

Public Works (1898) Department.

G.O., No. 277 W

DATED 2nd February 1898

[Despatch Abstract.]

Condition of the South Arcot Dk: Insr. Revenue
Dept. recording Board's Insr. submitting for the
information of Govt. report from the Collector regarding the
—, conld to the S.E. Circle.

2/2/98

Public works (1981) Department
urgent

Government {1898} of Madras.
REVENUE.

Spare copies 16

G.O., No. 38, 18th January 1898.

38, 16th January 1898
B. No 277 W 82.2.98
Communicated
to the Supt. Engineer
JANUARY. 1 Circle

S. & C. Co. ✓
C. & S. Co. ✓
L. S. ✓

Condition of the South Arcot District.

Recording Board's Proceedings submitting, for the information of Government, report from the Collector regarding the —.

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

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), Mis. No. 97, dated 10th January 1898 :—

Read—the following letter from the Collector of South Arcot, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 3rd January 1898, C. No. 965-V. :—

I have the honour to submit the report promised in my telegram of the 24th ultimo replying to Board's telegram, dated 14th instant, and Board's Proceedings, Mis. No. 9923, dated 14th December 1897.

My Head Assistant Collector, who has two years' experience of his division, does not consider that there will be any necessity for relief works in either of his taluks.

The General Duties Deputy Collector, who has been three years in charge of his division, does not apprehend distress severe enough to call for Government relief, and considers that the ordinary Local Fund and Minor Irrigation works will afford all that is necessary for the present.

After a careful study of the season and outturn reports, I find no reason to doubt the soundness of these officers' opinions. It will probably be necessary to grant remission for loss of crops under some rain-fed tanks, but the probable amount of such remission I am not yet in a position to estimate, as the rains of the 18th, 20th and 31st, which have been general all over the district though not uniformly plentiful, will have revived crops reported to be withering and replenished tanks.

My Sub-Collector having only just joined has no personal experience of his division which comprises the taluks of Tiruvannámalai, Tindivanam and Villupuram, so that for this division I have to rely on the report of the Tahsildars.

Tiruvannámalai taluk has been favoured with more than the average rainfall, but unfortunately the rains were not altogether seasonable.

The Tahsildar, however, does not anticipate any need to open relief works. The only portion of the taluk mentioned as likely to need careful watching being the tract bordering on the Thenmalai and Chekkadai hills. But it is reported that the inhabitants of this tract find sufficient employment in cutting and removing forest produce under minor forest produce contractors.

The late Sub-Collector Muhammad Raza Khan told me before he left that, so far as he had seen up to this (9th December), there would be no need for relief operations in that taluk.

As regards Tindivanam taluk.—The cumbu and ragi harvest over an area of 41,500 acres has been generally good, 50 per cent. of the outturn being reported at from 5 to 12 annas. The varagu crop, however, covers an area of 73,375 acres, of which only 1,650 had been harvested to the end of November and the outturn on this acreage is likely to be poor. Some applications for "dry" remission have already been received from the Gingee division.

The Tahsildar says he has inspected the greater part of the taluk, and is of opinion that even if no more rain falls it will not be necessary to start any relief works after the harvest season is over and until the south-west monsoon breaks. The cooly classes are getting labour now, and after the harvest will be employed in cutting fire-wood and working for big pattadars. The Minor Irrigation and Sanitary works

provided for in the budget will, in case of necessity, give additional labour to the working classes. The yield of cumbu and ragi having been fairly good, stocks will last out.

The Tahsildar of Villupuram is M.R.Ry. V. Ramachandra Row Avergal who was lately Deputy Collector, General Duties, Polur Division, North Arcot. He has been only two months in the Villupuram taluk. He reports that the cumbu harvest yielded 8-16 annas over an area of 15,000 acres as against 7,800 acres last year, the total area under this crop being 27,436 acres. Ragi has been harvested over 12,750 acres and the yield for the most part is from 5-16 annas. The standing crops on 5,400 acres will yield generally according to the Tahsildar's estimate, an 8-anna crop.

The standing crop of varagu (23,000 acres) will yield from 4 to 6 annas at the most. The area under paddy exceeds by 24,000 acres, the extent cropped last year. The Tahsildar says there may be entire failure over about 10,000 acres (dry and wet), but he expects an outturn of at least 8 annas on 50,000 acres.

The failure of crops is expected to occur in the Valavanur and Vanier firkas. Even in ordinary years, there would not be much employment for labourers in agricultural operations between April and July, but they find odd job to do and the majority are kept by their masters. The Tahsildar, however, anticipates that it may be necessary to open relief works in the ensuing year for the reason that the varagu harvest will be poor and that prices of food-grains will remain high owing to depletion of stocks. The favourable character of the south-west monsoon and the anticipations that were framed of bumper crop having led to large transactions in food-grains.

The total population of the two firkas is 126,000, of whom it is estimated that 5,000 persons may come on relief works. The cost of maintaining the number for three months would amount to Rs. 37,500 at $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas per head per diem. Tools and establishment are reckoned at Rs. 4,056 more, making altogether Rs. 41,556.

This estimate is, in my opinion, altogether too high, assuming as it does that 4 per cent. of the population of the affected tract will need relief, whereas, according to the statistical atlas, the percentage of population relieved during the famine of 1866-67 was .16, and that during the famine of 1876-78, 1.27. The highest percentage reached during the latter period being 5.92 in September 1877.

I would reduce therefore the number likely to require relief to 1,000, and for this number I am of opinion that relief works could be provided by the district board without having recourse to Provincial funds.

1,000 persons at $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas per head per diem for three months would cost Rs. 7,500.

There remains the Cuddalore taluk to be considered. The Tahsildar who has visited nearly all parts of the taluk does not think it likely any relief works will be required.

The statistics of crop outturn for the taluk are as under :—

	Sown.	Harvest.	Standing.
	ACS.	ACS.	ACS.
Cumbu	34,608	34,608	..
Ragi	8,813	5,209	3,604
Varagu	21,610	416	21,194

Some petitions for dry remissions have been received from Vellakarai and Ramapuram Vattams, but the Tahsildar who made a careful inspection under my orders reports that he found the standing crops in fair condition.

There was a very fair harvest last year throughout the district and the early crops this year have yielded well.

The export of food-grains from the district has been largely in excess of previous years and the ryots must have made large profits at the high prices which have been ruling.

The general conclusion, therefore, at which I have arrived is that assuming the south-west monsoon to break at the proper time, no allotment from Provincial funds will be needed for this district.

Tenders for Local Fund road works have already been accepted, and the District Board Engineer will make arrangements to get the contractors to commence work as early in April as possible. Minor Irrigation works can also be found in all parts likely to be affected. The estimates are at present under scrutiny, and when approved the works will be held over for execution departmentally so that they may serve as test works.

Resolution—Mis. No. 97, dated 10th January 1898.

The report read above regarding the condition of the South Arcot district will be submitted for the information of Government.

2. The Collector states that there was a very fair harvest last year throughout the district, and that the early crops this year have yielded well. The estimated loss of crops now on the ground, though considerable, is not generally serious. There may be demand for employment in parts of the district between April and July next, but this can be met by an expansion of the ordinary Local Fund and Minor Irrigation works, and the Collector has made the necessary arrangements for starting them when required.

3. In these circumstances the Collector considers that, assuming a normal south-west monsoon, there will be no necessity for relief operations under the Famine Code being undertaken in the district, and that no allotment of funds under "33. Famine Relief" is therefore required for 1898-99.

4. Dry remissions may be required to some extent, and the Collector should see that the detailed inspection of the crops in the affected parts as contemplated in section 18 of the Famine Code is made at an early date.

5. The Collector is requested to submit a further report on the condition of the district by 1st March next.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed)

L. E. BUCKLEY,
Famine Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Copy to the Collector of South Arcot.

ORDER—No. 38, Revenue, dated 18th January 1898.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement,
Land Records and Agriculture).
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Public Works Department.

Exd. Shaik Karim.

70 Copies.