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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2706

Press
Mis.

593-594

Dated

27-8-1866

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
27th August 1866.*

No. 593. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Revenue Department:—

Communicating paragraphs 10 to 13 of a letter
from the Collector of Madura, suggesting the
early commencement of the scheme for divert-
ing the waters of the Perryaur river, &c., into
the Madura District. (Here enter 20th August 1866, No. 2,146.)

No. 594. ORDER THEREON, 27th August 1866, No. 2,706.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 88.

1. Communicated to the Superin-
tending Engineer of the 8th Division.
2. The Government observe with

reference to the remarks contained in paragraphs 10 to 13 of the Collector's letter, that
in their Orders of the 22nd March last, No. 921, they approved of Captain Payne
continuing his investigation of the Perryaur project in June, and that in G. O.
No. 1,919, dated the 20th idem, a sum of Rupees 500 was allotted to meet incidental
expenses. Captain Prendergast will state what action has been taken on those orders,
and when the Government may expect to receive Captain Payne's report.
(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division.
„ Revenue Department.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

— none was action

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
20th August 1866.*

No. 500. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 10th August 1866, No. 5,530.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Madura, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 6th August 1866, No. 253 :—

1. I have the honor to report that, since writing my letter, No. 204, dated the 2nd July, some rain has fallen on the Palany Hills, but not sufficient to benefit the crops growing on the wet lands about the foot of the hills, which have, I hear, in consequence failed to a considerable extent, especially about Percakolam; other wet lands round the hills have not been cultivated to any extent for want of water.

2. The wet lands at the head of the Cumbum valley, watered by the Soorilyaur, which is influenced by the south-west monsoon, have been fully cultivated; the crops are in good order, and will be reaped in the end of September; the extent of this cultivation may be about 8,000 acres.

3. In the Madura Talook, there are about 2,500 acres of paddy cultivation, coming on under the two large anicuts across the Viga, and under channels led off that river, which crops are doing well, and will be cut about September.

4. Last year was not a favorable year; this year there has been up to this time only 25,358 acres of wet cultivation undertaken against 45,083 undertaken last year, being a decrease of 19,725 acres. Of the above 25,358 acres, about half may be under rice cultivation, the rest is taken up with the cultivation of betel and plantain gardens, cocoanut topes, cholium and cussai crops, grown by the aid of water raised from wells sunk in the paddy fields and banks of the rivers; little of the produce of the two latter crops will reach the markets, so that on the whole, there is no hope of any considerable quantity of paddy being produced in the District before March next, and then only, providing the north-east monsoon rains do not again fail.

5. Dry grain has been sown to some extent, but the crops have dried up in some places, and in others are languishing and will be lost, if rain does not soon fall. Last year up to date 64,148 acres were sown against 58,525 this year, but this latter item does not shew the real state of the case, because in the last item is included a very extensive acreage of garden lands under old wells recently transferred to the head of dry cultivation. These dry crops, if saved, cannot be harvested before December.

6. The garden cultivation is 1,395 acres cultivated, against 14,306 cultivated last year; the cause of the decrease arises partly for the reasons given above, and partly owing to failure of water in the wells.

7. Pasture has failed, and the cattle are wasting in many places, though up to this time, there has been no very great mortality amongst them.

8. From the Percakolam Talook, a very active export of grain is going on towards Palany, Dindigul, and the Coimbatore District, which has raised prices greatly in that Talook. Grain is being imported by sea for use in the Zemindarics of Ramnad and Shevagungah, where there is a great deal of distress amongst many of the people. Very little grain is now being imported from Trichinopoly and Tanjore, owing to the high prices prevailing there; but the markets are well

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supplied, and the people have the money to buy at the high prices. Employment is abundant and highly paid, the weavers are at work all over the District, and notwithstanding the dearness of every thing, and a considerable amount of distress, the signs of prosperity and improvement are manifest in Madura Town. In every street new substantial houses are being built, the shop-keepers are driving a good trade, and the weavers are adding at a great expense a whole new suburb to the town. I am sure there is a considerable quantity of food in store in the District, which would be brought out for sale, and that its price would fall, if rain only come down. Since October last year there has been no rain to speak of in the District.

9. There is a considerable degree of distress in parts of the District, and emigration to a large extent has occurred. I have ascertained from the Ceylon Agent that this year there arrived in the Ceylon ports from Madura District ports 44,701 people, against 33,207 last year. Steps have been taken in Madura Town and all over the District to provide funds for feeding proper objects of charity; several wealthy people have been distributing charity largely, and will continue to do so, and I have applied for sanction to expend portions of the Local Funds in Dindigul and Melur, where there is great distress, and in other places. I am urging the Tahsildars to expend the allotments in their Talooks, and have asked the Superintending Engineer to urge on the works, which his Department have to construct from the Local Funds. A large expenditure of Imperial Funds has been sanctioned for construction of a Jail and Court Houses at Madura, so that besides the expenditure by private persons, there are abundant public funds towards finding work for those able and willing to work; and I hope the local charities will afford sufficient aid to those who are not able to labor.

10. I may be excused for at this time bringing prominently forward the scheme for diverting the waters of the Periaur into the Madura District; because if that project had been carried out, we should now be in a very different position from our present one of distress and anxiety.

11. The Vyga, the main river of the District, has been for months as dry as this sheet of paper, and most of the lands dependant on it for irrigation are lying waste and baked as hard as a brick, scarcely yielding even a blade of grass, and thus they will be till the month of September or October, when freshes are expected down the Vyga, and this state of thing happens almost regularly year after year; the lands are cultivated in September, reaped in March, and lie fallow for the rest of the year, and yet it is certain that by a comparatively small expenditure, they might be made to yield a second, and, in some places, a third crop of rice.

12. The Soorilyaur, one of the chief feeders of the Vyga, rises in the south of the Cumbum valley, being fed by the streams which run down the steep sides of the Travancore ghauts. Five miles from the top of the southern ghaut, at a right angle to the Soorily, the Periaur river passes in a low valley about 1,000 feet above the Cumbum valley, making its way to the sea. The fall which is gradual from the top of the ghaut to the bed of the Periaur is 186 feet, so that a channel five miles long, with its greatest depth of cutting at one place 186 feet, would tumble the whole of the Periaur water into the Cumbum valley, and into the Soorily, and

so on into the Vyga, which dry river bed with its anicuts, channels, tanks, and fields, are already prepared to turn the water into food.

13. The water of the Periaur since June, 100 yards wide and five or six feet deep, has been rushing useless to the sea; it would have sufficed for the irrigation of some 50,000 cawnies of rice land, and the crop would be ready to cut in September; what a relief and feeling of hope and satisfaction it would give to Government and to the people at this present moment over a large part of Southern India, if it was known that a rice crop of such an extent was nearly ready for harvesting, to afford food to man and beast. The project is so manifestly beneficial that its execution should not be allowed to remain as if beyond the capabilities of the Imperial Government, which draws yearly thirty-one lacs of revenue from the Madura District; the work would be an honor to the Government, and add to its prestige, and confer an inestimable benefit on the people hereafter for ever; for it is almost certain that in the Madura District, without artificial irrigation, the land will not yield a blade of grass for about eight months in the year, though the best system of farming the most improved implements of agriculture, or best sort of manure be used. Intelligent natives cannot understand the Government not executing the work; they say, and say truly, the work is nothing to what Government has done in making railways for convenience of travelling, while this project would give food and wealth to the people, and a revenue to Government.

1. Submitted for the information of Government.
2. The Board believe that the necessary inquiries as to the practicability of the Periyar irrigation scheme are now going on by order of Government.

No. 501.

ORDER THEREON, 20th August 1866, No. 2,146.

Land Revenue.

1. The Collector will keep Government informed of the progress of cultivation in his District.
2. Paragraphs 10 to 13 of his letter will be communicated to the Department Public Works.

(True Extract.)

[Signature]
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
.. the Public Works Department.

C W B B Dep^{ty}
Pro: of Gov^t for August
No 3441
To: of the Madras Govt
in the Revenue Dept

Of 20 } August 1866
Dec 22 }

No 2146

Communicating
paras. 10 to 13 of a letter
from the collector of
Madurai suggesting
the early commence-
ment of the scheme
for directing the waters
of the Periar river
sea into the Madurai
Dist. 27.06.27. August 1866

No 593

2705
Public Works Dept: 5
No. 2706

Proceedings of the Madras Government

Under date the 27th Aug: 1866
Read the following

Proceedings of the Madras Govt
in the Revenue Dept - (H.E. No. 2146 dated 20 Aug: 1866)

Communicated to the
Superintending Engineer of
the 8th Division -

The Government observe
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6 Vol. The Supply 8-8-21 ✓
21 - Revenue Dep't ✓

Sept 28 - Augt

P.W. 1886-20 Dept
Pro: of Govt for C. S. 1/4

No 2406.

Pro: of the Madras Govt

D/24 August 1886

Proceedings
Revenue Department, re-
lation to the Early Com-
mencement of Periyar
Project, &c. Madras Dis-
trict, Communicated, &c. to
the Superintending In-
spector of the 8th Division

Asy 3. 594.