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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / B.P. No.	112	Press. / Mis.
Dated	14.9.1926	196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 123. Read the following endorsement of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Ootacamund, 11th August 1874, No. 581-A :—

From Major J. BEATTY, R.E., District Engineer, Godavery, to Lieut.-Colonel J. MULLINS, R.E., Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Dowlaishweram, 30th July 1874, No. 1,336.

I HAVE the honor to forward, for your information, copy of my letter to the Collector on the subject of the transfer to the villagers of the repairs, etc., of village channels, ordered in G. O., No. 651, of 29th May 1874.

From Major J. BEATTY, R.E., District Engineer, Godavery, to the Collector of Godavery, dated Dowlaishweram, 30th July 1874, No. 1,335.

WITH reference to your letter, No. 96, dated 8th instant, received 17th, I have the honor to inform you that the bódhis, or field channels, are now, and always have been, in the hands of the village authorities; consequently, in respect to these, things will remain exactly as they were, and I shall be obliged by your understanding that the remainder of this letter has no reference to them.

2. As regards the channels which irrigate sirgle villages, it would be a very great relief to this department to give up charge of both distribution and repairs as proposed by the Revenue Department, and I shall gladly issue the necessary instructions to the Range Officers, if you still think it expedient.

3. The advantage proposed to be gained by the change is now evident to me, from a further perusal of G. O., No. 651, of 29th May 1874, in which the following passage occurs:—"The idea was that the ryots should be left to do both for themselves;" viz., both keep in repair the channels that irrigate entire villages, and distribute the water from them.

Contrary to the inference made in the Government Order, both of these duties, as regards channels irrigating single villages, have hitherto been attended to by the Public Works Department.

4. It seems to me however that, as village channels irrigate from 150 to 1,500 acres of land, the charge should not be suddenly thrust on the villagers, but carried out gradually, lest a serious diminution of revenue should result.

5. As an instance of a village channel irrigating 1,500 acres, I may mention the Poolla channel, which has its head in the 31st mile of the Ellore canal. There are, I believe, some two or three parties in that village, and among them the channel and cultivation under it will probably fare badly if the care of it be suddenly cast upon them.

6. I would suggest that, in the first instance, only channels irrigating 250 acres or under should be handed over, and that the transfer of channels of greater acreage be deferred.

7. However, whatever you decide, it should be clearly intimated to the villagers, in regard to the channels now given up, that they are to be held responsible in future not only for the distribution of water, but for repairs also, and that no remissions can be claimed on the ground that the channel has fallen out of repair.

8. With reference to the last paragraph of your letter, I beg to point out that, if the distribution of water from village channels is to be taken out of the hands of this department, and they are still to be held responsible for repairs, the result must be a certain loss to Government. As soon as the villagers get the distribution into their hands, they are sure to begin a series of cross-dams, which will cause the rapid silting up of the channels and a heavy expenditure on repairs. Consequently, if this be the meaning you attach to the proposed change, I must protest against it as certain to prove injurious to the interests of Government.

9. There is one point on which you appear to me to have been misinformed, and which therefore I think it well to notice. The Revenue Board make use of the expression, "charge of the water supplied to single villages from the moment it quits the regulating sluice," and I observe that you use the same expression in your letter. As a matter of fact, the great majority

of the channels which supply single villages are not provided with regulating sluices, and the supply is regulated by means of a temporary dam at the head of the channel, now in charge of the conservancy establishment under this department.

10. I would also point out that one year of this experiment will be quite insufficient to give complete results. Hitherto this department has executed repairs as often as they were required, and the village channels will now be handed over in fair order. But year by year their condition must deteriorate, until the villagers become thoroughly alive to the fact of the extra burden laid upon them in the work of repairs. The complaint will also be made that while Government are continuing to repair some channels having only, say, 400 acres of cultivation under them, because they irrigate two or three villages, they have thrown on the ryots the cost of repairing single village channels that irrigate 1,000 to 1,500 acres.

SUBMITTED for the information of Government.

It will be observed that Major Beatty reports that the Godavery Delta field channels have been in the hands of the village authorities, but that distribution channels, although irrigating the lands of one village only, have been managed and repaired by the Public Works Conservancy Establishment.

2. Major Beatty shows that the circumstances are in some cases probably different to what had been supposed, and that some single village channels irrigate from 1,000 to 1,500 acres. He proposes, therefore, not to transfer these large channels to the villagers without due notice, lest the irrigation and revenue should suffer, and I think that time may properly be allowed for introducing changes which are more extensive than had been supposed. The matter is in good hands, and will no doubt be carried out so as to comply with the wishes of Government at the earliest possible date, but in a way which will show due consideration for existing interests. The Public Works Conservancy Establishments have had to do hitherto an amount of detailed work which certainly is foreign to their proper duties, and of which they should undoubtedly be relieved at the earliest possible moment, which will be directly the Revenue Authorities have made the village officers clearly to understand that the village distribution arrangements and the maintenance of the village channels in an efficient state will for the future devolve upon them.

3. The principle that the repair and maintenance of channels must be in the same hands as the water regulation, is one which cannot safely be departed from. I fully agree with Major Beatty that the Irrigation officers must either have entire control over a channel, so as to be able to prevent any interference, such as is mentioned in paragraph 8 of his letter to the Collector, or the channels must be handed over entirely to the village officers, with whom the responsibility for its efficiency and for the due distribution of water should thenceforth rest.

4. The circumstance, mentioned in paragraph 9 of the District Engineer's letter, that comparatively few single village channels have regulating sluices at their heads, will not affect the intended arrangements. The regulation of the supply at these heads, whether by temporary dams or otherwise, will be as hitherto in the hands of the canal officers, and all that will be necessary will be to maintain a proper depth in the channels immediately below such regulating works. It is necessary to remark, however, that the provision of these minor head sluices should be made as soon as possible; and that, as the circumstances of particular channels become finally determined, the permanent minor works of regulation

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
5th September 1874.

112/2

should without loss of time be constructed. Temporary dams are objectionable for three reasons: they involve waste of water, they are not capable of securing accurate distribution, and they are more liable to be improperly interfered with. It has to be remembered that the delta works are in a transition state, and that until the proper water level in the major distributaries shall have been secured, the dimensions of regulator openings, which will be proper eventually, would be unsuitable and insufficient. Directly the intended regimé of any major distributary has been attained, the sluices or regulators at the heads of all its branches should be built.

5. It may be gathered from the tenor of parts of Major Beatty's letter, that the Collector is not altogether prepared to accept a full and final transfer of all single village channels, and that he thinks it may be requisite possibly to return to the arrangements hitherto in force. This would not, I think, be at all right or convenient. The principle that the canal officers should have nothing to do with the distribution of the supply of single villages is sound and proper, and it is one the adoption and enforcement of which is necessary, because it would yearly become more and more impracticable for the Delta Public Works Establishments to attend to such matters, without neglecting duties which they alone can perform. The proper arrangement will therefore be not to be in too great a hurry to transfer large channels, the details of the management of which it will be desirable to settle before the control is handed over to village officers; but, when once the transfer has been effected, the latter should understand that thenceforth no difficulties which may be encountered will be deemed a reason for a return to the system of detailed distribution by the canal officers. I think that three years should be fixed as the limit within which all single village channels in the delta should be finally transferred.

(Signed) JOHN MULLINS, Lieut.-Colonel, R.E.,
Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

No. 124. ORDER THEREON, 5th September 1874, No. 2,526.

IRRIGATION, No. 18.

THE observations of the Collector and Board of Revenue on the letter of the District Engineer, Godavery, to the former will be awaited, and these should be submitted as early as possible.

(True Extract.)

Lieut.-Colonel, R.E.,
Joint Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Godavery.
" Collector, Godavery District.
" Board of Revenue.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. S T. Austin.

Spare Copies 5

No. 3146

Revenue Department

Govt. of 1874

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, GODAVERY,

&c. &c. &c.

Dated September 5th.

Recd. 14 Encl. 1

G. O., 5th September 1874, No. 2,326.

SEPTEMBER

Nos. 123-124

410 2...

Village and Field Channels in Godavery District.—The observations of the Collector and Board of Revenue on the letter from the District Engineer on the subject of the transfer of the—to the charge of the village officers, solicited.

Read Rejected

14 Sept. 74

Withdrawn