

APPENDIX No. 19.

LETTER from Lieut. Colonel Barry Close, to Captain Alexander Read, Superintendent of the Revenues in the Barahmah Country, dated 31st March 1792.

Sir,

LORD Cornwallis conceiving it doubtful whether it may be altogether convenient for the Madras government to appoint collectors immediately, for the management of the ceded countries, has formed the intention of having them placed under your immediate charge, not only from the experience you have had in that branch of business, but from the convenience that attends the measure, on account of your being already desired to march with the necessary force, and take possession of the posts ceded in the Baramahl.

Letter from Lieut. Col. B. Close, of 31 March 1792.

In pursuance therefore of the intention above mentioned, his lordship hereby nominates you to be collector and manager, on the part of the Honourable Company, of all the revenue concerns in the ceded districts, contained in the Barahmah and the Salem country, including the Namcul, from the 16th day of the present month, which is the date of the treaty of peace concluded with the nabob Tippoo Suldaun, until the end of the present year, when it is proposed that collectors shall be appointed by government for the said concerns, from the list of civil servants.

When you proceed to the Barahmah therefore, agreeably to former instructions, his lordship wishes you to be prepared and provided to enter on the office in the best manner possible, prepared with such authentic information as can be gathered together, respecting the real annual produce of the districts that are to come under your management:—a point that you must spare no pains to ascertain with precision, and without delay; and provided with such number of accountants and subordinate instruments from amongst the natives, on whose integrity you can place reliance, as the effectual execution of your arrangements may require.

The officers attached to you at present as assistants, his lordship is in hopes will contribute largely to your aid. However, as you will have concerns of a wide extent to arrange and settle, his lordship proposes to send you from head quarters, to be employed under your directions in the revenue branch, Lieutenant William Macleod, whose merits are not unknown to you, and who, from having long maintained a constant intercourse with the natives, in which he has become familiar with their languages, customs and manners, promises to afford you the fullest satisfaction.

In nominating you to an office of such high trust and importance, and so difficult to execute with propriety and success, as that now conferred upon you, his lordship thinks it unnecessary to advert to the reliance he places in your zeal, integrity and abilities; the ready selection he has made of you on the present occasion, being a sufficient proof of the opinion he entertains of you, in those respects.

In entering upon your charge however, he desires you will hold it constantly in view, as a leading principle never to be departed from, that neither the Company nor Tippoo Suldaun has any claim on the ceded countries, for arrears of any denomination, connected with any period previous to the 16th of the present month, the date of the treaty of peace as afore-mentioned; and his lordship is the more particular in marking this circumstance to you, from thinking

202 APPENDIX TO FIFTH REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE

it not improbable but since that date, persons subject to Tippoo's government may have driven off, or shown themselves desirous of driving off, cattle or inhabitants, or removing the implements of husbandry from the ceded districts.

Such a conduct on their parts, his lordship wishes me to intimate, it must be your particular, care to ascertain and resist; referring cases of doubt or difficulty to the head quarters or to government.

Under the change of government that is occasioned by the cession, it is but natural that the inhabitants should be for a time, impressed with doubts and fears.

On similar occasions amongst the native governments, the old master generally exacts what rapacity suggests, and the new one, seldom fails to insist, with a rigorous hand, on the discharge of long arrears. The villagers therefore, ignorant of the just and moderate intentions of the English government towards them, may from apprehension, be disposed to abandon their habitations, and keep aloof amongst the hills, to the great detriment of the districts, till they can inspect the system of your management, and receive encouragement from it, to draw them from their retreats; while, on the other hand, some of the poorer class of inhabitants, may be willing to subject themselves to imposition, rather than fly their homes.

On these accounts, his lordship enjoins you to use the earliest and most effectual means possible, to inspire the inhabitants at large, and particularly the villagers, with an adequate confidence in the English government, giving them such explanations yourself, or through your European assistants, as may tend to remove every ground of apprehension on the above points; and taking every precaution that none of your native followers may avail themselves of the diffidence and timidity of the villager, to subject him to the payment of sinister demands [743]

These matters of regulation, his lordship has little doubt, your own experience would have suggested to you. However, his solicitude for the welfare and improvement of our new acquisitions, in which the credit of government and the interest of the company are so materially concerned, would not permit him to refrain from having them detailed.

Major Cuppage is directed to receive charge of the posts ceded in the Salem and Namcul districts; and you will be informed when he gets possession of them, that you may proceed to settle those districts accordingly.

To the above, his lordship has at present, little to add. He has directed me to repeat his former instructions to you, to correspond with government and head quarters on every material circumstance that may occur connected with your employments; and to subjoin his hopes, that from your experience, and the success that has attended your arrangements and exertions in the revenue branch: your knowledge of the languages; and the qualifications of your European assistants, you will not only be able to regulate a just and effectual system of revenue management for the districts under your charge, but that principles of improvement may be derived from your regulations hereafter, for the better management of other countries subject to the company's government.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Head Quarters,
Camp near Buckley, 31st March 1792.

B. Close,

Adj. Genl. to the Army.

EXTRACT of Letter from Governor General to Court of Directors ;
dated 2d May 1792.

Important as our late acquisitions are, in every point of view, I am exceedingly anxious that no means should be omitted to introduce and establish a system for their management, which shall be calculated to promote the happiness of the people, and to secure to the company all the substantial advantages of their revenue and commerce.

Being well acquainted with Sir Charles Oakeley's public spirit and zeal for your service, I know that I can depend upon him for doing his utmost to fulfil my wishes and expectations ; but I cannot conceal from you, that from many circumstances which have come under my own observation, as well as from the present wretched state of the company's Jaghire, and of the Northern Circars, that have been so long under the management of the government of Fort St. George, I am not without my apprehensions of his meeting with some difficulty in finding gentlemen amongst the company's civil servants at that presidency, possessed of all the qualifications that could be wished for discharging properly the duties of collectors and managers of the newly acquired countries that will be annexed to their territorial possessions. I must however, in justice to the civil servants at Madras declare that those apprehensions are not founded upon my entertaining any doubts that a number of them, are men of great private honour and good talents. But unluckily, few of them are acquainted with the country languages, and are therefore obliged, both from habit and necessity, to allow the management of their official, as well as their own private business, to fall into the hands of dubashes, a description of people in the Carnatic, who, with very few exceptions, are calculated for being the most cruel instruments of rapine and extortion in the hands of unprincipled masters, and even of rendering (by the artifices and the ascendancy that they acquire over men who are forced to depend implicitly upon them for transacting their business) the most upright and humane intentions on the part of masters of different characters, perfectly useless to the interests of the company, and to the unfortunate natives who happen to be within the reach of their power or influence.

I am sorry to say, that as your Bombay servants have had no experience in the management of revenue, or in superintending the administration of justice amongst the natives in the country, my expectations are still less sanguine that gentlemen will be found at that presidency, properly qualified to manage to advantage our newly acquired possessions on the coast of Malabar. But I can rely upon General Abercromby for selecting men, on whose honour and good intentions he can depend ; and who at the same time, possess the greatest share of the other necessary qualifications. [744]
