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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.

386

~~Press~~

B.P. No.

Mis.

Dated

25.2.1875 196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 541. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. ROBERTS, R.E., Superintending Engineer, Tanjore, to Lieutenant-Colonel J. MULLINS, R.E., Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated 17th November 1874, No. 2,019 :—

I HAVE the honor to forward a statement showing the breaches that occurred in this district during the late high floods and the expenditure incurred in closing the same.

One statement.

2. On the 16th July 1874 the gauge on the upper anicut registered no less than 11 feet 10 inches, a height which has not been reached for the past 15 years in this district. It has always been thought that, with a height of over 10 feet on the above-mentioned gauge, the whole of the delta of this district would be flooded and its safety endangered. Fortunately, however, the flood was a falling one, and owing to this, as also to the fact of the banks of all the rivers in this district having of recent years received a great deal of attention and been carefully maintained, the damage done by the floods this year, in comparison with what has taken place in former years, has been, on the whole, almost trifling. The largest breach was in the south bank of the Coleroon near the village of Veeramangoody, and this breach is attributed to the bank having been worn away at the spot by the passage of cattle coming backwards and forwards between the village and the river.

3. Major Oakes, R.E., when in charge of this district was in the habit of publishing in the *District Gazette* a notice to all Tahsildars, warning them to fill up the ruts, etc., made in the river and channel banks by the passage of bandy and cattle. Mr. Arbuthnott, however, informed me shortly before he left the district that Major Oakes had no authority to issue such an order, and that the Tahsildar and village authorities were justified in treating it as waste paper. I am now, however, in communication with Mr. Thomas, the Acting Collector, with a view of some definite instructions being prepared and issued in this connection, and I am in every hope that Mr. Thomas will issue such orders as will check the facility for the breaching of the banks owing to the cause above specified.

4. I should mention that the delay in submitting this statement has arisen solely in consequence of the difficulties experienced by the Range Officers in obtaining from the Tahsildars concerned the information necessary for the preparation of the statement now forwarded.

No. 93.

Note by the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

THE accompanying report by the Superintending Engineer, Tanjore, of the extent of damage sustained by the Cauvery Delta works in Tanjore from a fresh of 11 feet 10 inches on the gauge at the upper anicut is, it is thought, the best evidence that the river banks and embankments have since the flood of 1869 been vastly improved. It will be seen that only twenty-five breaches occurred, most of them

of a very trifling kind, and that the expenditure in their repair amounted to but Rupees 2,524. From the condition of the river beds and banks some 13 years ago it is believed that 50,000 rupees would not have covered the damage which such a fresh would have occasioned, and there would also have been much loss from damage to crops. In the present case there was either no loss, or the damage done was insignificant.

2. The Government will doubtless notice with regret the views expressed by the Honorable D. Arbuthnott, when Collector of Tanjore, as reported in paragraph 3 of the Superintending Engineer's letter. Major Oakes' warnings to Tahsildars and Village Officers generally through the *District Gazette* must, from the fact of their publication therein, have manifestly had at least the indirect support of the Collector, and that such warnings are necessary in some form or another is manifest, because only villagers can see to the safety, on the occurrence of high freshes, of the many hundreds of miles of river banks of the delta. To say, therefore, that such warnings, because issued by an officer who had no direct authority over the Tahsildars and villagers, might justly be treated as waste paper showed great want of wisdom, if nothing worse, seeing that very great interests are involved, and Major Oakes' action was reasonable in itself and based upon a thorough knowledge of the necessities of the case.

3. Instructions have repeatedly been issued from this office to the effect that all recognized crossings of flood embankments or tank bunds, etc., should be provided with proper ramps, and that means should be taken to so fence these as to confine the traffic thereto. Such precautions are necessary to reduce risk of accidents, and these works may also be considered to be a reasonable convenience. Nevertheless the attention and care of Village Officers, and especially of all Revenue officials will continue to be necessary, and they should certainly be given ungrudgingly.

CAMP AT ARCONUM, (Signed) JOHN MULLINS, Lieut.-Colonel, R.E.,
22nd January 1875. Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

No. 542. ORDER THEREON, 22nd February 1875, No. 509.

IRRIGATION, No. 42.

HIS EXCELLENCY the Governor in Council has learnt with much satisfaction that the attention paid in recent years to the condition of the river beds and banks in the Tanjore Delta has been so far effectual that a fresh registered as 11 feet 10 inches on the upper anicut gauge occasioned but little damage in the way of breaches and but nominal loss of revenue.

2. There is no objection to the issue of such a notice as that issued by Major Oakes from time to time with a view to remind Tahsildars and Village Officers of the necessity of looking after the low places of banks caused by the passage of carts and cattle, and its promulgation in the *District Gazette* clears the late Collector of the charge of having opposed it. It is the duty of all officers of Government and of Village Officers to protect such public and private interests as those now

referred to; and to do all that lies in their power to lessen risks of accidents and of damage therefrom resulting. The Government are glad to learn that measures are being concerted between the Collector and Superintending Engineer for securing due attention to this important matter.

(True Extract.)

C. Munster Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, Tanjore.
To all other Superintending and District Engineers.
To the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, with one statement.
.. Revenue Department. ✓

Revenue Department
No. 708
Govt. of Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER.

TANJORE.

&c., &c., &c.

2 Dec

Dated February 22nd.

Recd. 25 Encl.

G. O. 22nd February 1875, No. 509.

Des. M. M.

FEBRUARY.

Nos. 541-542

Damages, Tanjore District.—Passing orders on the subject of the damages sustained by the Cauvery Delta works during the late heavy floods.

Comm. to the
Board of Revenue

144 To the Board of Revenue, Tanjore