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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

1171

☒ Press
☐ Mis.

Dated 2-6-1875 196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

22nd May 1875.

No. 411. Read the following letter from Colonel F. J. MOBERLY, R.E., Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, to Colonel G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Camp at Veerajeecoonum, 26th April 1875, No. 311:—

In acknowledging the receipt of G. O., No. 880, dated 2nd instant, I have the honor to call attention to G. O., No. 2,851, dated 7th October 1874, on my letter

1 Statement.
No. 1,953, dated 5th September, which has, I presume, been overlooked, as the Government consider that my "explanations should have been forthcoming five months earlier."

2. I am quite aware, as the Government observe, of the condition of the irrigation works of this district. In 1862-63, when I held this appointment, I put a stop to the incomplete estimates, but the old system obtained again; and in 1872-73 I found after some experience in the district scarcely any estimate was for more than patchwork.

3. I insisted on fuller examination of the wants of irrigation works, and had succeeded in getting, during 1873-74, a better class of estimates.

4. I would also beg that the Government would be pleased to compare the outlay in this district with that in other districts, see pages cxxxii. to cxxxv., Administration Report, copy of which has just reached me.

5. After the large outlay in 1873-74 we began the year 1874-75 with estimates to the amount of Rupees 30,074 and 3,112 for Agricultural Repairs and Minor New Works, respectively. I respectfully submit that as District Engineer I had every reason to be satisfied that we were making a good start.

New Works.	Repairs.
1,20,099	1,95,136

6. During April 1874 the members of the establishment were busily occupied in examining and compiling the vouchers for the outlay abovementioned. These amount to several volumes, of which, I think, the Government can have no conception.

7. The heat in April is very great, the soil is baked hard, and the laborers, who had been much pressed to complete their work in March, at least into measurable form, refused to do anything till the showers of May enabled them to dispense with the use of a crowbar. I believe I may safely say that throughout the country very little is done in April, and that the outlay which is shown is in payment of work executed in March.

8. I was myself in camp in Madranticum, endeavouring to study the country, which is generally very difficult to travel over; attendance at a Local Fund Board Meeting saved me from being in my tent when it was blown down in May; 17 inches of rain fell in one day, and when I rejoined my camp I found the whole country under water; tanks were full, breaches had been rapidly patched up, and cultivation was begun.

9. The arrangements which had been made for future work were necessarily altered, and it was very difficult or even impossible for some time to traverse the country in the manner required for proper estimating. I beg to refer to Revenue

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
22nd May 1875.*

G. O., No. 1,082, dated 26th August 1874, in support of my statement as to the condition of Madranticum, which applies in less degree to the other taluqs.

10. I also solicit the perusal of Revenue Board's Proceedings, No. 2,880, dated 5th October 1874, on which Public Works G. O., No. 1,075, dated 17th instant, has been passed.

11. I may be allowed to explain that the soil of the district generally is sandy or sandy loam on rock; a great quantity of water is passing a little way under the surface, which is dried by the sun to great hardness. After heavy rain a horse or cart breaks through this crust to the saturated or quicksand below, and moving about is difficult and unsafe. This surface soil may be used to patch; but with a tank full of water, and fields irrigated below it, we cannot get earth to restore banks, nor was there any necessity or economy in doing so.

12. I would also call attention to the large number of tanks, 2,334, in this district of only 2,753 square miles—See Administration Report, page 156.

13. Cultivation having commenced earlier, the harvest was earlier; meanwhile estimates had been prepared with great difficulty but tolerable accuracy; and as soon as the ground and weather admitted work was begun. The issue is that—

Agricultural repairs have been measured and paid for to the amount of Rs. 85,375

Minor new works 3,212

More under the latter head would have been expended, but that Contractors, busy with their harvest, would not come to be paid.

14. I believe some thousands more are due to work-people, for which we had not funds.

15. I trust I have shown that my arrangements were good as regarded the requirements, character, quality, and cost of the work.

16. My exertions to carry them out have been unremitting.

17. I cannot but remark here that whereas for twenty-five years under Generals Sir A. Cotton, F. Cotton, Lawford, Orr, my industry and professional capacity were always favorably spoken of by my superiors (whatever other shortcomings might be), I have during the last three years apparently failed to give satisfaction to Government.

18. I would respectfully plead inspection of the fruit of my labors during the first two years of this period.

Statement enclosed, taken from Administration Report for 1872-73, pages cxxxiv. to cxxxvi., and 1873-74, pages cxxxii. to cxxxv., shows the position of Chingleput in the list of districts according to its expenditure.

19. In addition to the superintendence of all these, I have had personally to prepare the plans for new barracks, family quarters, and hospital at Poonamallee, and the approximate estimates for the new Ordnance buildings at Avady.

20. The Government in the Military Department thought that a special officer should be deputed for this last. In the Public Works Department Captain A. C. Smith was nominated; he complained that he could scarcely get through his range work, and when I was put on the Committee I undertook the preliminary work myself.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
22nd May 1875.*

No. 412.

ORDER THEREON, 22nd May 1875, No. 1,419.

IRRIGATION, No. 48.

RECORDED, with the remark that the Government hope that the progress made with the reformation of irrigation works in the Chingleput District in the current year will be far more satisfactory than was the case in 1874-75. The circumstances of that district cannot be so different from those of adjacent districts as to make it reasonable that in one-half of the year there should be little or nothing done in the former and much in the latter, and it is necessary in evidence of efficient administration that a fair number of these works should actually year by year be put into thorough order.

(True Extract.)

J. R. E. L.

Major, R.E.,

Offg. Joint Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, Chingleput.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

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Gobt. of 1875 Madras
PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

CHINGLEPUT.

cc. cc. cc.

Dated May 22nd.

Issued

Recd.

31st

Encl.

G. O., 22nd May 1875, No. 1,419.

MAY.

Nos. 411-412

N^o 1171

Comm. to the
Board of Revenue.

2nd June 1875.

Chingleput District. Short Expenditure
on Irrigation Works in 1874-75. — The letter of
the District Engineer furnishing explanation
in regard to —, recorded with remarks.

14. To the Board of Revenue, June 1875