CHAPTER V

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Though the Settlement Department was created and the work started in 1058 M.E., (1883 A.D.), the earlier years were devoted to work of a preliminary nature, consisting of experimental operations, collection of data and discussions as to the nature and scope of the Settlement scheme to be introduced. It was by the issue of the Settlement Proclamation in 1061 M.E. (1886 A.D.) that a definite and final shape was given to the scheme itself. The real commencement of Settlement work was, therefore, subsequent to this Proclamation. Hence, the year 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D.) had been adopted as the commencement of the period dealt with in this chapter.

The revenue reforms relating to the period covered by this chapter are best dealt with under distinct heads with reference to the change of personnel at the head of the administration. This period comprised the regime of six Dewans namely Rama Rao (1887-1892), Sankarasubba Iyer (1892-1898), Krishnaswamy Rao (1898-1904), V.P. Madhava Rao (1904-1906), S. Gopalachari and Sir. P. Rajagopalachari (1907-1914). Each of these statesmen introduced several important reforms in the land revenue system and procedure, in view to secure greater efficiency and enlightened
progress. These measures are dealt with in chronological order in the following paragraphs.

Two Royal Proclamations were issued during the regime of Rama Rao, one relinquishing the right to arrears of fees due on transfers of Srikar Pattom lands prior to 1060 M.E (1885 A.D), the fees on transfers subsequent to that date having been already remitted by a Royal Proclamation in 1059 M.E (1884 A.D). The other remitted certain penalties were recoverable on documents engrossed on unstamped cadjans at a time when the law required certain classes of instruments to be engrossed on cadjan (palm leaf) bearing a Government Stamp. When the Registration Regulation came into force in 1043 M.E (1868 A.D), the law requiring the use of stamped cadjans was repealed but still the penalties incurred for breach of that law in previous years continued to be levied whenever documents written on unstamped cadjan were produced in evidence till remitted by the recent Proclamation.¹

In 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), a committee consisting of Sankarasubba Iyer, Settlement Dewan Peishkar, as President, and Narayana Pillai, High Court Judge, Pachappa Naieker, Dewan Peishkar,

¹ T G G, dated 19th Kumbham 1062, p.162.
and Theravium Pillai, Valia Meleluthu Pillai, as Members, were appointed to inquire into the question of *puthuval* registry and suggested rules for facilitating the registry of such lands and encouraging the reclamation of waste lands.\(^2\)

As a result some detailed instructions were issued regarding the attachment and sale of immovable property for recovery of revenue. The following points were specially laid down.\(^3\)

(a) Only so much of the property as was required for the recovery of the amount due to the *Sirkar* was to be attached.

(b) A statement was to be taken from the defaulter or a notice served on him before attaching the property.

(c) The property on which the tax was due was to be proceeded against in the first instance. It was only in cases when that property would not fetch a sale or could not be sold, that other properties belonging to the defaulter were to be proceeded against.

(d) On receipt of the *Peishkar*'s sanction for selling the property, a notice of sale was to be issued specifying the

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\(^2\) *HCVR*, dated 3rd *Minam* 1062 M.E, p.20.

\(^3\) *Ibid.*
date and time fixed for the sale. Such notice was to be published in the locality and copies of the same put up in the *Proverti* and Taluk *Cutcheries* and affixed on the house of the defaulter.

(e) The sale was always to be conducted on the date fixed.

(f) Special care was to be taken that proper value was fetched at the auction.

(g) The Tahsildars were to take particular care to avoid irregularities of any kind in auction proceedings.

(h) The *Peishkars* were to insist on these instructions being strictly followed.

By a *Huzur Sadhnam* No. 4394, dated 21st Kumbham 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), addressed to the Division *Peishkars*, they were asked to insist on the *Proverti* officials crediting in the accounts the tax in paddy and money for which receipts had been given by them to the ryots. It was stated that some instances had come to the notice of Government of payment made by the ryots, though supported by such receipts, not having been credited in the accounts and that, in consequence of such irregularities, the ryots were subjected to oppression and hardship by the arrears being kept up in the accounts against their names and coercive steps being taken for their recovery, in spite of the payments already made by them. In view to remove
these grave irregularities and hardships, it was ordered that such cases, when brought to notice, should be promptly and severely dealt with and the delinquent subordinates called upon to pay up the amounts immediately and that the ryots who had made the payments should not be harassed on any account.4

A circular was issued on 26th Kumbham 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), to the Division Peishkars. In it was laid down that, in puthuval enquiries, the statements of persons in possession of lands immediately adjoining the puthuval, as well as the persons residing in houses or huts put upon the puthuval land, should be taken and brought on record, in view to establish the fact of reclamation and possession.5

It was also laid down that monies to be advanced to Viruthicar for the supply of provisions should be distributed in proportion to the pattom on the Viruthi lands assigned to each Viruthi, as directed in Huzur Circular No. 5494, dated 18th Medam 1039 M.E. (1864 A.D).6

In a notification No. 5034, dated 5th Minam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), it was laid down that, in the assessment of sugar-cane

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4 Ibid.
5 TGG, dated 22nd Medam 1062 M.E. p.331.
6 Ibid.
cultivation either in hill tracts or river sides and other low lying tracts, the superficial area should be calculated at 1 parai per 64 perukkams instead of 1 parai per 40 perukkams according to past usage, and the assessment fixed at 7 fanams, 2 chuckrams. Per parai for Pandaravagai lands, 5 fanams, and 8 cash per parah for Adiyara Pattom lands and 3 fanams, 2 chuckrams per parai for Jenmam lands including Devaswamvagai, Brahmaswamvagai and Madampimarvagai.7

A circular was sent on 18th Minam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), to the Division Peishkars. It was laid down in the circular that, in view to test the accuracy of the assessments fixed for land and trees in puthuval cases, the Tahsildars should inspect some lands occasionally and the Peishkars also look into this matter during their circuits.8 The Division Peishkars, were also directed to examine and pass orders in the Arivu Nos, of the several taluks in each Division.9

Further some detailed instructions were issued regarding the planting of avenue trees on the sides of public roads. In view to encourage the planting of such trees for the comfort and convenience of pedestrian travellers, it was laid down that, on the sides of public roads, i.e, within the limits marked out by the Department of

7 Ibid, dated 29th Medam 1062 M.E, p.357.
8 Ibid, dated 22nd Medam 1062 M.E, p.332.
9 Ibid.
Public Works outside the line of boundary stones demarcating the road, the ryots were permitted to plant avenue trees such as jack, mango, punna, etc, maintain them by putting up fences round the plants without causing obstruction to the use of the road, and take the produce when the trees came to bearing. It was added that the Sirkar would not levy any assessment on such trees. The felling of such trees was prohibited except when the trees were decayed, when the ryots could cut and remove them with the permission of the Sirkar. If the branches of such trees road so as to were found to over hang the public cause obstruction to passengers or wheeled traffic on the road or to the Telegraph line, it was open to the Sirkar to cut and remove those branches. The ryots were permitted only to take the produce of the trees and were not to have any right on the land.\textsuperscript{10}

On 15\textsuperscript{th} Medam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), a Committee was appointed under Royal Sanction to examine into the present system of Nair Viruthis and to propose, for the consideration of Government, measures for ameliorating and reforming the same in accordance with the Royal Proclamation of the 14\textsuperscript{th} Edavam 1061 M.E. (1886 A.D). The committee was constituted. The President of the committee was S. Sankarasubba Iyer, Dewan Peishkar, Revenue Settlement. The Members were Theravium Pillai, Valia Meleluthu Pillai,

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, dated 1st Medam 1062 M.E, p.292.
Nagamia, *Dewan Peishkar*, Trivandrum, and P. Thanu Pillai, Assistant & 1st Class Magistrate, Quilon Division.¹¹

The expenditure on irrigation works had hitherto been directed almost exclusively to South Travancore, the lands of which being highly assessed, it developed on the Government to keep in order the main supply channels and the tanks they fed. But there were applications from the ryots of North and Central Travancore for the repair and restoration of channels and bunds serving irrigation purposes. All such works were left till now, for the most part, to the ryots themselves. Owing chiefly to the want of co-operation among them, these works were neglected and the damage to the cultivation in consequence was not small. Therefore, with a view to help the ryots, certain rules had been passed authorizing the Division *Peishkars* in consultation with the ryots. Accordingly, the channels and bunds were improved at *Sirkar* cost in the first instance, and then to recover the expenditure prodata from those whose lands were benefited by such works. These rules had been made applicable to the Northern and Quilon Divisions and parts of the Trivandrum Division. The total amount allowed to be expended annually under these rules were Rs. 20,000. The rules also provided for a portion of the

expenditure not exceeding one half in each case being borne by the Sirkar, if, on special grounds, it was found necessary to extend such consideration to the ryots.\textsuperscript{12}

In a notification, dated 31\textsuperscript{st} Medain 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), issued under Royal sanction, certain rules were laid down regarding the assessment of malavaram cultivation in respect of other grains than paddy. The superficial area, according to the notification was calculated at 128 perukkams per parai, and the assessment fixed at 6 chuckrams, per parai for Pandaravagai lands and 3 chuckrams per parai for Jenmam lands.\textsuperscript{13}

Wastelands granted to the ryots were assessed with the highest rate of tax on the neighbouring lands under cultivation. This discouraged the improvement of the land, as, from the small capital available for cultivation, the Government came in for a share equal to their share of the produce of the very best land in the vicinity which had been under cultivation for a long period. The Maha Raja had now been pleased to command that in future, the assessment on wasteland should be the average tax on the neighbouring land and not the highest rate.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} TG G, dated 26th Edavam 1062 M.E, p.437.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, dated 19th Edavam 1062 M.E, p.410.

\textsuperscript{14} TG G, dated 26th Edavam 1062 M.E, p.407.
It was not only the extent of land under cultivation that had
to be protected and enlarged, but the quality of the produce, the method
of cultivation and the breed of cattle admitted of much improvement.
With a view to stimulate improved production, His Highness had been
pleased to sanction the holding of Agricultural Exhibitions and
Cattle Shows annually in some centres of population in each of the
four Divisions and a sum of Rs. 500 a year had been granted for each
Division to be awarded in prizes. The Exhibitions, in previous
years, got up by private enterprises with a small aid from the State
in the town of Kottayam, were very encouraging and it was hoped
that the more general measure now sanctioned would considerably
benefit agricultural produce.

The ryots were hitherto heavily handicapped in the
matter of throwing up inferior land, which they could not remuneratively
cultivate. Once a piece of land was registered in a ryot's name in
the Ayacut or Survey and Settlement account, he had to pay the tax
upon it whether the land was cultivable or not. Land once cultivable
might afterwards have become unfit for the plough from various
causes, the ryot had to pay the tax all the same. If the tax on that

particular land ran into arrears as it often did, that lot being unmarketable, other productive land held by the same ryot and who had regularly paid the tax upon the uncultivable land. If he continued to pay the tax, his assets, were soon exhausted. In either case, ruin stared him in the face, to avert which he had often times recourse to the artifice of transferring the registry of the land to some pauper who had no assets to go upon, and the Government never got its dues. The system was demoralising in all its phases. His Highness the Maha Raja had now been graciously pleased to command that ryots were at liberty to surrender any unremunerative holding and the Peishkars had been directed to remit the tax on such properties on their being surrendered. This measure was proved popular.¹⁶

A set of rules was passed on 27th Karkadagam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D.) under Royal sanction, regarding the registry of escheat and pokuthi lands. Detailed instructions were laid down in these rules regarding the procedure to be adopted in conducting enquiries in such cases, and the class of cases for which Vilayartham should be levied and those in which registry was to be ordered on the strength of long possession without demanding Vilayartham.¹⁷

Another set of rules was passed on the same date, 27\textsuperscript{th} Karkadagam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), regarding the assessment of alienated Jenmam lands. It was laid down that tax-free lands belonging to Jenmis (Devaswams and Brahmaswams), when alienated by the Jenmis for a money consideration, should be charged with Rajabhogan according to local usage. The Division Peishkars were to dispose of such cases under the powers delegated to them by the Rules dated 21\textsuperscript{st} Mithunam 1062.\textsuperscript{18}

Another set of rules was passed on the same date, 27\textsuperscript{th} Karkadagam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D), under Royal sanction, regarding the registry of puthuval lands. Detailed instructions were laid down in these rules regarding the procedure to be adopted in conducting enquires in such case, the method of measurement and assessment for such lands as wet or dry, the levy of arrears of assessment for the period of occupation, the allowance to be made on account of Nadavukur and other details.\textsuperscript{19} The Division Peishkars were to dispose of such cases under the rules dated 21\textsuperscript{st} Edavam 1062 M.E. (1887 A.D).

\footnote{Ibid, p.929.}
\footnote{Ibid, p.931.}
By a circular dated 21st Chingam 1063 M.E., (5th September 1887 A.D), the Division Peishkars and Tahsildars were directed to insist on the Proverticars receiving only the actual amount of paddy due as tax from the ryots. The object of the circular was to put a stop to the practice of the Proverticars compelling the ryots to pay more paddy than was due, to the extent of 20 or 30 per cent. In some cases, it was stated that Government were aware of the evils, which attended the collection of tax in kind and that they could not be completely suppressed except by the conversion of grain into money payment. But as it would take some time before any such measure was considered and adopted it was thought necessary to issue this circular to prevailing abuse as far as possible. The Tahsildars were to move in the Provertis when the paddy portion of the tax was being collected and see that the ryots were not oppressed and injured by their subordinates. It was stated that the Tahsildars who might be found wanting in their sense of duty in this respect would incur the severe displeasure of Government. The Division Peishkars were asked to satisfy themselves, during their tours of inspection, that the Tahsildars were paying sufficient attention to this branch of their work.

20 TG G, dated 29th Chingam 1063 M.E, p.984.
During the time of the tours of the Division Peishkars and Tahsildars, they found that the Viruthicars had been relieved of the very distasteful duty of supplying provisions at certain fixed rates, which were considerably lower than those ruling in the market, and of rendering certain gratuitous services in connections with the tours of His Highness the Maha Raja, the members of the Royal Family, Thampurans, Swamyars and other privileged persons. These services were rendered in consideration of certain lands they hold on easy terms. At the time the lands were granted, there was no doubt a fair relation between the benefit conferred and the value of the service exacted, but as in recent years the price of provisions and the wages of labour have gone up very considerably, the system has become oppressive. This relief granted, substantial as it was but an earnest on the part of the Maha Raja of a more general plan of amelioration which the Government contemplate to afford to the Viruthicars who form a considerable portion of His Highness subjects.\(^2\)

It was laid down in a circular dated 2nd Dhanu 1063 M.E. (1888 A.D) that two Thadastars from each Muri should be nominated from among the leading ryots, possessing intelligence and good character, that listed of such persons should be obtained from the

Proverticars, and that the Tahsildars should be, after satisfying themselves that the persons elected answered the qualifications prescribed, preserved the lists in the taluk offices and saw that the Thadastars thus selected were always utilised in connection with revenue enquires such as puthuval, escheat and assessment of Viruthis.22

By a notification dated 5th Makaram 1063 M.E, (17th January 1888 A.D.), some special concessions were granted to the ryots to encourage the cultivation of pepper in the Taluk of Nedumangad where it was understood, waste lands adapted for this purpose were to be found.23 Persons willing to undertake the cultivation of pepper in the Nedumangad Taluk were to apply to the local Tahsildar or Division Peishkar for waste lands lying within one mile on either wide of the Trivandrum- Shenkottai road. The necessary enquires were to be made on such applications and, if the Government saw no objection, the lands would be granted free of tax for the first ten years and them after wards on the Payattu Pattom tax then in force. Persons obtaining the grant of such lands were not to fell any timber of State

23 Ibid, dated 12th Makaram 1063 M.E, p.62.
monopoly or trees for which seignior age was chargeable, except such as it was absolutely necessary to remove to admit of the land being opened up for cultivation. The trees thus felled were to be handed over to the Forest Department. The grantees were to clear and cultivate pepper on the lands within two years from the date of obtaining the grant, failing which, they would be held liable to pay the Payattu Pattom tax on the land from the date of the grant.

According to the Government Gazette dated 23rd Minam 1063 M.E. (1888 A.D) that “a sum of Rs. 20,000 was sanctioned for the restoration and repair of the minor irrigation and drainage channels and tanks in the Trivandrum, Quilon and Kottayam divisions. This amount would be spent in the first instance by the Government and afterwards recovered rateably. It must be remarked here that the Government was not under any obligation to lay out funds for repairing such works, as the land –tax imposed was comparatively light. But seeing that the area irrigated by a tank or a channel was parcelled into numerous petty holdings, that the ryots did not co-operate to execute the necessary repairs to damaged tanks and channels, and that the cultivation, as a whole, suffered, this measure was found imperative.” 24

By a circular, dated 27th Medam 1063 M.E. (1888 A.D), addressed to the Division Peishkars, some detailed instructions were issued regarding the procedure to be followed in the attachment and sale of properties, movable and immovable, for the recovery of revenue, chumathachilavumicham and other dues to the Sirkar. It was laid down that immediately after attachment, a notice should be issued, fixing a period of 30 days in respect of immovable property and 7 days in respect of movable property, calling upon the defaulters to pay up the amount within that period and warning them that, if they failed to do so, the properties would be sold in auction. On the expiry of this period and after service of the notice in due form, a notification containing particulars regarding the property to be sold and the valuation fixed therefore was announced by beat of drum in the locality where the property lay as to be published, well as in public places. A statement was to be taken from the villagers as to the fact of such publication and put up with the record. The sale was to be conducted on the property and at the Cutcherry on the dates notified. In cases in which the value of the property attached exceeded Rupees 100, the notification was to be published in the Gazettee.25

The Division Peishkars, were asked to frequently move out on circuit in the Taluks and Provertis, to enquire into and redress the grievances of the ryots on the spot, and scrutinise the work of the subordinates and remedy the defects and irregularities that might be discovered at such inspection. It was added in the Huzur Sadhanam that the Peishkars should visit each Proverti in the Division at least once a year. Details regarding the inspections work done were to be furnished in the circuit diaries as well as in the Administration Report.26

The Division Peishkars, were also asked to arrange for the Thandapar account being brought up to date, within the close of the year, so that it might serve as a correct and reliable guide for the collection of revenue in the succeeding years. It was directed that after the Thandapar had been completely revised, kykanakus or copies of the itself should be furnished to the ryots. A special report was to be sent up to the Huzur, after the Thandapar accounts had been prepared, so that a notification might be published in the Gazettee for the information of the ryots.27

A peculiar usage by which a Jenmi was deprived of some of his rights in property, though no default or failing on his part, was

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26 H C V R, Huzur Sadhanam No. 7871, dated 31st Edavam 1063 M.E.
27 Ibid, Huzur Sadhanam No.7872, dated 31st Edavam 1063 M.E.
also abandoned during the year under the sanction of His Highness the Maha Raja. When a tenant holding lands from a Jenmi died heirless, the Government, under the law of escheat, succeeded to the rights of the deceased; but in exercising the rights acquired, they put themselves in the position of Sovereign instead of tenant to the Jenmi, assessed the land with full pattom minus the varam or rent due to the Jenmi, converted it into Sirkar Pattom tenure and sold it by public auction. Thus depriving the Jenmi of his right as land-lord to fees payable on periodical renewal of the lease, to enhance rent at stated periods and other customary dues payable by the tenant on occasions of marriage or death. By the recent ruling, the Sirkar stepped into the rights of the deceased tenant not as Sovereign but as a tenant only in its relations with the Jenmi, and to whomever they transferred the land, the transferee stood in the same relation to the Jenmi as the deceased tenant stood.

A notification was issued rescinding the practice by which Jenmis or proprietors of entitled lands were deprived of their rights when their mortgagees or tenants died without heirs. The notification declared that the right of the Sirkar over such lands were only co-extensive with that of the tenant dying heirless, without affecting any right of the Jenmi.

28 TLRM, vol II, p.53.
Almost all the Jennam lands, which comprised no inconsiderable portion of the cultivable land in the country, were in the possession of others, either as mortgagees or lessees. The law gave the Jenmi the right to levy certain periodical fees and to enhance the rent itself at stated times. These rights could lapse by the accident of the tenant dying heirless. The Government, of course, stepped into the tenant's place, but it could have no greater right than the tenant himself. This injustice towards an important class of His Highness subjects had been removed by the above notification.29

By a notification No. 8178, dated 8th Mithunam 1063 M.E. (1888 A.D), issued under Royal sanction, some special concessions were granted to induce ryots to take up waste lands in the low country for the cultivation of tea, with a view to encourage the industry. The terms offered were as follows:30

(a) The lands were to be granted free of tax for a period of five years.

(b) After the period of 5 years, the usual Payattu Pattom tax was to be levied on the land.

(c) If, without one year from the date of the grant, the preparations began for the cultivation of tea, the Payattu Patom tax was to be levied from the date of the grant.

29 TAR, 1063 M.E, p.120.

30 TGG, dated 14th Mithunam 1063 M.E, p.590.
(d) Each applicant was to be granted not more than 10 acres of land.

(e) Persons desirous of taking such lands were to present their applications to the Taluk or Division office specifying the land selected by them.

Certain classes of people following the *Marumakkathayam* law were hitherto obliged to pay to Government a succession fee or *Adiyara* calculated at \( \frac{1}{4} \) of value of the property claimed as descending to them from a person remote in kin. Similar fees were also paid by *Kalachetties* and a few other classes following the *Makkathayam* law, to entitle them to succeed to the property of their uncles on the mother's side who left no issue.\(^{31}\) Though the impost was legitimate in principle if it were equally distributed, it was objectionable in this respect that it pressed on certain classes of the population, while other classes would be free to inherit from very distant kindred without the payment of the fee. His Highness the Maha Raja was therefore pleased to abolish this unequal burden on His subjects.

The chief object of this Proclamation was to remove inequalities in the distribution of the public burdens, all other classes of His Highness, subjects being exempted from number of escheat cases that came before the Revenue Officers related to succession by

\(^{31}\) *TLRM*, vol.I, p.119. Refer also *TAR* 1063 M.E.
Koothucars. The enquiry into the vexation and loss to the people, so much as that, not in a few cases, the direct heirs had been kept out of possession of their ancestral property, or the property had been placed under attachment for years pending the termination of protracted enquiries. The above measure was, therefore, calculated to remove all unnecessary hardships to the people and illicit gain to unscrupulous revenue subordinates.32

It was the practice in the Shenkottai Taluk to levy yearly on lands used for dwelling houses and cow-sheds an assessment known as ‘manavari’ and ‘tholoovari’ respectively. The rates were not uniform but differed according to circumstances.33 This system of annual assessment led to petty oppression and annoyance to ryots. In the year under report, the practice was discontinued and orders were issued to register such lands permanently in the names of the holders and to fix usual garden tax on them.34

On 9th Vrischigam 1064 M.E. (1889 A.D.), it was announced that rewards would be granted to persons bringing to the notice of the Sirkar instances of fraud or malpractices by Village Officials in the assessment of hill cultivation (Malavaram and

32 Ibid.
Vilameladi). The amount of such reward was fixed as one-half of the tax accruing to the Sirkar by such disclosure. Informants were to address petitions to the Tahsildar or Division Peishkar and adduced the necessary evidence to support their allegations, unless petitions were not to be taken notice of.\(^{35}\)

By a circular No. 4599, dated 10\(^{th}\) Makaram 1064 M.E. (1889 A.D.), addressed to the Division Peishkars, it was laid down that the practice of registering abandoned Viruthi lands which had been occupied and cultivated by ryots as Viruthi tenure, even after being entered as Nirthal, should be put a stop to and that the lands should be registered as pattom tenure the names of the occupants after recovery of vilayartham as prescribed in the notification, dated 5\(^{th}\) Makaram 1057 M.E. (1882 A.D.) and the rules, dated 9\(^{th}\) Chingam 1063 M.E (1888 A.D.).\(^{36}\)

In the year 1064 M.E. (1889 A.D.), it was directed that the procedure re-registry of escheat lands on payment of vilayartham, or after sale by auction, under the rules recently issued should not be applied to old escheat cases which had been decided by the Courts or the Huzur to be registered as pattom in the names of the Nadu Pattom

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\(^{35}\) T G G, dated 24th Vrischigam 1064 M.E, p.1340.

\(^{36}\) T G G, dated 18th Makaram 1064 M.E, p.85.
holders and that, in all such cases, the land should be registered as *Sirkar Pandara Pattom* in accordance with the previous decisions without subjecting the lands to *vilayartham* or auction.\(^{37}\)

With a view to induce capitalists to increase the cultivable area of the country by reclaiming the shores of back-waters, for which great facilities existed in some parts of the country, a notification was issued permitting the ryots who reclaimed such lands to enjoy them free of tax for five years, and on a moderate tax of about 1 ½ rupees per acre thereafter, till the next survey.\(^{38}\)

In 1064 M.E. (1889 A.D.) a review committee was appointed to consider whether it would be advisable to relieve the holders of *Viruthi* lands from the responsibility of supplying provisions to *pagodas* and feeding houses and purchase them in the open market. The majority of the members having given their opinion in favour of the relief, arrangements were made to purchase the provisions in the open market for a period of two years as a tentative measure beginning from the current year. An exception was made in the case of important ceremonies in the great *pagoda* at the capital and for occasions of State ceremonials.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{38}\) *TG G*, dated 27th *Mithunam* 1064 M.E, p. 696.

This measure and the relief afforded to *Viruthicars* involved a considerable increase of expenditure to the State; viz., about Rs. 50,000 a year. This was unavoidable, considering the justice of the claims of the *Viruthicars* for the payment of market prices for the provisions they supply to Government institutions as explained in the last report.\(^{40}\)

The practice of levying a fee known as *pathavaram* in cases of alienation of lands under *Kudi-Jenmam* tenure was dispensed with according to a notification issued dated 11th *Karkadagam* 1064 M.E. (1889 A.D.). It was stated that the old practice thus abrogated was characterised by inequalities and anomalies even in the few taluks in which it was in vogue.\(^{41}\) This measure was referred to and explained as follows in Travancore Administration Report (1064 M.E.): “When *Inam* lands held under the tenures known as ‘*Pandaravagai Thettam*’ and ‘*Kudi-Jenmam*’ were transferred by sale, the practice hitherto obtaining in the 3 taluks of Karunagapalli, Mavelikarai and Quilon was to levy a fee called ‘*Pathavaram*’ from the purchaser equal in amount to \(\frac{1}{4}\) of the selling price in the first two taluks and to \(\frac{1}{10}\) in the third taluk. Again, when such lands were

\(^{41}\) *TAR*, 1064 M.E., p.112.
sold to low-caste people the tenures were changed into ‘Otti’ and the assessment enhanced. This practice was abandoned in the year under report."^{42}

A Proclamation was also issued by His Highness the Maha Raja revising the grain portion of the assessment on paddy lands. Hitherto, the proportion in which tax was received in kind was not uniform. It varied not only in different taluks but also in different proverthies and villages in the same taluk. By the Proclamation, the proportion was made uniform i.e, 25 per cent of the total assessment in the Quilon and Kottayam Divisions and 50 per cent in the Padmanabhapuram and Trivandurm Divisions, with the exception of a few proverthies in the two latter divisions, where the proportion of grain had to be slightly enhanced. The above measure had, on the whole, resulted in the reduction of the grain assessment and was a source of great relief to the ryots in as much as the commutation rate was far below the ruling price of grain in the market.^{43}

In the Ambalapulai taluk in the Quilon division, it was customary to levy four cadjans on every coconut tree on reclaimed garden lands and on Inam gardens when transferred. It was also

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^{42} TLRM, vol.I, p.121.

^{43} TGG, dated 24th Kanni 1065 M.E, p.1140.
customary to levy an extra cess known as 'Kodikeel' on Puthuval gardens and on the transfer of Inam gardens. As these cesses were levied over and above the usual assessment and were not in force in any other part of the country, they were abolished during the year 1065 M.E. (1890 A.D.) under report.44

A set of rules, dated 15th Makaram 1065 M.E., was issued, under Royal sanction, to regulate the conduct of Pokkuvaravu enquiries. Detailed instructions were laid down in these rules regarding the nature and scope of the enquiry to be conducted in different classes of cases, the presentation and disposal of appeals and other matters. These rules were declared to be applicable to the Pre-Settlement and Post-Settlement taluks i.e., taluks in which the Settlement Department had not started registration enquiries and those in which Settlement pattas had been issued and the collection of the Settlement tax had been commenced.45

In the preamble to these rules, it was clearly stated that the sole object of pokkuvaravu enquiries was to find out and bring on record the names of the persons to be held liable for the payment of Sirkar revenue and that pokkuvaravu decisions would not create or

affect any title to property. Hence, it was not necessary to hold elaborate enquiries into titles but only a summary enquiry to ascertain the mutations of names to entered in the account. It was added that no hard and fast rule could be laid down regarding the nature of the enquiry required in each case. It would depend upon the nature of the contentions raised in particular cases. A few general instructions were, however, necessary and were issued in the new rules.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.