MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1366 Press Mis.

379—381

Dated 17th May 1869

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Read the following :—

No. 379. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 17th March 1869.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Camp at Darojee, Talook Hospet, 27th November 1868, No. 290.

In continuation of my letter No. 270 of the 3rd instant, I have the honor, at the request of the Superintending Engineer, conveyed in his letter No. 2,926, dated 17th instant, to forward for the information of the Board of Revenue, the correspondence which has passed between us relative to the Rampoor Channel in the Adony Talook of this district. It is of so voluminous a nature that, as I have only a portion of the establishment out with me, I have taken the liberty of transmitting the original letters, which I request may be returned when no longer required.

2. I did not submit these letters with my previous communication, as they merely referred to a particular case, whilst those forwarded were quite sufficient to show the matter at issue between us. As however Major Moberly wishes the Board to see them also, I have no alternative but to transmit them. The Board will see from this correspondence what actually did occur in consequence of the Public Works Department asserting its independence of the control of the Revenue Officers.

In his letter to the Board, dated 3rd November last, No. 270, the Collector of Bellary alluding cursorily to loss of crop sustained last Fusly by the ryots of Rampoor in the Adony Talook, recommended that certain stated dates and periods should be fixed for the clearance of the Toombuddra Channels. The Board, in their Proceedings of the 22nd December last, supported the recommendation.

2. With his present letter, the Collector, at the request of the Superintending Engineer, forwards the correspondence which took place regarding the Rampoor Channel.

3. The Board did not attach any importance to the Collector's incidental allusion to this particular channel, and their recommendation was general and based on general considerations. The case of the channel seems to illustrate so forcibly the necessity of the measure recommended by the Board, that they proceeded to lay the correspondence before Government.

4. The following is a succinct statement of the case, as gleaned from the correspondence.

5. On the 12th December 1867, the Village Officers reported to the Tahsildar that the cultivation season was at hand and the clearance of the channel had not been commenced.

6. The Tahsildar wrote to the Range Officer, Mr. Claridge on the 18th idem.

7. The ryots repeated their representation on the 31st idem, and the Tasildar again wrote to Mr. Claridge on the 4th January. The Deputy Collector of the Division also wrote to Mr. Claridge on the 6th and 25th January.

8. No reply seems to have been made to these four requisitions.

9. On the 25th January, a notice appeared in the *District Gazette*, stating that the channels would be closed from the 22nd idem. They were closed on the 2nd February and remained closed till the 22nd idem.

10. The cultivation of the second crop is commenced about the end of January, sowing is completed by the end of February, and the crop is reaped in June. It is obvious, therefore, that closing the channels from the 2nd to the 22nd February, deprived the ryots of a month in which the preparation of the soil by ploughing, etc., had to be carried out, and it is stated by the Collector, as a matter of fact, that the ryots in this instance lost their second crop, in consequence of this delay.

11. Mr. Claridge's defence is represented to have been—

I. That he received the requisitions during the Xmas holidays.

II. That the clearances were not accomplished earlier in previous years.

III. That the Tahsildar out of ill-will induced the ryots to abstain from growing a second crop, and to complain.

12. The first plea has been disallowed by the Superintending Engineer, and Mr. Claridge has been severely censured by him. The second plea the Superintending Engineer declares to be correct, and his statement cannot be questioned. The matter, however, is of secondary consequence. Mr. Claridge received ample notice, and should not have lost six weeks of valuable time by inaction, where the interest of the Government and people were so deeply concerned.

13. To the third plea the Superintending Engineer attaches weight, but the whole of the attendant circumstances of the case are adverse to it. The frequent complaints of the ryots, the Tahsildar's repeated application that the clearance might be commenced, the importunate demands of the ryots for water, brought to a climax by their forcibly endeavoring to admit water into the channel, their alleged offer to do the work themselves for somewhat less than the estimate, leave no room for doubt that they were thoroughly in earnest in the desire to obtain irrigation for their crops, and render it improbable in the extreme, that they sacrificed a valuable crop to please the Tahsildar. The Collector has properly warned the Tahsildar of the serious consequences of hostility to the Public Works Department, but in this case there certainly is no ground for imputing improper motives to him, for he did all he could to get the work begun in time. Charges of this nature are easily made and difficult to disprove, and it is obvious that if lightly entertained, the result will be to deter public Officers from doing their duty.

NOTE.—The entry in the Diary of the Talook Overseer, Mr. Wade, is worthy of remark as evincing singular inability to appreciate the position of the people. The Reddy of Rampoor "and a number of his villagers begged that the work might be suspended for two days, and water let down the channel to *save the village from ruin*. Half a day, *lost* before the Reddy could be convinced of the hopelessness of his request."
Superintending Engineer's letter to Collector, dated 13th May 1868, No 475, paragraph 10.

14. There is a further allegation supported to a certain degree by the report of the Assistant Collector, Mr. Buick, that the clearance after all was inefficiently performed, and the 1st crop of last Fusly endangered in consequence; but as this does not bear on the question of assigning certain dates for closing and opening, and the Superintending Engineer is the proper Officer to enquire into and dispose of this matter, it is unnecessary for the Board to discuss it.

15. It seems to the Board, that the ryotsare justly entitled to remission of the water-rate on the second crop. The rule is, that full remission should be granted for entire loss of Nunjah crop by deficiency of water not caused by the ryots themselves. In this case they did all they could to obtain water, resorting even to criminal force for the purpose. The argument, that the channels were not opened sooner last year is of no validity, as the claim turns on the presence or absence of means of irrigation. If they had no water and no crop last year and yet were made to pay for water, the charge was at variance with the rules and inequitable.

16. The Board regret that in advocating the cause of the ryots as he was bound to do, the Collector should have made such sweeping complaints of the department generally, as are contained in his letter, dated 2nd May 1868. That Mr. Claridge in this instance grievously neglected an important duty is clear, but it is not fair to the department at large to make the misconduct of an individual the ground of a general condemnation. Such a course, while futile for good, serves only to irritate and cause dissension.

17. The case as already stated seems to the Board to illustrate the absolute necessity of adopting the measures recommended by the Board in their Proceedings, dated 22nd December 1868, No. 8,998. It is shown that notwithstanding all the efforts of the people and the Revenue Officers, the clearance of an important channel was unduly delayed, and there is no security that the same neglect may not recur.

18. It would seem from various remarks of the Superintending Engineer, that he is under the impression, that if a stated period be fixed for each channel, he will be obliged to open it, without fail, on the stated days. This, however, was not the Board's intention. What they meant was, that a period being fixed for the clearance of each channel, the Officer entrusted with the work would, if he failed to clear it properly within that period, be placed on his defence, and required to prove that the delay was really unavoidable, and that he had adopted every practicable means of preventing it. If he succeeded in this, he would of course be held harmless; but if he failed to establish his freedom from blame, his responsibility would be rigorously brought home to him.

No. 380. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 19th April 1869:—

Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Camp at Ramandroog, 15th March 1869, No. 47.

Vide Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 8,998, dated 22nd December 1868.

IN a previous communication I mentioned, for the information of the Board, the measures I had adopted this year to ensure the seasonable clearance of the Toongabuddra Irrigation Channels in this district. The dates for closing and re-opening were published in the *Gazette*, and an order was issued to all Revenue Officials concerned, directing them to afford the Officers of the Public Works Department every assistance in procuring labor, etc., so as to ensure the work being completed within the time specified, and with

the exception of the Adony Talook I have reason to believe that the two Departments co-operated heartily. In the Adony Talook, however, the Board will observe, from the enclosed report of the Range Officer, Mr. Porter, supported by the letter* of the Head Assistant Collector in charge of the Division, that not only was no assistance given to his Department, but a passive resistance was offered by the Tahsildar, his subordinates and the Village Officers to their efforts to get the channel cleared in time. With the smaller fry I am competent to deal, and I will take care that they get their deserts; but with reference to the Tahsildar's conduct I must ask for the Board's interference. The Board will observe that he has directly disobeyed my orders and the orders of the Division Officers, and has made use of his official influence to thwart to the utmost the endeavors of the Public Works Department to carry out my instructions. He offers no defence† worthy of the name, and his statement that he was not aware that labourers were required, is as false as his subsequent report, that the channel had been most imperfectly cleared, proved to be on investigation. As observed by the Head Assistant Collector, the Officers of the Public Works Department deserve great credit for the manner in which they carried on the work in the face of the obstacles thrown in their way by the very persons from whom they had a right to expect assistance, but I much doubt whether their efforts would have been so successful had not Mr. Kelsall fortunately happened to be in the vicinity at the time.

* No. 65, dated 8th instant, (with three enclosures to be returned).

† Enclosed.

No. 40, dated 12th ultimo.

2. From the report marginally noted, submitted by the Head Assistant Collector, on a petition for remission of assessment on some of the lands cultivated under this channel last year, the Board will observe that this Tahsildar has entirely forfeited the confidence of his superiors, and adverting to Mr. Kelsall's statement, that he fights with every department with which he is brought in contact; I may mention that I last month transferred him temporarily to another talook of equal emolument, simply on this account. When the Municipal Act was introduced into Adony, he was appointed one of the Commissioners; and it was of course expected by my predecessor, as well as myself, that he would lend the weight of his official position towards the furtherance of the measure. On the contrary, however, he has not only offered a passive resistance to all sanitary improvements himself, but I have every reason to believe that he has incited others to do the same. The Vice President on account of the petty insults and annoyances he was subjected to at the hands of the native Commissioners, sent in his resignation, and things came to such a pass that I had to go to Adony myself, where the first thing that came under my notice was an insolent letter addressed to the Vice President by some of the Commissioners, amongst whose signatures the Tahsildar's appeared. I last year incurred the censure of Government because nothing in the way of sanitary improvements had been carried out, and had I allowed Hanoomant Row to continue as Tahsildar, I should have again had to send in a similar report. I, therefore, lost no time in putting a better man in his room, as a temporary measure but he cannot be spared for long from his own talook.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 17th May 1869.

3. R. Hanoomant Row is an aged toothless man, who ought to be compelled to retire. His actual service is over 30 years although only 25 will count for pension, but he would have no difficulty in obtaining the necessary Medical certificate declaring him incapacitated for further service. If he can be got rid of in this way I would not press the charges noted above against him; but if he is still to remain in the service, he must be made an example of. He was warned (*vide* my Notification in the *Gazette* of the 27th November 1868) that any want of co-operation with the Public Works Department in the matter of these channel clearances would be severely noticed, and it is obviously inexpedient that this should be regarded as merely an idle threat. I, therefore, request permission to transfer Hanoomant Row, if he does not apply for pension in the interim, to a talook, the emoluments of which are Rupees 150 per mensem, instead of Rupees 200 which he at present enjoys.

List of Enclosures.

Letter No. 40, dated 12th February 1869, from the Head Assistant Collector of Bellary, to the Collector.

Do. No. 118, dated 13th January 1869, from the Assistant Engineer, Mr. Porter, to the Superintending Engineer, 3rd Division.

Do. No. 65, dated 8th March 1869, from the Head Assistant Collector, to the Collector, with 3 Enclosures.

Memorandum shewing dates for closing and re-opening the Toombuddra Channel, dated 27th November 1868.

From this correspondence it appears, that with the exception of the Rampoor Channel the clearance of all the Toongabuddra Channels was this year effected under the recent arrangements with the full co-operation of the Department Public Works and Revenue authorities. The clearing of the Rampoor Channel was, the Collector reports, this year completed on the 9th of January or more than a month earlier than in 1868, and this notwithstanding violent and most reprehensible opposition on the part of the Tahsildar, the Revenue Inspector, and the Village Officers.

2. From the Head Assistant's report it is shown that the Tahsildar though warned of the date on which coolies would be required, took no steps whatever to provide them: that there was plenty of labour forthcoming is clearly demonstrated by the fact, that on the Head Assistant forwarding requisition to the villages, 400 men at once turned out.

3. The Board are prepared on the grounds shown by the Collector to reduce the Tahsildar to the grade of Sheristadar.

4. In consideration of his long service, however, they would not object to his immediate retirement on the pension of his rank, though in apportioning that pension it will be necessary to take his conduct into consideration; with reference to the subordinates, they will leave the Collector to award such punishment as he deems necessary, remarking only, that such opposition must be put down effectually.

5. In their Proceedings, 17th March 1869, No. 1856, the Board brought to the notice of Government the delay that occurred in the clearance of this channel last year, and the attendant loss of crop by the ryots. The Collector now forwards a further report on the subject from Mr. Kelsall, in which that gentleman states it as

his opinion that last year there was a sufficiency of water, and that the ryots left to themselves would have cultivated just as usual; if the Collector is satisfied that this is so, no remission should be granted. The Head Assistant further is of opinion that the Tahsildar was anxious to get the clearing into his own hands, and instigated the ryots not to cultivate: he does not, however, support this view by such proofs, as would warrant this serious charge being brought home to the Tahsildar. He further states, that an inspection of the channel satisfied him that the clearance had been properly effected. The delay in the clearance of the channel remains; but it cannot be doubted that Mr. Claridge must have had difficulties to contend with last year, similar to those which have now been actually proved to have existed in the present year, and the Board, therefore, resolve to submit this correspondence, for the consideration of Government, with reference to the subject of their Proceedings before quoted.

No. 381.

ORDER THEREON, 17th May 1869, No. 1,366.

Irrigation, No. 8.

RECORDED with reference to the G. O., under date, 22nd March 1869, No. 799.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) H. WELLESLEY,

Acting Under-Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue, with 17 enclosures.

Erd. E. C. Shunker.

Apr 1869

Rev. Circ. No. 865.

Revised with reference to the S. O.
Circular dated 22nd April 1869, No. 749

Secd.

Sent.

Revised.

Govt. of [1869] Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

Dated May, 1869.

Recd.

G. O., 17th May 1869, No. 1,366.

MAY.

Nos. 379–381.

379. *Tungabhadra Channels in Bellary District.*—Correspondence on the subject of their clearance, received.

clearance had been properly effected. The delay in the clearance of the channel remains but it cannot be doubted that Mr. Claridge must have had difficulties to contend with last year similar to those which have now been actually proved to have existed in the present year and the Board therefore resolve to submit this correspondence for the consideration of Government with reference to the subject of their Proceedings before quoted.

(A true Copy and Extract)

I. A. Campbell
Sec. Sy Secretary to Govt. Sy Secretary.
Revenue Department.

With 3 original Enclosures to be returned.

Ex. Campbell
Sy. Sy. to Govt.