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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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

1827

Press
Mis.

Dated 30-8-1875 196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 104-I. No. 869.

IN G. O., No. 380, dated 11th February 1875, the Government directed the preparation of a Bill for the conservancy of rivers by the Advocate-General, in communication with the Chief Engineer for Irrigation and the Board of Revenue; and, in order that no really important details might be overlooked, invited the opinions of certain selected local officers of the Revenue and Public Works Departments in connection with the rivers of their several districts.

Replies from the Public Works Officers have now been received, and the following is an abstract of their contents in the order in which the officers are mentioned in the Government Proceedings.

*From District Engineer, Kistna,
dated 18th March 1875,
No. 161.*

The bed of a river should be defined to be that part submerged in ordinary floods; *i. e.*, up to the lip of the lunka washed by the stream. Where the edge of the bank is not clearly defined, the sand bank should be acquired up to the level of the adjacent lunka margins. Planting of lunka grass should be prohibited, also of topes and plantain gardens, except with the permission of the river conservancy officer. The construction, without sanction, of buildings, either permanent or temporary, between the river banks should also be prohibited.

dens, except with the permission of the river conservancy officer. The construction, without sanction, of buildings, either permanent or temporary, between the river banks should also be prohibited.

Notes by the Officiating Chief Engineer.

Land outside the flood banks, if required, would be regularly taken up and retained.

This would be an ordinary encroachment. It may best be guarded against by clear demarcation of land belonging to embankments, and it has been suggested that lines of palmyra or other trees would be a good and economical way of showing the boundary.

No interference with the details of cultivation of a kind not prohibited could be allowed, such margins as it may be considered should not be left in private hands must be taken up for the purposes of river conservancy.

Points of crossing for all kinds of traffic should be paid and provided with ramps at suitable gradients, with fencing to confine traffic to the pathways.

No work of either a permanent or temporary character will be allowed to be constructed within the river boundaries or bed. Whatever work of the latter kind may be necessary with reference to irrigation requirements will have to be regularly recorded, and permission given to the supervising village officer to carry it out in a certain way.

From Superintending Engineer,
Tanjore, dated 13th April 1875,
No. 211.

In addition to the provisions of Colonel Mullins' Memorandum, "competent authority" to grant a puttah or title deed to any land within the levees of any river or large distribution channel should include the conservancy officers. Construction of permanent work in any river, stream or channel without the concurrence of the conservancy officer should be prohibited; and margins of land outside as well as inside all flood banks or levees acquired, in order to obtain material for repair of banks. Copies of the draft Act might be circulated when the following objectionable practices might be provided against:—Gradual encroachments on banks by shifting of fences, within which planting is frequently carried on. Cutting trenches on the river side of plantain gardens for deposit of river silt too near the foot of the banks. (No trench should be cut nearer than 10 yards from foot of banks.) Tracks made across river banks by passage of bandies, cattle, &c., (depression of banks caused thereby should be filled up by the villagers before the floods come down in case of minor crossings, and by Government with ramps in case of more important crossings). Mud and sand banks being thrown across the bed of rivers. Raising of mud platforms adjoining banks for picottahs connected with a channel from the main stream. Cutting of river banks for laying down temporary sluices.

From the District Engineer, Godavery,
dated 6th April 1875,
No. 57.

The defined channel within which the waters of the Godavery

Notes by the Officiating Chief Engineer.

(River bed.) The embankments may be far removed from the river bed, and it is not intended to acquire any rights over the lunkas or berms generally, but only when these are so narrow as to be needed entirely for conservancy purposes.

Appeal to the District Engineer would be of little use after the Range Officer had rooted up the grass. The uprooting on lands deemed to be private property and situated outside the river bed would only be necessary occasionally, and when it may be so special authority would have to be obtained, and compensation given. Within the river bed full power is proposed to be given to conservancy officers, on certain terms yet to be finally settled.

This case is already provided for, and if referred to in the Conservancy Act it would be only as a matter of convenience.

Anything can be done at present if the emergency be such as to justify it.

This definition would not do. The bed is the whole space between the banks where these are defined and the equivalent line on the same level where there is no defined margin.—Vide Superintending Engineer's, Kistna, definition. A maximum ordinary flood, if capable of definition, would be a misnomer.

Such islands should have their proper outline and thereafter they should be restricted thereto.

ordinarily flow should be assumed to be the [space from embankment to embankment]. Range Officers should be empowered, subject to appeal to District Engineer, to uproot lunka grass, to prevent lunka grass planting, and to make lunka grass plantations wherever necessary. Land required for protective works should be acquired free of cost, and no payment made for uprooting grass from a proprietary lunka or shoal. In the case of land with standing crops being taken on emergency, Revenue Authorities to decide, subsequently, amount of compensation for loss of crop. Conservancy officers should be authorized to take up land for protective works, in emergent cases, in anticipation of sanction. Conservancy operations for protection of private property carried out at request of the owner should be paid for by the party interested, the nature of the work necessary being left to the discretion of the conservancy officer. Permission of conservancy officer to be obtained for protective works or nanel grass planting on private property, in default cost of removal of objectionable works to be recovered from proprietor with such fine as may be laid down in the Act.

From Superintending Engineer,
Nellore, dated 21st June 1875,
No. 29.

The bed of a river should be defined to be that portion between the banks which is liable to be submerged by maximum ordinary floods. No cultivation should be allowed within these limits without special authority.

All inhabited islands within the banks of rivers, and islands

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
6th August 1875.*

Notes by the Officiating Chief Engineer.

as possible, maintained up to those limits by the conservancy officers.

This would have to be decided upon the merits in each case. But seldom would private individuals wish to embank at their own cost.

Not as a rule. What land is really necessary to conservancy should be acquired. The rest should be left to its owners.

Of course not any more than any other trespass.

Power might be given to conservancy officers to repair and recover expenditure after lapse of reasonable notice. This could only however be in the case of conduits built on these terms after formation of embankments. Those required for channels existing before the flood banks would have to be constructed and maintained by the conservancy officers.

Perhaps not, but the distance must be prescribed—50 feet from toe of bank would do.

Included in provision against all work within river bed.

that are not liable to be submerged, by maximum ordinary floods, should be confined to their existing limits. The embanking of the latter should not be allowed. As a rule all land between the artificial embankments of a river and its natural banks should belong to the State. The planting of vegetables should not be allowed on river embankments. Where picottabs, or other appliances for raising water are situated between the margin of a river and its embankment, the owners should be held responsible for the repair and working order of the conduits that pass the water under the embankment. Suitable ramps should be provided for the local traffic, where necessary in the line of river embankments, and any attempt to cross them, at other places, should be considered an infringement of the proposed Act. Where the water stands several feet above the surface of the country in floods wells should not be allowed in the immediate vicinity of the outer slopes of river embankments. No weir to be constructed across a river without the sanction of Government.

From District Engineer, North Arcot, dated 15th February 1875, No. 3,294.

Provisions indicated in Colonel Mullins' Memorandum include all that is required with regard to rivers of North Arcot District, but legislative action should not be confined to "deltaic" rivers, but embrace all rivers.

(Signed) JOHN MULLINS, Lieut. Colonel, R.E.,
29th July 1875. Offg. Chief Engineer, P.W.D.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
6th August 1875.*

Notes by the Officiating Chief Engineer.

From Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, dated 18th February 1875, No. 3,935.

Do. do.

From District Engineer, South Arcot, dated 25th May 1875, No. 48.

The notes of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation touch upon all the really important points in connection with the subject of river conservancy.

From District Engineer, Tinnevely, dated 5th April 1875, No. 2.

No special circumstances connected with the rivers of the Tinnevely District require consideration in framing an Act.

No. 105. ORDER THEREON, 6th August 1875, No. 2,274.

IRRIGATION, No. 1-C.

ORDERED that these papers be communicated to the Advocate-General and Board of Revenue in continuation of

Proceedings, Madras Government, No. 380, of the 11th February 1875.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Major-General, R.E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Superintending Engineer, Kistna.
" " " Tanjore.
" District Engineer, Godavery.
" " " Nellore.
" " " North Arcot.
" " " Chingleput.
" " " South Arcot.
" " " Tinnevely.
" Advocate-General.
" Revenue Department.
" Judicial "

Exd. S. T. Austin.

Spare Copies

Govt. of {1875} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR IRRIGATION.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated August 6th.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 6th August 1875. No. 2,274.

AUGUST.

Nos. 104-105

Conservancy of Rivers, Madras Presidency.—Ordered that the papers containing the opinions of certain local officers on a Bill prepared for the —, be communicated to the Advocate-General and Board of Revenue.

No 1827

Forwarded to the Board of
Revenue for their information

By a Macgregor
as Secy to Govt.