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REVENUE DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

19th November 1878, No. 2052.

Famine Commission.

Read the following paper :—

No. 93. *From C. A. ELLIOTT, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Famine Commission, to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Department, dated Simla, 4th November* 1878, *No.* 323.

I am directed to forward, herewith, a copy of a Memorandum drawn up under the orders of the President, Famine Commission, in which is detailed the nature of the information requested by the Famine Commission as to the extent of the protection afforded by the existing canals and other means of irrigation, and as to the schemes which have been prepared, or are under preparation for enlarging those canals, or for making new ones; and I am to request that, with the permission of His Grace the Governor in Council, the Famine Commission may be supplied with the facts desired, and may also be favored with the opinion of the Government of Madras in the Irrigation Department as to the various matters of principle or theory involved in the present inquiry.

2. It is hoped that the Famine Commission may be favored with a reply to this communication by the 1st of January next.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

Memorandum by the Famine Commission.

The scope of the Commission's inquiries as regards irrigation is defined in paragraphs 12 to 16 of the Secretary of State's Despatch, dated 10th January 1878, and in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Government of India's Resolution, dated 2nd May 1878. In these instructions the Commission is required to record its views as to—

(1) the area now irrigated or irrigable from different sources of supply;
(2) the extent to which such irrigation protects from drought the food-crops of the district in which the works exist:
(3) the possibility of extending irrigation still further—
  (*a*) by the improvement of existing works;
  (*b*) by the creation of new works:
(4) the obstacles to such extension arising from—
  (*a*) any kind of administrative inefficiency;
  (*b*) the poverty and want of enterprise of the ryot.

2. These inquiries were embodied, as far as seemed suitable, in the Famine Commission's questions, which were mainly addressed to District Officers. Now hat the answers to those questions have for the most part been received, it is time to request the Local Governments to sum up the information before them, and to favor the Commission with their views regarding the different heads particularised in the preceding paragraph.

3. The District answers as to the first point, the area irrigated, should be compiled and, so far as they relate to canal irrigation, compared with the statistics of the Irrigation Department. From this compilation it will be easy to make out a statement showing what parts of the country

are least irrigated and are most in need of water. It will also be necessary to differentiate between the existing sources of irrigation, such as canals, wells, tanks or ponds, and rivers, and to distinguish the permanent sources of supply from those which are liable to suffer from drought.

4. The next point is to show what areas can be considered as requiring protection by means of irrigation, and what are actually so protected; and, in order to do this, it is necessary to decide what is meant by the term "protection." Careful consideration of this point is especially invited.

It has hitherto been held in the Irrigation Department that an area is "protected," of which a third part is or can be irrigated in a season of drought by a canal drawn from a permanent river, or by wells not liable to dry up. What light do recent facts throw on the correctness of this axiom? To what extent does such a proportion of irrigation save the "protected" area from the effects of famine?

This point being established, it will be possible to divide the cultivated area in each Presidency or Province into "protected" and "unprotected," and to state, approximately, the acreage of each class.

And it is further necessary to consider what regions are liable to suffer in an aggravated shape from drought, and how far the condition of the population is such that protection by means of irrigation is suitable or requisite. To this category perhaps belong the thinly-populated regions near the Indian desert, where the inhabitants are accustomed to save themselves by emigration in time of drought.

5. As to the third head, a *resumé* should be given of all irrigation schemes which have been prepared, or are under preparation, or have been or may now be suggested, in each Presidency or Province, whether they apply to the extension and enlargement of existing canals, or to new projects: the information given should show—

(1) if the scheme is unfinished, what stage it is in, what remains to be done, and what steps are being taken to complete it?
(2) if the scheme is completely worked out, what is the estimated cost of construction and of management; what is the estimated return, direct and indirect (from money payments for the water used, from navigation, &c., or from enhanced land revenue due to the increased value and capacity of the land); what is the area which the scheme proposes to irrigate, and to protect; what objections have been raised to the scheme, and what weight is attributed to them; whether the Local Government desires to carry out the scheme, and, if not, why not?
(3) in either of the above cases, it should be stated whether the scheme applies to the protection of land already cultivated and inhabited, or to the improvement and reclamation of land now uncultivated and desert: and if the latter, how far it would beneficially influence the condition of the neighbouring cultivated and more densely-peopled area:
(4) also whether the scheme is expected to be remunerative, if executed, and when executed, managed in the ordinary way; or whether, though not remunerative in a commercial sense, it would be expedient for Government to take it up at the risk of incurring a yearly charge with a view to protecting any area from famine:
(5) lastly, whether, in the case of works likely to be unremunerative, any general plan is recommended for adoption under which the necessary funds could be provided for their construction, or for meeting any yearly charge they would involve, without increasing the demand on the public revenues, which it must be assumed could not meet a growing charge of this sort.

6. Referring to head (4) of paragraph 1, the answers to questions IV 21, 22, 23 will be before the Local Governments, and will have informed them as to the views held on those points by their local officers. The Famine Commission should be favored with the opinion of the Local Government, recorded after a full consideration of these answers, as to the desirability and possibility of any reform in the system of canal administration, and of removing any obstacles which at present impede the spread of canal irrigation.

Transferred to the Financial Department with reference to Order in that Department, dated 5th August 1878, No. 1374.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
13*th November* 1878.

(Signed) LORNE A. CAMPBELL,
Under Secy. to Govt., Rev. Dept.

No. 91. ORDER THEREON, 19th November 1878, No. 2052.

Communicated to the Public Works (Irrigation) Department in view to the information desired being furnished to the Famine Commission.

(True Extract.)

Acting Chief Secretary.

To the Public Works (Irrigation) Department.
„ G. A. Ballard, Esq.
„ the Revenue Department.
„ the Revenue (Famine) Department.
„ the Board of Revenue.

Exd. J. Wright.

Rlwl Dept

Govt. of 1878 Madras

No. 5168

FINANCIAL.

To

THE PUBLIC WORKS
(IRRIGATION) DEPARTMENT,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated November, 19th.

Issued

Recd. 22

Encl.

G.O., 19th November 1878, No. 2052.

NOVEMBER.
Nos. 93-94.

Famine Commission.—Communicating letter from the Secretary, Famine Commission, forwarding copy of a Memorandum detailing the nature of the information requested by the Commission as to the extent of the protection against famine afforded by existing canals, &c.

No. 2870

Lodged

23rd Nov 78