M.R.O. 14-5,450—22-10-25.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No.	308	Press ~~Mis.~~
57-58 Dated	3-2-1868	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 3rd February 1868.

No. 57. Read the following:—

MEMORANDUM.

1. POLUR TALOOK.—The talook of Polur is the northern side of the Cheyar valley, (the river crosses the eastern extremity,) lying between the river and the lower spurs of the Javadi hills and rocky range near Vaniembady. It is in fact the northern and hilly extremity of the Trinomallay country. An affluent, the Seeyar, waters the upper part of the talook. Near the hills the country present a hilly and rocky aspect; much of the centre and southern area of the talook consists, to a great extent, of high, open, uncultivated tracts, with intervening low slips of cultivation. As yet the rivers do very little for the country; the cultivation is mainly dependent on rain-fall to fill the tanks. These are, with fewer exceptions than usual, small and shallow, and are rarely well filled.

Area 317 square-miles. Population 92,974 (or 293 to a square-mile). Taxes raised in 1866 Rupees 1,65,000. Head of cattle 29,202.

2. RAIN-FALL AND WATER SUPPLY.—The carelessness in keeping the Rain Gauge at the Polur Talook Office has rendered the official register of the year entirely useless. It is shewn in the margin, and carries its own refutation. Seven and a quarter (7·22) inches are entered against August and 6·2 inches against October, a fall which would probably have sufficed to fill every tank in the talook, to send full floods down its rivers and streams, and given one of the most flourishing seasons on record. The village accounts, however, afford the means of correcting these blunders. These have been very carefully examined and compared by me; and the result confirms the representations of the people, that the rain-fall of the year, very partial and irregular in its distribution, was not one-fourth of the fall of ordinary years. There has been no rain since early in November. The Cheyar and its affluent the Seeyar had two small one-eighth freshes in September and October from rain which fell in the Javadi hills; but the fall throughout in the low country was most insignificant, and not sufficient to supply more than two months' water to the most favorably situated tanks. The cultivation of the talook is carried on under 257 tanks. The failure of rain has affected these most seriously. A large proportion received no water at all, and the rest got but one and two months' water in

Months.	Average rain-fall for 5 years, i. e., 1861-62, 1862-63, 1864-65, 1865-66, and 1866-67.	Rain-fall for 1867-68.
	Inches.	Inches.
1. April ...	·446	.....
2. May	2·555	2·14
3. June... ...	1·947	.....
4. July	2·66	·92
5. August ...	4·797	7·22
6. September ...	4·121	2·
7. October ...	5·53	6·2
8. November ...	5·799	1·2
9. December ...	2·035	.....
10. January ..	·443	.....
11. February ...	·222	.....
12. March ...	.....	.....
Total...	30·555	19·68

The village registration by Shavi (on the principle of registering the penetrating effect of the rain) is sufficiently accurate for practical purposes, and for comparison over a series of years is a very useful statement.

N. B.—The Range Officer, Mr. Bevan, states that his observations at the Cheyar anicut led him to the conviction that not more than one-eighth of the usual rain-fall took place.

Tanks ...	...	...	257
Spring channels	...	...	11
River do.	..	...	27
Small anicuts	...	...	11
Wells ...	...	...	6,844

irregular dribblets at a time. None filled. The large Polur tank, which usually receives a twelve months' supply, got about two and a half months' water by extraordinary exertions of the people in arresting part of the very small freshes in the Cheyar and Manjelar rivers. It has been dry for a month already. The Mandicollatur tank got "two months'" water also from the Cheyar. The Alliabad tank, which should be supplied by the new anicut on the Seeyar, at Padivedu, remained absolutely dry, and the Vellur tank received only two months' water from the anicut. Thus the most favorably situated tanks got no sufficient supply to commence early agriculture, or to carry even a contracted area of the first crops to maturity. Much wet land was, therefore, brought under dry crops, and the limited rice, cholum, &c., cultivation on wet land has been mainly dependent on wells throughout the season, and is now absolutely so. A very small yield has been the consequence, and over a considerable area the crop has withered *(Shavi)*. The wells are failing, and fears are entertained for much of the unavoidably late sowings. The agricultural labor and cost of production has been largely increased.

N. B.—The people estimate that one man will distribute water and weed a cawny; whereas at least three or four are required for the picotta with the deep lift that now prevails.

	Holdings of Farmers.		Untilled in 1867		Estimated (Shavi) withered crops in December.
	In 1866.	In 1867.	Area.	Per cent.	
	Cawnies.	Cawnies.	Cawnies.		
Dry.	27,169	31,185	3,255	11·9	.....
Wet.	13,848	15,950	3,848	27·8	3,10)
Total	41,017	47,135	7,103	15·0	.....

3. Cultivation.—The obligations entered into by the farmers is shewn in the margin as they appear from the accounts. False expectations led, as usual, to a large area being undertaken; of which, however, fifteen per cent. was not tilled (*Turras*), viz., 27·8 per cent. of the wet land and 12 per cent. of dry lands. Of the wet lands from one-third to one-half seems to have been put under inferior dry crops, instead of rice, from want of water, and the whole cultivation was thrown late. The extent of withered crop (Shavi) already declared is about 3,500 cawnies of the wet lands, that on dry lands has not yet been ascertained. The standing crops are poor, and in many parts sickly. A very limited area has been brought under second crop, as the tanks are dry and wells low or failing. The highest out-turn declared of rice is one-half the usual crop in favorable localities. In most villages it is alleged to have been much less. Cholum and Waragu sown in wet lands yielded the same proportion. Raggy sown on wet lands suffered by blight, and is alleged to have yielded less than a fourth crop. The out-turn of the crops on dry lands has been very indifferent. Of Cumboo and Cholum the average yield was from one-eighth to one-fourth, the crop of ordinary seasons. Waragu failed entirely in the southern part of the talook, and elsewhere produced about one-eighth to one-fourth crop. Castor-oil will give a very small out-turn, and gram has failed entirely. Sami is not largely cultivated in this talook, but has given a very poor out-turn.

4. Cattle and farm stock.—The cattle are, on the whole, healthy, but there are indications of incipient disease of a milder form *(Komari)*. The stocks of fodder are very low, and the people do not estimate them at more than sufficient for

one month or six weeks. The pasture even on the hills is parched and scarce. Tanks are dry, wells and water holes very low, and hill streams failing. The cultivators are therefore naturally anxious on the score of their farm-stock, and the prospects are gloomy, unless rain fall. I have allotted 1,000 Rupees to the purpose of clearing wells, and improving hill-water holes, and the like. Expenditure in providing water in the Polur hills and jungles will also afford relief for the cattle of the Trinomalay talook of South Arcot, for large numbers of the latter are turned out to graze during the hot weather in these forests.

5. Prices.—The stocks of grain in Polur, notwithstanding the fine harvest of last year, are, I fear, very small. There has been a heavy drain on this talook for the past two months towards the Vellore market, and Arcot and Vellore Railway stations, leading to a reduction of stocks which the ryots are now greatly regretting. But prices continue singularly steady, as the market rates at Polur, as shewn in the margin, (if accurate, on which point I am not quite clear,) would indicate. There are, of course, no rail-borne importations to Polur, and a rapid rise is anticipated.

	3rd week in Dec. 1867.	3rd week in January 1868.
	Per Madras Garce.	
	Rs.	Rs.
2nd sort rice.	353	353
Raggy ...	206	247
Cumboo ...	200	225

6. Labor and condition of the People.—The population of the Polur talook is almost entirely agricultural, and comparatively impoverished. There are no manufactures of any importance, and only one centre of trade (Polur town). For years (last year excepted) the seasons have been thoroughly bad, and this talook suffered excessively during the famine year, from the effects of which it has hardly yet recovered. The condition of its tanks and channels is bad, and a large proportion of them are so seriously out of repair as to require partial re-construction. In a few large villages, such as Polur, Vellur, Alliabad, Mandicollatur, and Pelasur, &c., a few of the landed proprietors are in a condition to live on rents *(Warum)*, and in these villages about three-fourths of the land is in the hands of a peasant tenantry, with whom the Puttahdars divide equally the produce. But throughout the talook the bulk of the cultivators are laboring peasantry with little capital, and living from year to year on the produce of their small holdings. On all these and on the peasant tenantry, the disasters of the season must tell severely, and as the season advances many will probably be, indeed they are now, seeking wages. Agricultural employment (watering and weeding crops, &c.,) is gradually ceasing, and the supply of labor on works now in progress from unexpended balances is increasing. I submit a budget of works to be undertaken as emergency developes itself. The work, however, which will secure comparative prosperity in this sorely-neglected talook, is the anicut across the Cheyaur at Mambakum, already surveyed and estimated for. It is estimated that upwards of eighty villages* in this talook (exclusive of the villages to be watered in the Wan-

	Rs.
Communications	6,500
Irrigation	18,121
Miscellaneous	1,000

*N. B.—No. of villages in the Talook 226.

dewash and Trinomallay (South Arcot) talóoks) will come at once under its influence and secure or yield an additional annual revenue of 30,000 Rupees. This work is absolutely indispensable. We must no longer expose the people to the recurrence of such disasters as that of 1866 and the risk which this season is likely to produce. The losses to the people and the State of these two seasons would more than cover the contemplated expenditure. I recommend that this work be pressed forward by every means within the power of Government. The collection of materials and laying the foundation of the anicut would give suitable employment at this season. Tanks to which the water will flow are in a great measure ascertained, and expenditure on these is but an instalment of the indispensable outlay on this all-important work. In submitting the estimates for tanks to be repaired, I have kept this in view, and, if the need arise, this outlay may be increased with permanent benefit.

7. ALMS HOUSES.—I agree with the local officers that there is no immediate necessity for opening relief houses in this talook; but I think that the necessity will soon arise. In the meantime, the local officers are carefully observing the condition of the indigent poor; and I have urged on the Revenue and Village officers the duty of specially watching infant life amongst this class. For in times of distress in India the crop of infant-life, of the year and often of several previous seasons, withers away amongst the poor almost unobserved.

8. WANDEWASH TALOOK.—I have not been able to examine the Wandewash talook, but my Assistant, Mr. Lee Warner, has already proceeded thither; and I have been in personal communication with Mr. Comyn and the Rango officer. The talook is generally a prosperous one, and its population, as a body, is more wealthy and flourishing. There is not, therefore, such urgent necessity for remedial measures. There has been a very deficient rain-fall, though not quite to the same extent as in Polur; and some tanks received water from the Cheyar anicut. I submit the budget of works to be undertaken or supplemented from special funds, which will employ the indigent poor as emergency arises. Several of the works are already in hand.

Area 412 square-miles. Population 133,982 (325 to the square-mile). Head of cattle 55,853. Taxes raised in 1866, Rupees 3,01,000.

	Rs.
Communication	3,000
Irrigation	7,625
Miscellaneous	500

9. VELLORE TALOOK.—The Acting Sub-Collector and myself have made a careful inspection of the Vellore talook, which is in general a very prosperous one, and of which the irrigation is good. But during this season it has suffered in common with other parts of the district, although we think in a less degree than the adjoining talooks of Gudiattum and Polur. Its population is certainly far more able to bear any coming pressure than will be the case with the people of Polur. I do not propose here to enter into any details, as I could but repeat, happily in modified terms, much that has been said regarding the condition of talooks whose losses have had to be placed more prominently under the notice

Area 263 square-miles. Population 148,412 (554 to the square-mile). Head of cattle 50,136. Taxes raised in 1866, Rupees 2,04,000.

of Government. We have carefully ascertained in which parts of the talook distress is most likely to arise, which will be in the far western corner, and in the neighbourhood of the Vaniembady ghaut. We have prepared a budget of works which will afford employment to the indigent poor of those localities. Public health is good, and the farm-stock is still free from disease; but the stocks of fodder and pasture, as elsewhere, are of course low and very scanty. Prices keep at a reasonable figure, and the bazaars at Vellore continue well supplied. The Acting Sub-Collector and myself have taken full notes of our inquiry, and should more detailed information be required it can easily be supplied.

	Rs.
Communication	2,000
Irrigation	6,679
Miscellaneous	500

10. WALLAJAH AND ARCOT TALOOKS.—I purpose leaving the talooks of Wallajah and Arcot, in which no emergency has arisen, entirely to the local officers, under whose immediate eye they are, as I consider that my time may now be more advantageously employed elsewhere.

11. CRIME.—There has been no increase of crime in any part of the district.

12. The last reports from Kungundi are very unfavorable; and Mr. Wilkinson has proceeded thither with money, which I have drawn from the General Famine Relief Funds, in case he should find it necessary to establish relief-houses at once at Coopam and Kristnapuram. Operations are already being pushed forward on the Coopam and Kristnapuram section of the Venkatagiricotta road.

13. Mr. Gibson reports from Palmanair that the people are still in fair condition, and the works are going forward; that the cattle keep healthy on the whole, and that he is proceeding to Punganur.

14. Mr. Comyn has returned to his division, and the Collector has transferred the Jammabundy of the Gudiattum talook to him, as his acquaintance with its circumstances is complete.

15. The following shews the total amount of the budgets submitted by me. It comprises the allotments from special funds for the whole district, with the exception of the Arcot and Wallajah talooks, where nothing emergent will arise for a time, if at all:—

	Rs.
Palmanair, with the Zemindaries of Punganur and Kungundi...	14,460
Chendragherry, with the Zemindaries of Calastry and Carvaitnuggur	9,874
Chittoor	8,945
Gudiattum	20,060
Polur...	25,621
Wandewash	11,125
Vellore	9,179
Total...	99,264

16. Of these, the Palmanair and Gudiattum works have been put in hand. In Polur, works to the extent of 10,000 Rupees will immediately go forward, and 5,000 Rupees of works in Chendragherri and Vellore and Wandewash respectively. The Collector has selected the works in the order of their importance, and with reference to local circumstances.

WALLAJAH,
22nd January 1868.

(Signed) W. ROBINSON,
Acting 3rd Member of the Board of Revenue.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 3rd February 1868.

P. S.—Referring to G. O., No. 178, dated 22nd instant, I may add that the works selected for North Arcot District are expansive. The allotments for communications are partial, and may be extended on the same works as emergency arises. The irrigation and miscellaneous works adopted are works to which partial allotments can be made, and can be extended, or there are other works of the same kind arranged for in the same neighbourhoods to which further grants may be applied. Further budgets are cut out.

23*rd January* 1868.

No. 58. ORDER THEREON, 3rd February 1868, No. 308.

Miscellaneous.

1. The Government are glad to learn from the foregoing report that, except possibly in the Kungundi Zemindari, no immediate necessity exists anywhere for establishing a system of relief by alms-giving in the North Arcot District, and that there has been no increase in crime consequent on distress.

2. They approve and sanction the arrangements Mr. Robinson has made for giving employment to the laboring poor, and concur with him in thinking that his attention may now be turned to the adjoining districts.

3. The question of pressing forward the Mambakum anicut scheme will be considered in the Department Public Works. The Government are aware that its probable effect on irrigation works already existing on the same river needs to be carefully scrutinized.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,

Secretary to Government.

To W. Robinson, Esq.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Accountant General.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Collector of North Arcot.
,, the Famine Relief Committee.
,, the Editors' Table.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

5

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Cattle and Farm Stock.

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Prices

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Communication - 6,[illegible]0
Irrigation 18,121
Miscellaneous 1000

25,[illegible]

Construction

Anikut across the Cheyar at Mambakum already surveyed and estimated for. It is estimated that upwards of 80 villages in this taluq (extensive of the villages to be watered in the Wandiwash and Trinomallay (Arcot) talugs) will come at once under its influence and secure or yield an additional annual Revenue of 30,000 Rs. This work is absolutely indispensable. We must no longer expose the people to the recurrence of such disasters as that of 1866 and the risk which this season is likely to produce. The losses to the people and the State of these two seasons would more

NB. No of Villages in the Taluq 226

Part of the [illegible]

Reported to England
Dy 11th February No 7 of 1868 Mis.

Revenue 1868 Nov.
Rlo. of Govt. for Febry
No. 213.

Memo=

From

The Dy 3d Member of the
Bd of Revenue —

Dated 22d Day 68.
Received 24th
Dr.

Memorandum
on the Polur Talook in
N. Arcot.

S. R. No. 308. 3d July

No 57.

C. 26/1/68—250

Revenue Department

No 308.

Proceedings of the Madras Government

Under date the 3d July 1868.

Read the fol.
=lowing from W. Robinson
Esquire. Actg 3d Member
Board of Revenue.

Memorandum on the Polur
Talook in North Arcot — (Here enter 22d Janry 1868)

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1 Apply to W. Robinson Esqre Dept 4
21 Opin — Ad Dept
Copy to Acct Genl
4 — Board
4 — Collrs of N. Arcot
1 — Famine Relief Committee
4 — Orders Table Dt

Reported to England
Dl 11th Febuary No 37 of 1868 Mis

Recd 1868. Dept.
Dis: of Govt. for Feby

No 308.

Dis: of the Madras
Government
dd 3rd February 68.

No 57 058.