

REVIEW

BY THE



MADRAS GOVERNMENT

OF THE

ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF THE
COCHIN STATE,

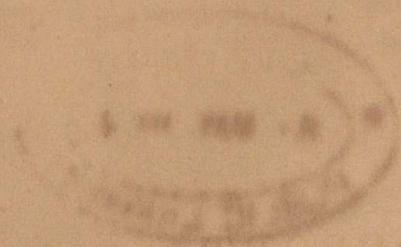
FOR THE MALABAR YEAR 1078.

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REVIEW
ON THE
ADMINISTRATION REPORT
OF THE
COCHIN STATE,
FOR THE MALABAR YEAR 1078.

From G. T. MACKENZIE, Esq., I.C.S., Resident in Travancore and Cochin, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Ernaculam, 11th December 1903, Camp No. 57.

I have the honour to submit herewith the Administration Report of the Cochin State for the Malabar year 1078 (1902-1903). This report reached me on December 5th, ten days before the due date.

LAND REVENUE.

2. The seventh paragraph of the report is not satisfactory. The practice in the office of the Diwan of Cochin has been that any item about which there is doubt or dispute does not appear as an arrear in the demand, collection and balance statement, but is placed under the head "Abeyance" until the doubt or dispute is settled. By means of this arrangement the demand, collection and balance statement has shown a wonderful collection of 99 per cent. of the undisputed demand, while the disputed demand has been hidden away under "abeyance." The disputed items thus placed out of sight remained for years without any decision and increased in number until the total amount under "abeyance" was several lakhs. The Madras Government, in their order on last report, said that this system may now cease and that all money that is in arrear may be shown as arrear. The Cochin Darbar are unwilling to do this, because the inclusion in the demand, collection and balance statement of these old arrears will disfigure the accounts and create mistaken impressions. This shows an inability on the part of the Darbar to understand the serious nature of this flaw in their administration. A large balance in the demand, collection and balance statement may create an impression that the collecting agency is negligent, but a much graver fault is that items under enquiry should be hidden away for years without any decision. Among merchants there is a saying that "suspense" is the refuge of an inefficient book-keeper, and a similar remark may perhaps be made on this head "abeyance."

CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

3. It is satisfactory to note in paragraph 46 that no witness before a magistrate was detained more than three days, but paragraph 40 shows that the acquittals have increased and the compensation for vexatious complaints has decreased. I regard malicious complaints as a crying evil in the Cochin State, and I hold the opinion that

the magistrates can do something to stop this evil if they have the courage to give compensation for wrongful accusations. This year, among the persons placed before a magistrate, 84 per cent. were acquitted, and the magistrate gave compensation to one in 72 of these.

JAILS.

4. The high death-rate last year, when nine inmates died, seems to have been a temporary fluctuation. This year only four inmates died. Nothing has yet been done to introduce new rules and a more stringent discipline, although Government specially noticed this point last year.

CIVIL JUSTICE.

5. The increase of the average duration of appeals decided in paragraphs 66 and 67 is a healthy sign as it shows that the old appeals were taken up and heard.

FORESTS.

6. The Forest department continues to be administered with much energy. Paragraph 92 shows that Mr. Alwar Chetty contrives to secure a market for his timber. The following paragraph relates to the tramway which has again been inspected by the Raja. So much is being done in the Cochin forests that the expenditure exceeds the receipts of the year, but a perusal of paragraph 101 shows that if the expenditure on the tramway be set aside as extraordinary and if credit be taken for half a lakh paid in after the close of the year, the operations of the department are financially successful.

7. A department worked with so much zeal must needs produce some controversial matter. With regard to the closing portion of paragraph 89, I adhere to the opinion which I expressed last year that Cochin ought to provide for the Adarapalle block of one hundred square miles of forest an outlet in Cochin territory and ought not to expect Travancore to give an outlet across Travancore territory. Paragraph 95 touches on a point which has been under discussion with the Madras Government, the cutting by the forest officers of teak that has grown on land that is in occupation by cultivators. There is a third subject, not mentioned in this report, which ought to be kept in view and discussed. This is the design to take back under the Land Acquisition Act fields which have been given for cultivation and to restore the teak forest which has been felled in the south of the Chittoor taluk.

PUBLIC WORKS.

8. If the forest be excluded the area of the Cochin State is less than 700 square miles. In this small area the Public Works department spend between two and three lakhs in the year. To carry on correspondence with the Chief Engineer the Diwan has in the Public Works branch of his office a staff of nine clerks. I never came across so glaring an instance of excessive establishment.

RAILWAY.

9. The Shoranur-Cochin Railway is now paying more than 3 per cent. on the capital cost and it will give better returns when more locomotives and rollingstock are obtained from Europe.

ABKÁRI.

10. Paragraph 125 is an admission that the Cochin Darbar have done little or nothing. The Tamil contractor, who is said to hold some of the farms, holds five of the seven. It may have been necessary to bring him in to compete with the local men but he ought to be under control. Although the Darbar knew that the approval of their Abkári Bill was daily expected they issued tenders which tie their hands until August 15th, 1905. We must wait until that date for any improvement.

OPIUM.

11. The explanation of the very high figure at which the Collector of Malabar sold the opium monopoly in British Cochin appears to be that the contractor in the Cochin State paid a high price for British Cochin in order to keep out any competitor. If that be the true explanation the Cochin Darbar have no cause of complaint. There is no evidence that opium is smuggled from British Cochin into the State.

EDUCATION.

12. There is ample material in the Cochin State for an interesting description of the education that is given, but paragraphs 155 to 167 furnish little but dry statistics. In a State where the people themselves without a penny of assistance from the Darbar maintain a constantly increasing number of elementary schools and where the various classes of the community are eager to maintain their own schools, a man with an observant eye ought to be able to clothe these statistics with instructive comment.

FINANCIAL.

13. The following statement shows the actual receipts and expenditure during the year under report:—

					Year 1078.
					RS.
Opening balance (cash)	..	..	..	..	2,21,935
Receipts under service heads	..	..	..	..	24,16,493
Other receipts	..	..	..	..	33,43,364
				Total	59,81,792
Expenditure under service heads	..	..	..	..	26,13,566
Other expenditure	..	..	..	..	32,00,776
				Total	58,14,342
Closing balance (cash)	..	..	..	..	1,67,450

Under the service heads there was an excess of expenditure over receipts by Rs. 1,97,073, while as compared with the previous year the receipts show Rs. 3,04,393 less and the expenditure Rs. 97,801 more.

Of this decrease in the receipts Rs. 1,10,500 represents the sum under the Inter-portal Trade Convention due in 1078 but realized in 1079. One material decrease is under Forest, Rs. 2,18,165, because of reduced supply of sleepers to the railways, etc.; also of the price of timber sold during the year half a lakh was received only during the following year. Another decrease is Rs. 15,996 under Salt because of the reduction of salt duty in British India. Against these must be set off Rs. 73,299, a new item, namely, the first earnings of the State railway, and Rs. 38,860 under Abkari on account of the enhanced prices paid by contractors for the abkari farms.

As regards expenditure Miscellaneous shows a large increase, Rs. 2,13,797, chiefly due to the Raja's Delhi tour. Other increases are Rs. 22,152, owing to enlarged operations in the Survey and Settlement departments, and Rs. 20,301, interest paid on additional loans raised. It should also be remembered that the Darbar have been meeting the special expenditure on the forest tramway from the current revenues. During the year Rs. 1,31,314 was so spent. However, the total forest expenses were Rs. 96,970 less, owing to the reduced working of the forests. There was also a saving of Rs. 16,775 from Oottupurahs or eating-houses for Brahmans because some of them were abolished and the cost of others was reduced.

For the purpose of providing more funds for the railway and of repaying the temporary loan of Rs. 5,85,000, the Darbar started as projected in the revised budget a State debenture loan of Rs. 10 lakhs. Although the whole sum was notified it was only possible to allot Rs. 4,25,200 before the close of the year and this fetched in cash, after making allowances for discount, etc., Rs. 4,16,449. For this reason the temporary loan could not be repaid beyond one lakh. But Rs. 1,04,196 was expended on the railway. The net result was that at the end of the year the State was indebted to the extent of Rs. 19,10,200, but at the same time possessed a valuable asset of Rs. 64½ lakhs in the railway alone.

There is one point which is not mentioned in the administration report. It is that the Government of India were pleased to sanction as security for the State debenture loan above referred to the sum of Rs. 1,10,500 annually due to the Darbar from the British Government under the Interportal Trade Convention. This sum has hereafter to be kept apart from year to year as a set off against the loan until the loan is repaid. The Darbar in framing the revised estimate for 1079 will doubtless bear this fact in mind as well as the orders passed by the Madras Government upon the last year's administration report in regard to the sinking fund which was proposed to be opened for the liquidation of the debts.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

ORDER—No. 149, Political, dated 17th March 1904.

The Darbar have submitted their report for the Malabar year 1078 (August 1902 to August 1903) with commendable promptitude.

2. *Land Revenue*.—The collections are given as 99.5 per cent. of the demand. Certain contested arrears are however excluded and the report gives no information as to their amount. There seems to have been considerable delay in the past in disposing of cases of disputed arrears. The Darbar now report that the work of disposing of them was taken in hand two years ago, and hope to complete it in another year or two. The Government trust it will be completed before the end of the current year and desire all arrears to be entered in the Demand, Collection and Balance statement in future reports.

3. *Revenue Settlement*.—It may be hoped that some definite scheme of settlement will be formulated at an early date. The policy of continuing the laborious task of tree counting before deciding whether it would not be possible to adopt some garden scheme, similar to that finally applied to Malabar, seems to be of doubtful advantage. The present Diwan of the State should be competent to formulate a satisfactory scheme and it will be a matter of regret, if his services are not used for the purpose.

4. *Police*.—The working of the Police department during the past year appears to have been on the whole satisfactory. It is not clear whether the Darbar have introduced a system for the identification of criminals by means of finger prints. If they have not, they should be advised to adopt its introduction at the earliest opportunity.

5. *Criminal Justice*.—The administration of criminal justice appears to be not altogether satisfactory in respect of the quality of the work done by the courts as judged by the appeal test, the realization of fines and the steps taken to put a stop to the practice of bringing false complaints.

6. *Jails*.—In the review of the last year's report the Government expressed their regret at the delay in issuing rules under the Prison Regulation of 1076 for the purpose of rendering imprisonment more deterrent. The Resident should report whether rules have yet been issued.

7. *Public Works*.—The expenditure on "Communications—Repairs" is given as Rs. 65,836. In future reports the amount spent on roads and the amount (if any) spent on navigable canals and the backwater should be shown separately.

As observed by the Resident, an establishment of nine clerks in the Diwan's office to carry on correspondence with the Chief Engineer seems to be excessive.

The Government note with satisfaction that the new railway yielded over a lakh of rupees net for the first half-year of 1903 and are glad to find that the Darbar are already obtaining a considerable return on the 64 lakhs invested in the line.

8. *Abkari*.—Pending consideration of a special report which is now before the Government on the subject of the liquor shops which exist near the British frontier the Governor in Council will not comment on the statement of the Darbar regarding the steps taken to remedy the evil complained of.

9. *Vital Statistics*.—Registration of vital statistics shows but little improvement.

10. *Vaccination.*—The work of the Vaccination department showed a large decline, only 23·0 per mille of the population having been successfully vaccinated against 38·2 per mille in the previous year. Infantile vaccination was deplorably backward as only 13 per cent. of the children born during the year, against 27·6 in the previous year, were protected from small-pox.

11. *Education.*—It is hoped that the action promised in the direction of bringing a large number of unaided schools under inspection and aid will not be long delayed. The expenditure on primary education may be increased with advantage. As observed by the Resident the people themselves now maintain an increasing number of elementary schools, but it is desirable that by the offer of sufficient inducement those schools should be brought under proper control and that their efficiency should thus be enhanced. The Darbar hint at financial difficulties. But perhaps it may be found possible to devote a larger proportion of the available funds to primary education. It is observed that the Ernakulam College costs the State nearly Rs. 5,000 and every student in it Rs. 61-11-0 per annum. The fees might well be raised and the cost to the State reduced. The College at Mangalore is maintained at a cost to Government of only Rs. 10-4-0 a student, and the Colleges at Palghat and Tellicherry cost those municipalities only Rs. 29-4-0 a student.

12. *Financial.*—There is an apparent fall in the ordinary revenue from 27·2 lakhs to 24·2 lakhs. The decrease is attributable to the facts that the sum due under the Interportal Trade Convention (1·1 lakhs) was not received in time to be included in the accounts and that the Forest receipts decreased by 2·2 lakhs. The fall in Forest receipts seems to be due to difficulty in disposing of stock as the actual outturn of forest produce exceeded that of last year under nearly every head, and the present stock is valued at 4 lakhs.

The report is silent as to the proposal made last year to start a sinking fund for the liquidation of debts. If the project has been postponed owing to transient financial embarrassment the Government hope that the first opportunity offered by an improvement in the financial position will be seized to revive it.

13. The Government have constant evidences of the close interest which His Highness the Raja takes in every detail of the administration and of the sagacity with which His Highness directs it, and they cannot conclude this review without expressing their cordial recognition of His Highness' strenuous endeavours to promote the welfare of the State.

(True Extract.)

M. HAMMICK,
Ag. Chief Secretary.

To the Resident in Travancore and Cochin.
Copy to the Revenue Department.

ENDORSEMENT—No. 150, Political, dated 17th March 1904.

Copy to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

A. GALLETTI,
Ag. Assistant Secretary.