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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. <u>242</u>	Press
<u>467-468</u>	~~Mis.~~
Dated <u>23-1-</u>	<u>1868</u> .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
23rd January 1868.*

No. 467. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Revenue Department:—

Passing orders on Mr. Robinson's report of the
result of his enquiry into the condition of the
Chendragiri talook of the North Arcot Dis- } (Here enter 18th January 1868, No. 145.)
trict.

No. 468. ORDER THEREON, 23rd January 1868, No. 242.

LOCAL FUNDS, No. 57.

Civil Works.

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.
,, Controller of Public Works Accounts.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 286. Read the following letter from the Acting 3rd Member of the Board of Revenue, on tour, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Chittoor, 5th January 1868:—

1. I have spent two days in conducting a thorough inquiry amongst the people into the condition of the Chen-

Chendragiri Talook.
Area 553 square-miles. Population 91,275 (or
165 to the square-mile.) Agricultural popula-
tion 58,993. Miscellaneous population 32,282.

dragiri talook, accompanied by the local officers. It consists of the upper valleys of the Surnamuky river and its hill affluents. From its condition the state

of the Kalahastri Zemindari, which lies lower down the valley, may be fairly estimated, and the condition of the upper parts of the Surnamuky valley, no doubt, re-appears in the lower tracts through which this river passes in Nellore.

2. The rain-fall of the year was irregular, and, on the whole, very deficient. The total rain-fall has been measures 24-4-0, against an average of measures 43-3-7. The rain-fall was insufficient in August and September, and not well distributed; agricultural operations were therefore thrown late, and inferior dry land crops were more extensively substituted than usual for the ordinary wet grains for the first crop. During the last two months of the year, when ten to fifteen measures of rain should have

Months.	Average of three years, 1863-65.	In 1866.	In 1867.
May	1 6 7		
June	2 6 0		2 5 0
July	2 2 3	2 6 0	2 4 0
August	8 2 0	13 5 0	5 5 0
September	4 6 7	3 2 0	3 4 0
October	5 3 0	12 7 0	6 4 0
November	9 5 3	3 7 0	0 0 0
December	6 5 7	7 0 0	1 4 0
Total	43 3 7	43 3 0	24 4 0

fallen, there was no rain: the slight fall shewn in December consisted of mere passing showers, which sufficed to keep pasture alive, but little more.

3. The tanks of the talook (both public and private) number 234. None of them received at any time more than two to three months' supply, and at this moment only forty are not absolutely dry: most of the latter will not last over this month. The large Perur tank, which usually lasts through eight months, is absolutely dry, and the other principal tank (Pedda Pakala) of the talook has about fifteen days' supply for the cattle only remaining. The agriculture of the talook is dependent, in a great measure, on its river-channels (ninety-one in number) and spring-channels (228). No fresh occurred in the Surnamuky river, and the river-channels had no adequate supply at any period of the year. Many of them have now nearly ceased, all are fast drying up. The spring-channels, too, have comparatively failed; those which are still running are flowing as feebly as they usually do in the month of April. The agriculture dependent on both classes of channels has, therefore, never had a chance. Finally, agricultural wells, likewise, are now too low to bring to maturity more than half of the crops usually dependent upon them at this time, and the sugar-cane is scarce and poor.

4. The consequence of the above conditions has been a serious disaster to the agricultural produce under every head throughout the talook.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th January 1868.*

Actual holdings exclusive of relinquishment and including land taken in after the usual period.			NOT PLOUGHED.	
	In 1866.	In 1867.	Area.	Per cent.
	Cawnies.	Cawnies.		
Dry.	7,050	9,713	1,580	16.2
Wet.	4,210	4,328	897	20.7
	11,260	14,041	2,477	17.6
Deduct not ploughed ...		2,477		
Cultivated ...		11,564		

5. The Revenue account shew an area of cawnies 14,010 of land (9,713 of dry and 4,328 of wet) taken up by the farmers at the usual time, being an apparent increase of 2,780 cawnies, or 24.6 per cent., over the area undertaken during the previous year. The prevalent anticipation of a favorable season led to the farmers entering into extended engagements; but, of the area so proposed to be brought under the plough, 2,477 cawnies, or 17.6 per cent., viz., 2,477 cawnies, remained unploughed, for want of rain. Thus in fact there was no increase, but a decrease in the amount of land brought into cultivation and sown during the past year as compared with the previous year.

6. The actual cultivation was further seriously affected. Of the wet land a much increased area was put under, as above stated, inferior dry land crops, Raggy, Cumbu, Cholum, and Waragu, instead of the more remunerative crops usually cultivated in consequence of the deficiency of water in the tanks and channels, and unfavorable prospects of the advancing season, and a smaller area than usual was put under rice as the second crop. The precise breadth of wet land, which was thus put under less remunerative crops than usual, is variously stated by the farmers themselves, at from one-fourth to three-fourths of the whole area, according to the situation of their village: under the hills the area was larger, under channels less. On the whole, the local officers and myself cannot estimate the extent of wet land put under dry crops at less than one-fourth to three-eighths more than in ordinary years. A considerable area of two-crop land was only put under crop once. The out-turn of the harvest from wet or irrigated lands for both crops cannot be taken higher than five-eighths of the usual crops, as corrected by the local officers; for the farmers themselves estimate it below one-half of the usual yield.

7. As regards dry lands, as above stated, the sowing fell late, and the rain-fall even at that season was insufficient; lands remained unsown, and the sowings did not get a good start. The crops grown on dry lands require rain throughout October, November, and December, and are harvested chiefly late in December and in January and February. Deficient rain in October, and the entire failure of rain in November and December, have had a most disastrous effect on the whole agricultural produce of this class of land (dry), in fact caused almost total failure. No Indigo (a crop of considerable importance in the talook) was sown; the Waragu (a coarse grain, which forms an important item of the food of the lower classes) and gram have entirely withered; and it would be unsafe to estimate the yield of the Raggy, Cholum, and Cumbu crops at more than one-fourth of the ordinary out-turn. In fact, probably, seventy-five to eighty per cent. of the dry crops has been lost.

8. It is not easy, under the present circumstances of this district, and in the face of the coming Jamabundy, to arrive at a very precise estimate on the above

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th January 1868.*

points from the sufferers themselves; but the facts elicited in a careful inquiry, during which I have been in communication with a large body of the principal farmers and village officers of the talook, lead to the above conclusions, and the local officers, as at present informed, do not consider the results as so stated, exaggerated. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that very serious disaster has overtaken the agriculture of the year; and the grains which have suffered most are those which form the staple food of the laboring classes, and are least likely to be supplied by the ordinary operations of trade.

9. Prices remain pretty stationary, with an upward tendency. The crops such as they are being in the markets at present, a rapid rise is reasonably anticipated.

10. Scarcity of water for domestic purposes and for the cattle will become a serious inconvenience as the year advances. The wells are as low now as they usually are when the weather is far advanced, and many must soon become absolutely dry. Still so far as I could learn, sufficient drinking water will be forthcoming to sustain life, of man and beast, even in the less favorable localities. In the meantime the attention of the local officers will be given to this matter, and should these anticipations prove too sanguine, wells for improvement (with aid from special sources) will be put in hand.

11. The cattle have fodder for the present. There are the remains of last year's stacks; the farm-stock is feeding on the withered crops, and the hills afford means of pasture not found in other talooks, so that for the present the farm-stock seems to be not badly off, and continues healthy. There is no epidemic disease at present amongst them.

12. The population of the talook is 91,275, of which 58,993 are returned as agricultural. The cultivators of the talook are for the most part peasant farmers, and do not employ farm servants, but the above includes the permanent farm servants (Shedigar, &c.,) of the talook. The actual cultivators and their servants have the means of livelihood; for the present there is no immediate indication of the farm servant being turned adrift on the labor market, always a last resource with farmers in this country. It is threatened however.

13. Thirty-two thousand (32,282) persons are returned as non-agricultural. In the towns of Tirupatty and Chendragiri, and their neighbourhoods, there is a considerable miscellaneous and wealthy population, which is safe, but notwithstanding a wide margin left for these, the laboring class, which lives from hand to mouth in this talook, is large. The means of employment at present open to these are, collecting wood in the hills (in which they are somewhat hampered by the needful forest rules), service of pilgrims, and public works including railway work. Work must in all likelihood be found for an increasing number of these as the year advances. It will, therefore, be desirable at once to extend the operations of Public Works Department, and allow the Revenue authorities to execute some irrigation works. Indeed, the dilapidated state of many of the existing tanks and channels has greatly aggravated present difficulties.

14. Several communications, as per margin, have been sanctioned for partial expenditure from Local Funds during this year, and are in progress. The allotment must be added to in anti-

- I. Extension of branch road via Penamary to meet No. 7 Tripatty road. Balance of estimate Rupees 3,360.
- II. Completion of Tripatty and Pudy road.
- III. Extension of do. do.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th January 1863.*

pation of next year's Budget, and the balance of the estimate expended during the next four months. The road noted in the margin, already sanctioned for Budget of 1868-69, should likewise be put in hand at once, with an allotment of Rupees 3,500. A number of well distributed and highly remunerative irrigation (river and spring-channel) works have been fully discussed, and are in abeyance for want of funds. These must be put in hand, with special allotments to meet progressive pressure. I will submit a statement, in form, of all proposed works in the course of a few days.

While writing on this talook, it will be desirable to allude to the Kalahastri Zemindary, lower down the valley of the Surnamuky river. There is little hope that this tract is in any respect in a better condition than the Chendragiri talook; but during the time of the pressure, last year, the Zemindar used his influence to impede the export of the grain grown in his Zemindary. There was consequently abundance, and reasonable prices ruled. It seems likely that he will, right or wrong, do the same again, and Government interference, even if desirable, would not lead to any practical result. There will probably, therefore, be a fair supply of food to be had if money to purchase it can be earned. In the meantime the two great roads Tripatty Station to Naidupettah. now in progress, noted in the margin, Branch for do. to Venkatagiri (Nellore District.) afford abundant employment for any laboring poor requiring wages, and the allotments can be added to if the demand for wages should outrun the sanctioned allotment before the close of the year. The works must be pushed on with the assurance that further funds will be forthcoming when required.

14. There is no immediate necessity to open relief houses at present in any part of this district; however should the necessity arise, the centres of suffering have been carefully ascertained, and it will only be necessary to revive the judicious arrangements of last year. The local officers are on the watch, and will anticipate any necessity and stimulate local charity.

No. 287.

ORDER THEREON, 18th January 1863, No. 145.

Miscellaneous.

The Government await the list of proposed works promised at the close of paragraph 14; but meanwhile they authorize Mr. Robinson to put in hand any Local Fund works provided for in the next year's Budget, which it may be desirable at once to undertake in anticipation, as a means of providing employment for laborers thrown out of work.

(True Extract.)

To W. Robinson, Esq.

„ the Board of Revenue.

„ the Accountant General.

„ the Public Works Department.

Erd. S. T. Augustin.

Secretary to Government.

List 242 No. 242.

Comm. to the Supg Engineer of the 4th Div.

2086, Dns

23 Jan 1863

22/1/63

1st 1060 Sept
Pro: of Good for January
£ 214
W: of the Masons Com
Revised Sept

£ 10⁰ 2nd Janry/61
£ 20⁰ 20th Janry/61
£ 145

Dating orders on
Mr Robinson's report of
the result of his inquiry
into the Condition of the
Chendragiri Taluk of
the North Arcot Dt.

N^o 242-23rd Janry/61

With an Order

N^o 467 & 468