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GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
ABSTRACT.

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Forest lands leased for Food production - collection of lease rent orders issued.

Agriculture & Rural Development Department
G.O. Rt. 284/66/Agri. Dated Trivandrum 5-2-1966

- 1. Read 1. Recommendation No. 48 contained in the Second Report of the Public Accounts Committee 1961-62
- 2. G.O.P. 98/Agri. dated 30-1-1963
- 3. D.O. No. OA2/4/10-47/61-62/104 dated 29-7-64 from the Deputy Accountant General (GAD)
- 4. From the Chief Conservator of Forests letter No. A2-15613/62 dated 19-9-64, 63-41601/63 dated 23-10-64 and D6.30665/64 dated 2-11-65.
- 5. From the Secretary, Board of Revenue letters No. K. Dis. 27331/6 LR/A6. dated 13-12-65 and K. Dis. 65137/64/LR dated 29-12-1965.

1. The Public Accounts Committee in its second report for 1961-62 recommended that the collection of arrears of lease rent from the lessees of forest lands should be expedited and that the lease registers should be brought up to date and the D.C.B. statements prepared urgently. In the inspection report of the Trichur Forest Division forwarded to Government by the Deputy Accountant General (GAD) with his letter read as 3 paper above also it was pointed out that the lease register of the Division was not complete and up to date and that no D.C.B. statements had been prepared. It was also pointed out in the inspection report that leases were sanctioned from periods as early as 1117 M.S. without actual survey and demarcation of the land and without executing agreements. The Deputy Accountant General, therefore pointed out the necessity for settling the lease holding of each occupant urgently as the dues would become irrecoverable with the efflux of time.

2. The question was discussed at the meeting of the Public Accounts Committee held on 16-5-1964. The Committee was of the view that the Revenue Department would not be able to collect the dues unless the Forest Department furnished details of occupants, area of each plot, amount of lease rent due, amount collected, balance outstanding against each lessee or occupant etc. and that additional staff, if any required by the Forest Department to collect the above details should be sanctioned after getting detailed proposals from the Chief Conservator of Forests. The Public Accounts Committee also wanted to impress the Revenue Department on the imperative need in pursuing action in the matter of collection of arrears from the occupants and to furnish them with a detailed plan of operations regarding the survey and demarcation of boundaries of each holding, names of occupants, amounts of lease rent due, amount collected and balance outstanding etc. Government accordingly called for detailed proposals in the matter from the Chief Conservator of Forests and the Board of Revenue.

3. The Chief Conservator of Forests has reported that it is not possible for the forest department now to bear the responsibility for preparing the D.C.B. statements for lands leased out under the Grow More Food scheme from 1942. He has explained that it was at a time of acute food scarcity, i.e. during World War II, that Government decided to release forest lands for cultivation under the G.M.F. Scheme. As the lands had to be made available for cultivation immediately, the areas were allotted even before proper survey and demarcation. It is also

stated that the lands were not allotted to individuals, but to the of various associations, committees etc. and that the self styled later disappeared and the lands passed on to individuals and changed frequently. Instances of encroachments were also numerous. So it is possible to find out who enjoyed which plot at a given time and for what period each plot had been in the possession of a particular individual. As the lands have been transferred or ordered to be transferred to the Revenue Department the Chief Conservator of Forests has suggested that the Revenue Department may collect the arrears from the present occupants. The Board of Revenue has however reported that it is not possible for the Revenue Department to collect the arrears in the absence of records to show who owes and how much. They have also pointed out that once the lands are transferred to the Revenue Department they have to be treated just as any other Government land assignable and assignment will be subject to the provisions of the Land Assignment Act and rules. They have suggested that the entire dues may be written off as being noncollectable and the loss recovered from the officers responsible if that is possible.

4. The whole question was considered in detail at a conference held in the Secretariat on 10-1-66 in which the Agricultural Production Commissioner, additional Secretary (Revenue) Secretary Board of Revenue, Joint Secretary (Agriculture) and the Chief Conservator of Forests were present. In pursuance of the decisions taken at the above conference Government are pleased to issue the following orders.
- i. Demarcation of forest boundaries, areas to be preserved as forests and areas to be handed over to the Revenue Department for assignment should be completed at once giving top priority to this work.
 - ii. Areas falling outside those to be preserved as Reserved Forest i.e. areas which can be handed over to the Revenue Department for assignment, should be disreserved and handed over to the Revenue Department with the least possible delay.
 - iii. Wherever this procedure is completed, steps will be taken immediately for assignment under the Land Assignment Rules.

5. The question relating to the collection of arrears of lease rent is under the consideration of Government and orders at this point will issue separately.

By order of the Governor
E.R. Sukumaran Nair,
Jt. Secretary to Govt.

Undt. on D6.26870/64 dated 26-2/12-4-66
Copy to Conservator of Forests, Chalakudy, Quilon
Kozhikode and all D.F.Os.
sd/. For Chief Conservator of Forests.

Undt. on G1-8425/66 dated 6-6-1966
Copy communicated to sections, TH, ML ET, A1, A2,
and H.A. and G2.
Copy to stock file and Circular file book.
Copy to Conservator's personal file.

Conservator's Office,
Chalakudy.
B. S. S. S.
For Conservator of Forests.

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