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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
4th January 1876.*

No. 31. Read the following endorsement of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Fort St. George, 21st December 1875, No. 51:—

From J. H. LATHAM, Esq., Chief Engineer and Manager of the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company, to Lieutenant-Colonel J. MULLINS, R.E., Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Kurnool, 18th December 1875, No. 139.

November Reports.

I HAVE the honor to forward per book post copies of the Upper and Lower Divisions Reports, together with my own, for the month of November 1875.

MADRAS IRRIGATION AND CANAL COMPANY.

UPPER DIVISION.

Monthly Report for November 1875.

THE weather has been dry and favorable for the spread of irrigation of the second class, that is, the necessity of applying for water has come home to some of the ryots who have been hoping to mature certain garden crops by means of rain water only. The heavy rains of the 20th October, mentioned in my last report, were found sufficient to ripen a large area of "coarse paddy," which is a very favorite crop with the ryots in many parts. This crop requires much less water than ordinary paddy, but it produces a very inferior grain.

2. Another inferior crop, called "*amea*," has been much sown under the canal and irrigation channels. Some ryots applied for water for this crop, and, I believe, some hundreds of acres were almost destroyed, and only saved by the timely rain and the moisture from our channels.

3. It is necessary to point out these crops, which have of late years, together with a few others of a similar kind, greatly increased in the villages adjoining the canal. A statement showing the increase of these partially irrigated crops since the canal was opened would be very interesting, and I am confident that it would prove how beneficial the canal has been indirectly to the district.

4. It is no easy matter to settle which fields have actually been supplied with water, and which have only casually benefited by the surrounding wet cultivation. In some villages it has become the custom to sow the crops mentioned above round the paddy fields. The ryot then applies for water for one field, and in reality gets the benefit for three or four times the area for which he pays. This occurs from September to December, and the settlement takes place on the following May, June, or even later. At the settlement the Curnam, who generally is the only man present from the village, represents that he saw no water actually being supplied to the fields not applied for, and very probably the Overseer has not been able to come on the fields exactly at the moment at which they were supplied, and cannot therefore testify to the fact, although it may be perfectly well known to him and all the village.

5. Should, however, evidence be sufficient to convince the settling officers that a ryot was caught endeavouring to get water for nothing, i.e., stealing, he is fined at the rate of one shilling per acre. The man has probably well reckoned that the odds are against his being found out; it becomes a question as to whether he shall pay nothing or pay an extra shilling per acre. With the large areas to be watched by the staff, and with the general indifference of the Curnams, added to the extreme difficulty in producing proper evidence of the fraud, he will probably escape nine times out of ten.

6. In the lower part of the Nundial Taluq the ryots are very acute in all matters regarding irrigation, especially in the neighbourhood of old tanks. A man applied for water for his field situated among several other paddy fields nominally under tank-supply, but had the field been supplied with water by the Company, the adjoining field owners would have made good use of the water, and so cunningly, that it would have been impossible to prove the fact to a Tahsildar.

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7. On some occasions ryots have asked me why the rate has not been reduced to Rupees 4, as under Government tanks. The answer given has generally been that perhaps the Company might agree to the rate of Rupees 4 per acre if the ryots would pay the bankers, overseers, &c., and make the repairs to the canal and irrigation channels, as, I believe, they are required to do under Government tanks; this is generally enough to silence all mention of the Rupees 4 rate; but I regret to say that influential natives have been fostering the idea among the villagers that if they hold out the rate will be lowered. The Deputy Collector of Kurnool, A. Ramachandra Row, also writes, "It appears that some designing persons have been spreading out a false rumour that the water-rates would be reduced to Rupees 4 per acre if the ryots held out for a time."

8. The village of Kurrimudela has often been mentioned in these reports. Here the ryots have taken water for 200 acres; more than double of last year's area. A new channel was made through their lands to Yerraguntla and Poolamuddy below, but water was entirely stopped by the ryots of Kurrimudela, and only after great difficulty the Overseer was able to keep the channel open. It seemed as if the ryots thought they were entitled to the whole of the water.

9. No loss occurred, though the crops in the two lower villages were nearly withered at one time. It is time some strict means were taken to prevent any man from meddling with the channels; at present the idea seems prevalent that the villagers may do as they like with them. This comes partly from the frequent cases which have occurred without any punishment having been inflicted; and partly from a peculiar tenderness with which the people of this district seem to be treated, so that convictions are quite the exception.

10. The same restrictions that are enforced under ordinary tanks ought to hold good in villages under the canal. No villager of Yellagode would dare to stop up the main channel of the tank without orders.

The system of distributing water requires entire revision, as hereafter bankers will be unable to do that work, and it is probable that each village will have to keep its own "neel cutty," or "water distributor."

11. There will, it is thought, be a considerable demand for water, for indigo and other crops of the kind, as the weather seems unusually dry and dusty; but there are indications of rain to the south, and some has fallen at Velapanoor.

12. The usual repairs are going on, especially in the first section, where approaches to the third-class bridges are being widened and prepared for bandy traffic. Stone also is being collected for the new bridges at Gopalsingaram and Mochmurry.

13. The health of the staff has been fair, a few cases of fever as usual at this season occurred among overseers and bankers. Cholera broke out again in Nundial, but has now nearly disappeared.

14. The teak for the new road-ways over third-class bridges is expected soon from Madras.

(Signed) C. H. WILKS,
Conservancy Engineer.

LOWER DIVISION.

Report for the month of November 1875.

The state of the main canal throughout this division is very satisfactory; the monsoons have departed without leaving their usual traces on the banks, and the masonry works have stood the floods without any sign of failure, and the slight injury done to the toe-wall coping of the anicut at Adamapully has been repaired.

2. The distribution works are all in good repair, and continue to supply all the water required for irrigation efficiently, the only breaches which have been discovered are those made by ryots in order to obtain water surreptitiously; these are chiefly made at night so as to make it generally impossible for the Company's servants to detect the ryots who cut the banks, but in one

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bad case I hope we shall be able to convict, I allude to a breach made in the Maideoor main channel, which was breached in order that its water might flow into a natural channel which supplies the Palem tank near Maideoor. At the beginning of the month this tank had only one month's supply in it, now it has over two months supply though the rainfall has not been sufficient to lay the dust. Mr. Dunphy has promptly brought this case before the Tahsildar of Prodatoor, and as this is a private tank I hope the owners will be punished by the Revenue authorities.

3. Irrigation prospects continue much the same as in my last report, but I have been much disappointed, after successfully passing a copious supply of water over the new Goorumpaud aqueduct, to find that none of the ryots can cultivate the fields in the village this season as they have not yet received their puttahs from Government; at the time these ryots made their application for a supply of water they stated that at least 200 acres would be irrigated at once, now this additional area will not be realized until next season. One of the chief difficulties we now have in extending irrigation is the advantage taken by the ryots of clause 11 of Rule VI, which says that "leakage into fields, otherwise called sub-soil leakage, shall not be charged for." In many villages in the Sirwell and Prodatoor Taluqs the sub-soil leakage is considerable, owing to the presence of flat beds of rock under the surface of the soil, the ryots now find that by planting coarse paddy on fields kept damp by such leakage, they can, with the aid of the usual rainfall, secure a good crop of this inferior class of paddy without having to pay anything, and should the rainfall fail them they simply breach the irrigation channels at night, or at such times as they hope to do so without discovery, and so obtain sufficient canal water to mature their crops; neither do they confine this practice to fields receiving sub-soil leakage, but they select spots where our main channels are likely to leak, or in the midst of fields taking canal water by application, so that they can obtain the surplus water from their neighbours' fields to irrigate their own surreptitiously.

4. This practice is largely on the increase as shown in the accompanying table. Last season in the taluqs of Sirwell and Prodatoor 321.70 acres of wet crops were matured by this means free of any charge for the canal water; this year 911.62 acres have been raised by the same method, an increase of nearly 300 per cent., and if not checked I fear it will continue to increase until it will absorb 20 per cent. of the whole irrigation in those taluqs. In the village of Cana-Goodoor in Prodatoor Taluq last season we had no such cases of coarse paddy grown by aid of canal leakage water, this season 68 acres have been sown, and, owing to the deficiency of rain, all these fields have been more or less flooded by cutting the irrigation channels or by damming them up until they overflowed. Mr. Dunphy himself, with his Overseer and the Reddy and Curnam, made a careful inspection of these fields, and saw numerous small cuts made in channels, many so imperfectly filled in that water was still passing through them, and most of these fields were at that time as full of canal water as those of their honest neighbours who had taken water on application; but in spite of this evidence of their guilt all the ryots owning these 68 acres, and the Curnam of the village, continued to assert that it was only leakage water.

5. I have dwelt on this subject at length because, I think, it proves the necessity of this rule being modified, not only because it causes to the Company a considerable loss of revenue, but also because it offers a direct premium on dishonesty.

(Signed) A. J. DODSON,
Conservancy Engineer.

Chief Engineer's Report to accompany the Divisional Reports for November 1875.

It will be seen from the Divisional Reports that the first crops have been harvested in the neighbourhood of the canal without any incident of climate, any success or disaster, worthy of special note. Cultivation by means of canal water is clearly become an established branch of farming in the whole district irrigable from the Company's channels; and the study of "the Rules" occupies the thought and time of the wise men of every village. But, with all this, the

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slow growth of revenue is a subject of much anxiety and uneasiness. The time and thoughts and even the money of the villagers seem to be attracted so much towards artful and intricate modes of getting benefit from the water, in such a way as to pay the least possible water-rate, that they are diverted from the larger and bolder measures which should lead to a more extensive, and, we may feel sure, a more profitable use of the water.

2. Many of these petty methods are likely soon to work their own cure, without any repressive action; and, in such cases, it seems far better to leave them to do so. But the rules for progressive rates (Rule VI., Clause 2, Note) and the rule making irrigation from subsoil leakage free (Rule VI., Clause 11) seem to need firmness and care in the way they may be administered. Thus, unless the reduced progressive rates be confined strictly to fields properly converted by levelling and bunding, the ryots will be induced to throw up their previous irrigation and turn to irrigate fresh land, thereby getting the advantage of the reduced rate without incurring the expense of properly preparing the new land; and the Company will have the canal water used wastefully over ill-formed fields, instead of economically over the properly levelled fields. Again, scattered fields will be badly prepared, with bunds either insufficient in strength, or of porous earth and gravel, in order that the water running from them may flow over the neighbouring fields below, the latter claiming exemption on the plea that they are irrigated by subsoil leakage. These evils, so far as appears, already affect thousands of acres; and there is room for their extensively spreading. Yet they seem very difficult to check without causing a general feeling of resentment and mistrust, prejudicial to increase of revenue. It is true that if the irrigation were four or five times as extensive as it is, a staff of men might be maintained sufficient to ensure each applicant being supplied with just sufficient water for his field; in which case he would take care to bank it well, and secure his getting the sole benefit of the water supplied him; but I think this remedy inapplicable at present. These matters shall have my careful attention when I make my tour of inspection next month.

3. On the 23rd November I took over charge from Mr. Dodson, and resumed my duties as Chief Engineer.

4. I append a table of rainfall in November.

KURNOOL,
15th December 1875.

(Signed) J. H. LATHAM,
Chief Engineer.

Rain Register for the month of November 1875.

Date.	STATIONS.							
	Seonkessala.	Kurnool.	Japaud.	Vellapa- noor.	Chinta- coonta.	Rajoly.	Dhoor.	Adima- pully.
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3	...	...	...	0.10	...	...	...	...
4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
9	...	...	...	0.20	...	...	0.14	0.05
10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
13	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

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Rain Register for the month of November 1875.—(Concluded.)

Date.	STATIONS.							
	Seonkessala.	Kurnool.	Japaud.	Vellapa- noor.	Chinta- coonta.	Rajoly.	Dhoor.	Adima- pully.
18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
21	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
24	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
28	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
29	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total...	...	...	...	0.30	...	...	0.14	0.05

KURNOOL,
15th December 1875.

(Signed) J. H. LATHAM,
Chief Engineer and Manager.

SUBMITTED for the information of Government.

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

No. 32.

ORDER THEREON, 4th January 1876, No. 16.

IRRIGATION, No. 4.

THESE reports contain remarks showing that there is a disposition on the part of the ryots of villages near the canal to obtain benefit from the use of canal water without paying the prescribed rates. The practice of cutting channels in order to turn water on to lands not entitled to a supply appears also to be on the increase. His Excellency the Governor in Council will look to the Collectors of Kurnool and Cuddapah to repress all irregular practices promptly and firmly, and to take measures for the immediate examination of lands which the Company's officers may report to have been irregularly watered.

(True Extra.)

Ch. M. M. Major-General, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

„ Manager, Madras Irrigation and Canal Company.
„ Revenue Department.
„ Collector of Kurnool.
„ „ Cuddapah.
„ Examiner of Railway Accounts.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

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Govt. of 1876 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR IRRIGATION.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated January 4th.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 4th January 1876, No. 16.

JANUARY.

Nos. 31-32

Reports on the works of the Upper and Lower Sections of the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company for the month of November 1875.—Passing orders on endorsement of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, submitting—

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19. Jan 76

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