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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works DEPARTMENT.

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
19th December 1867.

No. 392. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Revenue Department:—

Sanctioning a special grant of Rupees 50,000
for the Districts of Madras and North Arcot
respectively, for employment on the construc- } (Here enter 17th December 1867, No. 3,005.)
tion of roads and the sinking of wells.

No. 393. ORDER THEREON, 19th December 1867, No. 3,928.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 63.

Communicated to the Superintend-
ing Engineer of the 4th Division.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division,

Erd. F. R. Bantleman.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
17th December 1867.*

Read the following :—

No. 322. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 14th December 1867.
Read letter from the Collector of North Arcot, dated 5th December 1867, No. 340.
Read also letter from the Acting Collector of Nellore, dated 6th December 1867,
No. 1,651.

1. The foregoing letters will be submitted for the information and orders of Government.

2. The Board are glad to observe that the season in Nellore has been unusually favorable. This is especially a subject of congratulation, as the account received from Mr. Fane of the state of the Madras District, which was submitted to Government with the Board's Proceedings, dated the 12th instant, is by no means satisfactory, and the report of Mr. Robinson, recorded above, is still more unfavorable.

3. It appears that all the Tahsildars of the North Arcot District report that the crops have perished beyond recovery over large tracts of land, that the wet crops have already suffered severely, and that the standing rice-crop is in great danger in most parts of the district. Scarcely a tank in the district has received a proper supply of water, and not one of the rivers has been in fresh. And in Palmanair and parts of the Gudiatum Talook, in the north-west of the district, the want of water, even for domestic purposes, is reported to be severely felt.

4. The Collector submits returns of the rain-fall, cultivation, and prices, giving a comparison with the similar statistics of last year at this date. As, however, the fall of rain during the latter months of 1866 was unusually copious, and as the prices were seriously affected by the severe scarcity with which the district had been visited in June, July, August, and September of that year, this comparison is not of much value. On reference to the statistics of their Office, the Board find that the average rain-fall of the district from July 1st up to the end of October is 13.19 inches, (ascertained from the actuals of five years,) whereas in the present year only 11.94 inches had fallen up to the same date, or a little less than half the average annual district rain-fall which is 23.43 inches, ascertained from the details of five years: The average cultivation, arrived at in the same manner, is 313,251 acres of dry land, and 131,081 acres of wet land up to the end of October, against 281,063 acres of dry land, and 98,253 acres of wet land in the present year; but, as observed by Mr. Robinson, these are merely the returns of the lands which have been sown, and by no means represent the prospective local grain supply of the district. The average prices of second sort rice and raggy in the month of October (as ascertained from the Price Lists of that month for five years) are found to be Rupees 301 and Rupees 187 per garce, respectively, whereas the average selling price throughout the district during last October was Rupees 302 per garce for second sort rice, and Rupees 212 per garce for raggy.

5. It will thus be perceived that though the rain-fall of the year has been considerably below the average, and though cultivation has fallen off to rather an alarming extent, the prices of the staple food-grains have not yet risen to the rates that might have been expected under such circumstances. The highest price reached appears to have been 7½ measures per Rupee (Rupees 427 per garce), at

which rate rice was selling at Palmanair on the 25th ultimo. Raggy was selling at the same place at $11\frac{1}{4}$ measures per Rupee (Rupees 284 per garce) on the same day. These grains are now selling at 9 and $13\frac{1}{2}$ measures per Rupee, respectively, at Madras.

6. These prices, as already remarked, are not so high as might have been anticipated, but unless there should be an early and propitious change in the prospects of the season, prices must rise much higher, and even if rain does fall, the losses of the agriculturists must still be very heavy.

7. Appearances are now very threatening, and timely preparations should be made to meet any crisis which may occur. Fortunately the district is supplied with railway communication, and probably there are sufficient supplies of food-grain in other districts, which will doubtless reach North Arcot in due course should necessity arise. The Government have already authorized the Collector to commence any works which he may find necessary for the relief of the poor in any particular locality; but the Board would beg to suggest that immediate attention should be directed to the rapid completion of those lines of road by which grain will reach those parts of the district which are not in the immediate vicinity of the railway.

8. They would strongly recommend that a special grant of funds should be at once sanctioned for this purpose. There is a very important line of road from Tripputty station easterly to Naidupett, now under construction, on an estimate of Rupees 34,000, of which Rupees 17,000 have been expended, which might with great advantage at once be completed from such a grant as that indicated. The same may be said of the roads from Coopum and Palmanair, on Bangalore branch north-easterly to Venecatherrycottah and Palmanair, Arnee to Poloor and Chetput, Wandiwash to Arcot and many others, which are the avenues by which grain will enter the district. These lines open the district to supplies from Madras, South Arcot, Nellore, Mysore, and the Western Districts. Some expenditure might also be very advantageously made in sinking wells along these lines of road, as well as in any other localities where the want of drinking water is felt.

9. The Board would name 50,000 Rupees as a suitable sum at present, and if this be sanctioned at once, the Collector and Superintending Engineer can proceed immediately with the works.

10. The Board have gone carefully over the Road Fund Budgets of the year, and find it impossible to divert funds for these roads without stopping others quite as important.

11. The Board would also suggest that all the subordinate officers of the Revenue Department in the tracts of country, likely to be affected by scarcity, should be freely supplied with medicines for distribution to the people, as scarcity is always more or less accompanied by disease. They should also be warned to give timely notice if the services of Dressers should be needed.

12. If these precautionary preparations are made, the Board believe that all will be done which the occasion at present demands, and if unfortunately matters should become worse instead of improving, as there is yet reason to hope they may do, the experience which was gained last year will cause no difficulty to be felt in establishing Relief houses and initiating Famine Relief works, should they be found necessary.

13. As regards the Madras District, the Board have requested the Collector and Superintending Engineer to meet them and discuss its needs, and they will address Government separately at an early date on this subject. Meanwhile, they think it would be well to attach two more Assistants to the district, so as to be prepared for the worst.

No. 323. From the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 16th December 1867.

1. With reference to the concluding paragraph of the Board's Proceedings, under date 14th December 1867, I am directed to report, for the information of Government, that the Board have this day conferred with Mr. Fane and Colonel Boileau regarding the Madras District.

2. They have ascertained from the Collector that although he has not as yet received any specially unsatisfactory accounts of the condition of the people of the district, the prices are high in all quarters, and they are said generally to have a slightly upward tendency. Mr. Fane has but recently resumed charge of the district, and is not therefore in a position to give more complete information as to its present position and prospects; but the aspect of affairs in some localities has been so unsatisfactory as to induce him to call for fuller details of prices, cultivation, &c., than are at present before him; and when these are received, they will be submitted to Government.

Rain-fall in the Madras District.						
Fuslies.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	Total.
	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.
1271 ...	0 91	3 63	5 97	0 50	7 78	18 79
1272 ...	2 00	4 65	2 86	5 65	5 52	20 68
1273 ...	3 30	4 02	2 91	12 38	2 89	25 50
1274 ...	1 55	5 83	3 41	5 62	10 85	27 26
1275 ...	2 89	...	1 67	2 11	7 46	14 13
Total...	10 65	18 13	16 82	26 26	34 50	106 36
Average...	2 13	3 63	3 36	5 25	6 90	21 27
Fusly 1277	2 08	2 72	2 34	...	2 77	9 91

* Average cultivation up to the month of November ... 2,81,028
Cultivation up to November in present year. ... 2,89,643

3. The District Monthly Returns have been received in the Board's Office up to the end of November, and the marginal statement exhibits the alarming intelligence that the rain-fall during the present revenue year (Fusly) has been less than half the average rain-fall up to the same period of the year. A reference to the Cultivation Return shews, however, that this deficient water supply has not as yet had any serious effect in diminishing the extent of land sown with cereals,* but, as observed by the Board in regard to the North Arcot District, the extent of land under crop in a bad season is a very poor criterion of the probable out-turn of the harvest, as a large proportion of the seed put down does not germinate, and a still larger proportion of the crop does not come to maturity in consequence of the want of seasonable rain.

4. There is every reason to fear, too, that the grain stocks of the district must be much exhausted, for the severe drought of the early part of 1866, and the drain

4 *Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,*
17th December 1867.

which they must have sustained owing to the famine prices which ruled during the latter half of that year, would have had no other effect upon them.

5. Under these circumstances, the Board are of opinion that it is only prudent that precautionary measures of the same nature as those recommended by the Board for North Arcot, should be taken in the Madras District also.

- No. 1. Chunambett to Trunk Road.
 „ 2. Ponnery to Pulicat.
 „ 3. Ootakottah to Trunk Road.
 „ 4. Vulloor to Trunk Road.
 „ 5. Wallajabad to Trunk Road.
 „ 6. Konnatur to Streeperimadur.
 „ 7. Utramalloor to Chingleput.
 „ 8. Trivellore to Nagalapoorum.
 „ 9. Extension of the Cheyur and Chotpa-
 kam road towards the North Arcot
 frontier.

6. The marginal list of roads exhibits the lines by which, in the opinion of the local officers, food will be drawn into and distributed through the district, and the Board strongly recommend that a special grant of Rupees 50,000 be made for their completion.

7. The Board have gone through the Road Fund Budgets of the present and coming years with Mr. Fane and Colonel Boileau, and they concur with these gentlemen in considering that the requisite funds cannot be made available for any of these lines without hindrance to other equally useful roads.

8. Colonel Boileau informs the Board that he has estimates prepared for agricultural repairs to the amount of Rupees 1,36,000, a large number of which cannot be executed for want of funds. These, if unhappily the season should not improve, will afford suitable means of providing employment for the able-bodied poor.

9. It will be necessary in this district, as well as in North Arcot, to give the Collector and Superintending Engineer a liberal discretion in the matter of employing extra agency for the prosecution of these special works.

10. In conclusion, I am to state that the Collector expresses himself to be most anxious to have the services of the additional Assistants recommended by the Board in their Proceedings, dated 14th December 1867.

No. 324. ORDER THEREON, 17th December 1867, No. 3,005.

Miscellaneous.

1. The Government approve the Board's suggestion that attention be more immediately directed to the further improvement of the lines of road by which grain will reach those parts of the North Arcot District which are remote from the Railway, thereby conferring a permanent advantage on the district, even should the present threatening scarcity not prove eventually so serious as now seems probable, and they resolve accordingly to place the sum of Rupees 50,000 at the Collector's disposal for employment in the manner proposed, in communication with the Superintending Engineer, enforcing at the same time the importance of using a portion of this sum for sinking wells along the roads in those localities where scarcity of drinking water is experienced.

2. The Inspector General, Indian Medical Department, will be instructed to meet the Collector's requisitions for medicines required for distribution in the talooks.

3. The Government also approve the Board's similar recommendation on behalf of the Madras District, and sanction accordingly a special grant of the same

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amount (Rupees 50,000) for employment there, in the manner indicated by the Board.

4. As Mr. Gribble Turner's services are not immediately required in the Police Department, to which he stands posted, he will be temporarily attached to the Madras District for special duty, and Mr. Glenney, now Assistant to the Collector of Malabar, will be similarly attached to Madras for the present.

5. These gentlemen will join at once at the public cost.

(True Extract.)

[Signature]

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

- „ the Accountant General.
 „ the Inspector General, Indian Medical Department.
 „ the Department Public Works.
 „ the Inspector General of Madras Police.
 „ the Collector of North Arcot.
 „ the do. of Malabar.
 „ the do. of Madras.

H. G. Turner Esq
W. H. Glenney Esq

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Wm. D. Johnston

*C. S. White, Nathan Sayre,
C. Cushman Deane*

London
Dec 11th 1854

Sanctus Vio Dec 1853
18.4.41

14. 2. 1907

Ed. Davis
No 3928 - 19 Dec 1867
Sunderland &c

General Grant & Staff
in the South of
Alabama & visit to
Birmingham for im-
provement on the
line of road and
resting of soldiers.

Ms. A. 9.2.39.5

Wil
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W. J. E. D. A.

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