

Public Works (1899) Department.

G.O., No.

364 ✓

DATED

18 April 1899.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Revenue Report of Inspection of Mangrove Works

Gard. J. J. review of the ——— as Bengal for
1897-98, communi. called to the Chief Engineer for
Inspection.

~~W. G. 9~~

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date
3778	95	8-98.	

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

No. 247 C. W. I.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

CIVIL WORKS.

Irrigation.

Simla, the 21st March 1899.

Review of the Revenue Report of Irrigation and Navigation Works in Bengal for 1897-98.

Read—

The Revenue Report of Irrigation Works in Bengal for 1897-98, and the Resolution thereon by the Government of Bengal, No. 19 L. A., dated the 7th January 1899.

OBSERVATIONS.—The actual expenditure during the year against capital account amounted to Rs. 5,39,232, of which Rs. 4,39,638 were expended in practically completing the canalization of the Bhangore Khall of the Calcutta and Eastern Canals. On the Irrigation Works the largest amount expended was Rs. 65,112 on the Orissa canals in the restoration of a flood embankment. Some small works chargeable to the capital account were executed on the Sone and Midnapur canals, but the writing off of more than a lakh of rupees against suspense account and tools and plant brought down the net expenditure of the year on all works to Rs. 4,32,213.

2. The total area irrigated from all works was 727,292 acres and though less than the 830,761 acres irrigated in 1896-97 was 84,696 acres in excess of the average of the last nine years.

The Major Works contributed 701,253 acres towards the total and 433,445 acres of this area were watered from the Sone canals. Compared with the figures of 1896-97, the area irrigated by the Sone canals shows a falling off of 121,711 acres or nearly 22 per cent.; but the abnormally deficient rainfall in that year makes a comparison with it of little value. The area on the other hand compares favourably with the irrigation of years previous to 1896-97, being 40,522 acres in excess of the average of 5 years ending with 1895-96.

The Orissa canals irrigated 195,602 acres, surpassing all previous records, the highest of which was 188,587 in 1896-97, while the Midnapur canal with 72,206 acres did better than last year though not so well as in any of the four years 1890 to 1894.

The areas of the principal crops irrigated by all the canals were as follows:—

	Acres.
Rice	574,632
Wheat	28,215
Barley	15,927
Sugarcane	31,749

The estimated value of all the crops irrigated exceeds 282½ lakhs of rupees, the value per acre being Rs. 38.85. The average rate levied for the use of water was Rs. 1.88 or one-twentieth of the value of the crop.

3. For the Major Works the working expenses amounted to Rs. 14,37,681. Though somewhat in excess of the expenditure of the two previous years they were not above the normal. For the three Irrigation Systems the expenditure was equivalent to Rs. 1.9 per acre irrigated as compared with Rs. 1.6 in 1896-97 and Rs. 2.3 the average of the previous nine years.

On Minor Works there was a satisfactory reduction of working expenses, especially in the case of the Orissa Coast Canal.

On all works, Irrigation as well as Navigation, the working expenses amounted to 67.4 per cent. of the gross revenue realised during the year.

4. The financial results of the Bengal canals of which Capital Accounts are kept, in operation during the year, may be summarised as follows:—

	Capital outlay to end of year.	Net revenue.	Return on capital outlay.
	Rs.	Rs.	Per cent.
Major works ...	6,41,74,359	7,34,501	11.4
Minor works ...	1,16,19,016	2,36,017	20.3

The gross revenue derived from Major Works amounted to Rs. 21,72,182 exceeding last year's receipts, which were then the highest on record, by nearly 3 lakhs. This large increase was due in a great measure to the large rabi irrigation from the Sone canals of the previous year the assessments on which were collected in 1897-98, but there was also a satisfactory increase in the gross receipts collected on the Orissa canals, the figures being Rs. 5,51,924 against Rs. 4,72,947 of the previous year, due entirely to the increase in the kharif irrigation.

As a result of the large gross revenue derived from Major Works the net revenue rose from Rs. 1,23,389 in 1895-96 and Rs. 5,35,498 in 1896-97 to Rs. 7,34,501 in the year under review, while the average for the nine years ending 1896-97 amounted to Rs. 1,42,495 only.

The Government of India welcome the improvement shown by these figures. Under Minor Works there was also a satisfactory increase in the net revenue, though this was due to a reduction in the working expenses, the gross receipts having fallen from Rs. 5,45,047 and Rs. 5,27,013 in 1895-96 and 1896-97 respectively to Rs. 5,14,213 in 1897-98.

5. The Government of India notice with satisfaction the improvement in the financial working of the Hijili Tidal canal and the Orissa Coast canal, but it is observed that the increase in the receipts on both canals is due to fewer interruptions of traffic by closures than to an increase in the number or tonnage of boats plying, there being in fact a slight decrease under both heads. There was a satisfactory decrease in working expenses on all the purely Navigation works, which amounted in the aggregate to Rs. 78,854.

GENERAL REMARKS.

6. The results of the working of Bengal canals during 1897-98 are on the whole very satisfactory, although the rainfall was plentiful and generally well distributed, and the seasons therefore not favourable to irrigation. The area irrigated was above the normal, and the Local Government concludes that the cultivators on the canal areas have come to realize the great value to their crops of an unfailing water-supply. The working expenses were not excessive, though they continued high on the Orissa canals, and the net revenue from all the canals was largely in excess of any previous record. The continued decrease in the cost of silt and weed clearances on the Sone canals is noted with satisfaction. The work of collection was performed very efficiently,

and the fact that 99.87 per cent. and 99.79 per. cent of the total demand were collected on the Sone and Orissa canals respectively is evidence of the care bestowed on this branch of the administration and reflects great credit on those responsible for it. The steady decrease in the number of cases in which resort was had to the certificate procedure for realising water rates is also a matter for congratulation. The experiments on the outturn of crops on irrigated lands are now, it is understood, made systematically under a code of rules and the recorded outturns may therefore be accepted as trustworthy.

7. The Government of India desire to record their appreciation of the results attained during the year, and of the services rendered by Colonel McArthur and the officers named in the concluding paragraph of the Local Government's Resolution and by the officers of the Irrigation Department by whom they were assisted.

ORDER.—Ordered, that copies of this Review and of the Report be forwarded to the Revenue and Agricultural Department for information.

Ordered also, that copies of this Review be forwarded to the Government of Bengal for information and guidance, and to the Local Governments and Administrations in the Public Works Department, noted on the margin, for information.

The Governments of Madras, Bombay, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the Punjab and Burma,
The Chief Commissioners, Central Provinces, Assam, and Coorg.
The Residents at Hyderabad and Mysore.
The Agents to the Governor General in Central India, Rajputana, and Baluchistan.

Ordered further, that this Review be published in the *Gazette of India*, and that copies of this Review and of the Report and the Resolution by the Government of Bengal be forwarded to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

J. Higham.

Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

*To
The Joint Secretary to the Govt
of Madras P.W.D.
with bse*