No. 196. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Military Department, dated 10th May 1872, No. 1,551 :—

Read the following :—

MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE R. S. ELLIS, C.B.

I beg to offer to my colleagues the suggestions which have occurred to me, after a visit to, and careful inspection of, Vellore.

The matters on which the orders of Government are immediately necessary may be briefly stated to be as follows :—

The question of maintaining the two tanks,* the breaching of which have led to the late disaster.

* Vircopachiagrararam tank, Allapuram tank.

It is stated that these tanks have more than once breached and threatened the low-lying portion of the town. They are represented as having considerably silted, to be not of great value as regards the ayacut of land watered by them, and there would be little loss of revenue† by their discontinuance as works of irrigation. The tanks themselves, with their rich silt, will yield a considerable sum in revenue, and the conversion of the wet land into dry will not entail any heavy loss.

	RS.	A.	P.
† Under the 1st tank	847	7	10
Do. 2nd do.	458	2	8
When transferred to dry the revenue under the 1st tank	306	10	8
Bed of tank will yield	165	11	10
	472	6	6
∴ Loss under it...	375	1	4
Under the 2nd tank	185	0	0
Bed of do.	37	11	3
	222	11	3
∴ Loss under 2nd tank...	235	7	5
∴ The total loss under the two tanks	610	8	9

It appears to me emergent to settle, in limine, this question, because on the decision depends the re-construction of the regimental family lines in their former locality known as the cusbah. If the tanks are to be restored the danger of their again breaching should, in my judgment, prevent the re-building of the regimental family lines or indeed of any habitations at the cusbah. On the other hand, it will be difficult to find another site for these lines at Vellore itself.

If the regimental families are to be kept at Vellore, there seems no alternative but to remove these lines to the high ground in the direction of the Central jail.

The next question for determination is whether Vellore is to remain permanently a station for a single regiment. The late flood has destroyed the lines of the 28th Regiment, except a few native officers' quarters. These lines will, if Vellore is to be a military station, have to be re-built.

The site of the existing lines has been repeatedly condemned, and there has long been a design of removing them. In wet weather a great portion of the lines is under water. If the lines are to be re-built, I would strongly urge their removal to a better site, and in this case I would recommend the purchase of the house and compound now occupied by Mr. Gordon, the Small Cause Court Judge.

I think that this property, which contains about forty acres, will, with some addition, be admirably suited for regimental lines. The property is situated halfway between the Central jail and the town, the soil is favorable, and I am informed that there is no difficulty as regards the water-supply.

I learn that the house and compound is at present offered for sale for about 4,000 Rupees. There is on the ground a house which would make a good regimental hospital. The materials of the military buildings at Vellore can probably be utilized in providing the place of arms and other subsidiary regimental buildings. The regimental bazaar would follow the regiment. The situation will probably, in a military point of view, be approved. It removes the regiment from the immediate contact of an objectionable Mahomedan population, and they are available to coerce both this population, and the large Central jail.

I would urge the decision of the question of the retention of Vellore as a military station because considerable expense will be involved in delay.

I beg also to submit the necessity of a very early decision as to the disposal of the regimental families who have lost their lines. These consist of the families of the 13th, 14th and 27th Regiments, with relatives and followers.

Their numbers are roughly detailed in the margin—total 1,822.

13TH REGIMENT NATIVE INFANTRY.		
Holders of family certificates	282	
Relatives	334	
		616
14TH REGIMENT NATIVE INFANTRY		
Holders of family certificates...	209	
Relatives	347	
		556
[illegible] NATIVE INFANTRY		
Holders of family certificates	159	
Relatives	491	
		650

These, and 461 men and families of the 28th Regiment Native Infantry, whose lines have been destroyed, had to be provided emergently with accommodation. They have all been lodged in the larger and lesser Tippoo Mahals in the Fort, in the rampart old jail, and in the Commissariat godowns, all within the Fort

This was the best and indeed the only thing that could be done in the first instance. But I cannot help feeling extremely apprehensive as to the danger which may result from crowding these people, of not very cleanly habits, in these buildings.

Dr. Cornish, the Sanitary Commissioner, fully shares in my apprehensions, and considers it very desirable to relieve the crowding as far as possible. In order to do this, as far as is possible at present, I have sanctioned further accommodation being immediately prepared in what is known as the gun shed within the Fort Pagoda (disused) in the Dispensary quadrangle, and in the unoccupied half of the market place, a new building, belonging to the Municipality. The accommodation thus rendered available is roughly given in the margin.

Large Mahal—men and families of 28th Regiment 461.	Persons.
Small mahal	500
Gun shed	100
Dispensary	100
Rampart jail... ...	100
Commissariat ...	100
Market-place... ...	100
Total...	1,000

But this accommodation is in itself insufficient, and is not of a nature to be recommended, except for a very short time. The difficulties of conservancy in all these buildings are very great. The drainage is also incomplete. I most strongly recommend that the families of two regiments be removed from Vellore, with the least possible delay. If an epidemic were to declare itself, under present circumstances, the loss of life would be exceedingly great.

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16th May 1872.

The 13th Regiment will, I believe, shortly return from foreign service, and is, I believe, to be stationed at Palaveram. It is very desirable that the families should rejoin the regiment at once, if accommodation can be found for them. If there is no such accommodation at Palaveram, they should remain at Vellore so as not to give them *two* moves.

I strongly recommend that the families of the 14th and of the 27th Regiments be moved as soon as possible to Arcot.

From a letter received from Captain Kelly, it appears that the Native Cavalry Barracks and sick lines at Arcot, accommodated the whole of the families of the 17th Regiment in 1869. The European Barracks at Arcot are stated by Captain Kelly to be capable of accommodating 500 families.

Under these circumstances, there should not, I imagine, be any difficulty in removing at once the families of the 14th and 27th Regiments to Arcot. There will be, I think, no serious risk in keeping the men and families of the 28th Regiment in the larger Mahal where they now are. They are under much stricter discipline than can be enforced among the regimental families who have not their husbands with them.

The 13th Regimental families would remain for a short time scattered in the other buildings I have described, and by the relief of over-crowding and with liberal conservancy expenditure, may be kept free from disease, but I earnestly trust that there will be no delay in moving the families of the 14th and 27th Regiments to Arcot.

The Sappers have been most usefully occupied since they have been here in clearing the debris of the storm in the cantonment, and in restoring communications on the Bangalore and Arnee roads, and on the road leading from Vellore to the railway station.

This work will be finished by about Saturday next. It will be for the Government to determine whether the Sappers should be employed in building lines for the regiment here, and the lines of the regimental families, if these are to be retained at Vellore, or whether they shall return to Bangalore. If they are retained at Vellore, it will be necessary to make arrangements for affording them shelter of a temporary nature, as it will probably not be considered desirable to keep them for any length of time as they are at present under canvass on the glacis. If the families of two regiments are moved as recommended, I think accommodation can be easily found for the Sappers.

The only expenditure which I have thought it necessary to sanction has been 1,500 Rupees, which I have requested the Collector to advance to the Station Staff Officer to enable him to issue food to the most needy from among the regimental families, to supply clothing to such of the women who are absolutely in want of clothes, and for bamboos and matting to complete the separation of families in the buildings I have described, and to meet the expense of conservancy establishments. I have not in this Minute attempted to enter into any description of the storm and its attendant flood or of the measures taken by the Civil authorities. No immediate orders are required on these matters, regarding which a detailed report is about to be submitted to Government. The Government may wish to know, so

far as has at present been ascertained what has been the loss of life owing to the disastrous inundation.

There was no loss of life in the 28th Regiment, nor in the families of the 13th Regiment Native Infantry.

Sixty-one deaths occurred in the families of the 14th Regiment Native Infantry.

Three deaths occurred in the families of the 27th Regiment Native Infantry.

The returns of persons dead and missing, as reported by the Native Magistracy, amount to 505.

The number of corpses found up to present date, is 282.

The number of persons still missing is 223.

It is improbable that any of the missing persons are alive, and the deaths may, therefore, be roughly estimated at 505.

From the enquiries I have made, and from personal observation, I am able to state that there was a perfect unanimity in well-directed zeal and exertion on the part of all the officers of Government.

The ready assistance afforded by the Officer Commanding, Colonel Robson, by the Police under the direction of Lieutenant Price, and by Captain Macleod of the Jail Department, gave confidence to the people, prevented any plundering of property, and enabled the bodies of the dead to be speedily recovered and buried.

Captain Johnson, the Station Staff Officer, has been most unremitting in his efforts to assist and comfort the unfortunate regimental families who have become houseless and have lost everything belonging to them.

The men of the 28th Regiment behaved exceedingly well in efficiently guarding the convicts employed in recovering the bodies of those drowned, and in removing the debris of the cusbah. This was a duty rendered all the more trying, as this necessary work took them away from the recovery of their property from their own lines, which have been almost entirely destroyed. The presence and advice of Dr. Cornish, the Sanitary Commissioner, have been of great service to me and give me confidence in the recommendations which I have offered to Government in this Minute—I think it will be very desirable that Dr. Cornish should visit Vellore next week, and advise the Local authorities on any further sanitary precautions which he may consider necessary.

(Signed) R. S. ELLIS.

VELLORE, *9th May.*

ORDER THEREON, 10th May 1872, No. 1551.

The question of the abandonment of the tanks referred to in the foregoing minute will be considered and disposed of in the Revenue and Public Works Departments.

2. In the event of its being decided to restore the tanks, the cusbah of Vellore will be interdicted as a place of residence for regimental families.

3. The Honorable the Governor in Council directs that, for the present, and as a sanitary precaution, the families of the 14th and 27th Regiments be moved to Arcot at the public expense, and accommodated in the European Infantry Barracks and in the Native Cavalry Barracks and Sick Lines there.

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4. The Public Works Department will be requested to cause those buildings to be put into habitable condition as far as is immediately practicable, and provide bamboo and matting for the separation of families, and give such assistance as may be necessary for the immediate occupation of the buildings.

5. The huts of the 28th Regiment will not be re-built for the present. The part of that regiment now in the large Mahal will be kept there.

6. The families of the 13th Regiment will remain in the smaller Mahal and in the other buildings available in the Fort.

7. The Government attach great importance to the adequate conservancy of the buildings in the Fort at Vellore, as upon this mainly depends the health of the inmates of these buildings.

8. The Officer Commanding will entertain the necessary establishment of carts and scavengers on a liberal scale, and will submit the temporary establishment for the sanction of Government.

9. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief will be requested to direct the return of the Sappers to Bangalore on the completion of the work on which they are now engaged at Vellore.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. C. SILVER, Colonel,
Offg. Secretary to Government.

No. 197. ORDER THEREON, 16th May 1872, No. 799.

Miscellaneous.

THE Board of Revenue will call for a report from the Acting Collector of North Arcot as to the necessity or otherwise of restoring the tanks and as to the personal compensation that will be due to the holders of land under them if they are not restored.

2. The Government note with surprise and dissatisfaction that up to the present date they have received no report from Mr. Whiteside on the late disastrous storm in North Arcot.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revenue / Ob. No 1683.

Govt. of {1872} Madras.

MILITARY.

To

THE REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

&c. &c. &c.

Dated, May 10th.

Recd. 15th.

G. O., 10th May 1872, No. 1551.

MAY

Nos. 202-A—202-B.

Passing orders on the question of the abandonment of certain tanks at Vellore, and the temporary location of the families of the 14th and 27th Regiments Native Infantry at Arcot.

No 799 - 16 May/72

1403 of Rev Dep 17 May 1872