

Revenue (1897) Department.

PRESS SERIES.

G.O., No. 589

Dated 19th July 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Famine Prospects.

Recording Board's Proceedings concurring in Mr. Stuart's opinion that prospects in the South Arcot district are encouraging and that there is no probability of relief works being required unless both the south-west and north-east monsoon should fail.

[illegible]

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

CURRENT No. 582

42. the Governor.

1977

The Board of Revenue
Supplement.

No. 464.

Dated 24th June, 1887

Received

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SUBJECT.

Reg. prospects of famine
in the South West St.

The Board of Ed. Sept 20-7-97

RS

note the C-2's note about the requirement of tools in the district - is now in effect

c1577/97

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
100	35	215	11-11-96
140	202	215	11-11-96

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1897.

Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

MADRAS.



Recd.

Enclosures

1897.

Regd.

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Printed July th

Proceedings, 24th June 1897, No. 464.

JUNE.

Famine Prospects.—Concurring in Mr. Stuart's opinion that prospects in the South Arcot district are encouraging and that there is no probability of relief-works being required unless both the south-west and north-east monsoons should fail

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE
(REVENUE SETTLEMENT, LAND RECORDS AND AGRICULTURE).

READ—the following letter from A. E. CASTLESTUART STUART, Esq., Collector of South Arcot, to the Famine Secretary, to the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated Cuddalore, 5th June 1897, Ref. on No. 376-Ver. Sup.:—

Adverting to the last clause of paragraph 3 of Board's Proceedings (R.S., L. R. and Agri.), dated 10th May 1897, No. 352, I have the honour to submit the following report.

2. Immediately on receipt of the Board's Proceedings, which reached me in camp on the 18th ultimo at Vriddhachalam, I put myself in communication with my Divisional Officers, the Executive Engineer, District Board Engineer and the District Medical and Sanitary Officer. The Divisional Officers were called upon to report—

(a) The particular localities, if any, likely to be seriously affected should the south-west monsoon fail;

(b) which of the relief-works in the famine programme should be first started should necessity arise;

(c) what village relief circles they would propose;

(d) what localities and sites they would select for poor-houses and kitchens;

(e) whom they would designate as officers for the various circles poor-houses, kitchens so far as existing establishments are concerned;

(f) what number of extra hands may be required for these purposes, should such a contingency arise;

(g) what number of persons are likely to require relief under section 75 of the Code, the information being supplied in the forms prescribed for the "first" and "second" pages of the register referred to in that section;

(h) what the general condition of each taluk was and what, if any, cause for anxiety in the event of the south-west monsoon proving a failure.

Copies of the circular to the Divisional Officers were communicated to the Executive Engineer and District Board Engineer who were asked to furnish information regarding the number and description of tools available in the district for relief labourers and the places at which they are stored. The Executive Engineer and the District Medical and Sanitary Officer were further asked to furnish a list showing the present strength of the subordinate staff working in the district and the strength to which it should be augmented should it become necessary to open famine relief works.

3. I have now received replies from all these officers—the last was received to-day, and this explains the few days' delay in submitting this report, which I wished to make as complete as possible. It may at once be stated that, even should the south-west monsoon totally fail in this district this year and the indications are all in favour of at least a normal monsoon, it is highly improbable that any part of the district would be so seriously affected as to necessitate the starting of relief works anywhere within its limits or the giving of gratuitous relief, should the south-west monsoon totally fail, or be extremely light, the most that would probably be necessary in a few places would be the expansion of ordinary Local Fund and Minor Irrigation works.

4. In support of this view, which is held by all the local officers, the following facts may be mentioned. The district has been in a flourishing condition since the last north-east monsoon, which, though late in coming, was abundant and in some parts almost superabundant. No trouble has been experienced in making the collections. Owing to the great demand for food stuffs in the affected districts, prices have been somewhat high, but grain has been exchanged for money, and the holders of grain have largely benefited. Stocks have, however, nowhere been depleted owing, I think, to a prevalent relief that famine in other districts is likely to last and that prices may, as they probably will for two or three months, range still higher in the near future than they have done in the past. At the same time the following figures prove that the range of prices in this district affords no just ground for anxiety.

The "normal," "warning" and "scarcity" rates fixed by the Board (B.P., R.S., L.R. and Agri., dated 2nd November 1896, No. 308), for the staple food-grains of this district in seers of 80 tolas per rupee are—

	"Normal."	"Warning."	"Scarcity."
Rice, second sort	14-0	11-2	8-4
Ragi	28-0	21-0	14-0
Cumbu	26-0	19-5	13-0

The following table shows the variations of prices in the district for the last ten weeks. For week ending:—

	Prices in seers of 80 tolas per rupee.									
	April 1897.				May 1897.					June 1897.
	3rd.	10th.	17th.	24th.	1st.	8th.	15th.	22nd.	29th.	5th.
Rice, second sort ..	14-12	13-56	13-01	12-77	12-81	12-81	12-65	12-41	12-05	12-05
Ragi	20-89	21-03	20-40	20-24	20-24	19-73	19-66	19-22	19-51	19-01
Cumbu	21-00	20-79	20-23	19-81	20-25	19-32	19-32	18-76	19-04	18-87

It will be observed that, in spite of the drain upon the district in consequence of the large demand for food-stuffs beyond its limits, prices though slowly rising, as must be expected, are by no means alarming and they are fully explained by the facility of communications in this district which enable the ryots to drive satisfactory bargains with foreign traders in grain. The hot-weather conditions of the district have been excellent, the late north-east monsoon kept water in the tanks much later than usual and cultivation was generally late but the harvest was reaped and there is ample food-stock in the district. In the week ending 20th February 1897, there was an unusual rainfall which was gauged as follows at the 17 registering stations:—

	INCHES.		INCHES.
Merkanam	1-61	Tiruvannamalai	1-06
Cuddalore	3-49	Chengam	0-20
Bhuvanigiri	3-40	Tirukkóyilúr	1-69
Chidambaram	2-46	Ulundurpétai	3-15
Tindivanam	1-82	Kallakurchi	2-71
Vanur	2-37	Vriddhachalam	0-87
Villupuram	2-61	Tittagudi	3-79
Panruti	2-67		
Mannargudi	5-03		
Gingee	0-71		
		Total	39-63

This rainfall was very generally distributed over the district which received in that week 39-63 inches or an average of 2-23 inches at each registering station. This heavy rain towards the end February 1897 following upon the late north-east

brought upon the sanctioned list immediately. The Divisional Officers have made their suggestions on the various points noticed by Government and are quite ready to start works and form village relief circles should such become necessary except in regard to tools. I am of opinion that this district is well prepared for any contingency that may arise. The detailed enquiries prescribed in section 75 of the Famine Code are being made and will, I hope, be completed by the 15th instant. As regards staff, the Revenue officials are ready with men, but again the Public Works Department are found wanting. The Executive Engineer reports that the existing and normal strength of the Engineering staff is as follows:—

Existing.	Normal.
One Executive Engineer.	One Executive Engineer.
Four Sub-Divisional Officers.	Four Sub-Divisional Officers.
One Upper Subordinate.	Four Upper Subordinates.
Two Sub-Overseers.	Two Sub-Overseers.
Three Temporary Upper Subordinates.	Three Temporary Upper Subordinates.

9. It will be seen that the Engineering staff is at present below its normal strength, and the Executive Engineer in reply to my question as to the strength by which he would consider it should be augmented should famine relief-works become necessary, writes: "The answer to this question must of course depend on the number and magnitude of the famine works started. As a commencement, however, it would be sufficient if the normal strength was increased by the addition of one Upper Subordinate for each taluk. There being eight taluks, the existing strength would then have to be increased by eleven Upper Subordinates." It would therefore appear that should famine relief-works become necessary, the Public Works Department would have to find eleven Upper Subordinates in addition to their existing staff which is already below the normal strength sanctioned for the district.

10. As regards the Medical staff, there are, besides the District Medical Officer and the Assistant Surgeon, seven Civil Apothecaries, twelve 1st-class Hospital Assistants, four 2nd-class Hospital Assistants, three 3rd-class Hospital Assistants and one Reserve Civil Apothecary; all these, except the last, are employed in the existing hospitals and dispensaries and if no fresh men were available in case of famine being declared, some of these institutions would probably have to be closed temporarily and the apothecaries and hospital assistants deputed to famine duty. The paucity of Public Works Department and Medical subordinates and of famine tools is, in my opinion, the prominent defect in this Presidency. As already observed, practically so far as this district is concerned, I do not believe that we shall require either tools or additional Medical or Public Works Department subordinates; but if we did, I fear we should have difficulty in having these wants readily supplied.

RESOLUTION—dated 24th June 1897, No. 464.

Recorded.

2. The Board concurs in Mr. Stuart's opinion that prospects in his district are encouraging, and that there is no probability of relief-works being required unless both the south-west and north-east monsoons should fail.

3. Colonel Campbell and Mr. Winterbotham now on tour will deal with the question as to the proper stock of famine tools for each district.

4. The task of ascertaining what persons are likely to require gratuitous relief need not be pursued at present.

(True Copy and Extract.)

Handwritten signature
Famine Secretary.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" " Collector of South Arcot.

Exd. P. Seetharam.

Government {1897} of Madras. REVENUE.

Recd.

1897.

Enclosures

Regd.

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G.O., No. 539, 19th July 1897.

JULY.

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

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It will be observed that, in spite of the drain upon the district in consequence of the large demand for food-stuffs beyond its limits, prices though slowly rising, as must be expected, are by no means alarming and they are fully explained by the facility of communications in this district which enable the ryots to drive satisfactory bargains with foreign traders in grain. The hot-weather conditions of the district have been excellent, the late north-east monsoon kept water in the tanks much later than usual and cultivation was generally late but the harvest was reaped and there is ample food-stock in the district. In the week ending 20th February 1897, there was an unusual rainfall which was gauged as follows at the 17 registering stations:—

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Gingee	0.71		
		Total	39.63

This rainfall was very generally distributed over the district which received in that week 39.63 inches or an average of 2.23 inches at each registering station. This heavy rain towards the end February 1897 following upon the late north-east

monsoon, together with slight rain in some places in the succeeding week, viz., 0.25 at Ulundúrpéttai, 0.20 at Vriddhachalam and 0.07 at Tittagudi, materially helped the district. Water and pasture and late crops were plentiful, and the total absence of rain during the month of March nowhere caused difficulty. The drought of March has been followed in April and May by unusual rain. In fact, more rain has fallen in the district during these months than in the corresponding months of any year since 1893 except the year 1894, as the following figures prove:—

Total rainfall.						INCHES.	Total for the two months.
						INCHES.	
In April 1893	...	...	...	...	...	8.61	27.88
" May "	...	...	...	...	...	19.27	
" April 1894	...	...	...	...	...	35.76	62.32
" May "	...	...	...	...	...	26.56	
" April 1895	...	...	...	...	...	20.81	36.82
" May "	...	...	...	...	...	16.01	
" April 1896	...	...	...	...	...	...	14.27
" May "	...	...	...	...	...	14.27	
" April 1897	...	...	...	...	...	6.94	38.01
" May "	...	...	...	...	...	31.07	

The following table shows where this rainfall was gauged in the several weeks of April and May 1897:—

Place.	Week ending									
	April 1897.				May 1897.					
	3rd.	10th.	17th.	24th.	1st.	8th.	15th.	22nd.	29th.	
Merkanam	..	..	0.54	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cuddalore	..	..	0.43	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bhuvanigiri	..	..	0.97	..	..	0.32	..	..	..	..
Chidambaram	..	..	0.18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tindivanam	..	..	0.41	..	..	0.60	..	..	..	..
Vanur	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.30	..	..
Villupuram	..	..	0.10	..	..	0.52	..	..	..	..
Panruti	..	..	0.18	..	..	0.09	..	0.32	..	..
Mannárgudi	..	0.17	0.36	..	..	0.76	..	..	0.17	..
Gingee	..	0.20	0.20	..	..	0.19	..	..	..	..
Tiruvannámalaí	..	..	0.02	..	..	3.63	0.91	1.62	..	..
Chengam	..	..	..	..	..	1.64	2.70	1.30	..	..
Tirukkóyilúr	..	..	0.70	..	..	0.80	..	..	..	..
Ulundúrpéttai	..	..	0.28	0.55	..	0.40	..	0.96	..	..
Kallakurchi	..	..	..	..	..	2.12	0.86	3.56	..	..
Vriddhachalam	..	0.10	1.07	..	..	0.14	..	0.82	..	..
Tittagudi	..	..	0.95	..	..	0.36	1.92	0.40	..	..

For the week ending to-day the rainfall gauged has been as follows:—

Stations.	Rainfall for the week ending 5th June 1897.	Stations.	Rainfall for the week ending 5th June 1897.
	INCHES.		INCHES.
1. Merkanam	1.25	10. Gingee	2.42
2. Cuddalore	0.93	11. Tiruvannámalaí	3.81
3. Bhuvanigiri	2.05	12. Chengam	0.90
4. Chidambaram	..	13. Tirukkóyilúr	0.24
5. Tindivanam	0.78	14. Ulundúrpéttai	0.64
6. Vanur	0.46	15. Kallakurchi	..
7. Villupuram	0.15	16. Vriddhachalam	2.74
8. Panruti	0.31	17. Tittagudi	..
9. Mannárgudi	0.52		

5. It will thus be seen that the district, which is not very dependent upon the south-west monsoon, has up to date fared well and that even a total failure of that monsoon, which generally benefits only the western portions of the taluks is not likely to necessitate the opening of relief-works or the granting of gratuitous relief. A normal or even moderate south-west monsoon is likely to keep the district in a very prosperous condition. The following remarks of the different Divisional Officers are recorded for the Board's information:—

The Sub-Collector writes: "There exists *no* cause for anxiety respecting my division, nor is it likely to arise in the near future." As regards the Tiruvannámalaí taluk which, owing to the failure of the north-east monsoon last year, gave 'slight cause for apprehension' he writes, "Tiruvannámalaí has now been specially fortunate and has had good showers aggregating about 9.30 inches from 1st to 31st May and the country around is faring well. Yesterday there was a heavy fall of 3.15 inches there which, I believe, has considerably improved it and cumbu has been and is being sown largely."

The Head Assistant Collector reports: "Even if the south-west monsoon fails entirely, I do not believe that severe distress will prevail in any part of my division."

The Deputy Collector, Tirukkóyilúr Division, writes: "Of the two taluks comprising the division Kallakurchi fares better than Tirukkóyilúr, and neither is likely to be seriously affected by a partial failure of the south-west monsoon. There are already indications of a favourable monsoon, the rainfall registered at Kallakurchi in May 1897 was no less than 7 inches and as many as 100 out of 302 tanks in the taluk are reported to hold a fair supply of water even now." He is of opinion that even should the south-west monsoon fail "there will be no need for opening relief-works or affording gratuitous relief in that taluk"; but as regards the Tirukkóyilúr taluk, he thinks that if the south-west monsoon should fail, "there may be need for extending ordinary works with a view to provide adequate labour for the cooly classes."

The Assistant Collector reports, as regards the Cuddalore taluk (which rarely receives much of the south-west monsoon): "The general conditions of the taluk are exceedingly fair and ought not to cause any anxiety even if the south-west monsoon proves a failure."

6. Such being the present state of the district I proceed to deal with the other matters upon which the Board requires information, assuming that the south-west monsoon will fail — an assumption for which there are, at present, no valid grounds.

7. As regards *tools*, I beg that reference may be made to my letter of this date, No. 377-Ver. Sup., dated 5th June 1897, in which I have expressed my opinion that the stock of famine tools in the district is totally inadequate should the necessity for starting relief-works arise. This I do not think can possibly happen unless both the south-west and the next north-east monsoons fail. There is no justification for such gloomy anticipations, but at the same time I am of opinion that the Public Works Department should be required to keep a stock of tools sufficient for 1,000 persons in the district. The District Board Engineer reports that he is not able to spare any tools for famine works but proposes to submit an indent to me as President of the District Board for additional tools.

8. As regards *works*, the Board will be pleased to observe from the list I furnished to it with the map which accompanied my letter, Ref. on No. 430-Ver. Sup., dated 29th January 1897, that the works are well distributed throughout each taluk so that they can afford ample employment wherever needed. The Board's review of the famine programme for the current year was received only the day before yesterday. The additions suggested therein fortunately refer to the Chidambaram taluk, the whole of which is protected according to the statistical atlas. It is a taluk in which it is difficult to anticipate scarcity in any year. The attention of the Executive Engineer has been drawn to the small proportion of the "sanctioned" to the "unsanctioned" works of the Public Works Department and he has been requested to bring in more of the latter under the former class at once. The District Board Engineer has also been instructed to see that such of the Local Fund still "not sanctioned" works are

brought upon the sanctioned list immediately. The Divisional Officers have made their suggestions on the various points noticed by Government and are quite ready to start works and form village relief circles should such become necessary except in regard to *tools*. I am of opinion that this district is well prepared for any contingency that may arise. The detailed enquiries prescribed in section 75 of the Famine Code are being made and will, I hope, be completed by the 15th instant. As regards staff, the Revenue officials are ready with men, but again the Public Works Department are found wanting. The Executive Engineer reports that the existing and normal strength of the Engineering staff is as follows:—

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Three Temporary Upper Subordinates.	Three Temporary Upper Subordinates.

9. It will be seen that the Engineering staff is at present *below* its normal strength, and the Executive Engineer in reply to my question as to the strength by which he would consider it should be augmented should famine relief-works become necessary, writes: "The answer to this question must of course depend on the number and magnitude of the famine works started. As a commencement, however, it would be sufficient if the normal strength was increased by the addition of one Upper Subordinate for each taluk. There being eight taluks, the *existing* strength would then have to be increased by eleven Upper Subordinates." It would therefore appear that should famine relief-works become necessary, the Public Works Department would have to find eleven Upper Subordinates in addition to their *existing* staff which is already below the *normal* strength sanctioned for the district.

10. As regards the Medical staff, there are, besides the District Medical Officer and the Assistant Surgeon, seven Civil Apothecaries, twelve 1st-class Hospital Assistants, four 2nd-class Hospital Assistants, three 3rd-class Hospital Assistants and one Reserve Civil Apothecary; all these, except the last, are employed in the existing hospitals and dispensaries and if no fresh men were available in case of famine being declared, some of these institutions would probably have to be closed temporarily and the apothecaries and hospital assistants deputed to famine duty. The paucity of Public Works Department and Medical subordinates and of famine *tools* is, in my opinion, the prominent defect in this Presidency. As already observed, practically so far as this district is concerned, I do not believe that we shall require either *tools* or additional Medical or Public Works Department subordinates; but if we did, I fear we should have difficulty in having these wants readily supplied.

Resolution—dated 24th June 1897, No. 464.

Recorded.

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3. Colonel Campbell and Mr. Winterbotham now on tour will deal with the question as to the proper stock of famine *tools* for each district.

4. The task of ascertaining what persons are likely to require gratuitous relief need not be pursued at present.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) L. E. BUCKLEY,
Famine Secretary.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
" " Collector of South Arcot.

ORDER—No. 589, Revenue, dated 19th July 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement,
Land Records and Agriculture).

Exd. Shaik Karim.

50 Copies.