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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. B.P. No.	2913	Press. Mis.
Dated	28-11-1878	197

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2913

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

15th November 1878, No. 928 I.

Irrigation.

Read the following papers :—

No. 83. Endorsement of the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, dated Ootacamund, 19th September 1878.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 5th September 1878, No. 2,469.

Read the following letter from H. J. STOKES, Esq., Acting Collector of Madura, to C. A. GALTON, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 17th August 1878, No. 306 :—

WITH reference to your endorsement, Miscellaneous No. 7,335, dated the 23rd July 1878, calling for my remarks on the proposal to construct a reservoir near Gollapuram in the Periyakulam Taluk of this district, I have the honor to state that I do not think that it will be possible to make 6,572 millions of cubic feet of water available for irrigation at Gollapuram without seriously prejudicing the vested interests of holders of irrigated land lower down the river.

2. On pages 16 and 17, Part I, of Mr. Nelson's Manual of the Madura District, the Board will find a description of the Vaigai river, which points out that the bed is all but dry during by far the greater portion of the year even at Madura, a hundred miles from the mouth. It is only after heavy rains in the country of its sources that the bed is properly filled. Freshes occur but a few times in the year, and are extraordinarily irregular both as to volume and the periods of occurrence. The water seldom reaches the sea, and very frequently years pass without a supply being received in the main tank at Ramnad. There are several anicuts on its course, and numerous minor channels which draw off the water on either bank, until in ordinary years the whole supply is exhausted. Most of these minor channels will receive little or nothing until the bed is fairly covered, and the water has risen to the level of the bed of each channel. Under these circumstances I am unable to understand how the area of irrigation about Gollapuram could be increased by 30,000 acres without a corresponding diminution taking place in the area lower down the stream.

3. On this subject I beg to refer the Board to paragraphs 18—32 of letter, No. 228, dated the 7th June 1876, from Mr. Bliss, Acting Collector of Madura, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue. In this letter Mr. Bliss discusses the feasibility of a scheme for a reservoir at Gollapuram, the capabilities of the river, the necessity of an irrigation survey, and other matters of interest. He points out that nothing is known of the amount of wastage of Vaigai water that takes place through drainage into the Gundar, except that it is considerable; and that without a thorough investigation into the present distribution of the Vaigai water, any storage high up the stream might be prejudicial to vested interests lower down. This seems to me so obvious that I do not think it necessary to enlarge on it, and would only urge that no risk of invading these interests should be incurred; and that it would be premature to execute a new work on a large scale before it has been ascertained by examination whether equal or perhaps greater advantages could not be secured by promoting economy in the use of water taken off by existing channels and by improving the existing means of off-take and storage.

4. If it so happened that works constructed on the upper part of the river interfered with the rights of holders of Government and Zemindari lands, the Board can easily imagine that the profits to be derived from the new works would be considerably reduced by the compensation which would become payable to the holders of land under the old ones. What claims the Shivaganga and Ramnad Estates might make it is impossible to anticipate.

5. At present little or nothing is accurately known as to water-supply of the Vaigai, except that it is extremely irregular. No one, as far as I know, has made any attempt to estimate the amount of water lost by soakage into the sandy bed, and we have no knowledge of the amount of wastage by the channels which discharge into the Gundar and by that river into the sea. Information on these points is absolutely necessary before any comprehensive scheme of irrigation can be carried out, and to obtain it will require the kind of survey recommended by Mr. Bliss.

6. Until this preliminary objection is set at rest, I do not think that it is necessary for me to report further on the revenue merits of the project. It cannot be doubted that any means of extending the irrigated area of this district would be of great advantage to it, but I do not anticipate that it will be possible to do this without resorting to the project for turning the Periyar into the Kambam valley, or in some other way increasing the supply of water.

SUBMITTED to Government with reference to G.O., dated 12th July 1878, No. 1,699, Revenue Department, communicating G.O., Public Works Department, dated 14th June 1878, No. 491-I.

2. The Board observe, with reference to the Collector's remarks, that the irrigational capabilities of the Vaigai river, although they have been much theorized on, do not appear ever to have been scientifically investigated and reported on. In G.O., Public Works Department, 30th September 1876, No. 2,637, Colonel Oakes, R.E., was specially appointed to this duty, but, so far as the Board are informed, no report has been submitted, and the question as to whether the whole annual supply which passes down the river is absorbed by the existing irrigated area, or whether it is possible, without prejudice to vested interests, to detain and store a portion of the water passing down during the season of freshes, yet remains unsettled. The Chief Engineer for Irrigation at paragraph 8 of his Note on the Gollapuram project, printed with the Proceedings of the 14th June 1878, adverts to this point as one needing careful consideration.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Secretary.

TRANSFERRED to the Public Works Department with reference to G.O. in that Department, dated 14th June 1878, No. 491 I.

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Acting Chief Secretary.

No. 83-A.

No. 323 I.

RESUBMITTED.

2. The Superintendent, Revenue Survey, has been communicated with regarding the state of the Madura Survey. It appears that the survey of one taluk only (Periyakulam) is approaching completion, and that of the next taluk taken up (Pulney) is expected to be completed "within a year." It is likely to be at least six years before the maps of the district, excluding Ramnad and Shivaganga, are completed.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
9th November 1878.
(Signed) J. O. HASTED, Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Ag. Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
To the Joint Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, Irrigation Branch.

No. 84. ORDER THEREON, 15th November 1878, No. 928 I.

ORDERED to be recorded.

2. The preliminary investigation contemplated by Colonel Mullins should be taken in hand as soon as possible.

(True Extract.)

By order
Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Ag. Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,
Irrigation Branch.

To the Superintending Engineer, Fifth Circle.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Revenue Department.

Exd. J. W. Fischer.
Spare Copies

Revenue Dept
No 5232
IRRIGATION.

Govt. of (1878) Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

To
THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
FIFTH CIRCLE,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated November 15th.

Issued

Recd. 27 November Encl.

G. O. 15th November 1878, No. 928 I.

NOVEMBER

Nos. 83-84.

4.2913
Communicated to the
Board of Revenue.

28 Nov 78.

Reservoir near Gollapuram in Periyakulam
Taluk, Madurai District. The proposal to
construct a — recorded with remark.

17 Feb 2002 Board of Revenue