Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 20076

DATED 25 July 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Famine Relief Estimates Famine to 30.6.98: Proc:
Revenue Dept: Recording with remarks the first
Report of the Secretary to Govt: P.W.D. and the
Third member of the Board of Revenue on —,
in the Trichinopoly Dt: Comtd: 6 S.E.
VI Circle.

B
W 8747

[P.W. 25.
5,000—30-11-96.]

Indexed. 1/8

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Public Works (1897) Department

Current No: 6985

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd. 17.7. } 1897. *Enclosures*

Regd. 17.7. } *Spare copies* 16.

G.O., No. 535, 5th July 1897.

No 2037/Wg 28.7.97

Communicated to the Supdg Engr VI circle

Ch 22/7/97

JULY.

S.E. VI circle with 4 Cycle

Ch. S. for info with ref

Reading to note 24/7

B 7/20 T. 26

Famine-relief Works, Estimates and Famine-tools, &c.

Recording, with remarks, the joint report of the Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, and the Third Member of the Board of Revenue on — in the Trichinopoly district.

O.L.S 302 R 24/7

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following letter from the Honourable Colonel D. M. CAMPBELL, R.E., Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, and H. M. WINTERBOTHAM, Esq., Third Member, Board of Revenue, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Trichinopoly, 24th June 1897, letter I :—

In continuation of our letter H, dated 22nd June 1897, we have the honour to submit the following report on the district of Trichinopoly.

2. We reached Trichinopoly on 22nd June, and on the 23rd and 24th we met the Acting Collector, the Superintending and Executive Engineers, all the Divisional officers, and three out of the five Tahsildars. Mr. Macleod, the only European Revenue Officer, has been in the district since 1st February 1897. The Musiri Deputy Collector has been some years in the district. The two Probationary Deputy Collectors in charge of the other divisions are young officers without much experience.

3. *General condition of the District—Rainfall.*—The rainfall for 20 years ending 1892 gives an average of 34·2 inches for the district. To this the April-May rains contribute 4·60 inches, the south-west monsoon 11·82 inches and the north-east monsoon 16·53 inches.

In 1896 the district average was 34·8 inches. The fall in April-May was 2·82 inches: 10·65 inches fell in the south-west monsoon, but there was little rain till September when the fall was unusually heavy; 21·2 inches fell in the north-east monsoon and there was not the deficiency in October which was so marked in South Arcot and Chingleput. The October average rainfall was 6·42 inches against a twenty years' average of 7·24 inches. The only remarkable feature in last year's rainfall was the deficiency of rain in July and August.

The area cultivated from June to November 1896 was well above the average. The early-crop harvest was scanty, but on the whole the outturn of grain for the year cannot, we think, have been much below the average.

In February 1897 there was the same unusual fall of rain as occurred in South Arcot, the district average being 3·86 inches. Pasture and water-supply have since been unusually good, and all the garden and late cultivation have benefited. The April-May showers (5·26 inches) have been over the average and well distributed: 2·32 inches have fallen in the first three weeks of June against an average of 1·40 inches for the whole month; the Cauvery is in high flood, and general prospects thus appear normal and encouraging.

4. The curnams in the district have been engaged on survey work (sub-division of fields) and jamabandi, and have not been able to prepare their cultivation accounts properly. The cultivation accounts up to 31st May show an area much below the average, but this is certainly due to the incompleteness of the returns, and is opposed to fact.

5. *Prices.*—The following statement shows the prices of the principal food-grains for the week ending June 19th as compared with the normal, warning and scarcity rates :—

Stations.	Prices in Imperial seers of 80 tolas per rupee of															
	Rice.				Ragi.				Cholum.				Cumbu.			
	For week ending 19th June.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.	For week ending 19th June.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.	For week ending 19th June.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.	For week ending 19th June.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.
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Manapparai	11·6				18·3				14·0				..			
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District average ..	10·9				20·0				24·9				19·1			

Rice is dearest in Trichinopoly town, where it is two seers per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate. In four stations out of ten it has not reached the warning rate. The average for the district is very slightly dearer than the warning rate. Ragi and cumbu have not reached the warning rate in some stations. The district average price of cumbu is below the warning rate, and the price of ragi is only one seer per rupee above it. Cholum prices are always apt to mislead in this district, owing to the fact that an inferior *black* variety is largely cultivated. This black cholum is at present selling at about half the price of white cholum, and at some stations it can still be got at about 30 seers per rupee. Varagu is also very extensively grown in the dry taluks.

6. *Exports and Imports.*—From the middle of February last up to 19th June 1·38 lakhs of maunds of grain have left the district by rail, and 34,000 maunds have been imported. No detailed information is available, but we are informed that the bulk of the exports consists of rice consigned to stations in the Madura, Tinnevelly, Malabar and Coimbatore districts and to Tuticorin *en route* to Ceylon.

Grain is cheapest in the places most remote from the railway, clearly indicating that the high prices are due to scarcity outside the district.

7. So far as we can judge from our observations and enquiries, and the opinions of the local officers, there is no present distress in any part of the district, and no likelihood of any class of the population coming on relief works, unless the current south-west monsoon and the next north-east monsoon both fail.

8. Prices in Pudukkóttai are cheaper all round than in this district, and the last weekly report gives an encouraging account of the water-supply, agricultural operations, condition of cattle and public health.

9. *Famine Programme.*—The famine programme includes works, the assumed cost of which is Rs. 54,02,633 which is sufficient to give employment to 52 per cent. of the population of the district for three months.

The programme is somewhat misleading as it includes two works, one the Ponnéri Reservoir project, Rs. 30,00,000; and the other Kulittalai Kattuvari project, Rupees 45,000; neither of which is available for execution by famine labour. It would take at least a year to complete the investigation necessary for the preparation of the estimate for the former, and the latter does not seem to exist except in name on paper. This at once reduces the total of the programme to Rs. 54,02,633 — 30,45,000 = Rs. 23,57,633.

10. Since the programme was submitted several estimates have been sanctioned and others have been revised, and the following shows the amounts of the estimates sanctioned and which were laid before us :—

	Sanctioned. Rs.
(1) Irrigation Public Works Department	41,451 *
(2) Irrigation works, Revenue	1,00,277
(3) Local Fund works	1,00,510
(4) Minor Local Fund works	84,247
(5) Forest works	4,000
(6) Miscellaneous	4,34,946
Total ...	7,65,461

Item (2) chiefly comprises estimates for the repair of tank bunds. On examining these we find that a great number of them contain no report on the existing condition of the work and no data on which the estimate is framed; while the dimensions given under height and breadth are out of proportion to each other and are obviously wrong. Some of the estimates are for masonry works; and many of them are for very small amounts, rendering them unsuitable for execution under the rules of the Famine Code. All these estimates require to be revised by a competent officer before the works can be pronounced ready for execution. If the amount for minor irrigation works be omitted from the programme, the total amount of the estimates sanctioned and available for immediate execution is Rs. 6,65,184 or sufficient for 88,691 persons, or 6·4 per cent. of the population, for three months. Under Local Fund works there are many works ready, but not sanctioned. These were laid before us and amount to Rs. 4,43,850. These should at once be brought under sanction, and the amount available for execution will then be Rs. 6,65,184+Rs. 4,43,850 or Rs. 11,09,034 or sufficient for 10·7 per cent. of the population for three months. This, we consider, is ample provision till November next. In addition to this there are proposed works, the total approximate estimate for which amounts to Rupees 42,10,471; † these, we think, need not be considered at present, though, should the south-west monsoon prove unfavourable, as many of the estimates as possible should be prepared and brought under sanction.

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11. There are no works of any magnitude on which large bodies of coolies could be massed, and, should it be found necessary to provide work for a great number of persons for any considerable period, all we can recommend is that they be employed in preparing road metal at quarries in central positions. Stone is available near the railway station at Tiruvarambur, and, if relief workers were employed in preparing stocks of metal there, we believe that the Tanjore District Board would gladly take large quantities of it for the roads in the western parts of that district at rates which would recoup at least half the relief cost.

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Bill hooks	153
Mamooties	1,370
Crowbars	262

13. The Public Works establishment has been reduced to half its sanctioned strength owing to the transfer of men to famine duty.

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Order—No. 535, Revenue, dated 5th July 1897.

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2. The Collector's attention will be drawn to the remarks in paragraph 10 about the estimates for minor irrigation works and he will be requested to take immediate steps to have them revised. The estimates for Local Fund works should be brought under sanction at once.

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(True Extract.)

for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner.
„ Public Works Department.
„ Collector of Trichinopoly.

Exd. C. M. Thombuswamy.

70 Copies.

Government {1897} of Madras.

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Recd. / Regd. } 1897. — Enclosures / Spare copies

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9. *Famine Programme.*—The famine programme includes works, the assumed cost of which is Rs. 54,02,633 which is sufficient to give employment to 52 per cent. of the population of the district for three months.

The programme is somewhat misleading as it includes two works, one the Ponnéri Reservoir project, Rs. 30,00,000; and the other Kulittalai Kattuvari project, Rupees 45,000; neither of which is available for execution by famine labour. It would take at least a year to complete the investigation necessary for the preparation of the estimate for the former, and the latter does not seem to exist except in name on paper. This at once reduces the total of the programme to Rs. 54,02,633 — 30,45,000 = Rs. 23,57,633.

10. Since the programme was submitted several estimates have been sanctioned and others have been revised, and the following shows the amounts of the estimates sanctioned and which were laid before us :—

Sanctioned.

	Rs.
(1) Irrigation Public Works Department	41,451 *
(2) Irrigation works, Revenue	1,00,277
(3) Local Fund works	1,00,510
(4) Minor Local Fund works	84,247
(5) Forest works	4,000
(6) Miscellaneous	4,34,946
Total ...	7,65,461

Item (2) chiefly comprises estimates for the repair of tank bunds. On examining these we find that a great number of them contain no report on the existing condition of the work and no data on which the estimate is framed; while the dimensions given under height and breadth are out of proportion to each other and are obviously wrong. Some of the estimates are for masonry works; and many of them are for very small amounts, rendering them unsuitable for execution under the rules of the Famine Code. All these estimates require to be revised by a competent officer before the works can be pronounced ready for execution. If the amount for minor irrigation works be omitted from the programme, the total amount of the estimates sanctioned and available for immediate execution is Rs. 6,65,184 or sufficient for 88,691 persons, or 6·4 per cent. of the population, for three months. Under Local Fund works there are many works ready, but not sanctioned. These were laid before us and amount to Rs. 4,43,850. These should at once be brought under sanction, and the amount available for execution will then be Rs. 6,65,184+Rs. 4,43,850 or Rs. 11,09,034 or sufficient for 10·7 per cent. of the population for three months. This, we consider, is ample provision till November next. In addition to this there are proposed works, the total approximate estimate for which amounts to Rupees 42,10,471; † these, we think, need not be considered at present, though, should the south-west monsoon prove unfavourable, as many of the estimates as possible should be prepared and brought under sanction.

† Includes Rs. 30,40,000 for the Ponnéri and Kulittalai projects.

11. There are no works of any magnitude on which large bodies of coolies could be massed, and, should it be found necessary to provide work for a great number of persons for any considerable period, all we can recommend is that they be employed in preparing road metal at quarries in central positions. Stone is available near the railway station at Tiruvarambur, and, if relief workers were employed in preparing stocks of metal there, we believe that the Tanjore District Board would gladly take large quantities of it for the roads in the western parts of that district at rates which would recoup at least half the relief cost.

12. *Tools.*—The tools in store were personally counted by the Executive Engineer on the 16th instant and examined by us on the 24th. The numbers are as per margin, and 3·52 per cent. of the pick-axes and 1·0 per cent. of the mamooties are unserviceable. The supply of tools is altogether inadequate, and we recommend that the same reserve be kept as we stated to be necessary in the case of Chingleput.

Pick-axes	1,814
Bill hooks	153
Mamooties	1,370
Crowbars	262

13. The Public Works establishment has been reduced to half its sanctioned strength owing to the transfer of men to famine duty.

* This figure was not included in the programme and represents the balance of sanctioned estimates in progress.

Order—No. 535, Revenue, dated 5th July 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

2. The Collector's attention will be drawn to the remarks in paragraph 10 about the estimates for minor irrigation works and he will be requested to take immediate steps to have them revised. The estimates for Local Fund works should be brought under sanction at once.

3. The attention of the Famine Commissioner will be drawn to the remarks in paragraph 11.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner.
„ Public Works Department.
„ Collector of Trichinopoly.

Exd. C. M. Thumbuswamy.

70 Copies.