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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue. DEPARTMENT

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 217.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE, dated 4th February 1874.

Read the following letter from Surgeon J. J. L. RATTON, M.D., On Special Duty, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Acting Sub-Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Madras, 12th January 1874:—

I HAVE the honour to submit a plan of operations in accordance with the request contained in Board's Proceedings, dated 10th January 1874.

2. The most important group of salt manufactories in the Presidency at the present moment is that lying in the north of the Chingleput District between Ennore and the Pulicat Lake. It contains five divisions, viz., Kattur, Voyalore, Pulidiwak, Attiput, and Vullur, and these comprise 5,595 ullums or separate salt factories.

3. These divisions make most of the salt supplied to the Madras Railway and distributed in the interior of the country; they are all on the borders of Cochrane's canal, within easy reach of each other, and have separate establishments of Superintendents, Assistants, etc.

4. I would propose commencing operations in their midst for the following reasons:—

A.—The materials for salt manufacture they possess are the bare essential requisites,—a fairly plastic alluvial soil and water of the density of sea-water; with these my system will be well tested.

B.—The facilities of communication are so great that my experiments will be carried on under the eyes of the Superintendents of all five divisions at once. A knowledge of the new system in all its details will spread quickly over a large area, and it will thus, I hope, effect some immediate good.

C.—Besides the Superintendents of the five divisions named, Mr. Plunkett, Salt Deputy-Collector, Nellore District, could visit the experimental works when inspecting Dugarazapatnam, Tada, or Sunnapagunta, all salt divisions in his charge, on the borders of the Pulicat Lake close by. The Superintendents of Covelong and Vadasamanjari in the south could run up occasionally without much inconvenience, and take note of the work being done. Salt officials passing through the Presidency town would have an opportunity of seeing the works, and gentlemen residing in Madras interested in the experiments could look on, from time to time, and form their own opinions concerning them.

D.—Proximity to Madras would facilitate correspondence, and I should be able to obtain the Board's assistance without delay in case of emergency.

E.—I should be on the spot in case my services were required temporarily elsewhere; as, in selecting sites, etc.

5. I would confine the experiments within the bounds mentioned and to places that could be visited daily or on alternate days.

6. If the Board wish for other experiments under altered conditions this year, the latter half of the season might be devoted to experiments at Vedarniem, which is in the midst of the next most important group of salt stations (viz., those of southern Tanjore), is possessed of exceptional facilities for salt manufacture, and is badly in want of a scientifically arranged ullum.

7. If the Board sanction my proposals, I will proceed at once in search of a locality suitable for the experiments. The preparations for salt manufacture should begin at the end of this month.

8. I would earnestly request that one or two sharp intelligent Assistants be specially told off to help me at this work. I have good reason to fear, from experience at Pulidiwak, that the ryots will at first at least, by influencing the coolies, endeavour to procure the failure of my experiments. Some one must be present during the heat of the day to see that orders are carried out, and no European could usefully employ himself at the salt-pans at or for some time after midday. I feel sure that the ryots will themselves copy and assist me when they find my system not much of an innovation after all; but there is the first burst of prejudice and its consequences to be withstood, and for this, single handed, I am unprepared.

9. I would, also, respectfully bring to the notice of the Board that I have been now for two years travelling, inspecting, experimenting, reporting, and corresponding with the Board and ten Salt Deputy-Collectors without the help of a single Assistant, Writer, Peon, or any one of those native helps attached to the service of men in my position in the Military, Medical, or Civil Services, and request that the Board would have the kindness to make provision for me in these respects for the remaining two years.

The Board approve Dr. Ratton's programme, but they understand that it is yet too early in the season to commence work north of Ennore; and they have instructed him to communicate with the Collector of South Arcot, with a view to his first visiting that district as directed in Board's Proceedings, dated 26th January 1874, No. 131, with reference to the extension of manufacture in the south of the district.

2. Dr. Ratton has expressed a wish for the services of the Salt Superintendent of Arasanagiri in Tanjore. The Collector is requested to report whether the man can be spared. The Board will be prepared to apply for the necessary sanction, under the head of Temporary Establishment, for the employment of this man and of a Writer, Overseer, etc., on hearing from Dr. Ratton, in detail, what men he proposes to employ and on what salaries. He should submit these proposals as soon as he can, that there may be no delay when he finds himself otherwise ready to commence work. He should also state what funds he will require to be placed at his disposal for payment for labour, etc. A permanent advance to be replenished on the submission of bills would probably be the most convenient plan. The cost of the experiments can be met from savings in Salt Contingencies.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

Acting Sub-Secretary.

To Surgeon J. J. L. Ratton, on Special Duty.
,, the Collector of Tanjore.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
,, to the Collector of South Arcot.
,, to the Collector of the Chingleput District.
to the Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Rev Dept 1874 Jan 116-117

Revenue 1874. Depts

Board of Revenue,

MADRAS.

No. 583

PROCEEDINGS, 4TH FEBRUARY 1874, No. 217.

Dept 19 Feb 1874.

Encl.

Received 20

FEBRUARY.

No. 217.

Salt Manufacture.—Dr. Ratton's programme of operations to be undertaken by him in regard to experiments in connection with—, approved with certain remarks. Collector of Tanjore requested to report whether Salt Superintendent of Arasanagiri can be spared for employment under Dr. Ratton. This officer to submit proposals regarding establishment required by him, and funds to be placed at his disposal.

No 38 Mdl 25/2
Lodged
1/2 March
6. Lt

C 25 Feby/74 - RB Record.