M.R.O. 1—30,000—16-10-22.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1388 Press ~~Mis.~~

286-287

296-29

Dated 27.9.1865 ~~19~~ .

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
27th September 1865.

No. 296. Read the following letter from W. FRASER, Esq., C. E., Special Executive Engineer, to Colonel C. A. ORR, R. E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 12th September 1865, No. 38.

I have read, in the *Times* of this morning, the Proceedings of the Madras Government on *the sanitary condition of Coimbatore.* As the project therein alluded to was designed, and partially executed by me, and as I believe that full information regarding it was not before the Government when their order was passed, I have the honor to request that they will be kind enough to excuse my reviving the question, and submitting, for their information, the following remarks:—

I have none of the papers connected with this project, and my statements are therefore from memory; but there were several Government orders passed about it, and a reference to those will explain fully the action taken by Government in the matter.

2. The importance, in a sanitary and commercial point of view, of draining the swamp about Coimbatore was so evident, that, very soon after I got charge of the District, I made arrangements for including the estimate for the necessary works in the next Budget; but, on consulting the Collector, Mr. E. B. Thomas, I found him so decidedly opposed to the scheme, that, in deference to his wishes, I abandoned it.

On the occasion of the visit of His Excellency Sir Charles Trevelyan, he, (accompanied by Mr. Thomas, Dr. Porteous, and me) drove along the margin of the tank, when His Excellency noticed its filthy condition, and the abominable stench which arose from it. He at once called the Collector's and my attention to it, and blamed us both, for having allowed the place to remain in such a disgraceful condition. I explained how it could be drained, and His Excellency ordered the plans to be prepared.

3. We were then going to the Jail to see the custody of the convicts handed over to the new Police. A discussion arose as to how the convicts were to be employed, the Superintendent of Police objecting to their being broken up into small parties and scattered over the station as they then were. His Excellency suggested that they might be employed on the drainage of the swamp, and after a rather unpleasant discussion with the Collector, who, up to that time had had the employment of the convicts, I was directed, much against my own wishes, to take them in hands, and employ them on that work immediately:—

I have to apologize for the length of this statement as to the origin of the work. My reasons for making it are that a very different and incorrect one has been given, and because I believe that a very useful public work was stopped in consequence of the personal feeling with which it had, very improperly, been connected.

The works were pushed forward until the outfall was secured, and a new Kalingula built; but they were stopped on my leaving the District, and the convicts were again placed under the orders of the Collector.

4. Mr. Grant in his letter, No. 86, dated 18th July 1865, says "I cannot "help thinking that the evil effects of the tank, in a sanitary point of view, has been "over estimated." * * "Mr. Fraser's original project will, I feel convinced, cost "a large sum of money in actual outlay, and, if I am not much mistaken, in a remis-

" sion of assessment on wet lands, become unprofitable for want of water, the " result of improvements."

That Mr. Grant is mistaken on all these points, I have no doubt whatever ; and my opinion is formed on a thorough knowledge of the place, and a careful consideration of what should, and could readily, be done.

As regards the sanitary condition of that portion of the Native Town which adjoins the tank, I would only say that no one who had walked through it at any time, during several months of the year, would say that its filthy and unhealthy condition could be over-estimated ; and I know that the opinion of the Medical Officers of my time was that cholera very rarely was absent from that locality.

On this point, however, I would refer to Dr. Porteous and Dr. Cornish, both of whom lived for years at Coimbatore, and know the place well.

5. The completion of the work, as designed by me, need cost but little in actual outlay, as nearly the whole might be done by the convicts, as there could be no more convenient work to employ them on.

Before the works were stopped, the most expensive part of the drain had been excavated, and an outfall of 12 feet secured by carrying the drainage channel under one of the Kalingulas* ; thus securing the perfect drainage of the lowest parts of the town.

With the exception of a culvert across the Polachy Road, the rest of the work would consist of excavation in earth and loose rock, forming the bund, and cutting some drains from the main one to the low parts of the town.

6. The area of the tanks is about 500 cawnies, and about one-half of this is very shallow, varying in depth from 18 inches to nothing, when the water is highest. This shallow part was proposed to be reclaimed, and as the soil was of the richest description, the Tahsildar (who had walked over the ground with me several times) valued it at a minimum of 400 Rupees a cawny. I know that, at that time, waste land in the neighbourhood of Coimbatore (not nearly so rich as that proposed to be reclaimed) sold at auction for 400 Rupees a cawny. Of the reclaimed land, probably 150 cawnies would have sold at that price ; the remainder was not so valuable, and a portion of it was proposed to be kept for public purposes.

I believe that the value of land near Coimbatore has greatly increased since that valuation was made, and that the proceeds of the sale of the land would not only re-pay the cost of the works, but leave a handsome balance beside. But if even the sale of the lands only met the cost of the works, will any one say it were better to keep them in their present filthy state, or to convert them into fruitful and healthful gardens.

7. The remarks of Mr. Grant regarding the supposed remission of assessment, from want of water, lead me to infer that he has never read the papers connected with the subject.

The new bund was proposed to be run where the depth was about 18 inches, from which line to the margin of the tank the water shoals to nothing, thus making the average depth of the portion cut off the tank about 9 inches.

I proposed to compensate for this by raising the remainder of the tank 12 inches, and actually re-built the old Kalingula 12 inches higher than it had been.

* Note.—By a simple arrangement, which has since been patented by another officer of the Department Public Works.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
27th September 1865.

As the works could in no way interfere with the supply channel, and as rather more than one half the area of the tank would remain, and be raised 12 inches above its former level, the quantity of water would be increased rather than diminished, especially as the loss due to evaporation would be diminished one-half.

These facts dispose of this part of the question thoroughly, as there can be no loss of assessment where there is no loss of water.

8. I have deemed it my duty to lay this statement of facts regarding this project before the Government, as I sincerely believe it to be a most useful work, and one that should be undertaken, the more especially as it is singularly well adapted for the employment of convicts.

A general plan, sundry sketches, and a full Memorandum of what was proposed to be done, were given to my successor, Captain Goddard.

Transferred to the Judicial Department, with reference to the Order in that Department, No. 1190, dated 29th August 1865.

FORT SAINT GEORGE, (Signed) J. S. STEWART, Major, R. E.,
16*th September* 1865. *Under Secy. to Govt., P. W. D.*

No. 297. ORDER THEREON, 27th September 1865, No. 1388.

The Government consider it desirable to obtain further information as to this project before it is definitively abandoned, as proposed in Proceedings, dated 29th August 1865, Judicial Department, No. 1190.

2. They desire, therefore, that the Superintending Engineer may be required to submit a full report on the subject, and to forward, with the report, the plan and papers made over to Captain Goddard by Mr. Fraser.

3. The Collector will also be required to state what will be the probable loss of revenue by the work in his opinion, and on what data he bases his estimate.

4. The opinions of Drs. Porteous, Cornish, and the present Zillah Surgeon will be obtained as to the effect of the tank on the health of the town in its present state, and as to the expediency of dealing with it in the manner proposed.

(True Extract).

Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Public Works Department.
,, Revenue Department.
Principal Inspector General, Medical Department.

Exd, J. H. Burns.

15 Apr 1865

My Dear Sir

I shall be most
happy if you will
be good enough
to submit this
letter to His Excellency
when he leaves
Madras—

As he asks

Judicial Department

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No 1934.

From

The N. Fraser Esqr. C.E.
Special Executive Engineer
Dated 12th September 1865.

For Orders

I think that we should have more information in respect to this project —

I would ask for a report on it from the SE Col Walker - The Col. should also state what will be the probable loss of revenue if the work be opened. Toll and on what data calculated. Do Portions - Commissioner and the present Chief Surveyor might be asked for their opinion on the effect of the trade

Let us have the Plans - & full memorandum as handed to Goldsmid - with Col Walker's remarks thereon

Mr Pycroft

Jean Thompson Commissioner
has written stating
that apprehensions
of danger from the plans
alluded to - which
were sent into enquiry
him more than
help our town
your faithfully
N Fraser
Colonel

Rec'd 27 Sept 1865 Dept 1865 Department
225. Medical
From No 3549
W. Fraser Esqr C.E.
Special Exec Engineer
To
Colonel C.A. Orr R.E.
Secretary to Govt
P.W.D.

Dated 12th Sept 1865
Rec'd 16th Sept 1865
Rec'd 18
No 1984
No 38

Submitting certain remarks on drainage of the swamps about Coimbatore

W. Fraser
With an Order

Transferred to the Judicial Dept with reference to the order in that Department No 1190 dated 29 August 1865.

H. Maxwell
Major - RE
Under Secretary to Govt

P.W. Dept -
Fort St George -
16 Sept 1865

286-287 296-297.

Rec'd 27th September 1865 - No 1388.

The Govt. consider it desirable to obtain further information as to this project before it is definitively abandoned as proposed in Govt. Order dated 29 August 1865 Jud. Dept. No 1190.

They therefore direct that the Superintending Engineer be required to submit a full report on the subject. stating with the utmost detail. & forwarding with the report the plans & papers now under the Superintendence of Capt. Goddard by Mr. Fraser.

The Govt. will also be glad if the Superintending Engineer will state what portion of the work in his opinion can be executed with the funds he takes his estimate -

The opinions &

the quantity of water would be increased rather than diminished, especially as the loss due to evaporation would be diminished one half:-

These facts dispose of this part of the question thoroughly, as there can be no loss of assessment where there is no loss of water.-

8. I have deemed it my duty to lay this statement of facts regarding this project before the Government as I sincerely believe it to be a most useful work and one that should be undertaken; the more especially as it is singularly well adapted for the employment of Convicts:-

A general Plan, Sundry Sketches, and a full Memorandum of what was proposed to be done, were given to my successor Captain Goddard.-

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obt Servt:

William Fraser CE

Spl Exr: Convicts