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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

27th September 1877, No. 348 L.

Irrigation.

Read the following paper :—

No. 131. From J. H. LATHAM, Esq., Chief Engineer and Manager, Madras Irrigation and Canal Company, to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Kurnool, 31st August 1877, No. 107.

P. Works G.O., No. 23 I of 18th instant. Comd. to the Ch. Engineer.

I HAVE carefully read the correspondence embodied with this Government Order and Mr. Dunphy's reports referred to, as well as G.O. No. 2,378 of 25th ultimo, I have the honor to respectfully urge the Madras Government not to let the matter rest. Their object and the interest of the country is not to allow the matter to be shelved, but to remedy the evils so correctly and to my mind with average perspicuity described by Mr. Dunphy.

The matter now stands thus :—

I.—In his December report (1876) Mr. Dunphy gave what I may perhaps call a despairing description of the way in which water was being violently interrupted and misappropriated, all security for the crops of those who had rightly applied and been registered destroyed, and the water wasted by being used for detached patches. He mentioned that the Tahsildar of Sirwell was quoted by the ryots as having given permission for this forcible diversion of water, and the difficulty of bringing ryots to justice even in case of an armed interference with irrigation in Yallur. I enclose* the extract from his report.

* Enclosure A.

II.—In his report for February (1877) Mr. Dunphy again summarizes his progress, or failure of progress, in suppressing disorder, progress in the Cuddapah District, failure in the Kurnool District. Mr. Dunphy's division includes all the canal irrigation in five taluqs, viz. :—

Sirwell	}	in Kurnool District,
Kovilkuntla		
Jamalamudugu	}	in Cuddapah District,
Prodatur		
Cuddapah		

and I see no ambiguity in his remarks, which are correctly and moderately expressed. He gives sufficient cases in detail, all in the Sirwell Taluq, but in general remarks he cannot except the Cuddapah District, where I saw water being forcibly diverted from a rice field which was cracked and perishing under the eye of the Curnam and of the Acting Canal Overseer at Jangalapilly, 28th November 1876. This was a "lighter offence." At the same time Mr. Dunphy does not write a word of complaint directed against any Government Officer in the Cuddapah District, though I am aware that many of the offences of ryots he describes were in the Cuddapah District, such as punching holes in culvert arches, and making holes in banks, &c. Mr. Dunphy never alludes

to any trouble he has had in bringing offenders to justice in Cuddapah, though this is on record in last year's cases, but particularizes one case in Yallur, Sirwell Taluq. (see enclosure B.)

III.—Going on to Mr. Price's letter (G.O. No. 2,378 of 25th ultimo) Mr. Price, writing rather as a Magistrate than as a Collector, justifies the smallness of the fines, and thinks Mr. Dunphy takes a one-sided view (see enclosure C). But does not Mr. Price in this letter take "a one-sided view," or rather no view at all, of the crying evil about which Mr. Dunphy reports? Is it Mr. Price's office, as an officer of Government in the Revenue Department, to calmly look on while the revenue of the canal is going to the dogs; ryots fighting for the water and forcibly diverting it; crops perishing which have duly been registered; Tahsildars neglecting their duties and securing no records, as the rules order of the irrigation being supplied in every village with water from the canal, from which record alone the Government can gather any income from this expensive work? During this chaos does not Mr. Price take "a one-sided view" when he calmly from his Magisterial chair criticises Mr. Dunphy's law, and does not indicate the stirring of a finger to stop the evil.

IV.—The papers in G.O. No. 23 I of 18th instant seem irrelevant. I do not know where the mistake originated that Yallur and Sirwell were in Cuddapah District. Mr. Price asked Mr. Dunphy for proof of his assertions. So far as appears Mr. Dunphy gave them. His remark (see enclosure D) seems rather meaningless, but if Mr. Price takes it to express confusion, I take it to express surprise. It probably was meant merely as a bare notice of a fact which Mr. Dunphy thought, but was not sure, was overlooked.

V.—As to Mr. Price's remark in paragraph 3,* I have pretty carefully gone over Mr. Dunphy's paragraphs referred to, and they seem to me carefully made and with studied avoidance of any inaccuracy; and they seem to me to be all correct and unrefuted. If there be any inaccuracy I believe Mr. Dunphy will gladly apologize; but I feel sure they must be contained in some of his papers not yet come to my knowledge.

To me it would seem perfectly fair and reasonable to make every acre of land irrigable by the canal pay two rupees a crop for the insurance of their crops provided by the canal, an advantage which they necessarily annually enjoy, and which ryots not under the canal do not enjoy. This apart from special rates for any improved class of produce. But it requires a very profound philosophy to justify the sitting apart of the department of Government entrusted with the revenue, while in a year of famine the water of the canal is being used and its revenue lost owing to their own failure to control the irrigation as Magistrates or to record it as Collectors. The ryots not under the canal would thus after suffering from famine have to pay the Government for the provision of water to those under it. If the laws and rules be sufficient, then the Magistrates and Collectors cannot have been so; if the former be insufficient, it is a poor subject to waste time in proving that the Magistrates and Collectors and staff kept to them; the country wants their improvement.

A.

Extract from Lower Division Report for the month of December 1876, and printed in G.O. No. 292, dated 30th January 1877.

"WHILE the cry for water has been spreading, and while it has been my utmost endeavour to make the best use of the comparatively insignificant quantity at my disposal the ryots have been greedily and forcibly endeavouring often with success to monopolize all the water in the channels.

"Such outrages as forcibly taking possession of a channel and all the water, driving the banker in charge of a channel from his post frequently by force, destroying the dams made in the channels by the Company, and other lighter offences are numerous; and yet ryots are constantly complaining to the Deputy Collector and Tahsildars of non-supplies and insufficient quantities of water to their villages; such complaints are too readily heard and are invariably forwarded to me with long effusions dilating on the supposed deficiency of supply, for it is too much trouble to ascertain if such complaints be true; but no reference is ever made to the probable cause of the deficiency, with which none but the native officers should be better acquainted. They know how unscrupulous a ryot is, and how totally regardless he is of truth and justice if he be thwarted or pined. They must know that with such a large supply of water constantly in the channels for such a small area irrigated, such phenomena as deficiencies and total failure of supplies to villages can only occur by accident to the works, or interference with them.

"I have frequently complained of the latter to them and have instituted criminal cases against some offenders, but hardly with success, at least with regard to checking the lawless interference with the channels.

"I instituted a case against a body of ryots of Yallur for entirely damming up a main channel which had to supply several villages, and who were armed with battle-axes, which they threatened to use against any banker or other employes who attempted to thwart them in their attempt to take all the water. Mr. W. Johnston (Range Officer) and the Overseers expostulated with the men, but without success; so summonses were taken out against them.

"The case occupied the Canal Officer's time for nine days, and the offenders were punished with a fine of 10 Rupees each. One of the defendants immediately after the case wrote a petition complaining of insufficient supply of water.

"The Magistrate of Nundial, commenting on the case, wrote to me to the effect that prosecutions would deter ryots from irrigating. I have succeeded in getting other ryots punished, but fear that, until they are treated with more firmness, they will not learn to respect any rights except their own.

"The ryots of a village close to the one mentioned above recently complained to me personally that the Reddi of another village and others had effectually prevented all the water from reaching their village, and the banker who had endeavoured to regulate it was assaulted. I sent the banker the next day and told him to caution the interference of ryots, but he was disregarded. The next day I sent two of my lascars with the banker; the ryots in this case allowed my men to divide the water, but as soon as the lascars left, they proceeded to undo their work, and were caught in the act by my men who returned with that object.

"The Range Officer, Mr. Johnston, reported to me to-day (10th) that while inspecting the village of Sirwell he discovered a mass of irrigation under a channel which some ryots had taken possession of, and for which no application had been made to anybody. The ryots told Mr. Johnston that the Tahsildar had given them permission to take the water. In this village alone 50 acres have been irrigated on this system.

"The villagers under the canal may be considered to be in a very prosperous condition, the crops being very good indeed. It seems to me surprising that instead of a ryot irrigating the whole of his rain-sown crop, he has merely taken water for patches; this is the case in almost every village."

B.

Extract from Lower Division Report for the month of February 1877, and printed in G.O. No. 1,301, dated 16th April 1877.

"11. Now that I may say the irrigation season has terminated, it is worth while to introduce the results of my efforts to instil a more rational impression on the ryots concerning the use and abuse of the canal water.

"There is nothing to be said in favor of the ryots who have so outrageously and mischievously abused the blessing the Canal Officers have brought to their doors, not the plea of ignorance. Ryots, who, in order to get possession of the water, go to the channels armed with battle-axes and knives as they frequently did, who violently assault the bankers, the only men who divide the water fairly, and who pull the parapets of bridges down to make their dams, have learned to open and have opened irrigation sluices fitted with screw gears, and who are in the habit of making holes in the banks and masonry, not to obtain sufficient water, but to get without payment, or before their neighbours who may be equally entitled with them to receive water, ought not to be leniently dealt with. The object of the prosecutions instituted this season were almost solely to check and stop the dangerous practice of ryots forcibly taking entire possession of main channels discharging about 4,000 cubic yards of water per hour, or enough for 2,000 acres. The mischief these men did cannot be described without long details.

One of the Overseers, Mr. Johnston, and I did all we could to stop such disgraceful doings, but we were powerless. The trouble experienced in bringing a gang of these offenders (they were all well armed) to justice was described in a

* For December 1876.

previous report,* and that is the only case I have been able to successfully carry in the most troublesome of the five taluqs I have to deal with. I wrote to the local magistracy, representing the condition of affairs, when there was ample time to take precautions, but without the slightest assistance being given. It would be worth while before these channels and their works are repaired to have them carefully inspected by a competent officer, who should give an approximate estimate of the damage done.

"12. During the season in the Sirwell taluq two serious cases have been brought before the Magistrates; in one case the offenders alluded to in a previous paragraph were punished by fines of Rupees 10 each; and the other, the Overseer informs me, was dismissed by the Sirwell Tahsildar, though no reason was given to him.

"In the Prodatur taluq six serious cases were expeditiously disposed of by the 2nd-class Magistrate, Jeeram Row, the most serious offence being the breaking open of a banker's head; for this the offenders were fined Rupees 50 each.

"In the Cuddapah taluq three cases have been disposed of by the 2nd-class Special Magistrate, the offenders being punished by fines of small amount. Before the same Magistrate eight other cases have been laid, but for some reason are deferred."

C.

Extract from the Acting Collector of Cuddapah letter No. 1,556, dated 19th June 1877, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, and printed in G.O. No. 2,378 of 25th July 1877.

"2. I quite agree with him in thinking that, considering the state of the times, Rupees 10 and 15 are quite sufficient fines to impose for petty cases of mischief.

"3. Mr. Dunphy appears to take a completely one-sided view of matters. If he had to perform the duties of a special Magistrate in a famine district for a short time, he would probably change his opinion."

D.

Extract from the Acting Conservancy Engineer's letter No. 851, dated 16th July 1877, to the Acting Collector of Cuddapah, and printed in G.O. No. 23 I of 18th August 1877.

"The remarks in my report were, I think, pointed against the Kurnool District, and the letters are mostly addressed to officers of that district."

E.

Extract from the Acting Collector of Cuddapah letter No. 2,046, dated 21st July 1877, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, and printed in G.O. No. 23 I of 18th August 1877.

"3. It would save correspondence and time lost in searching records if Mr. Dunphy would be more particular as to the accuracy of his statements. I do not read his remarks as applying to Kurnool alone, nor do Government or the Board appear to have done so."

(True Extracts.)

(Signed) C. DAWSON,
Chief Clerk, Madras Irrigation and
Canal Company.

No. 132. ORDER THEREON, 27th September 1877, No. 348 I.

HIS GRACE the Governor in Council desires a report to be made by the Collector of Kurnool on the subject of the improper interference of ryots with the water distribution under the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company's Canal, sometimes accompanied by mischief, as noticed in the Lower Division report for February, Proceedings Madras Government, No. 1,801 of 16th April 1877, as also in the report

for December printed in Proceedings Madras Government, No. 292, and the requisite instructions Department.

2. The Chief Engineer and Manager will be requested to append to the monthly showing the number of cases of interference results. These abstracts can be completed

(True Extracts.)

Government, 30th January 1877, to be conveyed through the Revenue

Department, Madras Irrigation and Canal Company, to be appended to the monthly statement of the canal an abstract statement of mischief reported, and with what results during the irrigation season.

Colonel, R.E.,

Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,

Irrigation Branch

To the Chief Engineer for Irrigation,
and Manager, Madras Irrigation and Canal Company,
Revenue Department.

Exd. A. Grubert.

Spare Copies

13 Feb 77 N 803
 12 May 77 N 2710
 25 July 77 N 527-528
 13 Aug 77 N 4528

N 6059

Communicated
 to the Board of Revenue
 with reference to the
 13 Feb 1877 N 803 Order of
 12 May " " 2710 Govt in the
 25 July " " 2378
 13 Aug " " 4528
 notes, in view to the
 report from the collector
 of Kurnool, required
 in para 1 of the fore-
 going order, being for-
 warded.

8 Oct 77

[Signature]

to Secy of Revenue 10-10-77

Revenue Department
 No 4264
 IRRIGATION.

Govt. of 1877 Madras
 PUBLIC WORKS.

To
 THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR IRRIGATION.
 &c., &c., &c.

Dated September 27th

Issued

Recd. 5 October

Encl.

G.O., 27th September 1877, No. 343 L.

SEPTEMBER.

Nos. 131-132.

Nis 8-10-77 N 6059

Vide N 3564/78

Madras Irrigation and Canal Company's
 Canal.—The Collector of Kurnool to report
 on the subject of the improper interference
 of ryots with the water distribution under
 the —, and the Chief Engineer and Manager
 to append to the monthly reports of the canal
 an abstract statement showing the number
 of cases of interference or mischief re-
 ported.

[Signature]