CHAPTER - IV

MUNRO AND THE INROADS OF COLONIALISM

In the previous chapter, we have seen how the Post-Vijayanagara society was late medieval period in the Bellary region during the transforming itself to glare up to the colonial future. In continuation of that, the present chapter concerns with the responses of the traditional processes of power vis-a-vis the British colonial polices, and to evaluate as to how the various local structures were incorporated by an alien to spread colonialism in this region. The following discussions, therefore, revolves around two basic issues: firstly, the policy of the British, especially that of Thomas Munro, in dealing with the Poligars, whom the colonial masters found to be a threat for their rule, and the measures they had adopted to subdue their uprisings in the entire Rayalaseema and secondly, the colonial policies related to the agrarian aspect. It may be mentioned here that this crucial period of the British rule has been referred to as the period of experiment in the case of the Bellary region, since it was still a time when the colonial state was yet to gain its ground in the intricate matrix of the Indian sub-continent.

As noted earlier, the Bellary region, became the western most part of the four Ceded Districts (comprising Bellary, kurnool, Anantapur and Cuddapah) of the erstwhile Madras Presidency after they were handed over to the East India Company by the Nizam of Hyderabad. The districts thus ceded to the Company by the Nizam's Government in October 1800 were for the purposes of defraying the costs of an 'augmented subsidiary force' stationed in Hyderabad (The Fifth Report V.3:27). Subsequently, Thomas Munro was appointed the Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts (hereafter CD) between AD 1800 and 1807 (Stein 1989:1397).

Even the hardest critics of Munro's pacification policies in these districts had to concede that he made an almost instant success of his task of creating order and a reliable revenue from a turbulent and large territory, and therefore established himself as a first class "political manager". This was done in close co-operation with Josiah Webbe, his sponsor in Madras, being the Chief secretary. While Munro must have realised that his proposal for a grand army to liberate the peninsula south of the Krishna •
he had hoped for a freer hand to conduct things than Webbe was ready to allow. Munro received his initial appointment and instructions from the then Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, through Webbe. Webbe’s advice to on 24 November 1800 was typical; it was to negotiate the order. Four subordinate collectors, he told Webbe, were too many; three would be better since there were three constituent parts of the Ceded Districts: Bellary (which included Anantapur then); Cuddapah; and Kurnool. Moreover, Munro wanted to directly administer one of the districts of the newly formed Ceded Districts himself, which could have reduced the usefulness of subordinates even further. But he did see the point of Webbe’s suggestion about assistants: your desire is I conceive to train up a number of young (European) Collectors, and is actually one that should be pursued where it does not lead to serious inconvenience? Also, care was needed to avoid the appointment of Indian subordinates who might intrigue with poligars’ (Stein 1989: 91).

At the outset, Munro must have found the political conditions of the region a fitting reflection of this hard land. An indication of the difficulties posed by this territory may be gained from the fact that it had been ceded to the Nizam by Tipu Sultan in 1792 as part of the spoils won by th Nizam, who was an ally of the Company in its penultimate conflict with Tipu Sultan. The tract had proven difficult for him, but he was able to pass it off as more valuable in revenue than it actually was when he was forced to cede it, as Munro was to discover shortly after taking over its administration. Another indication of potential difficulties of the region was that Colonel Arthur Wellesley was sent with British troops to occupy it and to establish order prior to Munro’s civil administration. Military occupation was announced as completed by January 1801, particularly in the heartland of the Vijanagara kingdom that was later to be called the Ceded Districts including Bellary (Regani 1963: 184-186).

When the region was about to be occupied by the Company, there was a general concern about the level of military expenditure that might be required. In informing Colonel Arthur Wellesley of Munro’s appointment as ‘the sole Collector’ of the newly acquired region in October 1800, Josiah Webbe, Chief Secretary of Madras and Lord Wellesley’s principal agent there, also conveyed the Governor-General’s orders to his brother to deliberate with Munro so that they might enter the region together. Me also
commented on the high costs of the occupation force: This is expensive, I acknowledge, but if you are determined to conquer all India at the same moment, you must pay for it' (Hardwicke Papers, Ad Ms. 29239, 10 Oct 1800, Cf. Stein 1989:83).

Nor was the matter one of cost alone. Lord Wellesley had solicited the views of military advisors and of Lord Clive, Governor of Madras, about the force to be sent to the region for its pacification and occupation, and he was told that forces were dangerously low in the Presidency. Troops involved in the final assault against Tipu Sultan at Srirangapatnam were considered in poor condition for what might prove a difficult task in the dry tracts. This meant that soldiers would have to be drawn from elsewhere in the Carnatic and Northern Circars, reducing garrisons there to a critical level. The Governor-General was warned that when troops had been drawn off from the Northern Circars to comprise part of the Mysore invasion force, rebellion had broken out. Reducing Company garrisons in the Carnatic was seen as an invitation for a general poligar uprising there. The defeat of Tipu Sultan had certainly reduced 'serious danger from a foreign enemy (!) in India', but the dangers of rebellions were thought to be present in Malabar, Dindigal, Ganjam and Masulipatnam or the modern port town of Machilipatnam in the Krishna district of Coastal Andhra (See, Home Miscellaneous Series, V 402, Clive to Wellesley, 18 Sept. 1800). The perceived precariousness of Munro's entry into the region, with its 'unsubdued' and armed inhabitants, conveys a good deal about the confidence which the Governor-General and advisors were prepared to vest in him.

Munro was directed to introduce regular government into a territory hitherto unsubdued and to suppress the evils arising from the weakness of the (Nizam's) government. To accomplish this daunting task meant that he must cope with some 30,000 armed retainers of poligars who roamed the countryside (Raghavaiyangar 1893:24). Almost everywhere these local chiefs or poligars had constituted such government-local and sub-regional as there had been, and which were essentially patrimonial in nature. Of their military capacities Munro spoke clearly and consistently with disdain. However, he was wary of esteem and local political influence of such chiefs, as he had encountered them in the Brāmanhal and accordingly he saw them as potential dangers to his rule in the region. It may be recalled here that prior to Munro's appointment as the principal
Collector of the Ceded Districts, he had served as a civil administrator as a 'mature twenty-eight years old and an experienced India hand in Baramahal and Kanara (Stein 1989:24). The methods he devised for dealing with these dangers held implications of their own for his career as a civilian administrator.

The care with which he proceeded against poligars in the Vijayanagara heartland is illustrated in his first instructions to William Thackeray one of the subordinate collectors assigned to him, in December 1800. In Adoni division, where Thackeray was to serve, 'a state of anarchy' had long existed. The inhabitants there, he told Thackeray, had been plundered not only by revenue officers and Zamindars, but by every person who chose to pay a mezzarnamah (gift to the ruler) for the privilege of exacting money from them... and the heads of villages having on the same terms been permitted to carry on a continual predatory warfare against one another. Still, Munro reassured him, all powerful poligars of Adoni had been driven off, and there was therefore no actual danger of organized opposition, even though rumors of this always circulated (See MC, F/151/10 : cf 1-5; eg Stein 1989: 84). More immediately, a source of civil disorder were former soldiers of the Nizam's forces in the region who were seeking to collect arrears of their wages on drafts (tunkhas) against the revenue collections of many villages, as this is how they had been paid by the Nizam's officials (Regani 1963: 184-196). But by far the most serious menace to order were the poligars, and towards these local lordships Mimio devised early and stern measures for their subjugation, which brought him into conflict with higher authorities.

Poligars, according to the thinking of his superiors in Madras and Calcutta, were to be divested of their political and military capabilities, but were to be considered as candidates for landed enfranchisement under the settlement principles of Bengal that were to be extended to Madras. Inams, lands alienated to privileged holders subject to payment to a small quit-rent (jodi), were to be validated, not by the collectors, but by courts of law, again in accordance with Bengal regulations.

Inams were to be resumed by the Company if found invalid, as it was expected many were. Under Munro poligars were eliminated in a manner so ruthless and devious that rare criticism of him occurred. Inams, on the other hand, were never subjected to
judicial review in Munro's time, nor diminished, but rather were used by him to win the allegiance of powerful local interests, beneath the level of the poligars, in what Frykenberg aptly calls the 'silent settlement' (Frykenberg 1971: 37-54).

The new British rulers of south India in the late eighteenth century knew little of this history. In the various territories which they took under their control they merely saw powerful, armed, local authorities who stood in the way of their own political objectives. All such opponents were lumped together and treated according to their willingness to accept without the deprivation of their local authority.

Well before Munro assumed control of their Ceded Districts, the Company's position with respect to these authorities or poigars had become set. Annihilation was to be the fate of most, certainly all who opposed the British (Rajayyan 1968: 35-42). The high costs of the various ensuing campaigns against poligars in the far south during the late eighteenth century, culminating in the widespread uprising of 1800-1, produced some circumspection within the Madras government by the time Munro was instructed about his tasks in the region. The Court of Directors and the Madras Board of Revenue had come to favor more leniency towards poligars. In addition to this prudent reconsideration of policy, the Madras Governor had been instructed by the government-General, Lord Wellesley, late in 1799, that the Bengal regulations of Cornwallis were to be established in Madras, in 'poligar countries' and elsewhere. This meant that on lands under poligars the latter were to be confirmed in them, in the most full and solemn manner. If there were to be Zamindars in Madras, they would have to be created mainly from the local lordships of poligars (See The Fifth Report V 3:336).

The Poligars of Rayalaseems were prospective candidates for Zamindari enfranchisement under the Madras regulation of 1802. As already mentioned according to a survey conducted by Munro and his staff during the first two years of his administration of the region, there were some eighty families of these local authorities who, a hundred or fifty years before had controlled two thousand villages, nearly one-sixth of the villages of the whole of what were to be later called the Ceded Districts. They claimed to have exercised authority in their 'palems' (palayum in Tamil) from
About this time there were others who expressed that poligars be given an appropriate position within an emerging civil society in Madras. Lionel Place, Collector of the Company’s Jagir in Chingleput, shared this view in 1795 when writing about one ‘Papa Raju’, poligar of Covelong:

The conduct of this old man who has attained the age of 90 affords an example of probity which is rarely met, (especially in relations between Indians and agents of the European companies in Madras) and the uprightness of his character has established an almost unprecedented reverence from the Natives who on many occasions refer their disputes to him...for the justice of whose decisions appeal has never been made to me (PUR Settlement’, 6 Oct. 1795 : 29).

Place’s was one of the few voices in Madras that had any good to say of poligars. Therefore, the MIBOR apparently had to give a serious thought to Wellesley’s instructions that these chiefs were to be vested with permanent rights in their lands unless there were strong and particular reasons against. There remained considerable consternation in Madras about the treaty of 1792 between the Company and the Nawab of Arcot stipulating that the Company was to assure that poligars observed all older customary ceremonies honoring the Nawab. To the MIBOR, Munro’s belligerent opposition to poligars must have seemed reasonable and may account for the considerable indulgence which he enjoyed in pursuing his tough policies towards these local chiefs.

Immediately after arriving in the region, Munro had outlined to Webbe how he intended to tackle the poligar authority. Poligars had been driven off and had not been permitted to return, Munro wrote: we had best go quietly to work, establish ourselves firmly in the country and conciliate the inhabitants a little before we begin with them. Elsewhere, where poligars were present, it is my intention to examine the revenue of the districts of all poligars as I go along without dispossessing them, but
giving them however to understand that any opposition on their part will be deemed rebellion (Wellesley Papers Ad. M.S. 13629, f. 153).

Two months later, on 31 December 1800, he expressed exasperation to Webbe that he might not be able to reduce the poligars in the manner he preferred because the military officers in the Ceded Districts have apprehensions in using force against them. To this he was averse. Fears of a rising of poligars in the region were alarmist, he wrote. Most poligars had been expelled from the Ceded Districts by Haidar Ali's brother-in-law, Mir Ali Riza Sahib, and John Company Bahadur is at least as strong as Mir Saheb ever was... Besides, he wrote to Webbe a few days later, Company ibices, being mostly cavalry in the legion, not suited to the task and would only rally around the presently divided and discordant poligar forces. For the moment, Munro thought, it was best to proceed slowly, and

it would be decorous before we begin with them to have some reasons to produce such as might be worked up into a manifesto after the fashion of modern Europe. As the whole gang of them was expelled by Hyder and Tipu though restored by the Nizamites I am for turning every last soul of them adrift again... But tho' this is what I would do if there were no one to call me to account for oppressing fallen royalty, I see many obstacles in the way at present (Wellsley Papers Ad. MS. 13629: ff 166-168).

Munro's ironies (the fashion of modern Europe and 'fallen royalty') tell us something about the confidence between the two men, and the congeniality that Munro had for the aggressive policies of Lord Wellesley which Webbe was pressing in Madras. but these remarks, and other of the early months of 1801, also demonstrate Munro's sensitivity to the shoals in the political waters he was attempting to navigate in this new and difficult posting. This applied most seriously to his actions against poligars. In purging the Ceded Districts of poligars he knew that he had to appear to be following a procedure which satisfied a growing sentiment in official Madras that a Bengal-type of settlement, which had been ordered by Wellesly, was correct and could be made with poligars. This was also a procedure which would make it appear to Munro's employers in London, still smarting under Burke's lashes, that justice was being done in India. As to the actual reduction of poligar authority, which Munro saw to be in competition with his own authority, he suggested the following 'bold line' to Webb:
contrive some means of giving me the military command [of the CD], weed out the useless military dogs above, raise some regiments to make me a Lt Col and then Majors might be easily got to work under me. I am certainly a better general now than I shall be in twenty years. My Civil situation gives me the means of procuring information that no military man can have, and I am also more interested in bringing matters to a speedy decision than any another military man.

Did this mean that Munro, like his military colleagues (of whom he seemed not to think much), sought a military solution to the problem of poligar authority? It would seem not, at least at this time, for the actual policy which Munro was proposing was not a military but a political one. However, he feared that the independent Company military in the region could well spoil his plan. This was to permit the eighty or so poligars to remain in their territories and not directly challenge their authority. Instead, he proposed to increase the level of tribute (*peshcush*) demanded from each to a theoretical maximum previously demanded but never collected by Hyder and by the Nizam’s regime. At this high pitch of demand, Munro reasoned to Webbe (as previously John Sullivan had reasoned to Lord North), poligars could not pay their troops and maintain their military capacity and also pay the tribute to the Company. When, as he expected, they defaulted on the latter, they could be deposed and expelled legally. He concluded this proposal to Webbe with: ‘I am convinced that it is possible to expel them all and to hang the great part of them’ (Cf Stein 1989: 88, also see Beaglehole 1966).

So smitten was Munro by this approach - and he might have been encouraged in this by Webbe - that he wrote to his friend later in the same month, April 1801, with an even more audacious proposal, explicitly military now, and one that would clear the entire Presidency of poligars. This involved the same tactic of increasing the tribute demanded from all poligars, but also being prepared with an adequate force when their joint resistance exploded. This force, Munro specified, should consist of nine regiments of cavalry and thirty-two of infantry, one-third of which was to be European. To the manner that he could reasonably expect from Webbe, Munro added: ‘I am afraid you will say that this army is rather intended for conquest than defence, but if you are attacked by a Native Power you can only oppose him... by invasion’ (Gleig V.3, 1830: 23-27).
Not surprisingly, to Munro’s superiors in London, his poligar policy appeared cynical and aggressive, and he found himself in danger of being returned to military duty in disgrace. It appears to have been severely attacked for his treatment of the poligar of ‘Vimlah’ (Vemulakota village, Pulivendla taluk, Cuddapah) district. Munro had deprived this poligar of this territory after ordering that the poligar’s fort be forcibly seized by Company troops in May 1801. His reasons for this action were that the poligar was an old, blind man who had been set in place as a puppet by the head of the armed retainers of the poligari family, and he was prevented from attending Munro’s office as he had been ordered repeatedly to do. So a second reason for Munro’s action was that relations between him and the poligars of the region were stalemated and, according to Munro, required a demonstration by the Company that its authority would be established. His violent action against a pathetic old man became the focus for widespread criticism of his poligar policy as a whole (Gleig V.3 1830: 45-48).

The Madras Governor, Lord Clive, had given full and explicit approval to Munro’s concern that if he made no move to reduce some of the more intransigent poligars in the region, the commander of the Company army there, Duglad Campbell, would have launched an action against all poligars, something which Munro believed could only exacerbate conditions. Josiah Webbe, chief secretary of Madras, had written in November 1801 approving Munro’s move against the ‘Vimlah’ poligar, an approval which put him in opposition to some in Madras. As usual, Webbe’s tone was heavily ironic:

the refractory spirit of the rebellious poligars will yield to gentle care of the native prejudices, timidity, and ignorance of European maxims: the halcyon times will return when jamabundies shall be settled through the more natural channel of the native dubashi, conversant with the manners; the crooked sword into a scythe shall bend. In sober truth I fear that all our plans for a vigorous government within [the] conquered country are frustrated...(MC, 151/5, Webbe to Munro, 9 Nov. 1801)

Another friend and counselor Mark Wilks, was not supportive, but fearful of the consequences of Munro’s ruthlessness. He advised his friend to go slowly, for, he feared that the uprisings of poligars in the southern part of the Presidency against the Company authority could become more general; there was, he said ‘a last struggle for savage independence’, the effects of Company policy had made mortal enemies of every
Mussalman in the Peninsula and now we are proceeding to the same point with the Hindoos? (MC,151/5, Wilks to Munro 11 May & 2 July 1801).

A judgement yet more harsh and dangerous came from the Court of Directors:

it is our positive injunction, that force be never resorted to against the Poligars... unless in case of actual rebellion, until every lenient and conciliatory measure has been tried without proper effect... It is our anxious wish to owe the obedience of Poligars and others of our Tributaries to their confidence in our Justice rather than to the dread of our power (Cited in Beaglehole 1966 : 65).

The Directors found Munro's actions objectionable, and they absolutely opposed 'so dangerous and indirect a means' as to set the tribute demand so high that poligars must default and thus lose their lands: that such a principle of conduct should have suggested itself to Major Munro's mind, is to us a matter of surprise and regret. [for] it is our wish to uphold and preserve the poligars in their rights and enjoyment in the soil whilst we gradually aim at the reduction of their military power and wean them from feudal habits.' The Madras government was declared to be at fault for giving its approval to Munro's deceitful poligar policy, and Munro himself, they said, should be removed from his office and never again employed in any Revenue Post in future which the violent and mistaken principles of his conduct seem to render him unqualified to fill' (Beaglehole 1966:65).

Against those harsh recriminations Munro's defence was prompt and creditable. His instructions and support from Lord Clive had been unambiguous and sustained with respect to poligars. He did not seek nor expect special instructions with regard to the 'Vimlah' poligar. That action was justified by the circumstances and proved to be salutary, for, from the time of the deposition of that chief, not only did the poligars come into line with Company authority in the dry tracts of Rayalaseema, but Munro successfully negotiated the surrender of rebellious poligars in Arcot in the Tamil country. He also applied to Clive's successor, Bentinck, for intervention against influential members of the Madras establishment who opposed his poligar policies. The strictures of the Directors against Munro and their call for his dismissal were not pressed, though the odor of that affair lingered in Madras among many who viewed
the 'Vimlah\^1 incident as a part of larger problem involving military collectors, an issue which also came to a head in 1802 (see Beaglehole 1966: >5-67).

Having pacified this turbulent region and survived the criticisms of his means and the attack upon military collectors, two complex and taxing processes mainly occupied Munro from 1800 to late 1807. These were, first, the establishment of the ryotwar system of revenue administration there and polemizing for its adoption elsewhere and second the provisioning of Arthur Wellesley's army in the war against the Marathas from late 1802 to early 1805. While it was the first of these, together with his later judicial reforms, that earned for Munro much of his enduring fame as the humane and just face of British imperial establishment and deepened his friendships with many important people not least with Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. The irony of this is that the usual focus upon ryotwar and its administrative implications, and its tunnel-like view of the focus upon ryotwar and its administrative implications, and its tunnel-like view of the future Munro system, neglected to notice that, shortly after Munro’s departure from India in late 1807, the system that he had labored so hard to create was dismantled and replaced by the village lease system. Only when the village leases proved a failure thus Munro’s system was restored to by a reluctant Madras establishment, at the insistence of London. However, his contribution to this war against the Marathas—a major turning point in early British imperialism in India—is scarcely noticed in the official or scholarly discussion of Munro in the Ceded Districts. Yet the victory over the Marathas in 1805, to which bullocks and grain from the region contributed so much, made the British the supreme power in the subcontinent, and most importantly in the Delhi heartland of Mughal authority.

For Munro, concerns about empire and administration were absolutely linked, as we know from his earliest letters to his father from India. Thus it is not difficult to see why a system of revenue administration based upon a mass of small peasant holders, under the close administrative scrutiny of a large body of revenue officers and tightly controlled by British officials, would have commended itself to him and other Company officials-like Josiah Webbe-in the Madias of 1800. Even if he were not already won
over to this sort of scheme, as Munro had been in the Baramahal by 1797, the objective conditions of the CD might have urged something like ryotwar upon him. The Poligars of the Ceded Districts (eighty poligars) their 30,000 or so armed followers, villages fortified, armed, and a history of at least thirty years of marauding armies coursing over the tract—all counseled an arrangement like that which had been evolved in the Baramahal ten years earlier (Stein 1989: 99).

That plan, as rephrased by Munro in September 1797, contained the essential elements of ryotwar. These were: an annual settlement with small farmers who were permitted to add to or freely reduce their holdings of the previous year; villages and taluks (districts') jointly liable for revenue failures of individuals; and no additional taxes to be demanded for improvements carried out by farmers. The rules he had introduced into the central division of the Baramahal in 1797 did differ in some respects from later formulations of ryotwar. Several of the 1797 rules pertained to provisions for cultivators to take up lands on lease for longer than a year, as then favored by the MBOR. Another stipulation was that all were to pay the same revenue for the same land, a provision substantially altered by the inam settlements in the Ceded Districts and elsewhere. A third prohibited remission except for the cultivation of commercial crops such as cochineal and mulberry (Arbuthnot 1881: 50-51). Munro's underlying political concerns about the central division of the Baramahal, even before he fell into line with Read about annual settlements, were evident in the middle of 1794, when he declared his intention to exclude any possible role or influence of leaders of peasant castes, [also called karaikarj and small cultivators from pre-existing political and economic networks' (The Bramahal Records, Section 1, Management: 220).

Thus, when he was appointed to Kanara, Munro had in mind a method and an approach, if not a wholly operational administrative system, and he perceived no difficulty in assimilating what he found in Kanara to his conception. This was remarkable, for almost everything about landholding and the social and environmental conditions of agriculture in Kanara were different from those of the Baramahal of his past region of his future. Nevertheless, after fifteen months in Kanara he brought away the
conviction that landed property existed there in the form of the small estate, and a notion that the Kanara jenmi was the same as the small farmer of the Baramahal. This last conceit formed the basis of his persuasive and successful reports of May and November 1800. But the central contribution of his Kanara experience to his view thereafter was that small landed property was ancient in India and could become common again, provided the large intermediate land holders of the Bengal scheme were not installed in Kanara and the revenue demand was moderate. This conception he incorporated into his Kanara reports and carried with him to the Ceded Districts in October 1800, from whence, in the following several years, the complete Munro version of ryotwar was issued.

Historical writing on the development of the ryotwari system is too voluminous to recapitulate here. The existence of two major works on the evolution of Munro's programme makes such a task unnecessary, and our purpose is to draw attention to aspects of this evolution under Munro's hands between 1800 and 1807 which appear not to be adequately noticed by Nilmani Mukherjee or T.H. Beaglehole, or by official commentators the subject (Mukherjee 1962 : 17-40; Beaglehole 1966 : 55-87).

The question is whether the state settled its revenue demands upon individual, or small cultivators as Munro claimed. Beaglehole avoids this question and seems to accept, with most official commentators, that Munro's claim was valid, even though Munro himself almost always added that evidence on the point is absent. On the other hand, many of Munro's contemporaries with a much experience and ability such as John Hodgson and Lionel Place-and some modern scholars who have studied the question, have been persuaded that the base from which the revenue was passed, from the point of production to whatever stood for 'state authority', was more likely to be a village or a set of villages (later called a 'mootah'). Munro's critics in the early nine-tenth century had only a slim basis in inscriptional evidence to refute his claims about the historicity of ryotwar as a system of direct relations between state officials and cultivators. But where this was cited, as by Ellis in his report on 'mirasi', the effect was telling and might have been devastating upon Munro's position, had not the major decision been
made for ryotwar by the time that Ellis' work was published, in 1818. Moreover, Munro's critics, such as Hodgson, made skilful metaphoric use of Munro's elegiac 'village republic' (Stein, 1989: 101).

In the 1808 report of the MBOR, of which John Hodgson was the most influential member (and the most often cited in the document) the decisive argument to the Madras Governor, Sir George Barlow for replacing ryotwar with village leases began with the following proposition:

The country is divided into villages. A village, geographically, is a tract of country comprising some hundreds or thousands acres of arable or waste land; a village politically, is a little republic, or rather corporation, having within itself, municipal officers and corporate artificers; its boundaries are seldom altered; and though sometimes injured, or even devastated by war, famine, and epidemic disorders, the same name, boundaries, interests, and even families, continue for ages (The Fifth Report, V.3, Report of 25 April 1808: 431).

The later sections of the report echo Munro. The village (Mozawar) system is, at least as old, as the age of Menu... Every village with its twelve ayagandees...is a petty common-wealth...and India is a great assemblage of such commonwealths (The Fifth Report, V.3: 435) It is important to keep in mind that Munro himself, in his late reports on the Ceded Districts, acknowledged that more than a third of the villages of the region had a corporate form of organization similar to mirasi in Chingleput and Tanjore, in which they settle among themselves the exact proportion of the whole rent that each individual is to pay. This was the veespuddi' (visabadi) system which presupposes a group of persons entitled to enjoy the major benefits of landed income and to stand jointly responsible for a tax placed upon the village as a whole. It must be granted that Munro's reiteration of the historic character of ryotwar was never the principal argument for ryotwar; hence, it should not be given exaggerated significance by those who wish to understand that historical context. However, Munro's history should be appreciated for the rhetorical contribution that it made at the time, when he was confronted with over 200,000 individual cultivators of the Ceded Districts to pay their annual land revenue, ranging as he wrote later, from Rs. 10 to 10,000 (Stein, 1989: 102).

As compared with the Baramahal, and certainly with Kanara, the Ceded Districts presented Munro numerous problems of ticklish nature. Where as in the Baramahal, an
annual settlement involved 80,000 pattadars, that is farmers who engaged to cultivate particular fields for the year and at a fixed revenue rate, in the Bellary region the number was about 209,000 in 1804. In Kanara heavy monsoon rains mired the few roads. In the Ceded Districts, on the other hand, welled rivers that traversed that territory, and made ascent to upland villages difficult, the 26,000 square miles of the region made it necessary for an administrator of the diligence of Munro to move about incessantly. During the administrative year 1805-6 (fasly 1215), Munro's correspondence provides evidence of the following itinerary: late March 1805, Chitvel, late May, Anantapur; early October to early November, Rayadurg; middle November, Hampi, Bellary and two smaller places; early December, Adoni; early January 1806, Harapanahalli; late February, Rayachoti; and late May, Anantapur. There is no reason to suppose that this was an extraordinary year for him (Mukherjee 1962 : 24).

But there are two elements in the revenue administration of the Ceded Districts that go to the central conception of ryotwar, elements quite different from earlier ideas about it. These were inams and judicial problems.

That almost half of the cultivation of the Ceded Districts then and for the next 150 years was under privileged revenue demand is at least anomalous, given the principles of ryotwar first articulated by Munro in 1797; that the average revenue demanded for inam holdings was 7 percent of that for the same land on full revenue mocks the expressed principles of ryotwar, though the reasons for this are clear enough. It was well recognized by Munro and his colleagues that the conditions of collecting the stipulated revenue from the region was the provision of a vast reserve of lowly taxed, prime agricultural land at the disposal of the wealthy peasantry. It was also recognized that access to inam holdings at very reduced revenue for inamdars was a means of fixing at least part of the Ceded Districts peasantry in its villages. This meant reducing their migrations, with the stock and skills they possessed, to the nearby on-British territories of Mysore and Hyderabad, or just as alarming from the view point of any collector, to neighboring districts under the Company. Where went the wealthy peasantry went the revenue, and it was by the revenue that careers were made and unmade in Madras. The inam element in the ryotwar of Munro's region meant that this system was a settlement with and for wealthy cultivators, those whom Munro called 'the
better sort of rayets' (the top 20 percent of farmers). This was not the egalitarian system it may have begun to be under Read in the Brahmahal and was claimed by Munro to be throughout his career, even as he also claimed that under ryotwar gradations of ranks in society were preserved in Inams, and this made Munro's ryotwar work, it seems clear, but inams also raised fundamental problems about the extant judicial system.

The new order being created by Munro depended on the recognition by established peasant communities that their welfare was best vested in the securities provided by the tall, hard soldier who represented the Company in the Ceded Districts, rather, than in those of the fierce old fighters who had previously ruled the countryside. Munro's inam policy was meant to make such a decision inevitable, for these respectable peasant communities of the Ceded Districts were the major beneficiaries of the inam policy (Stein 1989: 103).

The word in'am is Arabic; it designated a gift, usually of landed income, as an honor of mark of distinction from a ruling authority, and it was often accompanied by a document, sandad-in'am. This Arabic word entered South Indian usage, ironically, from the Marathas in their seventeenth-century expansion over the southern peninsula. Adopted by the British, the term underwent a change, being extended in meaning in one sense, and contracted in another. Inam came to encompass all extant alienation's of land revenue. In this the British took a single technical term of previous administrative usage and applied it to all cases of revenue privileges which they additionally asserted were conditional, not permanent. The usefulness of such an adoption should not be minimized. As a gloss for a variety of entitlements which in the various Dravidian languages implied a moral component, inam as a technical term was contracted in meaning by the denial of moral content and by the view of a wide-range of prior grants as contingent, utilitarian, and service-connected alienation's which could be resumed at the discretion of the state. For the Madras establishment, the example of Tipu Sultan was a precedent. His official policy of disallowing various prior alienation's of landed income, including those for support of Hindu shrines and religious persons, while extending those to Muslim institutions and persons, was inspired by his consciousness of being a Muslim sovereign as were his nomenclature
changes in calendar, titles, and currency. Somehow, Munro's superiors in Madras or in London appear to have not noticed the cognitive disorder of, on the one hand, justifying the wars against the Muslim Mysore state on the basis of its religious oppression, while, on(or with) the other hand, seizing all of the privileges of sovereignty that Tipu Sultan had possessed (Stein 1989: 103-104).

Munro collected a mass of information about inams in the Ceded Districts, and regularly sent it to Madras. Among his first instructions to tahsildars in the Adoni taluk, anticipation of his young assistant Thackeray's assuming charge of it, was for all inams to be carefully examined and information about them sent to Munro's office. However, neither he nor his superiors in Madras ever undertook to consider the entire matter of inams, nor seriously to questions or justify their continuation at a level which was seen as massive in his most complete statement about them in 1806 (MC, F/151/106: ff 57-70, Cf Stein 1989).

Inams then comprised 44 percent of all of the cultivated acres in the Ceded Districts and, though less clear, paid a mere 7 percent of assessed revenue for fields under inam holder (inamdars). Moreover, Munro had reported in 1801 that the potential revenue from inam lands in the region constituted 54 percent of the total land revenue actually collected. Such a glaring fact could not have been missed by the MBOR nor eventually, by the Court of Directors in London. The latter called for explanations in 1804, and they repeated the call in 1811, suggesting that their earlier queries had gone unanswered. Even then, little of anything official was undertaken on the inam question in the Ceded Districts and this was quite desultory considering the singularity of the concern for revenue by the Company, then and later. In fact, no reductions in inam holdings (nor even serious questions about their appropriateness) were entertained until quite late in the nineteenth century, by the Inam Commission. Even so, by the end of the century about half of the revenue-yielding lands of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies was under privileged revenue demand, and the inam category was not wholly abolished until after independence, in 1950 (Robert 1982).
Some judicial regulations and procedures impinged upon the operations of ryotwar and the resumption of ‘unauthorized’ inams, according to Munro. He claimed that most litigation's arose from these two causes and also that the courts were hopelessly unprepared to deal with cases arising under both. Partly, this was because revenue regulations in Madras had been set in anticipation of a permanent, Zamindari settlement, with respect to which annual settlements with individual cultivators were antagonistic; and partly it was because the court system, which was established with the same anticipation, lacked the expert knowledge and experience to deal with problems involving either the revenue or inams. At the same time, he was to carry on a debate, through official and unofficial channels, with his superiors in Madras on the same matters. This was with William Petri, President of the MBOR from AD 1800, who was respectful of but not wholly persuaded by Munro’s ryotwar arguments. The second person with whom Munro debated was Bentinck, Governor of the Presidency, who, while convinced by Munro on ryotwar, was too much the politician to attack a judicial system promulgated by the great Cornwallis and impatiently pressed by the Governor-General, Richard Wellesley.

When Zamindari revenue regulations were extended to Madras in 1802, it was provided that the land revenues of as yet unsettled districts of Madras should be made permanent as Zamindar estates; or, if that was not possible, under leasehold estates; or, failing that, under an annual ryotwar settlement until a permanent system could be established. These were the provisions of modified Zamindari worked out for those parts of Avvadh which had been ceded to the Company in 1800. To Petrie, Munro protested against the too hasty construction of revenue estates in Madras as yet insufficiently known to predict whether or how they would work: ‘It is really an extraordinary method of proceeding-first to deprive yourself of the means of acquiring information, and then to sit gravely down to pursue your research’ (Baegholt 1966:76-77). Bentinck needed no convincing about the inappropriateness of the Bengal-Awadh revenues scheme for Madias and had determined in June 1805 to see Wellesley in Calcutta to protest against its introduction in Madras. But on the matter of the Bengal judicial system he opposed Munro and the MBOR, both of whom protested that these judicial arrangements as being best for Madras. Accordingly, the courts were introduced in all of
the districts of Madras in 1806, even in territories like the Ceded District's which were not fully surveyed for revenue purposes.

Nevertheless, Munro continued his opposition to a judicial system which he was convinced was in conflict with an equitable and constructive revenue administration, for him the central pillar of British rule in India and one best realized through ryotwar. He continued this struggle for another eight years before his views prevailed. The reasons for his obsessive opposition were of two sorts. One line of reasoning was public and turned on practical as well as principled difficulties of a judicial system whose procedures were considered by him as inimical to indigenous custom and social realities. On this most conceded that Munro was correct. His arguments were advanced in reports beginning in 1807. The other reasons arose from his realistic apprehension of the politics of policy determination in British India. This was knowledge that he did not possess ten years before in the Baramahal, when he adopted ryotwar and gave to that order of revenue administration a voice that it had not previously had. The second reason was, in many ways, the guiding one for his long and successful opposition to the Company's judiciary.

After the first few years of the Ceded Districts' administration, Munro had come to understand that the single, great requirement for enduring British rule over India was the construction of a unified conception of sovereignty derived from and therefore appropriate for India. This understanding was not nearly so perfect as it was to become by 1824, when it received eloquent expression in his Minute of 31 December, but the kernel of that understanding was planned by 1806. Believing as he did that British rule rested on land revenue administration (Appendix 6), and believing further that the principles of ryotwar were best calculated to establish that foundation, he had become convinced that the usual reason for rejecting ryotwar—that it was at odds with established principles of jurisprudence as derived from British law and experience—must be attacked at the highest political level. His opposition here was formidable; the arrogant confidence that British institutions provided the essential means for ruling India according to the still hallowed Cornwallis. His attack upon the Bengal system was relentless—against its zamindari revenue regime and its A wadh M odifications,
as well as deeper Anglicized commitment of which law was the center piece. Munro launched this attack upon all levels of the system of Company policy determination, and the center of his attack was against the existing legal system, with respect to which ryotwari could never be made to fit. Ryotwar in Munro’s hands would not change; the law must.

More immediately, however, in the few years that he remained in the Ceded Districts and India, Munro pressed his argument on the incompatibility of the court system with normal administration because it not only ignored but also contradicted many Indian customs and realities. An example of this line of argument is found in his letter to the MHOR on 15 May 1807. There, he began in an interesting way by denying the relevance of some of the reigning historical authorities, Manu’ (Manu) and Abul Fazi, on a matter where they had previously served him. In attempting to determine the proportion of the gross produce which actually went to the cultivator and that which was taken by the state. Munro questioned the relevance of Manu and Abul Fazi in that spoke of the state receiving a low one third to one-sixth as its share of gross production. And yet it was necessary for Manu to require that any landholder who failed to cultivate his land should have it taken and given to another. Munro asked why, if the share to the state was low as claimed, a landholder would not quite happily cultivate his land, and concluded that the assessment in ancient times was not low but high. Still, practical experience of the Company’s officials everywhere in Madras, except on the Malabar coast, was that one-third of gross production was all that a cultivator could pay to the state and still realize a sufficient profit from farming to make a land a valuable asset. The benefits of a moderate revenue demand in increasing land values and private property in land would be greatest under a ryotwar mode of settlement than under either a zemindary or mootadarry (village lease) settlement (Stein 1989: 106-107).

Regardless of the mode of settlement, however, the existing judicial system was a barrier to progress. There were then, and there would continue to be, long delays in actions involving property owing to the formal procedures of the courts as then constituted. It was vexatious for cultivators to attend often distant zillah courts, for this interfered with cultivation. He argued that bribery, the concomitant of delays in suits
In late 1807, on the eve of his departure to Europe, Munro delivered a farewell exhortation to Bruce on the subject of relations between revenue and judicial officials. He reminded Bruce that the existing regulations were not well adapted to a permanent settlement of the revenue, and still less for a Rayatwar one, for they led inevitably to a clash between both kinds of officers and therefore required the prudence and good temper of both. Bruce was urged never to impede the 'Collector and to act towards his revenue successors in the Ceded Districts you would have them act to you if they were judge'. If differences arose, Bruce was to work them out with his revenue colleagues, for Government dislikes being troubled with petty disputes and forms bad opinions of those involved.

Though grateful to have the sympathetic Bruce, whom he warmly recommended, Munro had made efforts to avert any appointment or court in the region. When Bentinck had written to him in April 1806 for advice about where the new zillah court should be located in the Ceded Districts, Munro had responded that no place in the region recommended itself. Cuddapah, the most central place, was also the hottest in the Ceded Districts and Rayachoti, another proposed site, was rejected as unhealthy. Munro suggested that Nellore might be a better place for the Ceded Districts court. Though this would place the court some seventy miles outside the Ceded Districts, that was not a problem. The people of the Ceded Districts are a more hardy and travelling race than those on the coast; in any case, the major consideration in locating the court should be the convenience of the judge, not the Indian litigant. This might have been viewed as disingenuous in the light of Munro's criticisms of the court system as taking cultivators from their fields for the treks to and long absences at distant courts. In any case, the Nellore suggestion was rejected and the court was set up in the Ceded Districts under the compliant Bruce, leaving Munro free to refine ryotwar practice through the training of others. William Thackeray was one of the first, and he remained devoted to Munro's interests on the whole throughout his very long career. In 1806, now an experienced ryotwar collector, Bentinck was considering Thackeray for a judgeship in Ceded Districts. However, he was instead appointed the judge of Masulipatnam, but remained available to Munro as a spokesman on matters judicial revenue relations and on ryotwar in general from 1806. That time, Bentinck designated Thackeray as his expert companion for a
projected tour of the residency to determine, finally, whether ryotwar should be adopted. Though Bentinck later decided that he could not undertake the tour, he set Thackeray that task. Immediately, Thackeray applied to his mentor, Munro, for guidance on how he should proceed and what questions had to be seriously considered. Thackeray appears to have fully shared Munro’s antipathy to the intrusion of the courts in 1806. He wrote to Munro in May 1806, thanking the latter for his advice on how to proceed with the tour and passing the news that three more judges were to be appointed within the month. However, one of the three new appointees was to be James Cochran, another of Munro’s protégés from the Ceded Districts and thus another ally (Stein 1989: 109-110).

In all, a good number of young Britons in the civil service of Madras passed through Munro’s hands while he was in the region, and many of them in their turn became collectors who trained another cohort of men dedicated to the Munro system. The awe in which Munro was held by his juniors was obvious and earned by Munro’s experience, confidence and ability. That there was also affection is attested by the correspondence that exists. We have seen that Munro was reluctant to have junior men assigned to him the Ceded Districts because, as he argued, it would not ease his administrative tasks and it might inhibit his political ones. But once there, Munro proved a patient teacher and a supportive superior. This may be best judged from the full correspondence with Peter Bruce which has survived, but it is found with respect to his other trustees as well, and on a great variety of topics (Stein 1989: 110).

Ryotwar and its operation was the obvious topic of importance. His instructions to Thackeray, when the latter assumed responsibility for the Adoni division in 1800, comprise among the clearest exposition on ryot war that Munro ever constructed. Thackeray was told that the ‘patals’ were answerable for the revenue of their villages and jointly with other headmen for the districts in which their villages were. They would settle with ‘inferior rayets’ partly in grain, but mostly in money, and any surplus over what the headman contracted to pay to Thackeray’s revenue officials was to be retained by the headmen, since they were collectively liable for revenue deficiencies. On the last,
Munro cautioned not to be harsh on the collection of deficits from village headmen; they were not to be weakened 'materially'.

Munro provided Thackeray and his other assistants with their initial staff of Indian subordinates, and any changes in their stalls were to be made by each of them after having interviewed candidates carefully. Me told Thackeray that the inhabitants of Adoni were to understand that he, not Munro, would 'manage the country'. One way to assure the last was for Thackeray to maintain a double office staff; one 'cutchery' made up of Marathi speakers, and the other of Kannada speakers. This, he said, would stimulate competition and minimize cabals against him, and it would ensure that there was open communication regarding government business.

It is by general and unreserved communication not merely with your own cutcherry, but with such of your tahsildars or inferior servants as appear to be men of capacity, and by receiving all opinions, and being guided explicitly by none, that you can restrain every person in office within the line of his duty, guard the rayets from oppression, and the public revenue from deflation, and preserve in your own hands an perfect control of the country (MC I:151:10, 1.5).

The great expanse of waste-uncultivated, but cultivable land-and the Ceded Districts were to be healed as a special problem by Thackeray. The policy of granting such lands, on lower revenue through issuance of a 'cowle' (kaul) to expand cultivation in the country was to be carried out with caution. Thackeray must recognize that the prime objective of the ryot was to maximize his money income and this was necessarily in conflict with the collectors objective of maximizing the revenue. While the government wanted to increase the cultivation of wasteland for added food and industrial raw material, not to speak of revenue was most likely to conic. Similar care had to be taken with the grant of production loans from the revenue, or 'taccavi', to be repaid at the time of harvest. Munro wanted that unless care was exercised, these production loans were used by zamildars, sheristadars and other revenue officials to improve their own lands while being shown in their records as loans to others. Munro's method in both matters was to insist that accurate records be kept, to constantly query cultivators about cowels and taccavi, and to frequently inspect their proper application in person. Tank repairs was another matter on which fraud could occur, especially for funds for such repairs be
accompanied by detailed surveys. As to the construction of new tanks to replace badly silted ones. Munro was discouraging: "scarcely any place where a tank can be made to advantage... has not already been applied to this purpose (The fifth Report Y.3 : 204).

Other matters on which Munro instructed all of his assistants had to do with inams, poligars and trade. Some attention has already been given to the first two. On inams Munro usually answered queries from his assistants by relating how he dealt with particular kinds of inams and essentially by counseling the renewal of inams where there was some proof that these had existed for a considerable time. On poligars, once he had completed his draconian measures against them, he advised that these chiefs should be supported. When Bruce informed him that the allowance of the poligar of Chitvel Rs.(>00. had been stopped owing to an action by poligar’s vakil/agent in Madras, it was Munro who decides that the allowance should be resumed and the vakil investigated for swindling the poligar and punished (MDF151 12 Munro to Bruce 12 June 1806). On the Company's trade in the Ceded Districts and the operation of the Madras Board of Trade’s commercial residents in the CD. (Appendix - 8) Munro became in increasingly critical of their interference with free commerce and their exploitation of the region merchants and artisans. Still he maintained a scrupulously correct position in instructions to his juniors. In 1804 he sent them a circular about an impending visit to the region of the commercial resident, J. Greenhill. He said it was their responsibility to ascertain that all engagements entered by weavers were voluntary, but once made they must be enforced. No sales of cloth by weavers was to be permitted until contracts with the Company had been fulfilled. However, coercion by head weavers, often using Company peons and even soldiers was discouraged. On the other hand however, Munro was quite prepared to interfere with market arrangements if necessary. Accordingly, he sent a circular to his assistants in 1804 with the instruction that because of the grain scarcity of that year of drought and crop damage, and with large procurements to meet the needs of Wellesley’s army in Maharastra, all sales of the region’s grain outside the territory notably in Raichur north of the Tungabhadra were to be curtailed (MC f 151 10. 7 August 1804).
Many of his instructions and much of his supervision pertained to matters involving Indian subordinate officials. (Appendix - 7) Their large number which Munro took to be a strength of ryotwar and his critics its weakness-occupied much of his time. Munro often stripped his own staff of its best people to supply the initial staff of his new assistants, in effect, he was conducting a double training process during most of his time in the region, that of young British Chilians and Indians. His consistent instructions to the former was that they just depend upon and support their Indian subordinates.

Being acutely conscious of his own dependence upon Indian subordinates, Munro was aware of how much greater it was for his assistants. The balance between encouraging his European subordinates to carry out their responsibilities in an independent manner to be seen to be managing affairs in their jurisdictions and interfering with his own superior experience was a delicate one which Munro managed admirably. This is brought out in an exchange with Bruce in 1806 when the latter complained about an exchange of letters between this sheristadar, Hanumantha Rao, and Munro. Munro hastened to soothe: 'sorry that my correspondence with your servants should have given you so much uneasiness, and that you should have supposed that my writing to them proceeded from any want in confidence in you. There was no assistant with whom he was more pleased that Bruce, he said, and the correspondence with Hanumantha Rao had arisen over some matters in Munro's division of the Ceded Districts, not about Bellary. The delicate sensibilities of all involved was very much in Munro's mind and in his instructions. To Bruce, in 1804, he had written that Hanumantha Rao was to be in charge of settling the revenues with the ryots and that Bruce should inspect such arrangements and determine that all increases or decreases in revenue were justifiable. But you should take care not to do away (i.e. alter) in the presence of rayets what he has settled, because this would lessen his influence so much that he would not be able to make anything of them. You should hear the complaints or objections of the rayets against the settlement, but never make any alteration unless on the fullest conviction that it is right. The vulnerability of European officials to their trusted Indian subordinates was widely recognized. The young Alexander Read, who had served under Munro briefly in the Baramahal and had succeeded him in Kanara (along with another
Munro protege, John G. Ravenshaw, refers to this in a letter to his younger colleague James Cochrane before the latter joined Munro in the Ceded Districts. Read wrote that when taking up a new posting in a district not yet permanently settled, it was an accepted practice for the collector-designate to bring 'as many of his own people fit to serve as amildar as possible'. He should also bring an able peshkar, or head (office) man. a good seerishtadar and one or two clever gomasthas'. These were to replace 'corrupt' officials that were found in the new post and persuade of the people of the district of the 'fairness' of the new regime. The worst scandal that could beset a ryotwar collector was the loss of control of his district to a cabal of revenue servants. The wreckage of careers of company collectors strewed the revenue history of Madras from this cause, and as Munro knew it was one of the persistent reasons for the resistance of governments in India and London to ryotwar (Stein 1989: 112-113).

There were other hazards of which Munro sought to make his European juniors aware and to have entered into their executive calculations as collectors. One of these given thought and expression by Munro to early in his Ceded Districts administrations the proper level of revenue to be demanded from the cultivators. In September 1802 he wrote to Thomas Cockhum, an old friend and senior official of the M'BOR from 1793, on his perceptions of the pressures that affected the level of revenue demanded.

The desire that men at the head of affairs usually have of seeking the country, or at least the public income, flourishing under their auspices would most probably compel me to proceed too rapidly, and bring revenue to a standard four or five lacs below the point to which it ought to have reached. If I were left entirely to my own judgment it is possible enough that I may have sufficient resolution to follow the wisest course. I may get nervous as I get older, and become afraid of the censure. If I leave room for my successor to raise the revenue, it would be said that I allowed the inhabitants to defraud Government. If I raise all that the country can pay, and he could raise no more, it would be said that I had oppressed the people for the sake of exhibiting a high settlement. However, I shall, for the sake of assisting the public want of money, press the rates rather more than I ought to do (Gleig Y 1, 1830: 334-335).

Other matters touching revenue and the welfare of cultivators were not within the power of the collector to totally control in a place as poor as the Ceded Districts, but still efforts were to be made to minimize revenue losses. Thus, he wrote to his assistants in 1802 that there was a period in most years, from early in April to the middle of July.
(the lunar months of Chaitra. to 'Jaisht' or 'Jyestham) when poor peasants desert their villages and even their taluks, looking for easier terms of landholding. This was called the 'kalawedi' season (Tamil:Klavadi, meaning sweepings from the threshing floor). Then village headmen sought to lure poor farmers from elsewhere by offering low revenue demands, and this encouraged the spirit of emigration... (and ) hinders the improvement of land, warned Munro. Therefore, each assistant was advised to instruct village headmen and accountants that no cowles were to be granted to non-resident cultivators at rates lower than standard, even if the migrant cultivators were indigent, or in a of what was called 'nadar' (Wilson. Glossary: 250). Vigilance for the Company's revenue and concern for career must override other considerations.

In the light of this, Munro's warnings to his assistants were unceasing. To Bruce, again, regarding reportedly large loans made by the shiroff or money-changer attached to the latter's office. Munro wrote that if the shiroff is much involved in debt I should not think him a safe man, for he will be endeavoring to speculate on the coins of the kist (revenue installments paid into the collector's treasury) (MC. I 151 11. Munro to Bruce. 7 May 1804). To all of his such-collectors he had written in 1802 that he had taken the precaution of canceling the outstanding debts of talsildars because many were found to be the result of bribes for their appointments then. He urged his assistants to do likewise so that they and other Indian officials were under no obligations which might suborn them. He also advised that they guard against future debts and presents involving such officials for the same reasons of the corrupting consequences of such practices. To his orders that each assistant was to have a dual staff of servants using Marathi or Kannada or Telugu, he added to exercise care in the appointment of 'krakoons' (karkun), subordinate registrars and writers. They were often, he said, appointed at the recommendation of Zamindars from among their kinsmen. but should be independent men who might be useful as spies. In view of Munro's later strong advocacy of a 'native agency', i.e. major administrative responsibilities for Indians, such suspicions and minute scrutiny of Indian subordinate officials who were so essential for the operation of his method may seem contradictory. However, then and later Munro insisted that the venality of Indian officials was inversely proportional to their rewards in money and
honours, and he urged that the Company increase both. In any case, the embarrassment of a scandal involving his Indian subordinates never happened to Munro during the fifteen or so years that he served as a collector, and one reason for this was the close supervision he exercised (Stein 1989: 114-115).

It is difficult to think that Munro’s plans could have progressed as far as they did during most of his time in the region without Lord Bentinck’s warm support as a balance against a usually hostile Board of Revenue. Perhaps it was with an eye to bolstering Munro’s reputation in London as well as his own strong confidence in Munro and his methods that Bentinck arranged for the son of the then President of the Board of Control, Lord Minto, to serve as assistant under Munro in the Ceded Districts. Writing to Munro in 1806, Bentinck had reported that his old friend Minto had suggested that his son serve the Company in Madras city, but the Governor urged instead that the young man, whom he described to Munro as ‘energetic and intelligent’, should learn about India, and the best means for this was to work with Munro. Minto agreed that his son should become an able revenue servant, but the plan was scrapped when Minto was appointed Governor-General late in 1806. In these arrangements involving Minto’s son, William Thackeray may have had an influential role. In 1806 Bentinck had come to depend upon him and to see him, perhaps, as Munro’s surrogate.

Thackeray had been singled out to be Bentinck’s special advisor on the permanent settlement of Madras revenues and to accompany him on a tour of the Presidency to determine, finally, which mode of settlement was to be adopted. Thackeray had then been in Company service for thirteen years and had sound knowledge of the Company’s commercial operations. This he gained in the Northern Circars before joining Munro in the region in 1800, and subsequently when following his three years there was a revenue assistant of Munro’s. He was for three additional years judge of the zillah court in Masulipatnam. Regarding the tour Thackeray wrote to Munro: “I shall have an opportunity of discussing revenue matters, and it is a good thing to know the best system”, then plaintively for so seasoned an official:
I therefore beg of you to write me your ideas of the best way of settling the
country permanently as they call it. You used to write to me a great deal... I wish that
you would again... and write me an Indian utopia, or a scheme for managing a country
in India.... If you could do this, it may do much good, and I may have an opportunity
of explaining your principles of govt. and expatiating on their benefit in such a way as to
produce good (MG F 1519, Thakeray to Munro. 30 January 1806).

Three months later, as plans for the tour matured, Thackeray again wrote requesting
some queries by which to inform himself on the relative merits of permanent Zamindari
and ryotwar systems. He said that there were doubts expressed in Madras about the
appropriateness of ryotwar and again pleaded: 'if you desert me now, I shall look
foolish'. During the ensuing months of 1806 Thackeray wrote frequently and with growing
assurance about the tour. He thanked Munro for the suggestions the latter had sent.
Out of these Thackeray said he had 'Compiled a pretty dissertation on permanent
Ryotwar settlement which is not worth sending to you though the Board of Revenue
are engaged in refuting my principles.' Thackeray's notes on ryotwar had been passed to
the MB OR by Bentinck for their comment -'bones for the Board of Revenue and Bengalees [i.e. those in Madras who favored a Zamindari settlement there] to gnaw at... it
is all your sentiments and most likely your words in many places' (MC. F 1519. 5 May
1806).

Objectors to Munro's ideas as reformulated by Thackeray were led by John
Hodgson of the MBOR. According to Thackeray's report there were two major
objections to ryotwar. One was its failure to attend Regulation XXX of 1802 which
specified the protection to tenants by Zamindars. To this Thackeray remarked: "Neither I
nor any other judges nor the natives here [in Masulipatnam] can make out exactly
what the devil said regulation means..." The other objection was its presumed social
leveling. Proportions of a Zamindari settlement insist that 'we must have a nobility in the
country and regular gradation of society..., ryots composing the base, the Zamindars above
them all like the apex of the pyramids'. Thackeray concluded with the news that he
intended to propose a public debate, with himself supporting ryotwar and Hodgson
taking the zamindari position (MC. F 1519. 16 June 1806).
Shortly after this, he was raised to the MBOR by Bentinck. Thackeray wrote that Bentinck actually favoured Munro for this appointment to the MBOR, as its president but that appointment 'would have brought down a terrible storm, and you are certainly needed in the Ceded Districts'. Bentinck, he assured Munro, is very strenuous for ryorwar, however not another soul here supports it though 'the Court of Directors... seem to have some idea of its utility'. In the end, Thackeray undertook the tour of the Presidency without Bentinck, who had become engulfed in the aftermath of the Vellore Mutiny of July 1806, an event which ended, for the time, his Indian ambitions. Thackeray's report of 4 August 1807 with its support for a permanent ryorwar settlement is preserved in the Filth Report, as the final words its lengthy appendixes, a fitting place for perhaps the most eminent of Munro's apprentices in the Ceded Districts.