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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	1141	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	1-5	1874 195

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
1st May 1874.*

No. 9. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Revenue Department, dated 10th April 1874, No. 433:—

ABSTRACT.—*Melur Taluq, Madura District.*—Approves Board's suggestions for the immediate commencement of certain works in —; directs the employment of extra Overseers, etc., to be arranged by Public Works Department; and refers the question of repairing the Kunnathur tank to that department.

No. 10. ORDER THEREON, 1st May 1874, No. 1,141.

IRRIGATION, No. 1.

THE District Engineer, Madura, will arrange for the employment of such temporary supervision as may be necessary for the speedy execution of the road work and irrigation repairs referred to.
(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Madura.

- „ Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
- „ Inspecting Engineer for Ports and Communications.
- „ Officiating Controller of Public Works Accounts.

Exd. S. T. Austin.
Spare Copies

Govt. of 1874: Madras
PUBLIC WORKS.

To

DISTRICT ENGINEER, MADURA

Dated May 1st.

Recd.

Encl.

MAY

Nos. 9-10

Irrigation works in the Melur Taluq and the repair of Kunnathur Tank and other road works in Madura.—The District Engineer requested to arrange for the employment of such temporary supervision as may be necessary for the speedy execution of these works.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1874.

No. 58. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 1st April 1874, No. 768:—

Read the following letter from W. McQUIHAE, Esq., Collector of Madura, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 23rd March 1874, No. 77:—

With reference to the Board's Proceedings, dated 12th March 1874, No. 557, I have the honour to submit copy of a report from the Additional Deputy-Collector, who was deputed to inspect the Melur Taluq. This taluq, with the part of Madura Taluq adjoining it, is the least fertile tract of country in the district. The soil is poor, and irrigation depends almost entirely upon small rain-fed tanks, of which there are 2,771 in Melur alone. In all years, there is a good deal of emigration from this part of the district to Ceylon, and, in a bad season, it is the place where actual distress may be expected to make its first appearance.

2. The Deputy-Collector suggests—

(1.) That all estimates already prepared for the repair of irrigation-works in Melur be sanctioned, and the work executed at once. Between April 1873 and February 1874, estimates, amounting to Rupees 14,350, were countersigned and sent to the District Engineer, and many of these works have not been commenced. Orders for their immediate execution might be issued in the Public Works Department.

(2.) That the Kunnathur tank be repaired. The District Engineer has been asked whether the estimate for the repair of this tank can be sent in at once.

(3.) That the Local Fund roads from Melur to Shevagungah and from Madura to Alagarcovil be pushed on. The District Engineer has been requested to have this done, and sufficient funds are available.

3. The Deputy-Collector thinks that immediate expenditure on the works he mentions will prevent distress till the commencement of the next cultivating season. He is intimately acquainted with this district, and no one is more competent to form a correct opinion regarding the actual state of any part of it; but unfortunately he has been suffering from fever since his arrival, and consequently has not yet seen so many villages as I intended. Revised proposals for the remission of punjah assessment in this taluq will be submitted shortly, some modifications being necessary in the proposals made in my letter of the 24th February last.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

- From P. SOOBIEN, Temporary Deputy-Collector, Madura, to W. McQUIHAE, Esq., Collector of Madura, dated 17th March 1874,

ADVERTING to your letter, No. 255, I have the honour to submit a brief report on the present condition of Melur Taluq.

2. I took a tour into the taluq in each direction whereby I was able to learn the state of the whole taluq, and I actually visited fifteen villages.

3. According to the rain reports kept in the taluq and those furnished by village-officers, there is no question as to the scantiness of the rains during the current official year. It must be

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1874.*

remarked here that even these rains did not fall generally throughout the taluq, or at least throughout any section of the taluq. While there was rain in one village, the neighbouring village had none. Instances have also come to my observation, in which the same village was partly favoured with rains and partly not.

4. In about thirty villages of the taluq, it has been the practice to sow a species of cumbu on dry lands in the month of April or May, and to sow pulse grains on the same lands in the month of August or September for the second crop; while in the other parts of the taluq only one crop is raised on dry lands, the sowing season commencing from July. Accordingly, the rains, which fell in May, were availed of for sowing cumbu. But there having been little or no rain in June and July, the result, as may be expected, seems to have been almost a failure of harvest. The crops raised in the subsequent months have likewise suffered for want of good rains in October and November. There was one heavy rain in December, which, however, was, for the most part, too late to do any good.

5. On the whole, it may be said, without exaggeration, that only one-half of the taluq reaped a half of the average produce, and that in the rest of the villages there was only a nominal harvest; because no ryot appeared to possess, at the time of my inquiry, any surplus stock in hand. This taluq, which is well known to supply the Madura market and other adjoining districts with staple pulse grains of black, green, and horse-grains, has failed to do so this year. Hence, the exorbitant high price of those species at this time of the year.

6. Before, however, determining whether the ryots are entitled to any special indulgence on account of their dry lands, it becomes necessary to take conjointly into consideration what has been the outturn of their wet cultivation; and because Melur is neither a wet nor a dry taluq, and because there is hardly a village in which the failure of one description of crops could not be compensated by the good outturn of the other.

7. But, from what has been already stated, it would appear that the season was not favourable for nunjah also. Excepting a few villages benefited by streams from Nutham hills (even these do not bring down a continual supply), the taluq, consisting of tanks, depends entirely upon rains. The tanks being generally small, and not capable of holding water sufficient to produce a crop, and the rains, subsequent to the planting season, having been very little, as already stated, wet crops commenced to wither just at the time of the sprouting of the ears, and there would have been an entire failure of paddy-crop, had not the rain, which fell in the beginning of December last, saved them to a little extent. Except a very few peculiarly favoured villages, the general nunjah outturn of the taluq is supposed to have been a little above a quarter of the average, omitting the extensive shavi that has taken place out of account.

8. Under these circumstances, I consider it necessary that, in addition to remissions on account of nunjah, which will be regulated according to the rules by the settling officer, a position to pay the Government demand without feeling it a hardship. I will submit shortly my proposals on the receipt of information from the taluq.

9. I have, however, to bring to your notice that, in villages most affected, some ryots have emigrated to Ceylon or to some villages in Madura Taluq, or in the Shevagunah Zemindari, where the harvest has not yet ceased; others are selling their cattle or borrowing money for their subsistence. I think that, even supposing there will be a good season for coday cultivation, the people of the above mentioned villages will feel difficulty in maintaining themselves until they could reap the fruits.

10. I would, therefore, suggest—
(1.) That all estimates for repairs of irrigation-works in Melur Taluq, which have, up to this time, been submitted for sanction, may be sanctioned at once, and the works commenced at the very beginning of the next official year.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government Revenue Department,
10th April 1874.*

NOTE.—I have ascertained from the Taluq Overseer that estimates, amounting to Rupees 8,100, have been submitted for sanction.

(2.) That repairs to the large tank of Kunnathur village, in Madura Taluq, which is in the proximity of the said affected villages, and which is in need of repair, be likewise ordered to be undertaken at the beginning of April. It is said that measurements were made a year ago for framing an estimate to this tank.

(3.) That the next year's allotment for the construction of the road from Melur to Shevagunah, sanctioned by the Local Fund Board at the early part of the current official year, be ordered to be worked out in the commencement of the year. The work does not appear to make a fair progress under the contractor, the amount spent up to the end of February being only about 1,000 Rupees, though the allotment was Rupees 5,000.

(4.) The construction of a road from Melur to Alagarcovil, which has also been sanctioned, should likewise be undertaken.

11. If the above suggestions were carried out, I believe, the ryots in question will have no cause to feel any distress until the ensuing cultivating season. Some of the above works are likely to benefit the ryots of the Madura Taluq also, who are, in my opinion, not placed in a better circumstance than those for whose benefit their early execution is now recommended.

12. I would have submitted this report some time ago, had I not been labouring with fever for the last ten days.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. McQUHAE,
Collector.

SUBMITTED for the orders of Government.

2. The information given regarding the state of the Melur Taluq is sufficient to show that some exceptional remissions will have to be granted eventually, but that work is the thing which is most urgently required.

3. The Board think the Collector should be authorized, as President of the Local Fund Board, to employ a larger number of Overseers and Maistries than usual in supervising work on roads. Without such supervision, the work will be badly done, and the daily payment of labourers will be impossible. All the road-work entered in the budget has been approved by the Board, so that the President might be authorized to push on with it at once, though the budget has not been sanctioned by Government. He should also consider and, if necessary, represent to the Local Fund Board the expediency of sanctioning work upon wells and ponds which supply drinking water.

4. The suggestions that the repairs to irrigation-works, which have been already estimated for, should be commenced at once, and that the repair of the Kunnathur tank should be undertaken seem to be judicious. In the case of these works, also, more supervision than usual will be necessary, and the labourers, so long as the distress lasts, should be paid daily.

5. With regard to the exceptional remission, the Board await the promised report. As at present informed, they think it will be best to give remission on the ground that some particular crop, such as varagu, has failed conspicuously throughout a tract where there has been no compensating profit from wet crops.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1874.

No. 59.

ORDER THEREON, 10th April 1874, No. 433.

Miscellaneous.

His Excellency the Governor in Council approves of the suggestions made by the Board for the immediate commencement of the works entered in the Local Fund Budget, as well as of the irrigation-works in the Melur Taluq. The employment of extra Overseers and Maistries in both cases appears desirable, and it will be considered in the Public Works Department how this can be arranged.

2. The question of the repair of Kunnathur tank will be referred to the Public Works Department.

(True Extract.)

For Acting Secretary to Government.

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

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revenue Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following

Minutes of the Board of Revenue dated 1st April 1874

Read letter from the collector of Madurai dated 25th March 1874. Submitting copy of a report regarding the state of the Melur Taluq. received from the additional Deputy collector who was directed to inspect that Taluq. on deputing him to revised proposals for Punjab remission in the Taluq will be submitted shortly.

Submitted for the Orders of Government.

The information given regarding the state of the Melur Taluq is sufficient to show that some exceptional remissions will have to be granted eventually, but that work is the thing which is most urgently required.

The Board think the collector should be authorized as President of the Local Fund.

Board

Boards, to employ a larger number of men and maintain them usual in performing work on roads. Without such supervision the work will be badly done and the disbursement of labourers will be ineffectual.

All the road work entered in the Budget has been approved by the Board so that the President might be authorized to put on with it at once though the Budget has not been sanctioned by Government. He should also consider, and if necessary request to the Local Fund Board, the expenditure of irrigation work upon wells and ponds which supply drinking water.

The suggestions that the repairs to irrigation works which have been already estimated for, should be commenced at once and that the repairs of the Himmathu tank should be undertaken, seem to be judicious. In the cases of these works also, more supervision than usual will be necessary, and the labourers so long as the distress lasts, should be paid early.

With regard to the exceptional remission the

the Board awaits the promised report. As at present informed, they think it will be best to give permission on the ground that some particular crop, such as Curage, has failed disastrously throughout a tract where there has been no compensating profit from other crops.

(See Extract)

184 J. Cross
Secretary.

Order No. 10th April 1874 N^o 133.

This Excellency the Governor in Council approved of the suggestion made by the Board for the immediate commencement of the works entered in the Local Fund Budget as well as of the irrigation works in the Mohur taluq. The employment of extra men and maintainers in both cases appears desirable and will be provided in the Public Works Department for this purpose. The suggestion of the repairs of the Himmathu tank is also approved.

(Spec. Extract)

Quarto
for Secretary to Government.

Dec: 10 1874
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Govt. of 1874 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

Chief Engineer
Madras.

Dated

Recd.

Encl. ..

G. O. Pillay: 1874 No. 1441

Nos. 9-10..

execution of these
works -

Irrigation works in the
Mettur Talook & the
repair of Minnaithur
Tank and certain road
works in Madurai.

The Dy. Engr. requested
to arrange for the employ-
ment of such temporary
superintendence as may be
necessary for the speedy