Revenue (1899) Department.

PRESS SERIES.

G.O., No. 834

Dated 9th December 1899

[Despatch Abstract.]

Distribution of Water

Passing orders on papers relating to the question of transferring from the P. W.D. to the R. D. the duty of distributing water in irrigation works.

BACK PAPERS.

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

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1899.

Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

MADRAS.

Current No. 5224.

Recd. 12th August } 1899. *Enclosures* 3

Regd. 14th do- } *Spare copies*

Printed August th.

Proceedings, No. 215, 19th July 1899.

JULY.

Distribution of water.—Submitting, with Board's opinion, reports from the Collectors of Madura, Gódávari and Kistna on the question whether the work of — from Government channels should be controlled by the Revenue or the Public Works Department.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE
(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).

Mr. A. W. B. Higgens.

Read—again the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898:—

Read—the following G.O., Mis. No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898:—

Read—again G.O., Mis. No. 3962, Revenue, dated 3rd October 1896.

Read—also the following extract from the address presented by the inhabitants of the City and District of Madura to His Excellency the Governor during his fourth tour:—

". . . We beg respectfully to point out that it would be of greater advantage and convenience to the ryots if the distribution of water from the Periyár channels be placed under the direct control of the officers of the Revenue Department, who are in constant touch with the people and are responsible for the public revenue."

Order—Mis. No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898.

This question was fully considered in 1896 when it was decided that the responsibility of distributing the Periyár water should vest in the officers of the Public Works Department, but that they should at the same time be required to consult the Local Revenue officers freely and to give effect to their suggestions unless there are grave reasons to the contrary. There appears, however, to be general feeling that responsibility in this matter should vest with the Revenue officers not only in Madura but also in Gódávari and Kistna. The Board of Revenue is requested to consider the matter again consulting local officers and associations and to report its views on the questions to the Government.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) F. J. WILSON,
for Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement).

Resolution—Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898.

Forwarded to the Collectors of Madura, Kistna and Gódávari for early report, with reference to the last sentence of the Government order.

(True Cypy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. BENSON
Deputy Director,
for Secretary.

To the Collector of Madura.
" " of Kistna.
" " of Gódávari.

Read—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899:—

Read—the following letter from C. J. WEIR, Esq., Acting Collector of Madura, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated Madura, 28th November 1898, Dis. No. 768-R.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, I have the honour to submit the reports of the Tahsildars of Madura and Melur and of the Special Deputy Collector who were consulted on the subject. These officers as well as the general public are in favour of the proposal that the Revenue officers should be entrusted with the duty of distribution of Periyár water, though the Tahsildar of Madura and the Special Deputy Collector would leave the existing arrangements undisturbed until the works are completed. The Tahsildar of Melur would leave the control of the head works at Periyár and at Peranai alone in the hands of the Public Works Department.

2. When the reports of the Revenue officers were received, Mr. Partridge was about to be relieved and as he had no time to go into the question at length, he left the papers for my disposal with the following remarks:—

"The Public Works Department must always maintain the channels and see that any repairs are promptly attended to. If the distribution of water is left in these channels to the village officers, each karnam and munsiff will be a little king and will no doubt derive a large revenue. Can the overworked Tahsildar or the Revenue Inspector properly supervise such work? Will not the villages high up benefit to the detriment of the villages at the end? I should employ a special staff of men, if the transfer is carried out as I do not believe that the present revenue staff is capable or has time to attend to such work."

3. Before submitting my own views, I consulted Mr. Smyth, the Special Executive Engineer in charge of Periyár Irrigation, and forwarded the reports for his remarks. His letter in which he gives various reasons in favour of the existing system is also enclosed.

4. I endorse almost entirely the remarks contained in the letter of the Special Executive Engineer and I consider that any attempt to make the Revenue Department responsible for the distribution of water in such large irrigation systems as the Periyár project would end in disaster.

5. It is undoubtedly true that there is a general feeling among the ryots that they would prefer the revenue authorities to have the distribution in their hands, but I do not think that the existence of this feeling affords any real proof that the Public Works Department, taken as a whole, has failed in its duties in the matter. Having been invested with the responsibility for distribution, the Public Works Department have had the duty put upon them of saying "no" to requests impossible and to requests which to one not possessed of technical knowledge of the subject appear reasonable, and hence this department has incurred a large amount of odium from those disappointed. If the Revenue Department are entrusted with the distribution of water, they will have the duty of saying "no" transferred to them and with the transfer of the duty, a transfer of the odium.

6. In November 1896 when famine was imminent in Ganjám, there was a limited supply in the Russelkonda reservoir with which to supply all lands irrigated by the Rushikulya project. It was necessary to husband the supply by letting it down in turns in different channels and in different portions of same channels. I made at the time a tour through most of the country irrigated by the Rushikulya and was everywhere met by excited demands from ryots to give longer turns of supply to their villages, to make cuts in the channels, to supply areas not really under the system, and in many instances to take the water to places absolutely unirrigable and these demands were, as a rule, supported by the subordinate Revenue authorities. The officers of the Public Works Department, however, knew exactly how long the supply in the reservoir would last and could calculate what amount of water they could afford to let down the different channels or portions of channels and it cannot,

I think, be doubted that the distribution thus made was fairer and saved a larger area of crop than any distribution by the Revenue Department; indeed, any attempt of the latter department to distribute, had it been made without consulting the Public Works Department, would probably have ended in disaster.

7. It is true that on the same occasion I had many complaints against the Public Works Department subordinates of corruption and though none were established, many were probably true, but I very much doubt if the Revenue subordinates would have been appreciably more honest, had they the same opportunities.

8. I am of opinion that the responsibility for distribution should be left to the Public Works Department and that any reform of the existing system should be in the direction of improving the status of the officials responsible for distribution and of ensuring a more complete check over them by the superior officers of the Public Works Department. In my opinion, Government can never expect to devise any system of distribution satisfactorily to all parties. In Tanjore delta, as far as my recollection serves me, the existing distribution is based on innumerable orders of Revenue officials modified or set aside by decrees of Civil Courts. Disputes as to the distribution are there still of constant occurrence and occupy a large portion of the time of the Revenue officers, the Magistrates and the Civil Courts. Yet, the system of irrigation grew up under the control of the officials supposed to be peculiarly in touch with the people.

Read—also the following letter from R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated Masulipatam, 15th December 1898, Dis. No. 6913-Gl.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, I have the honour to submit copies of the reports noted in the margin and received from the Divisional Officers and the "Kistna District Association."

Sub-Collector's letter, Dis. No. 4769, dated 4th November 1898.
Head Assistant Collector's Dis. No. 3169-Genl., dated 15th November 1898.
Head-quarters Deputy Collector's letter, Dis. No. 2487, Revenue, dated 9th November 1898.
Letter from the Secretary to the Kistna District Association, Dis. No. 180, dated 10th October 1898.

2. The question upon which the views of the local officers have been invited by the Board is as to the department which should be responsible for distributing water from the Kistna anicut system. This resolves itself into two—

(1) whether the regulation of the actual supply of water should be in the hands of the Public Works Department or of the Revenue Department;

(2) whether the power of approving of *applications* for water should vest in the Revenue or the Public Works Department.

3. As regards the first, the regulation of the supply of water has always been in the hands of the Public Works Department officers who have designed and carried out the works. The system has not worked as smoothly as it might nor has it given satisfaction to the ryots, who, in general, rightly or wrongly, believe that their complaints against the Delta Superintendents and Overseers who actually superintend the supply of water in and from the main channels are not properly enquired into by the Executive Engineers and expect that matters might improve if this power is transferred to the Tahsildars. But the Revenue officers consulted do not advocate the change, while the Public Works Department officers would surely resent it. Upon this point, I beg to invite the attention of the Board to the views expressed by Mr. Bryant, the Head Assistant Collector in his letter referred to in paragraph 1 *supra*. It requires some technical knowledge to fix the depth of water which must be allowed to pass into the main canals to properly supply the distributaries and into the distributaries to properly irrigate the fields under them without unduly stinting the fields and yet without wasting water. The Tahsildars have neither the time nor the training to efficiently supervise the work of Delta Superintendents and Overseers who

are professional and trained men and would have to ask the opinion of the Executive Engineer in all cases where the ryots complained that the Delta Superintendent was holding up water in order to extort a gratification and the Superintendent pleaded that he was only exercising his judgment as to the quantity of water required by the lands commanded by the channel. The intervention of the Engineer would be required again, where, for any reason, the Delta Superintendent was admitting more water than was really necessary, and thus reducing the supply available for the rest of the Delta. The result would be a large increase of correspondence, and probably a considerable friction. The channels do not irrigate areas in all cases conterminous with the taluks or the Revenue divisions, and Tahsildars and Divisional Officers would probably look to the interests of their own tracts and not to those of tracts lower down or higher up depending on the same works. It is in every way better that the distribution of water should rest with the Public Works Department who have the necessary technical knowledge and are in the best position to say what the full supply to each tract should be and can decide with reference to the water available in the river how it should be distributed if the supply is short. All that is necessary is, that, if it be true that the superior officers of the department do not take sufficient trouble to investigate charges of corruption and other complaints brought against Delta Superintendents and Overseers, it should be impressed upon them that it is their duty to take cognizance of such complaints. I do not wish to be understood as hinting at negligence on the part of the present staff of Engineers. I only know that it is the rumour that in the past there have been Engineers, who have thought that if they listened to any complaints from ryots, their time would be so fully occupied that they would have no leisure for anything else. This tradition, for all I actually know, may have no foundation whatever in fact.

4. As regards the second question, the Delta water-rate rules (appendix to Board's Standing Order No. 4) vest in the Revenue officers the power to dispose of applications for water from the anicut system. They are required to consult the officers of the Public Works Department as to whether water is available or not for supply to fields which have not yet been classed as wet. It ought not to be a difficult matter at this date in the history of the Delta to decide whether a given field is irrigable or not and whether water will be available in normal seasons for its irrigation after providing for the irrigation of all fields classed as wet. And yet the most extraordinary delays occur in the disposal of applications.

5. The 31st March of each year has been fixed as the latest date for putting in applications for water with a view presumably to its being possible to dispose of them before the re-opening of the canals and the commencement of the cultivation season in June. Unfortunately, jamabandi is usually in progress in the delta taluks in March and April, and the Tahsildars are not, as punctual as they should be, in sending their lists of applications to the Executive Engineers. In some cases a delay of some months has been known to occur though they are now becoming more punctual. Public Works officers are again busy with the silt—clearing operations in April and May and make great delay in giving their advice to the Tahsildars. It is no uncommon thing that their opinion as to the irrigability of land is not communicated until after the next jamabandi, and I could quote cases where the demand as settled at jamabandi has had to be altered on receipt of the Engineer's reply to a reference made to him nearly a year before. By the end of September, the opinion of the Executive Engineer, Kistna Western division, had not been given in 2,730 cases from Bapatla taluk in which the ryots had made their applications before the 31st March of this year and the Executive Engineer, Kistna Eastern division, had not reported on 5,155 cases in Gudivada and 2,615 in Bunder taluk. After the strike of fasli 1305, the Executive Engineer wished to take the opportunity of excluding from wet such lands as, through their high level, were difficult to irrigate and asked that all applications should be sent to him for opinion. The Tahsildars in the Western Delta would probably have otherwise reconverted into wet all land that had been classed as wet before the strike. By the end of September of this year, the Engineer's opinion had not been given in 143 cases of fasli 1304, 884 of fasli 1306 and 1,149 of fasli 1307 in Bapatla. I have not the figures of Tenali available.

6. I do not quote these figures with any intention of casting a slur upon the Executive Engineers concerned. They are, I personally know, hard-working men, and their other work is so heavy that it would probably be difficult, as the present system is worked, for them to arrange to give their opinions earlier in all cases. It is the result of the system that I wish to point out.

7. The ryots realize that if they wait for permission to use Government water before cultivating, they must lose all chance of cultivating for a year. They therefore do not wait for orders, but take water when it is available, and take the risk of being required to pay a penal charge for the use of water. In many tracts the soil is so fertile, and the present price of paddy is so high, that it pays the ryots to cultivate with Government water and pay double water-rate. This state of affairs is distinctly wrong. The ryot has cause for grievance when, having asked permission in March to take water, he receives no orders for an entire year. His application may then be approved and or it may not, and this introduces a sort of gambling spirit into cultivation. The ryot ought to cultivate with the full and certain knowledge of what will happen. He should know in advance of the cultivation season whether the authorities will let him have water and charge him single water-rate, or intend to penalize a cultivation of which they cannot approve.

8. I have gone into this matter at some length, because it is necessary to explain the feeling entertained by the ryots and alluded to by the Divisional Officers and the "Kistna District Association," that the disposal of applications should not be with the Public Works Department.

9. The remedy is, however, simple enough. All that is necessary is that each Executive Engineer should once for all inform the Tahsildars in his division of the number of acres which, in normal years, can be irrigated under each major distributary and indicate any particular tracts, or portions of villages which are in his opinion incapable of irrigation. With these facts, the Tahsildar can without difficulty decide whether a particular application can be complied with. He already knows the area in each village which is classed as "wet": the information given him by the Engineer affords the means of knowing what additional extent can be classed as wet: and a reference to the village map, a copy of which he has in his record-room will show him whether the field for which application for water is made is within an unirrigable tract. He would then be in a position to decide before the commencement of the cultivation season, if the application should be complied with. Only in very exceptional circumstances would it be necessary to take the advice of the Engineer, and Executive Engineers would not be harassed by a mass of correspondence during one of their busiest seasons.

10. An excellent beginning was made in this direction in the Western Delta in the early years of this decade. It was arranged that from time to time the Executive Engineer should supply the Tahsildar of Tenali with lists of dry but irrigable fields which might be converted into wet if the ryots applied for water. The Tahsildar approved applications made in respect of all fields in the "approved lists" without further reference to the irrigation officers. Unfortunately, the extra work there has been in the Western Delta for the last three years has prevented the preparation of any "approved lists" during that time. The practice might be resumed if my suggestion in the last paragraph is thought impracticable.

11. I consider that the power of approving applications for water should remain with the Tahsildars. Application must be made in the first instance to the village headman. He is more naturally in correspondence with the Tahsildar than with the Public Works Department Sub-Division officer. If the Tahsildar has the information which I have said above ought to be furnished him, he can issue orders at once to the village officers as to the grant or refusal of water and the future classification of land as wet or dry. If, however, the duty is transferred to the Public Works Department, the village officers must take their instructions from two masters, the Revenue and the irrigation officers, unless indeed the applications are to go through and be returned through the Tahsildar, thereby increasing that officer's correspondence. And further, if orders are to be passed by the Irrigation officers, the ryots must still have

to put up with the delays of which they complain, and of which I have given instances or else the correspondence and the work of the Engineers must be increased enormously just at their very busiest season.

Resolution—Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899.

Recorded, pending receipt of report from the Collector of Gódávari.

2. Extract of paragraphs 4 and 5 of the letter of the Collector of Kistna will be forwarded to the Collector of Gódávari with the request that information may be furnished in his report as to whether any similar difficulty has been experienced in his district with regard to applications referred to the Public Works Department.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAR,
Secretary.

To the Collector of Gódávari, with extract.

Read—again Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 1423, dated 14th March 1899.

Abstract.—Communicating to the Collector of South Arcot for report G.O. referring to the Board of Revenue for report extract from the South Arcot District Board's address presented to His Excellency the Governor regarding the transfer to the Revenue Department of control over water-supply in the main distributaries from Imperial tanks and river channels.

Read—also the following letter from V. A. BRODIE, Esq., Collector of Gódávari, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, &c., dated Cocanada, 29th April 1899, D. Dis. No. 1720-Rev. :—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, regarding the agency to which the distribution of water is to be entrusted in the delta of this district among others, I have the honour to enclose copies of the letters on the subject received by me from Mr. DeMorgan in charge of the office of Superintending Engineer, I Circle, and the President of the District Association, and to state that I fully concur with them in thinking that it is not possible to entrust the duty of distribution to either the Revenue Department or a special department, but it must remain vested in the Public Works Department, as the department in charge of the various main canals is that best fitted to make an equitable distribution. The Tahsildar of Rámachandrapuram thinks the duty should be transferred to the Revenue Department, but says the overworked Tahsildars cannot undertake it. He would have two Deputy Collectors to be styled Irrigation Deputy Collectors—one for the eastern and central deltas and the other for the western delta. I cannot see what good this would do unless these men were skilled Engineers, as to divide, water equally between the various channels in proportion to their ayakats requires calculations as to discharge, &c., and it is just on such calculations that the present distribution is based. In place of the Delta Superintendent, the Tahsildar would have the Revenue Inspector, but I do not see how a Revenue Inspector is to serve two masters—his Tahsildar and the Irrigation Deputy Collector—satisfactorily. The Deputy Collector, Narsapur, would entrust the work to the Tahsildars and their Revenue Inspectors as persons likely to sympathise more with the ryots, but I cannot think that the Tahsildars who complain of being overworked as it is, could exercise any very effectual control, and the Revenue Inspectors would, I fear, be just as liable to be dishonest as the Delta Superintendents, if, subjected as they would be, in times of drought to the same temptation. Again when the ryots of a particular village go now to the Divisional Officer and complain that their crops are withering, he is apt, if he finds that it is so, to issue orders that that particular village is to get water at once, whereas this may be the grossest

injustice as it is not the turn for that particular village to get water, but there are 30 villages equally badly off of which the turn of several should come first. Of course, in times of scarcity, low-paid subordinates make money by giving to some and refusing to others, but this cannot be prevented whatever may be the department in charge, except by close supervision by their superior officers, and as things stand at present, I do not think that the Revenue Department is at all in a better position to supervise than the Public Works Department. The best course by far is to leave the scientific department to regulate distribution on some fixed principle as the department of Public Works endeavours to do and strengthen the supervising staff of that department so as to assure that the arrangements based upon calculations of the quantity of water available and the duty such and such an unit of water can perform are strictly carried out and not deviated from by subordinates in times of stress and difficulty from interested and dishonest motives; as the Revenue Department is now manned, it cannot manage any better nor indeed so well as the Department of Public Works; so, instead of transferring the duty to it and strengthening it, the best course seems to be to leave it in the hands of the department at present in charge and strengthen it.

READ—also the following letter from J. A. CUMMING, Esq, Collector of Gódávari, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, &c., dated Cocanada, 5th May 1899, D. Dis. No. 1811-Rev.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899, and in continuation of this office, D. Dis. No. 1720-Rev., dated 29th April 1899, I have the honour to report that in this district no applications of previous faslis are pending with the Executive Engineers and comparatively few of those for the current fasli have been delayed by them and these only for a few months. None have been kept for so long a time as six months. The difficulty complained of by the Collector of Kistna has therefore never been felt here.

RESOLUTION—No. 215, dated 19th July 1899.

In its order, No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898, Government, on an address presented by the people of Madura to His Excellency the Governor on tour, desired the Board to report, after consulting local officers and associations, on the question whether it is desirable to transfer, from the Public Works to the Revenue Department, the duty of distributing water under the Periyár Irrigation project and also in the Gódávari and Kistna Deltas. Government observed that the question had been discussed and decided in the negative in 1896 in respect of the Periyár project, but that there seemed to be some general feeling that the work should be transferred to the Revenue Department. A similar reference in respect of South Arcot was subsequently received with G.O., No. 977, dated 9th March 1899.

2. The Collectors of Madura, Gódávari and Kistna have reported on the question and copies of their replies are submitted herewith. The Collector of South Arcot has not yet replied. His report will be submitted as soon as it is received. It will be seen that the Collectors who have reported are unanimously of opinion that no change should be made in the existing system under which the work of distribution is entrusted to the Public Works Department, although they recommend that the staff of Public Works officials responsible for the distribution should be improved and that a more complete check over them by the superior officers of the department should be secured.

3. Some subordinate revenue officers, principally in Madura, are in favour of transferring the work entirely to the Revenue Department. They urge that the Revenue Department is more in touch with the ryots, who therefore prefer that that department should control the distribution, and that the subordinates of the Public Works Department are unsympathetic towards the people and are liable to corruption.

The Collector of Madura, however, considers that the ryots prefer the Revenue Department because they expect that, under the management of that department, they could, through the influence of the village officers, get a larger share of supply than that to which they are entitled; that the Public Works Department having been entrusted with the responsibility of distribution must have had to refuse water in undeserving cases and has naturally incurred the dislike of those disappointed; and that, if the work is transferred to the Revenue Department, complaints will arise against that department also. The Collector also states that in Tanjore, though the Revenue officials have always been in charge of distribution, disputes are of constant occurrence. As regards the alleged corruption, the Collector considers that the low-paid subordinates of the Revenue Department are equally liable to temptation and cannot be expected to be more honest than the subordinates of the Public Works Department. The Collector of Gódávari holds a similar view. The Board does not consider that the arguments urged in favour of the transfer are of any great force.

4. On the other hand, the reasons urged by the Collectors against the transfer deserve serious consideration. They are—

(*a*) That the work of distribution requires technical knowledge and training which the Revenue officers do not, and cannot be expected to, possess; and that such technical knowledge is particularly necessary to strengthen the position of officers who must often refuse requests for more water in bad seasons.

This objection seems, in the Board's opinion, to be sufficient to negative any present change in the existing system.

(*b*) That the existing Revenue establishment will not be able nor could it find time to attend to the additional duty, unless it were considerably strengthened.

(*c*) That the channels do not irrigate areas in all cases conterminous with the taluk or Revenue divisions, and Tahsildars and Divisional Officers would probably look to the interests of villages in their own jurisdiction, and not to those lower down or higher up depending upon the same works.

5. The District Associations of Kistna and Gólávari have been consulted by the respective Collectors. The District Association, Kistna, advocates a change by placing the Delta Superintendents under the direct control of the Tahsildars and Revenue Divisional Officers, but the District Association, Gódávari, is opposed to such a change and considers that it is not likely to improve matters and would be attended with practical difficulties, and that the work of distribution must remain in the hands of the Public Works Department.

6. On a careful consideration of the question, it appears to the Board that the objections to the transfer of the work to the Revenue Department far outweigh any advantage which might accrue from it. The Board is therefore strongly of opinion that the Public Works Department should retain charge of the distribution of water under all large works. At the same time, on perusal of the Collectors' reports, it appears desirable that the necessity for strict personal supervision over the subordinate Public Works officers, and also of attention to the representations of the Tahsildars and Divisional Officers, should be impressed on the higher officers of the Public Works Department. The Board also begs to urge that the improvement of the position of the Delta Superintendents, which has been under consideration for some years past, should be carried out as early as practicable.

7. In this connection, the Collector of Kistna brings to notice that great delays occur in his district in obtaining the opinion of the Public Works officers on applications for water, several applications made in faslis 1304, 1305, 1306 and 1307 being still pending with that department. He points out the great discontent and inconvenience caused by orders not being received before the ryots commence cultivation, and suggests, as a remedy, that each Executive Engineer should once for all inform the Tahsildars in his division of the number of acres which, in normal years, can be irrigated under each distributary and indicate any particular tracts or portions of villages which are, in his opinion, incapable of irrigation. The Collector considers that, with this information, the Tahsildar could easily, without reference to the Public Works Department, decide whether a particular application should be complied with

or not. The Collector of Gódávari to whom a special reference was made on the matter reports that similar delays in obtaining the opinion of the Public Works Department have not occurred in his district. The reason why the difficulty has been felt in Kistna is probably that the works there are much less fully developed and the applications therefore much more numerous, whilst it is also to some extent possibly due to the circumstance mentioned by the Collector that after the water-strike and relinquishments of fasli 1305, the Executive Engineer wishing to take the opportunity of excluding from "wet" such land as, through its high level, is difficult to irrigate, required that *all* applications for water, including presumably those for land previously under irrigation, should be sent to him for opinion.

Resettlement on the basis of a consolidated wet assessment will only remove the necessity for applications for water in the case of land registered as wet. The greater portion of Kistna does not come up for resettlement for some years, and, moreover, on the principle sanctioned by Government in the case of Gódávari, *all* irrigable areas in the taluks to be now re-settled will not be registered as wet, but only those which have been under irrigation for some time past or from which water cannot be excluded. Thus there will still be a large number of cases, especially in the Kistna Western delta, in which applications will have to be made. The delays brought to notice by the Collector must cause great discontent and inconvenience, and the Board would suggest that the Public Works Department should be instructed to prepare, as early as possible, maps of the area irrigable in each village under each channel and to furnish them to the Revenue Department, so that the Tahsildars may dispose of applications for water without a reference to the Public Works Department in each case.

(True Copies and Extract.)

Deputy Director,
for Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
Copies to the Collectors of Gódávari, Kistna, Madura, South Arcot, Kurnool and Ganjám.
Copy to the Land Revenue Department.

Ext. Md. Pahilvan.

Revenue (1899) Department.

CURRENT No. 5414.

UNDER SECY. TO GOVT. 20 AUG 1899 REVENUE DEPT.

From The Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture, Madras.

Order

No. 4072 Misc.,

Dated 17th August 1899.
Received 20th —do—
Registered 22nd —do—
Enclosures
Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Distribution of water.

Submitting to Government in continuation of B.P.No.215, dated 19th July 1899, report from the Collector of South Arcot on the question whether the works of ----- from Government channels should be controlled by the Revenue or the Public Works Department

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

(Sett. 13—2,000—25-4-98.)

REVENUE BOARD OFFICE MADRAS.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

Dated 17th August 1899. ~~189~~ .

No. 4072 Misc.,

Mr. Higgens.

READ the following letter from L.M.Wynch Esq., I.C.S., Acting Collector of South Arcot, Dis.No.1031/V.D. dated 4th August 1899;—

Referring to Board's Proceedings No.1423-Mi*S.*, &c dated 14th March 1899, regarding the transfer to the Revenue Department of the control over water-supply in the main distributaries from imperial tanks and river channels, I have the honour to submit the following report after consulting the Divisional officers specified in the margin and the Executive Engineer of the District.

Ⓧ Head Quarters Dy. Collector. Dy. Collectors of Chidambaram and Tirukoilur Divisions.

2. The Head Quarters Deputy Collector does not recommend the transfer proposed, and his reasons are that no valid grounds exist for abandoning a system which, in his opinion, has been on the whole working satisfactorily. He considers that the remedy for the evil complained of does not lie in changing control from one Department to the other but in exercising a closer supervision over the work of the Public Works Department subordinates.

3. The Deputy Collector, Chidambaram thinks that

Tahsildars would not be able to control the distribution of water any better than the officers of the P.W.D. because they have multifarious duties to attend to whereas the Public Works Department officers have only to look after the maintenance of the works and the regulation of the sluices. He suggests however that if the officers of the P.W.Department are found to be inattentive to the want of the ryots it might be made a standing rule that requisitions made by officers of the Revenue Department for water-supply should be immediately complied with without cavil or objection unless such compliance would endanger the works &c.

4. The Deputy Collector, Tirukoilur Division strongly recommends the transfer sought for and assigns in support of his recommendation the following reasons:-

He says that the interference of the Revenue Department in the matter would be called for only in times of short supply in the irrigation sources when alone a judicious and prompt distribution of water would be necessary to avoid waste and ensure a fair and impartial distribution with due regard to the state of the crops on the ground and the amount of irrigation required. In these matters he considers the Revenue officers would, from their general knowledge and experience and from their greater accessibility to ryots, prove more competent that the sub-ordinates of the P.W.D. He is further of opinion that the Revenue Department cannot effectively safeguard Government Revenue without direct concern in the control over water supply and urges that in a year of short supply, economy in its expenditure is essential and that it can only be secured by promptitude and watchfulness, whereas delay and inconvenience result when the Revenue officers have to work through the officers of another department. The other grounds he adduces in favour of the transfer sought for are:-

(1) The P.W.D. officers attend more to the maintenance of irrigation works in proper order than to the work of distribution of water therefrom.

(2) The P.W.D. officers having nothing to do in the matter ...ections. they do not feel that the failure of the crops cripples the resources of the ryots and their grievances are not therefore likely to be attended to by them with as much sympathy and promptitude as would be done by the officers of the Revenue Department.

(3) The superior officers of the P.W.D. are not easily accessible to the ryots.

5. The Executive Engineer of the District says that the system of water distribution in the District is almost entirely one of morais, especially under the Coleroon ~~for the~~ North Raja voikal, Vadavar channel, Veeranam Tank and Shettiatope anicut system to which the farmers of the District address to His Excellency the Governor chiefly refer. The Head Sluices of all the distributaries of the above mentioned channels are regulated by the Superintendent in charge under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional officer. The irrigation under all distributaries is almost entirely carried out by means of dams, either permanent or temporary, each of which has its morai. The Superintendents in charge are supposed to exercise a general supervision to see that these morais are adhered to- As regards the allegation that P.W.D. Subordinates are not in touch with the ryots, ~~as~~ the Executive Engineer considers that the Superintendents are quite as much in touch with the ryots as any of the Revenue officials and does not therefore believe that the proposed transfer is desired by the ryots. He further says that the Sub-Divisional officer is constantly travelling about his sub-division, and as his chief duty is to see that the irrigation works are kept in proper working order he is in a better position to control the water-supply than the Revenue Officers, who have multifarious works to attend to. For the same reason he considers that the Sub-Divisional officer is quite as much, if not more, accessible to the ryots. It is further said that the suggestions of the Revenue Department in regard to water distribution are at times found impracticable for professional reasons.

6. The discussion of this question has been re-opened in consequence of a reference made to the subject ...in the addr...

by the District Board, South Arcot. Before submitting the address to His Excellency, I had an interview with the two gentlemen mainly responsible for it and I could not elicit any definite facts which had occurred to justify the complaint and I think the value to be attached to it may be, to some extent, tested by that of another made at the same time in the original draft (but subsequently modified) viz. that the officers of the P.W.D. would not supply water for cultivation from the Coleroon channels at the end of May or beginning of June, but kept the ryots waiting till July and thereby deprived them of the opportunity of raising a second crop. In vain I asked for information of instances of water being refused when it was available and an examination of the statistics of 10 years which I obtained from the Executive Engineer, of the readings of the Guages at the Head Sluices by the lower anicut ~~should~~ showed that water was supplied as soon as it could be, except on one or two occasions when the anicut or sluices were under repair.

7. So far then as the representation of the District Board is concerned, I do not think any weight can be attached to it. I have been in this District now for nearly two years and the only occasion on which a complaint has been made to me occurred at Chidambaram in July 1898. The ryots came and complained that their seed-beds were withering because the P.W.D. officers would not supply them with water. The answer was that the usual freshes had not come down the river and there was no water. A day or two later, the freshes did come down and water was supplied at once. On the other hand in the early part of last year, the water-supply ran very short; one of the channels taken from the Ponniar Anicut in the Tirukoilur Taluk supplies nearly 50 tanks. The Tahsildar and the anicut Superintendent worked together and the distribution of water was efficient. In his report the Tahsildar makes out that but for his initiative, nothing would have been done. As to that I cannot offer an opinion, but the Tahsildar at the time wanted me to take steps to give him more power of control. This, however, I was not prepared to do. Many rumours reached me of considerable

course nothing could be proved. I consulted the Executive Engineer and agreed with him that dual control was not advisable. At ordinary times control of water-supply would only be an utterly unnecessary burden on the Tahsildar. It would no doubt very considerably enhance his influence and importance to have it, but I quite agree with the Executive Engineer that the Department responsible for the maintenance of irrigation works is also in the best position to control a distribution of water therefrom. As regards accessibility to ryots, I was Head Assistant Collector at Bezwada for 3½ years and can fully bear out Mr. Cecil Smith when he says that the P.W.D. officers there are in close touch with the ryot and I am perfectly certain that the Tahsildar of Bezwada could never undertake the regulation of the sluices in the main canals (let alone the minor distributaries) so as to keep up sufficient supplies of water not only for irrigation but also for navigation. I have endeavoured to ascertain the opinions of the ordinary ryots in this District on the subject but without much success, for, as might have been expected, the answers obtained coincided with the views of the questioner, some being for the proposed change and some against it. In times of scarcity, it is the primary business of the Tahsildar to attend to the distribution of water-supply so as to save as large an area of crop as possible and if owing to some friction, he is not on good terms with the D.P.W. subordinates, Government interests must inevitably suffer. If he is, the distribution of water-supply can be managed all right, as the P.W.D. officers will attend to representations made by the Tahsildar so far as is practicable. In all the reports that I have received, I cannot find an instance in which it has been shown that the P.W.D. subordinates deliberately ignored a requisition from the Revenue Department when it might have been complied with. Nor do I think that the charges of inaccessibility to ryots, want of sympathy with them and indifference to the in-

interests of the revenue have been made out and it seems generally to have been overlooked that mere assertion is not proof.

--------:O:--------

Resolution.

The Collector's report will be submitted to Government in continuation of B.P.No.215 dated 19-7-99. It will be seen that the Collector also is opposed to the transfer of the work of distributing water, from the Public Works to the Revenue Department.

(True Copy and Extract)

C Bevan

Dy. Director for Secretary.

To

The Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

Encl 1897

Gp. mis 3361 Rev § 13-8-98 A
" " 977 " § 9-3-99 B

Revenue Department

Read B.P. no 215 (Cus 5224)
19-7-99
" B.P. no. 4072 mis (Cus 5414)
17-8-99

To the Under Secretary

The papers read above contain the Board's reply to the marginally noted references in regard to the advisability or otherwise of transferring, from the P.W.D to the Rev. Dept, the duty of distributing water under the Periyar Irrigation project, in the Godavari and Kistna deltas and in the district of South Arcot. The Collectors of the four districts were consulted by the Board of Rev, and their opinions as well as those of the District Associations of Kistna and Godavari are embodied in the Board's Progs read above. The opinions of the Collectors who are unanimously against the proposed change in the existing System, as well as the reasons urged

BW/W

by them are briefly set out in paras 2-4 of B.P. 215 19-7-99 and para 7 of [Collector's letter in] B.P. 4072 17-8-99. Of the Di Associations Consulted, that of Kistna advocates a change by placing the Delta Supply under the control of Rev. officers, while that of Godavari is opposed to any such change and considers that the work of distribution must remain in the hands of the P.W.D. The reasons assigned by both of the Tahsildars and Dist officers as are for the transfer of the work to Rev. officers are that the Rev. officers are more in touch with the ryots than the P.W., that they have a more direct interest in increasing the revenue, and that there is much delay on the part of the P.W. in complying with the requests of the ryots. Per contra those who

Cuo 5224 D

Cuo 5414. C

Para 5 of B.P. 215 19-7-99 (Cuo 5224)

who are opposed to the change urge that Rev officers have neither the time nor the technical knowledge required for regulating the water supply, and that the channels do not irrigate areas in all cases coterminous with the Taluks and Rev Divisions. The Board of Rev observes that the objections to the transfer of the work to the Rev. Dept far outweigh any advantage which might accrue from it and is strongly of opinion that the P.W.D should retain charge of the distribution of water under all large works. The following suggestions are, however, made by it for the purpose of improving the existing system.

Para 6 of B.P. 215 19-7-99 Cuo 5224.

(1) The necessity for strict personal supervision over the subordinate P.W. officers

_ do _ "

and also for attention to the representations of Tahsildars and Divisional officers, should be impressed on the higher officers of the P.W.D.

(2) The improvement of the position of the Delta Supdts should be carried out as early as practicable.

⊗ The question is being worked in the P.W.D pending orders on the general question of the D.P.C which should control the distribution of water for irrigation — not reported on by the Board.

(This apparently applies to Kistna only)

(3) In view to avoid delay in obtaining the opinion of the P.W. officers on applications for water, the P.W.D should be instructed to prepare as early as possible maps of the area irrigable in each village, under each channel, and to furnish them to the Rev Dept so that the Tahsildars may dispose of applications for water without a reference to the P.W.D in each case.

Para 7 of B.P. 215 (Cos 5224)
4-7-99

RS
7-9-99

Sir,
The two first suggestions of the Bd may it is submitted be endorsed. The remarks of P.W.D may be invited on these & also on the 3rd

No 527/21.9.99.

P.W.D
21.9.99

C/

UNDER SECY. TO GOVT.
31.OCT.1899
REVENUE DEPT.

No 4292 C & 30 Oct 99

Note in P.W.D.

I regret that pressure of work has caused this file to be laid aside until I had time to read it through. The Board has given much pleasure, and I clearly recognise the excellent spirit in which this important matter has been discussed by the Revenue officers consulted.

2. With regard to the suggestion (1) of the Board, I believe it to be certain that P.W.D. Divisional officers exercise as strict a personal supervision over their Delta Supdts as is possible with their extensive charge. The matter will, however, again be brought to their notice, as also that expressed in the latter part of this suggestion.

3. The reorganisation of the Irrigation Conservancy & Establishment which has been awaiting a decision

in the portion discussed in this file, will not be taken up at once. I believe the system I am about to propose will go far to remedy the evils complained of but its realization is mainly a question of funds.

4. With regard to suggestion (3) it is probable that the P.W. staff of the Kistna District is not strong enough to deal with all the work imposed upon it. There are a great many new works still in progress and the cultivation is extending so rapidly, that very numerous applications for water have to be dealt with. Proposals are shortly going up for sanction, to appoint an Special Officer & staff in the Kistna District, one of whose duties will be to ascertain the extent of land irrigable in each village under each channel.

2..

when this is done (it will take at least 2 years to complete) the Rev: Officers can be furnished with maps and data which will enable them to accept applications for water if Govt. choose decide that the duty of dealing with such applications should rest in Rev: Officers.

W Bell
23.10.99

Camp
Sultans Battery.

Please type this note
To 11/11/99.
The Rev. Dept. M. O.

To Rev.

Type-written copy submitted as directed.

CS
14-11-99

To. Rev

For orders.

RS
14 24-11-99

CS
14 X-

No. 4904 C dt 2nd Dec: 99

No. 4292 C. d/30th Oct. 1899.

NOTE in the P.W.D.

I regret that press of work has caused this file to be laid aside until I had time to read it through. Its perusal has given me much pleasure and I gladly recognise the excellent spirit in which this somewhat thorny-- question has been discussed by the Revenue officers consulted.

2. With regard to suggestion (1) of the Board, I believe it to be certain that P.W.D. Division Officers -- exercise as strict a personal supervision over their Delta Superintendents as is possible with their extensive -- charges. The matter will, however, again be brought to their notice as also that referred to in the latter part of -- this suggestion.

3. The reorganization of the Irrigation Conservancy establishment which has been awaiting a decision on the -- question discussed in this file, will now be taken up at once. I believe the system I am about to propose will go far to remedy the evils complained of, but its realization is mainly a questio of funds.

4. With regard to suggestion - (3) it is probable that the P.W. staff of the Kistna Dt. is not strong enoug

P. W. Current No. 9670

Recd 28.11.99
Regd

Enclos: P.W. Note 42926/99,
Rev. C. 5414/99 file

to deal with all the work imposed upon it. There are a great many new works still in progress and the cultivation is extending so rapidly that very numerous applications for water have to be dealt with. Proposals are shortly going up for sanction to appoint in -- November a special officer and staff in the Kistna Dt., one of whose duties will be to ascertain the extent of -- land irrigable in each village under each channel. When this is done (it will take at least two years to complete) the Revenue Officers can be furnished with maps and lists which would enable them to accept applications for water, if Government should decide that the duty of dealing with such applications should vest in Revenue Officers.

Itd. W.B.DeW.

23-10-99

Camp
Sultans
Maltair Battery.

To the Rev. Dept. U.O.

To U.S.

Submitted for orders.

25
14-11-99.

Lem
A draft order following the note above is submitted for approval. HHL 22/11/99 Draft to D.P.W. for acceptance before O"
23/11/99

No. 4904C dy 2nd Dec: 99

C/

Note in P.W.D.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT
-5-DEC-1899
RECEIVED
REGISTRY

The last sentence of this draft G.O. commits Govt to a procedure which it may not be found possible or expedient to introduce. Mr. de Lemtin in his note says "If Govt. should decide that the duty etc" It would be advisable to defer coming to any decision until the investigations of the special officer, which are likely to take at least 2 years, are further advanced.

The following may be substituted.

~~When this is done~~
"He will also prepare lists and maps which will enable afford all the information necessary for the immediate disposal of each application for water"

HHL
27/11/99

H.M.

I have corrected the draft accordingly, which may now issue

S.H.T. 7/12

Yes H.D. 7-12-99

Read again G.O. 3361 & 13-8-9

" " Eo. 977 & 9-3-9

Read B.P. 215 (Cir. 5224)
19-7-99

" also B.P. 4072 (Cir. 5414)
17-8-99

Abstract

Abstract

Full (without Enclosures) Abstract

Print 9-12-99

Irrigation No 23

G.O (Press) No. 833 dy 9th December

The Govt. concurs ~~in the opinion of~~ with the Board of Revenue, in thinking that the P.W.D should retain charge of the distribution of water under a large works. ~~The attention of~~ Orders In that Department will be ~~issued impressing upon the subordinate~~ ~~Drawing to the Subordination of~~ Officers of the dept ~~this Board that~~ the necessity for strict personal supervision in irrigation over their subordinates ~~Put officers~~ matters & the need for ~~paying~~ careful ~~Need not be referred to attention~~ to the representations of the Tahsildars and Divisional officers. ~~Should be impressed on the higher officers of the Dept.~~

The question of improving the position of Delta Superintendents is now under consideration in the P.W.D.

2. With regard to the delays referred to in para 7

of

of the B.P. ~~the Govt observe~~
that the P.W. Staff of the
Kistna District is not strong
enough to deal promptly with all the
~~the work proposed upon it.~~
The Govt has it under consideration
~~it is in contemplation~~ to
appoint a special officer
and staff for the Kistna district
one of whose duties will
be to ascertain
~~the ascertainment of the~~
extent of land irrigable
in each village under
each channel. ~~When~~
~~this is done the revenue~~ Land
He will also prepare
~~officers will be furnished~~
~~with~~ maps and lists which
will afford all the information required for the immediate
~~would enable them to accept~~
applications for water, ~~without~~
~~reference to the P.W.D~~
~~in each case.~~ disposal of each

22/11/99

(Sd) R.S.
19-10-99
20-11-99

23/11/99

To the B^d of Rev (Rev Sett).
with Enclosure GO P 215 dated
P.W.D (Irrigation Branch). 19-7-99

50/3

Government (1899) of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd.	1899.	*Enclosures*
Regd.		*Spare copies*

G.O., No. 834, 9th December 1899.

DECEMBER.

Distribution of Water.

Passing orders on papers relating to the question of transferring from the Public Works Department to the Revenue Department the duty of distributing water in irrigation works.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—again G.O., Mis. No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898, requesting the Board of Revenue to reconsider the question as to the officers with whom should rest the responsibility of distributing water from Government channels in the districts of Gódávari, Kistna and Madura, and to report its views to Government.

Read—again G.O., Mis. No. 977, Revenue, dated the 9th March 1899, referring to the Board of Revenue for report extract from the address presented to His Excellency the Governor by the South Arcot District Board in regard to the transfer to the Revenue Department of the control over water-supply in the main distributaries from imperial tanks and river channels.

Read—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), No. 215, dated 19th July 1899:—

Mr. A. W. B. Higgens.

Read—again the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898:—

Read—the following G.O., Mis. No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898:—

Read—again G.O., Mis. No. 3962, Revenue, dated 3rd October 1896.

Read—also the following extract from the address presented by the inhabitants of the City and District of Madura to His Excellency the Governor during his fourth tour:—

". . . We beg respectfully to point out that it would be of greater advantage and convenience to the ryots if the distribution of water from the Periyár channels be placed under the direct control of the officers of the Revenue Department, who are in constant touch with the people and are responsible for the public revenue."

Order—Mis. No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898.

This question was fully considered in 1896 when it was decided that the responsibility of distributing the Periyár water should vest in the officers of the Public Works Department, but that they should at the same time be required to consult the Local Revenue officers freely and to give effect to their suggestions unless there are grave reasons to the contrary. There appears, however, to be general feeling that responsibility in this matter should vest with the Revenue officers not only in Madura but also in Gódávari and Kistna. The Board of Revenue is requested to consider the matter again consulting local officers and associations and to report its views on the questions to the Government.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) F. J. WILSON,
for Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement).

Resolution—Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898.

Forwarded to the Collectors of Madura, Kistna and Gódávari for early report, with reference to the last sentence of the Government order.

(True Cypy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. BENSON
Deputy Director,
for Secretary.

To the Collector of Madura.
" " of Kistna.
" " of Gódávari.

Read—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899:—

Read—the following letter from C. J. WEIR, Esq., Acting Collector of Madura, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated Madura, 28th November 1898, Dis. No. 768-R.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, I have the honour to submit the reports of the Tahsildars of Madura and Melur and of the Special Deputy Collector who were consulted on the subject. These officers as well as the general public are in favour of the proposal that the Revenue officers should be entrusted with the duty of distribution of Periyár water, though the Tahsildar of Madura and the Special Deputy Collector would leave the existing arrangements undisturbed until the works are completed. The Tahsildar of Melur would leave the control of the head works at Periyár and at Peranai alone in the hands of the Public Works Department.

2. When the reports of the Revenue officers were received, Mr. Partridge was about to be relieved and as he had no time to go into the question at length, he left the papers for my disposal with the following remarks:—

"The Public Works Department must always maintain the channels and see that any repairs are promptly attended to. If the distribution of water is left in these channels to the village officers, each karnam and munsiff will be a little king and will no doubt derive a large revenue. Can the overworked Tahsildar or the Revenue Inspector properly supervise such work? Will not the villages high up benefit to the detriment of the villages at the end? I should employ a special staff of men, if the transfer is carried out as I do not believe that the present revenue staff is capable or has time to attend to such work."

3. Before submitting my own views, I consulted Mr. Smyth, the Special Executive Engineer in charge of Periyár Irrigation, and forwarded the reports for his remarks. His letter in which he gives various reasons in favour of the existing system is also enclosed.

4. I endorse almost entirely the remarks contained in the letter of the Special Executive Engineer and I consider that any attempt to make the Revenue Department responsible for the distribution of water in such large irrigation systems as the Periyár project would end in disaster.

5. It is undoubtedly true that there is a general feeling among the ryots that they would prefer the revenue authorities to have the distribution in their hands, but I do not think that the existence of this feeling affords any real proof that the Public Works Department, taken as a whole, has failed in its duties in the matter. Having been invested with the responsibility for distribution, the Public Works Department have had the duty put upon them of saying "no" to requests impossible and to requests which to one not possessed of technical knowledge of the subject appear reasonable, and hence this department has incurred a large amount of odium from those disappointed. If the Revenue Department are entrusted with the distribution of water, they will have the duty of saying "no" transferred to them and with the transfer of the duty, a transfer of the odium.

6. In November 1896 when famine was imminent in Ganjám, there was a limited supply in the Russelkonda reservoir with which to supply all lands irrigated by the

Rushikulya project. It was necessary to husband the supply by letting it down in turns in different channels and in different portions of same channels. I made at the time a tour through most of the country irrigated by the Rushikulya and was everywhere met by excited demands from ryots to give longer turns of supply to their villages, to make cuts in the channels, to supply areas not really under the system, and in many instances to take the water to places absolutely unirrigable and these demands were, as a rule, supported by the subordinate Revenue authorities. The officers of the Public Works Department, however, knew exactly how long the supply in the reservoir would last and could calculate what amount of water they could afford to let down the different channels or portions of channels and it cannot, I think, be doubted that the distribution thus made was fairer and saved a larger area of crop than any distribution by the Revenue Department; indeed, any attempt of the latter department to distribute, had it been made without consulting the Public Works Department, would probably have ended in disaster.

7. It is true that on the same occasion I had many complaints against the Public Works Department subordinates of corruption and though none were established, many were probably true, but I very much doubt if the Revenue subordinates would have been appreciably more honest, had they the same opportunities.

8. I am of opinion that the responsibility for distribution should be left to the Public Works Department and that any reform of the existing system should be in the direction of improving the status of the officials responsible for distribution and of ensuring a more complete check over them by the superior officers of the Public Works Department. In my opinion, Government can never expect to devise any system of distribution satisfactorily to all parties. In Tanjore delta, as far as my recollection serves me, the existing distribution is based on innumerable orders of Revenue officials modified or set aside by decrees of Civil Courts. Disputes as to the distribution are there still of constant occurrence and occupy a large portion of the time of the Revenue officers, the Magistrates and the Civil Courts. Yet, the system of irrigation grew up under the control of the officials supposed to be peculiarly in touch with the people.

Read—also the following letter from R. MORRIS, Esq., Acting Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated Masulipatam, 15th December 1898, Dis. No. 6913-Gl.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, I have the honour to submit copies of the reports noted in the margin and received from the Divisional Officers and the "Kistna District Association."

Sub-Collector's letter, Dis. No. 4769, dated 4th November 1898.
Head Assistant Collector's Dis. No. 3169-Genl., dated 15th November 1898.
Head-quarters Deputy Collector's letter, Dis. No. 2487, Revenue, dated 9th November 1898.
Letter from the Secretary to the Kistna District Association, Dis. No. 180, dated 10th October 1898.

2. The question upon which the views of the local officers have been invited by the Board is as to the department which should be responsible for distributing water from the Kistna anicut system. This resolves itself into two—

(1) whether the regulation of the actual supply of water should be in the hands of the Public Works Department or of the Revenue Department;

(2) whether the power of approving of *applications* for water should vest in the Revenue or the Public Works Department.

3. As regards the first, the regulation of the supply of water has always been in the hands of the Public Works Department officers who have designed and carried out the works. The system has not worked as smoothly as it might nor has it given satisfaction to the ryots, who, in general, rightly or wrongly, believe that their complaints against the Delta Superintendents and Overseers who actually superintend the supply of water in and from the main channels are not properly enquired into by the Executive Engineers and expect that matters might improve if this power is transferred to the Tahsildars. But the Revenue officers consulted do not advocate the

change, while the Public Works Department officers would surely resent it. Upon this point, I beg to invite the attention of the Board to the views expressed by Mr. Bryant, the Head Assistant Collector in his letter referred to in paragraph 1 *supra*. It requires some technical knowledge to fix the depth of water which must be allowed to pass into the main canals to properly supply the distributaries and into the distributaries to properly irrigate the fields under them without unduly stinting the fields and yet without wasting water. The Tahsildars have neither the time nor the training to efficiently supervise the work of Delta Superintendents and Overseers who are professional and trained men and would have to ask the opinion of the Executive Engineer in all cases where the ryots complained that the Delta Superintendent was holding up water in order to extort a gratification and the Superintendent pleaded that he was only exercising his judgment as to the quantity of water required by the lands commanded by the channel. The intervention of the Engineer would be required again, where, for any reason, the Delta Superintendent was admitting more water than was really necessary, and thus reducing the supply available for the rest of the Delta. The result would be a large increase of correspondence, and probably a considerable friction. The channels do not irrigate areas in all cases conterminous with the taluks or the Revenue divisions, and Tahsildars and Divisional Officers would probably look to the interests of their own tracts and not to those of tracts lower down or higher up depending on the same works. It is in every way better that the distribution of water should rest with the Public Works Department who have the necessary technical knowledge and are in the best position to say what the full supply to each tract should be and can decide with reference to the water available in the river how it should be distributed if the supply is short. All that is necessary is, that, if it be true that the superior officers of the department do not take sufficient trouble to investigate charges of corruption and other complaints brought against Delta Superintendents and Overseers, it should be impressed upon them that it is their duty to take cognizance of such complaints. I do not wish to be understood as hinting at negligence on the part of the present staff of Engineers. I only know that it is the rumour that in the past there have been Engineers, who have thought that if they listened to any complaints from ryots, their time would be so fully occupied that they would have no leisure for anything else. This tradition, for all I actually know, may have no foundation whatever in fact.

4. As regards the second question, the Delta water-rate rules (appendix to Board's Standing Order No. 4) vest in the Revenue officers the power to dispose of applications for water from the anicut system. They are required to consult the officers of the Public Works Department as to whether water is available or not for supply to fields which have not yet been classed as wet. It ought not to be a difficult matter at this date in the history of the Delta to decide whether a given field is irrigable or not and whether water will be available in normal seasons for its irrigation after providing for the irrigation of all fields classed as wet. And yet the most extraordinary delays occur in the disposal of applications.

5. The 31st March of each year has been fixed as the latest date for putting in applications for water with a view presumably to its being possible to dispose of them before the re-opening of the canals and the commencement of the cultivation season in June. Unfortunately, jamabandi is usually in progress in the delta taluks in March and April, and the Tahsildars are not, as punctual as they should be, in sending their lists of applications to the Executive Engineers. In some cases a delay of some months has been known to occur though they are now becoming more punctual. Public Works officers are again busy with the silt—clearing operations in April and May and make great delay in giving their advice to the Tahsildars. It is no uncommon thing that their opinion as to the irrigability of land is not communicated until after the next jamabandi, and I could quote cases where the demand as settled at jamabandi has had to be altered on receipt of the Engineer's reply to a reference made to him nearly a year before. By the end of September, the opinion of the Executive Engineer, Kistna Western division, had not been given in 2,730 cases from Bapatla taluk in which the ryots had made their applications before the 31st March of this year and the Executive Engineer, Kistna Eastern division, had not reported on 5,155 cases in Gudivada and 2,615 in Bunder taluk. After the strike of fasli 1305, the Executive Engineer wished to take the opportunity of excluding from wet such

lands as, through their high level, were difficult to irrigate and asked that all applications should be sent to him for opinion. The Tahsildars in the Western Delta would probably have otherwise reconverted into wet all land that had been classed as wet before the strike. By the end of September of this year, the Engineer's opinion had not been given in 143 cases of fasli 1304, 884 of fasli 1306 and 1,149 of fasli 1307 in Bapatla. I have not the figures of Tenali available.

6. I do not quote these figures with any intention of casting a slur upon the Executive Engineers concerned. They are, I personally know, hard-working men, and their other work is so heavy that it would probably be difficult, as the present system is worked, for them to arrange to give their opinions earlier in all cases. It is the result of the system that I wish to point out.

7. The ryots realize that if they wait for permission to use Government water before cultivating, they must lose all chance of cultivating for a year. They therefore do not wait for orders, but take water when it is available, and take the risk of being required to pay a penal charge for the use of water. In many tracts the soil is so fertile, and the present price of paddy is so high, that it pays the ryots to cultivate with Government water and pay double water-rate. This state of affairs is distinctly wrong. The ryot has cause for grievance when, having asked permission in March to take water, he receives no orders for an entire year. His application may then be approved and or it may not, and this introduces a sort of gambling spirit into cultivation. The ryot ought to cultivate with the full and certain knowledge of what will happen. He should know in advance of the cultivation season whether the authorities will let him have water and charge him single water-rate, or intend to penalize a cultivation of which they cannot approve.

8. I have gone into this matter at some length, because it is necessary to explain the feeling entertained by the ryots and alluded to by the Divisional Officers and the "Kistna District Association," that the disposal of applications should not be with the Public Works Department.

9. The remedy is, however, simple enough. All that is necessary is that each Executive Engineer should once for all inform the Tahsildars in his division of the number of acres which, in normal years, can be irrigated under each major distributary and indicate any particular tracts, or portions of villages which are in his opinion incapable of irrigation. With these facts, the Tahsildar can without difficulty decide whether a particular application can be complied with. He already knows the area in each village which is classed as "wet": the information given him by the Engineer affords the means of knowing what additional extent can be classed as wet: and a reference to the village map, a copy of which he has in his record-room will show him whether the field for which application for water is made is within an unirrigable tract. He would then be in a position to decide before the commencement of the cultivation season, if the application should be complied with. Only in very exceptional circumstances would it be necessary to take the advice of the Engineer, and Executive Engineers would not be harassed by a mass of correspondence during one of their busiest seasons.

10. An excellent beginning was made in this direction in the Western Delta in the early years of this decade. It was arranged that from time to time the Executive Engineer should supply the Tahsildar of Tenali with lists of dry but irrigable fields which might be converted into wet if the ryots applied for water. The Tahsildar approved applications made in respect of all fields in the "approved lists" without further reference to the irrigation officers. Unfortunately, the extra work there has been in the Western Delta for the last three years has prevented the preparation of any "approved lists" during that time. The practice might be resumed if my suggestion in the last paragraph is thought impracticable.

11. I consider that the power of approving applications for water should remain with the Tahsildars. Application must be made in the first instance to the village headman. He is more naturally in correspondence with the Tahsildar than with the Public Works Department Sub-Division officer. If the Tahsildar has the information which I have said above ought to be furnished him, he can issue orders at once to the village officers as to the grant or refusal of water and the future classification of

land as wet or dry. If, however, the duty is transferred to the Public Works Department, the village officers must take their instructions from two masters, the Revenue and the irrigation officers, unless indeed the applications are to go through and be returned through the Tahsildar, thereby increasing that officer's correspondence. And further, if orders are to be passed by the Irrigation officers, the ryots must still have to put up with the delays of which they complain, and of which I have given instances or else the correspondence and the work of the Engineers must be increased enormously just at their very busiest season.

Resolution—Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899.

Recorded, pending receipt of report from the Collector of Gódávari.

2. Extract of paragraphs 4 and 5 of the letter of the Collector of Kistna will be forwarded to the Collector of Gódávari with the request that information may be furnished in his report as to whether any similar difficulty has been experienced in his district with regard to applications referred to the Public Works Department.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAR,
Secretary.

To the Collector of Gódávari, with extract.

Read—again Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.), Mis. No. 1423, dated 14th March 1899.

Abstract.—Communicating to the Collector of South Arcot for report G.O. referring to the Board of Revenue for report extract from the South Arcot District Board's address presented to His Excellency the Governor regarding the transfer to the Revenue Department of control over water-supply in the main distributaries from Imperial tanks and river channels.

Read—also the following letter from V. A. BRODIE, Esq., Collector of Gódávari, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, &c., dated Cocanada, 29th April 1899, D. Dis. No. 1720-Rev. :—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 5109, dated 24th August 1898, regarding the agency to which the distribution of water is to be entrusted in the delta of this district among others, I have the honour to enclose copies of the letters on the subject received by me from Mr. DeMorgan in charge of the office of Superintending Engineer, I Circle, and the President of the District Association, and to state that I fully concur with them in thinking that it is not possible to entrust the duty of distribution to either the Revenue Department or a special department, but it must remain vested in the Public Works Department, as the department in charge of the various main canals is that best fitted to make an equitable distribution. The Tahsildar of Rámachandrapuram thinks the duty should be transferred to the Revenue Department, but says the overworked Tahsildars cannot undertake it. He would have two Deputy Collectors to be styled Irrigation Deputy Collectors—one for the eastern and central deltas and the other for the western delta. I cannot see what good this would do unless these men were skilled Engineers, as to divide, water equally between the various channels in proportion to their ayakats requires calculations as to discharge, &c., and it is just on such calculations that the present distribution is based. In place of the Delta Superintendent, the Tahsildar would have the Revenue Inspector, but I do not see how a Revenue Inspector is to serve two masters—his Tahsildar and the Irrigation Deputy Collector—satisfactorily. The Deputy Collector, Narsapur, would entrust the work to the Tahsildars and their Revenue Inspectors as persons likely to sympathise more with the ryots, but I cannot think that the Tahsildars who complain of being overworked as it is, could exercise any very effectual control, and the Revenue Inspectors would, I fear, be just as liable to be dishonest as the Delta Superintendents, if, subjected as they would be, in times of drought to the same temptation. Again

when the ryots of a particular village go now to the Divisional Officer and complain that their crops are withering, he is apt, if he finds that it is so, to issue orders that that particular village is to get water at once, whereas this may be the grossest injustice as it is not the turn for that particular village to get water, but there are 30 villages equally badly off of which the turn of several should come first. Of course, in times of scarcity, low-paid subordinates make money by giving to some and refusing to others, but this cannot be prevented whatever may be the department in charge, except by close supervision by their superior officers, and as things stand at present, I do not think that the Revenue Department is at all in a better position to supervise than the Public Works Department. The best course by far is to leave the scientific department to regulate distribution on some fixed principle as the department of Public Works endeavours to do and strengthen the supervising staff of that department so as to assure that the arrangements based upon calculations of the quantity of water available and the duty such and such an unit of water can perform are strictly carried out and not deviated from by subordinates in times of stress and difficulty from interested and dishonest motives; as the Revenue Department is now manned, it cannot manage any better nor indeed so well as the Department of Public Works; so, instead of transferring the duty to it and strengthening it, the best course seems to be to leave it in the hands of the department at present in charge and strengthen it.

———

Read—also the following letter from J. A. CUMMING, Esq., Collector of Gódávari, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, &c., dated Cocanada, 5th May 1899, D. Dis. No. 1811-Rev.:—

With reference to B.P., Mis. No. 61, dated 3rd January 1899, and in continuation of this office, D. Dis. No. 1720-Rev., dated 29th April 1899, I have the honour to report that in this district no applications of previous faslis are pending with the Executive Engineers and comparatively few of those for the current fasli have been delayed by them and these only for a few months. None have been kept for so long a time as six months. The difficulty complained of by the Collector of Kistna has therefore never been felt here.

Resolution—No. 215, dated 19th July 1899.

In its order, No. 3361, Revenue, dated 13th August 1898, Government, on an address presented by the people of Madura to His Excellency the Governor on tour, desired the Board to report, after consulting local officers and associations, on the question whether it is desirable to transfer, from the Public Works to the Revenue Department, the duty of distributing water under the Periyár Irrigation project and also in the Gódávari and Kistna Deltas. Government observed that the question had been discussed and decided in the negative in 1896 in respect of the Periyár project, but that there seemed to be some general feeling that the work should be transferred to the Revenue Department. A similar reference in respect of South Arcot was subsequently received with G.O., No. 977, dated 9th March 1899.

2. The Collectors of Madura, Gódávari and Kistna have reported on the question and copies of their replies are submitted herewith. The Collector of South Arcot has not yet replied. His report will be submitted as soon as it is received. It will be seen that the Collectors who have reported are unanimously of opinion that no change should be made in the existing system under which the work of distribution is entrusted to the Public Works Department, although they recommend that the staff of Public Works officials responsible for the distribution should be improved and that a more complete check over them by the superior officers of the department should be secured.

3. Some subordinate revenue officers, principally in Madura, are in favour of transferring the work entirely to the Revenue Department. They urge that the Revenue Department is more in touch with the ryots, who therefore prefer that that department should control the distribution, and that the subordinates of the Public Works Department are unsympathetic towards the people and are liable to corruption.

The Collector of Madura, however, considers that the ryots prefer the Revenue Department because they expect that, under the management of that department, they could, through the influence of the village officers, get a larger share of supply than that to which they are entitled; that the Public Works Department having been entrusted with the responsibility of distribution must have had to refuse water in undeserving cases and has naturally incurred the dislike of those disappointed; and that, if the work is transferred to the Revenue Department, complaints will arise against that department also. The Collector also states that in Tanjore, though the Revenue officials have always been in charge of distribution, disputes are of constant occurrence. As regards the alleged corruption, the Collector considers that the low-paid subordinates of the Revenue Department are equally liable to temptation and cannot be expected to be more honest than the subordinates of the Public Works Department. The Collector of Gódávari holds a similar view. The Board does not consider that the arguments urged in favour of the transfer are of any great force.

4. On the other hand, the reasons urged by the Collectors against the transfer deserve serious consideration. They are—

(*a*) That the work of distribution requires technical knowledge and training which the Revenue officers do not, and cannot be expected to, possess; and that such technical knowledge is particularly necessary to strengthen the position of officers who must often refuse requests for more water in bad seasons.

This objection seems, in the Board's opinion, to be sufficient to negative any present change in the existing system.

(*b*) That the existing Revenue establishment will not be able nor could it find time to attend to the additional duty, unless it were considerably strengthened.

(*c*) That the channels do not irrigate areas in all cases conterminous with the taluk or Revenue divisions, and Tahsildars and Divisional Officers would probably look to the interests of villages in their own jurisdiction, and not to those lower down or higher up depending upon the same works.

5. The District Associations of Kistna and Gódávari have been consulted by the respective Collectors. The District Association, Kistna, advocates a change by placing the Delta Superintendents under the direct control of the Tahsildars and Revenue Divisional Officers, but the District Association, Gódávari, is opposed to such a change and considers that it is not likely to improve matters and would be attended with practical difficulties, and that the work of distribution must remain in the hands of the Public Works Department.

6. On a careful consideration of the question, it appears to the Board that the objections to the transfer of the work to the Revenue Department far outweigh any advantage which might accrue from it. The Board is therefore strongly of opinion that the Public Works Department should retain charge of the distribution of water under all large works. At the same time, on perusal of the Collectors' reports, it appears desirable that the necessity for strict personal supervision over the subordinate Public Works officers, and also of attention to the representations of the Tahsildars and Divisional Officers, should be impressed on the higher officers of the Public Works Department. The Board also begs to urge that the improvement of the position of the Delta Superintendents, which has been under consideration for some years past, should be carried out as early as practicable.

7. In this connection, the Collector of Kistna brings to notice that great delays occur in his district in obtaining the opinion of the Public Works officers on applications for water, several applications made in faslis 1304, 1305, 1306 and 1307 being still pending with that department. He points out the great discontent and inconvenience caused by orders not being received before the ryots commence cultivation, and suggests, as a remedy, that each Executive Engineer should once for all inform the Tahsildars in his division of the number of acres which, in normal years, can be irrigated under each distributary and indicate any particular tracts or portions of villages which are, in his opinion, incapable of irrigation. The Collector considers that, with this information, the Tahsildar could easily, without reference to the Public Works Department, decide whether a particular application should be complied with

or not. The Collector of Gódávari to whom a special reference was made on the matter reports that similar delays in obtaining the opinion of the Public Works Department have not occurred in his district. The reason why the difficulty has been felt in Kistna is probably that the works there are much less fully developed and the applications therefore much more numerous, whilst it is also to some extent possibly due to the circumstance mentioned by the Collector that after the water-strike and relinquishments of fasli 1305, the Executive Engineer wishing to take the opportunity of excluding from "wet" such land as, through its high level, is difficult to irrigate, required that *all* applications for water, including presumably those for land previously under irrigation, should be sent to him for opinion.

Resettlement on the basis of a consolidated wet assessment will only remove the necessity for applications for water in the case of land registered as wet. The greater portion of Kistna does not come up for resettlement for some years, and, moreover, on the principle sanctioned by Government in the case of Gódávari, *all* irrigable areas in the taluks to be now re-settled will not be registered as wet, but only those which have been under irrigation for some time past or from which water cannot be excluded. Thus there will still be a large number of cases, especially in the Kistna Western delta, in which applications will have to be made. The delays brought to notice by the Collector must cause great discontent and inconvenience, and the Board would suggest that the Public Works Department should be instructed to prepare, as early as possible, maps of the area irrigable in each village under each channel and to furnish them to the Revenue Department, so that the Tahsildars may dispose of applications for water without a reference to the Public Works Department in each case.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) C. BENSON
Deputy Director
for Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department,
with three enclosures to be kindly returned.
Copies to the Collectors of Gódávari, Kistna, Madura,
South Arcot, Kurnool and Ganjám.
Copy to the Land Revenue Department.

Read—also Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), Mis. No. 4072, dated 17th August 1899, submitting to Government, in continuation of Board's Proceedings, No. 215, dated the 19th July 1899, report from the Collector of South Arcot on the question whether the work of distribution of water from Government channels should be controlled by the Revenue or the Public Works Department.

Order—No. 834, Revenue, dated 9th December 1899.

Irrigation No. 23.

The Government concurs with the Board of Revenue in the opinion that the Public Works Department should retain charge of the distribution of water under all large works. In that department orders will be issued impressing upon the superior officers of the department the necessity for strict personal supervision over their subordinates in irrigational matters, and the need for paying careful heed to the representations of the Tahsildars and Divisional officers. The question of improving the position of Delta Superintendents is now under consideration in the Public Works Department.

2. With regard to the delays referred to in paragraph 7 of the Board's Proceedings the Government has it under consideration to appoint a special officer and staff

for the Kistna district, one of whose duties will be to ascertain the extent of land irrigable in each village under each channel. He will also prepare maps and lists which will afford all the information required for the immediate disposal of each application for water.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. S. FORBES,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement,
Land Records and Agriculture), with enclosures to
Board's Proceedings, No. 215, dated 19th July 1899, returned.
„ the Public Works Department (Irrigation Branch).

Exd. Shaik Karim.

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