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Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Irrigation Branch.

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Dated 31st October 1877.

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*Diary of the Acting 3rd Member, Board of
Revenue, on inspection of distressed Districts,
No. 26.*

THE Tinnevely District has an area of 5,145 square miles, and a population of nearly a million and three quarters.

2. The river-valley, which comprises the greater part of the five southern taluqs has had a most favorable season, and the south-west monsoon crop now being reaped is heavier than has been known for years. The red soil taluqs to the north have had a good deal of crop under minor rivers and wells, especially at the foot of the hills; but the black soil taluqs of Ottapidaram and Sattur have been bare, as usual, till now. They have just, however, received a fall of one and a half inches and five inches of rain, respectively, and cultivation will be pressed on with vigor. This may be called the distressed part of the district, and this only needs attention as far as relief-camps are concerned. Even this would not need special attention were it not that high prices have driven some 65,000 of the able-bodied to seek employment in Ceylon and on the Travancore Coffee estates, and these people have left their families mostly unprovided for. Some large public works and camps at Sattur and Ottapidaram will afford relief for these, and I have arranged with the Collector and the District Engineer that the following works should be opened, and that the two famine officers lately posted to this district should be located in Sattur and Ottapidaram.

3. *Sattur.*—The irrigation works of this taluq have been put into repair with the exception of about thirty tanks, for which estimates, amounting to Rs. 10,500, have been prepared. These tanks can now be taken in hand if they do not hold too much water.

4. *Ottapidaram.*—The completion of the distribution channels at the end of the northern channel from the Strivaiguntum anicut, improving the Tuticorin supply channel and the repair of a tank near Sekaragudi, for which estimates, amounting to Rs. 23,000, have been prepared, can now be taken in hand. These useful works will provide employment for the distressed in the black soil taluqs up to the end of the year. In the other taluqs there are still some people for whom work should be provided, though there may be no need for closed camps. In Tinnevely it is, therefore, proposed to put the system of irrigation from the Pachiyar river into thorough repair, and an estimate for a portion of this work, amounting to Rs. 3,770, has been prepared. In Tenkarai the completion of the river embankment for which Rs. 2,720 have been sanctioned, the diversion of the surplus of the Tenkarai tank to a chain of tanks further on for which estimate has been prepared, widening the southern channel from the Strivaiguntum anicut for which an estimate is under preparation, and improving the surplus from the Perangulam tank, are all very useful works. In Sankaranainarkoil the repair of the Virasagamani tank and

the completion of the Tonukal channel, for which estimates have been prepared, and the completion of some six tanks already commenced, and the completion of the unfinished portion of the Tinnevely and Sankaranainarkovil road. In Strivilliputtur the repair of twelve tanks, for which estimates of upwards of Rs. 1,000 each have been framed. These works will, I think, be found amply sufficient to meet the wants of this district but, if not, there are many other estimates under preparation which will be ready as soon as required. The tendency hitherto has been to crowd into the river-valley, but the arrangements now proposed will draw the people away from the towns to those places where work of a nature that must be executed sooner or later has been provided for them.

5. Instructions have been issued by the Collector to fence in the camps at Sattur and Ottapidaram which have hitherto been more relief-houses than camps, and feeding at the other relief-houses will be gradually discontinued as the people are transferred to works or sent to the closed camps. Only 4,137 persons are in receipt of money-doles in their villages, and no fresh tickets will be issued pending the receipt of the orders of Government.

6. 20,000 persons are now fed in relief-houses, but this number will be largely reduced when residence in camp is required. The present number on works is about 2,000 under the Public Works Department officers, and less than 500 under the Collector, and Rs. 19,000 have been spent on works, and Rs. 73,000 on gratuitous relief up to date.

(Signed) R. K. PUCKLE,
Acting 3rd Member, Board of Revenue

TINNEVELLY,
25th September 1877.

Dated 8th October 1877.

The works proposed will probably suffice but the small number of people employed on works is unsatisfactory.

2. The plans for the enlargement of the Striviguntum ancient channels and for the improvement of the Tuticorin supply channel must be submitted for the consideration of Government.

3. The abolition of open camps or relief houses is very essential.

(True Extract.)

Additional Secretary to Govt.

To R. K. Puckle, Esq.
" the Collector of Tinnevely.
" the Board of Revenue.
" the Public Works Department.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Prof. Oct

Dec 25 1877

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R. K. Puckle

Chief Eng. for
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