

THE
WITH THE BEST COMPLIMENTS
THE GODAVARY DISTRICT ASSOCIATION,
COCÓNADA.

GODAVARI RE-SETTLEMENT

BEING 15 ARTICLES

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NOTE.

These articles which originally appeared in the columns of the Hindu have, at the instance of the Godavery District Association, been reprinted in this form.

ERRATUM.

- ARTICLE I, Page 3, Line 28, *for ancient read anicut.*
- „ IV, „ 12, „ 2, *for emoluments read emolument.*
- „ „ „ „ „ 25, *for of read for.*
- „ „ „ 15, „ 16, *for soon as read as soon as.*
- „ IX, „ 31, *for 19th December read 9th December 1895.*

GODAVARI RE-SETTLEMENT.

I.

(THE HINDU, 31st October, 1895).

"WHO shall command the King" ? asked Lord Finch, "Why," said those glorious old Puritans "the law shall command your King." Rajah Sir Dinkar Rao, K. C. S. I., was reported to have once remarked that the moral influence of the British Government in India had been on the decline of recent years, and that the word of an Englishman which in days gone by used to be as good as a promise engraved on a stone, has been in recent days looked upon as no more than a bankrupt's promissory-note. We often hear from old men, of a generation belonging to the Company's rule, narratives illustrating how the mere word of an English Officer used to be regarded by the natives of the country generally as good as, if not better than, the most solemn promises of an exceptionally honest Indian potentate. The Duke of Argyll says, "but one doctrine has been tenaciously held by the "stupid English people" in the Government of their Eastern Empire, and that is, that our honour is the greatest of our possessions and that absolute trust in that honour is one of the strongest foundations of our power." This is no doubt true when applied to the Englishmen of the generation now passing away, but in recent times the signs are numerous and most noteworthy of a change coming upon the spirit of the administration in this respect, a change making us doubt whether the Englishmen now conducting the administration are the "stupid English people" to be guided by any such obsolete doctrines as found favour with their predecessors. The Duke further adds that there is complete

unanimity of opinion among English statesmen "that promises once given by the Government, however long ago, must be absolutely kept." We doubt very much if the executive agents in this country controlled by the said statesmen are imbued with the same spirit and if they seriously think that keeping faith is a part of their duty. To illustrate our meaning, we propose on the present occasion to dwell briefly on the pledges given by the Government regarding the re-settlement of the Godavery District and the attempts that are being made to cast those pledges to the winds.

Godavery was, for the first time, surveyed and settled in Fasli 1272, and the thirty years period expired on the 30th June 1892 in the Taluks of Tanuku and Bhimavaram and in a portion of the Narsapur Taluk, and continues in force till the 30th June 1896 in the remaining Taluks of the District. It is one of the Districts that were declared in 1883 as having been adequately assessed, and consequently exempted from any re-classification in accordance with the orders issued by the Government of India. The G. O., dated the 4th July 1889, No. 515, Revenue, para. 20, passed on the report of the Agricultural Committee, conveys an assurance that no re-classification of soils would ever take place in the case of settled Districts. Board's Standing Order, No. 1, para. 4, declares that in Revision Settlements there will be no fresh classification of soils or fresh calculation of grain values, but that the rates of assessment will be revised entirely with reference to prices. Again, Section VIII., Chapter III, of the Settlement Manual says that "the revised Settlements are to be permanent as regards grain values, but to be considered as regards commutation rates after 30 years." The object of these declarations was to grant a modified form of permanent settlement to the temporary settled Districts. The permanent assessment claimable from all soils hitherto settled was once for all fixed at a proportion of the gross

staple produce, the proportion being based upon the principle of dividing the net profits in kind half and half between the Government and the ryot. This payment in kind so fixed should be unchangeable for all time, whatever improvement the ryot might effect in his land. It was commuted into money value which would be liable to periodical changes according as prices permanently rose or fell. Of course, it is not the intention of Government that the money values should be raised to the exact margin of the permanent rise in prices. A due allowance is to be made for increased cost of production and a higher standard of living, and a proportionate deduction will have always to be made on this account in the revision of assessments. The Government need suffer no loss by this arrangement and will share proportionately in the increased prosperity of the country, and it will be moreover free to levy special rates for facilities of irrigation actually supplied by it at public expense. Persons desirous of investing money in the purchase of land or in improvements to it will be enabled to forecast with reasonable certainty the changes in its value likely to result from the enhancement of the Government assessment, apart from changes arising from natural causes. Relying on the assurances of Government that it has no intention of revising the classification of soils, and believing in the finality of the grain values assigned to soils at the Settlement, the ryots have brought under cultivation, with the aid of the irrigation provided by the ancient channels, many lands in the Delta tracts, which would otherwise have lain waste. Every available area, however poor the soil, and however precarious the irrigation, has been brought under the plough, in view of remote rather than proximate benefit and the professional and trading classes have also joined the agricultural classes in sinking their capital in the improvement of land.

We have learnt with no little astonishment that, in spite of the aforesaid pledges so long acted upon by the people, Mr. Clerk, the officer deputed to settle the District, has submitted proposals suggesting the re-classification of the wet lands in the Delta Taluks and recommending the revision of assessment of lands in the Upland Taluks alone with reference to prices, and that the Government has lately passed orders *ex-parte* sanctioning the said proposals. Under the orders of the Government the Board of Revenue issues a Standing Order on the 1st July 1895 that at every revision of settlement the Government would "revise the assessment in such manner as may *then* seem just and proper, either with reference solely to a rise or fall in prices, on with reference also to *other* considerations such as would require a re-classification of the soils or of the recalculation of the grain outturns." These are the principles which will guide future settlements, and what surprises us is that the Government should seriously think of giving them retrospective effect by extending them to the Districts already settled. Such retrospective orders are not unusual with the Government of Madras, and it may be in the recollection of our readers how the water-cess was enhanced last year in the Godavery and Kistna Deltas with retrospective effect and how the Government latterly found itself compelled to abandon the position it had taken up in reference to the said enhancement. These orders are so many doctrines of personal Government, and, though the attitude of the subordinate officers in this respect is intelligible enough, we think there is no excuse for the higher authorities charged with the welfare of many thousands of law-abiding people trying to tamper with pledges in such a light-hearted manner. We beseech the Government not to hand over its conscience into the charge of the special department pledged to enrich the public treasury at the expense of the dumb millions, but to take

a true statesman-like grasp of the question in all its bearings and solve it in a manner worthy of the reputation and prestige of the British rule in India.

II.

(THE HINDU, 1st November, 1895).

WE are far from thinking that the Government is actuated by any sinister intentions in ordering the re-classification of soils in the Godavery Delta. It is the penalty of foreign rule that the rulers, however well-meaning, are cut off from all healthy contact with those whose interests it is their duty to protect. Most of their sins of omission and commission must be attributed to this unfortunate circumstance. The Government was led to believe that the re-classification had been proposed in the interests of the ryot, and in its profound ignorance of the real conditions of the District, and in its anxiety to get an increased revenue, it has sanctioned the proposals of the Settlement Officer, without taking the consequences into due account. No statement of reasons which suggested the re-classification of soils in violation of the pledges of Government has yet been published. No facilities are afforded to the ryots to acquaint themselves with the particulars of re-classification. The settlement operations are proceeding on the same lines on which they proceed in the case of a District settled for the first time. The Government has already enjoined the adoption of the new Tanjore rates in the Trichinopoly District, and it is only awaiting the detailed scheme to accord its formal sanction to the adoption of the same Tanjore rates in Godavery as well. It is no wonder that we should in these circumstances witness, in the District, the usual concomitants of periodical revisions of assessment, viz., "the uneasiness arising from uncertainty, the harrassment of the agricul-

lature, in order to remove the uncertainty and uneasiness now prevailing among the land-owning classes. "The law is a terror to evil doers, not to them that do well." If the Government is not going to enhance the assessments exorbitantly it cannot reasonably object to the interference of the Legislature in restraining it from making such enhancements. If any evidence were required to establish the necessity of legislation in the direction above indicated, we think that the present shifting policy of the Government in this respect furnishes ample evidence. We appeal therefore to the Legislature to pass an Act whereby the ryot's share in the net profits of the land will be duly secured to him, without being left to the tender mercies of our Settlement Officers.

III.

(THE HINDU, 2nd November, 1895).

To the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon we owe the beneficent reform effected in the land revenue policy of Government in 1882 and 1883. In replying to the farewell address presented by the Poona Sarva Janika Sabha, His Lordship said in reference to this subject as follows :—

"No questions in India are really of so great importance to the mass of the population as those concerning land revenue and land tenure. It has been the object of our measures to afford to the payers of land revenue greater security in the future as to the principles upon which that revenue will be assessed, and to *save them from much of the harrassing investigations which have taken place under the system previously in force.* We have desired to secure to the owners, and the cultivators of the soil the full and undiminished benefit of every improvement which they may make in their land. I venture to say that at the present moment the land revenue system in Bombay

is ahead of that in any other part of India—although measures are being taken elsewhere, notably in *Madras*, with the same object in view.” (The italics are ours). To the Government of Lord Wenlock we owe the reversal of the policy initiated by Lord Ripon, the revival of all the old elements of uncertainty. Curiously enough, the Government of Lord Wenlock does not recognize even the distinction between what the Government has actually guaranteed in the most explicit and unequivocal terms that any language could furnish and what it would not guarantee owing to present exigencies. Whatever policy the Government may think fit to adopt in reference to Districts that are yet to be settled, there is not a shadow of justification for revoking the pledges given in respect of Districts already settled—pledges on the faith of which most of the lands have changed hands and whose renunciation will be nothing short of encroachment on private rights. The only excuse is that the Government has not redeemed similar pledges made in the case of Trichinopoly District, so Godavery and next Kistna must be treated likewise. This is a very extraordinary explanation. Herbert Spencer has said in an analogous case: “One breach of the law” says he, “leaves a gap for numberless trespasses. If the first false step has been taken with seeming impunity, it will inevitably be followed by others. School-boy promises of ‘only this once’ are not to be believed. Make a hole through a principle to admit a solitary exception, and on one pretence or other so many other exceptions will by and by be thrust through after it, as to render the principle utterly good-for-nothing. . . . Almost every wrong-doing is excused by the doer on this ground. He thinks his act is at variance with the moral law, which he admits to be, and in some sort believes to be, the best guide. He thinks, however, that his interest requires him now and then to make exceptions. All men do this :—and see the result ?”

With a growing population and with limited resources, the struggle for existence is already felt as a strain on the social system. One of the essential conditions of improving the general lot of the masses is to effect a radical change in the relationship of the soil with the person who cultivates it. Whatever hinders the ryot from obtaining that degree of wellbeing which he is capable of reaching by exertions, according to the best of his ability, ought to be removed. No half-hearted measures can possibly produce lasting beneficial results. An honest and earnest attempt must be made by Government to secure, at least a reasonable, if not permanent, fixity and moderation in revision settlements. The magic sense of property, which turns sand into gold, can alone induce the people freely to embark their capital in the improvement of agriculture. The present insecurity of tenure is the chief cause of the stagnation of agricultural industry. As matters stand, the policy of Government varies with the predilections of each individual Governor and the pledges made by one Governor are repudiated by his successor. One standing order supersedes the other and nobody knows of the change of policy until after it is a *fait accompli*. The whole work of classification, valuation and the settlement of revenue is absolutely left to the discretion of the Settlement Officers. There does not now exist that interchange of views between the Settlement and Revenue Officers, which is so desirable and which may be regarded as one of the best guarantees for the soundness and equity of the settlement operations. The Settlement Officers carry on their duties in a position of perfect independence of the Revenue Officers. It is not till the whole scheme has been completed for a District and the results are reported for the sanction of Government, that for the first time an opportunity for offering an opinion is afforded to the Collector, the responsible head of the District

administration. But it is then too late. It is impossible for the Collector then to review the scheme in all its details to any good purpose. The superior authorities exercise their powers only in special pleadings intended to conceal their own powerlessness in the matter. No limit is placed on the enhancement of assessments at each recurring revision. Government may double, treble and even quadruple the assessments at a leap. The doctrine "that a great and sudden increase means such a great and sudden diminution in the cultivator's income, as must in most cases destroy the means of proper cultivation, in other words, must injure the agricultural prosperity of the country," quoted by Sir Steuart Bayley, is to be applied only to the Bengal tenants. The old settlements were for thirty years, and this has always been held as far too short a period. But now it is proposed that the new settlements shall be for only twenty years. Again, the assessment has to be paid punctually on pain of forfeiture of all interest in land. No compensation can be claimed by a ryot for improvements when he is ousted from his land. If the Government is really in earnest to encourage the development of agriculture in the Ryotwari tracts, it must be prepared to bind itself by the restrictions it has so generously imposed upon the Zemindars in Bengal and to concede as against itself the same measures of moderation which it was so anxious to provide for the Zemindary tenants. A Government which has so readily imposed restrictions upon the powers of private creditors in certain respects cannot surely leave its own action unhampered by the very same considerations which have dictated such encroachment on private rights.

IV.

(THE HINDU 4th November, 1895.)

THERE is considerable difference between the pledges of Government remaining unfulfilled and pledges deliberately broken. In the case, for instance, of pledges given

by Parliament to the natives of India regarding their admission to posts of honour and emoluments, all that we complain of is that there has been scandalously long delay in redeeming them. We indulge, however, in the hope that they will be fulfilled in the fulness of time. Their non-redemption affects chiefly the educated classes and the masses are not yet sufficiently advanced as to make common cause with their educated brethren, in securing their redemption by reiterating the appeals made to Parliament. Whereas, in the case of pledges that we are discussing in connection with the re-settlement of the Districts already settled, we charge the Government with an openly avowed renunciation of all obligations to fulfill its solemn promises. If, by guaranteeing a certain rate of interest, the Government has attracted foreign capital for the construction of Railways in this country, we say that the Government has attracted indigenous capital and labour to the improvement of land by guaranteeing in no less unmistakable terms, that the grain valuation of soils will be final, that the ryots' improvements will not be taxed, and that the revision of settlements will be regulated by changes in general prices. To disturb the grain value assigned at the settlement to any particular soil and transfer it from class III or II to class I and thus raise its grain valuation of the purposes of assessment is tantamount, in our opinion, to adding, in a Railway debenture, a clause reducing the rate of interest from 4 to 2 per cent., some years after the construction of the Railway. The consequences of violating guarantees of this description will be far-reaching in their character, as such violation is sure to give rise to discontent among the masses who form the bulwark of the Empire. No measures of Government more directly affect, for good or evil, the contentment of the masses in this country as those which are connected with the periodical assessment

of the land tax. It is needless to say that it is all the more binding on the honor of the Government to redeem the pledges dictated by such measures, for the redemption of which the people have and can have no other guarantee than the good faith of their rulers. Nothing should be done which is likely to shake the confidence of the people in the justice and fair-play of the Government, upon which the prestige and supremacy of the British Government in India so greatly depend. We hope that the Government of Lord Wenlock will prove equal to the occasion, rise above the temptation that exists in these days to force up the assessments and act in the spirit in which Sir John Malcolm acted, though not under exactly similar circumstances. Sir John Malcolm when he had persuaded the great Sirdars, Vinchoorkar, Purandare and others to leave the Peshwa Bajirao's side, gave them an *oral* assurance that their Saramjams would be continued in fact. The Commissioner of the province was of opinion that the said promise was exorbitant and he consequently referred the matter to Sir John Malcolm requesting him to state whether the said promise was written or simply oral; and how far it was to be deemed binding upon the Government. And now mark what that high-minded and truth-loving Englishman wrote in reply. Sir John wrote:— "The assurances I gave to the representatives of the Jaghirdars regarding their personal lands were so strong as to amount in my opinion to an engagement, and I should consider them as binding upon the British faith as if such had been written." Is it any wonder that a nation which has produced such statesmen as never violated their promises, whether oral or written, should become the first power in the world and be able to acquire and consolidate empires like the British Indian Empire?

Times have, however changed. Increasing demands from the Home Government and increasing expenses in

the Indian administration have effected a revolution in the ideas of our rulers. While, in every country in the world, Government frames its measures of taxation and regulates its expenditure with sole regard to the interests of the country it governs, it is the peculiar misfortune of the Indian Government to look to the interests not of India alone but of England also in framing its measures. How is it possible for views which flourished under a full exchequer to find acceptance in these days of an empty treasury? The Government finds it impossible to practise the very lessons which it has taken the pains to preach so long to the Zemindars in Bengal. Even the sanctity of written promises is sometimes set aside before the pressure of present demands. The demand for legislation for the protection of the ryot in the Ryotwari tracts is not therefore made a day too soon. There is a wide distinction both in principle and in practice between one mode of Government by legislative enactments, and the other by executive orders. The rules of the Legislature enable parties to be heard on any project of law by Counsel, if necessary, and we have also a small proportion of elected Councillors in the Councils to oppose any encroachments on private rights. The existence of an opposition, though not sufficiently influential and effective, will make the rulers better administrators than they would be without such an opposition. The defects in the existing constitution of our Legislative Councils should not detract from the excellence of the system inaugurated by Parliament in 1861. Another advantage is that the Government cannot so easily amend laws as it can its standing orders, and that, if it passes the bounds of the discretion vested in it by an Act of the Legislature, and violates the rights of property, the Civil Courts can interfere. The Government may not agree with us. This is but natural. "Persons who either possess or lay claim to power of any kind

are strongly disposed to be of the opinion that they may be safely entrusted with such power." But it is to be borne in mind that a full sense of property in land can be created only when the investigation of questions arising out of violation of rights of property is taken out of the hands of officers deficient in judicial training and interested in tampering with those rights according to the varying exigencies of Government, and made over to the hands of officers presumably skilled in adjudicating and accustomed to adjudicate upon rights of property. The present system under which an appeal against over-assessment lies to the officer who fixed the original assessment is no more than a patriarchal system of administration which is fatal to all improvement. We do not, however, rest our position on the want of confidence in the good faith of Government. "We say that soon as you come to speak of confidence in Government on points of the nature of those we are concerned with, the reign of Law ceases. Such confidence may, in itself, be proper or improper,—may be deserved or not deserved. When you ask for confidence, you surrender the position that we live under a Reign of Law. The question here is not about honesty and good faith. Good faith is perfectly compatible with the most stupendous errors in the appreciation of other people's rights. And, therefore, the confidence required is confidence in the capacity of Government to collect and correctly judge of the material on which individual rights are based. We have no hesitation in saying that Government, as it is constituted, does not command our confidence in the sense now stated."

V.

(THE HINDU, 8th November, 1895).

IN advocating legislation to protect the rights of the cultivators in the Ryotwari tracts in this Presidency, it

is easy to shew that we make no new proposals but merely reiterate a recommendation made by a body of experts who have studied the agricultural problem in all its bearings. The Committee appointed in 1888 to institute a comprehensive enquiry into the conditions of agriculture in this Presidency submitted a recommendation in May 1889 in the following terms to the Government of Madras :—“ There appears to be a feeling of mistrust regarding the finality of the grain values assigned to soils by the Settlement Department when revising assessments for the first time. It is feared that future revisions of assessments will be determined on a consideration not of prices only, but of soils also. A re-valuation of soils at each recurring revision would, it is said—and we think rightly said—be fatal to improvement. We believe that the present opinion of the Government is opposed to such a re-valuation, and is inclined to make the settlements permanent so far as the grain values of soils are concerned, but there has been no distinct avowal that this will be the policy that will guide future revisions of assessments. . . . We consider, therefore, that Government should distinctly declare *by legislation* that in any revision of assessment that may be made after the first, soils will not be revalued. In this way the value of his improvements will be absolutely secured to the ryot, for they will afford no basis for the enhancement of the Government demand upon him, and the stability of his tenure will be assured.” In its order thereon, the Government of Lord Connemara said : “ The recommendation that legislation should be undertaken for the purpose of defining authoritatively the status of the ryot need not be noticed at length, for it is made under a misapprehension of the real fact. . . . Nor has the Government any intention of revising the classification of soils. This principle has been repeatedly laid down and is very clearly stated in the Settlement Manual.” As regards the

statement to the contrary in the Manual of Administration and the reclassification of the Chidambaram Taluk which, according to the Committee, gave "a solid foundation for the want of confidence" to which they alluded, the Government remarked that the said statement was incorrect and that the reclassification in question was not a violation of the assurances of Government, as the Chidambaram Taluk had never been settled on the system then followed throughout the rest of the Presidency. The Government evaded legislation on the ground that the case cited by the Committee did not amount to a violation of the pledges and contented itself for the time with a distinct declaration of its policy to allay the feeling of mistrust among the people. While, however, these proposals were being made and assurances were being given, a Despatch from the Secretary of State, virtually setting aside the great re-settlement scheme of Lord Ripon on which these proposals and assurance were based, was sleeping in the Simla Secretariat. This Despatch arrived in India three years before Lord Connemara's Committee was appointed, and if Lord Connemara and his Committee were aware of this Despatch, the history of the Government's land revenue policy between the years 1885 and 1895 would certainly have been different. But, as a fact, all the benevolent assurances of the Government and all the prospect of the ryots being rescued from the vexation and loss of capricious re-settlement, have been scattered to the winds, and under orders from Government dated 11th May 1895, the Madras Board of Revenue issued fresh instructions to the Settlement Officers. "At each settlement, or re-settlement of a District," the Board of Revenue said "Government will fix at its discretion the period for which such settlement or re-settlement shall be in force. The Collector shall then notify the period in the

District Gazette, and explain to the ryots that the new rates will not be liable to alteration during the currency of the settlement period ; but that on the expiry of the said period Government reserves to itself the right to revise the assessment in such a manner as may then seem just and proper, either with reference solely to a rise or fall in prices, or with reference also to other considerations such as would require a re-classification of soils or re-calculation of grain outturns. It should be further explained that Government will refrain from enhancing the assessment in respect of any additional value which may have been given to land by improvements effected by the ryots even if carried out by means of money borrowed from Government." Thus, far from rules which would relieve the ryots from a re-valuation of soils or from a re-calculation of grain outturns at each recurring revision, being embodied in a legislative enactment, the caprice of the Executive Government, or it may be the Land Revenue Commissioner or the Settlement Officer himself, is the only rule that is to be in force hereafter. *What may seem to Government just and proper*—this is to be the only determining factor in future Settlements. Certainly this policy of vacillation and varying practice is not in the least calculated to produce confidence in the minds of the ryots. Lord Connemara's Committee reported : " It is stated that so long as any uncertainty regarding the policy of the Government in this matter is permitted to continue the tenure of land on the ryotwari system is not stable, and that it cannot be stable unless and until the Government declare that in future revisions of assessments the soil valuation and classification first adopted by the Settlement Department shall be final and will never be disturbed in any future revisions." But how different is the policy now laid down ?

Is this policy then irrevocable ? Will not the Government—or rather the India Office—reconsider its decision,

and give the ryots the concessions promised in 1883? Notwithstanding that the arguments in favour of a permanent settlement are unanswerable, this wise, and beneficent measure has been once for all declared impossible, and a scheme of settlement which in some respects had elements of permanence was proposed by Lord Ripon. There is little chance of a permanent settlement in the old sense being accepted by the administrators of the present day. Moreover, it is essential in all matters of legislation to proceed on the lines of least resistance. We may therefore rather err on the side of moderation and ask the Government to embody the principles declared by the Government of India in 1883, in the form of a legislative enactment, so as to secure harmony between the said principles and the practice of the Settlement Officers. As it is, our Settlement Officers with their wonderful ingenuity have the knack of carrying away both the earned as well as the unearned increment. The present revenue policy effectively diminishes the surplus of production by rendering impossible all improvements in the land. There is little or no scope for unearned increment under the present conditions. If the Government's demand be placed on a just and definite basis, in other words, if a reign of law is substituted for a reign of discretion, we have no doubt that the interests of the revenue as well as those of the people will be promoted thereby. Not only will the land revenue be then collected with greater ease, but wealth will be created which will under the general taxation of the country, afford additional revenue to the State. Industrial progress essentially rests on the basis of increased production much more than on anything else. It is the peculiar weakness of bureaucratic minds to feel an aversion to first principles, to regard all appeals to general considerations as sentimental madness, and to decry those, who venture to call attention to this subject in all

its importance, as agitators. The relation of cause and effect can be clearly traced between the land revenue policy of Government and the prevailing habits and deficiencies in the character of the people. The pressure of the Government's demand on the ryot's means of subsistence is hard indeed in all conscience, but the glorious uncertainty of the demand aggravates the evil. If security and permanence are the essential conditions of productive energy in nations as in individuals, the absence of these conditions must result in the depletion of all vital activity in the body politic. We hope that this subject will engage the serious attention of the next Congress, that an emphatic protest will be recorded against the present reactionary policy of Government, and that the demands of the Congress in this respect will be formulated with greater distinctness than hitherto.

VI.

(THE HINDU 4th December, 1895).

"But, Sir, your words have sunk deep into my thoughts; you said every deviation from truth was a forfeiture of duty."

"Certainly; but there are some exceptions. The world is a bad world, we are born in sin and the children of wrath. We do not tell infants all the truth, when they ask us questions, the proper answers of which would mislead, not enlighten, them. The very science of Government is the science of concealing truth—so is the system of trade. We could not blame the tradesman for not telling the public, that if all his debts were called in he would be bankrupt."

Lord Lytton's "*Earnest Maltravers*."

The above extract records the instructive dialogue between two minor characters in one of the most charming

and instructive novels of Lord Lytton. According to the code of morality inculcated by the banker in the novel upon his female companion, "the very science of Government is the science of concealing truth." If this be the true definition of the term "science of Government," then we certify that the Government of India, so far as its land revenue policy is concerned, has fully satisfied the requirements of the definition in question. In the answers to the questions put by the Honorable Mr. N. Subbarow at the last meeting of the Legislative Council in connection with the re-settlement of the Godavery District, the Government of Madras, while admitting that it has ordered the re-classification of soils in the Delta Taluks "in spite of the pledges of Government embodied in the Settlement Manual and in the Standing Orders of the Board of Revenue, No. 1, paragraph 4, that in the case of districts once settled there will be no re-classification of the soils," declined to comply with the Honorable Member's request "to place on the table the reports received, and the orders passed by Government on the subject." Nor would the Government condescend to publish the Despatch of the Secretary of State under which it takes shelter in support of "the change made in May last in the principles of re-settlement so long accepted by Government, and the people." Till we know the precise terms of the Despatch, we hesitate to believe that the Secretary of State issued any such mandate as to leave no option to the local Government but to revoke the pledges made in the case of Districts like Godavery "held by Government in 1883 to have been adequately assessed and consequently exempt from re-classification," revoke them only so far as they concern the lands in the Delta Taluks in the District. We are supported in this view by the following summary of this Despatch; "The final orders of the Secretary of State enjoin that no hard and fast rules should be laid down as to the

grounds on which revenue rates may be modified at the revision of settlements and that no pledges should be given to the people as to the limits beyond which enhancements will not be made. The circumstances of each tract or district are to be considered on their merits and special cases may be treated exceptionally. A fresh classification of soils may therefore be made where necessary, *though ordinarily such detailed enquiries are to be avoided in all cases in which there is a reasonable assurance that the existing revenue was arrived at by a fairly adequate assessment of the assets due to Government.*" This Despatch was dated 8th January 1885. It was not communicated to the Government of Madras until November 1893. On the 20th October 1893, that is, only a few days before the receipt of this Despatch, the Government of Madras, in passing final orders on the suggestions embodied in the Memorandum on the progress of the Madras Presidency during the last forty years, ratified for the last time the said pledges in the following terms : "Prominent among the suggestions here made are those which relate to the principles recently enunciated for the revision of land assessments in future years. The author points out that while it would be impossible to have rules regarding revisions of assessment conceived in a more liberal spirit than those at present in force, yet these rules are not generally known and that it is very necessary that they should be widely published. He suggests that the average prices of a definite period prior to each settlement should be taken as the initial standard, and that the prices thus arrived at should be compared with those of a like period preceding any future revision. His Excellency the Governor in Council regards this suggestion, as well as that which would ensure the publication in the official *Gazettes* of the rules regarding the revision of assessments, as sound and practical, and proposes to take action in the direction indi-

cated without loss of time. The Government considers, however, that there is no need for legislation in this matter." If the Government of Madras had understood the Despatch in question as introducing "A change in the principles of re-settlement so long accepted by Government and the people," may we ask, (1) whether any and what steps it has taken to apprise the Secretary of State of the solemn character of the pledges given to the dumb millions of this Presidency and of the moral and material consequences which their renunciation would entail, before it issued instructions in *May 1895* "To the Board of Revenue to revise the Standing Orders and the Settlement Manual, with a view to bring them into agreement with the policy laid down by the Secretary of State," and (2) if so, with what result? It is one thing to say that the Secretary of State disallowed *one* general scheme for the different provinces in this country and it is quite a different thing to say that he gave the Government of Madras a blank letter of authority to revoke in his name and on his behalf all or any and whatsoever pledges were given by Government in connection with the revision of assessments without reference to local circumstances. Whether the pledges in question were broken by the local Government on its own responsibility or under orders received from the Secretary of State, the Government whose honour is at stake is bound to render a full explanation of the circumstances which led to the change of policy in this respect and place at the disposal of the people affected by such change all the information afforded by the papers in its possession.

VII.

(THE HINDU, 5th December, 1895).

WHEN Lord Lytton was asked why the Famine Insurance Fund has been incorporated with the general revenues of the Empire, contrary to the explicit pledges given

by his Government, His Lordship replied "that the Government of India could not and never can guarantee, *under all conceivable circumstances*, the uninterrupted maintenance" of the fund. It appears to us that the Government of Madras is now playing a similar game. Under color of an enabling provision contained in a Despatch of the Secretary of State which saw the light for the first time, a decade after it was born, the Government says that when it guaranteed to the people the finality of grain values assigned at the settlement and the revision thereof solely with reference to a rise or fall in the general prices, it never did so *under all conceivable circumstances*, and, even if it had so guaranteed, such a reservation is always to be implied. In the light of this interpretation, Mr. Clerk's mission in Godavery is perfectly clear to our mind. The aims and objects of that mission are to shew that the existing revenue was not arrived at "by a fairly adequate assessment of the assets due to Government," in other words, to produce a set of "conceivable circumstances" under which the pledges may be broken. We venture to doubt if Mr. Clerk, with all his ingenuity, can succeed in transforming an adequately assessed into an inadequately assessed district. We may invite attention in this connection to Mr. Master's report on the Settlement of the Western Delta, para 59 of which says "great care has been taken in arranging the villages under the different classes. In addition to much personal observation of the different localities and of the general features and characteristics of the country, advantage has been taken of the experience of the intelligent ryots and their opinions have been obtained by means of Panchayats Reference has also been made to such of the subordinate Revenue officers as from long residence in the Taluks and acquaintance with the villages were competent to give advice on the subject." The Board of Revenue in its

Proceedings, dated the 23rd of April 1861, No. 2110, says "the rules laid down in the Manual appear to have been followed, and much care has evidently been taken to secure accuracy (in the classification of soils)." The Government in its Order thereon, dated the 24th June 1861, No. 1231, says "Mr. Newill's calculations have been made with the utmost care and in accordance with principles approved by Government after much consideration."

The Godavery Anicut was constructed in 1847; the Anicut channels came into existence in 1849-50; and "irrigation has made great strides, and in the Delta non-irrigation was the exception rather than the rule" at the time of the settlement. The lands under the influence of the Anicut irrigation were not only assessed with higher rates in view of the prospective advantages of irrigation, but the water-rate, which was recommended by the settlement authorities to be fixed at Rs. 3 per acre, was also raised to Rs. 4 before the confirmation of the settlement, on the ground "that the price of paddy of the first sort in the district has risen from Rs. 94 per garce in Fasli 1269 (1859-60, the year in which the water-rate of Rs. 3 was fixed) to Rs. 136 in Fasli 1273, and that of the second sort paddy from Rs. 87 to Rs. 127." (G. O. dated 12th May 1865, No. 1006.) There has been no marked rise in the commutation prices since that period. It is therefore apparent that the heaviest burden that could be put on the ryot in the Godavery Delta was already put on him so long ago as Fasli 1275 (1865). It may be also noted here that, in view of the difficulties caused by adopting the principle of a separate water-cess in the Godavery Delta, the Government not only directed its local officers to "carefully watch its practical working for a period of three years," but also called, before confirming the settlement and before enhancing the water-cess from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4, for a special report on the work,

ing of the measure, and requested the Board specially to note "How far the rates have proved fair and correct, how the ryots at large regard them, and whether they can now be *safely declared permanent*." Writing in 1878, Mr. Morris says at page 322 of the District Manual that "The present (water) rates were determined on after careful thought and careful revision," and "That all former rates have been superseded by these, which have been tested by experience and by the suggestion and advice of the Collector's, who had watched the working of the rules in actual practice." Another pregnant circumstance is that, in spite of the great inferiority of the lands in the Godavery Delta compared with those in Tanjore—whether we look to the characteristics of the soils, or their irrigational advantages, their selling values, or their rents—the average rate of assessment per acre of wet land in the Godavery Delta, as fixed in the settlement made 30 years ago, when the commutation prices were no more than 75 per cent. of the present commutation prices, was Rs. 6·32 against 6·71 in the Tanjore Delta according to the settlement made in 1893. If due allowance be made for the difference between commutation prices in the two Districts, it will be manifest that the average assessment per acre in Godavery is already equal to that of Tanjore, "the garden of the south. How in the face of evidence of such a positive character—not to speak of the admissions made by Government from time to time—Mr. Clerk has been able to convince the Government that the Delta taluks were so under-assessed as to call for a fresh classification of soils, we fail to comprehend. Why should the Government refuse to publish the precious papers bearing on this question for the edification of the public ?

It is said that the Anicut irrigation has materially changed the character of the soils, and that, a re-classifica-

tion is necessary in order to remove the anomalies in the assessment of wet lands in the Delta. Assuming that there are such inequalities, we say that, if any increased produce has resulted from the use of Government water—water left to the *option* of the ryot whether to take it or not, it was already charged for by the imposition of a separate water-tax, and any change perceptible in the productive capacity of the soil in consequence of the use of water so paid for should be regarded in the light of any ordinary improvement voluntarily made by the ryot, and as such exempted from additional assessment. The same argument applies also where the lands have deteriorated in quality on account of their having been brought under cultivation. In the words of the late Sir Charles Wood, Bart., "However much the benefits derived by the purchasers of the water may vary according to the nature of the soils to which they may apply it, its value to the seller, whether the Government or a private association, like the Madras Irrigation Company, remains the same, whatever the purposes may be for which it is used," and it was in accordance with this principle that a uniform water-rate was imposed on all soils without regard to their quality. The adoption of a uniform water-rate furnishes an additional ground for giving the ryots in the Delta Taluks the benefits of finality of classification accorded to the upland Taluks of the District in which the wet assessment was consolidated.

VIII.

(THE HINDU, 6th December, 1895).

THE anomalies urged as a justification for the re-classification of soils in the Godavari Delta are inseparable from a uniform water-rate. If the principle underlying the imposition of a uniform water-rate is good, then there would be no anomalies at all. It was good enough, however, for

nearly half a century after the construction of the Anicut. The burden lies upon those who assert the contrary to shew why it should now be condemned. Soon after the construction of the Anicut works, the question came up before Government in 1859 as to how water-rate should be charged on irrigated lands in the Godavery and Kistna Deltas, i. e., whether it should be consolidated with land assessment or kept distinct from it, and if distinct, whether the charge should be uniform or graduated according to the quality of the soil. Mr. Newill, the Director of Revenue Settlement, recommended a uniform rate, while the Board of Revenue expressed themselves in favour of a graduated rate, on the ground that a uniform rate would "create a great inequality in the land-tax, and involve an unnecessary sacrifice of revenue in the case of the superior soils," and that "the entire profit in the inferior soils would be absorbed by the Government tax, which is not only unfair to the owner of the land, but acts as a prohibition to the investment of capital in this class of soils." But the Government of Madras and the Secretary of State, disagreeing with the Board, sanctioned the imposition of a uniform rate. In according his sanction, the Secretary of State observed as follows:—"I have, however, no hesitation in expressing my opinion that the rate for water *should be uniform and not graduated according to the supposed profits of the recipient.* The land assessment will be adjusted according to the qualities of the several descriptions of soil including their capacity to benefit by irrigation." From para. 8 of Mr. Newill's letter quoted in Board's Proceedings, No. 4395, dated 27th October 1859, it will be seen that a scale of classification for land assessment independent of water charge was drawn up "taking into account for all hands, whether yet irrigated or not, their irrigable properties." And Mr. Newill further added that

"with a moderate assessment, the inequalities which would result from their adjustment, made in anticipation of the whole area being irrigated, would not be felt and were not such as should form an insuperable objection to the plan of classifying for the land assessment separately."

When the settlement was made, a comparison was also instituted between dry assessment plus water rate on the basis of the three-rupee rate, and a consolidated wet assessment by the Deputy Director, and the result was that "in the second class of soils, and in the two first sorts of the third class, the rates tally exactly, while in the third sort the consolidated rate is the lowest. In the fourth class or sandy *Regar*, the consolidated rate is necessarily the highest, inasmuch as that description of soil, when wet, produces heavier crops of paddy and has higher grain values than the third class or pure *Regar*, while the reverse is the case in dry soils. In the lower classes and sorts, the rates tally pretty nearly, except in the third sort of class 5 and in the second sort of classes 13 and 15, where it will be noticed that the dry rate, with the addition of the water-rate, considerably exceeds the consolidated rate." But directly the water-rate was raised to Rs. 4 per acre in May 1865, the dry rates plus water-rate became much higher than the consolidated wet-rates and pressed heavily in the case of a larger proportion of lands, and, in consequence, there were a number of relinquishments and a large falling off in revenue in subsequent years. Under the increased water-rate of Rs. 4, and with the enormous rise in the cultivation expenses since the period of settlement, we believe that lands would have been relinquished many years ago, were it not for a rise in the prices of the produce since 1876. In fact, when the water-cess was raised from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 in 1865, the

Government actually anticipated that "any very material fall was very unlikely" in the high prices which reached their culmination in the five years ending 1865. If the inequalities created by the imposition of a three-rupee rate were adjusted (as far as it was possible to adjust) in fixing the land assessment at the settlement, we say that the inequalities caused by the four-rupee rate were partially removed by the increased prices maintained since 1876. True, even now in many cases the four-rupee rate trenches upon the profits of the ryot to which he will be entitled under a consolidated scale, but the remedy does not lie in the direction of either classifying the lands afresh or consolidating the wet assessment, but in fixing the water-rate so low "that even the land which benefits least by the application of water will yield to the cultivator an increased profit fully sufficient to enable him to pay it" as contemplated by the Secretary of State when he gave his assent to an uniform rate in 1860. If this principle is to be given effect to, the Government knows full well that it cannot expect any increase in the shape of water-cess, and that the recent unwarranted enhancement of the water-rate to Rs. 5 cannot be made permanent during the re-settlement by any show of reason. The Government conveniently falls back upon the so-called anomalies of its own creation as a ground for disturbing the classification of soils already once carefully classified. Assuming that there are certain inequalities, we think "that a considerable degree of inequality is a less evil than a very great degree of uncertainty" attending the revaluation of soils at the revision which would, as observed by Mr. Wilson, Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, of 1889, "be fatal to improvement."

There is no pretence for saying that the public revenue has in any way suffered by reason of such inequalities. The percentage of net revenue on the capital outlay of the Godavari Delta system was 14·04 per cent. in 1893-94 against 13·73 per cent. in 1892-93. The total surplus revenue up to 1892-93, after paying interest on the capital amount, was about 271 lakhs of rupees. It is thus clear that the irrigation works in Godavari which were originally started with a view to protect the district from famine are yielding a considerably greater return than even the great canals in Upper India. The value of irrigation works is not to be measured merely by the amount of revenue realized by Government on account of water-cess, and whether we look to the direct profit made by Government in the shape of water-cess or to the increase of Land Revenue, Customs, Abkari, Income-tax and other items of revenue due in a great measure to the construction of these works, there is no doubt that the revenue has reached the highest possible limit and that, at any rate, the District falls within the class of "cases in which there is a reasonable assurance that the existing revenue was arrived at by a fairly adequate assessment of the assets due to Government."

IX.

(THE HINDU, 19th December, 1895).

In the words of the late Sir George Chesney, "The direct return in the form of a water-rate is in fact an altogether secondary consideration. . . That irrigation works unlike roads should in most cases yield a good return on their outlay is a very satisfactory condition, but their primary object is to be an insurance, primarily, against the horrors and losses of famine, and further against the resulting loss of land revenue." If

We look back to the history of the Godavari Anicut works, we find that in 1844, when the district was suffering from agricultural depression, and when there was consequent loss of Government revenue, Sir Henry Montgomery was appointed Commissioner to examine the state of things and report what could be done to raise the District from its lamentable state of depression. That eminent officer having, after due investigation, urged upon the attention of Government the construction of irrigation works as a proper remedy, Major (now Sir Arthur) Cotton was appointed in 1845 to report professionally upon the subject. He then submitted a scheme for the sanction of Government and, in recommending the project to the Honorable Court of Directors, the Government of Madras made the following remarks:—

“If it had no other effect than that of securing to Government the sum of Rs. 90,000 now annually lost, the object of its construction would be sufficiently gained.”

“One other point affords the strongest argument in favour of Major Cotton’s project, that is, the frequent visitations of famine with which the district has been afflicted and from which the inhabitants have so dreadfully suffered, and if, as there is reason to believe, the proposed Anicut will preserve the population of that province from this frightful scourge, there cannot be a question but that its construction should be advocated!” “The District which, at the commencement of British rule, constituted a portion of a neglected province, which, at one time, was brought into a state of extreme impoverishment and distress from various causes, and which was desolated by famine and misgoverned by the numerous landowners and their advisers,” says Mr. Morris, “has, since the introduction of the admirable system of irrigation, brightened and revived.” Mr. Morris would have been more accurate if

he had said that the prosperity of the District really dates from 1876, for we find that so recently as 1872, even after two decades after the construction of the magnificent irrigation works, the condition of the District has not materially improved, according to the following description of the District given by Mr. A. J. Stuart, the Sub-Collector of Rajahmundry, in connection with the inquiries instituted by the Board of Revenue regarding the condition of the laboring classes. "On the whole," says Mr. Stuart, "by far the greatest part of the population was poor and had little beyond food, clothing and shelter. *In no country in the world, was the taxation so high in proportion to the income of the people it was raised from, and little or no advance was observable in the condition of the masses and certainly none in that of the labouring classes*" (Page XXXVIII. of the Memorandum of the Progress of the Madras Presidency during the last forty years). This is the description given not by any speaker chosen from among the delegates assembled at the Godavari District Conference, but by a responsible officer of Government who had charge of the Sub Division comprising the most fertile Taluks in the Delta. That there has been some advance in the condition of the masses since that period admits of little doubt. In the first year when the irrigation channels came into existence, the extent of area irrigated by Anicut water was only 100,000 acres; at the settlement, this extent rose to 467,833 acres. At the time of the construction of the Anicut, it was estimated that the river would be capable of irrigating 579,470 acres, while it is now made to irrigate 66,629 acres over and above the estimated area, the actual extent under irrigation in 1893-94 being 646,099 acres. If the three-rupee rate was deemed adequate in 1859-60, when the area under cultivation was much less than it is now, the present irrigated area under the Godavery Delta

must needs make the four rupee rate more than adequate. Considerable increase of land revenue and of the export and import trade has also resulted from the enormous development of cultivation under the stimulus given by the construction of these works and from the advantages which have, indirectly as well as directly, followed them. The value of the exports and imports of Cocanada has risen from £ 300,000 in 1862 to £740,000 in 1872, to £1,500,000 in 1888, and to £1,404,586 in 1895. The salt duty has been raised considerably since the settlement. The additional revenue derived from tree-tax alone from the District is about 9 lakhs of rupees per annum. The Stamp and Registration laws have since come into operation. The ryot has to pay in stamps and Court Fees for every application he makes to a Revenue officer—be it an application for remission or transfer of land—for every process that is issued by or against him in the endless resort to Courts of one sort or another. He has to pay Registration fees for his perpetual transactions of bonds, mortgages and transfers. Local and village cesses, fees and tolls of various kinds, have since come into existence. Remissions for failure of crops have become few and far between. There has been a contraction of the grazing ground all round. Since the introduction of the new Forest policy, the ryot has been contributing to the forest revenue by paying grazing and other fees and charges which he never had to pay before. Waste lands are now sold in several cases to the highest bidder, like any other private property. The produce of trees in the Poramboke lands as well as grass grown on canal bunds are sold by the officers of Government in auction from time to time. Even the value of puttahs and receipts granted to the ryot and the cost of opening sluices or palmyra spouts required for leading water to his fields is separately levied from

him. A ryot who reserves the produce of his lands for sale in the favorable months of the year lives under the perpetual fear of being charged with Income-tax as a trader. A ryot who attempts to take water to his fields in the particular season when he most needs it runs the risk of being charged with double water rate on the *ex-parte* reports of low-paid subordinates.

X.

(THE HINDU 10th December 1895).

It is impossible to view with unconcern the retrograde proposal made by Mr. Clerk to do away with the optional system of irrigation which has produced such admirable results in the Godavery Delta and swelled the revenue without producing any great discontent among the masses by whom it is contributed; nor does the proposal to consolidate the wet assessment only in the case of such lands as are unfit for dry cultivation, and to charge an insurance rate of 25 per cent. of the dry assessment *plus* a graduated water-rate in the case of the other lands, when irrigated, appear to us of less retrograde a character. Consolidated assessment implies compulsory irrigation without any regard to the condition of the soil. It has always been recognized by officers of wide experience of the Godavery and Kistna Districts that there are certain lands in the said Deltas which are better adapted for dry than for wet cultivation, that, in view of the chief difficulties of agriculture—the loss of cattle and the want of manure—a mutation of crops is indispensable to prevent the spoliation of the soil, that it is desirable that there should be a variety of crops in every tract of country, and that the ryot should be left to choose for himself which crop pays him best, having regard to the nature of his soil,

its situation, the climatic conditions, the facilities of irrigation, the ruling prices of different descriptions of grains and the like, as "the effect of the water in increasing productiveness cannot always be calculated with certainty." By hampering the freedom of action of the ryot in this respect, the Government would be compelling him to relinquish the land itself in many cases and this is clearly opposed to the orders of the Secretary of State for India conveyed in the following Despatch, No. 81, dated 24th November 1863 :—"I am clearly of opinion that such option should be permitted. There is little ground for apprehension that the option would be exercised by the cultivator in the way of declining to use the means of irrigation when they are supplied to him *at a moderate price.*"... "Although few would probably reject the opportunity, yet *no compulsion to take the water must be exercised towards the dissentients*, and they must in no way be disturbed in the possession of their lands so long as they desire to hold them, and continue to pay the ordinary rate of assessment." How can the optional system of irrigation which stood the test of time so long as water was supplied "at a moderate price," work well in these days when water is sold on commercial principles? If the circumstances of the Godavary and Kistna Deltas render it necessary that the option allowed to the ryot should be continued in future, then there cannot be a shadow of reason either for consolidating the wet assessment in any part of the said Deltas or for levying a separate cess on the exercise of the said option. The principle of charging an insurance rate is altogether at variance with the fundamental principle laid down by the Secretary of State that the ryots are free to give up water whenever they like. We embody Mr. Clerk's proposals regarding Insurance rates in the form of a Bill :—

MADRAS ACT NO. VII OF 1895.

PASSED ON THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1895.

An Act to enable the Government to levy a separate cess for the *non-user* of water for irrigation purposes in certain cases.

Whereas large expenditure out of Government funds has been and is still being incurred in the construction and improvement of works of irrigation and drainage, to the great advantage of the country and of proprietors and tenants of land: and whereas it is right and proper, in view of the growing expenditure in the Civil and Military branches of the administration, that a fit return should, in all cases alike, be made to Government on account of the increased profits derivable from lands irrigated by such works or *decreased profits derivable from lands not irrigated by such works*; It is enacted as follows:—

1. Whenever water is supplied or *not* supplied or used or *not* used for purposes of irrigation from any river, stream, channel, tank or work belonging to, or constructed by, Government, it shall be lawful for the Government, *all previous pledges, promises, engagements, assurances, and declarations notwithstanding*, to levy, at pleasure, on the land *not* so irrigated, a separate cess for the *non-user* of the water, which cess shall be additional to any cess that may be leviable on the said land under the provisions of Madras Act No. VII, of 1865 on commercial principles, whenever irrigated, and any land assessment that may be leviable on the said land as unirrigated or *punjab* in exercise of the right the Government reserves to itself of revising, at each recurring revision, the assessment in such manner as may *then* seem just and proper, either with reference solely to a rise or fall in prices, or with reference also to *other* considerations such as would require a re-

classification of soils or a re-calculation of the grain out-turn, and the Government may prescribe the rules under which, and the rates at which and the date from which such cess as aforesaid shall be levied, and alter or amend the same from time to time.

2. Arrears of cess payable under this Act shall be realised in the same manner as arrears of land revenue are, or may be, realized by law in the Madras Presidency.

3. No action or other proceeding shall be had or taken, or be sustainable, against any officer for anything done or purporting to be done by him in, or relating to the imposition or levying of any cess under this Act.

As the present water-cess Act gives power for levying a cess only in cases where Government water is supplied for irrigation, Mr. Clerk's proposals apparently involve an appeal to the Legislature. As the Bill is, however simple and short containing only three sections, Mr. Clerk perhaps expects the Government to hold a special sitting of the Legislative Council during Christmas and pass the same into law, suspending the ordinary rules of business when almost all the elected members of the Council are expected to be absent in Poona in connection with the Congress.

XI.

(THE HINDU, 11th December, 1895).

WHEREVER any large outlay has been incurred by the State on irrigation, it is conformable to reason that those who are specially benefited thereby should not be allowed to enjoy the same at the expense of the general tax-payer, but pay a tax proportioned to the benefit derived by them. It would be unreasonable, however, to compel any one to take advantage of irrigation against his will. If it is his interest to make use of Government water on the terms

on which it is offered, he needs no compulsion to take it. In the matter of irrigation which is an absolute necessity, not only as an aid to agricultural operations but pre-eminently as an insurance against drought and the uncertainties of the seasons, the State alone can undertake the necessary works in this country—the people having neither the means nor the capacity for such undertakings. Any cess levied in respect of the benefits of irrigation is to be regarded as special taxation for special services rendered and the individual who avails himself of the same cannot fairly be called upon to pay more than what is required to reimburse the State on account of interest on the capital invested and working expenses, &c. And if these principles be applied to the irrigation works in the Godavery and Kistna Deltas, and if the circumstances under which the cess was raised in 1865 from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 are taken into account, it will be abundantly clear that there is no reason either for introducing a scheme of consolidated wet assessment or for charging insurance rates or for raising the water rates. Even from a commercial point of view, the outlay on irrigation is already yielding a very handsome return. When prevention of famine is the primary object of Government in starting irrigation works, there is no reason why the lands commanding water provided by such works should be burdened with the payment of an Insurance rate every year, in addition to water-cess paid in years in which they take water, on the extraordinary ground that a supply of water is placed within their reach to secure them against drought or inundation. The ryot pays for water the *full* price demanded by Government whenever he takes it and he is therefore entitled to the full benefit of all the advantages, *present and prospective*, which it confers. To apply this rate to garden lands in the Godavari

Delta which never or seldom take water is still more unfair. To attempt to assess possible benefits without bringing forward any proposals to compensate those whose lands yielding best dry crops have been converted into soils yielding worst wet crops consequent on Anicut irrigation indicates but an imperfect acquaintance with the conditions of the soils in the Delta. If one ryot relinquishes water in a particular year, another ryot takes it paying for it its full price and there is no reason for saying that the relinquishments made by ryots result in any loss to Government.

Mr. Master who originally recommended that the option to take or refuse water should be confined only to those cases where "the means of irrigation permanently fail," wrote to the Board of Revenue on the 29th April 1864, after watching the practical working of the water-cess rules for two years, in the following terms: "If the orders of the Secretary of State contained in the Despatch No. 61, dated 24th November 1863, giving to the ryots the option each year of taking or declining water or declared applicable to the tracts irrigated from the Godavari works, all semblance of harshness will be done away. There can be no doubt that much land has been relinquished owing to the severity of the rules as hitherto applied; and I am glad to think that whatever amount is now foregone in the shape of water-rate will be in a short time more than made up by the resumption of the land formerly relinquished, as well as by the extension of cultivation in waste lands." No one who has watched the course of events in the District since that period can say that Mr. Master's anticipations were not realized. The local Government did not, however, grant the full option at the period. Rule 7 of the rules framed for the assessment of

the water-rate in the Godavari and the Kistna Deltas and approved of in Government Order No. 2265, dated 31st October 1865, ran as follows: "Where the means of irrigation for such land already exist, the Collector will cause the ryot distinctly to understand that, if water be taken for three years in succession, the land will be permanently classed as irrigated." This rule was again modified in 1873 as follows: "Cultivators will be allowed to take or refuse irrigation for wet crops every year on condition that a formal application specifying the number and extent of the fields for which irrigation is sought or declined, be made to the head of the village and after registry by the Curnam, be sent to the Tahsildar." The operation of these rules formed the subject of enquiry when there was a steady falling off in the area of wet cultivation in the Kistna Delta in 1869 and in the Godavari Delta in 1876. The officers of the Engineering Department approached the Government with proposals either for revoking the option allowed under the rules or for levying an extra cess for dry crops grown on land that has been irrigated for a series of years, but neither of the said proposals commended itself to Government. It is therefore manifest that the policy of Government has always been towards a gradual extension and not contraction of the right of option, and that Government has never allowed itself to be guided in the past by mere considerations of revenue in the determination of this important question. It is difficult to imagine the grounds on which the proposal regarding the imposition of an insurance rate is now advanced nearly half a century after the construction of the Anicut, when the actual extent of irrigation has already exceeded the estimated area, when the problem how to regulate the water supply according to the wants of the variously situated tracts brought under irrigation is more and more pressing itself

on the attention of Government, and when, in fact, every consideration of policy suggests the extension of dry, rather than wet, cultivation in the Delta.

XII.

(THE HINDU, 12th December, 1895).

NOT only is the scheme of consolidated wet assessments and insurance rates opposed to the established policy of Government in the Godavari and Kistna Deltas, but proposals of a similar nature suggested in other provinces were distinctly negatived by the highest authorities both in India and in England. The Northern India Canal Act VIII. of 1873 repealed the Punjab Act XXX. of 1871. The repealed enactment contained provisions authorising the levy of compulsory water-rates under certain circumstances. The Punjab Bill was passed by the Supreme Legislature in spite of the protest of Lord Napier of Magdala, Mr. Cockerill and other Members. But, when it went up to the Secretary of State, he vetoed the same by reason of the sections providing for compulsory rates. The grounds of the Secretary of State's disapproval are stated fully in a previous Despatch from the India Office, dated 11th January 1870, in which His Grace the Duke of Argyll refused to sanction the draft of the Northern India Canal and Drainage Bill of 1869 upon which the Punjab Bill was modelled. His Grace objected to compulsory taxation on the ground that the Government was not justified in shifting the burden and loss consequent on its costly and unsuccessful speculations from its own shoulders on to those of the cultivators who had not been consulted before the works were undertaken, and whose unwillingness to use the water might arise from a perfectly intelligent desire to have their lands under dry crops instead of under wet ones. His Grace also further remarked that the Public Works expen-

diture when so guaranteed would, like all guaranteed expenditure, be prone to become excessive, and that to force irrigation on people who had not been consulted about it would be not unlikely to make that unpopular which would otherwise be regarded as a blessing. In accordance with these views, the Supreme Legislature passed, in the place of the abortive Northern India Canal Bill and the repealed Punjab Act, the present Northern India Canal Act omitting the provisions relating to compulsory water-rates. Another proposal made in 1879 in connection with the Bombay Irrigation Act, *viz.*, that all lands commanded by the water of the canals should be taxed with a protective rate which, though scarcely noticeable in the individual field, was calculated in the aggregate to make up a large amount, whether in fact the owners of the adjacent lands took, or refused to take, water from the canal, was thrown out by the Secretary of State, though it was approved by the Bombay Legislature and assented to by the Governor-General in Council and embodied in the Act.

Anxious as we are to give all credit to the noble works which have been the means of regenerating the Godavery and Kistna Districts, we are not sure that the said works have proved to be quite the blessing they are supposed to be, at any rate, they cannot be said to be such a blessing as to warrant the Government in forcing their advantages upon every dissentient land-owner in the said districts. In the first place, it is to be remembered that the regulation and distribution of the supply is in the hands of a departmental agency which is characterised to be "a serious blot in the administration" by no less an authority than the Honorable Mr. Arundel who long served as the Collector of Kistna. In certain localities, irrigation has brought to the surface of the soils clay in the Delta salt efflorescence. In para. 115 of his report on the Settlement of the Western Delta, Mr. Master says that "in some cases deleterious

ingredients are disturbed by the action of the water and have an injurious effect upon the soil." This evil is not peculiar to the soils in the Godavery and Kistna Deltas, as we find that it is prevalent all over the country, in the clay soils in Northern India, in the black cotton soils in the Deccan, and in the irrigated lands in Punjab and Bombay. There is next the evil of "water-logging and swamping of the soil" in other localities, producing insanitary conditions, to the detriment of the health and physique of the people inhabiting such localities. There is further the evil of extensive impoverishment of soil and deterioration of produce in the case of irrigated lands, if not sufficiently manured. One other evil which overshadows every other in importance is the deterioration of the condition of cattle which represent the only tangible wealth of the ryot. With the conversion of arid into arable land under anicut irrigation, the proportion of grazing ground and pasture in every village has almost disappeared to the detriment of communal interests. Mr. Morris rightly observes at page 85 of the Godavery District Manual that "so much of the land in all the Deltas is taken up for cultivation that very little has been reserved for pasturage," that "the ryots in the Delta taluks make it a practice to send their cattle during the cultivating season to graze in the inner and upland Taluks," that the grass grown on the lands watered from the anicut "causes the cattle that feed on it to contract a disease which generally proves fatal," that "inflammation of the throat is also another dangerous disease to which the cattle are peculiarly liable," that "the mortality among the cattle in the district is consequently very great," and that "the district cannot be said to be very healthy for cattle." The grass grown on the lands in the Delta being very prejudicial to the health of the cattle, the ryot is obliged to send them away to distant hill tracts, at considerable risk to their lives, and deprive himself for a con-

siderable portion of the year of one of the most important aids to manure his lands. Even during the period that they remain in the plains, the ryot is not able to feed his cattle with those rich fodders which he used to command at little or no cost before the undue expansion of wet cultivation in the delta, when he had abundant resources of waste lands to fall back upon. Without good cattle there can be no good ploughing and manuring which are so essential everywhere to the preservation of fertility of soil, and more so in a district like Godavery where an exhaustive system of cropping is pursued with the aid of artificial irrigation. The wet crops generally suffer from blight which is attributed in several cases to unseasonable cultivation consequent upon the deficiency of river supply and to imperfect drainage. None of these evils can arise from well-irrigation. They are too real to be overlooked. In the face of such evils, the proposals made for consolidating wet assessment or charging insurance rates cannot be too strongly deprecated.

XIII.

(THE HINDU 13th December, 1895).

"IT IS OUR EARNEST DESIRE," says Her Majesty the Queen-Empress to the people of India in her Magna Charta of 1858, "to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement and to administer its Government for the benefit of all our subjects, resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people." Although protection from foreign invasion, the maintenance of order and the diffusion of a feeling of security are conditions precedent to all industrial progress, the accomplishment of these valuable

objects does not complete the task of the British Government. The construction of large irrigation works of public utility was undertaken by the Government, in view to the increase of the wealth and promotion of the general prosperity of the country. Previous to 1854, the expenditure incurred on irrigation works of all descriptions was treated as ordinary expenditure and charged against the general revenues of the Empire. The Godavery and Kistna Delta works belong to the class of works projected under this system. Between 1854 and 1867, there was a change in the policy of the Government. The experiment of forming Guaranteed Irrigation Companies similar to the Guaranteed Railway Companies was tried. The said experiment did not, however, succeed in this country. Since 1867, all irrigation works requiring large outlay were undertaken directly by the State by means of money raised on loan. The revenue and expenditure of all Irrigation works classed as "Productive Public Works" are treated as "Imperial," from whatever source the outlay on such works was met. The surplus is applied to the general services of the Empire, as distinguished from provincial services. The irrigation rate, levied for the water supplied by Government, is in most parts of the country Rs. 3 per acre, or 10 per cent. on the value of the crops raised, according to official estimates.

The extent of area under irrigation in the Godavari Delta when the Anicut channels came into existence was no more than 100,000 acres against 646,099 acres in 1893-94. For nearly ten years after the construction of these works, no uniformity was observed in the method of charging for water supplied for irrigation. In some cases, water was charged at rates varying from As. 8 to Rs. 3 per acre. In others, a sum equivalent to 10 per cent. of the land assessment was levied as water charge. In 1859-60, the question was authoritatively settled by the Secretary of State. The value of water being the same to Government whatever the purposes may be for which it is applied by its purchasers, a uniform rate was sanctioned. It was estimated that Rs. 2 per acre would cover

the interest on the out-lay, besides the working expenses. A water rate of Rs. 3 per acre was accordingly sanctioned. This represented on the average 25 per cent. of the gross produce. Scarcely a few months passed before the Survey and Settlement operations commenced in the District. The extent of irrigated area in the Delta was then 467,838 acres. In fixing the assessment on the lands commanding canal water, their irrigable properties were duly taken into account. The average rate of dry assessment was, according to the calculations of the Settlement authorities, Rs. 2.32 per acre. To this must be added the water-rate of Rs. 3 to arrive at the average rate of wet assessment per acre of irrigated lands in the Delta. Comparative tables shewing in what classes of lands the adoption of a uniform rate of Rs. 3 involved a sacrifice of Government revenue and in what cases it absorbed the ryot's share of profits, as compared with consolidated wet rates, were prepared by the Settlement Officer and it was demonstrated that, if the Government were a loser in a few cases, it was undoubtedly a gainer in a number of other cases. In the settlement, the Government re-affirmed the principle underlying the uniform water rate, though it directed its local officers to carefully watch the practical working of the system for a period of three years before it could safely declare the rates permanent. Moreover, in a Despatch dated 24th November 1863, the Secretary of State laid down as a question of general policy that every ryot should be allowed the option of deciding by a stated period of each year whether he would take water or not, and that no compulsion should be exercised towards the dissentients, and that they should in no way be disturbed in the possession of their lands, so long as they desire to hold them and continue to pay the ordinary rate of assessment. During the currency of the three years' period, the Director of Revenue Settlement brought to the notice of Government the fact that much land had been relinquished during the 2 years since the settlement was introduced, in consequence of the severity of the water-cess rules in practical working. In view to removing the

hardship caused by the rules then in force, he recommended that the orders of the Secretary of State contained in the above Despatch be declared applicable to the Godavari Delta. It was observed that whatever amount was foregone in the shape of water-rate would be more than made up by the resumption of the land relinquished since the settlement as well as by the extension of cultivation in waste lands. Without paying any regard to the recommendation made, as aforesaid, and in the face of the large number of relinquishments of land which followed the settlement, the Government raised the water-rate from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. per acre by $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. on the 12th May 1865, that is, about 14 months after the expiry of the period prescribed by Government in its order dated 24th June 1861, for watching the working of the Settlements rates. The ground of enhancement was, that during the interval of six years since 1859 when the three-rupee rate was fixed, the price of produce had greatly risen. The price of first sort paddy rose from Rs. 94 to Rs. 136 per garce and that of second sort paddy from Rs. 87 to Rs. 127. "Prices rose rapidly after 1853 till they reached their culmination in the five years ending 1865, when they were two-and-a-half times what they were prior to 1853, and twice as high as in the early years of the century." The Government sought to legalize this illegal enhancement by getting an Act passed by the local Legislature (Act No. VII. of 1865) on the 7th September 1865, authorizing the Government to levy, according to such rules, and at such rates, as may be prescribed by Government from time to time, a separate cess in addition to land assessment for water supplied from Government sources of irrigation. Rules for the assessment of the water-rate in the Godavari and Kistna Deltas were passed by the Government on the 31st October 1865. The concession of option was limited only to the lands for which water was not taken for 3 years in succession. This limitation was, however, removed in 1873 by way of affording relief to the ryots in the Deltaic tracts.

Subsequent to the enhancement of water-cess, prices fell by about 25 per cent. from the level they had attained in 1865. The re-action was brought about by the cessation of the causes which had led to the influx into this country of the precious metals in the decade ending 1869. With the passing of the Village Cess Act in 1864 and the Local Funds Act in 1871, both the land assessment and water-rate were raised by $7\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The assessments fixed at the settlement, with the increased water-rate and the new cesses pressed heavily on the ryots, notwithstanding the rather liberal remissions granted to them in those days. Hundreds of acres were thrown out of cultivation by the ryots and hundred of survey numbers were sold for arrears of land revenue, which either realised only nominal prices or came back upon the hands of the Government unsold. In 1869 and 1876 when there was a steady falling off in the area of wet cultivation in the Kistna and Godavari Deltas, proposals were made to Government by the D. P.W. officers to do away with the option or charge Insurance rates, which proposals were vetoed by Government. Curiously enough, it never struck the Government or its officers that the true remedy lay in the reduction of the water-rate which had been raised *in anticipation of a continuance of high prices*. One of the District officers had, however, the courage to point out to the Government in 1872 that in no country in the world was the taxation so high as in the Godavari District in proportion to the income of the people it was raised from and that little or no advance was observable in the condition of the masses. If pressure of land tax affects only the ryotwari lands, it is to be remembered that the pressure of water-cess affects all lands alike—whether ryotwari lands, enfranchised inams or permanently settled estates—so long as they take water for irrigation purposes from Government works. Since 1876, prices again rose when the people became reconciled to the four rupee rate, though the said rate absorbed the margin of profit of the ryot in a majority of cases.

XIV.

(THE HINDU, 14th December, 1895).

THE water cess question entered on a new phase altogether in 1894. In the Godavari and Kistna Deltas, the water rates were raised by a notification dated 15th August 1894 by 25 per cent. in the case of all lands irrigated for five years consecutively. This was done, pending the revision of settlement, in the midst of the agricultural year, without any inquiry, without any notice to the parties concerned, and without even consulting the local officers. And what is worse, the notification was issued about four months and a half after the expiry of the time prescribed for filing applications for discontinuance of water, after the sowing and transplantation seasons had advanced, and after the ryots had taken water in the full confidence that they would have to pay for it only at the rate prevailing at the commencement of the Fasli. We need hardly say that the sudden enhancement of the cess created quite a commotion in the Godavari and Kistna Districts. Scarcely a fortnight elapsed before another notification dated 13th September 1894 was issued extending the time for relinquishment of water to 15th September. The Government apparently overlooked the fact that it was a physical impossibility for the notification to reach the hundreds of villages within 24 hours! From the very nature of things, the extension granted was only an extension in name as none of the cultivators could avail themselves of it, owing to the cultivation season having advanced too far. These facts were urged on the attention of Government by means of interpellations, memorials, resolutions, and finally by notices of suits. The Government replied that its policy is based on the principle "that a fair commercial value should be put upon all water supplied, provided that the price charged is not so great as to bar its use on lands which

really derive benefit from canal irrigation," and further admitted that its policy is wanting in any degree of reasonable fixity or certainty and that its action in the particular instance involved a denial to the ryot of the option granted to him by Her Majesty's Secretary of State, and which the ryot had been exercising, as a matter of right, for over 20 years. Two instalments of the cess were also collected. In December 1894, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution signifying its strong disapprobation of the policy and methods of Government regarding the imposition of the water cess. The Government eventually found itself compelled to abandon the position it had taken up and issued a notification on the 20th February 1895, cancelling the enhancement for the particular Fasli and directing that a general water-rate of Rupees 5 per acre should be levied on *all* lands from Fasli 1305. The cess was originally enhanced, pending the revision of the Settlement, and no land which has not been irrigated for *five* consecutive years was liable for the enhanced cess. Within six months, this distinction was taken away. The Government evidently intended to recoup what it had foregone in Fasli 1304 by the levy from the next Fasli of the enhanced cess, on *all* lands indiscriminately, without reference to the question as to how long they had been under wet cultivation.

The enhancement of the cess was naturally followed by a large number of relinquishments, notwithstanding the efforts made by the village and Taluk Officers to induce the ryots to retain the lands. The impolicy and injustice of raising the cess in the midst of the Settlement operations were pointed out to the Government, but it would not yield. The Government was led to imagine that a strike had been got up and that the ryots would soon reconcile themselves to their lot. Even Mr. Clerk held the view that there are several lands in the Delta which do not

admit of any the slightest increase in the water cess, and his calculations at the re-settlement support this view. Our only wonder is, that the Government was not aware of this fact and was carried away by extravagant notions of the prosperity of the Delta lands, when it raised the cess. But for the confidence inspired by Mr. Brodie since he assumed charge of the Godavery District in the good intentions of Government and the timely measures taken by the leading men of Godavari in representing the ryots' case to Government, we are not sure if the number of relinquishments in Godavery would not have been as large as in Kistna, which had not the fortune of having such a sympathetic Collector as Mr. Brodie to face the situation. In his inaugural address delivered at the District Conference held at Coconada in May 1895, the Honourable Mr. N. Subbarow tendered the following advice to the ryots therein assembled. "I wish to impress on you that Government is imbued with a strong sense of justice, and its policy is based on considerations affecting the whole country. Remember that nothing will be gained by relinquishing water for your fields. It would be a mistake to suppose that Government will change its policy, if you refuse to take water or give up your lands. This is not a Government to coerce but to convince." The same advice was offered to the ryots in Kistna at the District Conference held in Narsarowpeta. In the matter of relinquishments, we need only say that history has merely repeated itself in 1895. We do not wish to suggest that the relinquishments by themselves afford any evidence as to the capacity of the ryot to bear the increased cess, but it must also be said at the same time that the cases of involuntary submission to the four-rupee rate since 1865 or to the 5 Rupee rate in 1895 pending the final settlement of the question at the re-settlement cannot be quoted against the ryot to shew that the said rates were felt light generally, and much less that

all those who submitted to them had been receiving the half share of the net profits, against the calculations of the Settlement Officer. If the Government was of opinion in November 1894 that it would be "difficult to imagine any case in which a ryot would give up the prospect of cultivating paddy because of the additional charge of one rupee an acre," the Government was pleased to interpret in November 1894 its order of enhancement in the following terms: "The order was passed in the form in which it stands, because, if it had not been so passed, all the lands which can bear the additional water rate would have escaped the additional payment for the current Fasli 1305. The question whether any, and if so, what lands should be exempted from the enhanced water-cess is under the consideration of Government in communication with the Board of Revenue. If the concession is found necessary the Collectors of Godavari and Kistna will grant it at the time of the Jamabandi." This is a tacit admission that no inquiry preceded the enhancement of cess. The Government finding it impossible to make the water-rate of Rs 5 permanent, as it intended to do, has now under consideration the proposals regarding the consolidation of wet assessment and the imposition of Insurance rates, whose object appears to be to bring about the desired result indirectly.

If the year 1894 witnessed a wide departure in the water-cess policy of the Government, the year 1895 witnessed a still more radical departure in the policy regarding the revisions of land assessments. It is now difficult to say which of the two is more arbitrary than the other. Both the land assessment and the water-cess are now alike liable to fluctuations at the pleasure of Government. Without attempting any defence, the Government frankly confessed that its altered policy is directly opposed to its former pledges, declarations, and assurances, though it tried to mitigate the enormity of its action by relying on some

secret Despatch of the Secretary of State which cannot possibly apply to adequately assessed districts like Godavery. What appears to us remarkable about the whole business is, that the Government should have ordered the re-classification of the lands in the Delta without consulting the Collector of the District and without giving an opportunity to the people affected by such orders to state their objections, and that the Government should have further declined to place on the table the papers relating to the matter, when called for.

XV.

(THE HINDU, 16th December, 1895).

INDIA being essentially an agricultural country, the question relating to the principles, the methods, and working results of the land revenue administration is one of the most important questions in the whole range of Indian economics. Nothing has tended more in the past, and nothing leads more in the present, to the depression of our agricultural industry than the vacillating policy of the Government in fixing and revising the assessments and the numerous cesses on land and the unsettling and demoralising action of the Settlement Department. The ryot is denied a legislative guarantee as to the full fruit of his improvements. There is no assurance even of the scanty pittance which he at present earns from his few acres. The Government has promised fixity of tenure, but that promise remains unfulfilled to this day. The doctrine of anomalies comes to the rescue of Government whenever it takes it into its head to obtain an increase of revenue from its monopolies, to meet the growing expenditure in the Civil and Military branches of administration. The irrigation works are more and more administered as a source of revenue than as a help to agricultural industry.

In the opinion of the Government, a water-rate which absorbs already 15 to 50 per cent. of the gross profits calls for sudden enhancement. Fourteen per cent. on the outlay on certain irrigation works is not considered by Government as a fair return. Water is sold in certain localities at famine prices. The Government takes it for granted that all its irrigation works are perfect in their conception, in their construction, and in their working, and have proved to be an unmixed good all over the country, regardless of the fact that the irrigational requirements of the different tracts vary according to differences of climate and geographical configuration. A compulsory system of irrigation is proposed to take the place of the optional system, because the people refuse to take water at the *immoderate* price at which it is sold. Proposals are in the air to levy a separate cess even for the *non-user* of water. But, if the ryot is so heavily weighted with taxes, how does it happen, it will be asked, that such lands are cultivated at all. The answer is simple. He has practically no choice of throwing up his land when he finds that it is not sufficiently remunerative. If he wishes to escape the demands of the State monopolist he must look to the foreign monopolist who owns the Railway, the Banking, the Shipping, the Mining, the Planting and such other monopolies in this country. So keen and so fierce, therefore, is the struggle for the possession of land, owing to advancing population on the one hand, and on the other to a contraction of non-agricultural industries, that the ryot, preferring to face a deterioration in his standard of life rather than part with any portion of his holdings, submits to any terms "not involving starvation." Moreover, some of the lands are held in small properties not by well-to-do ryots who hire labour for cultivation but by agricultural labourers who supplement their earnings from cultivation by labouring for others to procure a sub-

sistence. The immediate object of cultivation in such cases is merely *subsistence on wages of labour, not profit on capital*. If the Government demand were limited to a true land tax, we have no hesitation in saying that the revisions of settlements must bring in a large decrease of revenue in Districts like Godavery and Kistna. It is impossible for us to accept as true, in fact, the dazzling picture of prosperity which does not exist, or in which, if it exists, 95 per cent. of the ryot population are not permitted to share.

Extensio*n* of cultivation and increase of population are generally cited as justifying the increase of assessments at periodical revisions. But the fact is invariably lost sight of that all these agencies fairly exhaust themselves in the assured interim, increase secured to Government by the spread of cultivation and the increase of population. As observed by the Bengal Law Commission "extension of cultivation is misnamed a ground of enhancement." When more land is put under crops, the total demand is increased but not the rate of payment leviable. It cannot justly be counted upon to render a double service to Government. Further, the best land in every district has been taken up already, and the extension of cultivation means only descent of tillage to poorer and poorer soils, encroachment on natural pastures, and contraction of grazing areas. The theory of the unearned increment appears to us to be inapplicable to the economic facts of this country. Were land to remain for ever in the same hands, while society multiplies and progresses in every other respect, an unearned increment would no doubt accrue to the old possessors, as population should advance and industry expand, and with both, demand for food and other agricultural produce grow. But landed property like every other species of property, is changing hands

with more or less frequency owing to the general poverty of the agricultural classes in this country and, with every such change of possession, it is evident that the unearned increment in its value, due to the operation of general causes, must disappear, as each incoming holder pays to the out-going for all its full value-earned and unearned alike. Above all, the administration is day by day becoming more and more unsympathetic. It seldom consults the wishes of the people concerned, nor does it respond to their wants. A policy of ignoring popular sentiment and of stigmatizing all views and opinions which are opposed to those of the Government as the views and opinions of foolish people is finding favour with the Government. Before issuing an edict of enhancement, the Government consults every body else but the head of the district administration who is responsible for the welfare of the people. The Government has devised a remarkable system of administration under which no District officer is permitted to remain sufficiently long in any single district under his charge, to gain a fairly correct insight into the economic condition thereof. Again, should any District officer happen to take a comprehensive view of the duties of the Government and give proofs of a judicial frame of mind in dealing with questions like settlement, he is not considered good enough to continue in the Executive branch, but is unceremoniously drafted to the judicial service. His reports are not worth being laid on the table. If the opinions of District officers given under such conditions are valueless, the impressions of the Government in regard to the economic condition of the people are simply dangerous.

With a tenure so uncertain, with a rent charge so liable to fluctuations, with a deterioration in the standard of life staring in the face at each recurring revision,—

thanks to Lord George Hamilton, His Lordship has not sanctioned the retrograde proposal to reduce the term from thirty to twenty years—what motive, we may ask, can the Indian ryot have for exertion and improvement, what incentive to thrift, prudence or self-help? He cannot be expected any more than his compeer in Western countries to work and improve his acres. We are therefore witnessing in the country *spoliation* and not *cultivation* of the land. Self-interest is the one effective motor force which leads to self-improvement all over the world. "Give a man the secure possession of a black rock, and he will turn it into a garden" is as true of India as of France or Norway. And may the God of all power grant to the present Secretary of State, who has already given indications of his sympathetic and conscientious mind, strength to redeem the plighted word of our noble Empress to stimulate the agricultural industry of this country, by giving the Indian ryot "the secure possession" of the acres he tills, and assurance of the full fruits of his toil.

APPENDIX L

SECTION VIII OF THE MADRAS SETTLEMENT MANUAL.

DURATION OF PRESENT SETTLEMENTS ARE

“As has been stated, the revised assessments are to be permanent as regards grain values after 30 years. Her Majesty's Government are to be permanent as regards grain values after 30 years. considered as regards commutation rates after 30 years. Eventually, however, it is contemplated that a community assessments have been carefully revised and shall be given to Madras which will be permanent both as regards grain values and commutation rates. This is shown in the Despatch sent to the Government of India by the Home Government, dated 9th July 1860, No 14.”

“It is there said that “Her Majesty's Government entertain no doubt of the political advantages which would attend a permanent settlement. The security, and it may, almost, be said, the absolute creation of property in the soil, which will flow from the limitation, in perpetuity, of the demands of the State on the owners of land, cannot fail to stimulate, or confirm their sentiments of attachment and loyalty to the Government by whom so great a boon has been conceded, and on whose existence it permanently will depend.”

“It is, also, most desirable that facilities should be given for the gradual growth of a middle class, connected with the land, without dispossessing the present proprietors and occupiers. It is believed that, among the latter, may be found many men of great intelligence, public spirit, and social influence, although, individually, in comparative poverty. To give the intelligent, the

thrifty, and the enterprising the means of improving their condition, by opening to them the opportunities of exercising these qualities, can be best accomplished by limiting the public demand on their lauds. When ^{thru} towards ~~the~~ acquire property and find themselves in a on the contentment ^{of} are certain to be well affected the great bulk ^{of} ~~the~~ Government ^{of} the agricultural classes, who form any casual ^{of} the population, that the security of ~~the~~ ^{of} mainly depends. If they are prosperous, man the security ^{of} outbreak on the part of other classes, or ^{it} ~~the~~ ^{intention} ~~of~~ is much less likely to become an element bodies of ^{the} ~~the~~ military force and its consequent expense ^{to} be regulated accordingly."

The Despatch then goes on to notice the main objections urged by the opponents of permanent settlement, viz., the loss of all future augmentation of income from land, wherewith to defray the increased cost of administration, consequent on advancing civilization and to meet any future depreciation of the value of the precious metals. As to the first objection, the Home Government point out that when once the assessment has been carefully revised "any increase, consequent on the natural progress of society, will, in all probability, take place but slowly and reach no great amount until after a considerable interval;" and they further bring forward the fact that "in all the revisions of settlement, which have taken place of late years, the tendency has been towards a reduction in the rates of assessment," and that such revisions, although occurring at intervals of thirty years involve the occupation of much valuable time, are harrassing, vexatious and perhaps even oppressive to the people, and as the time for them approaches induce deterioration of cultivation, with the view of evading a true estimate of the value of the land."

"The second objection, viz., the apprehension of a possible fall in the relative value of money "though deserving of consideration" was not considered by "Her Majesty's Government to be of sufficient moment to influence their judgment, to any material extent, in disposing of this important question."

"Finally, the Despatch says "after the most careful review of all these considerations, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the advantages which may reasonably be expected to accrue not only to those immediately connected with the land, but to the community generally, are sufficiently great to justify them in incurring the risk of some prospective loss of land revenue in order to attain them, and that a settlement in perpetuity in all districts in which the conditions absolutely required as preliminary to such a measure are, or may hereafter be fulfilled, is a measure dictated by sound policy and calculated to accelerate the development of the resources of India and to ensure, in the highest degree, the welfare and contentment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in that country."

"As regards the ryotwary districts of Madras, the Home Government referred to the revision of assessment now in progress, and decided that "as districts are gradually brought under the revised assessment and when there is reason to believe that the land revenue has not only reached its probable limit, but that it is equitably distributed over the lands affected by it," the permanent settlement should be carried out."

APPENDIX II.

*Extract from the Standing Orders of the Board
of Revenue, Madras.*

SECTION I, PARA 4.

“Collectors of Districts in which settlement by the Settlement Department has been completed or is in progress are to notify in their *Gazettes* that the rates will be liable to revision after 30 years' duration. It is to be explained, however, to the ryots that there will be no re-classification of soils or calculation of fresh grain values, that the rates of assessment will be revised entirely with reference to prices, and that no attempt will be made to assess any additional value which may have been given to land by improvements effected by ryots even if carried out by means of money borrowed from Government.”

APPENDIX III.

*Resolution No. XX. passed by the Tenth Indian
National Congress.*

“That this Congress views with apprehension the arbitrary policy of the Government of India with regard to the imposition of water-cess introducing as it does a disturbing element in taxation, and suggests that the imposition of the said cess be regulated by certain defined principles affording security to the rights of land-owners and of persons investing money in land.”

APPENDIX IV.

Questions asked by the Hon'ble Mr. N. Subbarau Puntulu in the Legislative Council and answers given by the Government of Madras from 20th November 1894 to 4th November 1895 regarding Water-cess.

Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
20th Nov. 1894.	<p>Whether Government is aware that when the notification was published in the Godavery and Kistna District <i>Gazettes Extraordinary</i> on or about the 15th August 1894, enhancing the water-cess by 25 per cent. from the current fasli, the sowing and transplanting season had advanced and the ryots had taken water from irrigation channels in the belief that it would be charged at the then prevailing rates.</p>	<p>Yes, and in consideration of this fact Government ordered that only water taken for land which had been irrigated for five years successively should be charged for at the new rate. It is difficult to imagine any case in which a ryot would give up the prospect of cultivating paddy because of the additional charge of one rupee an acre. The full option of refusing irrigation now allowed was not allowed under the old rules. It was granted chiefly because there were circumstances under which it was necessary that wet land should revert to dry. It is obvious that this consideration cannot affect those cases in which the landowners resolved before the issue of the Government order to persist in wet cultivation.</p>

Will Government be pleased to state the reasons which led to this notification after the commencement of the cultivating season and without allowing the ryots an opportunity to submit their representations with regard to the enhancement of the cess ?

The chief reasons are given in paragraph 9 of G. O. dated 2nd August 1894, No. 502 R ; namely :—The Settlement has already expired in a portion of the Godavery District and in any case the revision of water-rates on land in Zemindaries is unaffected by restrictions imposed by Settlement. In 1865, the rate was raised by upwards of 33 per cent. upon the sole ground that the price of grain had greatly risen during the six years in which the three rupee rate had been in force, and as the prices which would be taken into calculation for the purpose of commutation at the present time committing the abnormal prices of (1876—78) show, as compared with the commutation rate adopted at the time of last settlement, an increase of about 80 and 57 per cent. respectively for the two districts of Godavery and Kistna, it was considered that the time had come for a further enhancement of the water-rate. Moreover, the position of both districts in respect of communications has during the past five years been greatly improved by the opening of the Bellary-Kistna and the East Coast Railways,

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Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
	<p>Is it a fact that the notification published in the <i>District Gazettes Extraordinary</i> on the 13th September 1894, extending up to the 15th September the time (which had expired by the 31st March) for presenting applications for the discontinuance of Government water, was issued with the authority of Government?</p> <p>Whether Government is aware that this notification practically gave no option to the ryots as intended?</p>	<p>Yes, on the advice of the Collector of Kistna who in recommending it said "I do not think that many, if indeed any, relinquishments will be actually made, but it is fair that an opportunity should be allowed." The Collector of Godavery made no representation on the subject. The time in the Kistna District was afterwards extended by G. O., dated 19th September 1894, Mis., No. 3661, to the 30th September. It should be observed that no order allowing relinquishments was passed when the water-rate was enhanced in 1865. At that time no option was allowed, but land which had been rated as irrigated land was so rated till the means of irrigation failed completely.</p> <p>As I have stated, the time was extended in the Kistna till the 30th September and the Government does not consider that any option was needed, for the reason given in my reply to the Hon'ble Member's 1st question.</p>

Will Government be pleased to lay on the table the reports, if any, of the District Collector and of the Board of Revenue with the order of the Government of Madras and the Government of India relating to the enhancement of the water-cess?

22nd Jan. 1895.

In the matter of enhancing the water-cess by 25 per cent. in Godavery and Kistna Districts, were any reports called from the Collectors of the said districts and from the Board of Revenue or the Member in charge of the Settlement Department? If so, will Government be pleased to place them on the table? If not, will Government be pleased to state why the Collectors of the said districts were not consulted?

With reference to the answer given by Government at the last meeting of the Council that "the full option of refusing irrigation now allowed was not allowed under the old rules" and that "the Government does not consider that any option was needed," is it not a fact that ryots, during the twelve years or more have had and have

Paragraph 9 of G. O., No. 562, dated 2nd August 1894, will be laid on the table.

No. It was not considered necessary to consult the Collectors, as the Government considered it had all the requisite information.

The full option was given in 1873 when the revised set of rules was issued and had to be exercised before the 31st March or three months before the commencement of the fasli year.

Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
	<p>been exercising this option of refusing irrigation within the 31st March of each year ?</p> <p>Is it a fact that when the water-rate was enhanced in 1865 there was an understanding that the rate then fixed would not be increased during the currency of the settlement ?</p> <p>Will Government be pleased to state on what basis the rate of the water-cess is determined and whether there is any fixity of demand of the rate for any definite period ?</p>	<p>The Government is not aware of any such understanding.</p> <p>The rate of the water-cess is determined on the principle that a fair commercial value should be put upon all water supplied provided that the price charged is not so great as to bar its use on lands which really derive benefit from canal irrigation. There is no obligation on Government to leave a margin to the landlord to enable him to increase the rent. As a consequence, it follows that the Government cannot guarantee the fixity of the charge, at the same time it will not be arbitrarily or capriciously altered or otherwise than on fair and reasonable grounds.</p>

13th March 1895.

With reference to the answer of Government that no reports were called for from the Board of Revenue or the Member in charge of the Settlement Department in connection with the enhancement of the water-cess, is it a fact that a report was submitted by the Member of the Settlement Department and will Government be pleased to place it on the table ?

Is it a fact that your Excellency's Government was at first not in favor of the enhancement of the cess, and will Government be pleased to place on the table the correspondence of your Excellency's Government with the Government of India as requested by me at the meeting of the Council held on the 20th November last ?

With reference to the answer of Government that "the rate of the water-cess is determined on the principle that a fair commercial value should be put on all water supplied," will Government be pleased to state what it means by "a fair commercial value ?"

No report regarding the enhancement of the water-rate in the Godavery and Kistna Districts was submitted by the Member in charge of the Settlement Department before the issue of the Government order enhancing the rate. Correspondence has passed subsequently between the Government and the Board which the Government declines to place on the table.

The Government regrets it is unable to answer the first part of the question or to lay upon the table the correspondence referred to.

"A fair commercial value is what the supply of water is worth in the open market, but it does not follow that Government would always charge its full value thus gauged."

Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
8th April 1895.	<p>With reference to the recent notification published in the Kistna and Godavery District <i>Gazettes Extraordinary</i> on or about the 20th February 1895 cancelling the enhancement of the water-rate for the current fasli only and ordering the levy of a general water-rate from the next fasli not exempting land not irrigated for five consecutive years, will Government be pleased to place on the table a copy of the order on the subject ?</p> <p>With reference to the answer of Government given at the meeting of the Council held on the 22nd January that it was not considered necessary to consult the collectors as the Government considered it had all the requisite information about the enhancement of the water-rate, will Government be pleased to lay on the table the papers containing the said information ?</p>	<p>A copy of G. O., No. 774, dated 19th February 1895, and of G. O. No. 870, dated 26th February 1895 will be placed on the table.</p> <p>The information is summarized in paragraph 9 of G. O., dated 2nd August 1894, No. 562, of which a copy has been furnished to the Hon'ble Member, and the Government does not think that any object would be gained by laying on the table any further papers.</p>

4th Nov. 1895.

With reference to G. O. No. 870, dated 26th February 1895, issuing a revised notification with regard to the levy of the water-cess at an enhanced rate from the current fasli, will Government be pleased to state why it has ordered that the enhanced rate should be levied indiscriminately on all lands before the completion of the enquiry instituted to determine whether any exception should be made and whether any specified areas or classes of lands should be exempted from the enhanced rate and what the result of the said enquiry is ?

Will Government be pleased to place the papers relating thereto on the table ?

The order of February 26th, 1895, was passed in the form in which it stands, because if it had not been so passed, all the lands which can bear the additional water-rate would have escaped the additional payment for the current fasli, 1305, under the Government order quoted by the Hon'ble Member, the question whether any and, if so, what lands should be exempted from the enhanced water-cess is under the consideration of Government in communication with the Board of Revenue. If the concession is found necessary, the Collectors of Godavery and Kistna will grant it at the time of the Zamabandi.

The question of laying the papers on the table will be considered when the correspondence is complete.

APPENDIX V.

Questions asked by the Hon'ble Mr. N. Subbarau Puntulu in the Legislative Council and answers given by the Government of Madras from 8th April 1895 to 4th November 1895 regarding Settlement.

Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
8th April 1895.	<p>Will Government be pleased to state whether it has, according to the instructions of the Government of India, published for the information of the public, the initial Standard Schedule of prices with reference to which future revisions of settlement are to be regulated in order "that certainty of assessment might become one of the inherent attributes of agricultural property," and, if not, will Government be pleased to state when it proposes to publish "the rules regarding the revision of assessments?"</p>	<p>No instructions of the kind indicated in the question have been enjoined on this Government by the Government of India.</p> <p>In 1883 certain suggestions on the subject were made by the Government, but in 1885 the Secretary of State disapproved of the policy of laying down hard and fast rules binding future Governments as to future settlements. The Government is therefore precluded from laying down any rules that would have this effect.</p> <p>The preparation of schedule of prices is the preliminary to every settlement, and this schedule will always form an important factor in subsequent revisions. But in the course of years the staples, the prices of</p>

(a) In connection with the re-settlement of the Godavery District now in progress, has Government ordered that there should be a re-classification of soils in the Delta Taluqs ?

(b) If so, will Government be pleased to state the reasons for ordering the said re-classification, in spite of the pledges of Government embodied in the Settlement Manual and in the Standing Order of the Board of Revenue, No. 1, paragraph 4, that in the case of Districts once settled there will be no re-classification of the soils ?

which are recorded in the schedules may disappear or assume quite different relative values, and other unforeseen economic charges may arise ; and it would be therefore impolitic to stereotype these schedules as the sole basis of all future revisions.

In 1894, the Government directed the Board of Revenue to draw up schedules of prices not for immediate publication, but for official use, in order to facilitate future settlements.

(a) Yes. The Government upon considering the reports of the Deputy Commissioner and of the Revenue Board, decided that a re-classification of soils of the Delta of the Godavery was necessary.

(b) In 1883 the Madras Government on a reference from the Government of India intimated that it was prepared to assent to the principle that, in districts in which the revenue had been adequately assessed, the rates of assessment should be revised entirely with reference to prices, and that no re-classification of soils or re-calculation of grain outturn should be attempted. But

Date of the Meeting of the Legislative Council.	Questions.	Answers.
		<p>the Secretary of State, in a Despatch dated 8th January 1885, to the Government of India, refused to consent to the general scheme for the amendment of the Settlement system proposed by the Government of India, especially that part of it which contemplated that the enhancement of assessments should be determined solely on the ground of a rise in prices and declared against the policy of laying down hard-and-fast rules pledging the Government of the future to a particular line of action in dealing with revisions of Settlement. This Despatch was communicated to this Government only in November 1893, and it then became necessary to issue instructions to the Board of Revenue to revise the Standing Orders and the Settlement Manual, with a view to bring them into agreement with the policy laid down by the Secretary of State. This was done in G. O., No. 263, Revenue, 11th May 1895. Between 1883 and</p>

(c) Will Government be pleased to place on the table the reports received and the orders passed by Government on the subject?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state the reasons that led to the change made in May last in the principles of re-settlement so long accepted by Government and the people?

(e) Is it a fact that Godavery is one of the Districts held by Government in 1883 to have been adequately assessed in the settlement of 1861, and consequently exempt from re-classification?

1893, Government had no intimation that the scheme for re-settlement set forth by the Government of India had been disallowed.

The Government is not prepared to place upon the table the papers asked for by the Hon'ble Member.

Answer given in (b).

In reply to a letter from the Government of India this Government wrote in 1883 that it would assent to the proposal that increase of prices should alone be considered in future, revisions of settlement in districts in which the revenue had been adequately assessed, and added that "such districts will be those which have been surveyed and in which the assessments have been fixed by the Settlement Department." Godavery is one of the Districts mentioned amongst those in which operations had then been completed. As I have stated, this assent related to a scheme which was afterwards disallowed by the highest authority.