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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	180	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	21. 1.	195
		1875

Original

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st January 1875.*

Read the following:—

No. 375. Petition from the residents of Perambore and Veysarpaudy, dated
31st December 1874.

ABSTRACT.—Praying that measures may be adopted for relieving them and
their property from their present danger from floods.

No. 376. ORDER THEREON, 21st January 1875, No. 180.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 27.

REFERRED to the Committee ap-
pointed in G. O., No. 80, of 12th
January 1875, for consideration and

report; the Chief Engineer for Irrigation being added to their number.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Colonel, R.E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Presidency.

„ Consulting Engineer for Railways.

„ Chief Engineer for Irrigation, with copy of G. O., No. 80, dated 12th January 1875.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

Spare Copies

To

COLONEL G. W. WALKER, R. E.,

Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government,

Public Works Department,

FORT ST. GEORGE.

SIR,

We the undersigned landed proprietors and residents of Perambore and Veysurpaudy, beg you will have the goodness to submit to Government the circumstances herein detailed, with the view of obtaining for us such relief as the unsafe position in which we are placed urgently demands.

2. To say that during the heavy rains in October last, we were surrounded with water on every side, so that communication with other parts of the town became for a time both difficult and unsafe, will scarcely convey an adequate idea of the danger which threatened us. The rise of water on that occasion was higher than at any previous time that we can recollect, though many of us have resided in the locality a great many years; nor was the fall of rain at Madras during the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of October, which aggregated about 13 inches in the three days, such as to cause so wide-spread an inundation. The water found its way to our locality through the Otary Nullah, which rose so high that it cut a great gap across the road leading from Pursewaukum to Perambore, and spread over the Perambore Barracks Road at Vepery, and all over Perambore and Veysurpaudy, rising over Gantz's Road to an unprecedented height, and to the level of the floor of some of the houses; whilst one of them, which is low and situated near the Nullah, had water standing in it to the height of from 12 to 18 inches. The flood received very great accession from Cochrane's Canal, and thus the accumulation was immense. The water began to rise early on the 25th October, and continued increasing till the forenoon of the 26th, after which a slight abatement became perceptible, and very gradually it receded, as even on the 27th it was flowing over part of Gantz's, and the Perambore Barracks' Road.

3. The inundation appeared to us at the time to be owing to the breaching of some of the upper tanks, and this view received confirmation from the fact that the Cooum rose to so great a height that, as we have been informed, the safety of Harris' bridge was imperilled by the rise of the flood to almost the crown of the middle arch. The river was running out through the Cooum-bar with great velocity, but the accession of water it continued to receive, was greater in proportion to the quantity that found its way out. So great indeed was the rush at the Bar that the water was flowing at a level with the bridge. We were subsequently informed that three Tanks—the Padi, the Trimangalam, and the Ayappakkam, the first of which is of great extent, situated in the Chengleput district, and at no great distances from the Military Female Asylum, had burst their bounds. The waters so released, receiving addition from the drainage of the surrounding country, were obviously the cause of the extensive inundation to which we were exposed.

4. The rise of water during the monsoon has been higher of late years than formerly, and its progress seawards much slower, because there are several obstructions now in its way, which have come into existence within the last fifteen or twenty years, and which materially intercept its free and timely egress. The obstructions to which we refer are not few, and they

are formidable. To begin at the north, there is, first, the main line of the Madras Railway with its insufficient water-ways. (2.) The recent line from the Central Station to the main line, which it joins by means of the Salt-Cotaur line at Veysurpaudy. The principal water-way on this line is through the Bridge over the Canal, south of the Elephant-gate bridge. As this Bridge is placed *diagonally* across the Canal, its water-ways, from their position, are ill-adapted for the timely escape of floods, and the piers are an obstacle to the free course of the water. (3.) The line from the Salt-Cotaur to the Basin bridge, in which, as well as in the line from the Central Station of the Railway, the water-ways are insufficient both as regards number and capacity. (4.) The Bridge across the Coom Bar, which, by narrowing the outlet to the sea, impedes the rapid flow of the river in flood, and causes the Coom to rise to a greater height than formerly. There are also other obstructions, such as the additional bridges across the Canal, the Government Chunam-kiln, &c., on which we need not dwell beyond remarking that they tend to add to the more formidable impediments already noticed.

5. That the effect of the Railway lines is to shut in the flood in these low-lying localities cannot, we submit, be doubted. The water-way through the Railway Bridge on the Canal, north of the Basin, is inadequate for the free flow of the large body of water which comes down from the north; and more openings, of double the span of those now existing, are obviously a necessity on the Salt-Cotaur line, which connects the Central Station with the main line. The principal Bridge on this line, the one nearest to the Central Station, which we have already described as being placed *diagonally* across the Canal, offers a really great obstacle to the drainage of the locality. Even to an unprofessional observer it appears to be a great mistake, and our view is confirmed by the strong objection which we understand, the late Mr. FRASER, C.E., raised to the placing of the bridge in the direction in which it now stands. Lastly, the Coom-bar, the *only* outlet to the sea, is altogether insufficient under present circumstances, for the purpose for which it is intended. The bridge built across it narrows the water-way considerably, and the rush of the flood is through the openings provided in the bridge, whilst formerly it found its way out through a larger gap, which it cut for itself according to circumstances.

6. Considering the extent, and the formidable nature of these obstructions, and that no additional water-ways have been provided to counteract their effect, whilst the only existing outlet to the sea is altogether insufficient, it is easy to understand how it happens that, when the Coom and the Canal are in flood, the natural drainage of the country, enhanced by the contribution of the Otary Nullah, is locked in, and rapidly inundates all Perambore and Veysurpaudy, and the country eastwards.

7. In addition to the several obstructions referred to above, which cause the water to rise to a greater height than formerly, and to be longer in finding its way out to the sea, there are other circumstances which tend greatly to enhance these evils. The Red Hills Lake, and the Cholaveram Tank which is its feeding reservoir, which, before the works in connexion with the water-supply of the Town were undertaken, were usually dry in the hot season, or held but a scant supply, served formerly as receptacles during the monsoon, for the floods from the Cortelliar and the drainage of the country above, and held them within their enclosure; but now the case is very different. These great reservoirs, which formerly used to be dry at the beginning of the monsoon, are now kept nearly full throughout the year, for the service of the Town, and the result is obvious. The floods, during the rains, after filling them to overflowing, find their way downwards, and their natural course is in our direction. The outlet, or natural channel for the escape of surplus water from the Red Hills Lake, discharges itself into the Canal, near Shadeyancoopum, south of the lock, and the large accession thus received into it, is brought down towards Madras, adding greatly to the mass of water already collected on the plains. The Canal and the Coom become surcharged, the waters rise to a dangerous height unknown before, the low-lying levels become water-logged for days together, and the only outlet to the Sea at the Coom-bar is too limited to be efficacious.

8. The only remedy to these evils is obviously another outlet to the sea northward of the Town, for unless such a provision is made, the pent-up waters in these localities will always

be to us a source of danger; and it is fearful to contemplate what might be the culmination of

* Note.—The Cortelliar supplies the Cholaveram Tank, which may rapidly become full, as there is, we believe, no means by which the flood from the river can be restrained. The Red Hills Lake is connected with the Cholaveram Tank by a channel cut for the purpose, and is consequently liable at any time, according to the fullness of its feeder, to receive a larger supply than it can with safety hold.

the danger if the Red Hills Lake were to burst its embankment,—a contingency by no means impossible,* whatever the care with which it may be watched. We submit that the construction of a Canal in connection with Cochrane's Canal and the Otary Nullah, carried in an easterly direction towards the

sea through the open country; and the formation of a Bar at the beach, between the Railway Terminus at Royapooram on the north, and Clive's battery on the south, appear to us to be the only means by which these districts can be relieved effectively, and in sufficient time to prevent any disastrous consequences to the inhabitants. In addition to this, we respectfully submit that it is equally necessary to cut another canal in an easterly direction, in continuation of the channel south of the Lock, described in para. 7, as by this means a great part of the drainage which now finds its way southwards to Madras, will readily run out and escape to the sea. We may add that a somewhat similar outlet to the sea from Cochrane's Canal, as that we now pray for, was in existence many years ago, and traces of it are still extant. If found necessary then, how much greater and more pressing the necessity now, under the altered features of the country, and the formidable obstructions to its drainage which at present exist?

9. We would further urge that the evils of which we complain, were not in existence at the time we built our houses, or became possessed of them, but, as shown above, date only from a comparatively recent period. These evils are great. The water standing in our grounds for twenty-four or thirty-six hours at a time, and rising in some instances to the level of our floors, tends materially to deteriorate our property by causing the foundations of our houses to sink, whereby the walls and roofs suffer considerable damage, and by inducing dampness which affects health. The out-houses and stabling, which are on a lower level, have had water standing in them to the height of a foot or eighteen inches, to the injury of our horses and cattle. The expense to which we are put in consequence may easily be imagined. Outside communication is rendered very difficult owing to the height of water on the roads, and some of us have had recourse to boats to convey us over. We have said that our property sustains damage by these frequent inundations; we have to add that they also undergo depreciation in value. We can quote two authenticated instances of parties losing the opportunity of selling their houses, after the bargain had been settled, by the intending purchasers withdrawing, consequent, in one case, on the inundation of 1872, and in the other, on the more recent and formidable one of last October; and we can also point to another house-owner who had arranged to vacate his house in favour of a party who agreed to rent it on a lease, but who on the occurrence of the inundation in last October, by which the house in question specially suffered, very naturally declined to fulfil his engagement. We can cite also various instances of natives of the labouring classes, who had been washed out of house and home, and to whom the loss of their huts was the loss of all they possessed.

10. Under the circumstances above explained, we respectfully solicit the attention of Government to the unhappy predicament in which we are placed, and pray that early and effective measures may be adopted to remove from us the danger both to life and property to which we are continually exposed. The measures which seem to us to be of pressing necessity are those we have described in para. 8, namely, the provision of an efficient outlet to the sea on the north of the town for the timely escape of floods, and the continuation seawards, at Shadeyancoopum, of the channel from the Red Hills, for the direct drainage into the sea of the waters which now find their way through the Canal to Madras. Our view of the remedy to be applied, though wanting in the weight of professional opinion, is based on close observation, and a knowledge gained by long residence, of the features of the country around, and its requirements. We trust therefore, and in consideration of what we have already suffered, Government will be pleased to consider our representations with the attention they deserve, and afford us the relief to which we are justly entitled, and for which we earnestly pray.

We

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servants,

MADRAS.

31st December 1874.

Wm. Lantz
 William Lantz
 Lantz & Co.

For Mr. [illegible]

Wheatch

D. Wimer

Pritchett

Sumner Hall

W. C. C. C.

Prof. Napier journey.

Edson

Chm. 9.

The Clarke

R. Stephenson

John Thomson

E. Kelly

H. Tharock.

Although the 17th Regt. N.S. is about to leave Mader for British Borneo, yet in the interests of Holland W. J. Sturdee and the Officers of the 10th Regt. N.S. admit to coincide us in Pranmore and at the request of the permanent Residents of Pranmore and Pranmore—in whose name I coincide— I appended my signature.

W. H. Waterman
Sergeant U.S. Army

28/12/74

J. McDougall Capt.

Winter Cup
1948

Chambers Major

Wm. Lantz
 William Lantz
 Lantz & Co.

9. 2. 1875
 Referred to the Committee appointed
 in L.O. No. 80 of 12th January, 1875, for con-
 sideration and report; the Chief Engineer
 for Irrigation being added to their number.

St. Louis Presidency ✓
 Com. Eng. for R.R. ✓
 Chief Eng. for R.R. ✓
 with copy of L.O. No. 80 of 12th Jan'y 1875.
 Mr. de P. to all 21/1/75.
 Copies despatched to all 1/2/75.

Committee appointed
 L.O. No. 80 of 12th
 January 1875. for
 consideration and
 report

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 Govt. of 1875
 PUBLIC WORKS.

The Public Works
 President
 Dated 21st Jan'y 75, No. 182
 Recd. Nos. 275-376

Station from the Re-
 sidents of Terribles and
 Lyons, Jan'y 2, regarding
 that measures may be
 adopted for relieving
 them and their property
 from their present danger
 from floods, referred to the

P. No. 1875
 Dated 31st Decr 1874
 Recd. 14th Jan'y 1875
 The President of
 General Secretary

Proposing
 that measures
 may be adopted
 for relieving them
 and their property
 from their present
 danger from floods.
 Refers to
 L.O. No. 180 of 21-1-75.