CHAPTER VI

Land Reforms under Dewan Raja Gopalachari (1907-1914) & Dewan Krishnan Nair (1914-1920)
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LAND REFORMS UNDER DEWAN RAJA GOPALACHARI (1907-1914) AND DEWAN KRISHNAN NAIR (1914-1920)

As explained in the previous chapter, the Settlement operations started in 1058 M.E. (1883 A.D.) came to a close in Makaram 1085 M.E. (1910 A.D.) throughout the State. This constitutes, therefore a distinct landmark in the history of the land reforms of the State. The period subsequent to Settlement, of which 5 years have elapsed, deserves separate treatment, which is the purpose of this chapter. Out of the 5 years covered by this chapter, four years (1086-1089) (1911-1914) belong to the regime of Dewan Rajagopalachari and the fifth comprises the first year of the Dewan Krishnan Nair’s administration. The improvements and amendments in the system of land reforms and procedure introduced during this period are explained below.

On 29th January 1910 A.D. 16th Makaram (1085 M.E), some specific instructions were issued regarding the preparation of the Kodayar water-cess account. It was laid down that the old cess on the lands should be remitted only from the date on which the collection
of the new cess would begin and not from the time the new cess was formally imposed, and that the collection of the old cess should continue till then.¹

On 1st Kumbham 1085 M.E. (1910 A.D.), the Government sanctioned the assignment of a tank *poramboke* under *Erayili* tenure in the name of the *Arachar* in lieu of a piece of old *Erayili* land registered in his name which had been acquired in connection with the Alampara-Chenkulam Kal under the Kodayar Project. It was laid down that the income to the *Arachar* from the new land to be registered as *Inam* should be equal to the income which he was getting from the old *Inam* land and that the extent of the new land need not necessarily be equal to the extent of the old land.²

It is seen from Government Order that instructions were issued in detail regarding the Settlement of the lands in the Quilon Cantonment, comprised within the *pakuthis* of Quilon, Eravipuram and Vadakkevila in the Quilon taluk.³ The following points were dealt with in the Government Order.

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¹ *Government Order Number 473 / Land Revenue, (Here-in-after referred to as G O No. / L R), dated 29th January 1910 A.D.*

² *Huzur Sadhanam, No. 822, dated 1st Kumbham 1085 M.E.*

³ *G O No. 1150 / L R, dated 19th February 1910 A.D.*
(a) that all unregistered lands, whether within or outside the revised cantonment limits, whether held by the occupants under grants made by the British Military Department or on *Kuthagai Pattom* leases sanctioned by the Settlement or Revenue Department, should be registered in the names of such occupants on *Pandara Pattom*, on recovery of a *vilayartham* amounting to 25 times the *pattom* assessment.

(b) that all unoccupied lands, other than *porambokes*, whether within or without the revised cantonment limits, which were not required for any *Sirkar* or for communal purposes should be sold by public auction, in convenient lots and registered on *Pandara Pattom* in the names of the purchasers subject to the payment of the assessment imposed.

(c) that the following rates of assessment should be adopted for the land and trees in this area.

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<tr>
<td>For dry lands</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>15 panams per acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coconut</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4 panams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arecanut</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>8 &quot;</td>
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<td>Jack</td>
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<td>4 &quot;</td>
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(d) that arrears of assessment should be levied. In recovering such arrears, allowance was to be made for the Kuthagai Pattom or thanathuchitta tax already paid by the occupants.\(^4\)

On 18\(^{th}\) March 1916 (5\(^{th}\) Minam 1085 M.E.,) the tariff rates were re-imposed, for the valuation of reserved trees on puthuvals, in respect of trees of 10 panams and above in the taluks of Quilon, Kottarakarai, Pathanapuram, Shenkottai, Kunnattur, Moovattupuzhai, Kuttanad, Alengad, Parur, Vaikam and Shertalai.\(^5\)

At a meeting held on 29\(^{th}\) March 1910 the Government resolved upon a re-survey of the Nedumangad taluk and called upon the Survey Superintendent to submit detailed proposals regarding the lines on which the re-survey work should proceed and the staff required for the purpose. It was observed that the large extension of cultivation which had taken place in the taluk during the previous 10 to 15 years, coming as it did, on the top of a defective survey and a consequently defective Settlement, had produced a state of affairs in the land records which required a re-survey. The question whether the evils might not be remedied by a temporary maintenance

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\(^4\) G O No. 719/LR, dated 30th April 1909 A.D.

staff, as in other taluks, had been considered and after considerable discussion, the conclusion was arrived at, that, in view of the magnitude of the new survey of *puthuvals* that had to be undertaken, the large amount of revision required in the old records for harmonising the new work with the old, and the large number of missing stones to be re-fixed, the work of bringing the land records of the taluk up-to-date, by any method short of a re-survey, would be impracticable.\(^6\) However, the *Sirkar* agency at *Kombay* was abolished and the work done by the agent transferred to the Devikulam Taluk Office, for which purpose an additional staff was sanctioned.\(^7\)

The prohibition to the entertainment of applications for the registry of *poramboke* and *puthuval* lands, affected by the Kodayar Project, laid down by the notification dated 3\(^{rd}\) December 1898, was cancelled.\(^8\) It was laid down that, in registering *puthuval* wet lands, the assessment calculated on a paddy basis should be converted into money at 11 *chuckrams* per *parai* for the whole of the paddy assessment.\(^9\)

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\(^6\) *G O No. 2744/ L R*, dated 29th March 1910 A.D.

\(^7\) *G O No. 3692/ L R*, dated 30th April 1910 A.D.

\(^8\) *Huzur Records, Notification No. 4880/ L R*, dated 5th May 1910 A.D.

\(^9\) *G O No. 1093/ L R*, dated 6th May 1910 A.D.
On 17th May 1910 A.D. 4th Edavam (1085 M.E.), it was directed that open belts of land round the cultivated holdings within reserved forests should be thrown open for the use only of the ryots and according to the actual requirements of each case. It was added that such lands should not be allowed to be cultivated by the adjacent landowners nor pattas issued for the same. The rights of access, already enjoyed by the ryots, to their cultivated lands within the reserves were recognised by Government.\(^\text{10}\) It was laid down that, in the registry of nirthal lands, the same procedure should be followed as in the case of puthuval lands. The minimum rate of Rs.25 per acre fixed as Tharavilai for reclamations from backwaters was extended also to reclamations from canals and rivers.\(^\text{11}\)

The holders of Kuthagai Pattom gardens in the Palliport Farm were given the option of converting their Kuthagai Pattom gardens into Pandara Pattom tenure by paying a vilayartham amounting to 10 times the Pandara Pattom assessment in 20 yearly instalments commencing from 1086 M.E. (1911 A.D.). It was added that, in case of default of payment of the yearly instalment due on any garden, the Kuthagai Pattom assessment would be re-imposed and that the

\(^{10}\) *G O No. 2836*, dated 17th May 1910 A.D.

\(^{11}\) *T G G*, dated 7th Mithunam 1085 M.E. p.903.
concession granted by the proclamation would not apply to those gardens which had been converted into Pandara Pattom before the issue of the proclamation or thaiveppu or converted gardens covered by Government Order No. 1458/Land Revenue, dated 11th February 1908 A.D.

As there was no uniformity of procedure in regard to the disposal of puthuvals within town limits, it was laid down that all occupied Sirkar lands, pending registry, in the towns of Nagercoil, Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppey and Kottayam, should be registered only on recovery of a minimum Vilayaratham of Rs. 100 per acre and that all unoccupied Sirkar should be disposed of by public auction at an upset price of rupee 100 per acre. Further the tax on all lands granted under the Coffee Land Rules was raised from 12 annas to one British Rupee per acre and the tax on all grass lands granted for homestead and farmstead from 4 annas to 5 annas per acre. It was added that these taxes would remain unaltered until the next general Revenue Settlement of the State.

12 Royal Proclamation, dated 17th June 1910 A.D.
13 TG G, dated 14th Karkadagam 1085 M.E, p.1217.
14 Royal Proclamation, dated 17th Kanni 1086 M.E, (3rd October 1910).
A detailed instructions were issued regarding the construction, repair and maintenance of irrigation works under the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072. It was laid down:

(a) That petty irrigation works should be attended to wholly by the ryots concerned and that, in case the proprietors were unable, on account of want of co-operation or other cause to do the works, the same might be done by the Sirkar and the cost therefore recovered pro rata from the lands benefited under section 16 of the Regulation.

(b) That in regard to minor irrigation works half the cost should be recovered from the ryots concerned and that after such works had been constructed or completely restored or repaired at the cost, wholly or partly of the Government, the ryots concerned should maintain them under section 13 of the Regulation.

(c) That the construction, repair and maintenance of major irrigation works would be wholly attended to by Government and the policy pursued of imposing an irrigation cess under section 18 of the Regulation as was done in respect of the Kodayar and Thalaiyar schemes.

\[15\] G O No, 2933/L R, dated 18th March 1911 A.D, (5th Minam 1086 M.E.)
The minimum rate of assessment for *puthuval* lands (dry and garden) throughout the State was fixed at 5 *Panams* per acre.\(^{16}\) The system of levying the tax known as *malavaram* and *vilameladi* on fugitive cultivation on unregistered lands at the disposal of Government was abolished.\(^{17}\) It was directed that all Government lands including *cherikals* should be dealt with under the ordinary *puthuval* rules, except such lands as might be granted for the cultivation of coffee, tea, rubber, cardamom etc., under special rules. It was further directed that unauthorised occupation of any Government *cherikal* or other Government land should be proceeded against under the Land Conservancy Regulation.\(^{18}\)

The lands in the Ambalapuzha *kandukrishi* should be dealt with in the same manner as *kandukrishi* lands in the Karthigapalli taluk in the matter of demanding security from the ryots. No security was to be insisted on in the first instance, but if a ryot failed to pay the tax in time, it was to be recovered by means of coercive steps under the Revenue Recovery Regulation and no further lease was to be given to him unless he furnished security for future tax. If he failed to furnish such security, the land was to be immediately resumed.

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\(^{16}\) *TG G*, dated 29th *Minam* 1086 M.E, p.850.

\(^{17}\) *G O No. 3427/LR*, dated 10th April 1911 A.D.

and leased to another. The policy of Government was to bring the revenue registry of alienated *kandukrishi* lands in according with actual possession by transferring registry in favour of the alienees in possession.

A set of rules was passed under Royal sanction on the 22nd August 1911 6th Chingam (1087 M.E), under the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072. By these rules-

(a) Every Tahsildar was appointed and declared an Irrigation Officer under the Regulation in respect of minor and petty irrigation works in his taluk.

(b) The distribution of water of all the petty and minor irrigation works in a taluk was placed under the control of the Tahsildar of the taluk and that of all the major works under the control of the officers of the Public Works Department.

(c) The procedure for the construction, restoration and repair of minor irrigation works under sections 8, 9, 11, and 12, for the maintenance of such works under section 13 of the Regulation and for the recovery of the cost incurred from the ryots *pro rata*, was prescribed, and

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19 *G O No. 4320/ L R*, dated 25th May 1911 A.D.

20 *TLRM*, vol.IV, p.793.
(d) Provision was made for appeals from the decisions of Tahsildars to the Division Peishkars and from the latter to Government, to be preferred within 30 days from the date of the order or decision complained against.

Some specific orders were passed on the recommendation of the Committee appointed by Government Order No. 12744/Land Revenue, dated 6th December 1910, to report on certain questions connected with the irrigation of the area commanded by the Kodayar project. The following points were mainly dealt with in this Government Order.\footnote{\textit{G O No. 323/ LR}, dated 14th December 1911 A.D.}

(a) The Public Works Department was instructed to undertake the administration of the sluices in some of the larger tanks so as to enable the Department to efficiently, control the consumption of water in them and avoid the large wastage of water which the Department had brought to notice in the distribution of water by the Puravukars under such tanks.

(b) The date for opening the reservoir and the main channels was fixed as the 1\textsuperscript{st} of June every year. The date of closing was fixed as the 15\textsuperscript{th} February tentatively. It was added
that the channels should not be kept open beyond this date (15th February) except in cases of absolute necessity and without the special sanction of Government previously obtained.

(c) In regard to "irregular conversions" conversions outside the blocks, it was directed that they should in the first instance be included in the water-cess accounts but that, should in any case it be found impracticable to supply water to any converted land, the Peishkar should apply to the Government for the remission of the cess on the land after the necessary enquiry.

Some specific instructions were issued regarding the treatment of Thiruppuvaram charged on kandukrishi lands in favour of (a) private individuals or institutions, (b) Sripandaravagai, (c) Sripadam, and (d) Sirkar institutions.\textsuperscript{22} The minimum rate of tharavilai for wet lands reclaimed from the Vembanad lake was reduced from Rs. 25 to Rs. 15 per acre.\textsuperscript{23} It was directed that in every case in which the tharavilai due from a single registry-holder exceeded Rs. 1,000, it should be levied in five equal yearly instalments.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22} G O No. 10441/LR, dated 17th January 1912 A.D.
\textsuperscript{23} G O No. 2310/LR, dated 19th February 1912 A.D.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
It was added that the concessions granted by this Government Order would not apply to the tharavilai on the lands granted under the Puthuval Rules before the 1st Chingam 1088 M.E, or to the tharavilai on the lands to be granted for the cultivation of coffee, tea, rubber etc., under special rules, in which case the number and nature of the instalments in which the tharavilai should be levied would be determined according to the merits of each case. 25

It was laid down that the rates below the 8th tharam as per Settlement schedule of rates had become obsolete as the minimum rate of assessment had been fixed as five Panam per acre for dry and garden lands throughout the State. In regard to lands in the towns under the Town Improvement Committees, a special rate of assessment of 35 Panams per acre was fixed. 26

By a Government Order No. 13024/Land Revenue, dated 4th December 1912 A.D. 19th Vrischigam (1088 M.E.), some special concessions were granted in regard to the registry of lands in the Neyyattinkari taluk in the names of the Pulayas in view to remedy the special disabilities which they were labouring under in the matter of obtaining lands for habitation. It was directed that an area of 500 acres

26 Ibid, dated 28th Minam 1087 M.E, P.879.
in the Vilappil Pakuthi should be set apart for this purpose and divided into one acre bits for registry in the names of such of the Pulayas as agreed to settle on the land. The tharavilai was remitted as a special concession. But if any of the lands were to be alienated by the Pulayas, the Government reserved to themselves the power to levy the full tharavilai due under the rules. No special concession was considered necessary in the matter of the assessment on the land.

By Government Order No. 13027/Land Revenue, dated 6th December 1912 A.D. 21st Vrischigam (1088 M.E.), the instructions laid down in Government Order No. 11859/Land Revenue, dated 15th September 1908 A.D, on the question of thiruppuvaram were partly revised, in view to bring them into accord with the latest decisions of the High Court. It was laid down that the right of all thiruppu holders to collect their varam at the Pre-Settlement rates would be recognised by the Government. In cases in which the Settlement Department had reduced the thiruppuvaram, the varam at the Pre-Settlement rate was to be allowed to the thiruppu holder, the necessary reduction (to make up the full amount of the Pre-Settlement rate was to be allowed to the thiruppu holder), the necessary reduction (to make up the full amount of the Pre-Settlement varam) being made in the iruppukaram or the

27 G O No. 13024/LR, dated 24th December 1912 A.D.
net demand due to the *Sirkar*. Where the Settlement *pattom* was less than the Pre-Settlement *varam*, the whole of the Settlement *pattom* was to be given to the *thiruppu* holder and he was also to be given the balance, i.e., the difference between the Pre-Settlement *varam* and the Settlement *pattom* by the Government until the next Revenue Settlement of the State.

It was further laid down that, in regard to the *varam* charged on Service *Inam* lands, if a Service *Inam* holder made regular default in the payment of the *varam* charged on the land, the same would be resumed from the latter and given over to some other who might be prepared to pay the *varam* regularly and also to perform the allotted service.

It was directed that the *karampethippu* procedure should be followed in respect of all alienations of Jenmam land whether such alienations took place before or after the Settlement and that the *vilatharam* or commutation rate should be calculated at 11 chuckrams per *parai* for the whole of the paddy assessment and arrears recovered for a period not exceeding 5 years.

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28 *G O No. 13027/LR*, dated 6th December 1912 A.D.
30 *G O No. 4568/LR*, dated 16th April 1913 A.D.
By a Royal Proclamation dated 11th May 1913 A.D 29th Medam (1088 M.E.,), it was laid down that in respect of karanma services in Sirkar Devaswams, if owing to incompetency, negligence or other cause, the karanma service was not being properly and regularly performed or if any alienation of the karanma service or of the property, thiruppuvaram or other emolument attached thereto, had been effected by the karanma holder or by any member or members of the karanma family, it was open to Government to suspend, remove, determine, cancel, or deal with in any other manner the karanma right of the family to the service. The decision of Government in such matters was final and no action would lie in any Court against such decision.31

By a notification No. 5914/Land Revenue dated 6th June 1913 A.D 24th Edavam (1088 M.E.,), the rules regarding the assessment on cardamom gardens and lands granted for wet and dry cultivation within the Cardamom Hills and Periyar Reserves (Clause X of the Revised Rules dated 12th August 1905 A.D) were cancelled. It was directed that the assignment of lands for wet and dry cultivation within the Cardamom Hills and Periyar Reserves should be regulated by the ordinary Puthuval Rules.32

31 Royal Proclamation, dated 11th May 1913 A.D.
It was declared that, in accordance with past usage, the ryots of Thovalai, Agastiswaram, Eraniel and Kalkulam taluks were exempted from the liability to pay half the cost on account of minor irrigation works in their taluks. It was further directed that all minor irrigation works within the area commanded by the Kodayar Project should be treated as major.  

It was directed that escheat and *pakuthi* lands which were in the possession of the *pakuthi* or escheated persons and hence at the absolute disposal of Government, should be treated exactly like *puthuval* lands and the assessment fixed as under:–

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<td>Dry lands</td>
<td>a minimum rate of 5 <em>Panams</em> per acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden lands</td>
<td>tree assessment according to the nature and number of the bearing trees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wet lands</td>
<td>wet assessment not less than the 10th <em>tharam</em>.</td>
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Orders were passed on the statements received from the Division *Peishkars* regarding the separation of *Devaswam* land revenue from the *Sirkar* land revenue. On examination of the *Pakuthiwar’s* statements, the net demand on the *Sirkar Devaswam* lands was

33 *G O No. 6757/LR*, dated 22nd June 1913 A.D.
34 *G O No. 6779/LR*, dated 28th June 1913 A.D.
provisionally fixed at Rs.3,85,601-22 chuckrams and it was ordered that no alteration in this figure should be made except with the previous sanction of Government.\(^{35}\) It was further directed that the *pattas* and *thandaper* for the *Devaswam* lands should be separated from the *pattas* and *thandaper* for the *Sirkar* lands.

In regard to the Rajabhogam, it was ordered that the Government would refrain, as a special case and for the time being, from charging any Rajabhogam on the *Devaswam* lands.\(^{36}\) It was also ordered that the lands under the Main Left Bank Channel of the Kodayar Project should be explicitly excluded from the *ayacut* which was fixed as beginning at the Puthen Dam.\(^{37}\) It was further directed that the system of levying water cess on lands benefited only by percolation should be discontinued.\(^{38}\)

It was directed that the water cess on dry lands converted into wet under the Kodayar Project, once levied, should not be remitted in subsequent years for the reason that no paddy was grown at the time.\(^{39}\)

By Government Order No. 13662/Land Revenue dated 12\(^{th}\) December

\(^{35}\) *G O No. 9033/LR*, dated 9th August 1913 A.D.

\(^{36}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{37}\) *G O No. 9129/LR*, dated 14th August 1913 A.D.

\(^{38}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{39}\) *Huzur sadhanam No. 10447*, dated 18th September 1913 A.D.
1913 A.D 27th Vrischigam (1080 M.E.) It was directed that in cases in which the tharavilai due on lands registered under the puthuval rules was allowed to be paid in instalments the registry should be made on the following condition, viz- "should there be any default in the payment of any instalment of the tharavilai, the Government reserve to themselves the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation, and the registry holder will also forfeit any claim to the instalments of tharavilai already paid or to the cost of improvements, if any, already effected".40

It was further directed that no registry under the puthuval rules should ordinarily be made except in the names of single individuals or of registered companies and that, if in any case a registry was given jointly to two or more people, the complete liability of each of them for the tharavilai and assessment due on the entire area should be made clear.41

It is made mention in a Government Order No. 70 / Land Revenue dated 24th December 1913 10th Dhanu (1089 M.E), that some special orders were passed in regard to the disposal of puthuval applications in the Chengannur taluk and a temporary staff was

40 G O No. 13662/LR, dated 12th December 1913 A.D.
41 T G G, dated 9th Dhanu 1089 M.E, p.2174.
sanctioned for the purpose. In this connection a minimum *tharavilai* of Rs.15 per acre and a minimum assessment of one rupee per acre were fixed for lands in the *Pakuthis* of Rani and Kumpalazha in the Chengannur taluk. It was added that in cases in which the *tharavilai* due by a single applicant exceeded Rs.500, it might be allowed to be paid in ten equal yearly instalments and where the amount was Rs.500 or less but above one hundred, in five equal yearly instalments. This special concession was allowed only to the natives of Travancore.

It was further directed that in every case in which the *tharavilai* was allowed to be paid in instalments, the registry would be subject to the following condition, viz, that where the registry holder defaulted to pay any instalment of the *tharavilai*, Government would have the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation and that the registry holder would also forfeit any claim to the instalments of *tharavilai* already paid or to the cost of improvements already effected.

It was further declared that the minimum rates of *tharavilai* and assessment specified in this Government Order and the special concessions granted to natives of Travancore were

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42 *G O No. 70/LR*, dated 24th December 1913 A.D.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.
applicable also to the *puthuvals* in the *pakuthis* of Ezhumattur in Thiruvella taluk and Manimalai in Peermade taluk.\(^{45}\)

The minimum rates of *tharavilai* were fixed as follows for the waste lands in the Nedumangad taluk available for registry under the *puthuval* Rules:\(^{46}\)

1. In the case of lands lying within a distance of ten miles from the town of Trivandrum-Rs.10 per acre.

2. In the case of lands lying outside the ten miles limit from the town of Trivandrum-Rs.5 per acre.

3. Minimum assessment of one rupee per acre irrespective of whether the lands were situated within or without the ten mile limit from the town of Trivandrum.

4. It was further directed that where the *tharavilai* due by a single applicant exceeded Rs. 500, it might be allowed to be paid in ten equal yearly instalments, and where the amount was Rs. 500 or less but above Rs.100, in five equal yearly instalments. This special concession was allowed only to the natives of Travancore.\(^{47}\)

\(^{45}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{46}\) *GO No. 537/LR*, dated 14th January 1914 A.D.

\(^{47}\) *Ibid.*
In every ease in which tharavilai was allowed to be paid in instalments, the registry was to be subject to the following condition, viz., that where the registry holder defaulted to pay any instalment of the tharavilai the Government had the right to cancel the registry and evict the occupant under the Land Conservancy Regulation and that the registry holder would also forfeit any claim to the instalments of tharavilai already paid or to the cost of improvements, if any, already effected.  \(^4\)

To sum of Dewan Rajagopalachari began to encourage the agriculturists with a inauguration of a Department of Agriculture in the year 1908. After the establishment of the department he spread new ideas among agriculturists and organised agricultural exhibitions, seeds and manure were distributed fee of cost. The coconut farm was saved by careful research from the diseases to which they were then subjected. The Vembanad reclamation scheme was carried on with vigour security of tenure was given to the land-lords of Pallipuram, since the days of Sir T. Madhava Rao. When these lands were taken over by the Government, they were leased out to tenants on Kuthaga Pattom basis these lands were

\(^4\) TG G, dated 7th Makaram 1089 M.E, p.289.
now registered as private holdings in the name on the tenants who helped them. Lands were registered in the Cardamon Hills for enterprising people.

Like Rajagopalachari, Dewan Krishnan Nair also devoted much attention to promoting agricultural enterprise in the State. The survey department reorganised more efficient measures were taken to prevent encroachment on Government land. Agricultural loans were given to cultivators in South Travancore, and this led to an increase of the area of wet-lands under cultivation. All this brought in a good revenue to the State.