Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No.- 2060 W

DATED 29 July 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Famine Relief Estimates Famine tools &c. Bo.:
Revenue Dept. Acknowledging with thanks Report from the Secretary
Govt. P.O. and the Hon. Member of the Board
of Revenue on — in the Southern Circle Court
&c. &c. Works.

[P.W. 25. 5,000—30-11-96.]

Indexed.

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) Departmental
Current No: 6984

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Read. 17.7. } 1897. *Enclosures* —
Regd. 17.7. } *Spare copies* 16.

G.O., No. 530, 3rd July 1897.

No 2960 W 2 29.7.97

Communicated to the Superintending V Circle.

Cs 23/7/97

T. No

S. S. V Circle with 5 Sec

23/7/97

JULY.

Famine-relief Estimates, Famine Tools, &c.

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O.L.S. 302
R26/7

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following letter from the Hon'ble Colonel D. McNEIL 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 Camp, Cuddalore, 22nd June 1897, Letter H:—

In continuation of our letter G, dated 19th June 1897, we have the honour to submit the following report on the district of South Arcot.

We reached Cuddalore on June 20th, and were met by the Collector and the Executive Engineer. Owing to June 21st and 22nd being public holidays, we were also able to meet all the Divisional officers.

Mr. Castlestuart Stuart, the permanent Collector, has been continuously in the district for nearly four years, and is well acquainted with all parts of it. The Sub-Collector, Mr. Muhammad Raza Khan, has been in charge of his division for nearly three years and knows it thoroughly.

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As in Chingleput and Nellore, the north-east monsoon was very late, the rains in October giving only an average of 3·18 inches against a 20 years' average of 8 inches.

Very heavy rains set in in the middle of November, and the district average of the north-east monsoon shows 30·46 inches against a 20 years' average of 22 inches. The heavy rains did no extensive damage, and the wet crops and late dry crops which they secured were decidedly good.

The early dry crops were short and poor, especially in Tindivanam taluk, which is the poorest and most arid part of the district. February of the current year was marked by an unusual fall of rain, giving a district average of 2·38 inches. This again filled up many of the tanks, produced pasture, and benefited the second and garden crops.

Since February to May 31st the pre-monsoon rains have been unusually heavy in three taluks, and somewhat deficient in others. In the current month the fall has been favourable and well distributed,—the district average from April 1st to June 19th being 4·04 inches, against 3·34 inches, the average of the preceding three years.

3. *Cultivation.*—Both the dry and wet cultivation up to May 31st were well over the average of the last five years, and the current month's sowings will probably show a large excess over the average.

Sowing on a large scale, however, should not be looked for till the middle of July.

Prospects up to date certainly warrant the expectation that the coming early-crop season may be more than ordinarily favourable to agriculture.

4. *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.				Cumbu.			
	For week ending June 19th, 1897.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.	For week ending June 19th, 1897.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.	For week ending June 19th, 1897.	Normal.	Warning.	Scarcity.
Tindivanam	11·4	14·0	11·2	8·4	16·7	28·0	21·0	14·0	16·9	26·0	19·5	13·0
Tiruvannámalai ..	10·9				15·9				16·9			
Tirukkóyilúr	11·4				17·5				16·9			
Villupuram	12·3				17·5				16·9			
Panruti	12·3				19·1				20·1			
Cuddalore	10·5				17·9				17·3			
Tiruppápuliyúr ..	11·4				17·5				16·9			
Porto Novo	11·8				17·5				16·9			
Chidambaram	11·4				17·5				17·7			
Vriddhachalam ..	12·3				22·3				21·6			
Kallakurichi	14·0				22·3				21·6			
District average ..	11·8	..	..	..	18·3	..	..	..	18·2	..	..	..

The district average price of rice has not yet reached even the warning rate. Rice is rather dearer than the warning rate in Cuddalore, where its price is highest. Great quantities of rice are being exported from Cuddalore to Ceylon by sea, and this somehow keeps the retail price above the district average. We learn that there are still large stocks of rice in the town.

As regards the price of dry grains the parts farthest from the railways are best off. In two taluks prices have not reached warning rates. In Tindivanam, the worst part of the district, prices are about half way between warning and scarcity rates. In the taluks of Tindivanam, Tiruvannámalai, Kallakurichi and Vriddhachalam the area cultivated with varagu is greater than the areas of both ragi and cumbu together. Varagu, the cheapest of all the dry grains, is thus very largely consumed, and we have no information as to its price. It is usually alleged that there is no trade in varagu; that it is not commonly offered for sale in the bazaars; but that the small pattadars sell their better grains and keep their stocks of varagu for home use.

5. *Exports and Imports.*—Since February 13th 3·21 lakhs of maunds of grain have been exported by sea and 2·86 lakhs by rail. This is exclusive of exports to Pondicherry. From January to May the French Government has collected duty on our behalf on over 54,000 maunds of rice shipped at Pondicherry. The extraordinary export of rice by sea to Ceylon is, we are informed, due to the fact that the supply usually drawn by Ceylon from the Gódávari delta has this year been diverted northwards by famine prices in that direction. There have been no imports of grain by sea. The imports by rail since the middle of February amount to 52,000 maunds.

6. The current high prices in this district are due entirely to scarcity elsewhere coupled with facilities for exportation by sea and rail. All the local officers are agreed that the district population can subsist easily on its own resources till the next harvest, and that the district will present no cause for anxiety unless the south-west and north-east monsoons should both fail. There seems no ground whatever at present to apprehend the occurrence of such a calamity.

7. *Famine Programme.*—The famine programme includes works, the approximate cost of which is Rs. 38,53,447, sufficient to give employment to 24 per cent. of the population for three months.

The amount of the sanctioned estimates which were laid before us is Rs. 9,84,442. These are ready for immediate execution and may be divided as follows:—

	Rs.
Irrigation works, Public Works Department	1,54,755
Local Fund roads	1,13,141
Minor Irrigation works	7,16,546
Totol ...	9,84,442

This will give employment to 131,312 persons, or 6·3 per cent. of the population, for three months. By far the greater portion of the sanctioned estimates are for minor irrigation works. It was impossible for us to examine each estimate in detail, but from a number of specimens selected at random, we conclude that in many instances the calculations of earth-work are incorrect. The Collector has arranged to have the estimates revised and corrected.

The total number of minor irrigation works estimated for is 1,717; the average cost of each is therefore only Rs. 417, which would employ 55 coolies for three months and the amount of supervision necessary would be so great that it is doubtful if it would be advisable to attempt to carry out the works under the rules of the Famine Code.

8. The amount of the estimates said to be ready for sanction is as follows:—

	Rs.
(1) Irrigation works, Public Works Department	8,75,799 *
(2) Local Fund roads	5,46,075
(3) Minor Local Fund roads	2,07,725
(4) Miscellaneous	6,89,448
Total ...	23,19,047

Under (1) most of the works require further investigation and, as this cannot be done with the present reduced establishment, they should not be depended on for relief purposes.

The estimates under (2) and (3) were laid before us and only require the sanction of the Local Boards, and this the Collector proposes to obtain at once. The estimates under (4) were not available for inspection, as they were in the taluk offices. They are, for a number of small works, which would no doubt be useful for village relief, but they are open to the same objection as that raised in the case of minor irrigation works, viz., that they are too small and scattered to admit of their being carried out under the rules of the Famine Code. As soon as the estimates under (2) and (3) are sanctioned, there will be work to the amount of Rs. 9,84,442 + Rs. 7,53,800, or Rs. 17,38,242, available for immediate execution, and if the sum of Rs. 7,16,546 for minor irrigation works be omitted, the amount available will be Rs. 10,21,696 or sufficient for 6·3 per cent. of the population for three months; and considering the present state of the district, we believe that this is ample provision till next November.

9. There are some works of considerable magnitude on which large bodies of coolies could be massed. These are—

	Rs.
(1) Improving Chidambaram drainage	90,000
(2) Extension of the Buckingham canal from Thambakam to Kottakuppam	4,16,022
(3) Raising the Coleroon left flood bank	1,50,000 †
(4) Repairs to Vadanar channel	63,137
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Total ...	8,06,859

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For works Nos. (3), (4) and (5), the estimates are being prepared by Colonel Smart and we were unable to ascertain in what stage they now are.

* This includes Rs. 4,16,022 for extension of Buckingham canal.

† Entered in the famine programme at Rs. 43,400, but further investigation gives Rs. 1,50,000 as the approximate cost.

Estimates for Nos. (6) and (7) have not been prepared, and without special establishment this cannot be done.

We suggest that the Chief Engineer for Irrigation be asked to give his opinion regarding all these works.

These seven works with five or six of the larger roads would give employment to a considerable number of persons and would not require much supervision.

10. In the—at present unlikely—event of a severe famine in South Arcot, there is, we think, another method by which useful employment might be found for a great number of relief workers in one place.

No stone for roads is procurable in Tanjore, nor throughout the greater part of South Arcot. A plentiful supply exists in the vicinity of the Tirukkóyilúr railway station.

Relief workers might be employed in breaking stone at Tirukkóyilúr, and if the South Indian Railway Company could arrange to transport the broken stone at favourable rates, the stock might be gradually drawn upon by the District Boards of South Arcot and Tanjore for the metalling of their roads. A great part of the outlay on relief might thus be recouped.

We understand that in respect of salubrity, water-supply and suitability for the requirements of a large relief camp, Tirukkóyilúr is favourably situated.

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Order—No. 530, Revenue, dated 3rd July 1897.

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2. The Chief Engineer for Irrigation will be requested to favour Government with his opinion on the seven works referred to in paragraph 9. The Famine Commissioner will note the remarks and suggestions in paragraph 10.

(True Extract.)

for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner.
„ Public Works Department (W.)
„ „ „ (I.).

Exd. C. M Thumbuswam.

70 Copies.

Public Works Department.

Government (1897) of Madras.

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Recd.	1897.	*Enclosures*
Regd.		*Spare copies*

G.O., No. 530, 3rd July 1897.

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Communicated to the
S. & V. circle.

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Hdy D. M. C
3

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(True Extract.)

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

To the Famine Commissioner.
" Public Works Department (W.).
" " " (I.).

Ed C. M. Thumbuswamy.

70 Copies.