Government have not yet been satisfactorily disposed of. The ignorant ryots are at a disadvantage in not being able to properly understand the survey regulations, which are very complicated, and hence they cannot set forth their grievances as best as they ought. Their petitions in such cases often fail, and they begin to despair. Under the circumstances, therefore, it would be in the interest of every body if Government give effect to their rules in a benevolent spirit and allow the ignorant ryot the benefit of doubt when there is fair room for any doubt. Nothing less than a commission of inquiry appointed by the Government is likely to set matters right. (*Loud cheers*)

Gentlemen, I come from Alibag Taluka and have taken some pains to study the subject of these enhancements as appertaining to that taluka. I can, therefore, assure you that my information is based on facts. Having already said a good deal on the subject, I do not wish to take up any more of your time,

but beg most cordially to recommend for your acceptance the resolution which has been so ably proposed by the Hon'ble Mr. Natu, and which I have been asked to support. (*Loud cheers.*)

Mr. Vithul Mahadeo, Vakil (Alibag), said as follows in support of the Resolution:—

GENTLEMEN,

I have been elected a delegate to this Conference by the people of Kolaba as well as the Bombay Presidency Association.

I have been carrying on the profession of a pleader for about twenty-eight years, and not only possess lands in the Kolaba Collectorate, paying an annual assessment of about Rs. 400, but cultivate a portion of these lands myself.

The people who elected me as their representative are almost all of them farmers, and they have requested me to state all the effects produced by the introduction of the revision survey.

I am now to place before you the sufferings of the agricultural population, which forms the major portion of the inhabitants of the villages—sufferings of which I have been a personal witness, having every day dealings with the villagers.

The Kolaba Collectorate contains seven talukas. The original survey in the zilla commenced about the year 1851-52 and closed in 1867-68. Rates according to revision survey have now been given out for the Karjat, Panwel, Pen and Alibag Talukas, and work of revision survey is in rapid progress in the other talukas.

It will be seen from Col. Francis's report that the rates fixed at the original survey were in excess of those existing at the time of the previous administration.

When the Land Revenue Code was amended by Act IV of 1886, the Honourable Mr. Peile and the Right Honourable the then Governor, Lord Reay, declared, during the debate in the Council, that the revision survey was necessary to

rectify the mistakes committed at the original survey by officers who were new to the work at the time; and in pursuance of the same principle Government issued their Resolution No. 2619, dated 26th of March 1894. The officers committed no blunders of any importance at the original survey, and consequently the revision survey has only served the purpose of depriving the cultivators of many of their former privileges and imposing additional cess on them. The officers disregarded clause 107 of the Land Revenue Code and Government Resolution, No. 2619 of 1884, which forbade the taxing of improvements on land at the cultivator's expense.

The Alibag Taluka contains about 52 villages, known as the *kharapat* or salt *batty* land. The villages were first settled in 1851-52 and were resettled in 1871-72, so that they ought not to have been surveyed and classified a third time. Their recent survey and classification and consequent increase in revenue enhancement are therefore unjustifiable.

At the time when the said Land Revenue Code was amended, the Honourable Mr. Telang, in discussing the inadvisibility of taxing improvements, pointed out how such a measure would create distrust in the minds of the rural populations and debar the progress of agricultural improvements. He gave the instance of the cultivators of his own land at Lonauli. The Select Committee, who forwarded their report to Government on the 28th of February 1885, have laid down the same principle in it, and clause 107 of the Code was amended, and Government Resolution No. 7447, dated 21st October 1886, was issued accordingly. This resolution requires the Survey department to issue three notifications before the rates are given out, the second of which is to be to the effect that landowners should inform the Survey Officers of any improvements they might have made in their lands at their own expense and labour. The third notification relates to the classification and fixing of maximum rates for the different groups. The Survey Officers failed to issue the second notification, so as to give full facilities to farmers to point out their private impro.

vements. Many agriculturists were ignorant of what this notification stated, so that they applied to the Mamletdar for a copy of it, but that officer said even he was not sure that any such notification had been issued at all. The Survey and Revenue Officers commenced giving out rates notwithstanding the provision made, in Government Resolution No. 7447, to the effect that the Survey Officers should give out their orders on hearing the ryots, and should consider any appeals that might be made after the issue of the third notification; but the Survey Officers answered them not and commenced giving out the rates at once. When Col. Godfrey, the Survey Superintendent, began to announce the revised rates, I contended on behalf of the people that the applications they had previously made had met with no reply till then, and therefore the rates should not be announced at once. The Survey officer said that he had intimation by wire to proceed with his work, and he would therefore announce the revised rates, adding that the people were at liberty to appeal to Government. When these new rates were announced, a notification, bearing date 7th May 1894, was read to the public. This notification stated that *navakird*, *bagayat* of the lowest class, *varkas rabi* or *kharif* lands converted into *bagayat* were classed under one head, and the Survey authorities had received the sanction of Government to do so, but that alterations were liable to be made in them. The rate of assessment given out for *rabi* converted into *kharif* was to remain in force only till further orders were issued on the subject by the Government.

After the announcement of revision rates a copy of notification of 23rd May 1894 was affixed in every village, which omits to state what has been said in the foregoing paragraph, and this difference between the two notifications was caused by an interval of only sixteen days.

I give here some examples for test of the revised rates of Alibag Taluka:—

Name of Village.	Assessment at the time of Original Survey.	Assessment at the time of Revision Survey.	Percentage.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Umte	1 10 6	7 2 0	330 3 0
"	5 6 3	17 10 11	227 14 0
"	8 6 2	18 2 1	116 6 0
"	3 3 6	13 0 0	325 0 0
"	0 9 0	1 11 0	200 0 0
Tanasapore	0 1 0	0 11 6	1,050 0 0
Ramraj	15 7 0	48 6 0	213 3 0
Morode	14 4 0	52 15 0	273 3 0
Thal	0 6 6	1 8 0	283 5 0
"	2 1 6	6 3 0	200 0 0
"	4 13 0	12 0 0	175 0 0
"	12 11 6	30 0 0	141 10 0
"	14 3 6	31 0 0	114 4 0
Sasavane	2 15 0	8 0 0	250 0 0
"	0 13 6	3 8 0	223 1 0
"	2 13 0	9 8 0	300 0 0
"	2 9 8	8 14 9	191 10 0
"	6 8 0	30 0 0	383 5 10
Kolgaon	1 5 2	4 9 7	300 0 0
"	1 6 1	5 1 10	300 0 0

It will be seen that the assessment of the Alibag Taluka has been increased by Rs. 62,092-13-5. In like manner the assessment of the Pen Taluka has been increased by Rs. 46, 037.

Hundreds of people appealed to Government after the announcement of the revised rates, but they have received no reply as yet.

The notification ratifying the revision survey and settlement guarantees the present rates for only thirty years, and the people feel exceedingly anxious as to what might befall them after the expiration of that period.

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Every landholder ought to have been acquainted with the contents of the second notification, in order to afford full facilities for showing the improvements he might have made in his lands, and the Honourable Mr. Javerilal's contention in Council in this respect was quite to the point.

The landholders ought to have been acquainted with the contents of the second notification, especially as the Civil Courts do no longer exercise jurisdiction in matters affecting revenue enhancements, which has, by Act X of 1876, been transferred to the Revenue Courts.

Before the announcement of the revised rates the third notification was issued which, while showing the grouping and classification of villages, assigns the same maximum rate for *rabi, kharif, and navakird*. All these lands are each of them of greater or less importance than the other. The landholders would severally have liked to have previous intimation of this sort of classification.

I request the Conference to move the Government of India to amend Act X of 1876, so as to restore the jurisdiction of the Civil Court.

A curious incidence has occurred in the case of the Alibag and Pen Talukas. The revised rates were given out in the months of March and April of the official year 1893-94, when the revenue cess for that year had already been collected. The *khatas* had been closed, but they were re-opened and the revised tax for 1893-94 was entered to the landholder's credit and debited to Government as *remissions*. Section 104 of the Land Revenue Code forbids the levy of the revised assessment in the year in which it was announced, and so the notification of 23rd May 1894, taking 1894-95 for the year of levy, guarantees the rates to be in force till 1923-24. Properly speaking, the revised assessment ought to have been excused for the year 1894-95 and the year 1895-96 ought to have been the year of commencement.

It will be seen from what has been said that the revision survey in the different talukas has not been carried out with

due regard to the provisions of the Land Revenue Code and the various Government resolutions relating to them.

As a justification of the abnormal increase of land revenue in the Panvel Taluka, the Survey authorities state improved means of communication, in that a bridge at Div and a road from Kalyan have recently been constructed, the cultivation of grafts and such valuable trees as the nutmeg are also advanced as reasons. Now the whole of the Alibag Taluka hardly contains more than ten such valuable trees as the nutmeg.

Now all these reasons are empty; on the contrary the agriculturists on this side of the Bombay harbour have been losers inasmuch as the Abkari Act has reduced a great portion of their income from *bagayat* lands. They have been saddled with the Salt, Registration, Stamp and Local Boards Acts. They cannot get any supplies from the forests. The state of the ryots has indeed been of late so very deplorable that they can hardly get sufficient food. I must therefore urge this Conference to fight their case to the last.

A state of great dejection pervades the agricultural population, as will be seen from a petition to Government addressed by them at a meeting of about a thousand people from Pen, which had assembled at Mangrun a few days ago. The language of the petition is not polished; as no doubt it cannot be expected to be, being that to which the ryots are used. They request Government not to take legal steps against them in case they should commit suicide to which they say the burden of so many heavy taxes must ultimately lead them. They prayed God to inspire mercy into the heart of Government. The conduct of the peasants may appear ludicrous to some, but it is a sufficient proof of the depression which they experience.

I must, before concluding my speech, enjoin on you the necessity of preserving the agricultural population of this country, for on them chiefly depends the welfare of India. And on them we depend for our food. (*Cheers.*)

Mr. Ganesh Hari Dewuskar (Alibag), in supporting the Resolution, said :—

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

I wish to speak in connection with the Konkan Revision Survey Settlement. In the first place I would draw your attention to a few facts relating to the original survey. In his report on the Konkan survey, Captain Francis has admitted that in some talukas the rates of assessment fixed at the original survey were very high. From their experimental farms, Government have now known that in the Konkan much labour and cost are required to make the lands yield a good crop. I shall explain by an example how the original assessment was fixed. In the village of Shenawai, of the Roha Taluka, in the Kolaba Collectorate, I possess a piece of land, which is entered in the Government register in the name of my father, Hari Anant Dewuskar. At the original survey this piece was assessed at 18 *maunds* and 8 *payalis* of corn and Rs.12-6-6 in cash. Calculating the price of the corn at Rs. 20 per *khandi*, which was taken as the average rate at the former survey, the whole assessment came to Rs. 31-1-2. Two this were added two other cesses, one called the *galletasar*, which amounted to Rs. 3-3-6, and the other *gallepatti*, which came to Rs. 3-9-3. Thus the total assessment from all causes amounted to Rs. 37-13-11. At the revision survey the assessment on the same land has been fixed at Rs. 40-11-6. From this it is clear that the present settlement has unnecessarily loaded us with these two cesses—*galletasar* and *gallepatti*—in addition to an increase of Rs. 2-13-7. I say unnecessarily, because these cesses were levied by the former rulers, simply because they collected the assessment in kind (namely, produce) and had to dispose of it in distant markets. When the present Government collect the taxes only in coin, there seems to be no justification for levying the two cesses. When the assessment was in kind there were remissions in bad years, and we were also allowed to pay the assessment in arrears.

Although apparently it is only one kind of taxation; we have been indirectly obliged to submit to various cesses. It is a fact that the price of corn has now increased twenty-five per cent. over what it was at the original survey, but owing to various causes the produce of fields has been now much reduced. (*Hear, hear.*)

From considerations like the above one would be induced to reduce the former excessive rates of assessment, but as the Land Revenue Code lays down that the assessment may be increased to a certain per cent., our Survey authorities, instead of taking the existing circumstances into consideration, have unhesitatingly recommended abnormal increases. The average price of corn has increased 25 per cent, but the Survey authorities make their increases 33 per cent. or even more on a taluka. Our right to appeal to Civil Courts against unjust taxation has also been taken away from us. To show how the recent revision settlement has been contrary to the spirit of the law, I need only take the instance of the Alibag Taluka. In this taluka a notification, dated 16th November 1893, and giving the maximum rates, was issued by the Survey Superintendent to the various villages. Supposing the increase of 13 per cent. on the villages of the first group in that notification to be reasonable, the increase up to 33 per cent. in the case of sweet and salt rice-lands on the villages in the other groups seems to have no justification. The increase up to 50 per cent. on *bagayat* lands and up to 200 per cent. on *varkas* lands is equally unreasonable. According to the former survey *sweet rice*, *salt rice*, *bagayat*, *rabi*, and *varkas*, were the five classes into which all lands were divided. At the recent survey a new class called *navakirda* or converted lands has been added to these. Formerly there were four groups of villages for sweet rice land, now there are only three groups. The increase in the case of the first two groups is Re. 1 per acre; but as the 14 villages of the former third group have been transferred to the second group, the increase in their case

has been Rs. 2 per acre. These villages, having no ports or other conveniences should not have been transferred to the second group. The old fourth group having been transferred to the third, has been subjected to an increase of Re. $1\frac{1}{2}$ per acre. In the case of salt rice land villages, although there has been no alteration in the grouping, the increase per acre has been from 8 annas to Re. 1. Besides this the increases on individual holdings have in many instances far exceeded the legal limit.

In the case of *bagayat* villages the original five classes have now been reduced to two. All the villages of the former second class having been transferred to the first class, the percentage of increase has been 25 and 50 for the former first and second classes respectively. The villages of the former second class are at a disadvantage in being more distant from ports and having less fertile soil, but these factors do not seem to have been taken into consideration by the Survey authorities. The third class villages have all been transferred to the second and made to bear an increase of 25 per cent., while the remaining two classes have been eliminated. As in other cases the percentage of increase on individual *bagayat* holdings has been very high, the major portion of the former *rabi* land has been now classed as *kharif* or rice land. In the absence of any considerable grass produce in the taluka, the assessment on *varkas* land has been increased 200 per cent. All the level land that was formerly *varkas* is now *rabi*, and the increase on it has been from about 4 annas to about Rs. 2 per acre or 700 per cent. The increase on *varkas* land in some cases has exceeded even 1,000 per cent. *Naukirda* or converted lands have been similarly subjected to enormous enhancements.

It is a well-known fact that in the Konkan the fall of rain is generally great, and in the rainy season large quantities of earth and other matter are brought down into the

fields from the hills and deposited there. The farmers are put to trouble and expense to remove them. If this were not done, the condition of fields would have been far worse than what it was at the former survey. The change for better in the quality of the lands is the result of our labour and, therefore, it cannot be said that the lands were classed as inferior and at the former survey through mistake. We have been constantly manuring our fields at considerable cost. *Rabi* and *varbas* were converted into *kharis* by us at great cost, and to tax them at abnormally high rates is to tax improvements. Government Resolutions No. 2619, dated 26th March 1884, and No. 7447, dated 21st October 1886, appear to have been wholly set aside in this connection. *Rabi* is, properly speaking land near the bank of a river, but it seems all lands that appeared to be level to the survey classers, whether they were capable of producing any *rabi* crops or not, were classed as *rabi*. The recent revision settlements were completed with the help of ignorant village *patels*, who, it seems never cared to find out what the spirit of the Code was or what the reports the Survey subordinate officials asked them to sign contained; otherwise we could have got the requisite instructions while the survey operations were in progress.

Before concluding, I beg to refer to Government Resolution No. 1028, dated 25th February 1874, by which no tax should be levied on water supply in the Konkan. In the Alibag Taluka large expenses have to be incurred to make provision for watering the trees on alternate days, but the Survey authorities, in spite of the resolution quoted above, have apparently taxed the water supply. I may also mention that the change of the name of land in the new survey papers from the word *khalsa* to the word *sarkari* has been unintelligible to us. Do Government mean to intimate to us that by the insertion of the word *sarkari* or *government* we are to understand that Government can at any time dispossess us of our ancestral lands?

I earnestly pray that Government will be graciously pleased to give our complaints due consideration.

With these remarks I beg heartily, to support the resolution. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Budhaji Nathu Mokal (Alibag), in supporting the Resolution, said:—

I come from a village in the Alibag Taluka. I am an Agri by caste, and therefore I cannot speak well. I hope you will kindly excuse my mistakes. I possess some paddy-land, which I cultivate myself. The salt rice-lands being subjected to great risks, such as being immersed in salt water on occasions of high tides, the increase of assessment on them will be a great hardship on the poor agriculturists. I hope Government will hear our prayer. With these few remarks, gentlemen, I resume my seat. (*Cheers.*)

Resolution No. 2 (8th Provincial Conference).*

Mr. R. L. Gharat, (Alibag), said:—

MR. PRESIDENT; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

After the able and learned speeches of the mover and the seconder of the proposition, I suppose you do not expect to hear much from me. As, however, the mover of the proposition and even the President in his address expected to hear details from some of the speakers, I will touch upon some of these.

The last Conference held at Bombay did well in giving prominence to the subject of Survey Settlements and reve-

* The Resolution was as follows:—

“That this Conference, while re-affirming Resolution I of the 7th Conference, looks with regret upon the effects of the policy of Government in the matter of the enhancements of the revenue assessment on the agriculturists residing in the various parts of the Presidency, and earnestly urges upon Government the necessity of removing such of the defects of the system under which the revised rates are fixed as the Government may think practicable under the present circumstances.”

nue enhancements by passing a very important resolution in connection with it. It is to be hoped that during the present administration of this Presidency the suggestions made in that resolution will receive the earnest attention of Government. Some good signs, it may be noted, have already begun to show themselves. In the case of a certain Petha in the Ratnagiri District it has been decided to have no revision survey, but to continue the present lease for another 30 years on the ground that the Petha has made no material progress in prosperity to admit of any enhancement of revenue. The Collector of Ratnagiri has notified that improvements will not be taxed, though I cannot say whether the survey authorities will not hit upon some ingenious theory whereby even the Collector's assurance can be set at naught. It is not always the case that we see the well-intentioned resolutions of Government strictly and loyally given effect to. If that were the case, we would not hear so many complaints from different parts of the Presidency. You are perhaps aware, gentlemen, that to make the burden of taxation a little less heavy, Government have issued certain orders whereby partial remissions are granted during certain years following the announcement of the revised rates in cases where the increase is over 25 per cent. To work out the details of these remissions the Collector of Kolaba published certain rules framed by the Survey Commissioner for the guidance of subordinate revenue officers in the Alibag and other talukas. One of the rules was to the following effect. "Where the difference between the old and new assessment is under 8 annas, no remission should be given." Now, as these remissions were to be given not only in the case of whole holdings or khatas, but even on individual survey and *pot* numbers, the result was that several small holdings which were entitled to remissions in accordance with the standing orders of Government were deprived of that privilege by this arbitrary ruling. I may

illustrate this by an instance. Suppose a farmer paid 2 annas on a piece of *varkas* land before, and now he has to pay 8 annas on the same. According to the orders of Government, he would have to pay only 25 per cent. over the old assessment, that is only 2½ annas during the first two years, 3 annas during the next two and so on, but by the rule above quoted he would be required to pay the whole of 8 annas from the very beginning. It is reported that the Government of Lord Sandhurst has thought fit to order that this particular rule should be altogether eliminated, and that in consequence the large sum of nearly Rs. 15,000 already collected will have to be refunded in the case of the Alibag Taluka. I hope Government will be equally pleased to refund the whole of the excess over last year's assessment which they have apparently levied in contravention of section 104 of Act V of 1879 under the Bombay Land Revenue Code.

Since we last met in Bombay, several Government Selections relating to revision survey settlements have appeared, and I have carefully gone through the one relating to the settlement of the Alibag taluka. The survey superintendent's report is full of statements, statistical tables and reasons in justification of the enhancement of assessment. But I can assure you that most of the statements are exaggerated, while the statistical tables are merely misleading. The Collector of Kolaba in his report has pointed out a number of discrepancies in the figures given by the survey superintendent, and has clearly shown how certain of his reasons such as improved communications &c., for increasing the assessment will not hold water. I cannot do better than read a portion of his report to you. Says Mr. Lamb, "Figures of areas are not in all places so clear. The tabular statement in paragraph 11 purports to give the net result, with the variations between the original and the revision survey. In that table increase in rice land is shown as 1400 acres. In paragraph 48 the area converted from inferior class to sweet rice land is given as 1066 acres; in paragraph 50, salt

rice land has 623 acres' increase; and in paragraph 53 a further net increase in rice land of 97 acres is shown, giving a total of 4,786. I cannot trace where the old 386 acres have gone to....."

The various reasons advanced by the survey authorities for enhancing the rates can be proved to be fallacious, but as the time at my disposal is limited, and as I have been criticising the report at greater length in the public press I shall not just now turn to the consideration of them all I shall only show you how the increased trade and increased prices, which are among the chief reasons given in the report for enhancing the assessment, are unreliable. But before I do so I would say a word or two on improved road communication to which reference was made by Mr. Samarth in his speech. Colonel Godfrey has laid some stress on the improved road communication in the taluka. Mr. Lamb the Collector takes exception to them. He says, "I think rather too much has been made of improved communications. The only road that appears to me relevant is the Provincial Alibag Dharamtar road. All other roads are made from Local funds, and being thus constructed by payers of land revenue at their own cost, cannot be taken into consideration when revising land-revenue rates, because they are improvements made by the occupants out of their own capital and resources. (*Hear, hear.*) And after all, the effect of these roads on the movement of produce is very small." The Survey Commissioner admits the force of Mr. Lamb's argument, but supports the Survey Superintendent on the ground of some villages being advantaged over others. His very words are as follows: "Mr. Lamb in his third paragraph discusses the question of the bearing on the assessment of improved communications made from Local Fund, & c., indirectly at the expense of the payers of the cess. I admit his contention, but, in the question of grouping, these roads must be taken into account. If by the expenditure of the cess some villages are advantaged over others those

villages should certainly pay a proportionately larger share of the Government demand." Now what do you think of this sort of contention? If it is true that the roads have been made at the expenses of the villagers, does it not follow that they should not at all be taken into consideration while revising the assessment? On the contrary, would it not be more just and equitable that the fact of some villages being forced to incur expenses for roads of which they could not take proper advantage, ought to go a far way in lessening their former assessment?

Turning to the question of trade in the taluka, we find Col. Godfrey putting down its average annual export trade at Rs. 4,45,103 (*vide* para, 26 of his report). Dividing this by the average price, *viz*: Rs. 30 per khandi given by the same officer, we shall see that 14,836 khandis of unhusked rice must be annually exported from the taluka. Now from the appendix B we learn that the whole area on which rice grows in the taluka is 36,088 acres. The sweet rice lands yield from 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ khandis and the salt rice lands from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ khandis per acre, so that taking the average output at $1\frac{1}{2}$ khandis per acre, (it cannot certainly be more than this) we shall find that the whole quantity of rice grown in the taluka in a year would be 54,132 khandis. Appendix E gives the total population of the taluka at 75,098. The quantity of rice required per head averages from 18 to 12 maunds. 15 maunds or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a khandi may therefore be safely taken as the average quantity of rice required per head. Multiplying 75,098 by $\frac{3}{4}$ we get the total quantity of rice required for the maintenance of the entire population @ 56,323 khandis. This clearly shows that the Taluka produces about 2,000 khandis of rice less than what is necessary for its population, while Col. Godfrey says that it exports more than 14,000 khandis. If the export trade given by Col. Godfrey be taken as true, it will follow that several thousand people in the taluka are obliged to live on an insufficient quantity of food. In para. 33 of his report Col. Godfrey takes the

average out-turn of the lands in rice approximately at 35 maunds or 1½ khandis per acre. Calculating even at this high rate of the average out-turn we shall find that the quantity exported would come to about 7000 khandis and not nearly 15,000 as the Colonel says. In the above calculations the quantity required to be set aside for sowing is not taken into consideration, and when that is deducted the quantity exported will be found to be very small. I can explain how this export trade is shown to be so large. Entries of large quantities of rice shipped are made at the ports of Rewadanda and Dharamtar, but the greater portion of this rice is from the adjoining Talukas, notably from Roha and Pen. The Customs Department makes no separate entries for these Talukas. The figures given in the report are taken from the Customs Offices.

Turning to the subject of increased prices, I may say that the figure Rs. 22 per khandi, which Captain Francis quoted as far back as the year 1857 in his report on the original settlement of the taluka being taken into consideration, Rs. 30, the present average price which the Survey Superintendent mentions in his report, will not give us a very high percentage of increase in the price of rice. Even supposing the increase to be about 40 per cent., are you prepared, gentlemen, to say that the whole of this increase should go to Government? (*Hear hear.*) Alibag being essentially a rice-producing district, the other articles such as salt, sugar, oil, spices, &c., have to be purchased from other markets by it, and as the prices of these articles have considerably risen, the cultivator's cost of living has proportionately increased. Increased wages and insufficient supply of raw materials owing to stringent forest regulations have added to the cost of cultivation. Insufficiency of manure has decreased the annual output of the field to a serious extent. The cultivator has also to pay for fuel and wood for agricultural implements which he formerly got from the forest free of cost. To this we have also to add the burden imposed upon the tax-payer by the Stamps

and Registration Acts. On making actual calculation of the advantages from increased prices &c., and of the disadvantages to which the ryot has been subjected during the currency of the original settlement, it will be found that the cultivator has been a distinct loser. The rise in the price of lands is not advantageous to the cultivator in any way except perhaps in giving him more opportunities for borrowing. It may be stated here that although the average increase on the whole Taluka has not much exceeded the legal limit, that on individual holdings has in many cases been far in excess of 100 per cent. The reason given for such abnormal increase is that the lands were assessed very low at the former survey, but this has been repeatedly pointed out to be a mistaken view. *Varkas, rabi* and *bagayat*, which have been subjected to enormous increases have been pointed out to be quite incapable of bearing the burden, but it seems Government are determined to enhance the assessment even beyond the extent the law allows,—it matters not under what circumstances that is done. Innumerable cases will be found in which the revised assessment has been a source of great hardship to the cultivators. (*Shame!*) The following are only a few out of numerous other instances in which the assessment in the Alibag Taluka exceeds the income from the land :—

Village.	Old class of land.	Revised class of land.	New survey numbers.	Former contents.	Revised contents.	Former assessment.	Revised assessment.	Percentage of increase.	Average annual net income.
Gunjis ...	Varkas...	Rabi ...	26	ACS. GS. 0 26	ACS. GS. 0 27	Rs. A. P. 0 2 9	Rs. A. P. 1 8 0	772	0 3 0
Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. and Varkas.	9 & 10	0 38½	0 33	0 3 10	1 3 5	406	0 5 0
Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	12, 24, 52 & 53	6 36	6 16½	1 11 8	8 7 4	389	2 4 0
Do. ...	Do. ...	Rice and Rabi.	10	0 38	0 33½	0 3 9	1 10 3	600	1 6 0
Thal ...	Bagayat..	Bagayat...	187	3 11½	3 11½	12 13 0	31 0 0	141	25 0 0
Vayaset. .	Varkas...	Varkas...	10	15 17	12 28	3 6 1	8 1 7	139	3 0 0
Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	19	3 19	4 16	0 14 0	2 8 3	187	1 0 0
Thal ...	Bagayat..	Bagayat...	184	0 22¼	0 22¼	3 5 0	8 0 0	141	5 0 0
Avas ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	384	2 4½	1 36¾	4 15 0	14 0 0	183	6 8 0

CONTRAST OF OLD WITH NEW RATES.

In measuring and classing lands the Subordinate Officers of the Survey Department have instructions to show converted lands as separate *pot* numbers to prevent them from being amalgamated with and assessed at the high rates of adjoining rice lands. There are, however, instances in which this rule has been set aside, and the errors made by the survey authorities under this head cannot be easily detected. It indeed requires a clever head that knows a good deal of the subject to detect them. It is only fair to say that where the errors have been satisfactorily pointed out, the survey authorities having admitted them have made the necessary corrections.

In the village of Kihim a landlord whose land was classed as *bagayat* through mistake had his assessment reduced by Rs. 68. At Dhonkavade, another village, a landlord had 3 acres and 4½ gunthas of *varkas* land in old survey No. 130. The occupant converted the major portion of the *varkas* into rice land and amalgamated it with the adjoining old rice land. The Survey classers instead of marking out the converted land into a separate *pot* number, classed the whole piece as old rice-land and assessed it accordingly. The result was that the assessment of the whole was raised from Rs. 12-12-4 to Rs. 37. The holder of the piece, however, being an intelligent man, brought the matter to the notice of the authorities and had the assessment reduced by Rs. 13. Another landlord in the same village complains of a similar error. I have seen the piece myself. Here is a plan of it. The portion marked with dotted lines on the southern side was originally *varkas*, but was converted by the occupant into rice land at a considerable cost. The portion marked with dotted lines on the northern side is still *varkas* while the portion between the two was old rice land. The classers in revision have called the whole piece made up of the three portions as one *pot* number and assessed it at the high old rice land rate of Rs. 8½ per acre. As the land is nearly an acre in area, the holder is a great loser. I have advised him to petition Government against this error on the part of the survey authorities. How many such errors

there must be in the whole taluka it is not easy to determine; but it is certain that their number can by no means be insignificant. I am strongly of opinion that unless Government appoint an independent commission of inquiry there is little chance of such errors being rectified. The people are prepared even to bear the cost of a commission, and it is to be hoped Government will listen to their prayer. Another advantage of having such a commission would be that Government being able to collect information on the various conflicting points, in the Survey Superintendent's report would know whether it is necessary to modify their orders in regard to the sanction of the revised assessment of the taluka.

In my speech at the last Conference I had said that the survey authorities had made a third measurement, classification and revision of rates of 56 villages known as the *Kharapat* lands of the Alibag taluka contrary to the express provision of section 106 of the Land Revenue Code. Government say that the first classification of these lands in 1852-53 was rough, and hence the 1872-73 classification should be considered as the first classification. They further contend that the lands were not regularly measured off into small survey and pot numbers in 1852-53. I need only quote paragraphs from the reports of the Officers of Government themselves to show that my contention was right.

Mr. Gibson, Deputy Superintendent, Ratnagiri Survey, in his report to the Collector of Kolaba in 1872 says "I have the honour to submit the following report on the revision of the rates of assessment in 56 villages of the Alibag Taluka. These villages were surveyed and assessed by Mr. Jones in 1852, and the rates then introduced were guaranteed for 20 years, consequently the leases expire at the end of the current year." The same officer in a tabular statement further on shows the increase in the number of inhabitants, houses, live-stock, *i. e.*, by comparing the numerical returns taken in 1852 and 1872. This is another clear evidence of

the fact that the 1852-53 settlement was not a rough one. The following two extracts from Mr. Gibson's report will suffice to show the hollowness of the plea that the lands were not divided into regular Survey and *pot* numbers :

1. "The settlement which is now (1872) expiring was based on a survey made under the direction of the Collector of the district Mr. Jones. It was in some respects conducted on the same system as the Deccan Survey, and, as far as the measurement goes was very accurate ; but the plan of dividing the land into survey numbers of a convenient and uniform size was not adopted."

2. "When the Survey of the rest of the Alibag Taluka was made (1856-57) by the Poona and Ratnagiri Survey, the measurements of the *Kharapat* villages were revised and the land divided into Survey numbers, the limits of which were marked in the usual manner with stones." The omission pointed out in the first extract was supplied only about four years later as is clearly seen from the second extract, and thus the 1872-73 settlement of the villages was undoubtedly the revised one. It is to be earnestly hoped that Government will still reconsider their decision in the matter of the these villages and give the two hundred petitioners the justice they ask for. (*Cheers.*)

With these observations I beg heartily to support the resolution.

Mr. N. K. Gharat (Kolaba), in supporting the Resolution said :—

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

The Land Revenue Resolution this year takes a slight departure from last year's resolution in that it deals with the system under which the revised rates are fixed. I will confine myself to this aspect of the question, as it does in my

opinion require a fuller consideration than has been afforded to it.

Gentlemen, you have already been told that Government can lay claim to a higher assessment in revision settlement when the agriculturist derives greater profits from land owing to improved facilities of market or communication; that is, when the produce of his fields fetches higher prices without the landholder having to incur any amount of labour or money. The various statistics submitted to you by former speakers will enable you to ascertain how far these facilities have increased in the Alibag taluka and how far it would be right or equitable to raise the assessment of the taluka on their account to the amount to which it has been increased. But the Survey officers do not rest on these reasons alone for enhancing the revenue cess. They base their claims also upon the qualities of the soil, thus effecting a revision of the anna-valuation of the land. Now it was to remove this anomaly that the late Mr. Telang fought so very hard in the Legislative Council and exacted a promise and a clear enactment to the effect that the improvements of the agriculturists at their own cost and labour would not be taxed in any way whatever. The scope of the Survey Department for enhancing revenue was thus much narrowed, but they did not rest quiet under the defeat. While these debates were going on in the Legislative Council, the officers of the Survey Department were having a council of their own to devise methods which would effectually destroy the cause gained by the people's representative in the Council. The survey authorities framed rules for the guidance of the officers of the Department, which in themselves involve the taxing of improvements. The Alibag taluka was re-classified, and of course its anna-valuation was also revised. The Hon'ble Mr. Nugent, the then Commissioner S. D., bears testimony to the illegality of such a procedure in these words. "There is in the Commissioner's opinion a legal objection to a revision of the anna-valuation." (*Vide* para. 14 of his report at page 152 of the Selections) Government try to refute (*Vide*

para 9 page 156 *ibid*) this argument by stating that any alteration of the anna-valuation involved by the re-classification of the land is justified "so long as it rests on natural capabilities and not on changes in the character of the soil obviously and directly resulting from improvements effected by the holder." It is difficult to gauge the meaning of these words when the anna-valuation does in itself rest on "changes in the character of the soil directly and obviously resulting from improvements effected by the holder." Let me illustrate: suppose an acre of land was at the original settlement found to be, say 18 inches deep. It then came under the third class. The depth at the time of the Revision Settlement is found to be 27 inches and so the field falls and is assessed under the first class. The increase of 9 inches in the depth of the soil is not voluntary but is the result of the owner's toiling at it incessantly for a number of years. Two annas are reckoned for any land producing a second crop as that of *val*. This particular piece of land might have been quite unsuited for the growth of any such winter crops at the time of the original survey and then be fitted for them. Now this must be owing to the owner's having deepened the surface of the fields, surrounded them with good embankments and enriched their soil by the addition of manure. Why, the rules clearly lay down that fields with good embankments &c. (*Bandh Bandist*) are to be classed above those with defective ones. Similarly with wells. A well with good masonry work is to be classed higher than an unbuilt one or one built with raw materials. The latter sorts of wells of course have the danger of being filled up by the edges falling in during the rainy season. If a gardener wants to have a *puca* built well, he must be prepared to pay what may be called an increased well-tax. Why wells of any sort whatever that have been sunk at the expense or labour of the proprietor should at all be taken into consideration as also embankments, soil, &c., at the time of re-classification is not at all clear. No scruples seem to have been observed in taxing improvements. This well-factor has been curiously strained for the 4th class.

Where water is supplied to trees from wells or rivulets by pitchers, the supply falls under this class. But suppose there are small trees in a garden and the classers do not see any water below them in winter. They are then told that although the trees might not be watered then, they cannot but require water during the hot season, so that although there might be no well in the garden or rather garden land, nor any apparatus such as a wheel to draw water, the classers are enjoined to class the land under the fourth class of water-supply on the supposition that the trees must have been watered by pitcher from a rivulet or other source at some distance. (*Hear, hear.*) You would perhaps think that trees 40 years old would be allowed to go scot-free because they are watered neither in the winter nor during the hot season. But here the framers of the rules invoke the aid of logic. They tell their officers that although big trees might not be receiving water, they could not have grown to their size without having once been saplings; saplings must require water during summer, so pitcherfuls of water must some time or other have been poured at the roots of these trees. This is a sufficient reason to class them under the fourth class. This argument it will be remembered savours somewhat of the wolf's contention in *Æsop's* fable of the "Lamb and the Wolf" (*Hear, hear.*)

Where the Survey Officers *show* they have not taxed improvements in the case of converted *Varkas*. They say they have kept the same maximum rate for newly converted land *Navkird* as for *Varkas* and *rabi*. If this is to be taken to mean that they have assessed *Navkird* at the same rate as *Varkas* and not higher than it, why, they would have done better to have fixed one maximum rate for all sorts of assessable lands from *Bagayat* of garden lands down to *Varkas*. Of course in this case if they counted 16 annas for *Bagayat* they would have to value *Varkas* at some pies, that's all. This process would have given the Survey Officers the immense advantage of saying that as they had fixed the same maximum rate for *Varkas* as well as *Kharif* (rice-producing) and garden lands,

the assessment on the latter sorts of land was actually lowered to that on *Varkas*. For, is not this the sort of logic that is virtually being preached to us? The fixing of the same maximum rate does not mean that converted *Varkas* has not been assessed higher than *Varkas* as such, a thing which they were legally not entitled to do and which they profess not to have done. For, see, gentlemen, what has actually taken place. While even according to the high estimation of Survey Officers *Varkas* as such cannot be valued at more than four annas (taking the maximum rate of three rupees) and assessed at 0-12-0, Navikird is valued at full sixteen annas and assessed at 3. This means to say keep *varkas* as it is, we will take only 12 annas per acre; expend a large amount of money, dig it out, enrich it with manures and turn it into rice-producing fields and we will take three rupees per acre, only we will say we have assessed it as if it had not been converted.

Gentlemen, a system of Revision Survey that bears all these glaring faults cannot but on the very face of it be illegal, I must therefore recommend the resolution to your cordial acceptance. (*Loud cheers.*)

APPENDIX H.

Questions on the Alibag Settlement asked by the Hon. Mr. Javerilal U. Yajnik at meetings of the Bombay Legislative Council.

(14th August, 1894.)

QUESTION.

Whether Government are aware that under the rules for the maintenance of field boundary marks such boundary marks may consist either of stones or mounds of earth of required sizes? Is there, then, any reason why in Alibag and other talukas of the Konkan districts the introduction of mounds of

earth should be insisted upon by the survey authorities when the stone system has been found from experience to work satisfactorily from the hardness, stability and cheapness of stones compared to mounds of earth which are sandy, loose, and liable to be washed away at any moment during the rainy season, while at the same time taking up larger space and thereby interfering with the cultivation of small rice or garden fields ?

(a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the fact that the agriculturists and land-holders of Avas, Koparoli, Dhokawade, Milkatkhar, Mandwa, Kolgam, Sasawane, Virit Saral, Akshi, Tudal, and other villages of the Alibag Taluka, petitioned the Collector of Kolaba informing him of the non-receipt by them of the first notification usually issued under Government Resolution No. 7447, dated 21st October 1886, intimating that the classification of their lands was about to be carried out and bringing to his notice the fact that in the absence of such notification they had no opportunity allowed them of bringing to the notice of the Superintendent of Survey in charge of the party of classers such improvements or other circumstances bearing on the value of their lands which they consider should be taken into account in fixing the value of their fields and of being otherwise heard on the subject ?

(b) Is it a fact that in the revision settlement of the 196 villages of the Alibag Taluka the following, among numerous other survey numbers, have been assessed beyond the limits of 100 per cent. on individual holdings laid down in Government Resolution No. 5739, dated 29th October 1874, and Government Resolution No. 2619, dated 26th March 1884:—

Name of Village.	Old Survey Number.	New Survey Number.	Name of the Owner.	Former Assessment.	New Assessment.	Increase of assessment.
				Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
(1) Kavir ...	86	146	Narayan Laxman Khanekar...	0 6 6	6 0 0	1,376·9 per cent.
(2) Dhokawade ...	174	...	Gangadhar Bachaji Phatak ...	0 4 6	4 0 0	1,331·4
(3) Do. ...	186	...	Do. do. ...	1 7 6	9 8 0	546·8
(4) Avás ...	294	...	Antaji Sadashiv Patankar...	4 12 6	34 0 0	505·8
(5) Do. ...	295	...	Do. do. ...	8 4 0	54 0 0	631·4
(6) Do. ...	336	...	Ramji Laxman Gharut ...	0 7 3	3 2 6	596·5
(7) Do. ...	254	...	Bhalchandra Vithal Ghaisas...	4 10 0	16 0 0	245·9
(8) Do. ...	174	...	Babaji Gopal ...	23 10 0	74 8 0	215·3
(9) Do. ...	175	...	Do. ...	4 11 6	15 0 0	217·8
(10) Nágav ...	22	17	Damedar Sadashiv ...	0 7 0	1 8 0	255·5

(c) In fixing the maximum rate for regulating the assessment on these numbers, what is the exact nature of the calculation made in regard to profits of agriculture due to natural advantages and what to the labour and capital spent by the rayats in utilizing them; and what exemptions from assessments are made in the case of all conversions of land from warkas into new rice or rabi or garden land due to the labour and capital of the rayats?

ANSWER.

The Honourable Mr. TREVOR in reply said:—Under Section 122 of the Land Revenue Code, it rests with the Superintendent of Survey to determine the size, description and material of the boundary marks to be employed according to the requirements of soil and climate. Where it may have been decided by that officer that earthen mounds should be substituted for stones, it is presumably because the stone system has not been found from experience to work satisfactorily. Against the advantages of cheapness and economy of space claimed for that system by the honourable member, must be set the greater liability of stones to be shifted, displaced and lost, particularly in muddy ground.

(a) The attention of Government has not been drawn to the matter referred to, with which it is understood from the honourable member's question that the Collector is dealing.

(b) Government have no information as to details of cases in which the revised rates and classification have worked out to an increase of over 100 per cent., but have no doubt that such cases exist. Except in so far as there may be reason to suppose that the enhancements are wholly or partly due to error in measurement, classification or calculation, in which case the assessments are of course open to correction, they must be accepted in accordance with the principles laid down in the Resolutions quoted by the honourable member, subject to the

Name of Village.	Old Survey Number.	New Survey Number.	Name of the Owner.	Former Assessment.	New Assessment.	Increase of assessment.
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general orders as to the entire or partial remission of the excess which have been passed in sanctioning the settlement. These orders are to the effect that the enhancement on revision in any *pot* number or *phalni-tukra*, if in excess of 25 per cent., shall be leviable up to 25 per cent. in the first two years of the new lease, up to 50 per cent. in the two years following, and so on without limit till it becomes leviable in full.

(c) Converted lands are assessed at the same maximum rates as if they had not been converted.

QUESTION.

Whether Government are aware that 56 kharapat villages of the Alibag Taluka of the Kolaba Collectorate were measured, classified, grouped and settled for the second time in the year 1872-73, and is it a fact that these same villages were measured, classified, grouped and their rates enhanced for the third time in course of revision survey operations completed in 1889-90, contrary to the express provisions of Section 106 of the Bombay Land Revenue Code?

ANSWER.

The Honourable Mr. TREVOR in reply said :—The settlement in force in the 56 khàràpàt villages of Alibag previously to 1872-73 was one based on a rough classification of entire kbàrs or kothas, according to the description of rice grown in them and the prevailing character of the soil, carried out by the Collector, with the aid of committees of Kàrkuns and village officers, checked by the Màmlatdàr and Daftàrdàr. The villages in question were classified for the first time in detail according to survey methods and principles in 1872-73, and no further general classification, such as is contemplated in Section 106 of the Land Revenue Code, has taken place since.

(7th August, 1895.)

QUESTION.

(a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the recent revision settlement of the Alibâg Taluka, and, especially, to the application to that Taluka of the concession known as the Igatpuri concession, which directs that in the work of revenue collection, enhancement in excess of 4 annas in the rupee (or 25 per cent.) of the assessment on a holding will be remitted for the first two years of the revised settlement, enhancement in excess of 8 annas in the rupee for the 3rd and 4th years, and enhancement in excess of 12 annas in the rupee for the 5th and 6th years of the revised settlement? Have rules been framed by the Survey Commissioner to carry out the details of this concession, and have such rules received the approval and sanction of Government?

(b) Bearing in mind the object of the concession, which is to prevent hardship arising from the collection in one lump sum of excessive enhancements in individual cases as also to enable the ryots concerned to adjust themselves to increased payments by degrees, has the attention of Government been drawn to the complaint of the Alibâg ryots that rules 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the rules so framed by the Survey Commissioner operate in a manner which virtually deprive them of the benefit of the concession? Does rule 2, for instance, direct that when the difference between the original and revised assessment is 8 annas, no remission is to be granted? Do not the occupants coming under the operation of this rule constitute a very appreciable number?

(c) And will Government be pleased to direct a copy of these rules to be placed on the Editor's Table?

ANSWER.

(By the Hon. Mr. Nugent.)

(a) Yes. But the concession sanctioned in the case of Alibâg is not identical as the Honourable Member assumes

with what is known as the Igatpuri concession. It is based on the survey number of *phalnitukda*, instead of the kháta, as the unit of remission and provides that enhancements shall be leviable up to 25 per cent. for the first two years, up to 50 per cent. in the next two years, and so on without limit.

(b and c) I lay on the Table a Resolution No. 1213 of 13th February 1895, embodying the rules for applying this concession in detail framed by the Survey Department with the orders of Government thereon. With the exception of rule 2 which was disallowed, they are suitable and have been sanctioned. Rules 3, 4, and 5 do not appear to Government to be open to reasonable objection. The first is in strict accordance with the terms of the concession, while the other two merely provide for the elimination of pies in the calculations.

QUESTION.

(a) Is it a fact that there are pending at present before His Excellency the Governor in Council more than 100 appeals from the landholders of the Alibag taluka against the decisions or orders passed by the Survey Commissioner in the matter of revision enhancements? If so, what course do Government contemplate taking in disposing of them under their appellate authority?

(b) Has it been brought to the notice of Government that these appellants were called upon by the Collector of Alibag to pay the cost of such enquiries, and that the appellants paid the cost so demanded of them, believing at the mistakes in measurements and classification complained of that they will be enquired into? Do Government intend of taking any steps to give redress to the appellants? Will Government further advise of the fact that some

(c) Are there any applications for copies of survey papers to be supplied to the appellants containing information about the classification of their soils, and the basis on which annual valuations

were calculated, but that their application was rejected by the Collector on the ground that he had no orders from Government to supply such copies? Is there any reason for withholding this information from the appellants?

ANSWER.

(By the Hon. Mr. Nugent.)

(a) There are no such appeals pending before Government, but in November last many petitions were forwarded to the Collector of Kolaba with instructions that any petitioner, who was desirous of having an inquiry made into the correctness of the classification of his land or the calculation of his assessment, might have it made on depositing a sum sufficient to cover the cost. Under general orders such deposits are refunded in full in all cases in which the complaint proves on inquiry to be well-founded.

(b) The answer to the first question is no. As regards the second, the general order above mentioned is manifestly equitable and Government have no reason to suppose that it will not be properly carried out. There is, therefore, no reason for further action on the part of Government.

(c) The answer to the first question is no. The second question cannot be answered because it is not shown what survey papers are referred to. It may, however, be stated that there is no objection to the grant of copies of survey records on payment of the prescribed fees, but this statement applies only to completed or final records; for obvious reasons copies cannot be given of the memoranda or other preliminary writings forming the material from which after due test the survey records are prepared.

QUESTION.

Will Government be pleased to place on the Council Table a copy of the rules regulating the classification of rice, garden, rabi and warkas lands in the Konkan districts

framed specially for the guidance of the classing officers, including the Konkan Survey Supplementary Revision Rules?

ANSWER.

(By the Hon. Mr. Nugent.)

The Honourable Member was informed in a letter, dated 4th June last, that Government regretted their inability to furnish him with a copy of the rules referred to. The principles on which the classification is made are fully shown in settlement reports and other published papers; the rules laid down for the guidance of Survey officers in the application of the principles in detail cannot in the public interest be placed on the Table.

QUESTION:

Is it a fact that rule 2 of the rules framed by the Survey Commissioner for calculating temporary remissions in excessive revised settlements, viz., that where the difference between the old and new assessments is under 8 annas, no remission should be given, has not received the sanction of Government, and that the standing orders of Government make no such exception? Notwithstanding this, is it the case that in Kolaba the benefit of such remissions is withheld from the ryots in cases where the difference between the old and new assessment in revision is less than 8 annas, even though the excess assessments have in a large number of cases exceeded 400 per cent.?

(By the Hon. Mr. Nugent.)

ANSWER.

The answer to the first question is, yes. As regards the second, it is not the case that in Kolaba the benefit of such

re-missions is withheld from the ryots in cases where the difference between the old and new assessment is less than 8 annas, but in order to give effect to the instructions regarding remissions as soon as possible, the statements for the talukas of Alibag and Pen were prepared before the orders of Government were passed on the draft rules and on the assumption that draft rule 2 would be approved. As the preparation of new statements would have been a work of much time and trouble and as it was reported that the amount involved to individual occupants was in no case large and in many quite insignificant, Government directed that the draft rule in question should be held to have been applicable in the case of the Alibag and Pen Settlements. The statement contained in the last clause of the Honourable Member's question is irrelevant to the point referred to in the question and is incorrect in so far as it represents that enhancements in excess of 400 per cent. are numerous; and it is misleading in the absence of any indication of a recognition of the fact that such enhancements are due to a new and profitable use of warkas land which involves little or no expenditure.

QUESTION.

Has the attention of Government been drawn to a letter dated the 13th May 1895, over the signature of "C. R. Sail" published in the *Times of India* of 15th May 1895, in which exception is taken to the recent revision settlement of Alibag Taluka in respect of—

(1) The change made in the new classification of garden lands from the old 32, to 24-anna scale, the effect of which is to overclass soil and water factors while nominally confirming the old classification;

(2) No adequate weight being given to the supreme importance of water in garden lands;

(3) and the tremendous power of the newly-introduced position class ;
and have Government taken steps to enquire how far these statements are well-founded ?

(By the Hon. Mr. Nugent.)

ANSWER.

The attention of Government has not been called to the letter referred to, and Government cannot undertake to make any inquiries regarding, or in any manner to take notice of, statements which are made otherwise than in representations addressed to them in accordance with the rules.

Extract from the Hon. Mr. Yajnik's speech at the Council meeting on 14th August 1894.

The complaints against recent settlements may be summed up under three heads :—

(1). That agriculturists are not allowed reasonable opportunities of being heard in regard to the enhancements of rates on their lands before they are sanctioned.

(2). That these enhancements involve taxation of improvements.

(3). That this taxation of improvements is brought about by a new valuation of soils in re-classification work on account of the advantage of a "general position class," and by a new method of grouping on the plea of uniformity and other general considerations.

In proof of the first complaint, I will read only a sentence or two from the petition now before Government of the Panvel landowners. They remark that "the only notice which your petitioners had from the Survey Department as to their operations was a list of maxima rates proposed to be levied on the various descriptions of laud in the taluka. Your memorialists were not

informed as to how the lands were to be classified, nor the way in which individual khátás were to be treated, so as to enable them to make any specific objections." The people of Avàs and other villages in the Alibàg Táluka have made similar complaints. I hold in my hand a survey notification, in original, notifying maximum rates to these villagers. The objections they have to such a notification are that it is defective in (1) that it notifies groups of, and maximum rates on, villages only and is *wholly silent* as to details of rates on *individual* holdings and invites objections within a short space of two months through the revenue Patels; (2) that it does not specify the old order of grouping, and that so far it is vague and unintelligible; (3) that in column 8 it gives incorrect information as to the old maximum rate on warkas lands which was four annas only all over the Táluka, and not one rupee, as notified; (4) that in column 12, *nowhere*, kharif, rabi, warkas, and all kinds and descriptions of lands excepting *bàgáyat*, are jumbled up together for which the maximum rates are Rs. 3, Rs. 2½, and Rs. 2, but what rates for what lands is not shown, while in columns 4 and 5 the heading of kharif is divided into two portions, sweet and salt lands. Hitherto these petitions have generally received the reply that they contained nothing specific in the way of objections to the settlement. But I am glad to note that the subject has been receiving attention from Government, that the matter was referred to the Divisional Commissioners, but that final orders have not been passed.

As regards the second and third complaints, reference in support of them must needs be made to the most recent revision settlements in connection with the rice-producing lands of talukas in the Konkan districts. The cultivators of the 56 kharapat villages of the Alibag Taluka allege (1) that their lands were measured, classified, and settled three times, *contrary* to the provisions of the Bombay Land Revenue Code, first in 1852-53, then in 1872-73, and for the third time du-

ring the recent revision ; (2) that in their petitions to Major Godfrey they enquired if their lands having been already classified for the second time were to be classified again for the third time. They received a very cautious reply to the effect that no classification was intended except such as would be needed to rectify errors, and yet when the final results were notified,—a copy of which I hold in my hand,—they found that these 52 “khàrs” had come in for new grouping and enhanced maximum rates !! Moreover, the fact that they were compelled to pay the cost of such work showed that it was not mere rectification work that the survey had done, but the work of *entire* classification.

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