

Gobt. of {1892} Madras.
REVENUE.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 5th January 1892, No. 18.

JANUARY.

Season, Chingleput.

Board's Proceedings submitting report on
the state of the season for the fortnight ending
12th December 1891 in the district, recorded.

No 134 W of 15.1.92

Communicated to the
Superintending Engineer
V Circle for information

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S.E. V Circle
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5TH JANUARY 1892, No. 18, REVENUE.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 23rd December 1891, No. 822 :—

MR. CLOGSTOUN.

Read—the following letter from J. THOMSON, Esq., Collector of the Chingleput District, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated Saidápet, 17th December 1891, Ref. on No. 5658, Eng. :—

I have the honour to submit my report on the state of the district for the fortnight ending with Saturday the 12th instant.

2. *Rainfall.*—Fairly good rain has fallen throughout the district. It was heavy in Sathiavedu and Madurantakam, each station recording more than 6 inches. The fall was well distributed, and the average for the district 4·03 inches. That recorded for the 13th, 14th and 15th being added, the total of the 17 days gives a district average of 7·46 inches; the period, 29th November to 2nd December, gives inches 12·7 and that from 8th to 15th instant inches 6·19.

Within the fortnight the rain did not do much in the way of bringing a supply to tanks save a few in Madurantakam and in parts of Tiruvallur taluks which are reported to have filled; but it and the further three days' fall has been of incalculable benefit and has saved the standing crops and given excellent assurance of their harvest. More rain is looked for and will be very welcome for the extension of wet cultivation.

3. *Cultivation.*—The average cultivation up to the end of November for the previous five years is 207,732 acres of dry and 334,595 acres of wet and the figures for this year are acres 168,792 under dry and 233,291 acres under wet inclusive of second crop cultivation in both cases as shown below :—

Particulars.	First crop.		Second crop.	
	Dry.	Wet.	Dry.	Wet.
Average cultivation up to the end of November for the last five years.	ACS. 200,967	ACS. 315,422	ACS. 6,765	ACS. 19,173
Cultivation up to the end of November 1891.	161,123	223,200	7,669	10,091

There has been a slight increase in the second crop "dry" which may be due to wells. Agricultural operations are in progress in expectation of a further good fall of rain. The standing wet crops are in very good condition generally, but as the cultivation was commenced late (end of September) in the year, there will not be much of a harvest before February next. Some of the dry, especially varagu, on this land has been so stunted by the long break and short fall of November that little, if anything, can be looked for from it, but on the whole the dry crops are now doing well.

4. *Prices.*—Prices continue to be excessively high and above the scarcity rate in spite of the rains. Rice is sold above the scarcity rate in 8 out of 10 recording stations and ragi in all the stations as will appear from the accompanying statement. Rice has cheapened a little at Saidápet, Conjeeveram and Tirupórá; elsewhere the same or higher rates are maintained; ragi has increased in price everywhere except

at two outlying stations. The markets are reported to be fairly well supplied with grain except in a few localities in the Ponnéri and Tiruvallūr taluks, where, however, the Divisional officers report the exhausted stock will be recouped shortly. Trade is active, and no notable change in this direction has been reported.

5. *Public health*.—Excepting for cholera, the deaths from which numbered 246 against 226 in the last fortnight, the public health continues to be fair.

6. *Cattle*.—There is a material improvement in the condition of the cattle, and no anxiety about pasture; but it is a very common complaint that the cattle are unequal to their work, and in parts they are still very far from having recovered their proper condition. The scarcity of fodder, of course, continues.

7. I extract some of the District officers' remarks:—

MAIN DIVISION.

Tiruvallur Deputy Collector, 5th December 1891.—"The prices of grain have risen above famine rates; the crops on the ground are in want of further rain and do not afford abundant labour to the poorer classes, and the prospects of harvest are poor. If no further rain comes, a large proportion of the standing crops will wither. They can, however, hold on for a week more. No prospects of rain, and the outlook is gloomy. . . . The standing crops everywhere, however, have been benefited by the slight showers of last new-moon day (30th November and 1st December) and can hold on for a week or ten days more by which time a few more showers may prolong their life and minimise the disaster. In the southern parts of the taluk, the water in tanks is speedily drying up, offering no chance for even turning the tank bunds newly repaired where the work has not already been finished".

12th December 1891.—"The large (281) Santavelur tank has received $\frac{3}{4}$ supply. There is no fear of crops withering in this (northern) tract even if it gets no more rain. Between Sathavedu and the Cortelliar, the rainfall was not so liberal, but averaged between 2 and 4 inches. In the tract south of the Cortelliar the fall was still more meagre during the week, but since the forenoon of the 12th, especially towards the evening, there was a more liberal fall registered at Tiruvallur at 3.95 inches on morning of the 13th. In the Arni river there have been freshes since the 10th between 2 and 3 feet deep. The Cortelliar ran up to 4 feet depth. There were no freshes in the Coovum".

The subsequent fall was 5.50 inches at Tiruvallur and 3.05 inches at Sathavedu and the taluk must now be accounted well off.

Tiruvallur Tahsilār, 12th December 1891.—"On the whole the rains we have had during the week have proved very timely to the standing crop which in some villages began to wither have changed the face of nature and will ere long tend to bring about decided improvement in the condition of man and beast. . . . In the few villages that I have inspected during the week (and I could not do more owing to the wet weather) the prevailing prices of food-grains appear to have been telling on the physique of the people; but I anticipate an immediate fall in prices now that the season is changed for the better".

Saidapet Deputy Collector, 12th December 1891.—"The total quantity of rainfall, however, was not as much as was needed. There were only 3.05 inches at Saidapet and 2.80 at Poonamallee, but the rain appears to have been general throughout the taluk. More rain is still wanted for the tanks to receive their full supply without which the existing crops under them cannot all be saved. The crops under wells and *kasams* may get through. No freshes have yet come down the Coovum river, and so the Chembrambakam tank has not yet received the required supply."

The further rain, 2.02 inches at Saidapet and 3.80 inches at Poonamallee, and, as I hear, river freshes will allow this to be read with better hope. The Chembrambakam tank has now $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water as against $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

Ponneri Deputy Collector, 12th December 1891.—"The rainfall in this week was general and the tanks have received supplies ranging from 20 days to 3 months; but none of the tanks have yet received full supply. . . . Owing to the failure of the south-west monsoon cultivation began this year only by the end of September, and the chief crops raised are vada samba, a five months' crop, and sirumani, peruntumban (six months' crops) which can only be harvested after the 15th February next."

The further rain was 3.69 inches, but I have received no further report.

SUB-DIVISION.

Sub-Collector, 5th December 1891.—"The number of people requiring relief may not, at present, be very large, but the steady rise in the price of food-grains and the paucity of agricultural operations must drive the poorer classes to seek relief at no distant date. A very large portion of the occupied area is left waste. The standing crops are, no doubt, in good

condition, but it is feared that a great portion of the wet crop must wither. Tanks in the Conjeeveram taluk are already drying up."

12th December 1891.—"Five days of the week were rainy, and it is still raining when I write, but the rains not being heavy, the supply received in tanks is not much; except the Madurantakam tank, no other large tank is reported to have received any good supply. The Conjeeveram taluk tanks, which I said in my last report were drying up, have not had any perceptible increase, and till our tanks are full we cannot be free from anxiety. Nevertheless the rains have been of incalculable benefit to the standing crops. Most of the dry crops are expected to come to maturity; so will also the kar and the shorter rice crops."

Madurantakam Tahsildar, 12th December 1891.—"There has been a little more than 6 inches of rain since the 1st of this month; this has no doubt brought water of nearly 2 months' supply to many a tank in the taluk; this quantity, of itself, is not sufficient to raise a crop. Hence the ryots are not as forward as would wish in the cultivation of their lands; nearly one half of wet and dry lands are still lying waste; dry lands are not likely to be cultivated in future, and a small proportion of wet lands may be brought under plough if more rains fall."

The further fall was Madurantakam 2.98 inches and Uttramerur 2.90 inches.

Conjeeveram Tahsildar, 10th December 1891.—"There has been a general fall of about an inch of rain in all parts of the taluk by which both the dry and wet crops are considerably benefited. The former and the kar crop will mostly come to maturity; but paddy cultivated in Achookattu dry lands and samba require more rain. The rains during the week did not bring any appreciable supply to tanks so as to encourage the ryots to attempt at further wet cultivation, the present supply which various from nothing to two months not being enough to save a major portion of the standing samba crops."

The further fall was Conjeeveram 3.82 inches and Sriperumbudur 3.97 inches; and Tahsildar reports it general, that the large tanks had received from two to four months' supply, and the standing wet crops were expected to mature without *savi*, while *navarai* (three months' paddy), cultivation was being commenced. The Coovum and Sriperumbudur large tanks (the first gave on in the end of November and water in the latter was getting low) had two months' supply.

The additional fall at Chingleput was 2.57 inches.

8. *Kitchens*.—Out of the seven kitchens that remained at the beginning of the fortnight, the one at Tiruppalavanam was closed, and orders issued for the closing those at Gollāchavadi and Gummidipundi, where the number of inmates on the last day were 11 and 2 respectively. The number of inmates fed in all the kitchens on the last day of the fortnight was 168 against 432 in the previous fortnight. The Deputy Collector, Tiruvallūr, looks to the closure of the Ambūr kitchen and promises a further report on the subject. The strength of the remaining kitchens is so low that I shall close them when I have sent out some of the money at present in hand sent me by a private donor for gratuitous relief. With the exception of Pórá and Ambūr, all the other kitchens have been inspected by the Divisional officers in charge:—

Gollāchavadi	...	...	...	...	Saidāpet Deputy Collector.
Gummidipundi	...	...	...	...	Deputy Collector, Ponnéri.
Puduvāyal	...	...	...	...	
Tirupalavanam	...	...	...	...	Sub-Collector.
Karunguli	...	...	...	...	

I inspected Pórá and Karunguli in the fortnight; at the latter place I admitted a Villi boy, who was in a wretched condition.

9. *Relief works, &c.*—The number of coolies employed on works of all kinds has fallen from 5,367 to 3,428 as shown in the accompanying statement. The recent rains have drawn off most of the coolies to the fields and caused a temporary standstill in the execution of some of the works.

10. *Land improvement loans*.—One thousand four hundred and eighty-three wells have been constructed and 2,379 are under construction. The total amount of loans granted from 1st January and that actually paid are given below:—

	Amount granted.	Amount actually paid.
	RS.	RS.
Land Improvement Act	4,37,996	3,76,851
Agriculturists' Loans Act	19,477	14,947
Total	4,57,473	3,91,798

One thousand two hundred and six applications for Rs. 1,02,523 have been disposed of during the fortnight, of which 638 applications for Rs. 28,095 relate to the Agriculturists' Loans Act as per talukwar particulars in the accompanying return.

11. I travelled in the fortnight through the south-west of Saidápet, north and west of Conjeeveram, west and centre of Madurántakam and centre and east of Chingleput taluks. The state of the parts of Chingleput and Conjeeveram that I had seen is already reported. In the south-west corner of Conjeeveram, the large Dornal tank had two months' water which was not likely to carry on all the crop under it; the river-side villages were having some water from the river channels, but little on the whole; the dry crops were beginning to fade. In Uttramerur division of the Madurántakam taluk, the Uttramerur large tank had two months' water and a large extent was being ploughed, while some crop under it was two months' old. The dry crops were in fair condition for the most part, but all, of course, in want of rain. Onwards to Karunguli the crops, both dry and wet, were generally very fair; while at Karunguli (8th to 11th) the Madurántakam tank received a foot and a half of water and was some two feet below the crest of the calingula. Even before that one crop under the tank was assured. With the rains the tanks generally were filling and much water standing about on the fields. The Mambakkam was the first (and last) tank I have seen surplusing. To the south of Madurántakam the dry crops on good ground were looking well, on high or thin soil the crop, mostly varagu, had been stunted, and a good deal of it will be of little or no value. Gram generally was looking very well. There was but little ragi to be seen.

12. In Chingleput taluk, I went east in both the Tirukkalikundram and Tirupporur directions. All tanks had received a very fair supply, generally two months or over. It was considered by those concerned to be sufficient for the crop on the ground, but not much, if at all, for extended cultivation; but further east along the sea-board both in this and in Madurántakam taluk the general report was that the rain had been heavier then and theretofore, that the tanks were fuller and that water would be available for some second crop. Much of the crop under the tanks within the hilly parts had been put down only recently, and some ploughing of the waste was going on. There were great variations in the proportions of waste and cultivated under even neighbouring tanks. Very little dry crop came under my observation.

13. I noted a considerable increase in the contents of the tanks along the line of railway between the 13th and 16th instant.

14. On the whole, I think, I may safely say that the future of the crop now on the ground is assured.

15. There will be some extension of wet cultivation, and as the people seem generally to expect more rain, it is possible that if that does not come there may be mistakes made and too much ploughed and planted; but the season is so peculiar that it is too early to interfere with the distribution of water.

16. The dry crops generally may be taken now to be safe, but there is not likely to be any appreciable extension of the area under crop. The people say it is too late for that; but the real reason will be that they expect to be fully occupied with their wet lands.

17. I note that the Tahsildar of Tiruvallúr has observed a falling off in the physique of the people. Nothing of this has come under my own observation, but I have not gone out of the way to search for it; all I can say is there is no wandering on the roads or country tracks and nothing to attract attention in the physical appearance of those met; but the high prices now ruling must begin to have an effect before long and probably in the interval between the conclusion of the weeding and the crop coming to harvest. I hear at present of wages being paid to coolies in grain, and I note a large amount of labour employed in the fields; but the variation of the number of laborers on relief works shows how uncertain and brief the field work often is as well as indicates how useful these works are to the local population; and having regard to this continuing high price of food-grain, I would deprecate for the present any curtailing of expenditure on Public Works directly useful in character, such as the major irrigation works; no doubt this and the expenditure on minor works and the money advanced for wells has kept the district people in the physical condition in which they are.

18. I enclose the packet of grass seeds forwarded from Poonamallee as a specimen of what is gathered for food within the Chembrambakam tank.

19. I shall address the Board separately on the matter of the special establishments which the now more or less settled conditions of the year require should be taken up for consideration.

Resolution—dated 23rd December 1891, No. 822.

Submitted for the information of Government.

2. The rain alluded to in Board's Proceedings, dated 12th December 1891, No. 792, brought an average fall of 7·10 inches to the district between the 1st and the 15th December. The district has, therefore, received enough to save the standing wet crop and perhaps to admit of some extension of cultivation, but at present the Collector considers that it is too soon to gauge the adequacy of the supplies for this purpose. The standing wet crop appears to be now in a promising condition although in the forecasts of outturn made by the Tahsildar at the end of November the estimate was only given for a five-anna crop. The dry crops are not so good, and the varagu, one of the most important in the district, is poor in some places.

3. Pasturage is abundant and the cattle continue to improve in condition, but fodder is still and is likely to continue scarce having in view the small area of wet land sown and the inferior character of the dry crops.

4. The number employed on relief works dropped to 3,428 on the 12th December, and in view to the great improvement in the season, orders have been issued to close all but ordinary budgeted works forthwith. In the kitchens only 168 persons were fed on the 12th and the Collector is arranging to close the kitchens which remain open.

5. Prices have continued to advance and on the 12th those for ragi were above the scarcity rate for the district at all stations, as were those for rice at all stations except Pulicat, Uttramerur and Madurántakam. This rise in prices, if it be maintained, must cause a good deal of distress amongst the poorer classes when field work ceases.

6. During the fortnight 302 applications for loans, amounting to Rs. 27,305, under the well rules and 191 for Rs. 6,726 for the purchase of cattle and seed-grain were approved of, and 713 applications for both purposes were rejected, leaving 2,119 applications under the well rules and 2,121 for loans to purchase cattle and seed pending on the 12th December. Every effort should be made to dispose of the numerous applications of the latter class with rapidity.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" Collector of Chingleput.

Copy to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

ORDER—dated 5th January 1892, No. 18, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

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

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

Exd. A. Aubert.

75 Copies.