Gobt. of {1891} Madras.

REVENUE.

No 2826 Wa/26 Oct. 1891

Communicated to the Supdg Engr IV Circle

True Extract

/Signed/ O.V.B.

S.V.

21-10-91

*Issued*

*Recd.* *Enel.*

G.O., 13th October 1891, No. 955.

OCTOBER.

Supdg Engr IV Circle

C E- for I

**Season, Coimbatore.**

Instructions issued by the Board of Revenue for certain works being put on hand for the relief of the poorer classes in Erode and Bhavání taluks, approved, and the opinion of the Board that it is neither necessary nor advisable to reduce the fees for grazing in the forest reserves, concurred in.

provided that there are no irrigation works in this tract on which labour can be employed. In the meanwhile the ordinary road repairs, which are being pushed on, will afford labour to a good many. Attention may be given to the deepening of drinking-water wells.

5. Every effort should be made to make the ryots fully acquainted with the benefits of the special well rules and to encourage them to come forward to take loans for well-sinking.

6. The Board does not consider it necessary or advisable, in the circumstances stated by the Collector, to reduce the fees for grazing in the forest reserves. It is neither in the interest of the ryot nor of the State that the inferior, aged and decrepit animals which such a course might benefit, should be kept alive at the expense of the more valuable stock for which their owners are willing to pay the very small grazing fees now demanded.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Collector of Coimbatore.
Copy to the Secretary to the Government of India,
Revenue and Agricultural Department.

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Order—dated 13th October 1891, No. 955, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

The Board's instructions in paragraphs 4 and 5 are approved.

2. The Government concurs in the opinion expressed in paragraph 6.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture.
" the Commissioners of Land Revenue.
" the Public Works Department.

Exd. A. Aubert.

90 Copies.



## GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

## REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 25th September 1891, No. 612 :—

### Mr. Clogstoun.

*Read*—the following letter from J. STURROCK, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 22nd September 1891, Reference on No. 1143-Sub. :—

In paragraph 8 of my letter recorded with Board's Proceedings, dated 11th September 1891, No. 571, I stated that I was about to visit the Erode and Bhaváni taluks. On the 13th instant I supervised, at Chengapalli on the western border of the Erode taluk, the payment of 350 coolies employed in breaking metal on the Avanáshi-Perundurai road, a work opened by Mr. Tate just before I rejoined the district. The coolies were as a rule in very much the same condition as those on other works in the district, but I found three Vellala women, one washerman boy, and one blacksmith girl, who showed unmistakeable symptoms of severe suffering from want of food; and the presence of these people, as well as the failure of several of the wells in the neighbourhood, have satisfied me, with reference especially to paragraph 38 of the Famine Code, that the work had not been started before it was absolutely necessary. The fact that the wives and children of well owners are now coming to the works seems to me a serious sign.

2. As I proceeded eastward towards Erode, the character and extent of the standing crops showed a very distinct improvement, but the number of beggars at Perundurai was much in excess of anything I have ever noticed there before, and the conditions to the south of the line which I traversed are reported to be such that it will probably be necessary soon to begin stone-breaking on the Vijiamangalam-Tirupúr road. I shall be in a position to deal with this more fully when submitting my monthly report at the beginning of October. I may now mention, however, that the Superintending Engineer has informed me that the Kalingaroyen channel work can be taken in hand at a fortnight's notice.

3. The part of the Bhaváni taluk which at present gives cause for serious anxiety is the northern portion, mainly comprised in the Nerinjipet Revenue Inspector's firka. The greater part of this has been carefully traversed and examined by Mr. Todhunter whose report I enclose for perusal.

4. With regard to the taluk generally, Mr. Nicholson remarks at page 432 of his Manual that the rain returns are somewhat incorrect, as the town of Bhaváni, where the rain-gauge is kept, receives an exceptional rainfall from its position at the end of the Bhaváni valley down which the clouds sweep during the south-west monsoon. As the part of the taluk now most suffering lies to the east of the Bargúr and Palamalai hills, the Bhaváni rainfall returns are specially inapplicable, and I am, therefore, unable to submit any statistics of rainfall from which any inference can be fairly down. The karnams' returns on this point I find practically valueless.

5. The settled portion of the Nerinjipet firka is made up of a few villages to the south of the Palamalai hills, a narrow strip of about 14 miles long between the Palamalai hills and the Cauvery, and a tract of about 88 square miles to the north of the Palamalai hills and between the Bargúr hills and the Cauvery. Mr. Todhunter in his report alludes to the fluctuating nature of the population, which at present is somewhat scanty, and sparsely distributed. The existence of a large number of

ruined tanks supplied by streams from the hills testifies to a period of prosperity, but nothing definite seems to be known about them, and Buchanan, who found the tanks ruined in his time, states that the country was practically depopulated at the close of last century by marauding bands of Lambadies who accompanied the contending armies of Hyder and the British up and down the Kaveripuram pass, which was then the main means of communication between Mysore and the low country. I have written to the Executive Engineer to know if there is anything on record to show whether the restoration of the tanks has ever received consideration. The numerous wells which I saw in the bed of the old Kolatur tank lead me to think that the restoration of that one is not desirable, as the wells afford a better protection against famine than a tank dependent on a precarious rainfall, but Mr. Todhunter tells me that the bed of the largest of all, the Semberi (called by Buchanan the Suryamvara eri), is only under dry cultivation, and the stream which comes from the Bargúr hills is no doubt more to be depended on than the Kolatur stream from the Palamalai hills. Though I have not yet heard from the Executive Engineer, I feel sure there is no scheme on hand which will enable us to look to the restoration of any of the tanks as a work immediately available for relief.

6. I append a statement giving a few statistics relating to each of the villages of the firka. Mr. Todhunter has visited all of the distressed villages and a large number of the hamlets, and I have myself inspected the kasbas, or some of the hamlets, of Ammápet, Nerinjipet, Navapatti, Samballi, Mulakadu and Kolatur.

7. Looking to the firka as a whole, the accounts give the following figures:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Population ... ... ... ... | 19,729 | |
| Cultivation, average five years ... | 29,611 acres (exclusive of sivayajama). | |
| Cultivation, 1890–91 ... ... ... | 37,283 acres (including sivayajama). | |
| Outturn, 1890–91— | | ACS. |
| 20 Annas ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 146 |
| 16 „ ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 2,044 |
| 8 „ ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 18,385 |
| 4 „ ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 15,897 |
| Cultivation, April to August 1889 ... | | 22,665 |
| Do. do. 1890 ... | | 13,994 |
| Do. do. 1891 ... | | 8,502 |

8. The above figures show only a quarter crop last year for nearly half the area, and the entries under that head include the total failures which are said to have been considerable. The sowings up to date this year are only 8,502 acres against 13,994 last year and 22,665 the year before. The few standing crops not under wells are in a hopeless state, and what is still worse, portions of the crops under wells have had to be abandoned in order to save the remainder. So much for the statistics as a whole, but when we eliminate the villages to the south of the Palamalai hills and a few of those with good wells in the north, such as Kolatur and Chennampatti, matters look much worse for the remaining villages. To take for example Kaveripuram, which has a population of 4,411 souls distributed between the kasba and 30 hamlets over an area of about 50 square miles, we find that last year 8,093 acres out of 9,566 produced little or no crop, while this year only 406 acres have been cultivated up to date against 4,494 in the same period of fasli 1299.

9. Nothing more need be said to show that if the north-east monsoon is a failure relief measures on a large scale will be necessary. The more difficult question is to decide how far immediate measures are necessary to relieve existing distress and to help the people to tide over the period between the present time and the harvesting of the next crop. Applications for work from all classes have been more frequent, and more persistent, than any I have experienced elsewhere, and though I have seen little or no actual emaciation which seemed to be the result not of sickness, but of want of food, there has been a pinched and suffering look which I have not noticed to the same extent elsewhere, and amongst the Pallis or Padayachis, a cultivating class peculiar to this neighbourhood, there is in addition a listless air of despondency and indifference which I can only attribute to insufficient nourishment. The price of grain is perhaps not a matter of much importance to those who have no money at all



with which to buy it, but I may mention that 18 seers of ragi are usually procurable in the markets for a rupee. The large granaries examined by Mr. Todhunter were all empty or nearly so, but as the amount imported for sale in the markets, though small, is more than equal to the demand, it is to be inferred that local stores are not yet exhausted.

10. Turning now to the measures to be adopted for relief, the Local Fund Engineer has in hand an estimate of about Rs. 28,000 for re-making the old road from Ammápet northward to Kavéripuram which is even now passable in a way for cart traffic. This would be a useful work and expenditure begun along the whole line and stopped before the estimate was worked out would not be money thrown away, as every here and there throughout the whole length there are some exceptionally bad parts which might be first taken in hand, a plan which would also have the advantage of distributing the centres of relief. In addition to this, another estimate has been prepared for metalling the road from Ammápet westward to Andiyur, and these two large works will suffice to afford labour for a considerable period to a large section of the population. Those in the villages between the Palamalai and Bargúr hills could hardly come as far as this work, and when I return to Coimbatore I shall confer with the Superintending or Executive Engineer with regard to the possibility of taking some work in hand on one of the tanks not yet abandoned. As I could find other work on a smaller scale which might suffice for immediate wants, I was unwilling, looking to the remarks in paragraph 8 of Board's Proceedings, dated 11th September 1891, No. 571, to commence large works without consultation with the Commissioner, but I should be glad to receive authority to open them as soon as I consider it necessary.

11. To meet immediate wants the Local Fund Engineer is pushing on ordinary road repairs faster than usual, which will afford employment to many persons in the southern villages of the firka, and I have directed the District Forest-officer to commence the sanctioned forest road over the Bargúr hills. Apart from their usefulness as relief works, which is limited, the deepening of existing drinking-water wells, or the construction of new ones, is a matter of urgency, and I have ordered 21 to be taken in hand. This will afford a certain amount of employment in the tracts in which there is at present no road work, and as blasting is to be resorted to only in cases of really hard rock, the work can be carried out in great part by all classes of people. In a few cases pariah and chucklers' wells will be made by these classes. Clearing prickly-pear along the old road near Nerinjipet has already been sanctioned by the Local Fund Board, and will be taken in hand at once, and a new pound is to be constructed at Navapatti, these being small villages on the strip near the Cauvery where no wells are required. The expenditure ordered I propose to meet from the Rs. 25,000 which I recently applied for as a grant-in-aid to Local funds. Applications for loans for wells are being received to some extent, and will be disposed of promptly.

12. Mr. Todhunter recommends the reduction or abolition of grazing fees in the forests, but this is not a matter to which I attached much importance at present, as fees up to the 31st March have already been paid for all good cattle which the owners care to send to the hills. The remaining cattle are those which are required on the farms throughout the year for well cultivation or other purposes, and the usual worthless appendages to herds whose arrival on the hills—if the owner actually sent them, which I doubt—would only lessen the already scanty stock of grass now available in the forests. I had many applications for a refund of fees, but few for free grazing, except in conjunction with a refund, and one man who had paid a considerable sum in fees went the length of pleading that he had received no consideration for the fees, as there was no grass in the forests, and cattle sent over to his charge from Salem were actually dying of starvation. As the close of the year approaches the question of allowing free grazing or grazing on reduced fees will require careful consideration, if the season has not improved. The grazing on these hills in bad seasons is certainly limited, and there is unquestionably much force in the argument that free grazing in such circumstances means the sacrifice of good cattle in the hope of preserving worthless animals. I may here mention that, though cattle are undoubtedly in great straits, I saw many well-cared for

animals on garden lands. I also saw stocks of ragi straw alongside cattle reduced almost to skeletons. It is clear that private owners do not allow the stock of fodder kept for the working cattle to be consumed by those which are practically of little value.

13. At Ammápet I was asked for relief by the weavers, some of whom seemed very weak and worn. From enquiries I find there a number of houses in which work has come to a standstill, and there is no money forthcoming with which to buy yarn. I propose to do something on the lines laid down in paragraphs 86 to 89, though the time has hardly come for the appointment of supervisors, distributors and store-keepers.

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ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From C. G. TODHUNTER, Esq., Assistant Collector of Coimbatore, to the Collector of Coimbatore, dated 16th September 1891.

I have the honour to submit the report of an inspection of Bhaváni taluk, with reference to the question of scarcity, undertaken in accordance with your verbal orders of August 26th last.

In my inspection I have followed for the most part the route suggested by the Sub-Collector and approved by you in your letter, No. 2520-Genl. of 1891, but I have deviated from it in inspecting the Bargúr hill villages which were reported to be considerably distressed, and in inspecting some of the villages classed as unaffected and some villages in the Salem district in order to compare them with the villages classed as affected in this district.

2. Before commencing my inspection I examined the accounts in the taluk and made out, as directed by you, the statements of comparative cultivation for several years. I found these, however, to be of very little use in determining the locality and extent of present distress. In fact the total extent of cultivation and the number of darkhasts for last year shows in almost every village a considerable increase on any former year. This, however, may be accounted for by several reasons. In the first place there are a number of absentee landholders in the taluk, most of them rich men, whose cultivation would not vary so rapidly with the seasons as that of the poorer ryots. In the second place the deficiency of the sowing rains last year caused several of the ryots to sow two or three times for the same crop, sometimes in the same and sometimes in different land and this appears to have been all entered by the karnams in their cultivation accounts. Lastly, there is the historical fact that variations in population and cultivation in this taluk seem to have been greater and more sudden than in any other place in the district and thereby have deprived its statistics of much of their value. In the days of the rajahs at Kaveripuram, this taluk was one of the most prosperous and thickly populated in their kingdom. The ruined villages to be met with on every hand speak to the population, and the ruined tanks (of which there are thirty or more in the Nerinjipet firka alone) show that a very large part of the taluk was once fertile wet land. In the wars with Hyder Ali the country was almost depopulated, the villages were deserted and the tanks were ruined, having no one to care for them, and years afterwards a new population entered on the land to cultivate it as punjah. This population showed a continual increase until five or six years ago when a bad season or two caused the first check; since then a succession of bad seasons has caused a large number of the people to leave the taluk or to settle in other parts of it. A curious instance of this mobility of the population may be seen at the village of Komarayanur, behind the Palamalai hills, which 30 years ago was a large village with 500 to 1,000 inhabitants. It is now deserted by all but 10 to 15 householders, while within the same time and within five miles of it two large villages—Sennanipatti and Kittampatti—have sprung up with a population almost entirely derived from the Salem district. The present tendency, however, is undoubtedly towards deserting the old villages and not towards building new ones, and empty houses are to be found in almost every village in various stages of decay, some deserted a few months back with the roof still standing, others as much as five or six years old showing nothing but the walls.

3. Seasons which have been severe enough to make many people leave their lands and seek for new ones, have naturally pressed very hardly as those who by force of habit or necessity have remained in the taluk. These have eked out their scanty living as far as possible by any extraneous means that the rivers and hills in their neighbourhood afforded them, but even these are failing them and they are beginning now to give way to despair. For the last five or six years crops have been bad and grain stores very low. These became lower still last year. The first crop was a fairly good one, but very few ryots sowed for it on account of the failure of the rains in May and June. For the second crop the sowing rains were good and a great extent of land was sown, but the later rains failed and the crops were not properly matured, consequently the outturn was scarcely enough to feed the cultivators, and many of the poorer ryots in the dry lands had everything staked on this year's cultivation. Now for six months there has been no rain to raise a crop. In the northern part of the taluk they have sown nothing since last December's crop was reaped, and in places to the south of the hills they have sown three times and lost their seed and labour each time. The prices of grain have risen in the more inaccessible markets to the north to 5 vallams per rupee, while in the south they are at 5½ vallams. The people go from market to market with any money they can gather together to buy a small supply of grain, of which only a little is brought to each market; when this grain is finished they are reduced to eating leaves and roots and prickly-pear fruits where they are any. This is naturally beginning to tell on the health of some of them, and a few of the Padaiyachis in the north and some of the Pariahs in Mylambady and the neighbouring villages are already beginning to look unfit for a full day's work, while in the villages near the hills small-pox has taken a much stronger hold on the people than it would have done had they been in their usually healthy condition. In nearly all the villages more than three miles away from the river the distress for want of food is made doubly severe by a water famine. The wells which held out all through the famine of 1877 have already given out, and it is the exception rather than the rule to find a village well with more than two cubits of water in it. The state of the cattle again is worse than that of the people. There are large numbers of cattle in the north, of which a great part belong to the Salem district. In some villages half of them are already dead, while the rest are too weak to do more than half their ordinary work. I have seen them lying dead and dying in the villages, and great heaps of fresh bones and skins in the chucklers' quarters speak for the number of the lately dead. This mortality is due partly to want of water, but much more to want of food. For months past there has been no grass in the fields; the forest grazing fee of 4 annas is too high for the poorer ryots to pay, and in many places there is no grass even in the forest. The little straw that they gathered last year has given out, and the cattle have been fed on the village refuse or, when their owners can afford it, on the hill grass which is reported to have killed as many as it has kept alive.

4. For entering into the local details of this distress and the means of remedy I think it will be best to consider first the part of the Neringipet firka which lies north of Neringipet and afterwards the large plain to the south, taking the villages on the Bargur hills and those to the south of the Bhaváni river as separate groups.

5. The first of these groups, the northern part of the Nerinjipet firka, has all along been classed as affected, and, I think, rightly. The most prevalent caste are the Pallis or Padaiyachis who indeed form about three-quarters of the population. They have no means of livelihood besides their lands and a little trade in bamboos with the Trichinopoly merchants. They are for the most part a thriftless improvident set of people and very reliant on external help, which reliance has, I fear, been considerably increased by hopes held out to them by the inspecting officers. Their chief articles of food are ragi and samai which they buy at 5 vallams for the rupee at the weekly markets at Samballi, Kaveripuram and Sholambadi in the Salem district. This is eked out by leaves (வக்கிரி) and tender shoots of the bamboo. To take the riverside villages first, the distress here touches them only through the want of work and food for men and cattle. Their land is nearly all of the last taram or the last but one and needs a good rain before it will grow anything. No cultivation of any kind has been done on it since December last. They have no irrigation of any kind and lack the energy of their neighbours on the other side of the river who are even now watering ragi crops by hand. In fact, they do nothing but keep their lands ready for rain and themselves ready for any work that may be given them. A few go to the hills to cut bamboos for sale, but now this trade, I am told, will be stopped by the Forest department within a month.

6. In the villages which stand back from the river there are a few garden lands which have helped in some degree to maintain men and cattle; but they are very few and the wells cannot hold out much longer, for many that I saw were already dry, and in those which were not there was scarcely a month's water, for I tried several of them and in none did it reach more than half way up a man's thigh. The distress in these villages is chiefly for drinking water, for the village wells have given out before those in the gardens and some are already dry. This distress is more especially felt by the minor castes who have no access to the wells, for instance, the Clucklers and Pariahs in Kolathur at all times dependant on charity for water, have great difficulty even in begging any, now that it takes a woman half an hour to fill a pot by scooping in the sand at the bottom of the well.* Where men are suffering from want of water, the cattle naturally suffer too, and many of them are dying from this cause combined with the want of sufficient and proper food.

* *Note.*—On subsequent inspection with the Collector I find this statement to have been utterly false and that both castes have wells, the existence of which was concealed from me. There is no doubt, however, as to the distress for water in the hamlets.

7. In the villages on or near the hills cultivation is the same and the scarcity of water is more severely felt as the village becomes more and more inaccessible. The prevalent caste is still the Padaiyachi, but there are also a number of Lambadis in Ullurthorda and Mobbalapatti and a few Malayalars in the hamlets scattered over the Palamalai hills. It is in these hamlets that the distress is most severely felt and it is reported that in some of them chatties of water are sold at 3

pies a piece though I cannot vouch for the truth of this. The distress to cattle is also very severe here, and it has been greatly increased by the fact that large numbers of cattle have been sent over to this part of the taluk from the Salem district and have taken the food out of the mouths of the already starving cattle here.

8. With respect to the means of relieving distress in this northern part of the taluk, I think the first step that should be taken is an immediate reduction of the present grazing fee either to one anna per head as it is on the other side of the river, or, better still, to nothing at all. The people are also badly in need of work. With regard to this I think that the Loans Acts may with advantage be more fully impressed on them and speedy disposal of applications undertaken. The reason given everywhere for not having recourse to Government loans are either that the people had never heard of them or that the delays were reported to be so great as to make the loans received in many cases valueless. At the same time I think that some relief works will be found to be immediately necessary for the great bulk of the population. I have already made a reference in this office letter No. 17 concerning the proposed new anicut and channel from Myladiputhur. This, if begun, would give work to the whole taluk. Besides this I am not aware of any works in this part of the taluk for which estimates have been prepared or sanctioned in the Public Works Department, and the present overseer has only lately been transferred here and has not yet made any inspection in the north. I think, however, that the department may be asked for an immediate report as to whether any of the ruined tanks, of which there are about 25 in this part, are worth repairing and for estimates for the best of them. I think the following are the best of these tanks in respect of position and state of repairs: Sembari, Mamadatthur, Singiripatti, Kolathur, Kannamunchchi and Chennampatti. If there is no Public Works Department work to be undertaken there is a very good work on the Local Fund side. The road from Kaveripuram to Nerinjipet which was constructed during the last famine is now so out of repair that it is hardly passable even to a bullock bandy. It is a very useful road and supplies the only communication between Bhávani and the two markets in the north. It will also be within three or four miles of most of the villages. Some of the villages are also very clamorous for roads to join Kaveripuram and Samballi to Thirumangalam in order to give access to the big market at Cholampadi in the Salem district, also to join Kalathur with Kaveripuram, Samballi and Kannamunchchi with Bathapadi market in the south. These, however, are the demands of people who wish to turn a famine to their own advantage, and for the present at least may be safely disregarded. With regard to the Kannamunchchi valley, however, some work will, I fear, be necessary either now or later closer to the villages themselves. In these villages and those named Puthur and Chennampatti in the unsurveyed tract there is a large population in great need of work. They are about eight miles distant from the nearest point on the Kaveripuram-Nerinjipet road. I think it would be well therefore if the three tanks which lie in the Komarayanur and the Kannamunchchi valleys were inspected by some competent officer with a view to seeing if they are capable of repair. I hope that either that at Kannamunchchi or at Chennampatt will be found to be so. The same difficulty will arise though in a less degree with respect to the hamlets which lie near the hills on the Kollegal side. In these villages there are also several tanks whose repairs would be very beneficial. The biggest and the best of these is the Sambari tank which is situated between the two hills noted by the Sub-Collector in his letter, Reference Mis. No. 325 of 1891. The Mamoraththur tank is also, I think, worth consideration.

9. To turn next to the second group of villages in the plain to the south of the hills we have detached pieces of country classed as affected, viz., from Ilipilli east to the Cauvery and south to Mylambadi and from Purandupalayam to Vembatti. I am inclined to doubt the correctness of this classification. In the first place the villages are under three different Revenue Inspectors who have no common standard of classification and for the most part no standard at all except personal opinion. The Neringipet Revenue Inspector has classed all his firka as affected and therefore Ilipilli and the surrounding villages are included in spite of a considerable acreage of garden cultivation. The kasba Revenue Inspector is, I think, right in including Kurichchi and Mylambadi on account of the large number of Pariahs and other poor castes affected there; but I am unable to see any reason why the Audiyur Revenue Inspector has selected the villages round Atthani as suffering. There is hardly any desire for work in these villages, a fair amount of garden cultivation and a good water-supply from the river. If any villages in this part of his firka are to be classed as affected, I think they should be the poorer hamlets in the thickly populated country about Mylambadi and Brammadesam.

10. Under these circumstances, I think it will be best to consider this part of the taluk as a whole, as the cultivation and population are very much alike. There is no caste so prevalent here as the Padaiyachis are in the north, but the Goundens are still in the majority, Padaiyachis round Ilipilli and Vellalahs further south. There are, however, a very much larger population of smaller castes chiefly Moppans, Shanars and Pariahs. The cultivation here is of both dry and garden lands, the former in the outlying hamlets and the latter in the large villages. Rain has been better here than in the north, and two or three times there has been enough to make the ryots sow cumbu and avarai, but never enough to mature a full crop. The supply of water in garden wells has been fairly good hitherto, but the wells are fast beginning to fail and there are very few of



them which can hold out for another month without rain. However there is nothing to complain of as yet in the gardens, both work and harvest have for the most part been as usual. It is in the small hamlets which have no garden lands that distress is chiefly felt. The inhabitants are a very poor class, many of them Pariahs and Moppans; they have no capital to fall back on; they have sown three times and lost their seed, and their cattle are beginning to get very weak. But they have found means of livelihood hitherto, some by going to the coffee estates, others by bringing bamboos from the hills, others by travelling to the wet lands near the Bhavání for work. These resources, however, are all beginning to fail, and I think some works will very soon be necessary for these people. Another and more widespread cause of distress throughout this tract of country is the want of drinking-water in the village wells. Almost all the villages away from the riverside are suffering from this want. The wells are many of them shallow, badly dug and narrow at the base and the water in them is confined to about a cubit's depth or less at the bottom. In many of them it is so low that the women can only just fill a chatty by scooping with a cup at the bottom. In others there is nothing but mud to be obtained.

11. With reference to the means of alleviating the distress such as there is in this district, I think that, if possible, water wells should be deepened or new wells sunk in several of the villages. Besides the relief of the water famine, this would give a good deal of work to the people scattered over a considerable area. I understand that estimates have been prepared by the Revenue Inspectors for several of the wells. If it is considered advisable to give any other work in answer to the large demand for labour which exists, I think nothing could be better for the purpose than stone-breaking work on the Audiyur-Ammapet road. This road is supported by a very small allotment and needs repairs; it runs through the centre of all the worst affected tracts and would besides be more accessible than any other road to coolies from Kannamuchchi and the surrounding villages. I understand that it has been measured with a view to works by the Local Fund Supervisor. There are besides a number of old tanks in this district some of which might be considered worthy of repairs. I understand that those at Gettesamudram, Pattalur and Brammadesam have already been inspected by officers of the Public Works Department, though I have heard nothing of the result of their inspection. I should suggest that if work of this kind is decided on the Maththur, Punnachchi and Huppakottai tanks should also be considered.

12. Turning next to the small group of villages belonging to Audiyur firka on the Barghur hills, we have a population of some two thousand people almost without exception, Sivachars by caste. They live by dry cultivation, the only crops raised being ragi and avarai, and they keep besides large herds of cattle. This year's cultivation has been very bad. There has been just enough rain to sow and raise the ragi crop a few inches from the ground but no more. Last year's cultivation is also reported to have been very bad. The grain stores, however, are distinctly better than in other parts of the taluk. Nearly all the ryots have some grain stored and some have enough to last them for six months, while I met one man taking down two or three bullocks' load for sale in Audiyur. The condition of the cattle is a little worse, as there is no grass long enough to supply them with pasture and water is very scarce. The ryots are very anxious to have grazing free or at any rate at a lower rate than 4 annas a head, but as this question has been fully gone into in a separate correspondence, it is needless to re-open it here. It is sufficient to say here that the more valuable cattle and the calves seemed to me to be well cared for and the less valuable cattle and buffaloes to be suffering somewhat. With regard to the question of water, I did not find the scarcity in these villages so great as in other parts of the taluk. Water however is very low in the wells, the wells are very few and the distance from other supplies very great, so I think it is at last necessary that the supplies should be carefully watched.

13. With regard to means of relief here, I think the first thing to be done is to bring the Loans Acts prominently to the notice of the people who seem to be entirely ignorant of their existence. If other relief is found necessary at any stage, I am afraid that the caste of the Sivachars will stand in the way of its easy application, as it is said to prevent them from attending either relief works or relief kitchens; I think however a reference to the papers of 1877 will clear up the point satisfactorily.

14. I regret that I have not yet had time to visit the villages south of the Bhavání river as I have only had 12 days as yet free for inspection. I have the honour to request that I may send a supplemental report with respect to those villages as soon as I have time to inspect them.

15. I enclose herewith the following papers:—

I. Abstract of cultivation statement for affected villages.

II. Statement of applications for loans in affected villages up to 2nd September 1891.

III. Statement of roads (existing or proposed) and their suitability for famine relief works.

IV. Tahsildar's report No. 179 (returned).

V. Taluk Season report for June 1891 (returned).

VI. Petition from the ryots of Ammapett and other villages concerning the new anicut at Mylodipothur.

16. I am also preparing the following which I will send with my supplemental report on the state of the villages south of the Bhaváni :—

I. Statement of present sources of irrigation and wells.
II. Statement of abandoned tanks.

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*Resolution*—dated 25th September 1891, No. 612.

Submitted for the information of Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, dated 11th September 1891, No. 571.

2. Since those Proceedings were passed, the Collector has inspected the threatened areas in Erode and Bhaváni. In the former taluk, he considers that at the extreme west relief works are necessary and he found a few persons, employed on the Avanáshi-Perundurai road, showing unmistakeable signs of severe suffering. Further east towards Erode, the state of the country is better, but still there are signs that distress is beginning to appear.

3. In Bhaváni, the affected area lies in the north of the taluk and mainly in the Nerinjipet firka. This portion receives a rainfall stated to differ considerably from that recorded at Bhaváni. It is sparsely populated. The country shows signs of having possessed much greater resources than it now does in former times, in the shape of ruined tanks. Statistics as to the area are not fully available, but it appears that last year's crop was a very poor one, though the area cultivated was largely in excess of the average, being in the Nerinjipett firka 37,283 against an average of 29,611 acres. The sowings up to date in this division are only 8,502 acres against a cultivation last year up to the end of August of 13,994 acres. The cultivation last year, however, subsequent to August, was upwards of 23,000 acres, and a favorable north-east monsoon during the current year will doubtless lead to the cultivation of an equal extent. A very large proportion of the current year's sowings are, however, reported to have already failed and any deficiency of the north-east monsoon will be very seriously felt in the taluk. The water-supply in the wells is failing, and very scanty. The cattle are suffering greatly for want of water. The people are clamorous and persistent in their demands for work, and the Collector, though for the present satisfied with starting a few small works, is apprehensive that relief works on a much larger scale may shortly be necessary. The price of food-grains is not recorded in the locality, but at Bhaváni there has been a serious rise (from 19·68 to 14·76 seers per rupee) in the price of ragi and also in that of cumbu (17·49 to 15·90) during the past three weeks. Rice and cholum have been stationary. It appears, however, that local stores in the affected area have not yet been exhausted.

AVERAGE Rainfall registered at.

| Months. | Bhaváni. | Tiruchengód. | Sankaridrug. | Omalúr. | Pennagarum. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| April .. .. .. | 1·46 | 1·19 | ·98 | ·73 | ·91 |
| May .. .. | 3·57 | 3·45 | 4·15 | 3·36 | 4·62 |
| June .. .. .. | 1·75 | 1·72 | 2·08 | 2·52 | 1·86 |
| July .. .. .. | 2·19 | 1.57 | 2·12 | 2·98 | 2·03 |
| August .. .. .. | 3·18 | 3·44 | 4·71 | 5·17 | 5·75 |
| September .. .. | 3·63 | 4·26 | 3·98 | 4·03 | 4·48 |
| October .. .. | 6·17 | 5·72 | 5·88 | 5·73 | 6·53 |
| November .. .. | 3·99 | 3·22 | 3·72 | 3·30 | 5·71 |
| December .. .. | 1·21 | ·95 | 1·29 | 1·05 | 1·31 |
| January .. .. | ·17 | ·12 | ·20 | ·28 | ·29 |
| February .. .. | ·19 | ·05 | ·20 | ·04 | ·28 |
| March .. .. | ·83 | ·47 | ·37 | ·39 | ·44 |
| Total (Normal) .. | 28·34 | 26·16 | 29·67 | 29·58 | 32·21 |
| April to August 1891 .. | 13·41 | 5·60 | 7·10 | 5·09 | 5·37 |

4. That measures for the relief of the poorer classes in the locality under reference are necessary is clear. The Collector proposes to put an old road from Ammapett northwards to Kavéripuram in order, and to metal the road from Ammapet to Audiyur, which will provide labour for the centre and the north-east side of the taluk, whilst to afford work in the country between the Palamalai and Bargúr hills, he proposes to undertake tank repairs. The Commissioner sanctions the commencement of these works when, in the Collector's opinion, they become absolutely necessary, and



provided that there are no irrigation works in this tract on which labour can be employed. In the meanwhile the ordinary road repairs, which are being pushed on, will afford labour to a good many. Attention may be given to the deepening of drinking-water wells.

5. Every effort should be made to make the ryots fully acquainted with the benefits of the special well rules and to encourage them to come forward to take loans for well-sinking.

6. The Board does not consider it necessary or advisable, in the circumstances stated by the Collector, to reduce the fees for grazing in the forest reserves. It is neither in the interest of the ryot nor of the State that the inferior, aged and decrepit animals which such a course might benefit, should be kept alive at the expense of the more valuable stock for which their owners are willing to pay the very small grazing fees now demanded.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Collector of Coimbatore.
Copy to the Secretary to the Government of India,
Revenue and Agricultural Department.

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ORDER—dated 13th October 1891, No. 955, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

The Board's instructions in paragraphs 4 and 5 are approved.

2. The Government concurs in the opinion expressed in paragraph 6.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture.
" the Commissioners of Land Revenue.
" the Public Works Department.

Exd. A. Aubert.

90 Copies.

Govt. of {1891} Madras.

REVENUE.

No. 2826 W dy 26th Oct. 1891.

Communicated to the Supg Engr IV Circle

(True Extract)

(Signed) C.B.K.

DW

21-10-91

Issued

Recd. Encl.

G.O., 13th October 1891, No. 955.

OCTOBER.

Supg Engr IV Circle

C. & for I

## Season, Coimbatore.

Instructions issued by the Board of Revenue for certain works being put on hand for the relief of the poorer classes in Erode and Bhavání taluks, approved, and the opinion of the Board that it is neither necessary nor advisable to reduce the fees for grazing in the forest reserves, concurred in.

P. W. Department

Proceedings of the Madras Government

Read the following

13TH OCTOBER 1891, No. 959, REVENUE.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 1st October 1891, No. 620:—

MR. CLOGSTOUN.

*Read*—the following letter from M.R.Ry. K. V. LAKSHMANA RAO, Deputy Collector on Famine Duty, North Arcot, to the Collector of North Arcot, dated Wandiwash, 20th September 1891:—

FORTNIGHTLY NARRATIVE.

(*Fortnight ending* 19*th September* 1891, *Wandiwash taluk.*)

STATE OF THE COUNTRY—*Crops.*—The only standing crops are paddy and ragi under wells. The supplies in the wells are failing, but water is obtained with considerable labour and by deepening the wells.

*Fodder.*—The scarcity for water continues to be felt more and more. The forest reserves in which grazing is permitted are all parched up. The cattle are fed with leaves of certain kinds of trees and palmyrahs, and the concession granted to the ryots of getting leaves from the poramboke and avenue trees is largely availed of. Dry fodder, if at all procurable, is very dear. The cattle mortality is reported to be increasing.

*Water-supply.*—The sources of drinking-water have generally failed and the increasing demand in this direction is promptly attended to by sinking wells in the beds of ponds and deepening the existing wells. About 25 villages situate in the Cheyár valley to the north and parts east of Wandiwash had rain on two days—the 14th and the 15th instant—varying in quantity from 1 to 2 inches. The ponds and tanks received a few days' supply. The quantity registered at the Kusba Wandiwash on three different dates was ·51 inches.

*Agricultural operations.*—In the few villages to which the partial rainfall extended it was not beneficial except providing a few days' supply in ponds and tanks for the cattle to drink; a few dry fields however were ploughed here and there where the rainfall was heavier in parts to the east of Wandiwash.

*Cattle.*—The condition of cattle is simply miserable and deaths are increasing.

*General remarks.*—The people are beginning to despair at the scantiness of rain. They however expect rain in the present month of Purattasi. Should it hold off further, the disappointment will be serious.

Condition of People—*On works.*—Generally fair.

*In villages.*—The number of admissions into the several kitchens is increasing. People who through prejudices were unwilling to resort to the food relief and from distant and unaffected villages now claim admission.

*Sickness—mortality.*—Cholera prevails in 15 villages. Out of 78 attacks during the fortnight 33 have proved fatal. The disease, however, is reported to be subsiding.

*Remarks on the above.*—The coolies on the several major and minor irrigation works and on Local Fund roads on Saturday, the 19th instant, are :—

| | No. |
|---|---|
| 1. On minor irrigation works in progress ... ... ... ... | 441 |
| 2. On major irrigation works in progress other than the Cheyár channel ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1,750 |
| 3. On the Cheyár channel extension work— | |
| Under Overseer No. 1, distance 12 miles ... ... ... | 2,225 |
| " " 2, " 5 " ... ... ... | 265 |
| 4. Sinking wells under loans ... ... ... ... ... ... | 3,920 |
| 5. Coolies on Local Fund works road repairs as furnished by the Overseer ... ... ... ... .. ... ... ... | 660 |
| 6. Improving water-supply in villages (Local Fund Work) ... ... ... | |
| Total ... | 9,261 |

*Poor-house.*—Nil.

*Village relief—*

| | |
|---|---|
| The number on the rolls in the 11 kitchens is ... ... ... | 2,019 |
| And the number fed on Saturday, the 19th instant, is ... ... | 1,748 |

*Result of inspection of relief kitchens during the fortnight—*

| Date. | Kitchens. | Admission. | | | Rejected. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Men. | Women. | Children. | Men. | Women. | Children. |
| 4th September .. | Vallam .. .. .. | 1 | 2 | 16 | .. | .. | 9 |
| 8th " .. | | 1 | 4 | 5 | .. | .. | 9 |
| 15th " .. | Melma .. .. .. | 3 | 3 | 15 | .. | .. | .. |
| 9th " .. | | 5 | 7 | 9 | .. | .. | 2 |
| 16th " .. | Kilnarma .. .. .. | .. | 1 | 15 | .. | .. | .. |
| 9th " .. | | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 16th " .. | Salavedu .. .. .. | 1 | 2 | 19 | .. | .. | 14 |
| 9th " .. | | 3 | 3 | 22 | .. | 3 | .. |
| 16th " .. | Marudadu .. .. .. | .. | 2 | 10 | .. | .. | .. |
| 10th " .. | | 3 | 3 | 8 | .. | .. | .. |
| 17th " .. | Nallur .. .. .. | 2 | 3 | 12 | .. | 1 | 4 |
| 11th " .. | | 4 | 25 | 60 | .. | 1 | 10 |
| 18th " .. | Nedungunam .. .. | 1 | 3 | 8 | .. | 9 | 12 |
| 11th " .. | | .. | 3 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 25 |
| 18th " .. | Ragunathasamudram .. | .. | .. | 7 | .. | .. | .. |
| 12th " .. | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 18 |
| 19th " .. | Pernamallur .. .. | .. | .. | 16 | .. | .. | .. |
| 12th " .. | | .. | 2 | 6 | .. | 3 | 15 |
| 19th " .. | Vennamangalam .. .. | .. | 1 | 10 | .. | .. | 18 |
| 12th " .. | | 5 | 6 | 15 | 1 | .. | 8 |
| 19th " .. | Wandiwash .. .. | 2 | 2 | 10 | .. | 1 | .. |
| | | | | | 1 | 1 | 42 |

*Number of cases of death for want of food.*—Nil.

*Remarks.*—Nil.

*Grain-supply.*—Second-sort rice is imported from the unaffected villages of the taluk in small quantities and ragi is imported from Vellore and Arni.

*State of the imports by rail or sea of rice or other staple food-grain.*—No imports by rail, &c.

*Known or estimated stock in taluk.*—There is a good stock in some of the unaffected villages, but the supply is not freely brought into market,



*State of market—Prices of food-grain.*—The price of second-sort rice is stationary, that of ragi has risen from 9½ measures in the previous fortnight to 8 measures per rupee during the fortnight. Ragi is imported largely to Vellore from Bangalore and other parts of Mysore hitherto. The price is reported to have risen in Bangalore owing to heavy imports to other parts.

| State of market and price of food-grain. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rice. | Cholum. | Ragi. | Cumbu. | Remarks. | |
| 5½ | .. | 8 | .. | Rising at Wandiwash. | |

*The number of villages visited during the fortnight—*

| Date. | Names of villages. | Date. | Names of villages. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7th September 1891 .. | Thenvennakkambadi. | 13th September 1891 .. | Nadukuppum. |
| | Thellar. | | Thenvannakambadi. |
| | Agaragarakottai. | | Thellar. |
| | Thesur. | 14th " " .. | Echoor. |
| | Tirakal. | | Purisai. |
| | Ponnur. | | Arasur. |
| | Elankod. | | Perumbakai. |
| 8th " " .. | Thennankur. | | Thandalam. |
| | Thethurai. | 15th " " .. | Kuram. |
| | Melma. | | Elapakam. |
| 9th " " .. | Manganallur. | | Soundaryapuram. |
| | Agaram. | | Ayyavadi. |
| | Valur. | | Melma. |
| | Kilnarma. | 16th " " .. | Salukai. |
| | Kilpakam. | | Kosapet. |
| | Salayedu. | | Olapakam. |
| | Marudadu. | | Vilangadu. |
| 10th " " .. | Sogathur. | | Kilnarma. |
| | Embalam. | | Salavedu. |
| | Ramasamudram. | | Marudadu. |
| | Nallur. | 17th " " .. | Sathurakuppum. |
| 11th " " .. | Vallam. | | Kodanallur. |
| | Malavur. | | Nelyankulam. |
| | Kolipoliem. | | Srirungarajapuram. |
| | Nedungunam. | 18th " " .. | Kandiyanallur. |
| | Ragunathasamudram. | | Nallur. |
| | Pernamalur. | | Nedungunam. |
| 12th " " .. | Vinnamangalam. | | Ragunathasamudram. |
| | Sengadu. | | Pernamalur. |
| | Kovilur. | 19th " " .. | Vinnamangalam. |
| | | | Total .. 60 |

Statement showing loan applications disposed of during the fortnight is appended.

Statement showing the number of loan applications received and disposed of in Wandiwash taluk for the fortnight ending Saturday, the 19th September 1891.

| Items. | Number and amount of applications pending at the end of last fortnight. | | Received during the fortnight. | | Total. | | Applications accepted. | | | | Second instalment paid. | Applications rejected. | | Pending. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number. | Amount. | Number. | Amount. | Number. | Amount. | Number. | Amount involved. | First instalment paid. | Amount. | | Number. | Amount. | Number. | Amount. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| | | rs. | | rs. | | rs. | | rs. | rs. | | rs. | | rs. | | rs. |
| Special rules .. .. .. | 740 | 54,947 | 100 | 15,210 | 840 | 70,157 | 136 | 16,130 | 8,065 | | 3,741 | 63 | 3,654 | 641 | 50,373 |
| Ordinary rules .. .. .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Total .. | 740 | 54,947 | 100 | 15,210 | 840 | 70,157 | 136 | 16,130 | 8,065 | | 3,741 | 63 | 3,654 | 641 | 50,373 |

Number and amount of applications rejected.

| Number. | Amount. | Reasons. |
|---|---|---|
| | rs. | |
| * 7 | | 390 Applicants have no patta lands. |
| 9 | | 530 Joint pattadars did not consent to take loans. |
| 8 | | 495 Applicants did not furnish sufficient security. |
| 1 | | 50 Petitioner is a minor without a guardian. |
| 3 | | 120 Wells are on poramboke lands. |
| 23 | | 1,314 Applicants are not willing to take loans and withdrew the applications. |
| 32 | 10 | 630 Parties presented petitions twice. |
| .. | 2 | 125 Lands are encumbered. |
| 30 | — | |
| 63 | 3,654 | Total. |
| — | | |

| Number of applicants whose applications have been accepted. | | Amount involved including the second instalment. | Amount actually disbursed at present. | Balance yet to be paid. | Remarks. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | rs. | rs. | rs. | | |
| From 1st January to 31st March 1891. | Ordinary .. 26 | 3,280 | 3,280 | .. | Number of wells completed. | Ordinary rules. 32 |
| | Special .. 82 | 13,490 | 8,208 | 5,282 | | Special rules .. 30 |
| From 1st April to 19th September 1891. | Ordinary .. 15 | 1,825 | 1,825 | .. | Do. under construction. | Ordinary .. |
| | Special .. 1,391 | 1,77,996 | 94,948 | 83,048 | | Special .. 1,084 |
| Total .. | 1,514 | 1,96,591 | † 1,08,261 | 88,330 | | |

† The amount paid for second instalment up to 19th September 1891 is Rs. 7,413.



Endorsement by W. J. H. LE FANU, Esq., Collector of North Arcot, dated Pólúr, 24th September 1891, Perdl. No. 7068.

Submitted. A rainfall of 75 cents took place on the 22nd instant. It has only benefited cattle in a small way. There are a few pools for drinking water, and some grass will spring up in ten days. The condition of cattle is very bad, notwithstanding that our avenue trees—mostly the *Ficus religiosa*—are being hacked out of shape to feed them. At the village of Vengunam the ryots offered the whole herd to any one who would take them. I suggested to a by-stander to take a pair of bullocks, but he said "what's the use? there is no grass." The official returns of mortality amongst cattle are worthless. In fact there is no column for deaths by starvation. I have been inquiring into the matter and the fact is that cattle have been dying, not by hundreds, but by thousands. From January to December 1890 the number of cattle hides purchased in the three tanneries in Wandiwash was 5,759. In 1891 the number from January to May was 4,235. The number from June to 20th September was 21,473. This excludes the number sent to tanneries at Trivattur (Arcot), Ranipet, Arcot, Chetput, Tindivanam and Arni which the tannery people estimate at 42,000, of which they say one-third, or 14,000, came from Wandiwash. This would bring the total mortality in the one taluk to 39,708. I am making further inquiries about this and will report again. The figures, however, from the Wandiwash tanneries are no estimates but *facts*, which, with the fear of the income-tax before them, the tanners would not be likely to exaggerate.

2. The failure of water in Wandiwash is very serious. Shavi crops *under wells* may be seen anywhere. Some wells are absolutely dry. Others contain so little that baling has been given up. The main drinking-water tank of Wandiwash contains 12 feet of water when full. Not only is it dry to the floor, but, at great cost, we have sunk in one place 21 and in another 23 feet through the solid rock before striking water, and even then the supply is very scanty.

3. The price of ragi at Wandiwash has suddenly risen to 14·56 measures, or only about half a measure above the official scarcity rate of the district. As the Board are aware, the average price of the district has risen in the last week, at a bound, by nearly two measures for ragi, and the average for rice is higher than the scarcity rate. The merchants are now thoroughly alarmed, and unless heavy rain comes a further jump is imminent.

4. In another communication I have urged the necessity for preparing further estimates for large Public Works Department works for this taluk—the Cheyár extension, &c. I request that the matter may have urgency allowed it. Unless good rain comes soon a crisis is at hand for which we should be prepared on all sides. The Cheyár channel already sanctioned is practically worked out, and 3,000 coolies will be on our hands in a few days.

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*Resolution*—dated 1st October 1891, No. 620.

Submitted for the information of Government.

2. During the fortnight ending 19th September there was a slight fall of rain in parts of the Wandiwash taluk, but it was too partial and too slight to be of much value for agricultural operations. The only standing crops in the taluk are those under well irrigation and the supplies in wells are stated to be failing and much crop is withering under them. There was a fall of ·75 inch subsequently on the 22nd instant, but it is reported not to have done much good beyond improving the supply of drinking water and encouraging the growth of grass.

3. The price of rice fell slightly from 10·55 to 11·05 seers per rupee, but that of ragi rose from the steady rate it had maintained during August of 17·29 to 14·56 seers per rupee. It is, however, still 1½ seers below the district scarcity rate, 13 seers per rupee, at Wandiwash. The Collector fears that, unless a good fall of rain comes, it may rise still further. The price of ragi which is being imported in enormous quantities from Mysore depends very largely upon the state of the season there which has latterly given cause for anxiety.

4. The condition of the people is generally fair, but they are losing heart, and unless a good fall of rain comes before the middle of October the consequences must be serious. The distress is stated to be breaking down the prejudices of the people in regard to the acceptance of relief in kitchens. The number fed in kitchens rose during the fortnight from 1,659 to 1,748. The number employed on relief works, however, fell from 6,721 to 5,341, but the fall is not explained. Besides these a considerable number was engaged in sinking wells. Cholera existed in 15 villages, but is stated to be subsiding. The supply of drinking water is becoming very limited and the difficulties attending its provision at Wandiwash are as described by the Collector. What can be done by deepening small wells is being done.

5. The condition of the cattle of the taluk is a very serious matter. Pasture scarcely exists at all even in the forest reserves, which have all been long since thrown open to grazing, and the supply of leaves of trees can only last a short time. The number of deaths that have occurred is evidenced by the enormous increase in the number of hides taken to the tanneries for sale, and their present weakened condition must greatly decrease the ability of the cattle to perform the necessary operations of tillage, and render them very liable to be carried off by the combined effects of exposure and over-eating rapidly grown grass if the usual north-east monsoon rains fall in abundance.

6. During the fortnight 199 applications for loans were disposed of, involving Rs. 19,784; of these, 136, involving Rs. 16,130, were accepted, bringing the total number accepted since the commencement of distress to 1,514, involving Rs. 1,96,591, of which Rs. 1,08,261 has been actually advanced. Thirty-two wells only had been completed and 1,114 were still under construction at the end of the fortnight. The Deputy Collector should make a point of visiting during his tours some of the wells that are now being dug from advances in the villages he happens to visit, and should report in his fortnightly diaries that he has done so, giving the results of his inspections.

7. The question of providing some large Public Works Department work in the taluk has already been referred to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, who will be requested to treat the reference as very urgent.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Collector of North Arcot.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
Copy to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

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ORDER—dated 13th October 1891, No. 959, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

2. The further report promised in paragraph 1 of the Collector's endorsement is awaited.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture.
" the Public Works Department.

Exd. A. Aubert.

75 Copies.