

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO THE

FAMINE IN BENGAL AND BEHAR,

FROM OCTOBER 1873 TO MAY 31ST 1874.



CALCUTTA:

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT

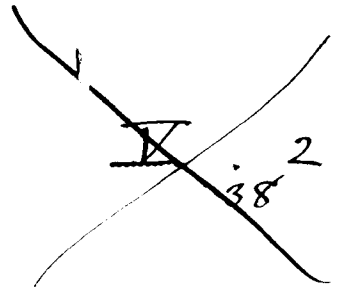
1874.

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CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO THE

FAMINE IN BENGAL AND BEHAR, 1873-74.

No. 1.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 9, dated Simla, October 30, 1873.

We regret to have to inform Your Grace that we have received from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal accounts which give rise to serious apprehension that the failure of the crops in a great part of that Presidency will occasion severe distress, if not worse results.

2. We enclose a copy of Sir George Campbell's letter*, together with the last reports of the rainfall and of the state of the crops in Bengal, and also copies of the telegraphic communications which have passed between him and the Viceroy †.

3. Even if the worst anticipations should not be realized, it is obvious that considerable distress will have to be encountered in the winter and spring, and under these circumstances we have thought it desirable to give instructions for the carrying on at once of some extensions of the Soane Canal, which will afford employment to the people in the neighbourhood of Patna, and also to anticipate Your Grace's sanction to the commencement of the Northern Bengal railroad, which extends through a portion of the country where the failure has been severe ‡.

4. Your Grace will observe that Sir George Campbell, in his letter of the 22nd instant, advocates the immediate prohibition of the export of rice from all Indian ports §. We have not thought it desirable to issue this order, and it appears to us to be probable that the wiser course will be to obtain any supplies of rice which may be necessary by purchase, directly or indirectly, rather than to take a step which must necessarily derange trade, give occasion to claims to compensation which it would be difficult to adjust, and which might not add materially to the stock of rice available to meet the apprehended scarcity.

5. The Viceroy has decided to proceed at once to Calcutta with Sir Richard Temple for the purpose of arranging, in consultation with Sir George Campbell, the best measures for meeting a crisis which we fear must in any case be serious. We have every confidence in the zeal, ability, and courage of Sir George Campbell, and we feel convinced that everything in his power will be done to prepare for the danger which may have to be encountered. In the meantime we have authorized Sir George Campbell, who is now at Patna, to use his discretion with respect to commencing relief works, and arranging for

* No. 50 T., dated Hazarilagh, October 22, 1873. (See page 2.)

† No. 1.—*Telegram from the Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, October 25, 1873.*

Do you wish any communication made to Burmah with reference to the possibility of having to buy rice for Bengal?

No. 2.—*Telegram from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to the Viceroy, October 27, 1873.*

Your telegram. See my letter of the 22nd to Agricultural Department (see page 2). Things look as bad as possible. I think that the sooner we buy rice in Burmah the better.

No. 3.—*Telegram from the Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, October 27, 1873.*

Your letter 22nd and telegram 27th. Orders will be given at once to proceed with Soane Canal and Northern Bengal Railway works. You are authorized to act as you think best as to other relief works and importations.

‡ See Resolution of Government of India, P. W. Dept., October 28, 1873. (See page 4.)

§ See paragraph 7 of letter No. 50 T., dated 22nd October, 1873. (See page 3.)

the importation of grain, where this may appear to him to be necessary, and where he does not expect that it will be provided for by traders. We have also telegraphed to the Governor of Madras and the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah*, with the view of ascertaining what amount of rice can be obtained within the next three months from Madras and from Burmah, and the manner in which it can be purchased and transmitted to Calcutta with the least interference with private trade.

6. We have also called for information from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and the Chief Commissioner of Oudh with respect to the surplus supply of grain which may be obtained in Oudh and in the North-Western Provinces†.

No. 2.

Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 50T., dated Hazaribagh, October 22, 1873. (Received at Simla, October 27, 1873.)

As long as there was any hope that the fall of rain which frequently occurs in October would very much alter the whole state of things, the Lieutenant-Governor has refrained from officially addressing the Government of India on the subject of the apprehensions which the crop reports have made manifest. Till now we could only wait and hope. But the time has come when it is the Lieutenant-Governor's very painful duty to report that throughout the greater part of these provinces the shortness and early cessation of the rains has caused irreparable injury, and that, in the absence of all symptoms of any return of rain up to this date, 22nd October, it is impossible to avoid the gravest apprehensions of general scarcity throughout the country and worse evils in large parts of it.

2. The most immediate fear appears to be for the very thickly populated Patna Division. Except in the north-east portion, the total rainfall of that division has not, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, been so much below the average as in other parts of these provinces, but it has been distributed in the most unfortunate manner. Here, as elsewhere, the rains were extraordinarily

* No. 1.—Telegram from the Viceroy to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, and to the Governor of Madras, October 27, 1873.

Large supply of rice will probably be wanted for Bengal. Consider what quantity can be bought during next three months, and how best without interference with trade and undue rise of price; and how transported to Calcutta. Telegraph and write to Calcutta, where I hope to be on Friday.

No. 2.—Telegram from the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, to the Viceroy, October 28, 1873.

Provided I receive immediate order, I think that I may guarantee minimum of 15,000 to 20,000 tons per month till February. After that time new crop will come in market. Some freight can be obtained here, and British India Company can assist, but steamers may, if necessary, be chartered in Calcutta. If you see fit to entrust details to me, I will work through chief firms and will not derange trade.

No. 3.—Telegram from the Viceroy, to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah, October 28, 1873.

I shall meet Lieutenant-Governor on Friday, and will then send you instructions.

No. 4.—Telegram from the Governor of Madras to the Viceroy, October 30, 1873.

Your telegram, 27th October. Would purchase gradually through mercantile firms and send by European vessels, as north-east monsoon precludes native craft. Rice crop generally fair, but our gross export rarely exceeds 100,000 tons per annum, two-thirds of which from Tanjore to Ceylon. Present price under six rupees per bag of two maunds. Prompt action desirable. Will endeavour to ascertain probable stock available for export.

† No. 1.—Telegram from the Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, and to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, October 27, 1873.

Great scarcity threatens in Bengal. Will any considerable amount of grain be available for export?

No. 2.—Telegram from the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, to the Viceroy, October 28, 1873.

Banars Division, pinched crop; elsewhere generally fair; if winter rain falls, considerable surplus will be available.

No. 3.—Letter from the Chief Commissioner of Oudh to the Viceroy, October 31, 1873.

I have ascertained from the best available sources, viz., the best-informed native opinion, that there are stores of grain in the province, though they are not considerable. But what the actual amount may be can only be ascertained by the test of demand. All that is sure is that they are not considerable.

The autumn crop is now being gathered, and I regret to say that, owing to the paucity of rain, it is not above half the average, with the exception of maize, which is plentiful. It is even less than half the average, so that your Excellency cannot count on our being able to export more than half the average quantity of the autumnal grains during the next four or five months.

As for the spring crop, owing to the want of rain, the usual area has not been sown, so that, even if we have the most favourable Christmas rains, it is to be feared that the harvest will not yield much more than two-thirds of the average.

Under these untoward circumstances, I am afraid your Excellency cannot look for special assistance from Oudh.

I can enter into more detail if required; but have not thought it right to delay this reply for further particulars or figures.

late; when they came, they were so heavy in some parts of the division that very great injury was reported to have been done to the early crop, called locally the Bhadoee (Indian-corn and the like), by excessive rain. At some places it was even said to have been entirely ruined. The late rice crop, however, seems to have been pretty well started everywhere except in the north-east, and if the rains had lasted as long as usual, the result might have been fair. Unhappily the rains may be said to have closed before the middle of September, and the crop, already very late, has more and more suffered, the hope of saving it gradually diminishing as time passed without rain, and being now reduced to the lowest, since the October rains have so far failed and seem likely to fail altogether. Not only is much of the rice crop irreparably gone, and much of the remainder almost gone, but the continued drought has given rise to the greatest fears for the cold-weather crops which are an important staple in the Patna Division. If there is no rain in the next few days, and the rubbee sowings do not give both immediate employment and hopes for the future, distress and difficulty of a serious character may be almost immediate in this division.

3. Throughout almost the whole of the remainder of these provinces the rains have been not only very late to commence and very early to cease, but have been in quantity below the average in amount to an extraordinary degree. This has been most markedly the case in the tracts north of the Ganges and near the Himalayas, which are usually great rice-producing countries,—the north-east of Behar, and the north of Bengal, Dinagepore, Rungpore, and almost the whole of the Rajshahye Division. In parts of this usually moist tract the rainfall has hardly exceeded that which is usual in the driest parts of the North-Western Provinces. It is in this tract that the greatest failure has taken place. Possibly in the moister and less populous parts even failure may not be so complete and ruinous as farther west, but in the west of this tract there may be said to be already panic.

4. In Calcutta and the neighbouring districts the rainfall has been below the average to an extraordinary degree. The tanks about the Lieutenant-Governor's residence have never once been half-filled.

The rain was, however, well distributed so long as it lasted, and there have been in these parts a few irregular and partial showers here and there in the first half of October. There seems to be reason to hope that in the moister districts,—e.g., the 24-Pergunnahs,—the crop may so far escape that, though injured, it will not wholly fail. In Western Bengal, where the soil is higher and drier, the apprehensions are of a much graver character. In Eastern Bengal, usually the granary of these provinces, we may hope that there will be no actual want of grain for local consumption, but it will be a very bad feature of the case if, as is feared, the crops are there so short that the usual exports are impossible. In Orissa only, the scene of the last great misfortune, there has been good rain in October, and the prospects are good. But Orissa is a very small province, and its surplus supply must be on a comparatively small scale. The rice-producing district of Backergunj also seems to have had rain.

5. Hope of a late fall of rain has hitherto so much buoyed people up and kept down prices that it is impossible yet to form a confident opinion of the actual results, but the time has come when within a very short period the fate of the crops throughout the country generally must be known.

The Lieutenant-Governor has already taken every means to obtain information*, and now that the issue cannot be long doubtful, he is about to go to take counsel on the spot with the Commissioner of Patna, and otherwise to make such enquiries and arrangements as circumstances may suggest.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that if unhappily the necessity is undoubted, he may have authority to make immediate arrangements for relief works and any importations which may seem possible and are not likely to be affected by private enterprise. He trusts that immediate authority will be given to him to exercise his discretion in this respect†.

7. The Lieutenant-Governor also begs to suggest that the export of rice to foreign countries from the Indian dominions should be stopped. In the face

* A circular calling for information on various points was issued on the 13th October. The questions contained in the circular will be found in paragraph 7 of the first Special Narrative, which is published in a separate volume.

† See telegram from the Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in footnote to paragraph 2, despatch to Secretary of State, No. 9 of October 30, 1873. (See page 1.)

of a general failure in Bengal, any supply that could be derived from British Burmah, the Godavery or Kistna Districts and Orissa, would go but a very little way, and if, as is believed, the premature cessation of the rains has extended to the North-Western Provinces, we probably cannot expect help from that quarter. If any change due to an unexpected rainfall should occur, it must be before orders can be passed on this letter, and such a measure as the stoppage of foreign exports carried into effect. If before then no rain has fallen, every grain of rice will be wanted*.

No. 3.

Resolution of the Government of India, P. W. Dept., No. 431 B. C., dated Simla, October 28, 1873.

The Governor General in Council has learned with deep regret that the prospects of crops in parts of Bengal are such that it will no doubt be necessary shortly to find work for the people as a means of relief. Where such relief becomes an urgent necessity, work must be undertaken for the purpose, if there are no well considered projects already under execution, or in such a state of preparation that they can be at once set in hand.

2. The parts of the country reported to be in the most urgent need are the Patna Division and the Rajshahye Division.

3. In the southern part of the former of these tracts, the Soane Canal project is in course of execution, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is authorized to extend active operations at once to all the branches where relief works are required, working on the rough estimates where detailed estimates are not ready. But where there are detailed estimates for works sufficiently near, such works should be preferred to those for which estimates are not yet ready.

4. In order to strengthen the engineering staff of the Soane Canal, the Government of the North-Western Provinces will be requested to hold in readiness a superintending engineer and the establishment of the Eastern Ganges Canal Survey to proceed to Behar on the requisition of the Government of Bengal, and the Government of the Punjab will likewise hold in readiness the engineers of the survey division of the Baree Doab Canal.

5. In the northern part of the Patna Division there is no large project in course of execution, and works, if required, must be selected from local projects, unless the lately deferred scheme for the revision of the Gunduck Embankment (Bengal Government letter No. 4640, dated September 13, 1873) should be found a suitable source of employment.

6. In the Rajshahye Division, the Northern Bengal Railway project has lately been completed, and was referred to the Secretary of State for sanction in the Government of India's despatch No. 204 R of the 15th instant. In anticipation of the approval of Her Majesty's Government, the Governor General in Council is now pleased to sanction the immediate commencement of work on this railway. To strengthen the engineering staff, the greater part of the engineers now employed under Mr. Collet in surveying for the projected Western Rajpootana Railway will be withdrawn and attached to the Northern Bengal Railway.

7. Such funds as may be required for the Northern Bengal Railway and for relief works, and such additional funds as may be required for the more active prosecution of work on the Soane Canals, should be applied for at once by the Government of Bengal. For the Railway and the Soane Canal works, the funds will be assigned under the extraordinary grant; for the other works not classed as loan works, the charge will fall on the provincial revenues, or, if necessary, on the imperial revenues of the year.

8. In the spring of 1869, when great scarcity existed in Upper India, the Government of India considered it right to endeavour to equalize the supplies of food-grains over a large area by arranging with the Guaranteed Railway Companies that they should lower their rates for the carriage of such grains to 1½ pice per maund a mile (which was believed to be approximately the cost of carriage), and charge the loss that the railways would thus

measure in some parts of the country; and should this be the case, the Government of India will be prepared to incur the same liability. In this view the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India for Guaranteed Railways at Calcutta should be directed to place himself forthwith in communication with the Government of Bengal, and to do everything in his power to give effect to such instructions as he may receive from the Lieutenant-Governor. The Governor General in Council will await an expression of His Honor's opinion on this point before taking final action in the matter.

9. In making provisions for this possible contingency, the Governor General in Council relies on the hearty co-operation of the representatives of each Railway Company, and feels that the Government may rest assured that this will be given.

10. For further instructions for general guidance, the Governor General in Council desires that the attention of officers in the Public Works Department may be drawn to the Resolution of the Government of India in the Public Works Department, No. 248-59 J of 24th September, 1868, which should be republished with the present Resolution.—Chapter XIII A of the Public Works Department Code contains a revision of the rules originally published in the Resolution of 1868.

No. 4.

Resolution of the Government of Bengal, dated November 3, 1873.

Read a Resolution of the Government of India, Public Works Department*, No. 431 B.C., dated the 28th October 1873, on the subject of the provision of work in these provinces for the people who may be thrown out of employment by the expected failure of the crops in many districts.

1. The Lieutenant-Governor is pleased to direct the publication of this Resolution.

2. Orders for carrying out the instructions of the Government of India in regard to the Soane Canal and Northern Bengal Railway works will be issued in the proper departments.

The Gunduck Embankment scheme is one which involves very difficult considerations, but it will be again carefully examined.

The proposed lowering of the railway fares has been arranged.

3. As regards works other than those above mentioned, the Lieutenant-Governor has received full authority to undertake such relief works as may seem to be necessary in various parts of the country. His view is that, to render effectual aid to the people, it is of all things most necessary that work should be offered in good time, so that the existence of public works may be known to the people at large, and those who stand in need of work may find their way to the work and be suitably provided for, before the greatest stress comes. All experience shows that work is wanted to avert starvation rather than to save people already half-starved and unfit for work, and that it takes time to draw to public works people who are not accustomed to labour for hire. In this view, in case of reasonable apprehension of scarcity, we can hardly begin too soon.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor also believes that there can be no surer test of the state of the country—no barometer, as it were, by which the condition of the people can be better gauged—than the degree to which they seek employment on public works. As such works are found more and more to attract classes usually self-supporting, so we may judge that there is want in the country; that is, provided that this test is established in sufficient time.

5. It is impossible yet to tell the degree to which there may be scarcity in the country. We yet trust to the mercy of Providence to avert the worst. But there can be no doubt that unless there is some very decided improvement in present prospects, there will be such shortness of crops that as soon as all hope of further employment in watering crops still alive and in sowing cold-weather crops comes to an end, need for employment will be much greater than usual. The immediate course, then, which the Lieutenant-Governor has thought best, is to extend and enlarge the scope of the usual district works undertaken at this season in various parts of each district. He has already settled

* See page 4.

schemes of such works with the Commissioners of Patna and Bhaugulpore, and has authorized the local officers to undertake them and carry them on, wherever and whenever there is a demand for employment. In every part of the country, where the conditions seem to be such as to render the need of employment probable, works will be opened and employment offered. It will not be attempted in such cases to draw together foreign labour by any extraordinary means, but all labour locally offering will be accepted. The works (so far as beyond ordinary means and requirements) are undertaken in order to give labour: we do not seek labour for the sake of the works. The local officers have been assured that if the labour thus employed absorbs their local means, these will be supplemented from the general treasury.

6. General instructions in the spirit of those given to the Commissioners of Patna and Bhaugulpore have also been given by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Commissioners of Rajshahye and Burdwan, and all Commissioners are now authorized to act in the spirit of these instructions wherever there may be need of such measures.

7. The Northern Bengal Railway runs through districts where there has been the greatest failure of rain, and where there is the greatest apprehension regarding the crops; but the people of those districts are wholly unaccustomed to labour for hire, and it may be doubtful whether they will go far from their homes for work till they are very hard-pressed indeed. It may be a question, then, whether we can rely on a single line of railway for the relief of that country generally. Deeming that roads connecting the various parts with the railway—feeder roads as they are usually called—are a necessary part of the railway system, the Lieutenant-Governor proposes to spread more widely the opportunities of employment by undertaking at the same time roads leading to the principal railway stations. The civil authorities will at once set themselves to devise the lines which will best subserve the traffic of the country, and the engineering staff of the Northern Bengal Railway will be requested to lay out and superintend these lines, which may connect the railway with the Berhampooter river system on the one side and with the Mahanuddee on the other.

8. The note of the Lieutenant-Governor, published in the Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 10th September 1873, explained His Honor's views regarding the great importance of improving the means of communication between the populous districts of the west and the insufficiently-peopled districts of the east, and pointed to a scheme of roads from west to east. The north-eastern portion of the Tirhoot District, and the north part of Bhaugulpore, by which such roads would pass, is the very country where the people will be most in need of employment, and these roads should certainly be undertaken at once. Durbhangah may be taken as the point of departure from roads already made of the great Behar population which tend to the east in search of labour. Fortunately Mr. Stevens, the able and energetic engineer of the Durbhangah Estate, is well acquainted with this country, and has already devised the lines of road which he thinks the best. The Lieutenant-Governor has arranged with the Commissioner of Patna and Mr. Stevens, that the latter officer should lay out two lines from Durbhangah to the Koosce River, one in the direct line to Purneah, and the other by Natpore to the north towards Titaliya. The Commissioner of Bhaugulpore is to arrange for the junction of these two lines with Purneah and Titaliya. From Purneah the present metalled road leads to Dengraghât on the Mahanuddee; whence to Dinapore a line of road is already marked out, which will be taken up as a relief work. From Titaliya the road to Julpigoree may be improved, and thence there is a line by Cooch Behar to the Berhampooter. By these lines, and others in connection with the Northern Bengal Railway, complete means of communication from west to east will, it is hoped, be established north of the Ganges. Further to the south, the line from Rajmehal to Dinapore should also receive attention.

9. In Burdwan, a work already discussed, *viz.*, the connection of the Damoodah with the Kana Nuddee, has already been put in hand, partly in the hope of obtaining an immediate supply of water and partly in order to give employment.

In this same part of the country there has been much complaint of the want of good tanks for drinking water, of petty drainage channels, and such like improvements. There can be no doubt that petty works of this kind are at least as useful as large works, and they certainly bring employment more

effectually to the homes of the people. But, on the other hand, it would be impossible for Government to undertake and superintend such works of local improvement on private property. The Lieutenant-Governor has, however, instructed the Commissioner to ascertain whether it might be arranged that private landholders should undertake such works, Government, if necessary, advancing the money on the security of the estates. He feels sure that if the upper classes feel the duties of their position, such an arrangement should be gladly accepted by them, and be very feasible.

10. The Lieutenant-Governor feels sure that he may trust to the zeal and energy of local officers to give effect to these orders, and that, whatever need may arise, they will not be found wanting. He feels that he can count on the thorough assistance of the European settlers. He would also express the earnest hope that the officers of Government will have the aid and co-operations of the native landholders, and generally of those classes of natives whose wealth, influence, and position may enable them to contribute to the duty of assisting their poorer fellow-countrymen. The most effective work cannot be done without that assistance.

No. 5.

Despatch from the Government of India, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 77, dated Simla, October 30, 1873.

Referring to our despatch No. 25, dated the 10th April 1873, we have the honor to transmit, for Your Grace's information, a copy of an Order in Council, dated the 28th instant*, declaring that it is expedient that the Governor General shall visit certain parts of India unaccompanied by his Council; nominating the Hon'ble Sir Henry Norman, K. C. B., to be President of the said Council during the time of such visit; stating the powers which shall be exercised by the said President of the Council and by the Governor General during his separation from his Council, and directing that the Council of the Governor General shall assemble on the 17th November next, at Agra; in the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces.

2. The Governor General left Simla on the 29th instant.

No. 6.

Order in Council, dated Simla, October 28, 1873.

It is hereby declared that it is expedient that the Governor General shall visit certain parts of India unaccompanied by his Council, and in the exercise of the powers conferred by the Indian Councils Act, section 6, the Hon'ble Sir Henry Norman, K. C. B., is nominated to be President of the said Council during the time of such visit, and the powers of the Governor General in assemblies of the said Council during the time of such visit shall be reposed in the said Sir Henry Norman, except that of assenting to, or withholding his assent from, or reserving for the consideration of Her Majesty's pleasure, any law or regulations as provided in Act 24 and 25 Vic., cap. 67, and the Governor General is authorized by this order made for that purpose alone to exercise all or any of the powers which may be exercised by the said Governor General in Council in every case in which the said Governor General may think it expedient to exercise the same, except the powers of making laws or regulations; and it is notified that, under the provisions of section 9 of Act 24 and 25 Vic., cap. 67, the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct that His Excellency's Council shall, on Monday, the 17th November, assemble at Agra, in the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces.

No. 7.

Despatch from the Viceroy, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. A, dated Calcutta, November 7, 1873.

I have the honor to inform Your Grace that I arrived at Calcutta on the 31st ultimo, accompanied by Sir Richard Temple. We saw Mr. Bayley, the

* See below, No. 6 of this series.

Commissioner of Patna, on the road. Sir George Campbell met us at Burdwan, and proceeded with us to Calcutta.

2. Since my arrival I have been in constant communication with Sir George Campbell, and have obtained from the British and Native commercial community much useful information upon the prospects of the province.

3. The reports from Behar, as Your Grace will perceive from the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 5th instant, have by no means improved, nor are those from the rest of the province re-assuring. The failure of a large portion of the autumn rice crop is now certain. In many parts the spring crop is not yet sown, and the possibility of cultivating the land for that crop depends upon a speedy fall of rain. From further accounts received there have been some showers in Rajshahye, Moorshedabad, Hooghly, Raneegunge, Beerbhoom, Bhaugulpore, the 24 Pergunnahs and parts of Jessore; but it is not considered probable that any considerable fall of rain will occur in the course of this month.

4. According to our present knowledge, the condition of things throughout the province is as follows: In Behar, comprising the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions, with a population of 20 millions, the failure of the rice crop has been very general, and the prospects of the spring crop are bad. The Division of Rajshahye, with a population of 9 millions, is affected in the same manner as Behar, but the failure of the rice crop has not been so complete, and the prospects of the spring crop are somewhat better.

5. In the Burdwan, Presidency, and Cooch Behar Divisions, with a population of 14½ millions, there has been a considerable amount of failure, but it is hoped that the results may not be very serious.

6. In the Dacca, Chittagong, Chota Nagpore, and Assam Divisions, with a population of 19 millions, there has been a failure of the rice crop in some districts, but, on the whole, there may be expected to be a surplus of rice available for export, although less than in ordinary years. The District of Backergunge, in the Dacca Division, which ordinarily exports rice largely, has not materially suffered.

7. In the Orissa Division alone, with a population of 4½ millions, are the reports altogether satisfactory.

8. In the rest of India, as Your Grace will see from the reports published in the *Gazette of India* of the 1st of November, the crops are generally good, with the exception of Oude and the Benares Division of the North-Western Provinces, which have suffered in part from the want of rain which has affected Behar. Sir William Muir informs me that the Eastern Districts of the North-Western Provinces, where the rains hardly ever fail, have had, on the whole, a scanty supply. The rice has suffered, and unless more rain should fall, there will be difficulty in ploughing for the autumn sowings. Some scarcity and distress is, therefore, apprehended in the Benares Division. From Allahabad northwards the prospects are better, and in the North-West they are very favourable*. Sir George Couper reports† that the autumn crop in Oude, owing to the paucity of rain, is not above half the average, with the exception of maize, which is plentiful, and that the usual area has not been sown for the spring crop, owing to the want of rain, so that it is to be feared that the harvest will not, even with the most favourable Christmas rains, yield much more than two-thirds of the average.

9. Your Grace will observe that so much depends upon the result of the spring crop that it is impossible at the present time to foresee the effect which the drought will have upon the food resources of the country during the coming year, and the necessary information can hardly be completely obtained before the middle of January next.

10. A memorandum written by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the 29th of October, after personal communication with the officers of the Patna Division, and the

Enclosure A (not printed).

Enclosure B (not printed).

Enclosure C (see page 11.)

* Letter from the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, to the Viceroy, October 14, 1873.

The upshot of the rains is very unusual. The eastern districts, where the rains, hardly ever fail, have had, on the whole, a scanty supply; the rice has suffered, and, unless we have more rain, there will be difficulty in ploughing for the rubber.

From about Allahabad upwards things are much better, and farther north-west very favourable.

In keeping with this abnormal state of things, the fall in the hills was to the end light, and also in the Terai, — places that are generally deluged. Prices are rising very much in the eastern districts, and there will, I fear, be some distress there.

† See footnote to paragraph 6 of despatch to Secretary of State, No. 9 of October 30, 1873. (See page 2).

reports of the Commissioner and local officers*, which I have the honor to enclose, will put Your Grace in possession of the latest information from that division.

11. All the recommendations of the Commissioner of Patna have been complied with, and he did not, when I saw him, anticipate any serious distress before the beginning of next year.

12. The general result of the anxious consideration which I have given to the present state of affairs is embodied in the accompanying Resolution of Government, in framing which I have had the great advantage of the assistance of Sir Richard Temple, and in which he entirely concurs.

Enclosure D (see page 19).

13. I have but little to add to what is stated in that Resolution.

14. The prohibition of all export of grain from British Indian ports is strongly advocated by the native press, and is still recommended by Sir George Campbell.

It is a course which does not commend itself to my judgment. It is probable, from the experience of former years and the information which is available as to the supplies of food grain in India, that the deficiency in Bengal and Behar can be met without recourse to importation from abroad; in the term "abroad," I include British Burmah, for Burmese rice is not imported into Bengal in ordinary years.

The rise of prices which has occurred, and which, if the prospects should become worse, must increase, will, in my opinion, of itself prevent any considerable export of the common classes of grain from Indian ports proper, and if it reaches Rs. 4 a maund, it would, according to the best information I can obtain, probably bring a considerable amount of Burmese rice into the Calcutta market.

Your Grace will observe from the enclosed return that the principal exports of rice from British Indian ports begin in February, before which time there will be full information as to the probable wants of Bengal, which information must necessarily operate upon prices.

Enclosure E (not printed).

15. To prohibit exports would have the effect of artificially reducing prices at the commencement of a season of scarcity, and moreover it would shake the confidence of the mercantile classes in the determination of Government to maintain the utmost freedom of trade as the best preservative against famine, and so by checking commercial operations cut off sources of supply from without which would naturally come to our aid in time of need.

16. The general principles which should guide the Government in times of scarcity were enunciated by the Government of India in 1863† after the

* The reports of the local officers have not been printed, but the essence of their reports is given in the letter of the Commissioner of Patna, for which see page 13.

† Extract from Resolution of the Government of India, Public Works Department, dated Simla, September 24, 1868.

In proceeding to consider the manner in which the Government should act if severe scarcity arises, His Excellency in Council would first most earnestly impress upon all persons in authority the necessity for not permitting the smallest interference with the ordinary operations of trade during the continuance of the scarcity. On this subject the following extract from a paper drawn up in 1861 by Mr. J. Strachey, then Collector of Moradabad, may be regarded as expressing the views of the Government of India at the present time:—

"There is one other point connected with this part of the question to which it is desirable to refer. The Government has already publicly expressed its disapproval of all interference by its officers with the object of reducing the price of food. I believe that orders still more strong and explicit would be useful. Unfortunately, public education in these matters is at a miserably low ebb. In times of difficulty, like the present, almost every Magistrate is constantly urged, both by Englishmen and by Natives, to interfere, in some way or other, for the purpose of cheapening food, or of rendering it easier of access to the consumers. Reports frequently become prevalent that in some parts of the country such interference has been actually practised. Whether these reports be true or false, they are extremely mischievous. The determination of Government to allow no such interference ought to be so notorious, that reports of this kind shall obtain no credence. These rumours are the more readily believed, because they fall in with the general idea of what is proper and probable. The mere suspicion of any interference of the kind is sufficient to check the speculations of the corn-merchants, and it cannot be doubted that this is a cause which often, in this country, has the effect of stopping the exportation of grain from distant markets."

It cannot be too clearly borne in mind that in time of extreme famine, when it is impossible to supply the deficiency of food by importation, the main safeguard against general starvation is the reduction of consumption, and that this can only be effectually brought about by a rise of prices. The grain-dealer, therefore, while he works for his own personal advantage by raising the price of food as it becomes scarce, is in fact providing the means for securing the community against the extremity of famine, and his action, so far from being, as it is too often ignorantly described to be, that of a public enemy, is much more that of a public benefactor.

Another point of great importance is that there should be no appearance or suggestion of Government interference in the introduction of grain, unless under most exceptional circumstances, which, so far as the Governor General in Council at present sees, can hardly arise in the districts of the plains. The experience of the famine in Orissa may possibly be brought forward as an argument for direct Government interposition on the present occasion. But the analogy of that case should not be permitted to lead to any disregard of the true principles which it is important to observe. To quote again from the paper before noticed:—

"There is no want of private speculation engaged in bringing grain from other districts. The actual quantity of food imported, although insufficient, is still very large, and any attempt by the Government to import grain upon its

experience of the famine in Orissa, which extended to the same districts which have suffered on the present occasion, and I have only to add that I concur generally in the opinions then expressed.

17. Experience shows that the great difficulty in India lies more in the obstacles to the transit of grain presented by the situation of some parts of the country in the case of a sudden demand, than in any deficiency of supplies in the great marts situated upon or in the neighbourhood of lines of railway or river communication. In order to guard against the people suffering in such cases, I have, as Your Grace will observe from the 26th paragraph of the Resolution, authorized advances to be made to zemindars and others, who may consent to import grain from a distance into such exceptionally situated districts, and sell it to the people in their neighbourhood.

18. The Government of India and the Government of Bengal will also purchase a certain amount of grain in order to secure a supply to the labourers employed on Government works. These purchases will be made through the trade, and appear to me to be a perfectly legitimate course of action. I have been assured upon good authority that they are not likely to have an injurious effect upon the trade.

19. It may be interesting to Your Grace to know that the East Indian and Eastern Bengal Railways can each carry 2,000 tons of grain a day without deranging their ordinary traffic, and could increase that quantity if necessary. From the 8th to the 26th of October, 335,000 maunds, or about 12,000 tons of food grains, were despatched by the East Indian Railway from Howrah and Chandernagore to the districts where the rice crop has failed. The goods traffic of the East Indian Railway for the week ending the 25th of October was 300,000 maunds above the corresponding week of last year. There has been the greatest activity in the grain trade all over Bengal, and Sir William Muir assures me that his experience of 1868-69 showed that there would be no want of private enterprise in the transport trade, wherever there are good roads or railways.

20. Sir George Campbell thinks, and I agree with him, that it would be premature to call a public meeting, appoint a central relief committee, and appeal to the public for subscriptions, until a better estimate can be formed of the amount of distress there is likely to be, which, in order to prevent loss of life, must be met by the distribution of food; but preparations will be made for the constitution of local relief committees at once, so as to be ready when the time of action arrives.

21. Your Grace will see from the report of the Orissa Commission, and from Mr. Cockerell's report of the distress in Behar in the same year, the importance of taking the distress in time, and Her Majesty's Government may rely upon the Government of India not shrinking from using every available means, at whatever cost, to prevent, so far as they can, any loss of the lives of

own account, or any interference with the operations of private traders, could hardly fail to be mischievous. "Direct measures," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "at the cost of the State, to procure food from a distance are expedient when, from peculiar reasons, the thing is not likely to be done by private speculation. In any other case they are a great error. Private speculators will not, in such cases, venture to compete with the Government, and though a Government can do more than any one merchant, it cannot do nearly so much as all merchants."

The true limitation of the action of Government in this respect is here given. So soon as the Government is satisfied that private trade is manifestly inadequate for the introduction of grain into the suffering districts in sufficient quantity, then the analogy to the position of Orissa will be established, but not till then. The case of severe scarcity in the hill districts of Kumaon and Gurhwal, in which the means of communication are extremely bad, and where there is virtually no internal commerce except on the very smallest scale, is one in which the direct action of Government in importing grain has on former occasions been exercised, and would, under the rule above laid down, be fully justified. But judging from past experience, it may safely be assumed that the enterprise of individuals will, in the open districts of the plains, no more fail on this occasion than it has failed before under similar circumstances. The probabilities are altogether in an opposite direction. The greatly increased facilities for cheap transport given by the railways now open will do much to stimulate the activity of trade, and to draw into the impoverished districts supplies from a distance in a manner not before possible.

The Governor General in Council desires to point out in a marked manner that during the calamity of 1860-61, Sir G. Edmonstone, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, allowed no Government interference of any description with the grain trade, and left the supply of food to the ordinary operations of the commercial community with most satisfactory results. It is apparent from the known facts that in that year, so far as the means of communication and transport available admitted, the import of food on a very large scale commenced as soon as the scarcity declared itself in a distinct form, and that the imports continued until the pressure ceased.

While therefore the only safe general rule will be to exercise no direct interference with the supply of grain, it will yet be most important to watch the condition of the markets, and to ascertain as exactly as possible the amount of the importations and the quarters from which the supplies are received. If an extreme condition of want arise, it may be right to enquire whether aid could be obtained from any of the more distant markets to which the action of private trade had not reached, and in the last resort the co-operation of the Government as an importer might be desirable. But these are contingencies on which a correct judgment can only be formed as the occasion actually arises.

Her Majesty's subjects in consequence of the calamity which now threatens Bengal.

22. In conclusion, I have to inform Your Grace that I thought it desirable to prevent any unusual assemblages of people in the districts which may be affected by the rise of prices. I have therefore put off the Durbars at Agra and Lucknow, countermanded the Kirwee Camp of Exercise, and requested the Commander-in-Chief to reduce, as far as possible, the force which was to be collected at the Roorkee Camp*.

No. 8.

Memorandum by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated October 29, 1873.

I have now had the advantage of discussing the food prospects of this division with the Commissioner, with local officers of most of the districts, and with several persons, European and native, who have a good knowledge of the country.

The season may still be very materially affected by an early fall of rain, but there is so little prospect of this that we must face the question on the supposition that there will be no rain in time for the rubbee sowings.

In this view, I fear, there is entire unanimity that the prospects are extremely bad, at least as bad as, if not worse than, any year within recent memory. Except in very low-lying places, and in the lands near the course of the great rivers subject to flood, there must be very great failure of both the khureef and rubbee crops—not mere shortness of crops, but disastrous failure; the greater part of the rice lands not producing at all, and the greater part of the rubbee not being sown or not germinating.

I do not feel that we have the means of forming even an approximate estimate of the stocks in hand, or the degree to which, if well distributed, they will suffice to keep the country alive till another harvest. All that can be said is that the general tendency of opinions on this subject is very gloomy. Yet, though the failure has now been for some weeks impending, and the people are thoroughly alive to it, there has been little symptom of panic, and the course of prices has not yet been so unfavourable as we might expect at this season when the country is alarmed to the last degree; rice in most places has not reached what can be called an actual famine price, and the cheaper grains, maize especially, have up to this time been procurable at rates which I may call surprising. Though the "bhadoi" crop, which produces these grains, has been very short in some parts of Behar, it has produced tolerably in others. In the case of the rice failure, wherever there has been much maize, it has been, and I believe is, selling at prices far better than famine prices; in some parts of the country almost cheap, the circumstances considered. I am told that planters and others who desire to lay in stocks have been able to get maize north of the Ganges, not only at comparatively cheap prices, but in considerable quantity. The great peculiarity of the present failure is that it is greatest in the parts of the country which ordinarily export the most food. We cannot tell whether the actual want will be most felt in those exporting tracts where a considerable surplus would not bring the food supply below local wants; or in those other parts in the division which have hitherto to some extent depended on a large import now cut off. Hitherto, importation from outside has been entirely confined to the districts of the division south of the Ganges, where the shortness of the usual rainfall has been less marked, and the local failure of the crops less complete, than in the northern tracts, and even yet the usual local export from the north to the south has not quite ceased. It should be mentioned, however, that exportation from the Nepal Terai into our territories (usually a large source of supply) has been wholly stopped by the Nepal Government on

It was subsequently determined to proceed with the Roorkee Camp as originally arranged. See paragraph 16 of despatch to Secretary of State, No. B. of November 12, 1873. (See page 25.)

account of the scarcity there *. On the whole question of importing food, only this can be said, that the division, as a whole, has begun to import largely from outside, and must continue to import; but to what extent this necessity will go we cannot yet estimate, nor can we tell in what parts of the division food will be most wanted. We do not know whether it will be enough to supply from the outside those parts which usually receive supplies from *within* the division, or whether the parts which usually export very largely, and still export rather than import, must eventually be supplied. All the accounts seem to show the failure of the great rice tracts in the north to be so complete that to supply them will be a great and most difficult task, unless they have great reserves in hand, such as we cannot trace. The sale of the maize up to this moment is the only symptom which seems to militate against the belief that food in these parts must fail. I very much fear in some large tracts, as in the north-east of Tirhoot, it is almost impossible that the food supply can suffice, since in such tracts there is very little grown but rice, and this is a failure. I do not doubt that the tide of trade is turning, and that Durbhangah and places similarly situated must import, but to what extent we cannot tell.

We cannot say how soon there may be panic in the grain trade, causing local scarcity and want in many places, long before the stocks are actually exhausted.

As long as there is plenty of rice in Calcutta and the districts from which Calcutta draws supplies, we may presume that if the greatest possible railway and other facilities are afforded, the spontaneous rice import which has already set in, will continue. The question, whether it is necessary to bring rice in great quantities from beyond sea to Patna, depends on the state of the Bengal markets, which we will deal with in Calcutta.

Already it has been arranged that Colonel Burn shall import rice from Calcutta in behalf of the Durbhangah Estate.

The general food supply however apart, this is certain, that if no providential rainfall comes very soon, the distress among the poorer classes of this very populous division must be very great indeed in the course of the many months which must pass before the earliest crop of another rainy season can be reaped. So much is certain. Whatever be the extent of the deficiency of food in the country, and the degree to which it must be imported, it must be very dear, and the poorer classes, who have no reserve either of grain or money, must be unable to get it without assistance. Relief works all over the country will be clearly necessary.

So long as there is question whether the food in the country and spontaneously flowing into it will suffice, if only distributed, and so long as distress has not reached a very extreme point, it may suffice to offer work and pay in money. But when it is evident that the food supply is wholly deficient, and a large proportion of the population must receive relief, I believe that relief works are of little use unless food is supplied to the labourers. Money then only raises the price, and affects the distribution of food without increasing the total food supply. It might be that those who work are in this case better off than they otherwise would be; but large classes who do not go to work till they are at the last extremity, and who suffer the most of all, would suffer more than if no work was going.

The general rule I would follow would be, not to import on the part of Government to supply the general market and to compete with the traders in a part of the country where there are active traders (as is here the case), but to import for relief works †, so that relief of this kind should be a relief given by a clear addition to the resources of the affected tract, and not by taking food from one man to give to another. I think that all the local officers should set themselves to devise the means by which food for the purpose I have indicated may be transported to the parts where they see the greatest prospect of a necessity for large relief works. Meantime, although, while people are occupied in the attempt to save crops still alive and there is a possibility of rubbee sowings, there will probably be little or no seeking for labour, I much feel the truth of what the Commissioner and several officers have said, that there is much danger

* The Nepalese Government subsequently allowed seed grain to be exported.

† See paragraph 14 of Resolution of Government of India dated November 7, 1873 (page 21), and proceedings at the conference held at Government House on 10th November (page 31.)

that people will keep away from relief works till they are half-starved, and I believe we cannot too soon open works sufficient to—

- (1.) Accustom the people to the knowledge that work is available to them;
- (2.) Test the state of the country.

Although the greatest distress usually does not come till a good deal later in the season, I think it very probable that as soon as all hope of farther rubbee sowings is past, there may be many people in want of work, the ordinary field-work being stopped. At any rate, there always is in these parts a certain labouring population, and the extent to which works draw this population, and after them tap strata, gradually deeper and deeper, of people not accustomed to ordinary hired labour, will be the surest index to the amount of want in the country. It is an index which must be read with much care and thought. In the early times of scarcity and famine, every one person not accustomed to hired labour who comes to the works, indicates the distress of ten, or it may be a hundred, who have not come. This symptom, then, must be very narrowly watched.

In this view, I have told the district officers that they should lose no time in commencing ordinary earth-work on roads, &c., at as many places as possible. I am glad to find that their attention has been already given to the point, and they have generally work of some kind ready which can be advantageously undertaken without delay. This they will do, giving the ordinary wages of the country. And by the aid of their general information and the index afforded by the works in hand, they will judge of the necessity of more extended works and food relief in each part of the country. I have told them that as soon as the demand for labour exceeds the resources of their local funds, money for works where relief is necessary will be supplied without stint. The great thing is that they should prepare beforehand, and peg out (by a centre line only) roads and other works on which relief labour may be expended to the permanent advantage of the country.

I have discussed with the Commissioner, and he will note some poor and isolated tracts in which there is special necessity to be prepared with work.

The canal works will afford very large employment to the people of Shahabad and Gya, and will be rapidly pushed on with that object. I have seen Mr. Levinge, and am sure that he can be depended on to do all that is possible to assist the people in this emergency. He has already done very much by giving irrigation where it had not been expected that we could do so.

The system of roads from west to east, i. e., from Tirhoot towards the labour-absorbing districts of the east, which I have already indicated as a great desideratum to facilitate movements of the population, will be put in hand at once. Mr. Stevens, the Durbhangah engineer, who has a great knowledge of the country, will undertake the arrangement of these lines so far as they are within this division, and I hope that some of the engineers of the North Bengal Railway will take them up for the Government.

The Commissioner and manager have already arranged a large scheme of minor relief works on the Durbhangah Estates, and similar preparations should be made on other Wards' Estates. The Commissioner will occupy himself in settling the works in the various districts that may best be undertaken. I have authorized the entertainment of special men for the design and superintendence of works. Mr. Bayley is today submitting a report, and I hope that his report with this note will give a sufficient summary of the knowledge which we have yet gained of the prospects of the Patna Division.

No. 9.

Letter from the Commissioner of Patna to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated October 29, 1873.

In anticipation of the scarcity which even then seemed probable, I issued on the 7th October a circular to the Collectors of this division calling for information on the state of affairs.

2. I quote the circular here, as it supplies the key to the replies:—

“The want of rain during the last six weeks, which has been very general throughout the division, has led in some parts to the total loss of the rice crop; and in other parts to the destruction of a great portion of it. The bhadoi crop has also been a very poor one, speaking generally, and unless rain falls soon there will be insufficient moisture to secure a rubbee crop. Altogether the out-look is a serious one, and it becomes necessary to collect accurate information as far as possible of the state of the country and of the food supply for the coming year.

(2.) “In the first place, the prices-current must be closely scrutinized and made as accurate as possible. The rates supplied to the district and sub-divisional officers should be tested by their own personal inquiries. Having done this, each magistrate should inquire, as far as possible, what exportation has been going on, and whether the stocks of food grains in hand are large or not; at the same time they should learn whether zemindars are having much difficulty in collecting the present kist (*i. e.* instalment of rent). This information will enable them to come to a fair conclusion as to the prospects of the ryots for the coming year, and I shall be obliged by their furnishing me with a full report thereon not later than the 20th October. They should, at the same time, state if in their opinion relief works will be necessary, and what works they are prepared to commence with, and at what cost.

(3.) “I shall also be obliged by their continuing to furnish me semi-officially with fortnightly reports on the same subject.

(4.) “It may be that in most parts of the country no relief works will be necessary; but wherever there is a probability of their being required, it will tend much to prevent waste if plans and estimates are prepared beforehand and arrangements made for having the requisite establishment at hand.

(5.) “Those Collectors in whose districts there are large Court of Wards' estates, should make special recommendations as to the necessity for temporary remissions to the ryots, for the relief works to be undertaken by the Court of Wards, and as to the expediency of now importing grain on the part of the estates.”

3. I have now received replies from all the Collectors, and beg to annex them for the Lieutenant-Governor's perusal. It is not necessary for me to comment at any length on them, as the Lieutenant-Governor has now seen and questioned all these officers as well as many others likely to be informed on the state of affairs, and has had their views put plainly before him.

4. Speaking generally, I may say that the result is this: in all districts the dhan (*i. e.* the khureef crop *) has failed. In none will there be an eight-anna crop; in some there will not be a two-anna crop. The bhadoi crop was in no district first-rate; in some districts it was destroyed by flood. There is no present prospect of rain, and unless there is rain in the next twenty days, the rubbee crop must also be a failure. The stocks of grain vary in different districts and in different parts of the same district, but I have found no one who considers that there is a six months' supply in hand, and there is everywhere a prospect of very great scarcity, which it is feared will deepen into actual famine in the early part of next year. Heavy rain within the next fifteen days may yet save the country from the pressure of extreme distress; but such rain is, in the opinion both of practical agriculturists and of meteorologists, in the

* The principal harvests of the year in Bengal are:—

(1.)—The Amun (the great harvest of the year), sown in April, May, and June, reaped in November and December.

(2.)—The Aus, or early rice, sown in most parts in April and May, reaped in August and September. In some parts this crop is sown in February and March, and reaped in June and July.

(3.)—The Rubbee, or spring crop, consisting of wheat, barley, pulses, oil-seeds, &c., sown in October and November, reaped in February and March.

(4.)—The Boro rice, a small crop, sown in September, October and November, reaped in March, April, and May.

The harvests in Behar are:—

(1.)—The Khureef, which corresponds with the Amun in Bengal, but is not relatively so important a crop as a larger area is sown with Rubbee in Behar.

(2.)—The Bhadoi crop, consisting of Indian-corn or maize and the several kinds of millet (murwa, janera, jowar, &c.) sown at the end of May and beginning of June, reaped in August and September. Bhadoi lands also yield Rubbee crops.

(3.)—The Rubbee crop, consisting of wheat, barley, gram, &c., sown in October and November, reaped in March and April.

Besides the above, there are several minor crops, *e. g.* the fruit of the mohwa tree, which affords food to large numbers in the Chota Nagpore Division; this crop is gathered about the end of April. The mango tree also yields a considerable crop in parts of Rajshahye and Behar. Cheena and moong, both of which are descriptions of millet, are sown in some parts in the spring and ripen before the rains set in; there are several other local crops of minor importance.

highest degree unlikely, and we must, I fear, make up our minds to face a scarcity certainly not less severe than that of 1866.

5. Before passing to the reports of the several districts, I annex below three tables—A, showing the rainfall in each district since 1868; B, showing the average prices of the commonest food grains during the three last fortnights in each district, together with the latest advices up to date; C, showing (approximately only) the proportion in which the three crops are severally grown in each district.

TABLE A.

Statement showing the Rainfall.

NAME OF DISTRICT.	1865.	1866.	1867.	1868.	1869.	1870.	1871.	1872.	1873, up to 11th October.
Patna	...	...	...	25.89	44.98	35.70	59.46	31.17	30.49
Gya	...	...	...	...	...	39.13	48.73	34.97	35.51
Shahabad	...	...	...	?	48.28	47.27	61.39	35.45	37.72
Tirhoot	...	...	...	...	...	78.10	77.02	52.47	28.94 up to 20th Sept.
Sarun	...	...	...	25.71	33.73	42.94	75.67	38.48	33.88
Chumparun	...	...	...	...	25.75	67.51	59.53	50.29	41.04

The figures are taken from the Calcutta Gazette for district head-quarters.

TABLE B.

Statement showing Prices-current in September and first half of October 1873.

DISTRICT.	COMMON RICE.			BARLEY.			MAKAI.		
	1st half Sept.	2nd half Sept.	1st half Oct.	1st half Sept.	2nd half Sept.	1st half Oct.	1st half Sept.	2nd half Sept.	1st half Oct.
Patna	15.5	15.6	14.12	22.9	22	19.14	25	23	19.6
Gya	14.2	13.8	12.1	22.8	22.12	18.8	21.8	19.12	15.12
Shahabad	15	14.2	13.8	20	17.4	16.8	18.4	19	15.12
Tirhoot	21.3	21.7	18.7	28.9	26.2	25.4	31.9	36	30.3
Sarun	16	15	14.8	23	20	18	22	23.3	23
Chumparun	20.1	20.3	20.10	30	29.13	26.10	26	31.9	32.5

TABLE C.

Proportion in which the three crops (Bhadoi, Khureef and Rubbee) are generally believed to grow in the several Districts of the Division.

DISTRICT.	Proportion of land under each crop, out of 16 annas of the lands of the district.			REMARKS.
	Bhadoi.	Khureef.	Rubbee.	
1	2	3	4	
	As.	As.	As.	
Patna	2	8	6	Bhadoi lands are also grown with rubbee after the bhadoi crops are reaped, so that, strictly speaking, the total rubbee lands are made up of columns 2 and 4.
Shahabad	2	6	8	
Gya	2	12	2	
Tirhoot	4	10	2	
Sarun	4	8	4	
Chumparun	6	6	2	

6. In Patna the prospect is less gloomy than in most other districts. The bhadoi, it is true, was nearly ruined by floods in August, except in one part of the district; but the consequent moisture has allowed a considerable breadth of land to be sown with rubbee, which has germinated and may live till rain comes. The flood also left a fair supply of water in the aharas

(reservoirs) with which the remnants of the dhan crop are being assiduously watered. In some places a four-anna dhan crop is estimated, in others a six-anna crop, and in Silao a full crop. Over the centre and west of the district the dhan is very unpromising.

7. By all accounts there is no lack of grain stored.

The Behar sub-divisional officers and the Dinapore magistrate both say that there is certainly not less than an ordinary supply, while importation has recently been going on very rapidly. The returns I have received show an importation into the Patna District by river of 122,114 maunds of food grains since the beginning of September, and by rail since the same period of 231,000 maunds. Now that the price is rising rapidly in Calcutta, and the market is disturbed, it is not at all probable that importation will be carried on at this rate, and it must be remembered that a very large proportion of this grain has gone on to Gya. Still it shows what the bunneahs can do in the way of importation under the pressure of high prices.

8. I may note here for future use that the railway can, I am informed, without greatly disturbing ordinary traffic, send up 200 wagons, or say 10,000 maunds a day.

9. The difficulty of collecting rents is not seriously felt yet. The (Pos) December kist is the heavy kist in all these districts, and especially for the dhan crop; but it must be remembered that in all the three southern districts the dhan crop is grown almost wholly on the bhaolee (or payment in kind) system—a system which, whatever its disadvantages, has this immense gain, that in a bad season it divides the risk between the zemindar and ryot, so that if the ryot gets no crop, he at least is free from the payment of any rent.

10. The immediate necessity of relief works is not apprehended, but the magistrate has in hand Rs. 7,000 laid by for this purpose; and in the report No. 242 of 27th February 1873, I sent up a list of works which all consist of raising existing roads, and can therefore be begun at any moment. The sum of Rs. 25,000 may be usefully expended on this list, and being well distributed they will suffice for the early period of distress.

11. The above remarks are, so far as the crops and state of the country go, applicable to Shahabad. The railway importations into this district during the last six weeks have reached a lakh of maunds, and prices are as yet not so high as to occasion alarm. Shahabad, however, has the immense advantage of the unfinished canal. Mr. Levinge determined, under the sanction of Government, and with the concurrence of the district officer, to send water down the canal; and with the assistance of Mr. Eyre, the sub-divisional officer, whose report shows the labour that had to be gone through, an area of some 50,000 acres has now been usefully irrigated. A quarter of this perhaps is land on which the dhan is actually saved, and on the rest a rubbee crop has, I trust, been secured. This, little as it is, is a great boon, and will, I have no doubt, leave a feeling of respect for a canal, which would otherwise have taken a long time to grow.

12. For relief works the canal operations afford the readiest and best means. The Lieutenant-Governor has already directed the chief engineer to go on with the Chowra and Buxar lines, which go through what is perhaps the least flourishing portion of the district, and which will afford ample work to all the labouring population of the district, and to many from a distance. There are moreover several district roads which require to be raised, and on which work may be commenced at once. There is one portion of the district, the south-west corner round about Cheynepore, in which, from the prices-current, and from what I hear of the condition of the people, I think relief work in the shape of raising the road should be commenced at once. The magistrate will be directed to do this.

13. I come now to Gya, which, both from its being less accessible and from the generally lower level of its population, is likely to feel distress earlier and more heavily than either Patna or Shahabad.

Here also over a great part of the country the bhadoi crops were destroyed by the August floods; the rice crop is a poor one—at the most a four-anna crop being expected; and there is good reason to fear that the rubbee (which, however, is a small crop in this district) will be an entire failure. The stock of grain in hand is small. Two or three large zemindars are known to hold

very large stocks, but the bunneahs have little; and not more than 20 per cent., I should say, of the cultivating and labouring classes hold stocks enough to keep them going for six months.

14. The prices in this district showed extreme sensitiveness at an earlier period than elsewhere, and though they have not continued to rise, this is explained in the magistrate's report as owing partly to the interference of the executive authorities and partly to the large importation that is daily going on from the railway stations in the Patna District. The canal officers have received instructions to endeavour to send water down the unfinished Gya Canal, and this will be done at once, but the water cannot be taken further north than Daoudnugger, and the area benefited will be far more limited than in Shahabad.

15. No rent difficulty has yet been felt, and seeing that twelve annas of the whole food crops of the district is *khureef*, which is almost wholly paid in kind, I do not anticipate that the collection of rent will add materially to the difficulties of the people.

16. The magistrate has submitted plans for relief works in each of his four sub-divisions: most of these are already aligned and can be undertaken at once, and he has been directed to have the others lined out and the land taken up at the earliest possible date. In addition to this, canal works offer more labour than the neighbourhood is ever likely to supply; so that we are able to start relief work as soon as ever an abnormal influx of labour or regular work shows the necessity for it.

17. I may mention here what I have omitted to notice in an earlier portion of this report, that from a comparison of the rainfall of this year with those of 1865 and 1868, as far as I have been able to compare them (and the returns for some districts are not complete), we are likely to feel distress in Gya and in the northern districts very much at the same period as it was felt then, while the prices of grain show a pressure even heavier now than was felt at the same period of 1865. The bhadoi crop has more completely failed in Gya this year than it did then; but, on the other hand, the rice crop of the previous season is far better on this occasion than it was in the severe distress of 1866.

18. Turning now to the districts north of the Ganges, I fear more immediate pressure, especially in parts of Tirhoot, than in the southern districts.

19. The north-east pergunnahs of Tirhoot are wholly rice-producing and rice-consuming. They have no other crop to fall back upon, and generally export rice largely. Communication is not easy, as they are 40 and 50 miles from the marts on the Ganges. The Nepal plains, which also in ordinary years export rice largely, and on which we might have depended for a supply, are as badly off as our own districts, and exportation from these has been stopped by authority. Last year's supply was only a tolerable one; and though I am informed that large stocks are held by the mahajuns and others, yet the prices at markets in the Durbhanga Sub-Division have now risen as high as 10 and 11 seers per rupee, a price which was not reached in 1866 till famine had begun. From the neighbouring sub-division of Sectamarhee exportation is still going on, though I believe only in execution of old contracts. What adds to the difficulty of this portion of the country is, that it is very largely populated by Brahmins and Bahbuns, who will not work, and whom relief works will not attract till they are at the last extremity. On the other hand, the Durbhanga Raj being in the hands of the Court of Wards places in our hands an organized administrative machinery which will be of the greatest possible assistance.

20. I have already sanctioned the Court of Wards opening relief works to the extent of a lakh of rupees, principally on tanks scattered about the eastern pergunnahs; the rest to be spent on roads, bunds, and pynes. The continuation of the Durbhanga and Purneah road is to be pushed on under the executive engineer of Durbhanga, and a northern road *via* Nathpore to the Koosee, which forms the usual line of communication between these districts and Julpigoree, is to be undertaken under the Lieutenant-Governor's orders.

I have also directed Colonel Burn to import from Calcutta rice to the extent of Rs. 60,000 at once, and to distribute it at the various tehsils, to be used *when absolutely necessary* in paying for relief works, and to prevent any

unnatural forcing up of prices. Colonel Burn has suggested that, by way of adding to the food supply of the district, he should be empowered to lend at 4 per cent. interest to some good Calcutta firm which will undertake the operation four or five lakhs of rupees to be expended in rice—half to be sold to the Raj at current rates, and half to be sold to dealers in the district. The suggestion deserves consideration, and if a trustworthy firm could be found to undertake the business on these conditions, I am inclined to recommend it.

21. Another suggestion made by the Collector is, that Government should advance sums of money to planters and others who would undertake to expend it in grain and sell retail to their own ryots. It is of course not desirable, if Government have to go into the market, to start opposition purchasers on the same account; but the question depends on the general arrangements which may be made by Government on this point; and as an organization ready to hand for storing and distributing grain over the whole district the employment of indigo planters commends itself to me very strongly indeed.

22. The question of fodder promises to be a difficult one; the supply of water is even now falling short, and the most experienced agriculturists fear that the distress among cattle will be excessive.

23. The details of Sarun and Chumparun differ little from Tirhoot, save that prices have not risen so high; in fact, in Chumparun they are still what would be considered cheap in any other district.

24. In Sarun there have been second-rate dhan crops for two years, and in one corner of the district (the extreme west) the Hutwa Raj under the Court of Wards has already started relief works. From both districts I hear that there are supplies of grain in store enough to last for several months, but importation into the north of Sarun and into Chumparun will be a matter of considerable difficulty owing to the distance over which grain must be brought either from the river or the rail. Importation from Nepal, as I have said, is stopped, and by all accounts the neighbouring districts of Ghazepore and Goruckpore will be quite unable to assist. Consequently, importation for these districts must commence early, even though I do not anticipate extreme severity before January.

25. Relief works in both districts must take the shape of raising and completing roads already laid out, and these works, lists of which are already prepared, can be undertaken at any moment. I am expecting further suggestions as to the assistance which can be given by the Hutwa Raj; but in both these districts the plan recommended of lending money to planters for importation of rice, is one, which if it does not clash with the other arrangements of Government, I should most strongly urge.

26. In Sarun the drainage of the Hurdia Chur, which was recommended in my letter No. 139, dated 27th March, to the superintending engineer, and forwarded by him to Government in the Public Works Department, will be a most useful special work in Sarun, and may be undertaken with advantage.

27. The only special measure in Chumparun that I have to note is the magistrate's suggestion that the cavalry regiment at Segowlee, which is down for relief in November, should be allowed to leave the division before the relieving regiment enters it. There need be no fear in leaving the district without a regiment, and it is an object to prevent two regiments being simultaneously quartered on an impoverished district.

28. It is perhaps needless for me, after the Lieutenant-Governor has so fully conferred on the subject with the district officers and others, to make any suggestions for meeting the distress which threatens us; but I note down the following general heads as those under which the principal measures proposed and discussed seem to fall:—

29. (1.) *Relief Works.*—These, setting aside canal works and Court of Wards' operations, will principally consist of raising roads and digging tanks. It is essential that we should be ready to commence upon them at the shortest notice, and in cases of existing and aligned roads this can be done. In others the district officers have been directed to lose no time in estimating them, laying them out, getting possession of the land, and organising a sufficient supervising staff.

(2.) The importation of rice from Calcutta by the Court of Wards to a small extent has been sanctioned. The question of its importation and storing

by the Canal Department, Public Works Department, and other District Establishments has still to be considered.

(3.) I have in the body of this report recommended the immediate advancing of money to planters and others to buy rice and to be sold direct to cultivators, either at cost price or somewhat above it, as circumstances may point out. Many planters are already doing this on their own account.

(4.) I would also recommend an arrangement similar to that adopted in 1869 for lowering the railway rates for carrying food grain within certain limits.

(5.) The question of remission of revenue will have to be considered by next January. I am quite convinced that unless we can extend the remission, or, as I would prefer to call it, postponement of demands, to the ryot as well as to the zemindar, it will be of no use at all. Former experience has shown how difficult it is to enforce this; and I may mention as an example of the way in which even rich zemindars treat a time of trouble such as this, that Dewan Ramcoomar Sing, one of the wealthiest landholders in the Arrah District, was discovered by Mr. Eyre to be extorting from his ryots four annas a beegah for the water which Government officers are now with great labour passing down the Soane Canal, and with which he had absolutely nothing to do.

I see no mean between the employment of an enormous staff to make inquiries previous to granting postponement of revenue and a general suspension, for a fixed period and within fixed limits, of the Government demand on the one hand and of the legal means for enforcing rent demands on the other. I do not think the aspect of affairs is as yet sufficiently black to warrant the latter measure, but the former one I do think is undoubtedly necessary.

(6.) Finally, we may have to organize food centres. The time has not come for this, and I have no personal experience of the lessons which the last famine taught on this subject. I shall be glad therefore to receive full instructions on the views of Government in case it may be necessary to start food centres.

It will be necessary to strengthen the executive staff of this division as largely as can be done with justice to other districts; and all privilege leave, except on urgent medical certificate, should be stopped.

30. I annex a detailed statement of the rainfall, month by month, as far as the records in my office (beginning with 1868, and even then imperfect) will permit.

31. The inquiries called for in the Government circular No. 70, dated 13th October 1873, especially in regard to food supply, are being still carried on.

No. 10.

Resolution of the Viceroy and Governor General of India, dated Calcutta, November 7, 1873.

The periodical reports of the state of the crops published in the *Calcutta Gazette* have shown that the autumn harvest of rice will fail to a large extent in many districts of the provinces of Bengal and Behar, and that in some districts of the province of Behar especially there is reason to fear that the harvest of the coming spring will partially fail also. These prospects may yet be modified for the better, or for the worse, by the condition of the weather during the next three months.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal brought these grave circumstances to the notice of the Government of India at the earliest possible moment. No time has been lost in devising, in concert with His Honor, the measures and the policy best adapted to avert the distress which threatens extensive and populous tracts of country; for it is certain that such losses must occur as will cause severe pressure on some classes of the population in many districts, during a period of several months.

3. As some little time must elapse before the extent of the evil can be fully known, the conduct to be pursued by the Government cannot at present be exactly decided. But the Governor General, fully recognising the advantage of publicity on such an occasion, will state the views and intentions of the Government of India so far as they can now be determined.

4. Various suggestions have been received to the effect that the Government should interfere with the trade in grain, either by prohibiting the exportation of this most important article, or by undertaking the general purchase and distribution of it throughout large tracts of country, or by regulating in some manner the prices of it in the markets. Without making any pledge as to what may or may not be done, in the event of extreme necessity arising which cannot now be foreseen, the Government is not prepared to adopt any such measures, and would always avoid them so far or so long as they could possibly be avoided.

5. The Governor General has full confidence that the energy and enterprise of those engaged in the internal trade of British India will prove equal to the occasion, and that supplies (excepting under the conditions to be noticed hereafter) will generally be at hand to meet any deficiencies of grain in different parts of the country.

6. It has been officially reported that on the very first appearance of the prospect of a short autumn harvest, large quantities of grain were imported into the trade centres of Behar, and much evidence has since been received to the effect that grain is being despatched by the merchants without any delay or hesitation to the principal marts in the districts likely to be affected by scarcity. The Governor General is sanguine that the same commercial activity will prevail wherever it is needed, and that it will become greater and greater according as the demand for it may be intensified.

7. It has, however, been proved, by the sad experience of famines in India, that exceptional circumstances may arise whereby numbers of persons may be exposed to danger of starvation, or to disease arising from want of food. In all such cases, when human life may be at stake, the Government and its officers will do their utmost to apply the most effectual remedy that may be practicable, and will strive, by forethought and management, to prevent the occurrence of any such misfortunes.

8. There are certain respects and particulars in which the Government, while abstaining from interference with the ordinary course of trade, can render assistance towards mitigating the effects of scarcity.

9. In the first place the opportunity will be taken to prosecute with vigour the execution of public works in those districts where large numbers of persons are, or will soon be, in need of employment or in distress.

10. Orders have been given by the Government of India to enlarge the operations on the canal from the River Soane, and to begin the Northern Bengal State Railway in anticipation of the sanction of the Secretary of State, for both which works plans and estimates are ready, which works, too, will be carried on in the midst of the districts where want of employment must be most felt, and are calculated to benefit the country generally, and especially to prevent or lessen the occurrence of scarcity in future.

11. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has been authorized to begin immediately such public works (in addition to those already in progress) as can be usefully undertaken in distressed districts, whether from funds granted by the Government of India, or from provincial funds, or from local resources.

12. The requirements for labour on all these public works will afford employment to large numbers who, by reason of the cessation or the slackness of the usual agricultural operations in a season of scarcity, may be thrown out of work.

13. Thus considerable bodies of men will be congregated on or near the works at a distance from their homes, and often in localities remote from the established markets. It will be necessary, therefore, that sufficient supplies of food be collected for their sustenance. If the accumulation of such supplies be left to the ordinary course of commerce, special pressure will be put on the grain trade in certain localities at the very time when all its resources are being taxed for the general supply of the province or district. And if the wages were to be paid in cash to so large an aggregate of labourers, an extraordinary rise of prices would be created by the action of Government, thereby aggravating the crisis in districts already placed in critical circumstances, and so far counteracting the benefit which the works were intended to secure, namely, the mitigation of the effect of the scarcity.

14. Now, in regard to those public works carried on under the orders either of the Supreme Government or of the local Government, the State will be in the position of an employer of labour on an unusually large scale, and is justified in doing that which all other employers do, namely, selecting the mode of remunerating its work-people most acceptable to them and most suitable to the surrounding circumstances. Such mode of remuneration will generally be payment in kind, that is, in food grain. For this particular purpose, then, sufficient supplies of grain will be purchased and laid in both by the Government of India and by the local Government for the public works under their charge respectively. These supplies will be obtained in such a manner as to interfere as little as possible with the trade in grain and with the supplies of food ordinarily available for consumption in the neighbourhood of the works, or within the area of the distressed districts. The Governor General relies on the carefulness of the local Government in making provision with this view. For the works to be carried on from imperial funds, the Supreme Government has resolved, in regard to its liability for the maintenance of the labourers, to arrange for obtaining supplies from provinces beyond the limits of the territories affected by the failure of the crops in Bengal and Behar. The Government of Madras and the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah have accordingly been requested to make purchases gradually, through the agency of the trade, for this purpose.

15. The future arrangements for the supply of food grain for the labourers on the public works will be strictly limited according to the requirement and to the purpose in view.

16. Besides the works just described, which are to be undertaken by the Government, there are many public improvements which can be undertaken either by corporations or other bodies, such as municipalities and trusts. For loans of money from the Government treasury to such corporations ample provision is made by Act XXIV of 1871 (the Local Public Works Loan Act). In some cases, under the rules recently promulgated in accordance with the Act, the Lieutenant-Governor is competent to make the loans on his own authority from funds which have been allotted for that purpose by the Government of India. In those cases where, under the rules, the sanction of the Government of India is necessary, any judiciously matured project, any well considered application, which may be recommended by the local Government will meet with the immediate approval of the Government of India. If the rules in respect to preliminary enquiry and the like shall be deemed by the Lieutenant-Governor to cause delay which may be prejudicial at a critical time, His Honor is authorized to relax them temporarily.

17. For agricultural improvements the Land Improvement Act (XXVI of 1871) provides for advances of money being made by Government to any landlord or tenant desiring to make an improvement in any land of which he is in possession or occupation. The improvements specified in the Act, that is, wells, tanks, and other works for the storage and distribution of water, works for draining, reclaiming, clearing, and enclosing lands, are well suited for employing the labour which may be unemployed in the villages by reason of the stoppage of ordinary work in the fields. The Governor General earnestly hopes that many landlords will take advantage of the provisions of the Act. The rules under this Act recently promulgated by the local Government with the sanction of the Government of India contain many precautionary provisions which are necessary in ordinary times, but which at a time of urgency might cause undesirable delay. The Lieutenant-Governor is authorized to make such relaxation of the rules as His Honor may deem advisable under the circumstances of the districts affected by the drought.

18. In reference to the local works, the Governor General desires that the levy of the road cess may be postponed in any district or portion of a district where the Lieutenant-Governor may consider that the cess-payers are in distress. It is to be remembered that in those districts which are not so severely affected, the proceeds of the road cess will afford the means of usefully employing any surplus labour that may be thrown upon the market.

19. In the next place the Government may contribute something towards facilitating the transport of grain in the interior of the country. The Agents, therefore, of the Guaranteed Railway Companies whose lines traverse Bengal and Behar have been authorized to reduce by one-half the rates charged for

the carriage of grain despatched to the districts affected by scarcity, the Government undertaking to reimburse the companies for the difference thus caused in the traffic receipts. The precedent is followed which was established by the adoption of a similar course in 1869.

20. The Governor General is sure that the private steam-flotillas on the principal rivers, and the native craft which is so abundant throughout the river system of Bengal, will bear a most useful part in the conveyance of grain to the places where it is urgently needed.

21. In those places where the means of water-carriage do not exist, the grain-traders must mainly depend on the country carriage. There may, indeed, be ground for apprehension that, as the dry season advances, mortality beyond the average must arise among the draught cattle. This subject will doubtless receive the anxious consideration of the local Government and of its officers. Every aid that can be afforded by the commissariat or other public departments will be rendered; and enquiries are being made as to the practicability of constructing tramways in the distressed districts.

22. Should the distress become severe, and should the worst anticipations be realized, the Government will assist in the formation of relief committees, and in the organization of a system of relief for those who, despite all the operations of trade, may be threatened with death or disease from want of food. The Governor General is sure that the private benevolence which has always been conspicuous in India will be evoked on this occasion, according as the need for its exercise shall become apparent. A central relief committee will, as soon as the local Government shall consider it to be necessary, be formed at Calcutta as the capital of the provinces under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. To this committee will be entrusted the general administration of the funds for relief which may be received from private sources and from the Government, and the distribution of those funds among the relief committees which the Lieutenant-Governor will establish in the districts affected by scarcity. The district relief committees will distribute assistance to the distressed, either in cash or in grain or in prepared food, according to the instructions which they may receive from the local Government. Any purchases of grain which may be necessary will be made either by the central committee or by the district committees. If the committees lay in supplies of grain, they will be instructed to do so in the manner best calculated to avoid undue interference with the ordinary course of trade, or with the stores available for consumption in the neighbourhood.

23. The Governor General relies upon the Lieutenant-Governor to take steps for organizing these district and local committees in seasonable time and in sufficient number, so that the measures for relief shall be far-reaching and comprehensive in proportion as the distress may become wide-spread. Whatever application His Honor may make for assistance from the ranks of the public service, with a view to effectively constituting these committees, will receive immediate attention from the Government of India.

24. Inasmuch as the prevalence of want may give rise to many forms of epidemic disease, the augmenting and the reinforcing of the medical staff of all grades in the afflicted districts will be of primary importance. Any assistance which the Lieutenant-Governor may require in this respect from the Government of India will be duly accorded.

25. The Governor General is sure that non-official gentlemen, both European and Native, resident in the districts affected by scarcity, will come forward to serve on the relief committees, and will render that assistance which has proved so valuable on former occasions of a like nature.

26. Furthermore, non-official gentlemen, European and Native zemindars, landlords, planters, and others may at once render much service by undertaking the provision and distribution of grain in localities where, from the difficulty of transport, the absence of traders, or other local circumstances, food cannot, during the period of scarcity, be obtained by the people. In such cases, the Government will be prepared to grant advances of money to non-official gentlemen who may undertake to import grain from a distance, and to distribute it at prices to be regulated according to the circumstances of the case. The condition that such grain be imported from distant places, so that the ordinary operations of the local trade may not be interfered with, must be observed.

Accounts of the advances will be submitted to and passed by the local Government, and any loss or charge which may arise upon the operations will, of course, be borne by the State.

27. The Governor General is confident also that many landholders, recognising the duty towards their tenants, their dependants, and their destitute neighbours, which is morally imposed upon them by the possession of property, will, of their own accord and from their own resources, dispense relief in the manner which they may deem to be most effectual.

28. The Governor General feels assured that the Lieutenant-Governor is well aware of the necessity for preparing the local arrangements for relief beforehand, that is, before the emergency shall have actually befallen the districts in question, before the intensity of the trouble shall have begun to be felt, so that the distress may not attain such proportions that the local authorities cannot adequately deal with it, or make such progress that they cannot overtake it.

29. Hereafter, as the season shall draw near for the sowings of the next harvest, the Government will be prepared to authorize advances of money to landlords or tenants for the purchase of seed grain wherever the Lieutenant-Governor may consider such a measure to be desirable.

30. It is to be hoped that in the populous tracts visited or threatened by distress unemployed labourers may emigrate to places where food is in comparative plenty, where a special demand exist for their labour, where culturable waste abounds, such as the tea-districts, the Doars, the provinces of Assam and of British Burmah. If it be found possible for the Government to facilitate such emigration, directly or indirectly, the Governor General will be glad to receive any suggestions which the Lieutenant-Governor may be able to make.

31. Having given such instructions as seem to be called for at the present time, the Governor General requests that the Government of Bengal will transmit periodically at short intervals to the Government of India full reports on the state and prospects of the corps, the stock of food, so far as it can be ascertained, the public works in progress, the relief operations, if any, and all other circumstances relating to the scarcity. Together with these reports there should be forwarded the opinions of the district officers, formed on the most recent data obtainable. The Governor General is satisfied that these opinions will be given fully, unreservedly, and promptly, even though time may not have admitted of their being precisely elaborated, and though they may be subject to subsequent correction and verification. Full information on these matters will be published from time to time.

32. Lastly, the Governor General places full reliance upon the foresight and the energy of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to provide for and to cope with the difficulties which may spring from the drought and scarcity, and upon the zeal and experience with which His Honor's efforts will be seconded by the officers of all grades and branches of the public service. He feels the responsibility which devolves on the Government of India under the present circumstances, and he trusts that with God's blessing the measures to be adopted will prove successful in averting, so far as may be humanly possible, the calamitous effects of the drought.

By order of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General.

No. 11.

Despatch from the Viceroy, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. B., dated Calcutta, November 12, 1873. (Issued November 14, 1873.)

In continuation of my despatch A. of the 7th instant*, I have the honor to report the further measures that have been taken for the purpose of meeting the anticipated scarcity in Bengal and Behar.

2. The reports of the state of the crops in the province of Bengal for the past week show that no substantial alteration has taken place in the prospects of which a summary was given in my last despatch.

Enclosure A (not printed).

* See page 7.

3. The enclosed report of the state of the crops in the south-eastern portion of the North-Western Provinces shows that no scarcity is apprehended there, excepting in the district of Goruckpore and the southern portion of Mirzapore.

4. Sir William Muir has been authorized to undertake at once such relief works as he may consider necessary in those districts, and he has informed me that projects are being prepared for South Mirzapore, and that nothing is as yet required elsewhere*.

5. In addition to the Soane Canal and the Northern Bengal Railway, I have, on the recommendation of Sir George Campbell, authorized the prosecution of certain embankments on the River Gunduck, which will provide employment in that portion of Behar which has suffered most severely from the failure of the rice crop. The plans for these works are complete, and have been approved by the responsible officers of Government in the Public Works Department. Their estimated cost is £20,000, which will in the first instance be borne as an imperial charge, but may ultimately be covered in part by contribution from the land-owners whose property is benefited, under the provisions of the Bengal Embankment Bill, which is now before the Legislative Council of Bengal. The correspondence upon this subject is enclosed for Your Grace's information.

Enclosure C (see pp. 25—28).

6. I am of opinion that no further measures are required for the provision of employment by means of imperial or local public works, which, according to the experience of former times, is the most effectual precaution that can be taken to prevent a period of scarcity from becoming a famine.

7. I enclose copies of a correspondence which has passed with the Government of Bengal with regard to the proposal of the Lieutenant-Governor that the exports of food grains from Indian ports should be prohibited.

Enclosure D (see pp. 28—31).

8. Sir George Campbell having expressed to me verbally his desire that more specific information of the views of the Government of India should be given to him than was contained in the Resolution of the 7th instant, I arranged for a conference with His Honor, who was accompanied by some of his principal officers, among whom were Mr. Molony, the Commissioner of Rajshahye, one of the divisions which has most suffered, and Major Lindsay, who is in charge of the Northern Bengal Railway works. I have the honor to

Enclosure E (see p. 31).

enclose a *précis* of the proceedings, and I trust that advantage will be derived from a free discussion of the present position of affairs and of the measures which are taken or contemplated.

9. Every endeavour will be made to supply the officers whom Sir George Campbell considers to be required in order to strengthen the different departments of his administration.

10. The Lieutenant-Governor has, since the conference took place, placed his views before me in a letter, of which and of my reply copies are forwarded herewith. Your Grace will observe that in compliance with the wish expressed by His Honor, I have entered somewhat fully into the details of the immediate measures which, in my opinion, should be taken, and given such directions as to financial arrangements as appear to be necessary for the present.

Enclosure F (see pp. 36—41).

11. In these, as in all other measures that have been taken and instructions given, I have had the advantage of the advice and assistance of Sir Richard Temple, as well as his entire concurrence.

12. In accordance with the announcement made in the Resolution of the 7th instant, steps have been taken to obtain supplies of rice for the sustenance of the labourers to be employed upon public works, and arrangements will be made for establishing stores at the most convenient places in the neighbourhood of the works.

13. I am happy to inform Your Grace that, so far as prices can be considered to afford an indication of the deficiency of supplies, the condition of

* Telegram from the Viceroy, to the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, November 9, 1873.

Act as you think best as to preparing relief works.

Telegram from the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, to the Viceroy, November 11, 1873.

Yesterday's message received; projects preparing for South Mirzapore. Nothing yet required elsewhere.

affairs is not worse than it was in the year 1865, and that all the information which I have received leads me to believe that great activity prevails in the trade of grain, so that it may reasonably be expected that prices will be equalized on the great lines of communication over a large area of country.

14. The last return of the traffic of the East Indian Railway is enclosed for Your Grace's information.

Enclosure G (not printed).

15. I have thought it desirable, in anticipation of the pressure upon the finances which will probably be occasioned by the scarcity, to instruct the local Governments and all departments of the State to exercise economy in regard to their expenditure during the remainder of the current year, and in the preparation of their estimates for the coming year*. I need hardly add that any assistance which Your Grace can afford in regard to the Home expenditure will be of material aid to the Government of India at the present time.

16. After communicating with His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and Sir William Muir, I have not made any alteration in the arrangements for the Camp of Exercise at Roorkee; all the preparations had been made, some of the troops had already marched, and Sir William Muir informed me that no inconvenience would result from the assembly of troops in that neighbourhood.

17. I propose to leave Calcutta this evening for the purpose of holding a Legislative Council at Agra and afterwards visiting Lucknow, returning to Calcutta on the 11th of December. Although it is with some regret that I leave Calcutta under present circumstances, there are measures of considerable importance to be discussed at Agra, as to which the advice and assistance of Sir William Muir is required, and I have business to transact with Sir Philip Wodehouse (who has arranged to meet me at Agra) and with Sir George Couper at Lucknow, so that upon the whole it has appeared to me to be most to the advantage of the public service that I should not abandon my original arrangements.

No. 12.

Letter from Colonel F. H. Rundall, R. E., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, to the Joint-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, Irrigation Branch, No. 803 I, dated October 31, 1873.

With reference to the Resolution of this Government, No. 431BC, dated 28th instant (see p. 4), and to the apprehensions of severe scarcity in the Patna Division, I am directed to enquire whether the Government of Bengal has had under its re-consideration the project for the irrigation of the districts bordering on the River Gunduck.

2. In the letter from this Government, No. 22J, dated 19th January 1870, it was observed that the Government of India "is on the whole disposed to consider that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the proposed works are of a nature to hold out such promise of eventual success as will justify their sanction, subject to the further favorable expression of local intelligent opinion;" but as no reply has been received from the Government of Bengal, and as the present appears to be the fourth year, since 1866, in which scarcity has occurred, it seems to His Excellency in Council that the irrigation project is deserving of further attention, and I am therefore to invite an expression of the Lieutenant-Governor's view on the subject.

* Resolution of Government of India, Financial Department, No. 2997, dated Fort William, November 14, 1873.

In consequence of the failure of the autumn rice crop throughout a large part of the territories administered by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, there is reason to fear that there may be a large expenditure of money for the relief of distress and a serious loss of revenue.

2. The Viceroy and Governor General accordingly deems it necessary to invite the attention of local Governments and chiefs of departments to the imperative necessity that is laid upon the Government and its officers for the immediate curtailment of all expenditure that can be reduced, postponed, or dispensed with. The scarcity in Bengal may cause a considerable strain on the general resources of the State, and expenditure that would be proper under ordinary circumstances would be out of place now.

3. His Excellency desires that each officer will take immediate steps to stop any expenditure in the present year that can be prevented, and that all estimates of charge for the coming year 1874-75 may be reconsidered and reduced to the utmost possible extent.

4. No increase of expense should for the present be suggested that can by any means be avoided.

5. The Viceroy and Governor General is confident that officers of the Government will recognise the necessity for these instructions, and he looks for their loyal co-operation in giving effect to them.

3. In a letter lately received from the Government of Bengal, it was stated that there was no present intention of prosecuting any further works on the Gunduck embankments; should, however, it be necessary to start relief works in the districts of Tirhoot and Sarun, embankments would (as already remarked in the Resolution quoted) seem to present the simplest and most easily aligned works on which to employ the labouring population. At the same time the necessity of providing a remedy against such frequently recurring scarcity appears to merit careful consideration.

No. 13.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, No. 3329, dated November 8, 1873.

At para. 5 of the Government of India Resolution (Public Works Department, dated 28th October 1873, (see p. 4), it is remarked that in the north of Behar there is no large project under execution, and it is suggested that the deferred scheme for the revision of the Gunduck embankment might be found a suitable source of employment for the approaching time of scarcity.

2. As it happens, these Gunduck embankments are situate precisely in that part of the country where the people are poor and where distress was keenest in 1865-66, and will, but too probably, be very keen again, I am, therefore, to describe briefly how the case stands, and to submit a recommendation that the Lieutenant-Governor may be permitted at once to carry on these works, and subject to the doubts and under the circumstances which at present surround the question.

3. In 1870-71 a large project for taking out an irrigation and navigation canal from the Upper Gunduck was very carefully elaborated by Mr. Stoney, C. E.; it was to cost 107 lakhs, to command 980,000 acres, and to possess an inexhaustible supply of water. The superintending engineer, Mr. Levinge, wrote strongly in its favour, and the Collector, Mr. Metcalfe, who knew the district well, expressed the opinion that the people would most gladly take any water that could be given them. This Gunduck irrigation scheme, however, did not go any further, and it could not now be taken up without much consideration and perhaps some re-modelment.

4. The embankment scheme was a different matter, and it provided * for extending, raising, and improving the Gunduck embankments, as well as for training the river to some extent. It was anticipated that the outlay would be increased, thus—

	Rs.
On the Sarun Embankments	1,51,377
„ Tirhoot „	45,900
„ Chumparun „	51,738
On training walls	72,189

The work had been previously prosecuted as a relief work, and Rs. 1,24,144 had been spent thereon up to November 1869, when the work stopped.

5. The Government, when acknowledging the submission of the scheme, admitted † that the works were very necessary, and had been devised with great care and judgment; but observed that the zemindars must pay for it, and declined to sanction any further outlay on the Gunduck embankments until it was “clearly explained how the amount already expended was to be recovered.”

6. On this reference was made through the Board to the local officers and to the zemindars' engagements. It was found that the zemindars of Tirhoot and Sarun had bound themselves to pay for the cost of repairing and maintaining the existing (in 1830 and 1840) embankments. But it was doubtful how far this engagement would extend to new embankments, or to improvements, such as training walls or retired alignment of old embankments; it was perfectly clear, moreover, that the zemindars of the Chumparun District had entered into no such engagements, and that there had been until lately no embankments in that district. As the Embankment Bill of 1870 had then been introduced into the Bengal Council under the late Lieutenant-Governor's orders,

* See letter to the Government of India, Public Works Department, No. 139, dated 24th March 1870 (not printed).
† Public Works Department No. 1871, dated 13th May 1870 (not printed).

it was decided (it is not absolutely clear when, or by whose orders) that no further steps should be taken to prosecute the Gunduck embankment scheme until such time as the new Embankment Bill should become law, and should legally lay upon the zemindars the burden of paying for these embankments, which the Government of India had decided they ought to, and must, bear. Meanwhile, after much correspondence, it has only lately been settled that the zemindars of Tirhoot and Sarun should pay, by easy instalments, nearly the whole of the cost (Rs. 1,24,144) of the work which had been done previous to November 1869. About Rs. 2,000, which had been spent in Chumparun, was decided to be payable by Government, as the obligation for embankments lay upon the zemindars of Chumparun.

7. This is how the case stands at the present moment: the Embankment Bill has not yet become law; but if it should be passed, as it shortly may be, the Gunduck embankments will come within its provision, subject to the provisos (sections 44 and 45) that the cost of the work on the right bank of the Gunduck is to be allotted according to the custom of the district, and not according to the general provision of Part VI, chapter 2. As the Bill at present stands, it would apply to *future* works only; and we could not be certain that the Legislature would give it retrospective effect to the works now to be undertaken.

8. Still the Lieutenant-Governor accepts the opinions which has been previously expressed by reliable authorities that the work is a good, useful, and even a necessary work. In its character it is specially fitted for a relief work, as it consists mainly of earthen banks. The Lieutenant-Governor would engraft on the original embankment project a very practical and useful addition suggested by Colonel Haig, whereby “a channel should run alongside the embankment, to be formed out of the excavation required by the embankments, to have its floor reduced to six inches per mile by masonry falls, to have its floor four feet below summer level, and to be provided with a head sluice.” Colonel Haig estimated that this channel, so conducted, would probably water 90,000 acres of land. Seeing how much water there is in the Upper Gunduck (a snow-fed stream) and what Mr. Metcalfe says about the need for irrigation, it would be a pity not to make as much as possible of the Gunduck embankment project. The extra cost involved by the proposed channel would be an imperial (Irrigation) charge, and would not be payable by the zemindars.

9. The object of the present letter, then, is to solicit permission for the Lieutenant-Governor to take up again, and at once, the unfinished Gunduck embankment's scheme as a work which will do great permanent good to the country, and will also afford plenty of labour of the very best kind to that part of the country where distress will, it is feared, be most keen. Sir George Campbell recommends that the permission be accorded on the understanding that the Legislature may or may not accord its sanction to a whole or a part of the cost of the embankments being treated as defrayable by the zemindars under the terms of the future embankment law. Any portion of the outlay which cannot be so defrayed, or which properly pertains to the irrigation channel which is to be led out behind the embankment, would of course remain to be defrayed from the imperial treasury; and the Government of India would decide whether it should be taken against “Loans” or as ordinary expenditure, or how.

10. It may be well to mention that though the original estimate was for Rs. 3,24,000 in all, of which Rs. 1,24,000 only had been spent in 1868-69, yet still the Lieutenant-Governor could not absolutely undertake that the whole work, as originally projected, should certainly be finished for the remaining two lakhs. Four or five years have passed since the work was first begun, the river may have changed—some of the old work may have to be re-done. But at any rate the engineers would keep as nearly as they could to the old plans and estimates which the Government of India then (in 1870) found to be worthy of approval. The subsidiary irrigation channel would not, it is believed, very greatly add to the original cost of the project, while it would very materially increase its usefulness.

11. The question being really financial, and an immediate decision necessary, this letter is submitted to the Secretary to Government in the Financial Department with the Governor General.

P. S.—While this letter was under despatch, the Irrigation Department of this Government has laid before the Lieutenant-Governor a fresh letter* from the Department Public Works of the Government of India, of which copy is annexed.

Colonel Gulliver's conclusion is—"I would propose that a superintending engineer be appointed with the necessary staff to carry out the Gunduck embankments and the Champurun embankment with the canal in rear." This is precisely what the Lieutenant-Governor has already recommended in this letter. Under the circumstances then, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks that the Governor General will not hesitate to accord in the Financial Department that financial sanction which is required for works which have been already approved by the Public Works Department of the Government of India.

No. 14.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 2981, dated 14th November 1873.

In reply to your letter No. 3329, dated 8th November 1873, (see above, No. 13 of this series), I am directed to say that the Governor General authorizes the immediate commencement of the Gunduck embankments on the approved plans. The embankments may be constructed in such manner as will admit of the eventual adoption of Colonel Haig's suggested addition of an irrigation channel in rear of the embankments; but the plan and estimate of the irrigation channel should be sent, in such form as may be now ready, for consideration in the Public Works Department.

2. The work will be imperial, and will be charged as ordinary expenditure.

3. His Excellency does not think that it will be advisable to introduce any particular provisions in the Embankment Bill to provide for expenditure incurred before the bill passes being charged to the landholders who benefit thereby; but provision should be made for future expenditure being so charged.

4. His Excellency awaits a further report, in due course, on the proposed irrigation canal from the Gunduck.

No. 15.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with his Excellency the Viceroy, No. 3300, dated 7th November 1873.

In the last paragraph of my letter No. 50T, dated the 22nd October 1873, (see p. 3), intimating to the Government of India that failure of the food crops was apprehended over the whole of Behar and over a large part of Bengal, was expressed the Lieutenant-Governor's recommendation that the exportation of food grains from British Indian ports might be prohibited, until the Government saw whether the surplus food of our territories would probably suffice to feed the people of Bengal and Behar.

2. Since that letter was written, the prospect of scarcity, distress, and perhaps even of famine has become much more certain. The Lieutenant-Governor has been allowed the privilege of discussing these important matters with His Excellency the Viceroy; and he has submitted orally his opinion that the Government must be prepared to prohibit exportation of food from British India to other countries, unless our food stocks turn out to be larger than is generally supposed. Sir George Campbell has gathered that His Excellency the Viceroy would not be prepared to prohibit exports of food generally from British Indian ports; indeed, he believes His Lordship is opposed to any such prohibition. But he desires to submit that even if it be decided not to interfere with the great export of 700,000 tons of rice which goes yearly from British Burmah, still the Government of India might very reasonably and fairly consider the expediency of interposing (by legislation if necessary) to prevent exportation of food from Bengal.

* No. 503 I, dated the 31st October 1873. (See page 25.)

3. The port of Calcutta has in ordinary years sent away about 350,000 to 400,000 tons of food grains per annum; in the current year it may be expected that eventually common rice in Calcutta will be too dear for export, though at this moment export is going on, as much as 94,000 maunds having been exported since the first of the present month. But from the ports of Chittagong and Morellgunge, whence were exported from 50,000 to 70,000 tons of rice during the last year, and from whence common rice only is exported, large consignments of rice will continue to be exported to the Mauritius, Galle and other rice-consuming British, French and Dutch colonies. The rise of a rupee or so per maund in price will not prevent these colonies from getting their supplies of Bengal rice just as heretofore; and the rice exported from Chittagong comes into the market far earlier than Burmah rice; in fact, new rice is already coming into Chittagong. The East Bengal rice moreover being "Balam" rice is of a kind which is much more acceptable to the people of the distressed districts than Burmah rice can be. If this rice cannot be exported, it will all find its way to the distressed districts. The West Indian and other colonies will still have many sources to indent upon; and so their populations (Indian and other) cannot suffer so long, at any rate, as Burmah exports continue.

The Lieutenant-Governor would very earnestly solicit that exports of common rice from Bengal, or at any rate from Chittagong and Morellgunge to places outside the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal, be prohibited from the 1st December up to such time as His Excellency the Viceroy may see fit.

No. 16.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, No. B, dated November 8, 1873.

In continuation of my letter of yesterday's date, (see above, No. 15 of this series), inviting the consideration of the Government of India to the need for prohibiting export of grain, at any rate from Chittagong and Morellgunge, I am directed to submit that Bengal rice is still*, during the present month, going to Madras ports and to Ceylon. The Lieutenant-Governor fears that the order of the Government of India directing the purchase of rice in Madras will raise the price of rice there and lead to fresh exports, if the export of Bengal rice be not prohibited.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor would very earnestly solicit the attention of the Government of India to the need for acting in this matter.

No. 17.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 2980, dated November 12, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letters Nos. 3300 and B, dated respectively the 7th and 8th November 1873, regarding (see above, Nos. 15 and 16 of this series) the proposals made by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor for prohibiting the exportation of food grains from British Indian ports, in consequence of the threatened famine in Bengal.

2. In the letter of the 7th November, reference is made to a letter from the Government of Bengal, No. 50T, dated 22nd October 1873 (see p. 2). In reply to that part of the letter of the 22nd October in which His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor recommended that the export of rice from the Indian dominions to foreign countries should be prohibited, and also to the letters now under acknowledgment, in which His Honor advocates the prohibition of the export of food grains from British Indian ports, and suggests that if the Viceroy should be unwilling to comply with that proposal, the export of food grains from Bengal should at least be prohibited, I am instructed to say that the Lieutenant-Governor will have observed, from the 4th paragraph of the Resolution of the Government of India of the 7th November (see p. 20), that the Governor

* N. B.—Telegraphic advice received to-day from Chittagong shows this.

General is unable to concur with His Honor upon this subject. The following extracts from a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State on the same day (see p. 9) will explain the grounds of His Excellency's decision :—

14. "The prohibition of all export of grain from British Indian ports is strongly advocated by the native press, and is still recommended by Sir George Campbell.

"It is a course which does not commend itself to my judgment. It is probable, from the experience of former years and the information which is available as to the supplies of food grain in India, that the deficiency in Bengal and Behar can be met without recourse to importations from abroad; in the term 'abroad' I include British Burmah, for Burmese rice is not imported into Bengal in ordinary years.

"The rise of prices which has occurred, and which, if the prospects should become worse, must increase, will, in my opinion, of itself prevent any considerable export of the common classes of grain from Indian ports proper, and if it reaches 4 rupees a maund, it would according to the best information I can obtain, probably bring a considerable amount of Burmese rice into the Calcutta market.

"Your Grace will observe from the enclosed return that the principal export of rice from British Indian ports begins in February, before which time there will be full information as to the probable wants of Bengal, which information must necessarily operate upon prices.

15. "To prohibit exports would have the effect of artificially reducing prices at the commencement of a season of scarcity, and moreover it would shake the confidence of the mercantile classes in the determination of Government to maintain the utmost freedom of trade as the best preservative against famine, and so by checking commercial operations cut off sources of supply from without which would naturally come to our aid in time of need.

16. "The general principles which should guide the Government in times of scarcity were enunciated by the Government of India in 1868 after the experience of the famine in Orissa, which extended to the same districts which have suffered on the present occasion, and I have only to add that I concur generally in the opinions then expressed."

3. The conclusion at which the Governor General arrived was strengthened by a careful consideration of the report and recommendations of Colonel Baird Smith upon the famine in the North-Western Provinces of 1860 and 1861*, and of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Orissa famine of 1865 and 1866 (Part III, paragraph 59)†; and also of the proceedings of the Government of India and of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces during the period of scarcity in 1868 and 1869 ‡.

4. I am to add that the Governor General considers that the minor proposal to prohibit the export of food grains from Bengal is open to the same

* Extract from the Report on the Famine of 1860-61, by COLONEL R. BAIRD SMITH, (Para. 20).

I would first dispose of the question of the sufficiency of the available supplies of grain for the support of the people within the famine tract. I think it is wholly unnecessary to burden this subject with elaborate calculations. Certain broad general considerations will probably determine it more satisfactorily than in any other way. There can be no doubt as to the abundant supplies in the districts surrounding the famine tract. The free flow from them into the markets there, even before the spring harvest become available, showed that grain was then plentiful. The spring harvest has everywhere, beyond the influence of the drought, been rather above than below the average yield. Within the tract itself between two-fifths and three-fifths at least of the cultivated area will be found to yield crops of variable quality, but generally good, excepting under such an aggravation of the drought as we need not anticipate at present. And so far as mere supply of food is concerned, such a proportion would be in itself almost a guarantee against any absolute deficiency. Reinforced by the surplus produce which would constantly begin to pour in from the outside on any great rise of prices, as past experience has amply proved, the combined quantities would, I feel confident, keep the markets at least sufficiently supplied to make a real dearth of food altogether improbable. On this point, I must say that as yet I do not see the faintest grounds for anxiety. And even if our hopes of a favorable rainy season should be disappointed, the practical question will then be, not so much how to get food, as how to get the starving people to the food, or the food to them in the cheapest and most expeditious way. If the spirit of private speculation should fail in bringing sufficient supplies to market, other means will doubtless be used, but that food itself will fail us even under the worst contingency, I consider so unlikely that I do not think it needful to dwell longer upon it. It may, however, be observed that having had occasion to examine many references to the last great famine, I do not find that any dread of deficiency in the quantity of food was ever expressed then even under the heaviest pressure. Twenty-five years ago the country generally was much more likely to suffer from such a deficiency than now, and in this respect, I think, we may face the future without fear.

† Extract from the report of the Orissa Commissioners (Sir George Campbell, Colonel Morton and Mr. Dampier), 1866, Para. 59, Vol I.

Doubtful as it may be whether any measures which can be taken would wholly supply such a deficiency of rice as occurred in 1770, we have no intention of proposing the prohibition of exports under any circumstances. If it be granted that the cotton crisis and the extraordinary demand of the years 1863-64-65 did diminish our stocks to a dangerous extent; that in a country where most of the grain, being consumed by the producer, is never brought to market, any extraordinary demand affects the market in an excessive degree; that the normal food demands on India of the intertropical and semitropical countries to the south is increasing and will increase, and that for the present the result may be, on the whole, injurious to the poorer laborers in this country, still we feel that in the end an increased demand will probably create an increased supply; that the proportion in which food and other staples are respectively grown will adjust themselves according to natural laws; that a surplus produce of food grown for exportation will in the end act, in some degree, as a reserve to fall back upon in time of scarcity; and that it may be hoped that eventually labor also will have its adequate share of the profit.

Even in time of extreme scarcity, we do not think that it would be proper, by any absolute prohibition, to run the risk of starving British colonies and other friendly countries whom we have accepted as our habitual customers in ordinary times. Exports must, generally, be left to contract themselves so far as contraction is possible, when the price rises so high as to reduce exportation.

‡ See Extract from Resolution of Government of India, dated September 24, 1868, in footnote, p. 9.

objections in principle which exist to the adoption of the larger measure, while it does not appear to offer any substantial advantage in exchange.

5. The natural effect of a rise in the price of rice must be to check and ultimately to stop altogether the export of ordinary qualities of rice from Bengal, without any interference by the Government.

6. The customs returns show that already the exports of rice from Calcutta have diminished: the amount exported in October last is not one-half of the exports of the corresponding month of last year; and the Governor General has no reason to believe that any peculiar circumstances exist to prevent the operation in Bengal of the laws which ordinarily regulate the distribution of produce.

7. The Governor General is satisfied that no instructions that have been given to the Government of Madras can have the effect which His Honor appears to apprehend.

No. 18.

Memorandum of the Proceedings at a meeting held at Government House, Calcutta, on November 10th, 1873, to consider some questions connected with the measures proposed in view of the anticipated scarcity in Bengal.

PRESENT :

His Excellency the Viceroy.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

The Hon'ble Sir R. Temple.

Mr. V. H. Schaleh, Member of the Board of Revenue.

Mr. R. B. Chapman, Secretary to the Government of India in the Financial Department.

Mr. C. Bernard, Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Presidency Division.

Mr. H. L. Dampier, Officiating Member of the Board of Revenue.

Mr. J. A. Crawford, Collector of Customs.

Colonel J. E. T. Nicolls, R. E., Chief Engineer.

Colonel H. W. Gulliver, R. E., Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department.

Mr. T. E. Ravenshaw, Commissioner of Orissa.

Mr. E. W. Molony, Commissioner, Rajshahye Division.

Major J. Lindsay, R. E., Superintending Engineer, Northern Bengal State Railway.

Captain E. Baring, R. A., Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY requested the Lieutenant-Governor to state anything he might wish to say.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL, referring to the Resolution of the Government of India of the 7th instant, (see p. 19), said that, without doubt, the spirit of that Resolution was to support the Government of Bengal cordially. At the same time he could not but feel that a very grave responsibility devolved upon the latter Government. Alluding especially to the 23rd and 28th paras. of that Resolution, His Honor remarked that the Government of Bengal were apparently expected to anticipate any distress which might occur, and to take such measures beforehand as would obviate its occurrence or alleviate it, if it was inevitable. This threw a heavy responsibility on the local Government, and he should be glad if the orders of the Government of India could be expanded; he would be glad of more explicit instructions on certain points, especially whether any and what provision was now to be made for eventual charitable relief. At present great uncertainty existed: it was difficult to state where or in what degree distress would occur, and it was, therefore, difficult to take such steps now as would prevent the occurrence of distress. Was the Government of Bengal to act immediately in regard to relief centres or to defer action? Was Government to buy and store grain for charitable relief at once? This latter point was one of extreme importance, and it was very necessary to come to some early decision on this branch of the subject. An early decision was especially necessary as regards transport; the East Indian Railway were not nearly working up to their full power at present. There was perhaps no immediate difficulty in

obtaining transport, but if any sudden calamity came upon them, the demands for transport would be very heavy, and it would certainly happen that the means of transport would be choked. Lastly, as regards money, His Honor wished to know something more definite as to the funds which would be placed at his disposal. He would like to spend a great deal without further delay, if he looked at the matter solely from a Bengal point of view, but it was of course for the Government of India to decide what funds would be allotted to him.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that perhaps the best course to adopt would be to go through all the important points raised in the Resolution of the Government of India *seriatim*.

Public Works.

First, as regards the public works which were about to be undertaken, every one recognised the importance of putting these works in hand without delay, and HIS EXCELLENCY would like to be informed what had actually been done with respect to imperial works, *viz.*, the Soane Canal and Northern Bengal Railway.

MR. BERNARD said that orders had been given to commence two new branches of the Soane Canal at once. Mr. Levinge had a staff of officers with him and had full authority to act; he would commence working so soon as labour came in. Rice was being sent for the immediate supply of labourers by the Government of Bengal. As regards the Northern Bengal Railway, no commencement had as yet been made, but Major Lindsay was here; the arrangements were being actively made and he hoped that in ten days the engineers would be at work.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then asked whether those works would be treated as relief works or as ordinary contract works, and in what manner the labourers would be employed and paid.

HIS HONOR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR observed that he thought it was impossible to make any hard-and-fast distinction between the labourers employed on relief works, properly so called, and those employed as ordinary contract labourers; the two cases ran so much into one another that the matter could only be decided from time to time according to circumstances.

MR. MOLONY said that in his opinion men should, for the present, be employed as ordinary labourers on a daily wage. Railway works should be regarded as ordinary contract works. Light work on roads should be viewed as relief work. It was desirable, as long as possible, to pay in money and to let the labourers purchase grain. Ultimately it would probably be necessary to pay partly in grain and partly in money. A local market would have to be established and shelter provided for the workmen. For the present, MR. MOLONY thought, and in this opinion Major Lindsay concurred, that the ordinary coolie huts would meet every requirement.

MAJOR LINDSAY then explained on what portions of the line it would be desirable to concentrate work for the present, and some conversation ensued as to the desirability of allowing the railway staff and the working parties collected under them to aid in the construction of the roads which would act as feeders to the railway. Eventually, HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY expressed his general satisfaction with the views set forth, and directed that Major Lindsay should be instructed to aid in the construction of these roads with his staff.

In answer to an inquiry from HIS EXCELLENCY the Viceroy, MAJOR LINDSAY said that there would be no difficulty in separating the expenditure chargeable to relief from that which would be properly chargeable to loan works. The distinction between the two was well understood both on the Soane Canal and Northern Bengal Railway works, and Mr. Levinge was known to be especially alive to the importance of the distinction.

HIS EXCELLENCY then made some enquiries as to the additional staff which might be required to prosecute the works.

MAJOR LINDSAY said that he was in no want of senior officers, but that he should require seven or eight additional assistant engineers. In answer to HIS EXCELLENCY the Viceroy, MAJOR LINDSAY said that young officers of the Army with some knowledge of surveying would do the work very well. HIS EXCELLENCY directed Major Lindsay to send in a requisition stating the exact number he would require.

HIS EXCELLENCY intimated that immediate authority would be given to commence the Gunduck embankment (see p. 28).

Secondly, as regards local works, HIS EXCELLENCY observed that the Resolution of the Government of Bengal of November 3rd (see p. 5) appeared to him to give local officers every instruction which was necessary, and asked if any additional staff was required. LORD ULICK BROWNE said that he did not want any additional officers at present. MR. MOLONY said that he would require one or two more assistant engineers. COLONEL NICOLLS said that 16 engineer officers would be required; young men of from five to six years' service would do the work well.

In answer to an enquiry made by His Excellency the Viceroy, SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said that plans for local works had been prepared in all districts.

MR. MOLONY then observed that in some portions of his division,—for instance, about Maldah and Dinajpore,—it would be desirable for Government to lay in stores of grain whilst water transport was still available. In a couple of months, when the water would have sunk low, this mode of transport would be no longer available, and it might be found difficult then to collect grain in suitable quantities.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY observed that as regards the purchase and storing of grain by Government, the principles laid down in the Resolution were, he thought, sufficiently clear. Government would take upon themselves the duty of providing grain for the labourers employed on public relief works, so far as might be necessary. They wished to rely as far as possible on the trade to collect and distribute supplies of food for that purpose, but when any exceptional circumstances existed which would probably hinder such an accumulation of food, and when, therefore, adequate supplies would possibly not be forthcoming without the adoption of special measures, there was no intention of precluding Government officers from taking such measures as these exceptional circumstances demanded, in order to secure a supply, including a reasonable reserve of food for persons employed on relief works. On this point the local officers could alone judge. The case mentioned by Mr. Molony appeared to be one in which Government could, through its officers, act properly in purchasing and storing food. It would probably be desirable in most cases to purchase grain from distant markets through some of the leading merchants.

Thirdly, as regards loans to municipalities and other corporate bodies, SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said that notices would be issued with a view to facilitating such loans, and that attention would be given to takavi advances for the construction of wells.

HIS EXCELLENCY next adverted to the means available for transporting grain from the railway into the interior of the affected districts, as to which he expressed considerable anxiety.

Transport.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said that this was a subject of extreme importance, and it was desirable to act in the matter without delay, which might prove very prejudicial. MR. MOLONY said that in his district pack-bullocks formed the most ready mode of transport. MR. BERNARD pointed out that if any large number of pack-bullocks were employed, it would be necessary to lay down supplies of fodder at convenient places, and that already, under the orders of the Government of Bengal, arrangements had been sanctioned for laying in supplies of fodder at some roadside stations.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY remarked that the serious attention of the local officers should be directed to this subject; any assistance which the Government of India could give, either by utilising the commissariat or post office service or in any other way, would be readily given. A communication had already been made * to the Government of Bengal, stating the extent to which the commissariat could render assistance.

HIS EXCELLENCY then observed that it had been suggested to him that the traffic of grain in some parts would be facilitated if the tolls were taken off the canals. THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that the Government of Bengal had already arranged to take off road tolls and to reduce actual ferry tolls to a minimum all over the distressed districts; orders to this end were actually under issue. LORD ULICK BROWNE said that a considerable amount of rice came from the Sunderbunds into Calcutta by water, and that undoubtedly the quantity would be increased if the tolls were taken off. MR. BERNARD said that this

* On November 6th, (see footnote, p. 160).

would give additional facilities for the export of rice to foreign countries, but MR. SCHALCH observed—and in this opinion MR. CHAPMAN concurred—that Calcutta must always be the great entrepôt through which rice would find its way up-country, and that, in this view of the case, it would be advantageous to facilitate the accumulation of rice in Calcutta. After some further conversation, it was arranged that the Lieutenant-Governor should inquire into the matter and consider whether it was desirable to take any action.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then proceeded to the question of the distribution of gratuitous relief. The paragraphs in the Resolution of the Government of India which dealt with this important branch of the general subject were based upon the experience of what had taken place in former years and more especially on the reports of the Orissa Famine Commissioners and of the scarcity which prevailed in the North-Western Provinces in 1868-69.

In the 73rd paragraph of their report, the Orissa Commissioners said that “there can be no better rule than that which has hitherto obtained, *viz.*, that Government should supply employment by means of public works, and that the public should supply the means of gratuitous relief to the helpless.”

The Government would contribute an equal sum to that which had been collected from private individuals; this, however, would not, of course, constitute the maximum amount of relief which would in all cases be given by Government; the principles which would guide Government in this matter were the same as those which were adopted in the North-Western Provinces in 1868-69 and which are thus described on page 5 of Mr. Henvey's report:—“The equivalent of private contributions was not the maximum limit of the Government gift, but an appropriation for disposal by the relief committees. Charitable relief must be held primarily the care of the public, but if public charity should fail from any cause, the Government must step in and save life.” In consequence of this determination the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces issued instructions on January 2nd, 1869, in the following terms:—“It is the duty of the State to see that none of its subjects starve for want of food, even if charitable contributions should (which His Honor has no reason to suppose) prove inadequate. The Lieutenant-Governor will accordingly hold every district officer personally responsible that no death occurs from starvation which could have been avoided by any exertion or arrangement on the part of the district officer or his staff.” There was no intention of throwing upon the Lieutenant-Governor, and upon local officers in Bengal, any greater degree of responsibility than had been incurred by officers in the North-Western Provinces. HIS EXCELLENCY did not doubt that they would accept this responsibility cheerfully, and that they would perform the duties which would devolve on them with judgment and ability. It was impossible that sitting in that room they could lay down detailed instructions to meet every case; much of the detail must be left to the officers on the spot; all that the Government of India could do was to lay down the general principles by which it would be guided and to assure the local Government that cordial support would be afforded to it. Nothing was more clearly shown from the experience of former famines, and on no point had the Orissa Commissioners dwelt more strongly than on the necessity of being prepared beforehand with such an organisation and administrative machinery as could be brought instantly into play so as to commence relief whenever and wherever the necessity should arise. For the present it was probably not necessary to establish relief committees anywhere, but discretion should be allowed to district officers to do so on the first breaking out of any distress.

The immediate steps necessary were that the various local officers should personally inquire into the circumstances of their districts and then send up, for the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, detailed recommendations showing the places at which they would propose to establish relief centres, the names of those who would serve on the committees, and any other points of detail which could advantageously be considered beforehand. Thus, an organisation would be planned which could be called into active existence whenever the necessity should arise. The fullest information on all points connected with the affected districts should be obtained, and with this object it would probably be necessary to strengthen the civil staff in some localities.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL said that probably a few civil servants of a few years' standing would be required.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY, in continuation of his remarks, said that as regards the central committee, he agreed with His Honor that it was not desirable to call it into existence at once, because the information in the possession of Government was as yet not sufficiently detailed and complete to allow of the case being placed before the public in such a manner as would probably attract subscriptions to any great extent, but it would be well to consider in what manner the Committee should eventually be constituted. When the central committee was once constituted, HIS EXCELLENCY proposed that it should supply grain to the district committees, and thus relieve Government of a most difficult task. As regards the importation of grain from a distance into the scarcity-stricken districts, much would depend upon the circumstances and position of each separate locality. It was difficult to lay down any general principles as to whether purchases should be made through local traders or not; when relief committees were once established, they should as a general rule, make their own arrangements for the supply of grain. For the present Government would only provide grain for the labourers engaged in public works and would not supply grain for charitable distribution. HIS EXCELLENCY thought that it would now be possible for Mr. Bernard to frame, for the consideration of the Lieutenant-Governor, detailed regulations as to the best method of organising charitable relief on the basis of those which were laid down by the Orissa Commission and in the North-Western Provinces on former occasions. These regulations would deal with the separation of the able-bodied men from those who were unable, from physical weakness or other causes, to perform work, the distribution of food to women and others who might be unable from sickness or infirmity to leave home, the times and occasions on which food should be distributed, cooked or uncooked, and other similar points. As regards the general question of the effect which would be produced by the distribution of charity, HIS EXCELLENCY said that he did not anticipate any danger of pauperising the people. The experience of former years had shown that so soon as plenty returned and work could be obtained as in ordinary times, the people gladly availed themselves of it.

SIR G. CAMPBELL enquired whether he understood His Excellency to say that for the present Government would only lay up grain for the payment of the labourers employed on the works, and not lay up grain for charitable relief. He understood His Excellency's view to be that till relief committees were formed no grain was to be provided for relief purposes other than relief works, and that the time had not come for the formation of those committees. HIS EXCELLENCY answered in the affirmative.

MR. DAMPIER observed that the district committees, as soon as they were constituted, would ask Government to import rice.

HIS EXCELLENCY said that there could be no objection to the district committees drawing on the stores which Government would accumulate for the payment of labourers on the public works, or obtaining supplies of grain in such other manner as they may consider best. The action of the district committees should not be arrested pending the formation of the central committee.

MR. MOLONY said that committees were not at present required. If they were empowered, when constituted, to draw on the Government stores collected to pay labourers on the public works, sufficient provision would have been made. Those stores should, of course, be ample.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then expressed a wish that all statistical information bearing on the facts of the scarcity and the measures taken to afford relief should be kept in due form, and that periodical reports should be sent in to the Government of India.

MR. BERNARD said that this should be attended to, and that fortnightly reports should be sent to the Government of India as to the state of the affected districts.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY then enquired of each officer present whether he wished to make any further remarks.

MR. SCHALCH observed that the Bengalees did not like Burmese rice; they would, however, probably be obliged to eat it; he thought that Government

might advantageously obtain rice from Burmah to pay labourers on the public works. Fifty thousand tons of this rice might be introduced; no great loss would probably be incurred.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY said that Government had announced that they would make importations of Burmese rice. In answer to Mr. Bernard, HIS EXCELLENCY added that he thought it would be better for the local Government not to operate out of India; any purchases of foreign (including Burmese) rice could best be made through the Government of India.

LORD ULICK BROWNE said that some inconvenience arose from the necessity, under existing regulations, of one European officer being present at the head-quarters of each sub-division daily to superintend the issue of stamps, and suggested that these regulations should be relaxed. The officer could probably be better employed in visiting his sub-division. After some conversation, it was arranged that Sir R. Temple and Mr. Chapman should inquire into the matter with a view to seeing whether any relaxation of the existing regulations would be desirable.

The proceedings then terminated.

No. 19.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, No. 3379, dated 10th November 1873.

With reference to the responsibilities of this Government set forth in the Resolution (see p. 19) on the scarcity in these provinces, published in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* of 7th instant, and especially paragraphs 23 and 28, the Lieutenant-Governor would be glad if the principles on which immediate measures are to be taken and relief is to be given could be somewhat more precisely laid down.

2. All that Sir George Campbell has learned on this great and most difficult subject has impressed on him the following:—

I.—When failure of the crops extends over a very wide extent of country and famine results, it may attain, and on occasions has attained, such proportions that no foresight, no energy, and no measures of relief which the Government can command can suffice adequately to deal with and overtake it. When the calamity is very severe and very wide-spreading, we can only partially mitigate it.

II.—In the early, and it may be said the middle, stages of scarcity there must always be an extreme element of uncertainty. Our knowledge of the stocks of grain and habits of the people, of the actual produce of the fields, and of many things which act and re-act on the market, are not such as to enable us to calculate eventual results with any approach to certainty. Especially is this the case in these provinces where any system of agricultural statistics is in its infancy, and executive establishments in the interior of districts are but just formed on a very small scale.

This uncertainty becomes much greater in proportion as the failure of crops extends over a very large area.

Where the area of scarcity is moderate and well defined, we can calculate with some certainty on the supplies which may be poured in from the surrounding countries; but when the failure has extended over such an area that we cannot depend on the outside world to supply an extreme internal deficiency, the main element in our forecasts must be an unknown quantity, *viz.*, the internal stocks, and the uncertainty is enormously increased.

III.—While the Government by all means in its power avoids any negligence or undue shortcoming, there is, on the other hand, another difficulty into which we may fall; that is to say, if we give relief with too free a hand we raise expectations and create obligations, which we shall find it extremely difficult to meet.

Sir George Campbell has always put forward this last view of the case as well as the other. It has seemed to him that the people of this country are now by

no means very prone to apply for relief, and that we could hardly by any means at our disposal give too much relief in times of scarcity, if necessity were to be measured by an English standard. When there has been much failure of the crops, and food is two or three times its usual price (not to say dearer than that), a very large proportion of the population, in fact the great majority of the population, are without sufficient food, and are in real need of assistance. But we have no poor law, no system of relief, and the people have been wont to feel that they must bear great privations. If the Government were to attempt to relieve all who suffer on every occasion of scarcity, the task would be too great.

3. Now, taking these three statements, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, with respect to the first, he may assume that the expressions in paragraphs 23 and 28 of the Resolution of Government of India are not to be taken as literally holding this Government responsible to deal with and overtake the distress, however great it may be or might be; he assumes at once that, if we do the best we can, that is all that can be expected of us.

4. But the second and third statements taken together do, if they are admitted, raise practical questions of the most extreme difficulty and urgency, and it is because this Government is about to undertake a very great task under very wide instructions, and with so liberal means placed at its disposal, that the Lieutenant-Governor seeks some further guide in the application of those means.

5. All the elements of uncertainty now exist in these provinces in the most eminent degree. Our means of ascertaining the actual yield of the crops and other particulars are still very far below that possessed by the Government in any other part of India. Our information regarding stocks in hand is wholly deficient. The case of Orissa having been very peculiar, and its area comparatively very limited, we have no experience of a very general failure and of famine very widely spread in Bengal in this country, though we know that such a famine did occur in the last century. Even if we could compare that failure with this, we know that the habits of the people and conditions in regard to storing grain, export, import, and everything else have wholly changed since 1770. The only comparison which we can to some extent effectively make is with the partial failure in Bengal of 1865.

6. Limited as are our means of knowledge, the Lieutenant-Governor is inclined to think that if we had to deal with Bengal alone with its 40 millions of people, or with Behar alone with its 20 millions of people, we could presently to some extent forecast the degree of scarcity. We could only do so within very wide limits, but still we might make our forecast. As it is, we are in this position: say we roughly forecast the degree of scarcity in Behar as we may perhaps do; if we were sure that we could buy in the Bengal markets and sea-ports, and pour into Behar, we might to some extent count the cost. But as it is, we know that the crops have failed to a great degree in the Bengal districts with few exceptions, disastrously in many. It is utterly impossible to calculate with the least approach to accuracy the effect on the Bengal markets of great purchases for Behar both by private dealers and by Government for relief works and stores. We know by experience that the markets in these territories are most sensitive and sudden in their variations. There are prices that mean scarcity, and there are prices that mean famine; and we cannot tell when a demand from one province, suffering from scarcity and threatened with famine, upon another already suffering scarcity, may not lead to famine prices in both provinces.

7. In the North-Western Provinces, not only has there been more frequent experience of scarcity, but modern failures there have been, either not excessive in degree, or confined to one portion only of those provinces. The scarcity of 1868-69 was not excessive in degree. From Mr. Henvey's report it appears that a large part of the khurreef crop was lost, and the rubbee crop was not above two-thirds of an average; but "there was no general failure of food," or actual absence of grain, and "the agriculturists suffered comparatively little."

The failure of 1860 was confined to the upper portion of the North-Western Provinces, and in no degree affected either Oude or the lower part of the North-Western Provinces, which, on the contrary, profited by an enormous exportation.

8. As an illustration of the uncertainty of these things, when the failure extends over to a great area, reference may be made to the account of the Bengal Famine of 1770, ascertained from the India Office records and published with the "Further Report" on the Orissa Famine.

We have no means of comparing the produce of the crops of 1769 with those of the present year, and may hope that the degree of failure is not similar; but the season seems to have in some respects followed a similar course, inasmuch as the greatest scarcity was for many months supposed to be in the districts north of the Ganges and Behar, while the districts south of the Ganges about Moorshedabad and Calcutta were better off; yet later in the season, in the middle of 1770, these latter districts (probably in consequence of exports) suffered far greater extremities than the northern districts, where the failure had been greater.

9. So again, unexpected outbreaks of famine (compared by the Famine Commission to outbreaks of cholera) frequently take place almost without warning, in out-of-the-way and secluded corners of districts cut off from communication, in consequence of a panic.

10. The present uncertainty then being great, it seems to the Lieutenant-Governor impossible to undertake beforehand measures of relief so far-reaching and comprehensive that we can make sure of adequately dealing with and overtaking all the distress that may possibly arise, unless we carry our measures by way of precautions far beyond the necessities that we can distinctly foresee. If we would make sure, we must prepare full means of relief wherever there is a chance or possibility of distress, that is, almost everywhere. This we can hardly do. It seems to the Lieutenant-Governor that in practice we must run some risk and a very considerable risk. While, on the one hand, we must observe and act on symptoms which render extreme distress probable, we cannot afford to prepare the means to meet every case in which it may be possible. We may—and, if things turn out badly, probably shall—be taken by surprise in some instances.

11. When it is said that timely measures must be taken, it must be fully understood that we cannot effectually guard against distress merely by organizing district and local committees and such like machinery. If we are to make sure that distress shall not get beyond our means, we must not only prepare the machinery of action, but act—store grain, build poor-houses, prepare the means of feeding, sheltering and aiding the people. These things are not done in a day, especially as we know by experience in Orissa grain cannot be transported at any time to feed a large population on a sudden crisis. Orissa was no doubt an extreme case; but undoubtedly in any part of the country beyond rivers and railways, if the strain on means of transport becomes too great next hot weather, the transport will break down. If we are to prepare for probable or possible relief in any locality, it seems most essential that food should be transported and stored in good time before the crisis and when carriage is available. The question then is, when, where, and to what extent, these things are to be done when future distress is possible, or when it is probable.

12. Finally, as regards the mode and degree of relief, the questions are very difficult. The difficulties are chiefly connected with the distinction so well known in England between in-door and out-door relief. It may be assumed that when distress is ascertained, both work, and, as far as possible, food for work, will be given to all applicants, while poor-house food, and, if necessary, shelter, will be given to the weak, unable to work. But beyond this comes the question of the amount of relief to be given to large classes who will suffer great extremities rather than labor on public works or accept cooked food. And very much of this question of degree of relief is bound up with the other regarding the time at which relief is given. In this country, as has been said, the people certainly do not to an unusual or unreasonable degree seek relief; on the contrary, we must for the most part seek them out and offer it to them. Just in proportion as we offer relief soon and near to their homes, they will avail themselves of it. It is scarcely possible to begin relief so soon and to carry it so far as to bring it home to all in time to avert all distress. To do all that in a limited area it is possible to do we must not only begin on the earliest appearance of scarcity, but we must scatter relief houses broad-cast so as to have one for every group of villages within reach of everyone's home. And we must give out-door relief to

all who have reasonable ground for not working or coming to a relief-house. It is only in this way that, beginning as early as possible, we shall get first the beggars on the surface; then the poorest people ordinarily self-supporting; then tap deeper and deeper strata, and really avert great distress. But it is almost impossible to get together at once the means of doing this over so wide an area as that in which distress is now possible.

13. The Lieutenant-Governor is very unwilling to seem to discuss rather than act, but it does appear to him that the general outcome of the Resolution of the Government of India is this: "We will give you (the local Government) men, money, and everything you can use; but on you it lies that disease and death, due to want of food, shall be averted." The Lieutenant-Governor has thought it necessary to represent that this is a burden which in its fullest extent this Government can hardly promise successfully to bear. In his opinion the area affected is so great, and the uncertainty so much precludes accurate calculation, that we cannot, with all the means at our disposal, make sure of doing all that might be done if the area were small and the degree of want could be accurately gauged. We can only take a certain amount of precautionary measures, and take them in the direction where it seems most probable that they will be needed. If happily the scarcity proves less severe, we may meet it fully, and for the most part avert very great suffering. If it unfortunately proves more severe, we must strain every nerve to do all that is possible; but we cannot hope to avert all calamity. In the uncertainty which must for some time hang over everything, the amount of precautionary measures to be adopted is a question of discretion and finance. No man can say exactly how much should be done; but some indication may be given how far the Government of India think it prudent to go without delay and wish the local Government to go under present circumstances.

14. In discussing these matters with His Excellency the Viceroy, His Excellency told the Lieutenant-Governor that it might be well that he should submit in writing the questions on which he felt uncertainty, and promised that, as far as possible, His Excellency's Government would indicate the principles and practice they wish to be followed. So far as the Government of India will indicate their views on the very difficult questions which form the subject of this letter, the Lieutenant-Governor will follow those views as much as he is able; and so far as the matter is left to his unfettered discretion, he will act to the best of his ability and judgment in the view that some risks must be run but that we must apply the means at our disposal in the mode which appears on the whole most likely to be beneficial.

Some indications, which would either limit the wide responsibility of this Government, or make it clear what discretion the Lieutenant-Governor has, he would certainly like to have.

15. To bring to a short conclusion a long argument, the Lieutenant-Governor would say that, at the present moment, the question which seems to him most to press, is that of buying, transporting, and storing food in the places where it is most likely to be wanted for relief works and relief centres. As affecting both the general course of trade and the Indian exchequer the Lieutenant-Governor would much like some decision as to what and how much it was desirable for him to do in this respect, and how much he may spend. If he were to deal with the question solely with a view to fulfil to the very utmost the condition that distress should in no case get beyond our means without regard to the capabilities of the general exchequer, he does think that there is such a reasonable possibility of need for very widely-extended relief measures, that, to be on the safe side, he would at once undertake very extensive measures indeed; in fact, he would buy grain very largely wherever it is to be had, procure and use every possible means of transport, and prepare food depôts in almost every part of the Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye Divisions, and perhaps in great part of the Burdwan Division. But he feels that if he were to act in this respect without stint or limit, he would be taking one view of the case only. If he had the whole case in his hands, his endeavour to do the very utmost to be on the safe side, as regards Bengal and Behar, would be controlled and limited by the feeling that the purchase of grain is connected with great free-trade and other questions, and with large questions of imperial finance. But these great subjects are not within his control. The question of free trade or

prohibition of exports has been dealt with by the Government of India. The Government of India is more fitted to deal with great trade and economic questions; the Government of India must judge how the necessities of Bengal on the one hand, and the state of the imperial finance on the other, must regulate and control one another. The Lieutenant-Governor thus is not master of the whole case, and when a discretion is given to him it must in some way be limited. He would like, then, some general indication how far it is desirable that he should at present go in preparation for relief, and how much he may spend in the purchase of food, means of transport, &c. Perhaps it would be convenient that the sum should be named up to which he may draw on the treasury for relief purposes without farther reference.

No. 20.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, No. E, dated November 11, 1873.

In the last paragraph of my letter of yesterday's date (see above, No. 19 of this series,) regarding the important Resolution by the Government of India dated the 7th November, is put the question how far, and to what extent, His Excellency the Viceroy would permit the Government of Bengal to spend money in providing against the distress that is threatening the country. I am now to solicit that the Government of India may be pleased to grant to the Government of Bengal a famine credit to be drawn against during the current year.

2. The ways in which the money, if granted, would be spent are—

- (1) relief works;
- (2) purchase of grain for storage at relief works;
- (3) advances to private persons, under paragraph 26 of the Resolution;
- (4) making grants to local relief committees, equal to the private contributions they may collect.

Some few of the larger relief works will indeed be imperial undertakings for which the local Government would not have to find the money. But there will be other minor relief works all over the country; the provincial Public Works Department grants for 1873-74 (which were very liberal grants) are by the last accounts being fully worked up to; the local funds are not large anywhere, and their income this year will be much curtailed by the stoppage of the road cess in some districts, and by the temporary cessation of road and ferry tolls on all roads by which grain is being transported. The provincial and local resources, therefore, for meeting the cost of relief works are not large, and as "famine" was, by the Resolution of December 1870, distinctly reserved as an imperial charge when the provincial system was started, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes that a grant, or a credit, may now be sanctioned against which this Government may draw for famine relief works.

3. There is no doubt that it will be necessary for this Government to buy and store grain largely and immediately at several points in the districts of Tirhoot, Gya, Bhaugulpore, Monghyr, Purneah, Dinagepore, and Bograh, over and above the stores which may be established for the Soane Canal works. The discussion at Government House at which the Lieutenant-Governor and his officers were permitted to attend yesterday (see p. 31) made it very clear that questions of transport, of price, of possible suddenness of demand, all made it imperative that we should be beforehand with our supplies of grain for relief works. The Lieutenant-Governor cannot say precisely how much grain Bengal officers may be able to store before the 31st March next, but he would be very glad if he could see his way to storing anything like the amount named by Mr. Schalch at yesterday's discussion, namely, 50,000 tons. Moreover, though this amount may not be stored by the 31st March, still in some districts it will be possible to make advances for delivery of the rice directly the new (winter) crop comes into the market in February next. So that if Government and its officers really can do as much as they would wish to do, very considerable sums will be required for the purchase of grain.

4. As to advances to planters and others who may be willing to lay in stores and to take Government advances for such a purpose, the Lieutenant-Governor would hope to leave very full discretion to local officers. The more money that can be properly and early spent in bringing grain from a distance for private storage in the distressed districts the better.

5. The private contributions to be raised in districts by relief committees will, the Lieutenant-Governor apprehends, be small. Already accounts are coming in of cases in which zemindars, village headmen, and others have begun to help and support their people; and any private charity will find a very ready outlet in such like directions. Still, some funds will be required to meet the private contributions.

6. In view of all these wants, I am to solicit that a famine credit of 50 lakhs of rupees may be granted to the Government of Bengal for the service of the remainder of the year 1873-74.

No. 21.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3003, dated November 13, 1873.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 3379 of the 10th current (see p. 36) respecting the arrangements to be made for averting or mitigating the effects of the scarcity in Bengal and Behar; also your letter E of the 11th current (see p. 40) asking for a famine credit of fifty lakhs of rupees to be drawn against during the current official year. In these letters the Lieutenant-Governor asks, that "the principles on which immediate measures are to be taken and relief is to be given, should be somewhat more precisely laid down, whether grain should be stored, poor-houses built, and the means of feeding, sheltering, and aiding the people prepared," upon what principles relief is to be administered, and "how much he may spend upon buying, transporting, and storing food in the places where it is most likely to be wanted for relief works and relief centres" and, "generally, for some indications which would either limit the wide responsibility of his Government or make it clear what discretion the Lieutenant-Governor has."

2. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor having expressed verbally a wish to be furnished with some further instructions on the topics treated of in the Governor General's Resolution of the 7th November, a meeting was arranged on the 10th November, at which the Governor General, Sir R. Temple, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and several of his principal officers were present.

3. A précis has been made of the substance of what passed at this conference, and a copy is forwarded herewith, (see p. 31). It will be found to comprise the answers by the Governor General to the various practical questions put, and to embody His Excellency's views on most, if not on all, of the points adverted to in your letter No. 3379 under acknowledgment.

4. The various observations by the Governor General contained in this précis are to be regarded as instructions for the guidance of the local Government.

5. It may be desirable to observe that the policy indicated in the Resolution of the Government of India of the 7th instant, does not include the general provision of supplies of food to districts, which have suffered from the failure of the autumn rice crop, within the operations which the Government are to undertake and for which they are responsible.

6. For the general distribution of supplies at the present time His Excellency has announced, in paragraphs 5 and 6 of that Resolution, that he relies with confidence upon the operations of trade, and no information that he has since received leads him to modify that opinion.

7. It was stated that the action of Government would be limited, first, to arranging, by means of advances of money, for supplies in such parts of the country as, by reason of distance from the main lines of communication, deficiencies of markets, or other exceptional circumstances, may, in the opinion of the local officers, reasonably be presumed to be beyond the ordinary operations

of trade; and secondly, to securing sufficient supplies of food for the labourers to be employed upon public works.

8. Chapter XIII A of the Code of Regulations for the Public Works Department, published in 1870, to which allusion was made in the Resolution of the Government of India of the 28th ultimo, contains full instructions as to the manner in which the officers of the Public Works Department should act in regard to laying in supplies of grain. Should the Lieutenant-Governor consider that any of these instructions require modification, His Honor will observe, from the 1st paragraph, that the rules are "subject to any special orders that may be issued by the local Government."

9. The reply, then, to the question of the Lieutenant-Governor how much it is desirable for him to do in regard to the buying and storing of food, is that the action of the Government of Bengal should for the present be limited to providing for the consumption of the persons who are likely to be employed upon the local relief works. This reply is not intended to debar the Lieutenant-Governor from acting upon his own responsibility in case of any sudden emergency, reporting the circumstances to the Government of India.

10. The information previously in the possession of the Governor General, and that laid before him at the conference held upon the 10th instant, was to the effect that it will not be necessary to have recourse to the distribution of gratuitous relief for the present. His Excellency is of opinion that relief should not be commenced before a real necessity arises, and he agrees with the Lieutenant-Governor that it is undesirable to "create obligations which it would be extremely difficult to meet." He explained the manner in which supplies would be obtained through the central relief committee, when appointed, and how any particular cases which might occur previously to the appointment of the central committee should be met. All that appears now to be necessary is that no time should be lost in preparing all the machinery required to set relief operations in motion so soon as the necessity shall arise.

11. The Governor General trusts to the Lieutenant-Governor to obtain from each division and district statements in categorical form of all that is proposed to be done in consequence of the scarcity, to issue suitable instructions on each statement as soon as it is received, and to give the Commissioners and district officers discretion to act on emergency even in anticipation of His Honor's instructions.

12. As soon as may be practicable, the Governor General desires to receive abstracts of the district reports. The Government of India will then be able to form some judgment as to what will be the character and extent of the operations proposed, and of the funds, local, provincial, or imperial, which will be required.

13. Meanwhile I am to state that the Governor General, although fully determined to support the local Government with such financial means as may be necessary, considers that there would be objections to the grant of so large a famine credit as fifty lakhs of rupees beforehand. We do not know as yet that such an expenditure as this will really be needed during the current official year 1873-74; and time has not yet admitted of even approximate estimates being prepared.

14. As regards the classes of works set forth in paragraph 2 of your letter under acknowledgment, I am to observe that among the relief works already ordered the most important are the Soane Canal, the Northern State Railway, and the Gunduck embankments. These works will be carried on at the charge of the Imperial Treasury; and all disbursements will be made from cash supplied in the usual way through the Imperial Public Works Department.

15. Thus the principal storage of grain for the consumption of the laborers upon relief works will at the outset be made at the cost of the Government of India from imperial resources.

16. As regards advances to private persons for distributing grain, I am to state that money for this purpose may be obtained from the funds, £100,000 (ten lakhs of rupees), already allotted for loans to municipalities.

17. In respect to grants to local committees equal to private subscriptions, I am to state that funds for such grants will be immediately supplied on information being received of such subscriptions being raised or promised.

18. Regarding provincial and local public works, the Governor General desires that the monies may in the first instance be disbursed from the available balance of the provincial or local funds, and may be provisionally debited to these funds. At the end of the official year the account will be subject to adjustment. That portion of the expenditure which, though incurred on provincial or local works, is yet really undertaken only for the relief of distress, will then be transferred to the head of "Famine Charges," which was reserved as imperial by Resolution No. 2086, dated 30th March 1872. But that portion of the expenditure which represents value received by the various districts in the shape of actual works, will be left finally at the debit of provincial or local funds, unless, indeed, it be found that the aggregate of such debits is more than the provincial finances can properly bear, in which case the Government of India will be prepared to consider the grant of an additional allotment for provincial services.

19. For these reasons the Governor-General will defer compliance with the application for a general famine credit, until the requirements of the case shall be more fully known.

20. In view to the expense to be incurred on relief works, the Governor General trusts to the Lieutenant-Governor to curtail as much as possible public works, whether at the cost of imperial, provincial, or local funds, in those districts which are not affected by scarcity, and in which there is no special need to find employment for unemployed labor, in pursuance of the principle laid down for the North-Western Provinces in 1868-69.

21. The Governor General is fully aware that any estimate which can now be formed of the extent of the distress which may arise must necessarily be uncertain. He knows the disadvantages under which the Province of Bengal is placed, as compared with some other parts of India, in regard to the collection of information. And he is confident that the Lieutenant-Governor will act according to the best of his ability and judgment in fulfilling the arduous and responsible duties which will devolve upon him.

22. Furthermore, the Governor General desires to take his full share in this responsibility, and has endeavoured to comply fully with the wish expressed by the Lieutenant-Governor that the principles and practice which the Government of India wish to be followed should be indicated as far as possible.

23. His Excellency trusts that the Resolutions of the Government of India of the 28th ultimo and 7th instant, together with the précis of the conference of the 10th and this letter, will enable His Honor to act without delay, in the full confidence that he is carrying out the views of the Government of India and that he will meet with their cordial support.

No. 22.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3004, dated November 14, 1873.

In continuation of my letter No. 3003 of the 13th instant (see above No. 21 of this series), conveying the Governor-General's views and wishes regarding the scarcity in Bengal, there is one special matter on which His Excellency desires to make some suggestions, and that is the prevention, so far as may be possible, of mortality among cattle in the districts affected by drought.

2. His Excellency has learnt that at present the cattle are probably allowed to graze in the fields of the withered crops, the stubble of which supplies abundant fodder. But such fodder will, doubtless, be soon consumed, and must be exhausted by January at the latest. After that time the parched ground will nowhere afford pasture, and by degrees want of fodder will cause disease and death among the cattle. The records of past famines in India show the loss of cattle to have been always so severe as to amount to a serious diminution of the agricultural capital of the districts, and even to cripple the sowing operations of the ensuing season.

3. And under the circumstances, as it is to be feared, they will be during the coming hot season, one main difficulty will probably be want of draught animals for the transport of food grains to the interior of the districts.

4. These considerations are well known to the Lieutenant-Governor, and will doubtless have formed the subject, among many other things, of His Honor's forethought.

5. But the Governor General would specially suggest, for the Lieutenant-Governor's early or immediate attention, that the present consumption by the cattle of the withered rice-stubble will, if not watched, be very wasteful. Quantities of fodder, in the absence of precautions, might be lost, which, if saved by management and stored for use some months hence, might prove a valuable resource at the most critical period of the scarcity.

6. It appears to the Governor General that the Lieutenant-Governor might be able to issue such instructions to the local officers as might cause a large part of the rice-stubble to be husbanded, stacked or stored for future use without at all preventing the cattle from consuming such part as might be needed at the present season. And the cutting and stacking might afford employment to those who are out of work from the cessation of the harvesting operations.

No. 23.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 1 C., dated Camp, Agra, November 21, 1873.

We have the honor to forward Special Narrative of the drought of 1873 to the 14th of November*.

2. During the absence of the Governor General in Council from Calcutta, the Lieutenant-Governor has been requested to transmit, for Your Grace's information, copies of the weekly Special Narratives, in which the proceedings of the Government of Bengal in connection with the drought will be recorded. On our arrival at Calcutta, the Special Narratives will be forwarded through the Government of India, in accordance with the usual practice.

3. The Special Narrative now enclosed contains no information of a later date than that which was conveyed to Your Grace in the Viceroy's despatch B, of November 12th (see p. 23), with which despatch copies were enclosed of the official correspondence with the Government of Bengal on the subject of the prohibition of exports and of the instructions given to the Lieutenant-Governor in reply to His Honor's letter of November 10th, No. 3379.

4. The information received by the Viceroy and Sir R. Temple from the Commissioners of Bhagulpore and Patna, whom they saw when passing through Behar, was to the effect that any extreme distress would be confined to the following districts:—

Tirhoot, Sarun, Gya, the remaining districts of the Patna Division in a somewhat less degree, half of Monghyr, the northern half of Bhagulpore, less than half of Purneah, and more than half of the Sonthal Pergunnahs.

5. We enclose a copy of the last report of the prospects of those districts of the North-Western Provinces where the rice crop has failed; the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces is that no considerable difficulty is likely to be experienced in dealing with those districts. His Honor has taken all the precautionary measures which the situation requires.

6. The Viceroy proposes to leave Agra on the 25th, and after visiting Futtehghur, Lucknow, and Allahabad, to arrive at Calcutta on or about December 10th. In the interim the Government of India will proceed to Calcutta, and we shall nominate the Honorable Sir Richard Temple the President of the Council during the absence of the Viceroy, under the provisions of the 6th section of the Indian Councils' Act, 1861, in order to prevent any delay in issuing such orders as may be required. (See below, Nos. 24 and 25 of this series.)

7. We have communicated with the Scinde, Punjab and Delhi, Great Indian Peninsula, and Oudh and Rohilcund Railway agencies with the view of reducing the rates for the carriage of food grains conveyed to Behar and Bengal, as has been done upon the East India and Eastern Bengal Railways.

* Printed in a separate volume.

No. 24.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated Camp, Agra, November 28, 1873.

In continuation of our despatch No. 77, dated the 30th ultimo (see page 7), we have the honor to transmit, for Your Grace's information, a copy of our Notification dated the 24th instant (see below No. 25 of this series), declaring that it is expedient that the Governor General shall visit certain parts of India unaccompanied by his Council; nominating the Hon'ble Sir Richard Temple, K. C. S. I., to be President of the said Council during the time of such visit; stating the powers which shall be exercised by the said President of the Council, and by the Governor General during his separation from his Council; and directing that the Council of the Governor General shall assemble on the 27th November at Calcutta in the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

No. 25.

Notification No. 3C., dated Camp, Agra, November 24, 1873.

The Governor General in Council hereby declares that it is expedient that the Governor General shall visit certain parts of India unaccompanied by his Council. In the exercise of the powers conferred by the Indian Councils' Act, section 6, the Governor General in Council hereby nominates the Hon'ble Sir Richard Temple, K. C. S. I., to be the President of the said Council during the time of such visit, and the powers of the Governor General in assemblies of the said Council during the time of such visit shall be reposed in the said Sir Richard Temple, except that of assenting to, or withholding his assent from, or reserving for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure, any law or regulation as provided in the 24 and 25 Victoria, cap. 67, and the Governor General in Council by this order made for that purpose authorizes the Governor General alone to exercise all or any of the powers which may be exercised by the said Governor General in Council in every case in which the said Governor General may think it expedient to exercise the same, except the power of making laws or regulations; and under the provisions of section 9 of Act 24 and 25 Victoria, cap. 67, the Governor General in Council hereby appoints His Excellency's Council to assemble at Calcutta in the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on Thursday, the 27th instant.

No. 26.

Letter from C. U. Aitchison, Esq., C. S. I., Secretary to the Government of India with the Viceroy, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 5C, dated Camp, Agra, November 17, 1873.

In continuation of previous orders relating to the scarcity, I am directed by the Governor General in Council to request that particular precautions may be adopted in order to prevent local officers from bidding against each other for the purchase of grain.

2. With this view His Excellency in Council hopes that the Lieutenant-Governor may be able to ensure that the Commissioners of the Patna, the Bhagulpore, and the Rajshahye Divisions specially, and also any other Commissioner in whose division such operations may take place, shall be in communication one with another, and act in concert in respect to the arrangements for the supply of grain in their respective divisions. Doubtless His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, after having duly weighed and compared the requirements of the several divisions, will have instructed the several Commissioners as to the quantities to be obtained, and will have arrived at an understanding with them as to the steps to be taken.

3. In the opinion of the Government of India, the simplest and best course is for the district authorities who may require these supplies to operate through the principal dealers in the district for which the supplies are required, even though they should have to be brought from a distance. If there should not be any dealers of sufficient capital or resources in the district itself, then the nearest dealers should be employed.

4. If such neighbouring dealers should reside in other provinces beyond the jurisdiction of the Bengal Government, then the Bengal officers may apply to the district officers in those provinces for information as to the prices, markets, and dealers. On receiving the information, the Bengal officers can themselves arrange with the trade for such purchases as they may feel themselves authorized to make. But they should not attempt to employ the agency of the district officers of other provinces in the making of such purchases, as the Government of India considers that this mode of proceeding would be open to objection.

5. In reference to this, I am directed to forward copy of a circular (see below No. 27 of this series) which His Excellency in Council has caused to be addressed to the Governments of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, and the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and the Central Provinces. It became necessary to explain the views of the Government of India, inasmuch as references had been received by His Excellency in Council from Allahabad, Lucknow, and Delhi, respecting applications on this subject which had been made by the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore.

No. 27.

Circular from C. U. Aitchison, Esq., c. s. l., Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, to the Secretaries to the Governments of North-Western Provinces and Punjab, and the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and Central Provinces, No. 1 Ct.-4E, dated November 17, 1873.

In reference to the Resolution by the Governor General of the 7th November (see p. 19) regarding the scarcity in Bengal, I am directed to convey the following instructions to be followed in respect to the procuring of such supplies of grain as may be required for the Public Works Department or for relief purposes in Bengal.

2. If the Commissioners or the district officers shall receive references or applications from the Bengal authorities in respect to grain, they will of course afford all information in their power respecting the prices of grain and the prospects of the grain market; they may also communicate with the principal grain dealers in order to ascertain at what rates or terms good contracts could be obtained.

3. But their proceedings should be carefully restricted within the above limits. If they receive applications from Bengal to purchase grain, they should withhold compliance until the orders of the Government of India may be received. As a rule, the Government of India does not desire that the purchases of grain for Bengal should be made by the district officers of other provinces: if such a course should, under special circumstances, be desirable, it should be adopted only under direction of the Government of India.

4. If the Bengal authorities desire to make such purchases in other provinces after receiving information thence as first described, they should do so through the trade without further intervention on the part of the local officers.

No. 28.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India with His Excellency the Viceroy, No. 3563, dated November 22, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 5C, dated 17th November, with enclosures, (see above Nos. 26 and 27 of this series) regarding the action of the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore, and the best way of purchasing grain for the future outside Bengal.

2. The orders of His Excellency the Viceroy in this matter shall be impressed upon the local officers; but the Lieutenant-Governor hopes that his note of the 19th, on "arrangements for food-supply," copy of which is hereto appended, (see below No. 29 of this series) will have met the difficulty. At the same time the Lieutenant-Governor would ask leave to submit an expression of his opinion that the plan of allowing this Government to work through an officer of the North-Western Provinces will not answer, unless the officer in question really and actively attends to the matter. If he only gives spare moments out of his time as Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Sir George Campbell much fears that the plan cannot answer.

3. As has been submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy in a separate communication of today's date (see p. 61), the Lieutenant-Governor is very earnestly of opinion that we should transport grain to our places of storage *at once* before a block comes, at railway stations and on cart-roads, with new rice of the season 1873-74. With that object the Lieutenant-Governor is especially anxious to get as much as possible of the autumn grains of the North-Western Provinces (jowaree and bajra) with the least possible delay; and he would hope that the North-Western Provinces officer in charge of the business may be instructed to scour the markets, including Delhi and Jubbulpore, and to buy these grains for Patna and Bhaugulpore at once.

No. 29.

Note by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the arrangements for food supply, dated November 19, 1873.

We have arranged and announced to all the world that we are to buy grain for labourers on relief works, and I have much urged that, to the extent of the carriage now available and not used fully by the private trade, we should import and store on the spot for this purpose with the least possible delay.

I am afraid, however, that we may get into confusion through the operations of various local officers, and would therefore lay down as follows:—

1. When we say that the thing is to be done as much as possible through the trade, we mean, in the first instance, the trade of the division or district of the officer to whom the order is given. All officers should, to the utmost possible extent, operate through their own local traders, and arrange that these men should transport the grain to the spot where it is wanted, or the nearest point that can possibly be arranged. No direct Government transport should be undertaken that can be avoided. The local traders may get the supplies wherever they find best, provided only they come from a distance. I wish no restriction put on them. They will best know where to go and how to convey the grain. What is necessary is that in all contracts they should be bound down to early delivery. This last is essential.

2. When local officers are wholly unable to work through their local traders, they must not send orders to a distance at their discretion. We must systematize business of that kind. I think the sources of food supply to which we must look may be roughly divided as follows:—

1. Calcutta and the neighbourhood;
2. Eastern Bengal;
3. North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces.

My present wish is that any special orders which the local traders cannot arrange for should be sent to these quarters, somewhat in the reverse order to that in which I have written them. Since we may trust to the Calcutta trade to do all that the demand renders profitable, and all considerable local traders in our districts have Calcutta connections, I should like the Behar officers to get their Government supplies as much as they can from the North-Western Provinces first, and then from Eastern Bengal, and the Rajshahye officers from Eastern Bengal before they indent on Calcutta.

3. To prevent clashing in the North-Western and Central Provinces, I have proposed that all purchases from thence (other than through our own local dealers) should be made through the Commissioner of Patna only (he supplying Bhaugulpore), and that a North-Western Provinces officer should be placed at his disposal, who will ascertain the kind of grain most available, the best place to buy, and will arrange with the North-Western Provinces dealers to send as required. Mr. A. Colvin, c.s., Allahabad, has been nominated for the purposes.

4. I should like the Commissioner of Dacca to make a similar arrangement for Eastern Bengal, employing an officer for the purpose. Orders which local dealers in Behar and Rajshahye cannot execute might then be executed through him.

5. It must be clearly understood that Chittagong is not a large producing district, but a mere port of foreign export for Noakhally, Tipperah, and South Backergunge; therefore orders should, as a rule, not be sent to Chittagong. What we want is to draw rice *away* from Chittagong, not to draw it to Chittagong. If it once gets there, either it will be exported, or we shall have to pay exorbitant prices to get it back from the export firms.

6. When officers are unable to get supplies either from Western or Eastern Bengal, they must indent on Calcutta. All such indents should be addressed to Mr. Toynbee, c. s., Bengal Office, who is now in charge of that department. To comply with them he will openly buy from the various firms, according as he can make the best bargain.

7. These rules will not be strictly obligatory on Court of Wards' officers, but I should like them to follow these lines as far as possible; especially as regards employing the local dealers first, if they possibly can.

8. In cases in which grain is got from a distance otherwise than through local dealers, the distant merchants will no doubt be unable to manage the local transport from the railway or river station to the works, and here will probably be the greatest difficulty. I think that direct Government arrangements should be avoided as much as possible, and effort should be made to get contractors, large or small, or even owners of carts to undertake the transport at contract rates. Certainly, I would avoid all attempt to put on the roads either carts or camels or anything else the property of Government till the whole of the indigenous carriage has been drawn out and used to the very utmost.

No. 30.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to all Commissioners of Divisions and to all Magistrate-Collectors, No. 80, dated Calcutta, November 17, 1873.

I am directed to forward copies of the papers marginally noted, being the orders of the Government of India in regard to the measures which the Government of Bengal and its officers may properly take to help the country and the people through the impending scarcity and distress.

Government of India Resolution dated 7th November 1873, (see p. 19.)
Government of India letter No. 3003, dated 13th November 1873, (see p. 41,) with minutes of a discussion at Government House, (see p. 31).

2. The orders of the Government of India being appended to this letter in full, the Lieutenant-Governor does not deem it necessary to go again over the whole ground embraced by those instructions; and he will only now state briefly how matters appear to stand, and on what special points immediate action or further report is required from local officers.

Sufficient replies have come in to circular No. 70, dated 13th October last, to show that, roughly speaking, extreme failure of crops will probably be confined to—

(1.) All the districts of the Patna Division;

(2.) All the districts of the Bhaugulpore Division, except the Sonthal Pergunnahs;

(3.) The districts of Dinagepore, Rungpore and Bograh, and parts of Rajshahye, Maldah, and Moorshedabad, in the Rajshahye Division.

In other districts there will be short crops, but in the districts and parts of districts above named the whole yield of all the food crops of 1873-74 will, unless copious rain falls at a very early date, probably be below a six-anna crop all round; and relief works on a more or less extended scale will be required soon. There are other districts or parts of districts where the crop has been short, and where relief works may be required a little later if not now, such, for instance, as the Maunbhoom District, much of the Burdwan Division, and some limited portions of the Presidency Division. But in all these districts the harvests all round are expected to give an eight-anna crop; and though food will be dear, there will, it may be hoped, be no general and complete failure of the food supply. For the present, then, and for the purposes of these orders, the tracts named in the first part of this paragraph will be treated as the distressed districts. At the same time the Commissioners of Burdwan and Chota Nagpore should watch narrowly whether large portions of the Burdwan Division and the Maunbhoom District may require to be brought within this category. Some relief measures will no doubt be necessary in these tracts where there is a large labouring population, many of whom may be without employment as soon as the rice harvest is over.

3. The policy indicated by the Government of India is briefly as follows:—

FIRSTLY.—Government will look to the natural operations of trade to import the food required to fill the deficit in the local supply in the districts where the crop has failed. By way of facilitating this traffic, the Government has reduced by one-half the railway grain rates, and has also ordered the temporary abolition of all road toll-bars, or tolls on ferries which can in dry weather be crossed by a ford or a causeway. The tolls on ferries where boats must be used to ferry carts across are to be reduced to the lowest tariff that will remunerate the boatmen. Further, the Government has put a steamer and flats to ply on the Ganges from Kooshteah to Rajshahye, and has ordered a small light draught steamer with flats to ply on the inland waters of Rajshahye. All that local officers have to do is to see that neither at ferries, nor at railway stations, nor at ghâts, nor on rivers, are any unauthorized difficulties placed in the way of, or dues levied upon, the transport of grain, and that the roads are put in order, and every facility given for traffic.

4. In places likely to be in want where there may not be traders of sufficient means and in sufficient numbers to import food to fill the deficit in the food supplies, or where for any reason the natural flow of trade is slow and difficult, the Government is ready to aid and promote the natural trade of the country by making advances of money, either—

(a) To zemindars, planters, or others, under paragraph 26 of the Government of India Resolution of the 7th November 1873, on condition that they will import grain from a distance, and sell it as near as possible at cost price, all expenses included;

(b) To traders and others of a safe and responsible character, who will take the money at a moderate interest of 6 per cent. per annum, and will engage to import grain from a distance without any conditions as to the rate or manner of their selling it.

The Lieutenant-Governor delegates to district officers in the distressed districts the power of making such advances, where necessary, up to a limit of Rs. 2,000 to any one person; and to Commissioners in those districts the power of sanctioning advances up to a limit of Rs. 10,000 to any one person. Larger advances may be specially sanctioned or a larger discretion may be allowed on a representation of the circumstances.

In the former class of advances, an undertaking must be taken from the person receiving the advance that he will sell the food purchased to his distressed neighbours as nearly as possible at cost price, and that he will repay the advance without interest before the 31st December 1874, or will produce full and complete accounts to show why Government should forego any portion of the repayment.

In the latter class of advances, it will be necessary merely to stipulate that the supplies will be drawn from districts beyond those to which the

scarcity extends and for repayment of the principal and interest by the end of 1874 or any earlier date that may be arranged. It will also be desirable to stipulate for the occasional inspection of the grain invoices (chalans) of such dealers in order to verify that they really do import their grain from a distance.

The Lieutenant-Governor has full confidence that district officers will know what persons can be trusted to act fairly by Government and by the people in respect of advances of these kinds. In regard to all advances for grain, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks it essential that it should be a distinct stipulation that the purchases should be made and the grain imported at a very early date to be specified, so that the means of carriage now existing may be utilised to the utmost. If the purchasers are allowed to delay, and the despatches do not come till February or March, all the difficulty which the Lieutenant-Governor apprehends from a block of carriage will probably arise, and the advances will do very little good.

5. **SECONDLY.**—Government recognizes that many of the labouring classes, and of all those people who have neither money nor credit, will, as soon as the reaping of the rice crop and sowing of the cold-weather crops have been completed or abandoned, and before the prospects of the spring crops have declared themselves, be unable to earn money or wages. Such people will probably before very long come upon relief works, if only we have a sufficient number of works spread over the country to give them labour near their homes as soon as they are ready to take it. The Government undertakes the relief of distress in this form, either directly by public works, or indirectly by advancing money to responsible persons who will undertake beneficial local and private works.

6. Already there have begun in the distressed districts—

- (a) The two new branches of the Soane Canal in Shahabad, while the old branches already in progress are being carried on in Patna and Gya;
- (b) The Gunduk embankment in Sarun and Chumparun;
- (c) The earthen embankments of the Northern Bengal Railway in the Rajshahye, Bograh, Dinagepore, and Rungpore Districts.

These three are works for which the Government of India will provide or advance the funds.

Farther, the Lieutenant-Governor at his recent interviews with the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye, has sanctioned the immediate commencement of work at as many points as possible, on—

- (d) The series of North Ganges emigration roads which are to lead from Sarun, Tirhoot, Monghyr, and Bhaugulpore, through the Purneah, Maldah, and Dinagepore Districts, to Rungpore, Bogra, and the Berhampooter; and thence to Assam, Cachar, and other eastern districts beyond the Berhampooter, which are in want of labour;
- (e) A variety of local roads in the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions, which the Lieutenant-Governor approved in conference with the local officers;
- (f) Local roads in the Rajshahye Division which the Lieutenant-Governor has authorized the Commissioner and Mr. Robinson to commence at once at their discretion, according to the necessity of the case.

Work has been already commenced in the Burdwan Division on—

- (g) The new cut from the Damoodah into the Kana Nuddee, by which it is hoped to procure a supply of water for the present season, as well as to make a great permanent improvement.

The Lieutenant-Governor has moreover given directions to prosecute—

- (h) Road fund roads generally throughout the country, which the local authorities have been desired to press on wherever they are wanted for the purpose of giving employment to people thrown out of work. The Lieutenant-Governor has promised that in such cases, whenever the works get beyond the means of the local funds, aid will freely be given.

7. Further details of the works to be undertaken will be settled as soon as possible.

The general statements of relief works which have been already prepared in compliance with the orders of Government, contained in circular No. 27, dated 19th June 1872, are being printed for circulation; and by a selection from, and, if necessary, addition to these, it may be hoped that sufficient employment will be everywhere provided.

8. In regard to the preparation for, and commencement of, relief works wherever they are required, it may be well to repeat here the orders passed by the Lieutenant-Governor in his note on Patna affairs, dated the 29th October, to the following effect:—

“In this view I have told the district officers that they should lose no time in commencing ordinary earthwork on roads, &c., at as many places as possible. I am glad to find that their attention has been already given to the point, and they have generally work of some kind ready which can be advantageously undertaken without delay. This they will do, giving the ordinary wages of the country. And by the aid of their general information and the index afforded by the works in hand, they will judge of the necessity for more extended works and for food relief in each part of the country. I have told them that as soon as the demand for labor exceeds the resources of their local funds, money for works, where relief is necessary, will be supplied without stint. The great thing is that they should prepare beforehand, and peg out (by a centre line only) roads and other works on which relief labour may be expended to the permanent advantage of the country.

“The Commissioner will occupy himself in settling the works in the various districts that may best be undertaken. I have authorized the entertainment of special men for the design and superintendence of works.”

9. His Excellency the Viceroy has been good enough to promise for temporary employment in Bengal and Behar as many engineers and competent young military officers as can be spared. These young officers will be available for directing relief works in the distressed districts. Meantime the local officers should, as far as possible, peg out the lines of road and set them going. The simple forms of account in which the district road fund works are kept will suffice for the relief works.

10. The Lieutenant-Governor would wish to receive from the Commissioner, as soon as they can be sent, lists of the local relief works commenced or proposed in each distressed district, with memoranda of (a) the additional establishment to be entertained upon relief works, and (b) the probable monthly expenditure upon the works, supposing the people to flock freely to them. After the list has been sent, the Lieutenant-Governor would wish to have, in the weekly narrative described below, an account of the relief works *prepared* and *actually begun* in each district. Simple forms of returns showing the operations at each relief work will shortly be circulated, as was done in 1868.

11. **THIRDLY.**—The Government recognizes that, if it collects large bodies of people together on relief works, it must provide food for them; that if the ordinary traders do not supply sufficient food close at hand, the Government must either pay the labourers partly in grain, or provide food for them to buy. We must not throw the support of a large body of labourers upon an impoverished tract where the food supplies barely suffice for the ordinary population. In fulfilment of this obligation the Government and its officers are laying in supplies of rice and other grain, which will be forwarded as soon as possible to places of storage near relief works in the distressed districts.

The restriction placed on Government officers in obtaining these supplies; is, *first*, that they should, as far as possible, operate through the trade; *secondly*, that they must get grain for such storage from a distance; and, *thirdly*, that they must not store grain except at centres of relief works where the local supply cannot be depended on to suffice for the wants of the labourers.

12. As long as local supplies are pretty cheap and plentiful, it will be best to establish and house close to each relief work dealers who will sell on their own account with or without advances. When the local rates for grain come to something like famine rates (fall below, say, ten seers per rupee), the Government must supply food. It would then be advisable to hire *bunneahs* or weighmen to sell on Government account next door to the works. It is

certainly, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, better to pay the labourers in cash, and to let them buy what they want next door, rather than actually pay their wages in grain. Colonel Baird Smith, in his report on the famine of 1861, truly points out that much inconvenience may be caused by paying wages in kind to labourers who are driven to barter at a disadvantage their grain for salt, pepper, earthen pots, and such other necessities as they are obliged to procure. It is a very simple operation to give each man the pice he has earned, and let him take as much or as little as he likes in grain at the Government store close by.

13. The first thing to be done in regard to storing grain by the local officers is to select places and sites for store-houses at relief works; to hire or construct temporary storage-houses; to determine to what railway or river-side stations Government grain should be consigned from Calcutta or elsewhere; and above all, to ascertain and arrange the means of transporting the grain from those stations to the works. Local officers should notify to Government as soon as possible the places selected for railway and river stations to which Government grain for relief works should be consigned, the points chosen for storage, the steps taken to prepare store-houses, and the arrangements for carriage which they make or have in view.

14. When Government grain has been delivered at stations on the railway or rivers, this question of transporting the grain to the places where it is to be used will remain the most important and difficult of all. The Lieutenant-Governor is aware that Commissioners and district officers in the distressed districts are considering this question, and he would wish to have an early and most careful report upon—

(a) The means of transport from the nearest railway or river-side station to the centres of relief works or distress; whether the communications are liable to interruption from the weather or any other cause; and in what way the means of transport could be increased, if necessary;

(b) The roadside stations and other places where fodder for cattle should be collected to aid transport.

15. The Lieutenant-Governor cannot too much repeat that very special attention is necessary to the need for testing and perfecting our transporting agency and appliances at as early a date as possible. He desires to point out how very much easier transport will be during the next two or three months, when roads are not choked up and fodder is abundant, than in the hot season, when there may be a rush and a panic, when the weather will be unfavourable, when forage will be very scarce, and when cattle will be dying. Sir George Campbell's great wish is to see all possible means of carriage to places where grain will be wanted fully utilised and drawn together from all available sources at once, so that Government may be in the best position when emergency comes. So far as the common wealth is concerned, it comes to much the same whether the transporting agency is used by private persons or by public officers. If the private traffic is quite fully using and drawing together all possible means of carriage, well and good; we need not seek to interfere with such a traffic. If not, the Government officers will have to promote the transport of grain to places where it will be wanted both by advances for importation and by importing for relief works. In some way we should attract and use fully all possible means of carriage to the distressed tracts.

16. **FOURTHLY.**—The Government cannot avoid facing the probability that eventually, if events turn out unfavourable, it may become necessary in many places to distribute charitable relief to the old, to children, to persons in reduced health, and to others who may be unable to do a full day's work. This must be done as soon as the necessity really arises. This business of gratuitous relief will be entrusted to relief committees in each district or sub-division, or part of a sub-division.

17. His Excellency the Viceroy, after consulting the Lieutenant-Governor and his officers, has decided that the appointment of relief committees for the purpose is, speaking generally, not, so far as we can see, necessary at present. But a discretion is left to local officers to start committees and begin relief arrangements in any tracts where such a measure may at any time prove emergently and clearly necessary.

When it is evident that such relief must be given in any district, the magistrate will call a meeting of Native and European gentlemen who may be willing to serve on relief committees; he will nominate branch committees under the sub-divisional officers or other fit persons; he will raise such private subscriptions as he can obtain; and will report his action to Government and to the Commissioner. The Government will at once make to every relief committee a grant equal to the amount of its private subscriptions, and may, when distress goes very far, be still more liberal. If a relief committee requires grain for its relief houses, before it can import for itself, the magistrate will have authority to advance all the grain he can spare from the Government stores collected for labourers on relief works.

A collection of the orders of Government issued in previous years of distress, regarding the time and manner of relief, with forms in which accounts should be kept and rendered, have been compiled, and will be digested and circulated in continuation of the present orders, with instructions applicable to the present time.

18. Meantime, though as regards charitable relief we are not to commence active operations, it is most necessary to prepare all the necessary machinery for establishing relief houses and for giving such relief (short only of collecting grain specially for the purpose), so that we may be fully prepared if the necessity arrives. His Excellency the Viceroy specially dwells on the need for doing this at once.

District officers in distressed tracts will accordingly consider immediately and carefully report at what places relief committees may eventually have to be appointed; they will have to prepare beforehand lists of gentlemen who will serve on those committees. They must especially mark out the places and sites at which the necessary sheds, godowns, and other accommodation for relief houses will be required if the scarcity should unhappily merge into famine. Each district and sub-divisional officer should prepare, and have by him for future use, a map of his district or sub-division showing the proposed sites for relief centres. They should provide for three grades of famine, thus—for comparatively mild famine there would be a few relief centres at large places or in especially impoverished tracts; if distress becomes keener, places of relief will have to be more numerous; and if unhappily the very worst comes over large tracts, the number of relief centres will have to be largely increased so as to be within reach of all. The sites for relief stations for each grade of distress should be distinguished on the district officer's map by a different mark. These sites, it should be borne in mind, must be selected after careful local inquiry and then entered on the map; they must not merely be marked on a map without knowledge of the ground. Complete plans should be drawn out showing the establishment and arrangements that will be required at each relief house as it is opened, and as far as possible men should be selected, and all that can be thought of by way of anticipation should be planned out so as to be ready to begin effectively the moment the necessity arrives.

19. **FIFTHLY.**—The Government wishes to enlist municipalities, landholders, and others, in the work of providing labour in the distressed districts. A credit of ten lakhs of rupees has been made to the Bengal Government from which minor loans of this kind can be granted for these objects. Larger loans will be referred to and speedily disposed of by the Government of India. Municipal bodies cannot, as the law stands, spend municipal money on poor-houses or on relieving the necessity of their poor. But if any municipality in the distressed districts has ready any scheme for drainage, embankment, or water-supply, or for opening out new streets and roads, such as will give labour to unskilled workmen, the Lieutenant-Governor will be very ready to consider any proposal for making a loan to such municipality under the Local Public Works Loans Act. Chairmen of municipalities must bear in mind the several heads of information required regarding applications for such loans, as set forth in the rules published at page 1218 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 29th October 1873. Already the Lieutenant-Governor has granted a large sum from provincial funds over and above the original grant towards the Burdwan city water-works scheme. The Dacca water-works scheme and the Gheor Canal loan in the same district will, it is hoped, be very shortly sanctioned. The Chuprah city embankment scheme is a type of the work that might usefully be kept in hand on the present occasion.

20. Where no schemes for works of this kind are ready or are required, then the Lieutenant-Governor suggests that many municipalities and townships should take advantage of the drought and abundance of labour to cleanse, deepen, and otherwise improve the public tanks, wells, or other sources of public water-supply within their boundaries. For such an object loans could be granted, and the labour so afforded could be of the very best kind for relief works. The Lieutenant-Governor is considering whether in any points the ordinary rules can be relaxed, and orders on the subject will, if necessary, be issued.

21. As yet the system of advances for improvements on the land (what are called in other parts of India tuccavee advances,) has not obtained much in Bengal. Recently the Lieutenant-Governor has received a report from Maunbhoom that zemindars and villagers in that district had already drawn out in small sums some Rs. 5,000 for tuccavee advances, and that more money was wanted. Reports from Bancoorah, the Sonthal Pergunnahs, and other districts, also say that the ryots and villagers generally have had the need for water-storage brought home to them very keenly this year, and that they are anxious to prosecute and extend petty works of this kind during the present year. In the Burdwan and Hooghly Districts the need of arrangements for the storage of good water and the drawing off water of good quality has long been recognized both by Government and the people.

22. The Lieutenant-Governor particularly wishes that all such works should be promoted, and that landholders and villagers should be encouraged to take out Government loans therefor, especially in the districts of the Burdwan Division. The rules for making agricultural advances were published at page 826 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 9th July 1873. Some Bengal officers have pointed out that the rules are cumbrous, and require too much detailed supervision of works for practical enforcement at a season like the present. The Lieutenant-Governor intimates that, in accordance with the permission given him by the Government of India, he will shortly issue instructions showing how far the provisions of the rules quoted above may be relaxed.

23. The Government further promises that it will be ready to defray a portion, not more than one-third, of the cost of petty village works (executed with Government loans during the period ending in July 1874) which directly improve the drinking water-supply of the people, or are shown to be of direct advantage to the general public, in any of the distressed districts, or in any part of the districts of Burdwan and Hooghly. The full loan will stand against the borrower in the Government books until the work is done; when it shall have been reported upon by Government officers, found to be good, and to contribute directly to the water-supply or general well-being of any village or tract, the Government will write off a sum not exceeding one-third of the loan as the Government share of the outlay.

24. It will be for district and sub-divisional officers to make known as far as possible the readiness of Government to grant these loans on favourable terms for village works and land improvements. They are at the same time reminded that under Rule 19, page 828 of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 9th July 1873, the Commissioner and the district officers have authority to sanction such loans with reference to superior authority up to a limit of Rs. 500 and Rs. 5,000 respectively. If the Commissioner of any distressed division can point out any particulars in which the Tuccavee Loan Rules (above cited) may at the present juncture be advantageously relaxed, the Lieutenant-Governor will be most ready to consider any recommendation in that regard. The Commissioner of Burdwan has been already asked to prepare suggestions on the subject. Sir George Campbell's belief is that in some districts (especially those where the ground undulates, like Bancoorah, Beerbhoom, and Gya,) the people will be glad to take tuccavee loans if only the intentions of Government are known to them, and if responsible Government officers give them the money promptly in full, and do not let it filter through a number of subordinate officials with many delays and difficulties.

25. Meantime, for advances for works of the kinds described in the foregoing paragraphs 19 to 24, the Lieutenant-Governor has assigned a credit of—

Three lakhs to the Patna		Division.
Two	"	Bhaugulpore
Two	"	Rajshahye
Three	"	Burdwan
One	"	Chota Nagpore

Each Commissioner will notify to his district officers, and will report to Government, how much of the divisional grant he makes available for each district of the division.

For the purchase of grain for relief works and advances to private persons for the purchase of grain, under the instructions conveyed in paragraph 4, a liberal credit has already been given to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye.

26. In regard to the promotion of emigration to the tea districts or to other parts of the country where population may be sparse (paragraph 30 of the Government of India Resolution, dated 7th November) the Lieutenant-Governor will issue instructions hereafter.

27. The Lieutenant-Governor does not wish to burden divisional and district officers with the obligation of furnishing more reports and returns than can possibly be helped. He is glad to know that officers will do their very best, whether they are called upon to report or not. But still the Lieutenant-Governor, the Government of India, and the public, must be kept informed as far as possible of what is being done, of what money is being spent, and of the state of the country generally. I am accordingly to request that a weekly narrative may be sent from each district on Mondays, bringing the account of affairs all over the district down to the latest information known at the head-quarter station on that day. The writing of this narrative had better be entrusted to one of the best officers at head-quarters, but of course the Magistrate, if he is present, will add or insert such remarks as he may see fit, and the narrative will give his views and be written in his behalf. A copy of such narrative should be sent to the Commissioner, unless he is on the spot and sees fit to dispense with its transmission. For the present a temporary clerk on Rs. 60 a month may be added to the Magistrate-Collector's office of each distressed district, for the conduct of correspondence regarding the scarcity. Copies of each narrative will be sent to the Commissioner and Magistrate-Collector concerned, from the Bengal Secretariat, as soon as they are printed, so as to facilitate reference to previous reports, and to obviate repetition.

28. The heads on which the weekly narrative should touch are—

NARRATIVE OF SCARCITY AND RELIEF IN DISTRICT FOR THE WEEK
ENDING SATURDAY, THE

(A.)—*State of the Country.*

Abundance or scarcity of supply in the bazaar.

Kind and price of grain selling at one or more specified principal marts.

Any information obtained regarding the amount and kind of grain believed to be in stock in the hands of zemindars, traders, ryots, and others.

Rainfall, if any. State of the crops. Condition of the people. Actual facts as to any *known* cases of misery and starvation. Grain thefts or robberies. Condition of any special tracts.

(B.)—*Relief Works.*

Progress in marking out or opening relief works, each work being specified; number of labourers thereon; supply of food thereat; condition of the labourers, mode of payment, and rate of wages; arrangements for tools, &c.

(C.)—*Transport of Food.*

Approximate account of private food supplies come into the district from outside during the week. Sufficiency or otherwise of means of transport. Steps taken to improve transport agency and appliances. Existence of a block at any station or point on transport routes. Working of any special transport trains or other agencies. Requirements in respect of transports, and arrangements for meeting them.

(D.)—*Storage of Government Grain at Relief Works.*

Places of storage selected. Construction of storage-houses or golahs. Arrangements for their custody and administration. Amount of food grain received. Amount sent out. Return of empty bags. Sufficiency or otherwise of stocks for Government purpose. Fresh arrangements in progress for getting more grain.

(E.)—*Advances to Private Parties, and their Results.*

Advances for purchase and storage of grain, &c. Advances to municipalities for works and description thereof. Advances to private parties for land improvements, and description thereof.

(F.)—*Charitable Relief.*

Actual relief operations commenced, if any.

Arrangements made in preparation of the machinery of charitable relief by way of precaution as above described (paragraph 18 above).

(G.)—*Financial Results of the week.*

Total expenditure from the district and sub-divisional treasury as shown in last narrative.

Detail of the above total :—

Expenditure during the week under report.

On disbursements to engineers or out-officers in charge of—

Relief work _____
 Relief work _____
 Relief work _____
 Relief work _____
 Relief work _____
 Relief work _____
 Relief work _____

On purchase of food, particulars being stated.

On disbursements to officers in charge of transport arrangements; name transporting agent.

Payment on account of establishments at storage golahs.

On account of advances for purchase of food.

Total of advances made during the week to trustworthy residents for purchase of grain;

To traders for purchase of grain;

To municipalities;

To zemindars and others for land improvements.

Total of the week's expenditure—

(a) Final payments made.

(b) Advances repayable.

Total.

Grand Total to end of the week.

The first weekly narrative should be despatched on Monday, the 1st December, and should show the expenditure up as nearly as possible to that date. Subsequent narratives would touch upon the facts only pertaining to the week under report. It will be observed that the narrative is merely for the information of Government, and is not to be a channel for asking sanction to additional establishments or expenditure of any kind.

28. Forms of accounts and register will shortly be forwarded for—

- (1.) Relief work expenditure.
- (2.) Food purchase expenditure.
- (3.) Transport expenditure.
- (4.) Grain storage expenditure.
- (5.) Charitable relief or poor-house expenditure.

Commissioners of Divisions and special relief commissioners, wherever appointed, will have power to sanction the commencement of work on any roads or other relief work which has been approved by Government. In case of any sudden local emergency they may, when they deem it necessary, sanction commencement of work, even though the particular work is not yet in the list of approved relief works; and an emergent discretion in such cases is also given to district officers, subject to weekly report of each sanction, to authorize the entertainment of—

Subordinate Engineering or Overseer establishments,
 Grain transport and reception establishments,
 Grain storage establishments,

provided that all appointments constituted under these orders are strictly temporary and subject to Government confirmation. In case any person is entertained on a salary exceeding Rs. 100 per mensem, an immediate report is to be made for sanction.

29. I am to sum up the instructions now conveyed, to which attention is specially drawn, thus :—

PARA. 2.—The “distressed districts,” as Government now believes them to be, are defined.

PARA. 3.—Officers are enjoined to see that no removable obstacle remains in the way of private grain traffic.

PARA. 4.—Money advances to private parties under two separate sets of conditions are authorized to promote private importation of food to the distressed districts.

PARA. 8.—Local officers are desired to push on the preparation of relief works in as many parts as possible of the distressed districts.

PARA. 10.—Statements of extra establishments required for, and probable expenditure on relief works, are asked for from Commissioners.

PARAS. 11 & 12.—The views of Government as to storage of grain and its sale at relief works are stated.

PARA. 13.—Officers are directed at once to select sites, and to prepare storage for reception of Government grain.

PARA. 14.—Report is called for regarding the means of transport in the district and its improvement.

PARA. 15.—The need for early testing of transporting agency is enjoined.

PARA. 18.—Officers are directed to prepare plans of arrangements and machinery for relief committees and relief centres, and to report through the Commissioner.

PARAS. 19-23.—Loans to municipalities and landholders and others for permanent improvements are to be promoted, and the terms on which these loans are obtainable should be made known to the people.

PARA. 25.—Grants are made to each division to cover their advances.

PARA. 25.—A weekly narrative is to be sent direct to Government from each distressed district.

PARA. 28.—Authority is given to Commissioner to sanction works, and to authorize, temporarily, establishments for grain storage, transport, and relief work, within certain limits, and subject to weekly report.

No. 31.

Note by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the famines of 1769-70 and 1865-66, dated November 25, 1873.

In the absence of any reliable information about stocks, and seeing the want of precision in our information about the yield of present crops, I have thought that a comparison with former years of scarcity would be the best index to our chances for the future. I believe, however, that the only years in respect of which we have any information admitting of comparison are 1769-70 and 1865-66. In regard to the former our information is necessarily very imperfect. In regard to the latter we accurately know the result, but we do not know with any accuracy the yield of the crops which led to that result. This is nowhere brought together in any detail. A good deal of information may, however, be gleaned here and there; and that is being done. Our inquiries are not complete, but I note what I can draw from the information we have so far got.

In all Bengal failures the immediate cause has been not so much general want of rain as the premature cessation of the rains. That was so in 1769 and 1865, and is so in 1873.

We know nothing of Orissa in 1769-70 (it was not then British). That was, as is well known, far the worst part of the country in 1865-66; in 1873 it is good. We must treat Orissa as abnormal.

As regards all other parts of these provinces, we may state the conditions which usually prevail. The south-eastern sea-board, Backergunge, &c., and the extreme east, Sylhet and Cachar, have never been known to fail through want of rain (when they suffer it is from floods); the other eastern districts—Dacca, Mymensing and Tipperah—though failure of rain may cause short crops, have never failed very disastrously from this cause.

In Central and Western Bengal, failure of the rains has produced scarcity and famine, but I should say that the failure has never been so extreme as in the northern districts.

Failure of the rains especially affects the districts of Northern Bengal and Behar lying along the foot of the Himalayas, where the rainfall is generally large, where rice is the chief product, but where the particular phase of the monsoon which causes these disasters seems always to lead to an extreme diminution of the rainfall. This was especially the case in 1769 and 1873, and to a less extreme degree in 1865.

All Behar, being dry, suffers more from drought than Bengal. It has generally happened that two successive short years have produced scarcity in Behar; whereas I do not find the record of two successive years of great drought in Bengal.

In comparing the years of failure of rain and consequent scarcity I will take—

1. The season of failure.
2. The antecedent circumstances which mitigated or aggravated it.
3. The succeeding circumstances which may mitigate or aggravate it.

Orissa, I have said, we must put aside as following no rule yet ascertained. It may be considered, as regards Bengal, a country beyond sea, the communication being by sea.

Taking then Bengal and Behar, the course of the season of 1769 seems to have been very like that of 1873. There was much failure of rain and of the crops in Central and Western Bengal, extreme failure in North Bengal and Behar, only a certain shortness of crops in the eastern districts, and no failure on the south-eastern seaboard.

In 1865 the failures in Central, Western and Eastern Bengal taken together may have been about equal to that in the present year. I should not yet like to say confidently which was worst; in neither year was or is the failure in these tracts of the most extreme character. In 1865 the failure in North Bengal and Behar was not so bad as the extreme failure of 1873.

On the whole, we cannot say with any precision that the season 1769 was worse or better than that of 1873: we have not sufficient information; the one somewhat resembles the other; but we may fairly hope that 1873 is not so bad as 1769.

1865 was, on the whole, not so bad as 1873, North Bengal and Behar being certainly worse in the latter year.

Coming now to the antecedent circumstances, I feel quite unable to estimate the effect of exportations and jute-growing on the prospects of modern years as compared to those of the last century, and I must confine myself to other circumstances.

It is clear that in Behar and parts of Northern Bengal a previous bad year had preceded that of 1769-70. The rains had much failed in 1768 in Behar and the North Bengal Districts; there was already serious distress in Behar early in 1769, and severe famine in July and August of that year. Rice was scarce in Calcutta in August 1769, so that it was found impossible to get two ship-loads for Madras; and very great alarm soon ensued.

1865 was also preceded by a short year in Behar; 1864-65 was certainly a bad year there, though a good year in Bengal, except where the cyclone and floods had done damage.

1873 suffers under no such disadvantages; the last year's crops were fair in Behar and good in Bengal, specially so in Northern Bengal.

As regards then the antecedent circumstances (export and jute apart) 1769-70 was much worse situated than 1865-66, and 1865-66 was worse situated than 1873.

Coming again to the succeeding circumstances, I find that the failure of the rains of 1769 was followed by a prolonged drought throughout the cold

season of 1769-70 and the early part of the hot season, which greatly aggravated the evil.

Some showers mentioned in February seem to have been very limited and partial, for later in the season (6th May 1770) it is officially reported that not a drop of rain had fallen in most of the districts for six months. There was no good rain till the end of May.

In 1865-66, on the other hand, Behar and Bengal were, as I believe, saved from a much worse calamity than actually occurred, by cold-weather rains. There was very little rain up to the end of December, but in January and February there was an unusual quantity all over the country in both Bengal and Behar, so much that the only complaints were injury from its excess and from the hail which accompanied it in some places. Throughout Behar the official accounts show (even though the November statements had been quite as gloomy as those we now receive) that the rubbee, there so important a crop, was quite a good one, except in limited tracts destroyed by hail. It should be noted, however, that though the valuable rubbee crops of Behar sufficed for rent and revenue, and probably pulled the Behar ryots through, they did not suffice to relieve the labouring classes, who, owing to dearness of prices, continued to suffer more than ever. In Bengal the demand for Orissa in 1866 probably told much on prices, and the rates were, for a short time before the new crop came in, such as must inevitably have led to severe and wide-spread famine, if they had continued long.

Seeing then how much the famine of 1770 was aggravated by want of cold-weather rain, and how much Behar and Bengal were saved in 1866 from the extremity of famine by good cold-weather rains, I more and more incline to believe that our fate still very much depends on the weather of the next three months. The cold-weather crops, though comparatively small in quantity, especially in Bengal Proper, might just turn the scale. Rain at that season would provide fodder for beast as well as some food for man, and enable vegetables, &c., to be planted and make the country altogether much easier.

To take the worst which may be possible, though I hope not probable, *viz.*, that so far the season of 1873 is as unfavorable as that of 1769, I think it is clear that the antecedent scarcity caused the failure of 1769-70 to be felt in a way which would certainly not have happened to the same degree after years of plenty. There remains farther this consolation that the dearth of 1873-74 may yet be mitigated by two things which did not mitigate the dearth of 1769-70, *viz.*, cold-weather rain and importation of food. The first depends on Providence, the second on ourselves. I have from the first urged the stoppage of exportation from the rice-producing tracts of British India to foreign countries, and importation to Bengal. The first measure has not been considered desirable; the second, I continue to urge strongly. And I put it as strongly that these importations should be immediate. They will certainly be wanted, whatever happens,—whether want of cold-weather rain leads to actual famine, or cold-weather rain reduces the misfortune to scarcity. And if supplies come now, while carriage and fodder are available, we shall both store food for our labourers before the strain comes, and draw out all our resources in the way of carriage; whereas if they do not come till later, the public and private demand for means of transport coming together, when the weather may be unfavorable and forage scarce, there will probably be a ruinous block.

FURTHER NOTE.

In comparing the different years, we must bear in mind what was brought out clearly from the official records of the India Office in the "Further Report" on the Orissa famine, that severe and terrible as was the famine of 1770 in its immediate effects, it has been very much exaggerated in the statements which have gone down as popular history, representing great part of Bengal as having then relapsed to a state of jungle, from which it did not recover for generations. So far from this being the case, the land revenue of 1771 was actually higher than it had ever been before, and continued to prosper and increase. It is clear then that the dearth of 1770 was not so great as to prevent the next crop being sown or to destroy the productive power of the country.

I note the following information regarding the season 1769-70:—

It has been said that Behar was in fact in a state of famine before the rains of 1769 commenced. When they did come, they were very late and scanty, and ceased very early. In October 1769 that province was described as "distressed beyond conception;" rice was at 10 seers per rupee, and there "were dreadful apprehensions of general famine."

As regards Bengal, it is specifically stated on 26th August 1769: "In all the districts northward of Nuddea the crops of rice will be very short indeed and there is every prospect of a dreadful calamity which God in His infinite mercy avert." There was little rain in September, and none in October, in most parts of the country.

In November 1769 the Collector-General of Calcutta thus sums up the season:

"In the southern quarter or low lands of the province they have been fortunately blessed with some rain, but to the northward the drought has been so severe as to occasion a total loss of the rice crop in some places and the greater part of it in others;" and on 23rd of the same month the Bengal Government, reporting to the Court of Directors, speaks of "the drought which has prevailed all over the country, such as the oldest inhabitant does not remember."

On the other hand, on 4th February 1770, we find this report, after mention of remissions of revenue in Behar: "In Bengal we have not found yet any failure in the revenue or stated payments."

Up to this time, the greatest distress had been in Behar and the northern districts of Bengal; but soon after it became very severe in the Calcutta and Burdwan Districts and especially in Moorshedabad. From May to August 1770 the famine in the southern districts was more severe than in the northern. These northern districts were reported to be greatly relieved by the beginning of July (how it does not appear), but at this very time rice in Moorshedabad reached the rate of 3 seers per rupee, and the distress over a large part of Southern Bengal was awful—quite like that in Orissa in 1866. It was not till September that relief came with the new crops.

The land revenue was not then under any long-term settlement leaving a large margin of zemindars' profit; it was collected in a precarious way from year to year, and remissions on account of failure of crops were part of the system. The statement of the revenues in the famine years and subsequent years is certainly somewhat astonishing after the dreadful descriptions of the famine and loss of life. But here is the official statement of the land revenue realized by the Company as taken from the accounts of the Board of Revenue at Moorshedabad—

	Sicca Rs.	As.	P.
1768	1,52,54,856	9	4
1769, the year of failure of rain which produced the famine...	1,31,49,148	6	3
1770, the year of famine and mortality...	1,40,06,030	7	3
1771	1,57,26,576	10	2

It is admitted, however, that the revenue of 1771 was raised to a point higher than ever known before by somewhat harsh measures. The season being plentiful, heavy extra cesses were laid on the ryots who remained to make up for those who had run away.

On the whole I think that, taking together the various passages which we can glean from the reports regarding this famine, and balancing the somewhat conflicting evidence afforded by the accounts of the severity of the famine on the one hand and the collection of revenue on the other, we may fairly judge that the season of 1769 was in itself a good deal worse than that of 1873; and that, taking into consideration the previous scarcity (which certainly brought on panic, dearth, and famine far earlier in 1769 than in the present year), we may be pretty confident that the whole situation in those days was much worse than at present, and that we have not now reason to apprehend so great a calamity.

Compared to 1865, if the present season is somewhat worse (it certainly is worse in North Bengal and Behar), we are at the same time free from the disadvantage of a previous bad year in Behar, and may still hope that we shall not fare worse on the whole.

The last accounts just received seem to show that in some districts the crops are turning out rather better than was expected.

At the same time we must bear in mind that in Orissa the season 1865-66 had been preceded by prosperous years, only depleted by voluntary exportation, and that the failure of the autumn crops of 1865 in that province did not appear to be greater than is now reported from great part of Bengal and Behar. Yet severe famine resulted. Also that in the southern districts of Bengal the season 1869-70 was not preceded by bad years or by scarcity other than that induced by exportations to the north and to Madras; that failure of crops in these districts in 1769 was not absolute; yet the result was what has been stated. Notwithstanding comparatively favorable antecedents, the degree of famine which occurred for a time in South Bengal in 1770 and in Orissa in 1866 was probably greater than was ever experienced anywhere in India within historical times. Bearing these things in mind then, notwithstanding our more favorable estimate of the present situation, we cannot be without anxiety and must not relax precautionary measures.

No. 32.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 28 P.S., dated November 22, 1873.

The telegrams copied in the margin have passed between the Lieutenant-Governor and the Viceroy. With reference to the request contained in His Excellency's telegram asking the Lieutenant-Governor to give by letter his reasons for anticipating such a block, I am now to explain those reasons.

Telegram from Lieutenant-Governor to Viceroy, dated 21st November 1873.
"Pray hasten urgently arrival of rice from beyond sea. I strongly warn Government if it comes later there will be a ruinous block. I find it impossible to get any large quantity in Bengal without disturbing market and stopping private trade."

Telegram from Viceroy to Lieutenant-Governor, dated 21st November 1873.
"Rice being shipped weekly from Burmah; explain further by letter your apprehension of block, as to time and place, also amount of purchases you have made and expect making."

2. When the rice of the coming harvest is reaped in December and the early months of next year, it will come into the market from all quarters at once—from Backergunge, from Orissa, from places beyond sea, Burmah, and Madras, &c. At the same time grain will be imported from the North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces. All these operations will take place at a time when, if there is not rain, forage will be exhausted, cattle dying and roads bad, and soon after the weather will become hot. The Lieutenant-Governor fears that if, under these disadvantages, it becomes necessary to transport large consignments of grain amounting to 50,000, 100,000 or even 200,000 tons, we shall not be able to do it.

3. In the mean time very little comparatively is doing. As regards facility and certainty of transport, every maund carried now is, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks, worth half a dozen waiting for carriage later. Besides, there is the advantage of drawing out and preparing means of transport, before pressure comes, by creating a demand for it.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor would gladly buy rice in Bengal at once for the sake of utilizing the means of transport now lying idle and of storing grain; but whenever the Government goes into the market it is met by the cry that no large quantities can be purchased without wholly disturbing the market. This is certainly the case in Calcutta, the principal market of these parts. His Honor would not object to paying an enhanced price; indeed, he thinks it would be worth while to do so; but the immediate result of largely raising the price by Government operations would undoubtedly be to stop the private internal trade which, if not now very large, is still considerable and wholesome. The last trade to be stopped by such a rise of price would be the foreign trade, because people who come to Bengal for rice want a quantity only obtainable here. Their agents have orders and will carry them out, buying rice in spite of a rise, and will send it out of the country unless the Government buys it back from them at an utterly exorbitant price. The up-country dealers in whose hands the internal trade is, are on the other hand more limited and cautious; they none of them know what is going to happen; as long as the price of grain

in Bengal enables them to make a profit by carrying it to Behar they carry it; but if the Government causes a sudden rise of price, their agents' limit will be passed and all their operations will be stopped. For these reasons the Lieutenant-Governor feels that he cannot, in the present state of the Bengal grain market, attempt to buy very largely in it.

5. But in the North-Western Provinces the Lieutenant-Governor would buy largely at once. Ordinarily there is little grain trade from the North-Western Provinces to Bengal, except in wheat. Trade in jowaree, bajra and the other common food grains of the North-Western Provinces would be comparatively new, and that the Lieutenant-Governor thinks should be taken up largely and at once. So also in Burmah where the principal trade is an export trade, we need not dread delaying that trade. If we go into the active markets and buy at once, it will be clear gain. To delay, I am to submit, is not only unfortunate from the point of view of transport, but will let the rice get into the hands of the export firms who will only sell it back to us at exorbitant prices.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor is aware that very large quantities of grain may not be obtained at once in the Burmah markets, but he has understood that the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah could get very considerable quantities before the next harvest. At any rate, I am to say the Lieutenant-Governor is quite clear that all the grain that comes in now is worth far more than it would be if it came later, and further that if all our supplies come together, there will be, as he has said before, a ruinous block. He would much like to have rice from beyond sea for immediate despatch to Government relief works.

7. There is one other point on which the Lieutenant-Governor would ask leave to submit his opinion. If rice in any large quantity should be ordered from Burmah, then the question of freight from Burmah to Calcutta will arise. Up to a certain point freight could no doubt be engaged by the Chief Commissioner. But the Lieutenant-Governor has been informed that very much of the Burmah rice goes away to Europe in Italian and other vessels which could not readily be diverted to Calcutta. Again, sailing vessels will probably occupy more than thirty days in going and coming between Calcutta and Rangoon, whereas steamers could do two trips each way per month. It is understood that there are rarely many steamers open to engagement at the Burmah ports; whereas at the present moment freights in Calcutta are very low, and the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised that it might be possible for Government to engage steamers at very reasonable rates to make trips between Burmah and Calcutta during the next three or four months, and that later this would be much more difficult.

No. 33.

*Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3402, dated November 29, 1873. **

I am directed by the Hon'ble the President in Council to acknowledge receipt of your No. 28 P.S. of the 22nd (see above, No. 28 of this series) regarding the reasons for anticipating a block or accumulation of grain for the distressed districts awaiting transport.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor may rest assured that the importance of avoiding such block or accumulation is fully recognized by the Government of India.

Information has been received to the effect, that the grain purchased for the Government of India in ports beyond the limits of Bengal is being shipped with all practicable expedition. The Government of Bengal has been authorized to expedite, in such manner as it may deem best, the despatch of such supplies up-country as soon as they shall arrive in Calcutta, reporting thereafter as soon as possible the place of local distribution for the information of the Government of India. A preliminary report from the local Government on this subject has been already received, and will be separately acknowledged.

The supply thus provided is as much as the Government of India deems necessary to be provided at this moment for the imperial public works in the

* The answer to this letter is given on page 87.

distressed districts, according to present estimates and subject to such modification of estimates as the course of events may induce us to make.

If the Government of Bengal should find difficulty in obtaining within its own provinces supplies sufficient for the local works, the Government of India would be prepared to assist in obtaining additional supplies from other places. But from the special narrative for the week ending on the 28th November, it would appear that the Lieutenant-Governor has arranged for the purchase of 600,000 maunds in all, equal to 22,040 tons, of which about 120,000 maunds are to come from the North-Western Provinces, and the rest from Bengal and Orissa. It would further appear that His Honor does not contemplate further purchases at present. And it may apparently be hoped, that out of the above total of 600,000 maunds, about two-thirds will reach the central stations of the distressed districts before the beginning of January.

The Government of India, would, however, desire to receive an estimate of the probable quantity of grain required for the local purposes as duly authorized, and of the amounts to be obtained from Bengal and from other provinces respectively. Such estimates would, in the first instance, be framed upon the best data now available, and would be subject to modification hereafter, as events may develop themselves.

It is satisfactory to observe that the Lieutenant-Governor has been able to effect the purchases through firms of good standing, which procedure is, in the opinion of the Government of India, preferable to the employment of an individual agent, which latter course would be open to objection.

I am to acknowledge with thanks the useful suggestions conveyed in the 6th para. of the letter under acknowledgment regarding freight between the Burmese ports and Calcutta. The matter has received, and is receiving, the attention of the Government of India, in communication with the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah.

So far as concerns the transport by rail to the stations in the distressed districts, the Government of India trusts that there will be no difficulty. The apprehensions of the Government of India are directed towards the prospect of despatching the grain from the railway stations into the interior of the country. The important subject will doubtless engage the constant attention of the local Government.

No. 34.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3012, dated Calcutta, November 13, 1873.

I am directed to forward, for the information of the Government of Bengal, copy of a letter No. 3911, dated 13th instant, addressed to the agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company*, directing them to deliver to the order of the Government of Bengal all consignments of rice received by them on Government account from British Burmah or Madras.

2. The Governor General desires me to request that the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor will give instructions for landing and despatching to the interior all rice that may be thus imported and cause it to be stored in such manner and at such places as may seem proper. His Excellency presumes that it will not be necessary to make any very urgent arrangements for this purpose just at present, and he is anxious that the means for the carriage of grain up-country should, as far as possible, be first made freely available for the movement of produce in the ordinary course of trade. If the rolling stock of the railways is not already absorbed, there can be no objection to the Government grain being forwarded by this means of conveyance. But if there is any pressure upon the railway resources by private traders, it should be considered whether it will not suffice to forward the Government rice by river.

8. A careful account should be kept of the appropriation of all rice imported by sea in order that the cost may hereafter be properly distributed among the several accounts to which the cost of all measures undertaken for the relief of distress will hereafter be debited.

* This letter requested the agents of the company to deliver all consignments of rice received by their steamers to the Government of Bengal.

No. 35.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3249, dated Fort William, November 24, 1873.

Referring to my letter No. 3012, dated 13th November (see above No. 34 of this series), I am directed by the Governor General in Council to request that, with the permission of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor, you will, as soon as possible, report, for the information of the Government of India, the plan which the Government of Bengal has devised for the distribution of the rice imported from beyond seas, and the places where it is proposed to store it in readiness for actual consumption.

No. 36.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 3626, dated Calcutta, November 25, 1873.

With reference to your letter No. 3249, dated 24th November, (see above, No. 35 of this series,) I am directed to submit that, under present arrangements, the rice imported * from beyond the sea is sent up-country for storage at imperial works only. It was understood that foreign rice should not be sent to the Soane Canal for storage, as the Government of India hoped to be able to fill the stores there from the North-Western Provinces. Accordingly, foreign rice is being sent for storage at the Gunduck embankment, and on the Northern Bengal Railway works only.

2. Rice intended for storage on the Gunduck embankment is sent by railway to the Patna Ghât station, and thence by country boat up the Gunduck to places of storage. As yet only a few thousand bags have gone, and they can hardly have got far on their way towards storing places in Sarun and Chumparun. Reports have not yet been received of the sites selected for store-houses on the Gunduck works, or of the erection of store-houses, but the Lieutenant-Governor has every confidence that the storage will be done properly and in good time; and he sent off the rice at once, so that the means of transport might be utilized at once, and rice be stored on the works as soon as possible. Mr. Bayley has secured storage room at the Patna Ghât station in case rice has to wait there for boats.

3. Rice intended for storage on the Northern Bengal Railway works is at present being sent by three different routes, namely,

(1) To Goalundo by the Eastern Bengal Railway, and thence in boats up the Oorasaugor to store-houses which are being made at Sultanpore and Nowgong on the Jamuna and Atrai Rivers. The small steamer *Flame* with her two barges started from Goalundo some days ago up this river with a cargo of rice.

(2) To Kooshtea by the Eastern Bengal Railway, and thence by native boats to the Oorasaugor as before; at Kooshtea the Lieutenant-Governor has placed the *Teesta* steamer with two flats to carry rice between Kooshtea and the mouth of the Oorasaugor or else between Kooshtea and Godagiri, at the mouth of the Mahanuddee. As yet we have not ascertained for certain how the *Teesta* can best be employed, but Mr. Molony, the Commissioner of Rajshahye, anticipates that as small boats (of 200 to 400 maunds) only can go up the Mahanuddee and Oorasaugor, the *Teesta* and her flats will have to ply between Kooshtea and the mouths of these rivers.

(3) By railway to Rajmehal, and thence by cart from the opposite side of the river to the Northern Bengal Railway near Dinagepore. Major Lindsay, who recently went to Dinagepore, wrote that there was carriage on that road, and wished to have it tried; so 5,000 maunds of rice are being sent to Rajmehal to Major Lindsay's forwarding agent there. We do not yet know how these three routes will answer, nor can the Lieutenant-Governor say for certain that store-houses have yet been prepared. But Mr. Molony, who is in Dinagepore,

* 14,402 bags of 225lbs. to 230lbs. each have arrived in Calcutta up to date per steamers *Dacca*, *Chaldea*, *Moulmein*, and *Mahratta*.

is arranging all these matters, and in a few weeks' time we shall know how the several routes answer. Meanwhile each route is receiving a practical trial as soon as possible.

4. As yet no foreign rice has been sent to the Soane Canal for storage, but a certain amount of Indian rice (5,000 maunds a week) was being sent until the receipt of your instructions mentioned above. Mr. Levinge, the superintending engineer, was preparing store-houses at Buxar and at other places on the works.

5. In case the Government of India may desire to know what arrangements are making for storing grain on local relief works, I am to explain that as yet Government grain has been sent—

(1) To Caragola, opposite Sahebgunge, on the railway, whence it will be transported by carts to Dengraghât, where a store-house has been made on the Mahanuddee. Six hundred carts were collected at Caragola for this grain some days ago, and some of them must have started on their first trip by now.

(2) To Bhaugulpore Railway station, whence it will be carried across the river, and then taken on carts to Soopole and Mudheypoorah, the two northern sub-divisions of Bhaugulpore. The Commissioner reports that on this route he can carry 10,000 maunds a week. Some 5,000 maunds have already been sent to him, and the carriage in this direction has still to be tried. The Superintendent of Works was at Soopole a few days ago, and will have arranged for store-houses.

(3) To Luckeeserai Station, whence it will be transported in carts to storing places in the south of the Monghyr District to store-houses on the works there. As yet we have not heard the result of the consignment of rice sent to Luckeeserai.

(4) To Monghyr Station, whence it will be carried across the Ganges to works in Northern Monghyr. Some 2,000 maunds went to this station a few days ago; the results are not yet known.

(5) To Raigunge on the Mahanuddee, at the northern corner of Maldah, and on the border between Dinagepore and Purneah. The grain for the store-house here, which is to be a large one, goes to Kooshtea by railway, and thence by steamer and boat up the Mahanuddee.

6. It will be seen that this Government and its officers are trying as many available routes as they can. As yet the local officers write very confidently from Behar that they will be able to provide locally as much carriage as is required. From Dinagepore, too, it is said that there will be plenty of carts available. But it is at present too early to say how far the transport arrangements succeed or fail.

No. 37.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3404, dated November 29, 1873.

I am directed by the Hon'ble the President in Council to acknowledge your No. 3626 of the 25th November (see above, No. 36 of this series), regarding the arrangements made for the despatch and storage of grain for the service of the public works in the distressed districts. The arrangements appear to be in general accordance with the authorization conveyed in the Governor General's telegram of the 22nd November*. In the present report some details are unavoidably wanting, which the Government of India will be glad to receive as soon as they can be submitted.

2. In reference to your concluding para. 6, I am to state that the Government of India, while observing with satisfaction the reports of the district officers as to the present abundance of country carriage in some of the distressed districts, cannot fail to look forward to the time which may arrive but too soon, when this carriage may begin to prove deficient; and to this prospect the special attention of the local Government is invited.

* Telegram from the Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated Agra, November 22 1873.

Despatch Burmah rice to works in the interior on your own authority, and then report places and plans of local distribution as soon as possible, for information of Government of India.

No. 38.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3328, dated Calcutta, November 26, 1873.

I am directed to request that, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, you will be good enough to furnish as soon as possible a statement of the various temporary appointments relating to the scarcity which are being, or are likely to be, created in the Civil Department, Bengal, and which will need the sanction of the Government of India, whether they be chargeable to the imperial or to the provincial revenues.

2. The Government of India is prepared to receive favorably any proposal which the Lieutenant-Governor wishes to make. But for every special appointment, the sanction of the Government of India must be obtained, and the salary proposed must be approved in this department. Perhaps a schedule might be submitted of appointments of this nature and of the relief establishments which are required.

3. I am directed at the same time to state that it is of great consequence that some general estimate should be formed, even approximately, of the cost chargeable to the ordinary revenues on account of the scarcity in 1873-74 and 1874-75 for insertion in the estimates. The Lieutenant-Governor may not be able just yet to form such an estimate, but a beginning should be made as soon as possible, and every known item relating to the scarcity should be noted down. The cost chargeable to public works extraordinary and to provincial revenues should also be estimated and reported to the Government of India.

No. 39.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3577, dated Fort William, December 8, 1873.

In reference to letter No. 3328 of the 26th ultimo, asking for an early estimate of the temporary appointments and establishments required by reason of the scarcity, I am desired to state that the President in Council is anxious to receive this schedule so far as it can be prepared up to date.

No. 40.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 3888, dated Calcutta, December 11, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 3328, dated 26th November, asking this Government to submit statement of the various temporary appointments relating to scarcity which are being or are likely to be created in the Civil Department, and which will need the sanction of the Government of India, and also desiring to have some approximate estimate of the cost likely to be incurred on account of the scarcity.

2. As regards this last, I am directed to say that the Lieutenant-Governor will separately address the Government of India. In my letter No. 46PS of 2nd December was submitted an estimate of the preliminary supply of grain which the Lieutenant-Governor desires to lay in before the end of January, viz., 18,75,000 maunds. If we take the price of the grain delivered in the distressed districts to be on an average Rs. 4 per maund, the total charge for that grain in the present year, 1873-74, will be Rs. 75,00,000 (£750,000). As regards other items, consideration is necessary. Supposing an equal quantity to be purchased in February and March, the cost in 1873-74 for grain purchased would be £1,500,000.

3. The establishments to be eventually entertained will of course depend on the degree of scarcity which may accrue and the extent of the measures eventually undertaken. Meantime I am desired to submit the following detail of the establishments which the Lieutenant-Governor has entertained, or proposes shortly to entertain. His Excellency the Viceroy and the Government of India have been pleased to express an opinion that, in accordance with the advice of the Orissa famine commissioners and with the experience of other Governments which have had to combat famines, very full and sufficient provision should be made for strengthening the district and divisional staff of the distressed tracts, and for enabling the local Government to control and direct, and to give an account of what is being done. In this view the Lieutenant-Governor has estimated for a sufficient addition to his secretariat staff; for a strong central relief committee when the time comes; for a relief commissioner or other competent deputy to each Commissioner of a distressed division; and for at least two extra officers to each distressed district. He has not asked for extra allowances for the district officers or for any superior officers; but he has asked for special allowances (to include all travelling allowances) in behalf of the officers who are to assist the Commissioners and also nine of the special officers posted to each district for relief work. Schedule A appended to this letter shows the total monthly cost of these officers to be Rs. 26,748. Into this sum is reckoned the full salary of officers from the North-Western Provinces, of the special officers posted to divisions, and of the officers attached to the central relief committee or to the Government headquarters. But in the case of officers taken from the civil staff, the police or other departments, and specially posted to districts for relief work only, the proposed extra allowances only are debited to "Scarcity."

The Lieutenant-Governor proposes to class the officers employed to assist the district officers in four grades, receiving respectively Rs. 500, Rs. 300, Rs. 200, and Rs. 100 per mensem, which is to cover travelling and other expenses.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor thinks it will suffice to reckon that two or three months' charges for these officers will fall into the accounts of 1873-74, and that six months' charges will fall into the accounts of 1874-75. Some of these establishments may not be absolutely required until February 1874, or even later; but some again have been employed since the beginning of November and December 1873. According to this estimate the total cost for these establishments may be—

	Rs.
In 1873-74 (two months' charge)	53,496
In 1874-75 (six months' charge)	1,60,488

5. If the proposals made in Schedule A (see p. 69), or any modification thereof, be sanctioned, the Lieutenant-Governor would ask permission to employ officers within these limits as occasion may arise, with the proviso that he may employ fewer men in the higher grades and more in the lower grades, so long as the total estimate is not exceeded in any month without further sanction.

6. *Secondly.*—The Lieutenant-Governor anticipates that we may expect to require extra clerks and accountants; and also store-keepers, guards, and peons for grain store-houses, or at places for the collection of grain consignments, as per Schedule (see p. 71) B. The total cost of the establishments, as at present estimated, is Rs. 11,057 a month—

	Rs.
Two months of this charge for 1873-74	22,150
Six ditto ditto for 1874-75	66,450

7. The Lieutenant-Governor would not be understood to say that the total charges for relief expenditure on civil offices of all kinds will come within the figures now offered; but he would hope to keep it within this amount for the present at any rate, and provided that the area of distress does not very greatly extend.

8. In regard to—

(a) the possible relief works expenditure,

(b) the possible expenditure for purchase and transport of grain,

the Lieutenant-Governor will hereafter make some attempt at an estimate. For the present, however, the Lieutenant-Governor merely submits the appended schedules showing that—

	in 1873-74.	in 1874-75.
(1) Civil appointments may cost Rs. 26,748 a month, or	51,496	1,60,488
(2) Clerks, store-keepers, and petty officials may cost Rs. 11,075 a month, or	22,150	66,450
Total ...	73,646	2,26,938

The Lieutenant-Governor apprehends that he may have to ask the Government of India to set aside a competent officer of the Account Department to take charge of all the accounts of rice purchase or transport extra establishments, and *all* "scarcity" expenditure not chargeable to public works. This officer should work in the Accountant General's Office, under the Accountant General, in concert with the Secretary to this Government in the Relief Department. If some such small separate office of account can be organised and relief expenditure of all kinds can be audited and brought to account as it occurs, very great future trouble to officers and possible loss to Government will be saved. In the Orissa famine, for want of some such arrangements over a lakh of rupees on one account alone had to be written off as unexplainable or irrecoverable. Probably if an officer of the Financial Department could be made available, the whole cost of the audit and accounting establishment would not exceed Rs. 500 or Rs. 600 a month.

ENCLOSURES IN No. 40.

SCHEDULE A.

Temporary Civil Appointments likely to be required during the Scarcity of 1873-74 and 1874-75.

Character of appointment, reason for its creation, with details, and explanation of the proposed salary or extra allowance.	Number of appointments of the class.	Proposed salary or allowance debitable to scarcity.	Total monthly cost, less any corresponding saving.
Secretariat and Head-Quarter Offices.			
		Rs.	Rs.
At present the Lieutenant-Governor has been obliged to set aside one of his Secretaries for scarcity, &c., work only: he has placed the Junior Secretary in charge of the Judicial and Political Departments, and proposes to allow him Rs. 1,000 for the duty. Mr. Mackenzie has during the last two years officiated as Secretary for about a year, when he drew an acting allowance of over Rs. 1,200, so that Rs. 1,000 a month is a fair acting allowance. Another officer would act as Junior Secretary in Mr. Mackenzie's place, who will receive	1	1,000	1,000
When the central relief committee is established, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes to make Mr. Schalch its President, and to set free Mr. Schalch's time for the duty. By this time it is probable that Mr. R. Thompson, Secretary to the Government, may have returned and relieved Mr. Mackenzie. In that case the Lieutenant-Governor would propose the following arrangements:—Mr. Dampier will do the revenue work of both the Secretariat and of the Land Revenue Board, receiving deputation allowance as Officiating Member of the Board		666	666
In this case Mr. Bernard's full pay as an extra Secretary must be charged to famine, less Rs. 1,000 already estimated for Mr. Mackenzie,—Rs. 3,166—Rs. 1,000 =	1	666	666
Mr. Mackenzie will then have to perform extra duties: for this requirement an extra deputation allowance of Rs. 500 must be estimated	1	2,166	2,166
A very competent officer will have to be appointed as Secretary to the relief committee. In 1866 he was an officer on Rs. 2,500 a month, and the Lieutenant-Governor would be unwilling to make a smaller provision now	1	500	500
At present Mr. Toynbee, c.s., who was employed on grain transport duty during the Orissa famine of 1866, is now employed in the receipt and transport of grain. His salary is Rs. 900 a month, and it is proposed to classify him with the second grade of extra district officials of his own service, who are to get famine allowances. That will cost	1	2,500	2,500
And extra allowance to an officer doing Mr. Toynbee's work	1	300	300
Under Mr. Toynbee at Calcutta will be for the whole time an assistant, to be borrowed from the marine office, on Rs. 400 a month	1	200	200
Also he will employ on occasions preventive officers (whose places will have to be supplied) to keep tally of bags of grain: take their extra cost at about Rs. 100 a month; three such officers	1	400	400
Then Mr. Geddes, c.s., is employed at present in editing famine papers, which are to be published for the guidance of our officers. Hereafter he will have other work, but as he possesses experience of the Orissa famine, he will be retained in famine work. In view of his standing in the service and of the expenses of Calcutta, he will be classified with highest grade of extra district officers. His substantive salary is Rs. 900; so he will get Rs. 1,400	3	300	300
	1	500	500
Commissioners.			
In the Rajshahye Division alone does the Lieutenant-Governor propose at present to employ a special relief commissioner, and there will be little extra cost, since the deputation of a district magistrate to lay out the proposed system of roads from west to east was already sanctioned. To that officer, Mr. Robinson, who has been already deputed in accordance with this arrangement, he would give a special allowance of Rs. 500 in addition to his salary as 1st-grade magistrate, Rs. 2,250	1	2,750	2,750
In the Patna Division the present position is that the Deputy Commissioner of Wards' Estates, whose salary is at present paid from Wards' Estates, is employed wholly on Commissioner of Wards' work. He will still do some Wards' Estate work. But the Government ought now to bear one-half the cost of his salary while he does famine work as well. Possibly a full relief commissioner may eventually be required	1	1,000	1,000
To the Bhaugulpore Division the Lieutenant-Governor has deputed as famine assistant under the Commissioner a joint-magistrate, who has in previous years officiated with efficiency as magistrate of one of our most important districts. He would be placed in the 1st grade of famine district officials, and would, if the Government of India be pleased to accept the classification, receive Rs. 500 a month deputation. As he is of the standing and calibre for an acting district charge, this deputation will not be excessive	1	500	500

ENCLOSURES IN No. 40.—(continued.)

SCHEDULE A.—(continued.)

Character of appointment, reason for its creation, with details, and explanation of the proposed salary or extra allowance.	Number of appointments of the class.	Proposed salary or allowance debitable to Scarcity.	Total monthly cost, less any corresponding saving.
		Rs.	Rs.
District Officials.			
The special officers to be detailed to districts might, the Lieutenant-Governor proposes, be arranged in four classes—			
I.—Active officers, who are substantive joint-magistrates and are eligible for acting districts, might receive a special allowance of Rs. 500 to cover all charges for travelling and deputation. In this class there might be perhaps four officers	4	500	2,000
II.—Active officers, who are permanent or acting joint-magistrates, who will have a great deal of extra duty and much travelling, an allowance of Rs. 900 in addition to the salary allowances they have been drawing for the previous six months. There may, including the officers from the North-Western Provinces, be ten such officers	10	300	3,000
III.—Ditto ditto of lower standing or grade. There may be ten such officers on Rs. 200 deputation	10	200	2,000
IV.—Young officers whose duties will be stationary or nearly stationary at relief depôts, places of receipt and despatch of grain, &c. There may be five such officers, who might receive Rs. 100 a month	5	100	500
North-West Provinces Officers.			
The substantive salaries of the extra officers to be received from the North-Western Provinces must be reckoned. Six officers on an average salary of Rs. 700 a month	6	700	4,200
Non-Distressed Districts.			
Outside the area which the Government has already decided must be reckoned as distressed districts: there may be required in some parts relief works, and possibly there may have to be in places relief houses and small grain stores even in these districts. At any rate there will be much extra work and correspondence. Already the Lieutenant-Governor has been obliged to give the Commissioner of Burdwan a famine assistant; to permit the magistrates of Burdwan and Hooghly to take on extra sub-deputies for examining into projects for which advances under the Land Improvement Act are required, for these non-distressed districts the Lieutenant-Governor fears he must estimate a requirement of—			
2 Additional district officials of the 3rd grade	2	200	400
1 Additional district official for the Commissioner of the 2nd grade	1	300	300
6 Additional sub-deputies on Rs. 150, including travelling allowance	6	150	900
Total of additional civil appointments which may be required per mensem	...		26,748

ENCLOSURES IN No. 40.—(concluded.)

SCHEDULE B.

Statement of Clerks, Accountants, Store-keepers, Peons, and other similar officials required for Civil Officers and for Granary Requirements.

Designation of Office.	Accounts of its necessity.	Number required.	Salary of each office.	Total cost per mensem.
			Rs.	
Clerks...	For extra correspondence, for accounting in the chief offices, such as the secretariat, the central relief committee, Commissioner's office, the central grain transporting offices, there will be required (say) 20 clerks and accountants on salaries from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200; some of the accountants will be also store-keepers and will have to give security	20	150 . (on an average)	3,000
Clerks and big store-keepers.	For secretariat, Commissioner's office, central relief committee's office, for magistrate-collector's office, for district committees' offices, for some sub-divisional offices, and for the larger district store-houses, will be required for 14 districts and the head-quarters' officers up to two for each district, and 12 for the supervising offices	40	80 (average)	3,200
Petty store-keepers	Store-keepers of petty store-houses and gomasthas for transport arrangements on salaries ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 25 for 14 districts; about 100 will be required	100	20 (average)	2,000
Petty officials made store-keepers or transport agents.	A great many of the smaller stores will be managed by petty officials, such as pound-keepers, head constables, constables, excise mohurrirs, school-masters, and others. To such men it will be necessary to make some small allowance varying from Rs. 3 to Rs. 8 a month. There may have to be as many as 300 such appointments. The salaries of the accountants will be debited to the police or any other department to which they may belong, and, as far as possible, the public service will be carried on without providing any substitutes	300	5 (a month, average)	1,500
Peons, guards for store-houses, messengers.	As far as possible the work of watching the store-houses, conveying grain, &c., will be done by police constables. But the police will after all have their own work; crime may become rife, the masses of men congregated on the works may have to be watched, and it is pretty certain that a considerable number of men of this class must be employed on salaries of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5 a month.	250	5½ (average)	1,375
TOTAL	...	...		11,075

No. 41.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3690, dated December 12, 1873.

I am directed by the President in Council to acknowledge your No. 3888 of the 11th December (see p. 66), regarding the temporary establishments of various grades in the civil branches proposed to be entertained by reason of the scarcity in Bengal.

2. The appointments and salaries proposed in the schedule attached to your letter under acknowledgment appear to be suitable. The Government of Bengal is accordingly authorised to act on these proposals. The Accountant General of Bengal will be instructed accordingly within the limits of this schedule. He will also be directed to pass any temporary salaries which may have been incurred already within the limits of this schedule, from such dates as may be assigned by the local Government.

3. The Government of India, while willing that all due assistance should be afforded to the Bengal establishments on this occasion, yet desires that all reasonable economy be practised, and that no appointment may be created prematurely. Thus the sanction now accorded need not in any case be acted on until the Lieutenant-Governor is satisfied that the necessity has arisen. On the other hand, absolute efficiency under the circumstances of the scarcity must be secured.

4. If any further appointments should become necessary, a previous report should, as a rule, be made to the Government of India. But if any emergency should arise, the local Government or the local authorities may employ such extra aid as may be imperatively necessary, report being immediately made to the Government of India.

5. As regards accounts, the suggestion made in your 8th paragraph will be communicated to the Comptroller General, with an instruction to make such arrangements as may be necessary under the circumstances.

No. 42.

Letter from the Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association, to C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated November 21, 1873.

The committee of the British Indian Association have watched with intense anxiety the prospects of the crops of the present season in the Bengal Provinces, and have been filled with alarm and grief at the disastrous effects which the early cessation of the rains has produced. So far as they have been able to judge, the calamity impending over the country threatens to be much more wide-spread, and consequently much more serious than in 1865-66.

2. In 1865-66 the brunt of the struggle was confined to Orissa, containing only three millions of people. It is true that some tracts of Behar, Chota Nagpore, and the metropolitan districts also suffered, but suffering in those tracts was not so intense or protracted as in the Orissa Districts. In the present year nearly the whole of Bengal, Behar, and Chota Nagpore has suffered from the drought, covering an area of 180,857 square miles, and containing a population of nearly 59 millions. In 1865-66, the Eastern and Northern Districts, which are the great rice-producing and rice-exporting districts of Bengal, were well off, and their surplus produce was available for the afflicted people. In the present year most of these districts will have hardly enough for home consumption, while some, such as Dinajpore, Rungpore, Bogra, and parts of other districts, will require the importation of food. The position of the whole province of Behar and of a considerable portion of Chota Nagpore is most critical. The

same remarks apply to several parts of the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions. To add to the gravity of the crisis, the prospects of the cold-weather crops are far from cheering, while the whole of the Benares Division in the North-Western Provinces and parts of the Central Provinces and Oude are said to be suffering from the drought.

3. It is of course difficult to form an accurate estimate of the probable out-turn of the amun crop, but it is doubtful whether, taking the good and bad districts together, excepting Orissa, the general yield will be a six-anna crop upon the whole. Nothing would give the committee greater satisfaction than to see their estimate exceeded by the actual result; but after having given the subject their best and most serious attention, they are sorry to own that they do not feel justified in coming to a more sanguine conclusion. They are fully alive to the mischief which an alarmist view of things is calculated to produce upon the popular mind, fraught as it is with dismay and despondency, but at the same time they cannot but submit that when the whole country is pervaded with a deep gloom it would be dangerous to hold out delusive rays of hope, which experience and present knowledge do not justify one in thinking would be realized at the hour of trial.

4. While such is the prospect of the present crop, the hope of tiding over the difficulty with the aid of the stores of previous years is, indeed, very feeble. It is true that Bengal has always been regarded as the land of plenty, but it is not the less true that a country seldom grows food crops or any other crops much in excess of demand both at home and abroad. Rice is a perishable article, and it is not therefore the interest of the agriculturist to store it in large quantities by way of provision against future contingencies. Whatever might have been the case in former years, the impetus which trade and industry have received under the auspices of British rule, has taught the producer the value of money, and as a capitalist does not like to keep his money idle, so he does not like to have his rice locked up from a dread of possible want in a bad year. There are certainly people who keep stores of rice, such as mahajuns who deal in rice, who feed the ryot after his stock is exhausted and till the new crop is harvested, and a few substantial men, and these stores generally suffice to carry the people through the harvest year. If any doubts should exist on this point, the experiences of the Orissa famine ought to set them at rest. When that calamity occurred, as usual on such occasions, great stress was at first laid upon old stores, and loud and bitter cries were raised against the supposed hard-hearted men who would not open their stocks to save their famishing fellow-creatures, but the futility of these cries was made patent when the grim reality came. Judging therefore from experience and from their knowledge of their countrymen, the committee submit that it would not be safe to rely upon the delusive hope of old stores.

5. In the midst of this general gloom the people are cheered up by one ray of hope. They observe with the deepest feeling of gratitude that those to whose hands Providence has committed their destinies have been moved to the utmost anxiety, care, and compassion from a contemplation of the terrible disaster impending over them, and they feel confident that nothing will be left undone, which may be accomplished with the resources of their vast continent, seconded by the means and appliances of the mighty nation which rules this land, to save them from starvation, disease, and death. The promptitude, foresight, determination, and sympathy, which his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General, and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, have evinced in organizing preliminary measures to meet the coming crisis, have greatly sustained their drooping hopes and their sunken hearts.

6. From the enquiries the committee have instituted, and the information in their possession, they conclude that there will be a very large deficiency of food for the country during next year, and they are strongly of opinion that in this state of things it cannot be advisable to allow the export of food grains from British India. Considerations of prudence, sound policy, and humanity, the committee respectfully submit, alike require that whatever food which may be available in the country, should be kept in it. The committee are well aware that the question is of grave importance, and involves many serious considerations. The requirements of foreign communities, the obligations of merchants, the advantages to be derived by particular sections of the people of

this country by sales at high prices to foreigners, are matters which should not be looked at lightly; but in a crisis like the present, in which the lives of millions are at stake, they must be allowed to be outweighed. It is true that high prices will check the export of rice, but by the time they reach the prohibitory figure large quantities will have been shipped away, and then high prices will avail little in giving the benefit of restraining export. It is also observable that differences in the value of money and consequently of staple articles of food are so great in different parts of the world, and that Bengal in this respect is so unfortunately situated, that what are reckoned as simply high prices in other parts will prove positively famine prices in this country, and the limit therefore which will act as prohibitory of exports will not be reached until it has far exceeded what will prove extremely oppressive here. The experiences of 1865-66 and 1866-67 show that, notwithstanding what was reckoned high prices in Bengal, enormous quantities were exported in those years, which, if they could have been retained in the country, would have gone a great way in saving the famished millions of Orissa.

7. The objections to the prohibition of exportation may be thus summarized: 1st, loss of revenue; 2nd, loss to the private trader; and 3rd, loss to friendly nations, which depend on Indian produce. With regard to the first, the committee respectfully submit that revenue can be no object with the Government at a time of national distress. With regard to the second, it is observable that individual interests ought to give way where the vital interests of the nation are in jeopardy. In times of financial emergency the Government did not hesitate to raise the customs tariff, notwithstanding the loss which sudden enhancement of tariff rates necessarily occasioned to the private trader. To meet the grave financial crisis of 1860 the first Finance Minister of India went to the length of raising the duty on saltpetre to a figure which ultimately destroyed the trade, but no consideration of the interests of the private trader then restrained the Government from resorting to that extreme measure. But the crisis rising from a want of supply of food for the nation is far more serious than a financial crisis. With regard to the loss to friendly nations, it is to be deeply regretted, but they cannot fairly blame the Government for adopting the extreme measure when it is a matter of life and death with those who supply the produce. When the producers are themselves threatened with starvation, with what fairness can they be called upon to feed others? It is observable that much of the exported rice is consumed for starch and distillery purposes, and the committee are inclined to think that human ingenuity may find some substitute for it. As for the countries which depend on Indian rice for food, their position will not be materially altered by the prohibition of export, if those who rely upon high prices as a deterring agent are correct in their assumption, for the result will be the same to them, whether export be restrained by high prices or by a mandate of the Legislature. But Burmah and Saigon will be open to them.

8. The committee are aware that the annual export of rice from this country is not large compared with the quantity required to meet the estimated deficiency of food, still it may be the means of saving the lives of many thousands; and if the effort of an individual or the State could save even one life, that effort would not be made in vain. The other food grains exported from British India are not of course large, but the same considerations that suggest the stoppage of the export of rice, also suggest that of the export of other food grains. The prohibition ought to apply to all ports throughout British India except Burmah. The committee do not include British Burmah, inasmuch as it will form a reserve for those friendly colonies such as Mauritius and the West India Islands, the staple food of the cooly immigrants of which is rice, and as it will be open to the Indian trader and Indian Government to import rice from it for consumption here. Indeed, the committee are of opinion that rice from Burmah as the nearest port may be laid down here at much less cost than food grain imported from any other place by sea, and should be stored in large quantities, for though it may not wholly replace the Bengal rice, still in times of emergency any rice would be better than no rice.

9. In the Resolution of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General, dated the 7th instant, it is stated that His Excellency has received various suggestions to interfere with the trade in grain either by prohibiting export, or

by undertaking the general purchase and distribution of grain, or by regulating the market price, and that "without making any pledge as to what may or may not be done, in the event of extreme necessity arising which cannot now be foreseen, the Government is not prepared to adopt any such measures, and would always avoid them so far and so long as they possibly could be avoided." But time is precious, and if it be allowed to slip away, it may, the committee fear, be too late to give the country the benefit expected from the prohibition of export. As for the other two measures, the Government has partially undertaken the second by offering to assist private individuals to lay in stocks. But this measure, the Committee respectfully submit, would be wholly insufficient. They have, they venture to hope, sufficiently indicated the extent of the deficiency of supply of food in the country from the failure of the rains, taking both the probable out-turn of the present crops and old stores, and they feel convinced that this deficiency cannot be met without a large importation of food grains from foreign countries. This, as already observed, cannot be done effectually for some classes of the people. The rice suitable for the people of Bengal cannot be had anywhere else. Nevertheless, there are large communities for whom food of various kinds may be imported to advantage. To the aboriginal races on the South-Western Frontier of Bengal and in Bhaugulpore, Burmah rice will, the Committee believe, prove most welcome, and to the people of Behar and to Beharese and up-country people general dwelling in different parts of Bengal, wheat and Indian-corn imported from foreign places would afford material relief. To the Bengali even, who is accustomed to two meals, one meal in wheat could not be unacceptable. Wheat and Indian-corn being more nutritious than rice, a maund of them may supply the place of nearly two maunds of rice—a circumstance which will conduce to facility of transport as well as economy in cost.

In recommending the importation of grain by Government, the Committee humbly submit they are not without precedent. During the Great Irish famine of 1847, Parliament voted a grant of £10,000,000, and Sir Robert Peel laid in stocks of food drawn from different parts of the world. The task before the Government of India at the present time is far more onerous than what the English Government had to meet in 1847, for the former has to feed about ten times the population which the latter had during the Irish famine of 1847. It is superfluous for the committee to observe that in a crisis like the present, individual aid, which they feel confident will be freely accorded, will avail little; the community as represented in the State must put forth its entire strength. Entertaining this opinion, the committee submit that it would be most unfortunate if the present invaluable time were lost in laying in stocks of food from foreign countries. The task of feeding 60 millions of people may well appal the stoutest heart, but if it is to be undertaken, the committee would solicit that no time may be lost in laying in supplies, for which there would be no lack of demand. It may be easily imagined that a vast number of ships will be required to transport food to meet the anticipated deficiency; and unless arrangements were made betimes, it would be too late to do anything. As in the case of export, so in that of importation of food grain from foreign countries, the present time is invaluable. It is observable that it would not be expedient to rely for this importation upon the natural laws of demand and supply, inasmuch as the private merchant would not hazard the undertaking without an assured prospect of profit, whereas such consideration would not or should not hamper the Government, and by the time the former realizes that prospect the opportune time may have been entirely lost.

10. With regard to the regulation of market prices, the committee need hardly remark that not only would such a measure involve gross injustice to the private trader, but would discourage or hinder private enterprise, and thus aggravate the difficulty which it is sought to relieve.

11. The relief measures which the Government has commenced have, it appears, for their primary object the alleviation of the sufferings of the able-bodied poor who can work on roads and other works and of those physically incapable, who may go to relief centres for food or assistance. But above these classes is a large class of men and women who from caste feeling cannot degrade themselves to the level of the day-labourer or the street beggar, and who are

yet too poor to maintain themselves at a time of general distress. In ordinary times they earn their livelihood with great difficulty, their income being generally scanty, and they will be, it may be easily imagined, utterly helpless at a time of universal distress. During the Orissa famine of 1866 numbers of men and women of this class died unknown and unnoticed, until the attention of the relief committee was drawn to them and a system was devised, called "Village Relief," for their benefit. It will be necessary, the committee submit, to devise similar measures of village relief for the benefit of the poor middle class, and it is, therefore, desirable to organize the relief committees early for the purpose of keeping them in readiness to meet exigencies as they arise. The experience of the Orissa famine relief committee will be a good guide to the proposed relief committees in their operations.

12. The Government, the committee observe, has offered to assist planters, landholders, and other private individuals in the importation of grain within the country. This is indeed a good measure, and will doubtless prove beneficial. The committee nevertheless apprehend that, owing to various causes, the advantage will not be so wide-spread as could be wished. They are of opinion that relief committees should be early organised in those districts which are most threatened with the impending calamity, and that they should be charged with the business of importation and distribution of grain.

13. The committee humbly but earnestly and confidently hope that the general community will render cordial co-operation and assistance in the impending crisis for the alleviation of suffering and distress. But native charity, as was well remarked by the Famine Commission of 1866, "takes the shape of distribution of food in time of scarcity, which the natives consider a cardinal virtue," and though in large towns rich men who have imbibed western notions will doubtless not be wanting in liberality to give money subscriptions, the bulk of native charity, the committee believe, will take the form indicated above, and thus supplement largely the relief houses to be established by Government.

14. Should the above suggestions meet with the approval of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the committee would request the favor of your moving His Honor to take such action in the matter as he may think fit, and also obtain the sanction of the Government of India on such points on which sanction may be deemed necessary.

No. 43.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association, No. 3638, dated Calcutta, November 26, 1873.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter as Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association (see above, No. 42 of this series), expressing the views of the committee of the Association as to the extent to which the crops have unfortunately failed through the drought in these provinces and the measures which should be taken in consequence, and am directed to ask you to be good enough to convey to those gentlemen the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor for their advice in this unhappy emergency.

2. The Association will have seen from the published papers that, after consideration, the Government has for the present determined not to interfere with the export of food grains from the country.

3. With respect to charitable relief, the Government has thought it better not to appeal directly to the public on the subject till the extent of the calamity is more fully disclosed, and the appeal can be made with sufficient point and directness. The Lieutenant-Governor would by no means however discourage any efforts that benevolent and public-spirited men may make in that direction, nor are such efforts, His Honor regrets to say, likely to be either premature or unnecessary.

4. With reference to expressions used in the 13th paragraph of the letter of the Association regarding "the relief-houses to be established by Government," I am directed to remind you that it has been declared that Government will not undertake the whole of this burden, but will look to the general public to make a commencement and largely to contribute towards charitable

relief. In anticipation of the necessity for relief-houses, instructions have been given to make arrangements for the organization of the local committees by whom they are to be started and administered when necessity arises, and I am to suggest that the Association may beneficially occupy themselves in finding efficient men to serve on these committees, and in obtaining offers of subscriptions for the houses. His Honor would be glad to be informed from time to time what success the Association has achieved in this way.

5. On the whole subject, and with special reference to the 5th paragraph of your letter, I am to observe that while Government recognizes the duties imposed upon it by its position in such a calamity, it must be remembered that the Legislature has made over to the zemindars of Bengal and Behar the greater part of the land revenue of these provinces—a gift carrying with it the care of the estates and of the many people by whom the revenue is produced; and that in a time of distress like the present the Government must look very much to the landlords of Bengal to aid these poor. To do this is both a moral obligation and a measure of prudence on the part of a landlord who would maintain the prosperity and productiveness of his estate.

The British Indian Association may well, therefore, occupy themselves thus early in urging upon landlords liberality towards, and consideration for, the tenantry of their estates.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that while the Association is good enough to advise Government of its duties in this emergency, it will exert its influence successfully upon its own members, and on all upon whom it has influence, and that the Association will soon be able to give the Government gratifying information of the steps it has taken in this direction.

No. 44.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3382, dated Calcutta, November 28, 1873.

The Honorable the President in Council has read with interest the letter of the British Indian Association to the address of the Government of Bengal, under date the 21st instant, on the subject of the impending scarcity. As the estimate formed by the Association of the food prospects in Bengal seems to be much worse than that given in your circular, dated the 17th instant, (see p. 48) addressed to all Commissioners and Magistrate-Collectors, the President is of opinion that it is important that the Government should be in possession of all the facts and figures upon which the statements of the Association are based.

2. I am accordingly to request that, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, you will be good enough to call for this information from the British Indian Association and furnish it to the Government of India on an early date*.

No. 45.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3456, dated December 3, 1873.

In continuation of my letter No. 3382 of the 28th November (see above, No. 44 of this series) regarding the representation made by the British Indian Association, I am directed by the President in Council to indicate certain points on which the Government of India desire to receive any data which the Association may be able to adduce.

2. The Association state in their para. 3 that "it is difficult to form an accurate estimate of the probable out-turn of the amun crop, but it is doubtful whether, taking the good and bad districts together excepting Orissa, the general yield will be a six-anna crop on the whole."

* The answer of the British Indian Association is given on p. 124.

3. Now, in the published circular of the Government of Bengal, dated 17th November, para. 2, it was stated that in the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions, and in parts of the Rajshahye Division, the yield would be under a six-anna crop, that in the Maunbhoom District, much of the Burdwan Division, and some limited portions of the Presidency Division, there would be an eight-anna crop. And as these several portions of the country were indicated as the distressed districts, the expectation apparently was that in the other portions of the country there would be more than an eight-anna crop.

4. Subsequently the Government of India has received from the Government of Bengal the following information, bearing date the 21st November * :—

* Review of the district reports upon the prospects of the crops in each of the seven tracts into which Bengal is divided.

(1.) *The Lower Delta and the Littoral Districts*.—In these districts the rainfall has been fuller than elsewhere. Inundation from rivers and creeks is general, and the land is thoroughly moist. In these, the chief rice-exporting districts of Bengal, the yield of the 1873 food-crops (almost exclusively rice) will range from three-quarters to a full average crop. Some of these districts will have, as usual, a large exportable surplus this year. The rice exported from the port of Chittagong beyond the sea (amounting in ordinary years to 50,000 tons) comes mainly from the districts of Backergunge, Noakally, and Tipperah, and not from Chittagong itself.

(2.) *Western Bengal* ^b below the uplands.—These are the most thickly-peopled tracts in Bengal. The people have been for some years past reduced, by fever. The rainfall in 1873 has been very short. Though it contains large swamps, the land is not so uniformly moist as in the districts of the Delta. The total yield of the food crops of 1873 will be under one-half of a full average crop. The early rice crop (reaped in September) was happily heavy over all this area, but this crop is barely one-fourth of the whole rice harvest of the year.

(3.) *The Central Delta Districts* ^c.—Here the land is usually moist, the October showers have been occasional, and partial inundation from rivers is general. In some of these districts the early (September) rice crop, which has been generally good all over Bengal Proper, is nearly equal in importance to the late (December) rice crop. In these districts the total yield of the food crop of 1873 will range from one-half to three-quarters of the out-turn of a full average year.

(4.) *Northern Bengal* ^d.—This tract, which generally has a heavy rainfall, and exports rice and other produce to an immense extent, has had this year an extraordinarily small rainfall. The food-crops are mainly rice, with perhaps a millet and pulse crop equal to 10 per cent. of the rice area. The early rice, which is about one-third of the area of the late rice, fared badly over the whole of this tract, and has nowhere yielded above half of an ordinary crop. In no district of this tract will the late (December) rice, the main crop of the country, yield more than one-third of the out-turn of an ordinary year, while over large areas it will be below 10 per cent. As in the rest of Bengal Proper, the spring food crops are very insignificant. It is feared that over the whole of this tract the total yield of the food crops of 1873 cannot exceed from one-quarter to one-third of the out-turn of an ordinary year.

(5.) *Eastern Bengal* ^e.—This tract exports rice and other produce largely in ordinary years, especially from Sylhet, Mymensing, and Tipperah. The rainfall is in ordinary years heavier than in Western and Southern Bengal, and it has in 1873 been steadier than in most other parts of the country. The main, almost the sole, food crops are rice. Over the whole of this tract the yield of the food crops of 1873 will range from one-half to three-quarters of a full average crop. Export will probably go on from all these districts; but Sylhet is perhaps the only district in the group which will really have a large exportable surplus over and above the consumption of the district in ordinary years.

(6.) *The Upland Country* ^f of Bengal and Chota Nagpore.—This tract differs in physical characteristics from all other parts of Bengal. The ground everywhere undulates; rock is near the surface; the soil varies greatly; the variety of crops grown is greater; a large proportion of the population is non-Aryan; the people possess the science of the jungles and live much on forest produce, such as dry mohwa (*Bassia latifolia*) flower. There is much habit of storing water in larger or smaller tanks and reservoirs, and of damming up streams from the hills. There is more likelihood of the people having stocks of grain than in the plain districts, where trade is more developed and men sell their surplus grain at once. Over the whole of this tract the yield of 1873 will range from one-half to three-quarters of a full average year; but there are occasional spots all over the tract where the land is high and dry and water-storage is wanting, and in these places there must be extreme failure of crops, and much distress may ensue in March or April next. The absence of large marts and must be of considerable traders will make it more difficult for the natural course of trade to supply the deficit of food where it may occur. Over most of this tract there is some breadth of spring food-crop, regarding which the prospects are quite uncertain.

(7.) The next tract is Behar, where other crops besides rice form a very important part of the food supplies. Wheat, barley, and pulse are the most important spring food crops; while maize and millets of different kinds are important autumn crops and with barley form the staple food of the poorer classes. As an example of the difference between the Behar food crops and those in Bengal may be cited the case of the Sarun District, in which only one-fifth of the cultivated area is estimated to be under rice; whereas in Bengal the area of rice crop ranges from two-thirds to four-fifths of the whole cultivated land. The proportion of cultivated land in Behar occupied by other than food crops is believed to be much larger than in Bengal. About 320,000 acres of the very best land in Behar are under opium, and about four-fifths of this opium land is irrigated from wells. Probably about 400,000 acres more may be under indigo; and there is a very large produce of rape, castor, and other oil-seeds in Behar. Parts of Behar import food in ordinary years from Eastern Bengal.

Behar divides itself naturally into distinct parts, namely—

- (a) the tract north of the Ganges.
- (b) the tract south of the Ganges.

(a) The Trans-Ganges tract ^g is highly cultivated, and very thickly peopled. In the rich belt of land which lies just under the Himalayas and ordinarily produces a vast surplus of rice, the late rice crop has almost entirely failed. Over the rest of this tract the yield of the late rice may be from a tenth to one-twentieth of an ordinary year's out-turn. The millet crop has been good and the maize crop fair. In the low-lands of Purneah, near the Koosi River, the rice out-turn is better; but over the whole of this great tract the total yield of the out-turn food crops cannot exceed one-third of an ordinary year's out-turn. Regarding the prospect of the spring food crops, it is impossible to speak with certainty. In Sarun and Tirhoot much of the spring crop land was too hard and dry, and has been unsown. In Purneah, on the other hand, a very much larger breadth than usual has been put down with spring crop, and seed has almost everywhere germinated. In Purneah, rice-lands whereon the standing crop has completely withered have been ploughed up and are being sown with wheat. If rain comes in the first half of December these spring crops will give a fair

Estimated out-turn of the Food Crops of 1873-74.

In the littoral districts of Orissa and Bengal, including the southern border of the Delta, population 11 millions. From three-quarters to a full average crop.

In the low lands of Western Bengal, the seaboard excluded, population 3½ millions. About one-half of the yield of a full average year.

In the Central Delta Districts, population 7 millions. From one-half to three-quarters of a full average crop.

In Northern Bengal, population 7 millions. One-quarter to one-third of a full average crop.

In Eastern Bengal, population 7½ millions. From one-half to two-thirds of a full average crop, except in Sylhet, where there will be a full crop.

In the uplands of Bengal and Chota Nagpore, population 7 millions. From one-half to three-quarters of a full average crop.

In North Behar, population 11 millions. One-quarter to one-third of a full average crop.

In South Behar, population 8 millions. One-quarter to one-third of a full average crop.

In Assam and the hill districts, population 3½ millions. Three-quarters of a full average crop.

5. But the estimate of the Association seems to be less favorable than the above forecast; and their remarks are accordingly invited, together with the evidence on which their opinion is based.

6. Again the Association say, "the task of feeding 60 millions of people may well appal the stoutest heart; but if it is to be undertaken, the committee would solicit that no time may be lost in laying in supplies for which there would be no lack of demand."

7. Is it then the opinion of the Association that anything like the above number of people may have to be fed by the Government? If so, then upon what grounds is that opinion based?

8. On the 21st November, the Government of Bengal reported to the Government of India *: "Over the greater part of Bengal Proper, containing 28 millions of souls, there will be, it is hoped, from half to three-quarters of a full average crop, while in North Bengal and Behar, containing a population of 26 millions, the yield of the food crops is estimated to be from one-quarter to one-third of full average years. As yet we do not know what the food stocks may be. It may be hoped that Northern Bengal, which is ordinarily an exporting tract, must have considerable stocks from previous years, for we find that in the other exporting districts (Sylhet, Backergunj and Orissa) considerable old stocks are this year being brought to market."

"The districts which have one-half the usual crop or more will manage to feed themselves one way or another, though relief works may be required for landless laborers in some parts of them."

out-turn. If rain does not come before January, the yield from the spring crops of this tract may be but a scanty addition to the food supply, but regarding the possibilities of the spring crop there is still, as there was at the same season in 1865, very much uncertainty.

South Behar ^a contains much less indigo land; and it contains, moreover, a very great area which is annually inundated by the Ganges, and on which excellent crops of food are produced in ordinary years. The early (September) crops of South Behar were for the most part bad, ranging from one-quarter to one-half of a full average year. On the inundated lands, the September crop (as is very often the case) was utterly destroyed. The late rice over the whole of this tract will not yield one-quarter the out-turn of a full average year. The rubber crops sown on the inundated lands will, if we get December rains, give a fair crop; but the area actually sown with spring crops is below the average of ordinary years. In the Gya District there is a certain amount of artificial irrigation, and in the Shahabad District some 80,000 acres of rice and wheat lands will have been watered from the canal. If copious rain does not come before Christmas (by that time it almost always does come in Behar), the total yield of the food crops of South Behar can hardly exceed from one-quarter to one-third of the out-turn of a full average year.

8. *Assam and the hill districts* ^c.—In Assam and the frontier districts the rainfall has been much below the average; but on the whole the food grain crops are fairly good. In a part of Goalparah there may, perhaps, be short supplies; but these Assam districts, though prices will no doubt be high, will probably support themselves. The yield of the food crops in this tract may be put down at full three-quarters of the yield of an ordinary average year.

^a Including the districts of Patna, Gya, Shahabad, parts of Bhaugulpore, Monghyr.

^c Including Darjeeling, Julpigoree, Cooch Behar, Goalparah, Kamroop, Durrung, Nowgong, Sebsaugor, Luckhimpore, Naga Hills, Khasia Hills, Garo Hills.

* See Special Narrative for week ending November 21st, published in a separate volume.

9. It would then appear that a large portion of the 60 millions will feed themselves and supply food to the distressed districts, that another large portion will at least feed themselves, that old stocks must exist, though their quantities may not be known.

10. Again, the records of recent famines in Bengal and in the North-Western Provinces supply data from experience for estimating what proportion of the population in distressed districts may be expected to need assistance from the State*. If the Association consider that the proportion indicated by those records is likely to be exceeded in the present case, the Government of India would desire to have the reasons for that view.

11. Further, the population of the area defined by the Government of Bengal as the distressed districts can be seen from the census returns.

12. And the opinion of the Government of Bengal can be weighed to the effect that the fate of the distressed districts may partly depend on the winter rains, which may yet be expected to fall†.

13. Without at present expressing an opinion, the Government of India would invite the attention of the Association to these considerations, in order that the reasons for their opinion may be fully educed.

* The following memorandum was at the request of the Viceroy written by Mr. Henvey, who compiled the account of the famine in the North-Western Provinces in 1869-70:—

"His Excellency the Governor General, when at Allahabad, desired that a memorandum should be prepared of the numbers relieved in our worst districts during 1869-70 for comparison with the numbers likely to need relief in those districts of Bengal that are now in a similar condition as regards the actual and probable out-turn of food crops.

It appears that extreme failure of crops is confined in Bengal to the Patna Division, and to parts of the Bhaugulpore and Rajshahi Divisions. In the worst tracts the food crops of 1873-74 are estimated at from one-fourth to one-fifth of the average, and the population of those tracts is in round numbers 24,000,000.

Now, leaving out Ajmere (which, from its isolated condition and peculiar circumstances, may properly be left out) the only districts of the North-West Provinces that in 1869-70 approached the above standard of failure and distress are shown in the subjoined table:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Tract.	Duration of distress.	Population of famine-stricken tract.	Daily average on relief works over the whole period.	Percentage of Col. 4 on Col. 3.	Daily average in poor-houses over the whole period.	Percentage of Col. 6 on Col. 3.	Total average on works and in poor-houses over the whole period.	Percentage of Col. 8 on Col. 3.	Daily average on relief works and in poor-houses at the climax.	Percentage of Col. 10 on Col. 3.	REMARKS.
	Days.										
Bijnour	335	737,152	11,064*	1.5	2,254	.8	13,918	1.8	24,926	3.3	* The figures for labour relief include special canal works.
Allahabad, Pergunnahs Barah and Khyragurh }	325	232,664	2,013	.8	269	.1	2,282	.9	3,188	1.3	
Jhansie	450	317,735	2,210	.6	2,399	.7	4,494	1.4	12,535	3.9	
Lullutpore	395	212,628	5,560 ^b	2.6	2,781	1.3	8,850	8.9	27,689	13 ^b	^b The labour relief figures include people employed from the Road and Ferry Funds.

In Bijnour alone was the proportion of loss estimated at exactly three-quarters of an average crop; but in the other tracts mentioned the kharreef of 1869 was an entire failure, and the rubbee of 1869 barely exceeded one-half the average, so that in mere respect of harvests their condition appears near enough for comparison. How widely nevertheless the results varied will be seen from the table,—the fact being that, where large numbers of day-labourers are, as in India, living on the verge of a minimum subsistence, their reduction to positive starvation depends more on the accidents of situation and the opportunities of obtaining work than upon the gradual rise of prices that may be surely predicted from an ascertained deficiency of crops. And so in Bengal like variations may be expected both as between district and district, and as between the districts there and here. But for the purpose of applying the percentages of our districts to those of Bengal, it would be safer to base the calculation on the figures shown for Bijnour and Jhansie. In the southern pergunnahs of Allahabad a considerable number of people are, or at least were during 1868-69 and previously, subject to a paralytic disease, and these permanent cripples must be taken into account in a computation of the poor-house figures, while the demand for labour relief was kept down by the comparative prosperity of adjoining tracts in the Doab. On the other hand, for the extremely high figures shown by Lullutpore (the daily average of all persons relieved reached 13 per cent. on the population during the autumn of 1869) an explanation must be sought partly in the sterility of the soil, the dependence on natural irrigation, and consequent despondency of the cultivators when the rainy season is deficient, and partly also in the circumstance of Lullutpore being encompassed by Native States and frequently thronged by travellers from Bundelkhand and Central India, who were not slow to avail themselves of our charity. If on a simple calculation of harvest loss the probable number of starving people in Bengal were worked out proportionally to the Lullutpore figures, it would appear that Government might expect not less than a daily average of one million labourers and paupers on its hands for a year, with a possible extension to over three millions. But I think Bijnour and Jhansie would be more serviceable standards. Bijnour was an ordinary district, perhaps rather heavily weighted with the last revenue assessment, and suffering under a very extensive failure of two harvests, but otherwise not differing much from any tract in these provinces that is not watered by the great canals. Jhansie had rather better crops, but a poorer and more apathetic peasantry and less enlightened neighbours. In these two districts it will be seen that the percentages of total numbers relieved daily reached in the first case 1.8, and in the second 1.4. A like proportion of the population in the distressed districts of Bengal would give a total daily average of 432,000 and 336,000, but these figures are suggested with much diffidence and with the knowledge that in such cases inductions from mere numbers are of little value.

† See Note by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal dated November 25, 1873, page 57.

14. From their 2nd paragraph it would appear that the Association considers the status of 1873 in the provinces under the Government of Bengal to be materially worse than that of 1865-66. The Government of India is not informed as to how that conclusion is arrived at. The Association may be invited to institute such comparison as they may see fit between the official reports in 1865-66 of the scarcity in Behar and the famine in Orissa on the one hand, and the official reports of the scarcity in 1873. The Government of India would be glad to receive the opinion which the Association may form after the making of such exact comparison. If the misfortune of 1873 should be found to be not greater than that of 1865-66, then the task likely to devolve on the Government can be better measured.

No. 46.

Letter from H. Luttman Johnson, Esq., Additional Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 52 P.S., dated Calcutta, December 6, 1873.

I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to bring to your notice, for the information of His Honor the President in Council, the fact that tonnage has already been engaged for the immediate export from Calcutta of 24,950 tons of rice, equal to about 6,73,000 maunds. It is expected that shipping will—so the Collector of Customs reports—shortly arrive for 30,000 tons of rice in addition to the amount for which tonnage has already been engaged.

2. I am to add that the Lieutenant-Governor fears that by the end of January the quantity of rice privately exported from Calcutta may greatly exceed the quantity imported by Government.

No. 47.

Circular from H. L. Dampier, Esq., Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna and of Bhaugulpore, No. 3057-58, dated Calcutta, November 24, 1873.

I am directed to state that, in the present season of distress, the Lieutenant-Governor is very anxious to promote the digging of wells in the districts where irrigation of this kind may save crops, give labour, and mitigate scarcity. His Honor has already sanctioned advances for this purpose to the opium ryots, and copies of the correspondence* on the subject are annexed. Your attention is invited to the question whether this measure might not be farther extended to landholders and cultivators who are not connected with the Opium Department.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor wishes the measure to be carried out to its fullest extent in Government Estates and Wards' Estates. On the one hand, the obligation which lies on the Government in its own right, or as administrator, to assist the ryots on these estates is greater than it is where the ryots have a zemindar to look to; and, on the other, the securities for the recovery of advances are practically greater.

3. In zemindaree estates the district officers should urge the zemindars to promote the digging of wells, either by taking advances under the Loan Act for the purpose, or by standing security for the advances which the Government might make to the cultivators. Where the zemindar or other substantial tenure-holder comes forward in this manner, there will be no difficulty. It might be so arranged that the zemindar should receive an advance in a lump sum on his making himself responsible for its repayment and undertaking that a certain number of wells shall be dug. He might then be left to make his own arrangements with the ryots.

4. Even where no such arrangement can be made, the Lieutenant-Governor would still wish the district officers to do all that can prudently be done to give the cultivators the benefit of these advances.

In estates where wells are urgently wanted and from circumstances the zemindars are unable to do their duty, if a ryot can give good security of any kind, the advance may unobjectionably be made, and even in cases in which no

* From Board of Revenue, No. 524R, dated 10th November 1873 (not printed).
To Board of Revenue, No. 2941, dated 12th November 1873 (not printed).

regular security can be offered, the local officers might in some cases, provided the need is very urgent, give advances to ryots, who, from the character and position they hold in the village, may be presumed to be men who will honestly repay the money to the best of their ability. You will not fail to observe that the benefit derived from every well which is dug will be two-fold—it will employ labour as well as supply water.

5. With these remarks, the Lieutenant-Governor relies on you and your officers to consider whether such a measure can be advantageously and prudently carried out.

For the present you should make funds available for these advances out of the allotment* which was placed at the disposal of Commissioners by paragraph 25 of circular No. 80, dated 17th November (see p. 48), subject to any adjustment which may hereafter be considered desirable.

6. It will be understood that, whenever it is possible, these advances should be regularly made under the rules of the Land Improvement Act, No. XXVI of 1871, as now relaxed. But this letter also conveys authority to you to go beyond the Act and Rules in cases where the security required by the Act cannot be obtained, and where the advance does not exceed Rs. 50 in any one case and is urgently required for the digging of wells. My letter of this date to the Board of Revenue will explain how the Lieutenant-Governor wishes you to make use of the agency of the Opium Department in regard to any advance for wells which you may think desirable.

No. 48.

Despatch from the Viceroy, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. C., dated Camp Lucknow, December 6, 1873.

I have the honor to enclose, for Your Grace's information, a copy of the reply which I made to an address which was presented to me by the Municipality of Agra on the 24th ultimo, as it was made after careful consideration and expresses the views of the Government of India upon the scarcity in Bengal.

Your Grace will observe that the statement of the position of affairs was taken from the circular addressed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to the local officers of that province on the 17th of November. (See p. 48).

Having, with the assistance of Sir Richard Temple, carefully examined the reports of the scarcity of the years 1865 and 1866, we came to the conclusion that the circumstances of the present year were on the whole not worse than those of the same period in the year 1865, and I thought it desirable to mention this in order to give to the public the best information in our power as to the probable extent of the scarcity. It has been a satisfaction to me to find subsequently that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has arrived (as Your Grace

will observe from the enclosed copy of a note written by His Honor) at the same conclusion after an independent examination of the facts of 1865 and of the prospects of this year.

The Lieutenant-Governor mentioned in his note his desire that the importation of rice for the relief works should be pressed on as much as possible. Steps have been taken to arrange this, and I understand from Sir Richard Temple that supplies are rapidly being pushed forward to the districts affected by the scarcity. The importance of being somewhat in advance of the demand upon us in order to prevent a future block of the means of conveyance, is fully recognized by the Government.

In reply to the address I recapitulated the measures taken by the Government, which were explained in the Resolution of the Government of India of the 7th November (see p. 19), and further in the excellent circular issued by the Lieutenant-Governor on the 17th (see p. 48).

All the measures to provide against the effects of the drought which the Lieutenant-Governor has recommended have been adopted with the exception of the prohibition of the export of food grain. The reports that I have received of the out-turn of the last crop and the prospects of the spring crops in the

* For the Patna Division, three lakhs; for the Bhaugulpore Division, two lakhs.

North-Western Provinces, with the exception of the Benares Division, are very satisfactory, and all the information that I have been able to collect since I left Agra confirms me in the belief that the opinion of the Government of India that the deficiency of the food supply of the districts affected by the drought will be met from the resources of India, is correct.

The latest reports from Bengal will have been forwarded to Your Grace by Sir Richard Temple from Calcutta. He informs me that, in the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor, it is not advisable to establish a relief committee in Calcutta before the middle of December.

No. 49.

Reply made by the Viceroy to an address presented by the Municipality of Agra, November 24, 1873.

After some preliminary remarks His Excellency observed:—

“The reason for which I decided to postpone the Durbar is, that about a month ago, after all the arrangements had been made, I received information of a serious failure of the crops in the Province of Bengal. As distress threatened a large population, I thought that it would be inopportune to hold Durbars either here or at Lucknow. I am glad to learn that my motives are understood by those who expected to attend the Durbar.

“The Municipality of Agra have naturally expressed their deep interest in the welfare of their fellow-countrymen in Bengal. The city of Agra is a great centre of trade; and desiring to give every publicity to the acts and opinions of the Government, I gladly take this opportunity of informing you what we consider the extent of the scarcity is likely to be, and what measures have been taken to alleviate the distress which must follow from a serious failure of the harvest.

“The position of affairs is as follows:—The winter rice crop has seriously failed in the whole of Behar and in the division of Rajshahye. Moreover, in some parts of these districts, the want of rain has interfered with the sowing for the rubbee crop. In other districts of Bengal, there has been a partial failure of the rice crop; but the deficiency of the food supply is expected to be confined to Behar and the division of Rajshahye.

“The Government is fully impressed with the grave responsibility which rests upon them, and we have taken without delay or hesitation measures in order to anticipate distress. Our aim and object is to prevent, so far as is possible, the loss of the lives of any of Her Majesty's subjects.

“We have complete and reliable information of the present state of affairs, and in framing our measures we have had the advantage of the experience of former years in which the crops have failed in the same parts of India. The scarcity of the year 1865 was not confined to Orissa; the excellent report of Mr. F. Cockerell shows that there was a great failure of the rice crop in Behar and Rajshahye in that year. The whole population affected by the scarcity in the year 1865 was in number about the same as that which will probably be affected by the scarcity this year, namely, about twenty-four millions. The scarcity of 1865 came after a failure of the crops in 1864, whereas in this year the scarcity has come after several years of good crops.

“The price of rice in Behar and Rajshahye in the months of October and November 1865 was higher than it has been in the same months of this year. On the whole, as far as our present knowledge goes, it may reasonably be assumed that the scarcity of this year will not exceed that which took place in the years 1865 and 1866: indeed, it may be less, if the rains of the winter and of the next summer should be propitious.

“The measures that we have taken have been announced in the Resolutions of Government.

“The persons who suffer first in a time of scarcity are those who labour for hire. For this class, and for any others who may require to be employed, the Government will provide work, not only on large public works, but on smaller works as much as possible in the neighbourhood of their homes.

“The people of India are distinguished for their liberality in maintaining their relations who are unable to work, and also by their charity to those who are in distress; but in times of scarcity, they cannot be expected to meet the larger demands which will be made upon their liberality, and persons unable

to work will often be without the means of subsistence. Wherever such distress may appear, the Government will, with the help of the influential inhabitants of each locality, give the requisite assistance. The time has not yet come for distributing relief of this kind, but every preparation has been made for commencing the distribution whenever and wherever it may be required.

"It is seldom that misfortune is altogether unaccompanied by alleviating circumstances. Distress in any part of Her Majesty's broad dominions never occurs without proving how closely the British empire is bound together. No more striking example could be produced than the present occasion. As soon as the telegraph conveyed the news to England of the failure of the harvest in Bengal, we are told that the city of London hastened to show sympathy with the people of Bengal by proffering substantial aid for the relief of distress. This sympathy and generosity will be gratefully appreciated throughout the whole of British India. I am sure that you have rightly interpreted the feelings of the people of India in being the first to tender assistance to your fellow-countrymen in Bengal, if the necessity should arise.

The most severe distress in former years has been felt in places remote from the common highways of trade. In order to provide for such places, we have calculated, with the aid of the local officers, the probable number of persons who may be brought on the hands of Government, in order to measure the extent of our liability, and we have purchased and ordered large quantities of grain, which will be sent to those parts of the country where there is likely to be a deficiency in the supply of grain for those persons.

"All the practical suggestions, without any exception, which were made by the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and the other officers who enquired into and reported on the scarcity of 1865 have been followed by the Government; and we have also derived great advantage from the experience gained from the North-Western Provinces in the years 1868 and 1869, where, under the wise administration of Sir William Muir, a period of great scarcity was successfully dealt with.

"Having made the extensive provisions which I have described, the Government have no reason to doubt that the food which may be required for the supply of the general population, who are unable to take care of themselves, will be met from other parts of India. The district of Backergunge in Bengal, where a large quantity of rice is produced beyond what is required for the consumption of its population, and the whole division of Orissa have good crops this year. Burmah has one of the largest rice crops ever known. In the North-Western Provinces, with the exception of a small portion to the east, and throughout Madras, Bombay, and the Punjab, the harvest has been excellent.

"We believe that, as upon previous occasions, the present deficiency among a population which does not exceed one-eighth of the whole population of the country can be supplied. I have good reason to know that the trade is very active here and elsewhere. The Government have helped by lowering the rate of carriage on the railroads, and will help further by organizing means for the transport of grain from the railroad to those parts of the country where supplies may be required.

"We are convinced that no better general means can be found for distributing the food supplies of a country at a time of scarcity than the free action of trade. We have, therefore, no intention of interfering with that freedom, and we have consequently declined to interpose for the purpose of regulating prices, or to take the serious step of prohibiting the export of food grains. The customs returns from Calcutta show that the exports of rice have greatly diminished owing to the rise of prices. During the last two months the exports have been only 17,500 tons, while in October and November 1872 they were 46,275 tons. The quantity exported lately has been inconsiderable in reference to the general amount of available supplies.

"While, as I have said before, we have no intention of interfering with the freedom of trade, we shall not hesitate to supplement the action of trade by special measures, if circumstances should arise in which such action is likely by itself to prove inadequate to the necessities of any part of the country.

"I have had the advantage of recent personal communication with the Commissioners of the affected districts. They have the full confidence of the Government, and I am satisfied that they will do their duty. All their

suggestions have been adopted, and they have received power to act on their own responsibility in case of emergency. I hope, moreover, before I return to Calcutta, to visit some of the relief works, and again see the officers in charge of the divisions affected by the drought. Such personal communications give me a greater knowledge than I can obtain from written reports.

"You will gather from these few observations on the position of affairs, and the measures which we have taken, that, although there is good cause for anxiety, there is every reason to believe that the Government and the people will, by the blessing of Providence, be able to cope successfully with the difficulties that lie before us."

No. 50.

Despatch from the Government of India, Financial Department, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 534, dated December 5, 1873.

We have the honor to transmit Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal for the week ending 5th December*.

2. From all the information we have received up to date, our general impression is that the prospect in the districts affected by drought is not at all worse than that indicated in previous despatches.

3. The operations of the general grain trade are active in many parts of the country, though they have not apparently attained anything like their maximum degree of activity, and are in some directions less advanced than might have been expected. Meanwhile a stream of food supply is setting in towards the districts likely to be distressed, and signs are manifest that the trade is preparing for operations on a scale commensurate with a period of considerable distress.

4. The exportation of food grains from the ports of Bengal has greatly diminished as compared with the average of former years, and has now become comparatively small.

5. The prices of food grains have not perceptibly increased; they are generally steady; in some cases they have even manifested a downward tendency. So far as they may be taken as an index of commercial opinion, it would not seem that apprehensions have as yet become urgent or serious.

6. We continue to receive good accounts of the harvests and crops from other parts of India beyond the provinces under the Government of Bengal, with the exception of the eastern and south-eastern portions of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. In some parts of the North-Western Provinces especially, which are in immediate communication with Behar by rail, the autumn harvest and the spring crops promise extremely well.

7. No rain has fallen in Bengal or Behar since the last advices. The weather has, however, been constantly cloudy during the past week. From such appearances there is hope that the winter rains will not be withheld.

8. We incline to the view that the extent and character of the distress in Behar and parts of Bengal will much depend on the winter rains. If they shall be propitious, the spring crops in Behar and Bengal will not be so deficient as we now fear that they may be. There will be good supplies of food obtainable from the North-Western Provinces. If these rains shall fail, then the spring harvest in Behar must be extremely deficient, and the surplus food obtainable from the North-Western Provinces would be much less than what we now hope for.

9. A month must yet elapse before the result of the winter rains can be known. By the beginning of January, we shall see whether the benefit of those rains is to be vouchsafed to the country or not. If it be not, there will be urgent need of measures for averting or mitigating the severe and protracted distress which would otherwise be certain to occur; and the Government of India is preparing for the due and timely adoption of such measures. Provision has been already made for the distress which is to be apprehended, even though the winter rains should not fail.

10. We believe that the foresight and energy of the Government of Bengal will be found worthy of Your Grace's approval, and that the local officers in the tracts affected are fully alive to the requirements of their position. The

* Printed in a separate volume.

Government of India will, in consultation with the local Government, anxiously anticipate the eventualities of the scarcity and distress, and will be prepared to give immediate authorization to whatever measure may be found necessary. Meanwhile the provincial authorities have been directed to act on their own authority whenever and wherever the need of such action may be manifest.

11. An estimate has been received from the Lieutenant-Governor to the effect that grain should be placed by Government within reach of the distressed districts by the end of January enough to provide food for 5 per cent. of a population of 25 millions for three months, commencing from 1st February (see below No. 51 of this series), it being assumed from experience of past occasions and from general considerations that this proportion may, despite the operation of trade, come on the hands of Government for employment on public works or for relief. We are in communication with the Lieutenant-Governor as to the best means of securing the due amount of such provision, and we have assured His Honor of our cordial support. The Lieutenant-Governor, however, adds that the data for such an estimate are necessarily defective. And we bear in mind that possibly the proportion of the population may prove greater than that taken in the above estimate.

12. The provision first made under orders of the Governor General amounts to 80,000 tons of grain from beyond sea to Bengal, of which we know already that 69,000 tons are in due train for arrival. The quantity already ordered or intended to be ordered in India by the local Government amounts to 38,000 tons or 10,34,441 maunds. These quantities amount to 80,000 plus 38,000 or 118,000 tons in the aggregate, which might sustain 5 per cent. of the population of the districts affected for a longer period than three months, or might sustain more than 5 per cent. for three months.

13. Whatever additional provision may be deemed necessary will receive our immediate attention; and our constant thought is given to the calculation of the full extent of the liability which may devolve on the Government in the event of the worst anticipations of the scarcity being unhappily realized.

14. The immediate question, however, respecting the provision required by the Lieutenant-Governor during January next, as just described, relates to the timely arrival of a sufficient portion of the total supplies ordered. In this respect we are concerting plans with the Lieutenant-Governor. The ten thousand tons as first ordered by the Governor General from Burmah and Madras are arriving in due course, and will certainly be in time. We are arranging with the Chief Commissioner of Burmah for the despatch to Bengal of as much more grain as he can obtain at a reasonable cost before the end of December in the Burmah markets. Out of the 6,00,000 maunds or 22,000 tons already purchased by the Government of Bengal, five-sixths will arrive during January. And such quantities as may be purchased in the North-Western Provinces can also arrive during that month.

15. The Government of the North-Western Provinces has, at the request of the Governor General, nominated an officer of standing and experience to assist the Bengal authorities in negotiating purchases of grain in those (the North-Western) Provinces. Some doubt having arisen (as noted in the Special Narrative) as to the functions of that officer, we are giving such instructions as will obviate any difficulty, as we are anxious that the purchases should be made within the time desired by the Government of Bengal.

16. A complete and effective staff of executive officers is being collected from other parts of India for the prosecution of the works on the Northern Bengal State Railway, which operations are now being actively commenced. Similarly, the staff on the Soane Canal works has been augmented and strengthened. The officers for executing the Gunduck embankment scheme are arriving at their stations. We hope soon to learn that very large numbers of labourers are being usefully and profitably employed on these several imperial public works.

17. The early commencement of local relief works in the several districts has been ordered. Some labourers have already offered themselves, but we have not yet heard of large numbers having come forward.

18. We have made it clear to the Bengal authorities the supplies of grain purchased by the State are to be for the payment of labour employed on public works imperial or local. If hereafter any portion of those supplies shall

be handed over to committees for relief, the Public Works Department will receive credit for the value.

19. We are taking steps in our account department to ensure that the cost of these supplies shall be properly distributed between the imperial and local heads of expenditure.

20. We have communicated with the authorities of the Guaranteed Railway companies in the Bengal Presidency, in order to satisfy ourselves that they will be able to convey the requisite quantities of grain both for the trade and for Government, and their resources in respect to rolling-stock are found to be very considerable.

21. The effects of the orders issued by the Governor General for reducing the rates for carriage of edible grains to the affected districts, on the East Indian, the Eastern Bengal, the Punjab and Delhi, the Oudh and Rohilkund lines, and a portion of the Great Indian Peninsula line in the Central Provinces, are, we are assured, producing and are likely still further to produce, excellent effect.

22. There is reason to fear that while the transport of grain by rail and by river may prove comparatively easy, the transport inland by country carriage may prove difficult. The local officers appear to consider the country carriage to be sufficient for the present. The attention of the Government of Bengal has been directed to this important subject; and special arrangements have been made for the conveyance of grain for the public works. The Governor General has had under his consideration the possibility of utilizing the agency of the Commissariat Department for organizing either camel or bullock trains for the carriage of grain for the public works during those months when pressure is most likely to be felt. We are prosecuting enquiries with this object.

23. The orders given by the Governor General for advances being allowed to landlords and others for purchase of grain for distribution at fair prices, under certain conditions, are already beginning to produce good results.

24. We regret to find that the terms offered by the Chief Commissioner of Burmah for the transport of emigrants from Bengal to Burmah are deemed so insufficient. We have just received a reference on the subject from the Lieutenant-Governor to which our immediate consideration will be given.

25. We understand that the local Legislature of Bengal is considering the possibility of further facilitating emigration from Bengal to Assam. We are not at present able to say more upon this point.

26. After consulting the Lieutenant-Governor we consider that the time has not quite arrived for forming a central relief committee in Calcutta. We shall be ready to form such a committee immediately on occasion arising.

27. Our notice having been attracted to a letter addressed by the British Indian Association to the Government of Bengal (see p. 72), comprising an estimate of the consequences of the scarcity more unfavorable than that as yet formed by us, we have asked the Association for such facts and data as they may be able to adduce in support of their view, as we desire that no effort should be spared in order to form the best anticipation possible regarding the difficulties which may lie before us (see p. 77).

No. 51.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 46 P.S., dated Calcutta, December 2, 1873.

With reference to paragraphs 5 and 6 of your letter No. 3402, dated 29th November 1873 (see p. 62), I am directed to submit a preliminary estimate of the Government grain which the Lieutenant-Governor would wish to have available for the distressed districts before the end of January next. Sir George Campbell considers the materials for forming such an estimate of our probable requirements are very uncertain and insufficient; still, as he understands that the Government of India desires the local Government to submit such an estimate, he directs me to report as follows:—

2. As a preliminary arrangement, the Lieutenant-Governor would wish to have in the distressed districts or in depôt ready for them, before the end of January 1874, sufficient Government grain to supply five per cent. of the

inhabitants of those districts for a period of three months. These districts contain about twenty-five millions of people; one-twentieth of this population (at the rate of two-thirds of a seer per head per day) would consume 18,75,000 maunds of grain in the three months.

	Maunds.
The Government of India have already ordered from beyond the sea, deliverable in January, 10,000 tons, or say ...	2,70,000
The Government of Bengal hopes to have by the end of January from Calcutta and the eastern districts ...	4,00,000
From Orissa ...	2,00,000
From the North-Western Provinces ...	3,50,000
	9,50,000
Balance to be provided ...	6,55,000
TOTAL ...	18,75,000

The Lieutenant-Governor would recommend that this balance be met by the Government of India's providing this balance by ordering a further immediate despatch of 25,000 tons of grain from beyond the sea. All this further consignment should be delivered in Calcutta as early as possible, and no part of it later than the end of January, and the Lieutenant-Governor would arrange for its despatch to the interior as promptly as possible.

3. If all this quantity of grain could be provided, then we should probably be in a condition to prevent starvation and to alleviate keen distress wherever it might occur up to the end of April 1874, on the supposition that there will be only very severe scarcity and very high prices. By the end of January, and at any rate long before the 18,75,000 maunds were consumed, we should know how the spring crops were turning out, and should have better means of judging how far the scarcity was likely to deepen into a severe famine, and the Government of India should be able to order up from Burmah as much as might be thought necessary of the abundant new crop which the Burmese are said to be expecting.

4. It is hardly too much to say that if we have a bad famine, approaching to the Orissa famine in severity, over very large tracts, we shall after January want more grain than the Government of India could give, or than it would be possible for the local officers to distribute properly throughout the distressed districts. For the present, therefore, the Lieutenant-Governor would not offer any estimate of the Government grain required in Bengal before the 31st January 1874.

5. With reference to paragraph 4 of your letter No. 3402, dated 29th November, I am to explain that the preliminary estimate now submitted includes all requirements for imperial and local relief works as well as for relief houses.

No. 52.

Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3550, dated Fort William, December 6, 1873.

I am directed by the President in Council to acknowledge your No. 46 of the 2nd current (see above, No. 51 of this series), forwarding a preliminary estimate of the requirements of grain by the Government of Bengal.

2. The Government of Bengal propose to provide grain for 5 per cent. of a population of 25 millions for three months from beginning of February to the end of April, at the rate of two-thirds of a seer per day, or 18,75,000 maunds, and hope to place within reach of the distressed districts, by the end of January, 9,50,000 maunds, leaving 6,55,000 maunds or 24,000 tons to be provided by the Government of India from beyond sea.

3. The President in Council is inclined to regard the estimate of two-thirds of a seer per head per diem as high. Half a seer or 1 lb. per head, including women and children, would seem to be sufficient. It is probable indeed that a lower estimate would be taken by some authorities. At half a seer, then, the amount to be provided would be 14,00,000, say 14 lakhs of maunds, instead of the 18,75,000 maunds or 18½ lakhs mentioned in your 2nd paragraph.

4. Bearing this in mind, the President in Council has to consider the quantity of 9,50,000 maunds which, according to your 2nd paragraph, the Government of Bengal propose to purchase and to have ready by the end of January.

5. It is in the first place to be observed that this amount includes only 2,00,000 maunds out of the 3,00,000 ordered by the Government of Bengal from Orissa, leaving 1,00,000 to come on during February, as is seen from the Narrative for the 21st November. Thus, the total proposed for the three months is brought up from 9,50,000 to 10,50,000 maunds (38,500 tons).

6. Looking to these considerations, the President in Council believes that the present estimate of requirements leaves some considerable margin beyond what would be calculated on the assumed data as absolutely essential to security. There are, however, advantages in allowing such a margin, and on the whole, the President in Council thinks he is justified in sanctioning the proposal to procure such quantities by the end of January as the Government of Bengal may deem necessary within a present limit of 9,50,000 maunds.

7. As correctly observed in your 2nd paragraph, the Government of India have ordered 10,000 tons or 2,72,222 maunds, which will arrive from beyond sea by January.

8. The Government of Bengal now request that a further quantity of 24,000 tons may be obtained from Burmah by the end of January. The Chief Commissioner of Burmah has been requested to send additional quantities of grain (within a certain maximum limit) as soon as possible. The President in Council is not prepared to state whether this order can be executed to the extent of 24,000 tons by the end of January, but every endeavour will be used for this end. Probably some considerable quantity will be sent in time. If there should be any difficulty in this respect, the Government of India will take such steps as may be necessary, bearing in mind the estimate of requirements as just sanctioned.

9. If, however, the whole of the 24,000 tons should not arrive before the end of January, it will certainly arrive well within the period of the three months beginning with the 1st February.

10. And it is to be borne in mind that quantities of grain in excess of the 24,000 tons have been already arranged for by the Government of India. These quantities, which will arrive before April and May, may be regarded as constituting a provision in addition to the preliminary provision now proposed by the Government of Bengal.

11. The President in Council duly observes that the Lieutenant-Governor regards the present estimate of requirements as necessarily defective. As soon as any revised estimate can be prepared by the Government of Bengal, the President in Council will be glad to receive it, and immediate attention will be given to it on receipt.

12. I am to state in conclusion that the Government of India are anxious to anticipate the eventualities of the threatened scarcity, to calculate beforehand the full extent of the difficulties that may lie before us, to concert with the local Government the best preparations that can be made, and to afford to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor the fullest and most cordial support in giving prompt effect thereto.

No. 53.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, No. 3889, dated December 11, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of the Financial Secretary's letter, No. 3550, dated 6th December (see above, No. 52 of this series), in which is conveyed to His Honor the President in Council's sanction to the Lieutenant-Governor's proposal that a total supply of 18,75,000 maunds of Government grain should be provided for the distressed districts of Bengal by the 31st January. Sir George Campbell will carefully bear in mind the views and wishes expressed at paragraphs 11 and 12 of the letter under reply;

he notes also that (as stated in paragraph 10) quantities of grain in excess of the provision now asked for have been ordered from beyond the sea.

2. There is, however, one point on which the Lieutenant-Governor would ask permission to offer further observations; and one other matter on which he would solicit orders.

First.—Paragraph 9 of the letter under reply mentions that in any case the balance to be provided from beyond sea (about 24,000 tons) will certainly arrive well within the three months from February to April next. The Lieutenant-Governor did not reckon the three months' supply to be from February to April. He fears we cannot reckon that our grain supply now sanctioned will remain intact until the end of January. We are sending it up-country as quickly as possible and it may be drawn upon before the end of January in some of the more distressed tracts. On the imperial works it will probably come early into use; and it is possible that much more than 5 per cent. of the population of the districts now reckoned as distressed may require assistance before the end of April. The Lieutenant-Governor desires me to submit that when he framed his preliminary estimate, his wish was to have a full three months' supply for 5 per cent. of the distressed population in the country before the end of January. He very strongly feels that if we get no favourable rain in December and January, and the spring food crops fail us, we may have to import food from Burmah and elsewhere to the utmost during the remaining months from January until the south-west monsoon set in. If the scarcity should threaten anything approaching the famine of 1865 in Orissa, or the famine * of 1770 in Bengal, we shall want much greater supplies than we have now proposed. If the prospects before us appear to be worse before the end of January, we shall then be able to hurry up rice from Burmah. The Lieutenant-Governor always has before him the terrible possibility, which was so unhappily realized in 1770, that the area of distress may extend; that food may be required in Central and Western Bengal. If such a disaster should come, we could only cope with it, even partially, by having already stored in the *present* distressed area a considerable supply of food.

3. It must, the Lieutenant-Governor would mention, be remembered that absence of December and January rain imports more or less failure of the spring crops over the North-West Provinces except on irrigated lands, and in such a case Behar could hardly hope further to supply itself very largely from the North-West.

4. If we have the supply mentioned by the Lieutenant-Governor in hand by the end of January, we may hope to be able, if occasion requires, to bring in much more food during the remaining months, and to distribute it before the rains set in. Beyond a total of say 200,000 tons we can hardly hope, as things are now arranged, to make distribution in the *present* distressed area by Government agency before the rainy season begins. But if distress should extend to, and Government grain should be required in, Central and Western Bengal, we could distribute by river, rail, and road a very much heavier amount; indeed we could, if need arose and circumstances permitted, probably distribute usefully over Lower Bengal the whole Burmah rice crop of 1874, and more if we could only get it. If, however, our proposed quantity of 70,000 tons is not provided or nearly provided by the end of January, we shall, if necessity should unhappily arise, find it very difficult indeed to distribute before the rains as much food as would be required.

5. It must be remembered, moreover, that carriage of grain will be cheaper and easier down to February than it can be at any later season, and therefore, whether we have to provide a further large supply or not, it will be in the end more economical to get the proposed 70,000 tons into the distressed districts before the 15th February, even though the prime cost of Burmah rice from the last crop be a trifle higher than the cost of the new crop rice will be in February.

As a very experienced officer in one of the distressed districts remarks, the Lieutenant-Governor is firmly convinced that in any case, whether the extremity of distress is eventually reached or not, it is absolutely necessary that

* The records of 1768-70 make it clear that over a part of the famine area the distress, starvation, and deaths of 1769-70 were the result of the failures of a single year.

we should have a stock of grain in hand in the distressed districts, and he thinks that the quantity now sanctioned cannot be there too soon.

6. On all grounds, therefore, whether of economy or of general policy, Sir George Campbell would very strongly urge that no effort and no expenditure (within reasonable limits) be spared to produce the delivery in Calcutta of the 24,000 tons asked for from beyond the seas *before the end of January next*.

7. It may perhaps be right for the Lieutenant-Governor to mention now (with reference to paragraph 3 of the letter under reply) that Burmah cargo rice loses a considerable portion of its weight when cleaned for food. If, as will probably be the case, most of the 25,000 or 30,000 tons of Burmah grain will be "cargo rice," about one-eighth of its weight will be unfit for human food; and in every estimate of the food supply available that one-eighth must be deducted from the gross weight of the Burmah rice available.

8. The *second* point on which the Lieutenant-Governor would solicit orders is, whether this Government is at liberty to send rice from beyond the sea for storage on local works. Hitherto, in obedience to the rule that the Supreme Government was to procure grain for imperial works, and that the local Government was to provide grain for local works, the Lieutenant-Governor has been sending *all* the Burmah and Madras grain to the three * imperial works. But, as will be seen from the annexed † circular order, the Lieutenant-Governor has had to distribute two-thirds of the present and expected Government grain to places outside the imperial relief works. The imperial works will barely employ 200,000 or 250,000 people, however they may be pressed on; and if the worst comes, the Government will have many more mouths to feed than four or five hundred thousand. Seeing that grain from across the seas forms one-half of the provision sanctioned up to the 31st January, the Lieutenant-Governor would ask permission to distribute this grain both to imperial and to local works according to the scale which he has set forth in the letter appended. He will take care that the accounts are kept as far as possible separate; and this separation will be so much the easier, as the Burmah rice is readily distinguishable from any of the Indian kinds.

9. I am to sum up what has been said in this letter—

- (1) by submitting that the Lieutenant-Governor very earnestly hopes that no effort may be spared to get the extra 24,000 or 25,000 tons of grain from beyond the sea into the country by the 31st January at latest;
- (2) by soliciting permission for this Government to store, when need arises to use, rice from beyond the sea on local as well as on imperial works.

No. 54.

Letter from A. O. Hume, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 579, dated December 13, 1873.

I am directed to reply to your letter, No. 3889 of the 11th December (see above, No. 53 of this series), regarding the probable grain requirements for the public works in Bengal.

Respecting the general remarks offered in the letter under acknowledgment, the President in Council believes that it will at present suffice to observe that the subject is engaging the best attention of the Government of India both as regards the calculation of the liability which may devolve on the State and the provision which may have to be made.

Adverting to your 6th paragraph, I am to state that the Government of India have duly given instructions calculated to ensure the arrival of the 24,000 tons in time from beyond sea.

Referring to your 8th paragraph, I am to say that, though it is intended that the grain from beyond sea should be applied to the service of the imperial public works, yet the local Government is quite at liberty to either use grain from beyond sea for local works, or to use for imperial works grain locally

* Soane Canal.
Gunduck Embankment.
Northern Bengal Railway.

† Circular No. 3834, dated 6th December, with enclosure, (see p. 92).

purchased, whenever special circumstances may render either course, in the opinion of the local Government, desirable. But, as noted in your 8th paragraph, care should be taken to keep accounts separate of the stores used for imperial and local works respectively.

The distribution of supplies among the various executive divisions as laid down in the enclosure of your letter under acknowledgment appears to the President in Council to be generally appropriate to the object in view.

No. 55.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of the Rajshahye, Patna, and Bhaugulpore Divisions, and to the Superintending Engineers of the Soane Canal, Gunduck Embankment, and Northern Bengal Railway Works, No. 3834, dated December 6, 1873.

The Lieutenant-Governor, after reviewing the whole position as to the food supply of Bengal and Behar (see p. 87), recently reported to the Government of India his views as follows:—

“As a preliminary arrangement, the Lieutenant-Governor would wish to have in the distressed districts, or in depôt ready for them before the end of January 1874, sufficient Government grain to supply five per cent. of the inhabitants of those districts for a period of three months. These districts contain about 25 millions of people; one-twentieth of this population (at the rate of two-thirds of a seer per head per day) would consume 18,75,000 maunds of grain in the three months.

	Mds.
The Government of India have already ordered from beyond sea, deliverable in January, 10,000 tons, or say	2,70,000
The Government of Bengal hopes to have by the end of January from Calcutta and the eastern districts	1,00,000
„ Orissa	2,00,000
„ the North-Western Provinces	3,50,000
	9,50,000
Balance to be provided	6,55,000
TOTAL	18,75,000

The Lieutenant-Governor would recommend that this requirement be met by the Government of India's providing this balance by ordering a further immediate despatch of 25,000 tons of grain from beyond the sea. All this further consignment should be delivered in Calcutta as early as possible, and no part of it later than the end of January, and the Lieutenant-Governor would arrange for its despatch to the interior as promptly as possible.

“If all this quantity of grain could be provided, then we should probably be in a condition to prevent starvation, and to alleviate keen distress wherever it might occur up to the end of April 1874, on the supposition that there will be only very severe scarcity and very high prices. By the end of January, and at any rate long before the 18,75,000 maunds were consumed, we should know how the spring crops were turning out, and should have better means of judging how far the scarcity was likely to deepen into a severe famine; and the Government of India should be able to order up from Burmah as much as might be thought necessary of the abundant new crop which the Burmese are said to be expecting.”

2. The Government of India has been pleased to accept the Lieutenant-Governor's recommendation, with the reservation that two-thirds of a seer per head is a large allowance for the whole distressed population, inclusive of women and children; but that, as it is desirable in such affairs to have a margin, the whole of the proposed provision may be sanctioned. Accordingly, the Lieutenant-Governor reckons upon having this amount of Government grain (more or less) available in Bengal by the end of January next. He therefore notifies to each division and district, and to each imperial work, what

is the amount it should prepare to receive, to transport, and to store between this time and the end of January next. Appended to this letter is a table of the total allotments the Lieutenant-Governor makes to each distressed district and imperial work. The statement provides a reserve of 3,75,000 maunds for allotment to any district which may emergently require further grain, or which may have satisfactorily transported and stored on relief works all the grain now allotted. From this reserve may be sent supplies to central depôts like Patna, Monghyr, Godagaree, and to districts like Maldah and Rajshahye, which are not reckoned as wholly distressed.

3. It must be understood that the 18½ lakhs of maunds, and the specific allotments shown in the Appendix, include all quantities of Government grain (Burmah or Indian) sent to or purchased by Commissioners, district officers, or superintending engineers up to the 31st January next, and are not in addition to the amounts already received. The allotments are of course exclusive of grain provided by the managers of Wards' Estates or obtained by private persons on advances.

It will be understood that the accounts of storehouses of grain for use on imperial and on local works will be kept quite distinct.

4. Regarding the sources and modes of supply of this grain, the Lieutenant-Governor will cause you to be addressed further as soon as he knows for certain how much Government grain ordered by yourself, or by the officers under you, you expect to have received before the end of January. On this point you are requested to submit an immediate report. Meanwhile, all the appliances for the receipt and transport of the quantity of grain indicated must be arranged so as to dispose of and store these quantities before the middle of February next at the latest. Storehouses and establishments for receiving and passing on grain at and from railway or river-side stations should be prepared, and the depôts at the places of final storage should be ready and in order.

In respect to carriage, carts should not be kept in waiting till advice of the approach of the grain is received, but the carriage necessary should be estimated, and the carriage resources of each district fully ascertained, and everything should be so planned and prepared that as each despatch reaches the rail or river station, it may be sent on to its final destination without delay. The whole resources in the way of carriage will then be available for further grain supplies, if unhappily they should be required.

5. Though the extract quoted above speaks of keeping the people from starvation, it must nevertheless be understood that as yet the Government keeps to the policy previously stated, and frequently repeated, that Government grain is to be stored only on relief works, and is to be used only for feeding people on such works. It is only in emergency that it may be necessary to supply relief houses by way of loan.

ENCLOSURE IN ABOVE.

Appendix to letter No. 3834, dated the 6th December 1873, showing the allotments to the distressed districts out of the Government grain which is to arrive in Bengal before the 31st January 1874.

PATNA DIVISION.				Mds.
Patna	...	...	...	1,00,000
Gya	...	...	...	1,00,000
Shahabad	...	...	...	1,00,000
Tirhoot	...	...	...	2,00,000
Sarun	...	...	...	1,00,000
Chumparun	...	...	...	1,00,000
Soane Canal Works	...	...	...	1,00,000
Gunduck Embankment Works	...	...	...	1,00,000
Total for the Division				9,00,000
BHAUGULPORE DIVISION.				
Monghyr	...	...	...	1,00,000
Bhaugulpore	...	...	...	1,00,000
Purneah	...	...	...	1,00,000
Total for the Division				3,00,000

RAJSHAHYE DIVISION.			
Dinagapore	...	...	1,25,000
Rungpore	...	...	50,000
Bograh	...	...	25,000
Northern Bengal Railway	...	...	1,00,000
Total for the Division			3,00,000
Reserved	...	...	3,75,000
GRAND TOTAL			18,75,000

No. 56.

Despatch from the Governor-General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 15, dated Calcutta, December 12, 1873.

We have the honor to transmit the Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal for the week ending 12th December*.

2. There has not been any change of importance in the general situation since the date of our last despatch to Your Grace on this important subject.

3. The weather has been frequently cloudy at Calcutta during the past week. Rain has fallen in the Bay of Bengal extending to the Chittagong coast, where it is reported to have done more harm than good. No rain, however, fell during the week in the interior of Bengal up to the 11th. On the 11th there was rain at Calcutta and in some of the surrounding districts, but being somewhat unseasonable it possibly may do harm in some respects, while doing good in other respects. The rain does not, however, seem to have at all extended to the province of Behar.

4. On the whole, the hope that the winter rains may be vouchsafed to the country derives some encouragement from the appearances of the weather. The opinion, that our prospects from the commencement of 1874 must greatly depend on these rains, is gaining strength more and more.

5. The winter rice harvest is being reaped in Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. The yield, so far as we yet know, is perhaps slightly better than the anticipation. The same remark is applicable to the rising spring crops.

6. There has been some fall in prices of food grains generally during the week. This is attributed to the in-coming produce of the winter harvest; consequently, it is expected that the range of prices may continue comparatively moderate for some time. A considerable rise may possibly not occur till nearly the middle of January. The temporary decline of prices may tend to quiet the public mind among the native population. We do not, however, place any reliance on the symptom in respect to the forecast of the consequences of the drought. Experience on previous occasions shows that even on the eve of scarcity a slight accession of supplies may cause prices to fall and maintain them on an apparently moderate scale until the crisis arrives, when they begin rapidly to rise.

7. Our general view therefore as to the anticipation of the future and the large measures of precaution which ought to be prepared, as explained in our last despatch, remains unchanged.

8. There is no change in the accounts of the harvest and crops from other parts of India, which are fairly good, except that in the eastern part of Oudh the reports, which were previously unfavorable, are somewhat worse. We apprehend that if the winter rains should fail, the distress in Behar may extend to the adjoining districts westward of that province.

9. In the North-Western Provinces generally, however, there is still hope of obtaining considerable supplies of food. About 1,00,000 maunds of grain have been already purchased there on behalf of the Bengal authorities, and 2,50,000 maunds more are about to be purchased immediately on the same account.

* Printed in a separate volume.

10. We are glad to find that the Government of Bengal has arranged for distributing the Government grain supplies among the various stations in the districts affected, where the various public works, imperial and local, are to be carried on. It is hoped that these supplies will for the most part be ready at their various destinations before the end of January, before the activity of the country traffic commences.

11. The aggregate of these supplies, thus to arrive during January and February, as provisionally arranged on the recommendation of the local Government, amounts to 19,60,000 maunds or 72,000 tons, of which 38,000 tons will be obtained in India, while 34,000 tons are to be obtained from the supplies (80,000 tons) previously ordered by the Governor General for Bengal from beyond sea. Of the 34,000 tons 10,000 have arrived or are arriving from Burmah and Madras; then 7,000 tons in December and 10,000 tons in January are promised from Burmah; and 9,000 tons are expected within this period from Hong-Kong and Saigon. Thus, unless some unforeseen disappointment should occur, the supplies from beyond sea ought to be in time.

12. The quantity of 72,000 tons above stated is to be taken as part of the 118,000 tons mentioned in the 12th paragraph of our last despatch. Thus, besides the 72,000 tons which may be regarded as the preliminary provision, there is a provision of 46,000 tons from beyond sea already made.

13. These arrangements are irrespective of any provision which may yet have to be made in view to the difficulties which may beset us during next spring and summer, and which probably will arise if the winter rains shall fail. We have received representations from the Government of Bengal as alluded to in the Narrative regarding the ultimate liability which may devolve on the State, and the provision which may have to be made for that. These ulterior considerations are receiving our best attention, and we hope to be prepared accordingly.

14. There has been no marked activity in the transport of grain by the trade during the week. The transport by rail up-country from Calcutta has indeed been comparatively slack. There is a larger quantity than usual of grain being sent by river in native craft, but still not so large as to be remarkable. The navigable canals, however, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta are bringing in large quantities of grain week by week.

15. We have received from the Lieutenant-Governor a schedule of the temporary establishments of the various grades in the civil branches which are likely to be entertained by reason of the scarcity, and we have given a provisional sanction to these proposals.

16. We are in communication with the Government of Bengal, the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah, and the British India Steam Navigation Company regarding the transport by sea of emigrants from the distressed districts to Burmah. But until distress shall begin to be keenly felt, it hardly seems probable that any large number of intending emigrants will offer themselves.

17. We observe from the Narrative that the local officers still consider that the supplies of country carriage are, for the present, tolerably abundant. But bearing in mind that, as the season advances, there may be deficiency in this important respect, we are considering the practicability of arranging country carriage from a distance for the transport of grain for the imperial public works in the distressed districts, during the months when country carriage is most likely to run short.

18. There are no signs as yet of general distress in the districts affected. In some few places considerable number of labourers are being employed on public works, but the relief works have not yet become general. We are not able to state exactly the full number of labourers for whom employment can be found on all the works, both imperial and local; but our calculations sustain the hope that these works will be such as to afford, in event of need, useful and productive employment for a considerable portion of the labouring population. Our close attention is being, and will be given, to the organization of the works with this view.

Despatch from the Governor-General in Council to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 17, dated Calcutta, December 19, 1873.

We have the honor to transmit the Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal for the week ending the 18th December*.

2. As might at this particular season be expected, the general situation remains without any material change since our last despatch.

3. The weather has been clear, rainless, and cool, and thus has been seasonable.

4. The prices of food grains continue comparatively low, by reason of the harvesting now in progress in all the provinces under the Bengal Government. The out-turn appears in some places better, and nowhere worse, than the anticipation.

5. But the general and probably well-founded opinion is, that in Behar the promise of the spring harvest considerably exceeds the first expectation. If the winter rains shall prove propitious, that source of food supply may yet afford a fair yield.

6. The accounts of the crops from the other parts of British India continue favorable, with the exception of the eastern and south-eastern portions of Oudh and the North-Western Provinces.

7. In general terms, it may be stated that distress has not yet begun to show itself in the districts affected by drought. Whatever symptoms of such distress may be perceptible are but slight and partial. The labourers employed in large numbers on the public works are mostly from those classes which ordinarily resort to such employment. Though preparations are made for organizing district relief committees, the occurrence of actual need is awaited before active operations are commenced. For the same reason we defer the formation of a central relief committee.

8. We still incline to the view that the position of the provinces under the Government of Bengal is not worse in 1873 than in the corresponding period of 1865. The Lieutenant-Governor's opinion affords some support to this view. But it will be seen from a letter among the enclosures of this Narrative that he regards the failure of the present year as more wide-spread, and the crops in the distressed districts worse, in 1873 than in 1865†. If Orissa be excluded from the comparison, there might be some foundation for this opinion. But if Orissa be included, as it ought to be, in the comparison, then the whole facts, as yet known to us, do not justify us in considering either the failure more wide-spread or the crops worse in the provinces under the Government of Bengal now than in 1865. In a case of this description, however, new conditions may develop themselves, and we shall continue to be on the watch for any facts which might induce us to modify our present opinion.

9. We bear in mind that a decisive opinion regarding the extent and character of the distress can hardly be formed until the end of January. Meanwhile, all the requirements of the Lieutenant-Governor have been met, and additional precautionary measures, which seem to us to be advisable in order to meet the distress if it should become more serious, have been taken.

10. The amount of grain required to arrive by the end of January for the public works in the districts affected by drought (72,000 tons as given in paragraph 11 of our last despatch) is on its way to its proper destination from places in India or from beyond sea, and will doubtless be in time.

11. During the last week there has been a greater degree of activity than before in the grain trade.

12. We observe with satisfaction that the Narrative shews emigration towards the Assam and the tea districts to have begun.

13. We forward copy of a letter addressed by the Governor General to the Government of Bengal, stating the impressions he derived from his recent visit to Behar. (See below No. 58 of this series.)

14. We believe that the proceedings of the Government of Bengal and of its local officers in the very important matters arising out of the drought are such as to merit the approbation of Her Majesty's Government.

* Printed in a separate volume.

† See p. 100, No. 59 of this series.

Letter from A. O. Hume, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 604, dated Fort William, December 16, 1873.

I am directed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General to acquaint you, for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, with the impressions which His Excellency has derived from his recent visit to Behar.

2. After leaving Allahabad, Lord Northbrook went by rail to Mogulserai, and from thence to Sasseram and Dehree, where the head works of the Soane Canal are situated. He then proceeded to the Behea Station, and returned to Calcutta by the Loop Line. In the course of this journey His Excellency has had the opportunity of passing through a part of Behar, in which the worst scarcity is anticipated, and of conversing with Mr. Bayley, the Commissioner of Patna, Messrs. Alexander and Palmer, the Collectors of Shahabad and Gya, Mr. Eyre, the Deputy Magistrate of Sasseram, Mr. Levinge, the Superintending Engineer of the Soane Circle, Messrs. Thomson and Fox of Behea, Messrs. Molony and Barlow, the Commissioners of Rajshahye and Bhaugulpore, Mr. Taylor, the Collector of Bhaugulpore, and others.

3. Lord Northbrook is glad of this opportunity of expressing his entire approval of the general arrangements ordered by Sir George Campbell in his excellent circular of the 17th of November (see p. 48) and subsequently, as well as of the manner in which they have been carried out. His Excellency feels entire confidence in the ability of the local officers to execute the orders of Government and to cope successfully with any difficulties which may arise. The energy, the thorough mastery of the details of the subject, and the anxiety not to omit any possible precaution to provide against famine, displayed by all the officers with whom Lord Northbrook came in contact, deserve His Excellency's highest commendation.

4. Lord Northbrook would be much obliged to the Lieutenant-Governor to convey the thanks of the Government to Mr. Levinge, who, when he heard early in October that the rice crop was in danger from drought, immediately made temporary arrangements for opening some branches of the Soane Canal which were incomplete, and has thus already supplied with water 120,000 acres of land, upon some of which the rice crop has been saved, whilst upon all there is a prospect of fine winter and rubbee crops. His Excellency has directed that the Lieutenant-Governor shall be furnished with a copy of Colonel Rundall's observations upon the progress of the works, and he requests that His Honor will authorize the commencement of the western main canal as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made by Mr. Levinge.

5. The general prospects of the country embraced within the three Commissionerships, which include the whole area of distress as defined in the Lieutenant-Governor's circular of the 17th of November, appear to His Excellency to be unchanged, with the exception that in Behar there is more land sown for "rubbee" than was at first supposed, and that the actual condition of the "rubbee" sowings is reported to be generally satisfactory. In these particulars the situation is certainly somewhat better than was anticipated a month ago. Lord Northbrook found that several high authorities had arrived at the same conclusion as the Government of India and Sir George Campbell (in His Honor's note of the 25th of November, see p. 57) that the present condition of affairs is on the whole much the same as it was at the same time in the year 1865.

6. When at Fyzabad Lord Northbrook saw Lieutenant-Colonel Harkin, Commanding the 4th Bengal Cavalry, which regiment has just arrived from Segowlee, having marched through the north of the district of Champaran, a part of the country as to which Mr. Bayley feels some apprehension. His Excellency was glad to hear that there were then no signs of distress. Colonel Harkin, who with great forethought took every opportunity of ascertaining the condition of the country through which he passed, has furnished Lord Northbrook with his observations, a copy of which will be sent for Sir G. Campbell's information.

7. The Commissioner of Patna explained to His Excellency in detail the arrangements which he has made both as to local relief works and as to the

storing of grain in convenient places. These will all in due course be reported by the Commissioner himself to His Honor. It will be sufficient for His Excellency to say that Mr. Bayley appears to have carried out the orders and intentions of Government with great judgment and ability. The number of centres in which grain is already stored or will be stored is large, and it may confidently be expected that when Mr. Bayley's arrangements are complete,—as they will be before any serious distress can arise,—every portion of his division will be within easy reach of some Government food depôt, from which officers in charge of public works, or relief committees, if it should be found necessary to establish them, will be able to draw supplies. Lord Northbrook himself saw considerable quantities of rice stored at Dehree, which is 60 miles distant from the nearest railway station.

Time did not permit of the Commissioners of Rajshahye and Bhaugulpore explaining to His Excellency the whole of the details connected with their relief works and storage of food, but from short conversations His Excellency gathered that they had made arrangements very similar in character to those of Mr. Bayley, and equally satisfactory.

8. Arrangements for local transport were reported to be in progress. The Commissioner of Patna and his subordinate officers have already provided largely for the transport of food, and were not under any anxiety that the means at their disposal would prove inadequate to meet their requirements.

9. No relief works, properly so called, have yet been found necessary in the Patna Division, although throughout the scarcity-stricken districts every preparation has been made to start them whenever and wherever they may be required. The number of persons employed on the Soane Canal works has recently somewhat diminished, owing to the employment of labourers in gathering the harvest; all those who were employed at the time of His Excellency's visit were ordinary contract labourers.

10. The preparations for the organization of relief committees have been generally postponed until the more urgent work connected with the storage and transport of grain has been completed.

The local officers in the Shahabad District expressed some doubt as to whether it would be possible to organize relief committees properly without increased European agency. Perhaps this requirement may have been met by the schedule of temporary establishments which has been already sanctioned by the Government of India; but should this not be the case, any representation which His Honor may think fit to make as to the temporary employment of more officers, with a view to the supervision of relief committees, will receive His Excellency's immediate attention.

11. His Excellency was glad to learn that the zemindars in the Shahabad District are applying for advances, and Mr. Bayley speaks in the highest terms of the assistance which the planters are rendering to him in the neighbourhood of their homes.

12. Almost all the local officers expressed considerable anxiety as to the sufficiency of the supplies of fodder, and some expressed apprehension as to the supply of water for cattle. His Excellency understands that this subject is receiving the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor, with a view to every possible precaution being taken to obviate so serious a calamity as great mortality amongst the cattle.

13. The Commissioner of Bhaugulpore brought to Lord Northbrook's notice the probability that certain classes of cultivators might be unable to obtain sufficient credit to carry them through the time of scarcity, but would not resort to public works, or apply for relief in any other form, and suggested that advances of money or grain might be made to them, to be recovered afterwards with interest.

It is the obvious and natural duty of the landlords under whom such cultivators hold to do their utmost to assist them in passing through this temporary difficulty. The issue of advances of public money to any zemindars for this purpose should be held to come within the authority already given by the Government of India in respect to advances, and, where apprehension is felt that this class will experience distress which cannot be otherwise met, it will be the duty of local officers to point out to zemindars the action which they should take, and the manner in which Government is prepared to assist them. The

instructions contained in the circular letter addressed by His Honor's directions to the Commissioners of Patna and Bhaugulpore of the 24th of November with respect to advances for the digging of wells appear to His Excellency to be very judicious, and might perhaps be extended with advantage to other purposes. Lord Northbrook does not doubt that, on such communications being made to them, zemindars will either make advances to such cultivators from their own funds, or accept with alacrity the assistance offered by Government for this purpose; but if these expectations should not be realized, and difficulty is found with regard to the security for advances made directly to cultivators, His Excellency is ready to consider whether some legislative provision should not be made to the effect that their landlord shall stand security for the repayment.

14. His Excellency endeavoured whilst in the North-Western Provinces to obtain the most trustworthy information both as to the prospects of the winter crops in those provinces and as to the surplus stores which are available for export. As regards the winter crops, there is every appearance of an unusually abundant yield in most parts of the North-Western Provinces. It is difficult, if not impossible, to state in figures the amount of surplus stores available, but the autumn crop has been a large one, and there was a remarkable concurrence of opinion amongst all whom His Excellency consulted, including Sir W. Muir, the district officers, and the best informed grain-dealers, that in any case a large quantity of grain will be available to meet the deficiency of the crops in Behar.

15. All the information which His Excellency received tended to show that private trade is active, and that large quantities of grain have been and are being sent to the distressed districts from the North-West and the Punjab. It is of great importance that no check should be put upon the operations of private traders by the importations of grain on Government account, and the Commissioner of Patna and other local officers in Behar pressed upon His Excellency the desirability of doing nothing to shake the confidence of grain-dealers in their ability to find a market for imported food grains.

16. The position which Government occupies in respect to food grains which have been or will be imported into the distressed districts cannot be too widely made known. The stores of grain laid in by Government will not be brought into competition with the general supplies of the trade, but will be used for the maintenance of the workpeople employed upon Government relief works, and as depôts upon which relief committees, should it become necessary to call such committees into existence, may draw.

Bearing in mind the large number of persons in need of relief for whom food may be required, the fact that many tracts of country which are threatened with scarcity are remote from railway stations, the difficulty which may be experienced in throwing grain in adequate quantities at a short notice into those tracts of country, and the determination of the Government to take ample precautionary measures in order to obviate mortality from starvation, His Excellency decided and announced in the Government Resolution of November 7th that it would not be sufficient to rely upon the ordinary action of trade to meet these contingencies. Steps have accordingly been taken to secure sufficient food for the full number of persons who, judging by the experience of the past and the estimates of the Lieutenant-Governor and of the responsible local officers as to the future, may be compelled to resort to relief works or require gratuitous relief.

It will be seen that Government relies to a great extent on private trade to supplement any deficiency in the food supply of one part of the country from the surplus of another part; but at the same time, as an insurance against the inability of the operations of trade to meet the expected demands in certain places, stores have been purchased in order to secure a reserve of food for that portion of the people who may be thrown on the hands of the Government or of the relief committees. Some part of these stores are already available in the districts threatened with famine, and the remainder will be available by the time they are required.

17. All the officers who were consulted by His Excellency were of opinion that the orders issued and precautions taken by Government were adequate.

18. The future prospects of the country greatly depend upon the timely supply of the rain which usually falls about Christmas; and although the prompt action that has been taken must greatly mitigate the severity of the calamity which threatens the affected districts, there is still every reason to press forward to completion the measures which have been decided upon, and to watch carefully the signs which indicate the approach of actual distress throughout the whole province, in order that any additional measures may be adopted which altered circumstances may require. Lord Northbrook is satisfied that the Lieutenant-Governor and the local officers are fully alive to these circumstances.

No. 59.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, No. 4033, dated Calcutta, December 18, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 604, dated 16th December, (see above, No. 58 of this series) and to express the Lieutenant-Governor's gratification that His Excellency the Viceroy has been pleased to accord approval to the arrangements made by this Government and the Commissioners and officers of Behar at the present crisis. I am to submit copy of the letter * under which the orders of His Excellency have been communicated to the local officers. With reference to the concluding sentence of paragraph 4, I am to say that regarding the Western Soane Canal works the Lieutenant-Governor will address the Government of India separately.

2. In regard to the remark that the prospects of the country at the present time do not differ greatly from the position at the same period of 1865, it must be understood to be the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion that the failure of the present year is much more wide-spread than in 1865, but the latter year having been preceded by bad seasons, while the crops of 1871-72 were good, it is possible that the country may be now in no greater danger than it was then; but there can be no question that the crops of 1873 have, at any rate in the distressed tracts, been worse than those of 1865.

No. 60.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore and Rajshahye, and to the Superintending Engineer, Soane Canal, Nos. 4020 and 4020½, dated Calcutta, December 18, 1873.

I am directed to forward copy of a letter (see p. 97) from the Secretary to the Government of India, conveying the impressions derived by His Excellency the Viceroy during his recent visit to Behar. The Lieutenant-Governor is glad to have the pleasure of communicating to you this expression of His Excellency's approval, in which Sir George Campbell heartily concurs. It will be observed that the Viceroy notices with approbation the arrangements made by all the local officers and also the assistance given by the planters of Behar.

2. With reference to paragraph 4, I am to say that the subject of the further extension of the Soane Canal works is under consideration, and a further communication will shortly be made to the Irrigation Department and the Commissioner of Patna.

3. With reference to paragraph 5 I am to forward copy of Sir George Campbell's note, comparing the position of affairs in November 1865 with that of the present year.

4. With reference to paragraph 13 of His Excellency's orders, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to urge upon Commissioners and Magistrate-Collectors to do all they can to make the zemindars see that it is both their duty and interest to assist their ryots with advances during the coming crisis; and he directs that advances of public money may be made without interest to zemindars who desire to help their ryots on the same terms as advances are made to zemindars who will import grain. Particular engagements

* No. 4020, dated 18th December 1873. (See No. 60 of this series).

regarding the expenditure of such advances must be taken, and great care must be exercised to see that they are expended in the manner intended. The Lieutenant-Governor will be glad to be favoured with an early expression of opinion from the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore and Rajshahye, on the question whether it would be possible, as suggested by His Excellency the Viceroy, that advances should be made direct to cultivators, and legislative provision be made requiring the landlords to be security for the payment of the advances.

5. I am to request that local officers will make known as widely as possible the position in regard to Government importations of grain as defined in paragraph 16 of His Excellency the Viceroy's orders. The Lieutenant-Governor hopes that it will be made plain that the grain now imported by Government is for use on the relief works and at poor-houses only, so that traders may recover from any fear of Government competition, and that private importations of grain may increase.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor will assure the Government of India that the local officers may be trusted to comply with the Viceroy's instructions, and carefully to watch all indications of the approach of scarcity and distress in any district or locality, even in those places where there has not hitherto been serious apprehension, but where, owing to sudden rise of prices or other reason, difficulty may unexpectedly arise.

No. 61.

Letter from A. O. Hume, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 605 (Confidential), dated Fort William, December 16, 1873.

In addition to my letter of this date (see p. 97), conveying the general impressions which Lord Northbrook received on his journey to Calcutta, I am directed to make some further observations for the consideration and guidance of the Government of Bengal.

2. This letter is marked 'confidential' in order that its contents may not be made public. In dealing with the difficulties before us, questions may arise upon which there may be some difference of opinion as to the precise action to be adopted, and upon such questions it is necessary that free official communications should pass between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal. At the same time it is very undesirable that such matters should be publicly discussed, and so an erroneous impression be conveyed to the public that the Government of India and the Lieutenant-Governor are not cordially acting together for the purpose of mitigating the effects of the scarcity. Lord Northbrook regrets to observe that some topics of this nature have already been publicly discussed, and he desires, as far as possible, to avoid this for the future.

3. Lord Northbrook has observed that in the Resolution issued by the Lieutenant-Governor on the 3rd instant, which appears to be very well adapted to guide the officers who will have to supervise relief works, it is provided that rice or other food shall be sold to the people employed upon relief works when the market price rises higher than the rate of 10 seers per rupee.

His Excellency thinks that this rule may probably give a correct indication of the price of rice which in many parts of the distressed districts would show sufficient scarcity to make it desirable that the Government stores should be opened for the supply of people engaged upon relief works, or in other words, that the wages of the labour so employed should be partly paid in grain. He understands, however, from the local officers that it may happen, especially in Behar, where rice is by no means the only ordinary food of the people, that the rate fixed may not be a good practical test. For instance, Lord Northbrook found, on recently passing through Shahabad, that while the general price of rice in the district was 13 seers per rupee, it was 9½ seers in

one small market in consequence of some accidental cause, and a like circumstance was mentioned to him by the Collector of Gya.

His Excellency is therefore of opinion that some latitude should be allowed to the local officers in acting upon this part of the instructions contained in the circular.

4. It appears to be very desirable that experiments should be speedily made in the use of Burmese rice in order to ascertain how it can be best made palatable to people who are only accustomed to the use of the Bengal article. Mr. Levinge, who was in Orissa when the Burmese rice was introduced there, informed Lord Northbrook that it requires to be boiled twice in order to be brought to the same condition as Bengal rice.

His Excellency would be glad to have early information as to the result of any experiments upon Burmese rice which may be made in the places to which it has been sent. Its successful use seems to depend very much upon the care and management of local officers when it is first introduced.

5. Lord Northbrook would suggest, although the matter may have already been considered, that when labourers are drafted from a distance to the larger relief works apart from their families, some arrangement should be made whereby they may be able readily to send them remittances of cash.

6. An opinion was expressed to His Excellency that the enquiries made into the stocks of grain in the hands of traders have had a disquieting effect, as indicating some intention on the part of Government to interfere for the purpose of regulating prices. His Excellency is aware that officers have been instructed by Mr. Bernard's letter of the 19th November * that their enquiries should not be in such detail as to be deemed inquisitorial, or tend to alarm the people, but he doubts if sufficient attention has in all cases been given to this warning.

7. In the latest famine narrative His Excellency observes the following paragraph:—

"The Commissioner of Bhaugulpore was told that if exportation was going on in his division, he might fairly purchase in the local market so much as would practically put a stop to the export of grain. He, however, showed cogent reasons against the appearance of Government as a buyer in local markets, and the matter has been left to his discretion."

His Excellency is glad that the Commissioner has not entered the market with the object of checking the ordinary course of the local trade.

So long as the purchases which the Lieutenant-Governor has proposed to make, and which have been authorized by the Government of India, are incomplete, it will be open to His Honor to buy locally through the agency of the trade, if it should be considered desirable with regard to prices and the state of supplies to depart from the general course agreed upon that purchases should mainly be made from outside; but any purchases made, not on general grounds, but for the special purpose of preventing the free transit of grain from one district to another, would be contrary to the policy which the Government of India has enjoined, and likely to occasion very serious difficulties if allowed generally at the discretion of local officers.

8. I am to add that while Lord Northbrook is satisfied with the precautions taken to meet distress in that part of the country where the crops have principally failed, he feels some anxiety lest distress should break out in parts where there has been less or no failure, owing to the increase of prices and the consequent export of food grains. This consideration leads to the conclusion that the condition of all parts of Bengal requires careful watching, and that the whole of the available supplies should not be localized, but as the quantity of Government purchases at our disposal increase, part at any rate should be kept in reserve; and he is glad to observe from the Lieutenant-Governor's letter of the 6th instant that His Honor proposes to establish such a reserve.

* In this circular district officers were requested "to furnish the best information procurable as to the stocks of rice held (1) by zemindars and mahajuns, (2) by individual ryots and others, the amount required for home consumption, and that available for export to other districts." It was added that they were "not to make such detailed enquiries as might be deemed inquisitorial and tend to alarm the people."

No. 62.

Letter from the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, No. 4113, dated December 22, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential letter, No. 605, dated the 16th December (see above, No. 61 of this series), and in reply to submit copies of two letters noted on the margin, which have been written with a view to giving effect to the views expressed at paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6 of your letter.

2. Under cover of my endorsement No. 4032, dated 18th December 1873, accounts of experiments made with Burmah "cargo rice" in Calcutta have been submitted *.

3. With reference to paragraph 3 of your letter, I am to explain that the orders of this Government in the Public Works Department (dated 3rd December) permit the sale of Government grain on works at not less than 10 seers per rupee, and it has now been explained that, under special circumstances, grain may be sold at more than 10 seers per rupee. The Lieutenant-Governor thinks that rice is a common enough food all over the distressed tracts.

4. With reference to paragraph 8 of your letter under acknowledgment, I am to solicit a reference to my letter No. 4033, dated 18th December 1873 (see p. 100), in reply to your letter No. 604.

5. In regard to paragraph 7 a separate communication will be made (see p. 111.)

No. 63.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to all Commissioners and Magistrate-Collectors, No. 90, dated Calcutta December 20, 1873.

It has been pointed out that our investigations into the amount of food held in stock by the different classes of the people cause disquiet and alarm, and it has been suggested that the caution given by Government against making such inquiries too inquisitorial may not have been fully regarded. The Lieutenant-Governor accordingly now directs that no further precise inquiries should be made into this point. Opinions may be gathered from time to time on the subject and reported; but no further investigation into the food stocks, village by village or thannah by thannah, should be made.

No. 64.

Circular from Colonel J. E. T. Nicolls, R. E., Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye, and to the Superintending Engineers of the Northern and North-Eastern Circles, to the Special Superintending Engineer Bhaugulpore Division, and the Superintending Engineer, Northern Bengal (State) Railway, No. 6162, dated Calcutta December, 22, 1873.

The Commissioner of Patna recently drew the Lieutenant-Governor's attention to paragraph 4, clause (a)† and to appendix A (not printed in this series) of this Department's Resolution, No. 5718, dated 3rd December. Mr. Bayley enquired whether some latitude might not be allowed in the matter of selling rice on the works, and it has otherwise been urged on the Lieutenant-Governor's attention that rice is not the ordinary food of the people in some of the Behar districts. It has also been pointed out that there is much difference between the ordinary rate of wages in different districts—2½ to 3 annas

* These are not printed. The general result of the experiments was that the Burmah rice was not disliked by those to whom it had been given.

† "When the market price of rice rises above 10 seers per rupee, the Government will sell rice or other food to the work-people at not less than 10 seers per rupee, whatever may be the current district rate of food. The food will be sold under the rules contained in Appendix A of this Resolution."

a day being the ordinary wages of unskilled labour in Rungpore, while $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna is the rate in Chumparun; and it is urged that the one rate will, and the other rate will not, buy famine rations for a man and his family at the rate of 10 seers per rupee.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor desires me to point out that rice is all over Bengal and Behar sufficiently common a food to be taken as a test of prices everywhere, and 10 seers a rupee seems to be about the best testing point. When common rice in Chumparun, for instance, is about 10 seers per rupee, maize would probably be about 12 or 14 seers. Further, the orders are that, when food in the local marts near relief works reaches these prices, rice may be sold from the Government store at not less than 10 seers per rupee. The Lieutenant-Governor believes that in most districts ordinary rice and wheat should not be sold on relief works at a lower rate than 10 seers per rupee. Burmah cargo rice, barley, tuwarie, and maize would be cheaper in proportion, and perhaps Burmah rice will always have to be sold a little cheaper than Bengal rice or wheat.

3. At the same time, Sir George Campbell desires to say that he is ready to consider any representations which may be made in the matter of price, and will be open to allow a certain discretion in special circumstances. He admits that in some circumstances we may have to sell Government rice at a somewhat cheaper rate (and other grain in proportion,) when we must sell.

4. With Mr. Bernard's letter of the 19th December were forwarded accounts of experiments made in Calcutta with Burmah "cargo rice," as to the best way of husking it, as to the loss in the process, as to the best way of

"His Excellency would be glad to have early information as to the result of any experiments upon Burmese rice which may be made in the places to which it has been sent. Its successful use seems to depend very much upon the care and management of local officers when it is first introduced."

cooking it, and as to its digestibility. I am now to request, with reference to the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy extracted in the margin, that an early opportunity may be taken in some of the relief works in your division to sell Burmah white rice, and also Burmah cargo rice, to labourers on works. The rice can be sold to a limited extent

at a rate a good deal below the rate for Bengal rice; and after a short time report should be made how the rice was liked by the labourers, whether they esteemed it very much lower than ordinary rice, how they prepared and cooked it, and how it agreed with them. If the Burmah rice is sold in the first instance and tried by the best and most sensible workmen, who follow advice as to the mode of cooking it, the Lieutenant-Governor doubts not that, with a little care and management at the outset, this rice will be palatable enough and generally acceptable, especially if it is slightly cheaper than Bengal rice.

5. It has been pointed out to the Lieutenant-Governor that when labourers are drafted to a distance from their families, some arrangements should be made whereby they may be able readily to send home remittances of cash. The Lieutenant-Governor desires that facilities of this kind may be afforded; the best way will, perhaps, be for each officer in charge of large works to keep a register of workmen who desire to send money to their homes, and to send extracts of that register to the sub-divisional officer nearest the home of the workman; the sub-divisional officer will pay such sums as he may from time to time be advised to the family through the agency of the nearest grain store or relief house.

No. 65.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 46, dated Calcutta, January 7, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 4113, dated the 22nd ultimo (see p. 103), received on the 3rd instant, and with regard to para. 3 thereof, to state that the question of the sale price of Government grain to be used on relief works has been specially reserved for consideration in para. 9 of the letter from this Department, No. 710 (Confidential), dated 30th ultimo (see p. 114).

2. Para. 4 of your letter under acknowledgment is not considered to be explicit enough as to the localization of supplies, which is the main point treated of in para. 8 of confidential letter from the Government of India, No. 605 of the 16th ultimo (see p. 102); and I am desired to request that, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, you will be good enough to furnish the Governor General in Council with precise information as to what is being done on this point.

No. 66.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 105, dated Calcutta, January 13, 1874.

With reference to paragraph 2 of the letter from the Government of India, No. 46 of 7th January (see above, No. 65 of this series), regarding the localization of supplies, I am directed to submit that the Lieutenant-Governor regrets that he fails to apprehend with certainty the exact point to which your present letter is directed. Paragraph 8 of Mr. Hume's (confidential) letter of 16th December (see p. 102) was directed not to the localization, but rather to what may be called the non-localization of supplies; that is, it was suggested that the whole of the available supply should not be localized in the distressed districts, but that part should be held in reserve to meet possible outbreaks of distress, owing to increase of prices and the exports of food grains in parts of the country where there had been less or no failure of the crops.

2. If the object of your present letter goes farther and asks for information regarding the carrying out of this policy, the situation may be stated as follows:—The Lieutenant-Governor has always taken most entirely the same view as that above mentioned regarding the provision of a reserve. It was noted in Mr. Hume's (confidential) letter of 16th December 1873, that the Lieutenant-Governor had done so by setting aside a certain reserve from the quantity which had then been sanctioned. As soon as the Lieutenant-Governor learned that further supplies had been sanctioned, he thought he might safely allot the previous reserves to districts which seemed most to want increased supplies, and did so accordingly.

3. As regards the further supplies sanctioned by your confidential letter of the 6th January, (see p. 155) the accompanying copy of a circular (confidential) letter of this office, No. 61 S.R. of 9th instant (see p. 109), will show what has been done. Considering that it would be some time before the additional 75,000 tons, on which the Lieutenant-Governor had been permitted to calculate, could be despatched, he thought he might safely allow the officers of the distressed districts to push forward food as fast as possible into the farther parts of their districts, not doubting that before the farther amount of 75,000 tons was reached, the orders of the Government of India, on the suggestions of this Government, to buy as a reserve in addition (expressed in my confidential letter No. 36 S.R., dated 5th instant (see p. 149), would be received. If the Government of India should find it necessary to limit the supply, there is still time to keep a reserve, as the supplies are at this moment coming in faster than we can despatch them, and if an outburst of want occurred in an unexpected quarter we could supply it.

4. Unless, however, some very great improvement takes place, the Lieutenant-Governor strongly thinks that it would be advisable that he should have authority to despatch to the interior of the distressed districts the whole of the 75,000 tons sanctioned for the three months from 1st February, and that for the purposes indicated in paragraph 8 of the confidential letter of 16th December, *viz.*, to meet possible outbursts of want due to exportation and high prices in places not yet distressed and accessible, a further reserve should be formed, as suggested in paragraphs 7, 8, 11 and 12 of my (confidential) letter No. 36 S.R. of 5th January.

5. If your letter now under acknowledgment intended, however, to ask for information regarding the localization of supplies, the following figures show

how the quantity sanctioned for distribution up to 31st January has been allotted after further grants from the reserve :—

Quantity of the Government Grain sanctioned up to the 31st January allotted as under.

		Mds.	Mds.
PATNA DIVISION	Soane Canal Works	1,00,000	
	Gunduck Embankments	1,00,000	
	Patna	50,000	
	Gya	1,50,000	
	Shahabad	50,000	
	Tirhoot	2,75,000	
	Sarun	1,25,000	
	Chumparun	1,50,000	
	DIVISIONAL TOTAL		10,00,000
BHAUGULPORE DIVISION	Monghyr	1,00,000	
	Bhaugulpore	2,00,000	
	Purneah	2,00,000*	
	DIVISIONAL TOTAL		5,00,000
RAJSHAHYE DIVISION	Dinagapore	1,95,000	
	Northern Bengal Railway	1,00,000	
	Rajshahye	20,000	
	Maldah	20,000	
	Rungpore	70,000	
	Bograh	20,000	
	DIVISIONAL TOTAL		4,25,000
	GRAND TOTAL		19,25,000

6. The enclosed (confidential) circular of 9th January (see p. 109) shows all that has since been done with reference to allotment of subsequent supplies. The Lieutenant-Governor thinks that under any circumstance we should for the present send into the interior of the districts of Dinagapore, Tirhoot, Sarun, and Chumparun, as much as we can possibly carry. Today a telegram announces that rain is falling at Patna, and if this fall is general in Behar, it will do very great good. Still it will not prevent the need for as much grain as we can store for some time to come in the most distressed districts, where no benefit to the spring crops on the ground, now possible, will supply a sufficiency of good for the population.

No. 67.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore and Rajshahye, &c., No. 10 S.R., dated Calcutta, January 3, 1874.

The Lieutenant-Governor has on several occasions taken opportunity to urge the great importance of pressing forward the supplies of Government grain as fast as possible to the distressed districts and to storehouses on works in the remoter parts of those districts. Sir George Campbell now desires me to remind you that, under the orders of the 6th and 16th of December, we have to distribute 16 lakhs of maunds before the end of January, besides 3 lakhs of maunds in reserve to supply any demand for quantities exceeding our assignments within that period. At present only 3 or 4 lakhs of maunds appear, according to the last returns, to have been distributed to, or even started for, the interior of the districts; while about 4,50,000 maunds have been despatched from Calcutta by Mr. Toynbee, and about 1½ lakh more has come from the North-Western Provinces and East Bengal into the distressed districts,

* The extra lakh to Bhaugulpore is to be held available for Tirhoot, and the extra lakh to Purneah is to be held available for Dinagapore.

making 6 lakhs in all. This leaves 9 lakhs to be sent in the present month of the assigned quantities besides the 3 lakhs of reserve, or 12 lakhs of maunds in all, all of which should be distributed in the present month.

2. These figures have made the Lieutenant-Governor very anxious on this subject. He thinks it of the most extreme importance that the whole quantity of grain sanctioned by the Government of India for the supply to the end of January should be despatched to the interior of districts, and, as far as possible, placed within that time. For he has never looked on this despatch as the final supply necessary to guard against the risk of more severe want hereafter: far from this, he looks on it as only a first instalment, which must in all probability be followed by farther despatches. If the symptoms should be unfavorable, these farther despatches must be very large indeed. The Lieutenant-Governor looked to the transport of the first instalment as an experiment, a means of discovering the best routes and the resources in the way of carriage available in case of greater emergency, and an experience which would qualify us for greater efforts hereafter rather than an end. He always anticipated that there would be many difficulties and some failures at first, and he knows that when a stream is turned into new channels it takes some time to find its way to its destination. But he hoped that when the stream once began to flow freely it would run more easily and in greater volume than at first. Though scarcely surprised that the quantity of grain actually placed in depôt in the first few weeks was not large, he hoped for somewhat larger results by this time, and he does earnestly trust that the grain will now be despatched and arrive very much faster than hitherto, and that after transporting all that can be supplied in the present month, the local officers will have a full knowledge of, and command over, their resources, and will be prepared to do on a large scale as much more as future necessities may demand for the relief of their districts.

3. The Lieutenant-Governor is glad to acknowledge that the stream of transport has set in satisfactorily toward all the remoter districts except, perhaps, Tirhoot and Purneah. But he fears that as yet what must by comparison be called mere dribblets have really gone. He would now ask all officers engaged in the business of transporting grain to the interior to strengthen and expedite their transport service in every possible way, so that the whole quantity assigned may be despatched to the interior by the 31st January, and may be deposited in the remoter storehouses by the 15th February at latest.

4. Arrangements having already been made for a farther supply of grain, the Lieutenant-Governor invites applications for assignments from the reserve from any officers who consider that they can receive and despatch more than has been already allotted to them before the 31st January, and that it is needed in their districts.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor desires me to add that Mr. Toynbee, the officer in charge of grain despatches from Calcutta, has plenty of grain to send off. A large supply is now actually in the river, and is being sent off as fast as possible, and much more is shortly expected. Mr. Toynbee has orders to keep no grain here in Calcutta, but to send it off as fast as he can up to the limits allotted to each division or district.

6. Sir George Campbell appeals then to the zeal and energy of the Commissioners, magistrates of districts, superintending engineers, and other local officers, to make the most strenuous efforts to discover and organize the best means of transport, and to show both what they can do now and what they are prepared to do hereafter.

7. While the Lieutenant-Governor thus calls for the strenuous exertions of the local officers to obtain sufficient carriage, and to transport supplies to the more distant tracts not reached by private enterprise with sufficient rapidity, he would also remind them that a great work of this kind, to be done on a large scale, requires discretion as well as energy. Such service as is required of cartmen and others will not be well done by unwilling men; rough attempts to press carriage indiscriminately may do more harm than good by diminishing the public supply and putting a stop to private supply. Every endeavour should be made to obtain willing and efficient carriage. As before observed, contract rates of transport would be best, but, when necessary, carts and boats may be hired for a period.

8. At the same time it must be particularly borne in mind that one great object must be to interfere with private trade as little as possible. Wherever private traders or other private persons are importing or are willing to import with or without advances, it will always be better to let them do so by preference, and to obtain the Government supplies through them. It is principally for remote tracts where private enterprise fails that, for so much supply to labourers and relief houses as it may be necessary for Government to undertake, regular transport trains or other means of carriage must be organized.

9. By way of showing at a glance how far the grain transport business has as yet progressed, I am to extract the following paragraphs from a report recently made to the Government of India as follows:—

PARA. 17. The distribution of the Government grain to the storehouses in the interior, and especially to the remoter tracts away from railways and rivers, is perhaps the most important work we now have in hand, and it is engaging the most earnest attention of our officers. It may be well to offer here some brief details of the routes and modes of traffic now being tried. Taking the several districts in order, we have—

Patna.—This district stretches along the Ganges and the railway; storage of grain can be done easily here last of all. But a few thousand maunds have been sent by cart to storehouses in the interior; means of carriage are said to be ample, and there is no anxiety about this district.

Gya.—The different parts of this district are being supplied from the Baktearpore, Patna, and Bilta Stations of the East Indian Railway. From the first-named station, grain goes on pack-bullocks to the eastern and less fertile parts of Gya. From the other two stations grain goes on carts by the Patna and Gya metalled road, and by unmetalled roads which are fairly good. As yet the despatches of grain to Gya have been about 35,000 maunds; the Lieutenant-Governor is somewhat anxious about the Aurungabad (extreme western, part of the district), and has asked the Commissioner to consider how the wants of that tract can be most easily met. He has suggested supplies from the North-Western Provinces, *via* the Grand Trunk Road.

Shahabad.—In this district depôts are arranged on the several works, and are to be supplied from five different railway stations. Grain has only now begun to be despatched to this district, most of which is very accessible, except only the Bhubooah Sub-Division, where distress is likely to be keenest, and to the requirements of which the Lieutenant-Governor has drawn very special attention; the tract will probably be supplied from the Grand Trunk Road.

Soane Canal Works.—The superintending engineer at present takes 5,000 maunds of grain a week and carts it to storehouses as it comes.

Up to the present date there has been no block in South Behar, and the district officers are quite confident of being able to get quite as much carriage as they require.

Tirhoot.—The supply of this district is at once more important and more difficult than the South Behar Districts. Grain is being despatched by three routes—namely, from Patna Ghât Station by boat to Hajepore and thence by cart to storage places in the centre of the district; from Barh Station to Chumpra Ghât by boat and thence by cart up to Durbhanga, Mudhobance, and Seetamarhee; from Monghyr Station up the Kosee and Ghugree Rivers to a place eight miles from Durbhanga, whence the grain is carried by carts into Northern and Western Tirhoot. A fourth route, the Chota Gunduck, which, in ordinary years, is navigable up to Rooshra, had to be abandoned because the water in the river was slow. As yet only 15,000 to 20,000 maunds have reached the Tirhoot District; as 2,50,000 maunds have to be stored there before the end of January, and the storehouses are mostly in the northern and north-eastern sub-divisions, the Lieutenant-Governor is not satisfied with the progress of grain transport in Tirhoot; he is aware that Mr. Bayley is doing what he can to secure greater progress, and he has begged that other matters may be postponed to the urgent necessity of getting grain up at once in the remoter tracts of Tirhoot. The district officers speak of abundance of carts being available, but the transport across the river and its sands causes delay, and as yet the stream of grain transport has not set properly into Tirhoot.

Surun.—This district is situated on the river and within easy reach of the railway. 25,000 maunds have been sent to Revelgunge on the Ganges and to places of debarkation on the Gunduck, and is in transit on carts to the marts in the interior; more is on its way.

Chumprara.—Forty-eight thousand maunds have been despatched by boat to this district, chiefly for the Gunduck embankment works; some of this has begun to arrive, and a little has been moved on to storehouses on local works in the interior. But the transport by boat is very slow; it is difficult to get a sufficient number of small boats to carry all the grain that is wanted at the present season when big boats cannot move up the rivers; and the Commissioner is trying how it will answer to cart 10,000 maunds from the Ganges up to Chumprara, into which district, 2,50,000 maunds have to be sent before the end of January.

Monghyr.—Transport is going on very promptly by cart from stations on the chord line and from Luckesera into the parts of Jumooee regarding which there is cause for anxiety. There is no hitch here; the despatches of grain to storehouses in the Trans-Ganges Sub-Division of Monghyr has also gone on smoothly.

Bhaugulpore.—The parts of Bhaugulpore regarding which there is most anxiety are those north of the Ganges. The magistrate has been able to send away across the river all the grain that has come to him, and by the middle of December more than 17,000 maunds had actually started from the river-side in carts for the extreme north of the district. The Magistrate-Collector expects to be able to carry all the supplies of Government grain without difficulty.

Purneah.—The district has drawn its supplies as yet entirely from the Sahebgunge Station, and there has been a block at the ferry and station. The railway ferry steamer can only carry a limited amount of cargo, and for some days the Purneah carts could not even carry away that much. A special officer is now posted at Caragola and Sahebgunge, and he is getting the grain across in native boats as fast as he can; more carts also are collected to carry the grain from the Ganges into the interior. The Magistrate-Collector is going to essay the Mahanuddee route, and see if he cannot get up grain from Godagaree by boat up to Barsooe, in the south-east of the district. As yet the Purneah grain transport arrangements are by no means complete.

Rajshahye Division.—The arrangements for sending grain to Maldah, Rajshahye, Dinagepore, and the North Bengal Railway works are all part of one scheme. The grain is sent by the Eastern Bengal Railway to Kooshtea, whence it is taken by Government steamer and flat and dropped at Dhaparee, Rampore Beaulah, and Godagaree. From Godagaree it is carried by boat to Maldah and Raigunge; from Maldah and other marts on the Mahanuddee it goes by cart to Gazole; and from Raigunge the Khurbah depôt is supplied. Some 5,000 maunds were sent from Rajmehal by cart to Dinagepore, but that route was tedious and costly. From Goalundo the river route by the Oorasagor, Burrul, and Atrai, was tried; and some 20,000 maunds have gone by that route. But the rivers are low, boats of the proper draught are few, and the papers herewith enclosed (enclosure 10) show the difficulties in the way. By making a transshipment depôt up the Oorasagor, this route will still be worked, but Major Lindsay has decided also to try two other routes, from Rampore Beaulah and Dhaparee, partly by land and partly by inland streams. From 60,000 to 70,000 maunds are already either stored in these districts, or are in boats on their inland waters, or in carts going up towards the northern storehouses.

Bogra.—This district is being supplied with grain purchased in Eastern Bengal and sent up the Berhampooter in native boats. The requirements of Bogra have only lately become emergent, and its supply will be thrown in without great difficulty.

Rungpore.—Grain from Eastern Bengal and Calcutta is on its way to Kaleegunge and Chilmaree at the mouth of the Teesta both by boat and by steamer. Part will be carried up the Teesta in boats to the ghâts opposite and above Rungpore; part will be carted to the storehouses from Kaleegunge. Carts and boats are being collected for the internal carriage; the district officer does not anticipate difficulty, but his arrangements have yet to be tested.

No. 68.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, Rajshahye, &c., No. 61 S.R., dated Calcutta, January 9, 1874.

In continuation of this office letter No. 10 S.-R., dated 3rd January (see above, No. 67 of this series), regarding the immediate pushing on of Government grain supplies to the remoter parts of the distressed districts, I am now directed to inform you that the Government of India has agreed to the Lieutenant-Governor's proposal that during the three months following the 1st February a further supply of grain, at least equal to that already sanctioned*, should be forwarded to the more distant and inaccessible districts where there is risk of serious distress.

2. Pending a more precise allotment of the further supply which will be made when reports of the needs and transport capabilities of the various districts are received. I am to say that an amount of Government grain, not less than that already allotted to each distressed district, will be available to meet further requirements, if it is wanted and can be transported. This further supply will be forwarded by rail to the stations in each district as fast as Mr. Toyabee can send it, in accordance with such instructions as he may receive from Commissioners. The Lieutenant-Governor much trusts that the amount allotted up to the 31st January will have been forwarded without fail into the interior before the end of the present month, and he begs that immediate arrangements be made to forward the further supply to the interior as fast as possible. The Lieutenant-Governor would not wish officers to extend their operations in forwarding this further supply over the whole three months: he would wish the whole amount to be transported to distant tracts as early as possible. If it can be done in one month, so much the better. Each district officer and Commissioner may rely upon receiving as much more grain as he requires and can carry into the interior for some time to come. The Commissioner of each division is invited to report as soon as possible how much he deems to be required for each district.

3. It is very evident that the greatest need as well as the greatest difficulty of transport will be in the districts north of the Ganges; and the Lieutenant-Governor hopes that, as we have now been experimenting so long in the different routes, the necessary information has by this time been gained, and the transport business will now settle down into the best routes, and will proceed regularly and much more rapidly than it has done hitherto.

4. The work of transporting grain, whether relief committees are constituted or not, will remain wholly under the divisional and district officers and not under the relief committees and officers.

In the Rajshahye Division only has a regular relief commissioner been appointed. Still Mr. Molony, the Commissioner, has been and will remain responsible for the despatch of grain from Kooshtea, Goalundo, Godagaree, Rampore Beaulah and Dhapparee, or any other terminus that may be selected for transhipment, and for transport arrangements generally. He may, however, delegate certain transport duties to Mr. Robinson if it is found desirable to do so. Mr. Molony must now settle with Mr. Robinson and the district magistrates the points up to which he shall himself directly superintend, and those from which he may delegate the superintendence to Mr. Robinson as regards transport of grain along interior routes. Ordinarily, the relief commissioner, as has been said, would have no concern with grain transport arrangements, which must be under the Divisional Commissioner; but looking to Mr. Robinson's knowledge of the country, especially of the Dinagapore District, and his position—superintending the northern districts—there is no objection to his undertaking the superintendence of transport from such points as Mr. Molony and he may settle.

5. It is believed that the assignment of additional officers to the Rajshahye Division has been liberal; so there should be no difficulty in properly conducting the transport operations. In Bhaugulpore also the Commissioner has adequate assistance, Mr. Barton's time being mainly devoted to this business. If additional assistance is required in either of these divisions, the Commissioner should inform the Government.

6. The Patna Division is very large, and the Commissioner doubts if the district officers have enough assistance. The transport business is exceedingly important, and special officers should be told off to superintend the work. Perhaps commissariat officers and some military officers may be shortly placed at the Commissioner's disposal for this and other duty. But after all, the Government must mainly look to district means and to local knowledge for means of transport; and in each district where large transport work is necessary, a civil officer should be specially charged to see that the transport arrangements are complete and efficient. If Mr. Bayley requires more officers for the Patna Division, the Lieutenant-Governor will try to supply them.

7. Now that officers have fully experimented with their different routes and their means of transport, the Lieutenant-Governor particularly desires that they should submit a distinct statement of the means of transport at their command, and of the amount of grain they can remove *per diem* from the railway or river-side station or stations whence their supplies are drawn: for instance, how much grain per day can Tirhoot despatch from Patna Ghât *via* Hajepore, from Barrh *via* Champā Ghât; and from Monghyr *via* the Kosee, or by any other route when all available resources are brought into play; how much can Maldah take away per day for itself or forward to Dinagapore from Godagaree and from Rajmehal; how much can Dinagapore carry daily from Godagaree, or by the Burrul route, or by road from Dhapparee or Beaulah. The magistrate of Rajshahye should also state how much he can forward by the various routes through his district. The different kinds of transport at work, or which might be engaged, should be stated: how many large boats are available, how many small boats, how many carts, how many pack bullocks. As yet the Gya magistrate appears to be the only officer who has worked pack bullocks, yet there are large numbers of pack bullocks in the Cooch Behar Division which might be made available to transport grain into Dinagapore. The Lieutenant-Governor begs that the required estimates of transport power may be prepared with particular care both by the district magistrate and by the Commissioner. All our arrangements hinge on this transporting power, and the Lieutenant-Governor is very anxious to have at a very early date reliable

information as to the means of transport available and the work that can be done on each route, and in each district or tract of country, when all reserves are called into play. The district officers must send their reports on the present subject to the Commissioner of the division, and must also send a copy at the same time to Government. With respect to the districts north of the Ganges in the Rajshahye Division, Mr. Molony will settle what district reports should be sent to himself and what to Mr. Robinson, and he will inform Government of such settlement.

8. The state of the roads by which the grain is to be transported must also be fully considered. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that the relief labor at the disposal of local officers may be used in some way or other, so as to make these roads practicable. Special measures must be taken to render passable sandy or muddy channels and such like obstacles. It often happens that a few planks, branches, or straw may make passable places at which carts would otherwise stick for hours. It need not be said that the ferry arrangements on the grain routes must be made quite efficient.

No. 69.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, No. 4119, dated Calcutta, December 23, 1873.

I am desired by the Lieutenant-Governor to submit to the Government of India some explanations and remarks suggested by paragraph 7 of your letter No. 605, dated 16th instant (see p. 102), in which, with advertence to certain instructions of this Government, you state that His Excellency the Viceroy is glad that the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore has not entered the market with the object of checking the ordinary course of the local trade, and express the view of His Excellency that, while it will be open to this Government to buy locally through the agency of the trade, if this should be considered desirable with reference to prices and the state of supplies, it would be objectionable and contrary to the policy which the Government of India has enjoined that such purchases should be made for the special purpose of preventing the free transit of grain from one district to another. Your letter also notices that the general course agreed on is that purchases should mainly be made from outside the distressed districts.

2. The instructions of this Government which gave occasion to these remarks, as quoted by you from the Narrative of 12th instant, were thus stated: "The Commissioner of Bhaugulpore was told that if exportation was going on in his division, he might fairly purchase in the local markets so much as would practically put a stop to the export of grain."

3. I am desired to explain that, in pursuance of the policy settled by the Government of India that grain should be stored to feed the labourers employed on relief works, it was arranged that the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore should procure, or the Government should procure for him, a certain quantity of grain for use on such works; and the Lieutenant-Governor's view was that, what he may call, the natural and *prima facie* course under ordinary circumstances, would have been to buy in the local markets, so long as those markets afford an adequate supply. Sir George Campbell considered that the resolution to import from more distant markets was a departure from the ordinary course, due to the apprehended local scarcity, and that a return to the local markets was not a special interference with free trade, but a return to the ordinary course of free trade. Now, it is quite certain that there has been a very considerable export of food grains from the Bhaugulpore District. It seemed to the Lieutenant-Governor, if he may so express it, unnatural that while private dealers were exporting grain, we should be importing it to the same localities. In one of the Bhaugulpore magistrate's letters it was gravely stated (whether truly or not the Lieutenant-Governor cannot say) that the cartmen were especially willing to carry Government grain to the distressed parts in the north of the district, because they expected to get return loads of grain to

bring back from thence. This did seem to the Lieutenant-Governor to be a sort of reduction to the absurd.

4. The course, then, which the Lieutenant-Governor took was in his view simply this. He said in effect to the Commissioner: "You have authority to buy supplies of grain within certain limits; in the apprehension of scarcity in Bhaugulpore we had settled to get these supplies from a distance; but as it now appears that an export of food grains is going on from Bhaugulpore, we authorize you to buy in the local market till you come to the point of price when your purchases have rendered it unprofitable to export." Sir George Campbell thought that, on the strictest principles of free trade, that was a fair and proper test, and he hopes that His Excellency the Viceroy and the Government of India will not deem that he has substantially departed from the course which they have enjoined.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor has thus particularly dwelt on this question not so much on account of its great importance as regards the particular case of Bhaugulpore, as because it opens a much larger question with respect to all Bengal and Behar. What was taking place in Bhaugulpore is, in fact, now taking place on a much larger scale in regard to the export and import of grain by sea. Very large quantities of the food to which the people of Bengal are accustomed and which they like are now being exported, while smaller quantities of food to which they are not accustomed and which they do not like are being imported by Government. The ships taking away the rice of Bengal cross in the Hooghly other ships bringing up the rice of Burmah and Saigon. The Lieutenant-Governor understands that there is now in the port of Calcutta a greater demand for freight for rice, and better prices are obtained for carrying away that article than for any other article whatever. Probably ships are the more readily obtained to bring foreign rice to Calcutta because they will obtain good freight rates for carrying away Bengal rice, following no doubt in this respect the same commercial instincts as the cartmen of Bhaugulpore.

6. Now, Sir George Campbell must venture to say that, in this state of things also, there is to his mind something unnatural. These questions of high economy have not been left to his discretion, and he trusts that he is honestly carrying out the policy enjoined on him by the Government of India. But he confesses that he has great difficulty in seeing his way to use the discretion with which he is vested within that policy, so that his action should fully tally and harmonize with it, and there should be no effects not anticipated and provided for.

7. Looking to the greatness of the interests involved, Sir George Campbell thinks it right to state frankly that there has been growing in his mind grave apprehension lest it should prove that the different parts of our policy in regard to the food supplies do not harmonize, and lest possibly, if things should turn out unfortunately, evil may result. To speak plainly, Sir George Campbell's apprehension is this. It has occurred to him that consistently to follow out the ordinary free-trade laws of supply and demand is a course which has its advantages—very considerable advantages; that, on the other hand, to follow, under such emergent circumstances as the apprehension of very widespread famine, an opposite course—*viz.*, to interfere with free trade by stopping the export of food grains, securing the maximum supply which the country affords, and then importing as much more as possible and sending it to the places where it is most needed—that course has its advantages; and to his mind advantages more considerable than the other. His fear is that to follow a middle course, neither leaving things to the laws of supply and demand on the one hand, nor stopping the export of food on the other, may lead to this, that one set of forces militate against and neutralize the other, and we gain nothing whatever, but may rather lose on the whole.

8. When the Lieutenant-Governor first recommended the stoppage of exports he was, he admits, under the impression that we must trust principally to Burmah for assistance, and that the rise of prices would reduce Bengal exports to a comparatively small amount. He pressed again the prohibition of exports from Bengal almost as much in view to the moral effect on the people of this country as for the quantity of grain which it would secure. It turns out, however, that the export from Bengal is larger than he had thought possible.

Taking the 1st November as the date from which active measures were commenced, it appears that from that date up to the latest dates for which we have returns, 40,559 tons of food grains were exported from Calcutta and Chittagong to places beyond this Presidency, while about 4,500 tons were imported. From Orissa we have no exact returns to a late date; but if the export from thence has not been as large as at one time seemed probable, it has only been checked by large Government purchases. The exports above mentioned have taken place in the dull season of the year before the new autumn crop has come into the market. At present the export from Calcutta is particularly active. There are now European ships in the river engaged, it is understood, to carry away about 20,000 tons,—a quantity which will no doubt much increase as the season goes on; and it is estimated that in the next few weeks Arab and other country ships will carry away about 20,000 tons to the Gulf and other Asiatic ports.

9. It appears that there is every prospect that the quantity of food grains exported from Bengal in the present season will very far exceed the whole quantity which the Government has arranged to import, and private persons have imported, or are likely to import. In fact, the private import has been almost *nil*, and there is no likelihood that it will be considerable.

After all that is being done, the food supply of the country will be much less than if the Government had simply prohibited exports and had imported nothing.

10. The apprehension which has lately been growing in Sir George Campbell's mind is, that in truth the imports and arrangements to import on the part of Government may, by keeping down prices, have been a main cause of the export. He has begun to fear that it may be possible that Government imports without the prohibition of exports may do more harm than good. The imports facilitate and increase exportation by cheapening rice in the Bengal markets.

11. It is a well-recognized fact that in all these matters the action of Government has an effect quite disproportioned to the actual magnitude of its operations. Sir George Campbell has long believed that in the height of a famine the quantity of grain which Government could throw in, by allaying panic and bringing out private stores, eases the people and the country to a degree far beyond the actual food supplied. He has not the least doubt that, so far, the action of Government in respect of both the import from beyond sea and the import into distressed districts has had a very great effect in averting present distress and enabling the people to live. If we were so far advanced in the season that the end of the scarcity and the advent of fresh supplies could be foreseen with some certainty, this would be an unmixed good. But this is not now the case, and the very grave question arises: "If present comparative ease is attended with no increase of the general food supply of the country but rather by its diminution through exports, may not the present advantage be purchased at the risk of future calamity, in case the need of the country should at any time get beyond the power of the Government to meet or allay?"

12. There then arises the question which has more than any other perplexed Sir George Campbell, and caused him extreme anxiety and doubt. According to the principle which he has suggested in the case of Bhaugulpore, the correct course would be to buy in the country till the price is such that export is unprofitable, Government imports being diminished in proportion. But while this may possibly be a practicable and a right course in regard to a single district situated as is Bhaugulpore, Sir George Campbell fears that it would not be possible, as regards the country at large, without producing great immediate suffering. The action of Government having, as before observed, an effect disproportioned to its actual extent there can be no doubt that the attempt to make very large purchases in this country on the part of Government would have disturbed the market enormously and very greatly enhanced prices. It appears that the export trade is the last to be affected by mere enhancement of prices. Merchants have their orders for distant countries; in many of these countries rice is rather a luxury than a necessity; and freight and other charges remaining the same, the prime cost of the article less affects the whole price than in the case of consumers in this country. The exports would not be stopped by mere enhancement of prices without reaching prices which must cause severe famine in this country. Any effect of that kind the Lieutenant-

Governor has hitherto striven to avoid; he has made purchases very carefully and thrown very limited demands on any particular market. He has not felt that it would be right to incur a certain present evil to avoid the risk of a future possible evil, even though it might unhappily turn out that this future evil is of far greater magnitude. But he feels that this is a most difficult dilemma, in respect of which he would be glad to receive advice and instruction from the Government of India.

13. Sir George Campbell thinks it right to state the doubts which oppress his mind on the question whether Government imports, unaccompanied by prohibition of exports, may not in the end do more harm than good.

Whatever we may say as regards our importing for relief works only, there is no preventing the people from entertaining a grateful belief that we are making arrangements to feed them in case of famine. So long as the general food supply suffices this is good; but if the result is that more is exported than is imported, and the food supply eventually fails, it will be a great evil.

14. The Government has not been able to obtain,—it is, the Lieutenant-Governor fears, impossible that it should obtain,—reliable information regarding the stocks existing in the country. The Lieutenant-Governor must, however, say that the difficulty he has experienced in making very moderate purchases in any quarter except Orissa has caused him to be apprehensive that the reserves may not be large. It is hardly intelligible whence comes to Calcutta so much rice as is exported from that place. Certainly there cannot now be very large stocks about Calcutta; we have failed to find such stocks in the eastern districts; and if a large share of the crop now beginning to come in from the littoral districts is exported, it is hard to say what reserves we shall have.

15. The fear is lest the action of Government should beget a false confidence, lest confidence should beget large exports, and lest a catastrophe might follow later in the season. The Lieutenant-Governor still hopes that by the blessing of Providence this will be averted, but it would not be right that he should refrain from stating to the Government of India the doubts and apprehensions which he feels. His Excellency the Viceroy in Council will no doubt, on a review of the whole case, direct the machinery of Government for the best.

No. 70.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 704, dated December 30, 1873.

I am directed to draw the attention of the Government of Bengal to the fact that your letter No. 4119 of the 23rd December (see above, No. 69 of this series) was not marked "confidential," as it ought to have been, inasmuch as it was in reply to the Governor General's letter, No. 605 (see p. 101), which was marked "confidential."

2. I am to request that your letter No. 4119 may be duly marked "confidential," and that great care may be observed in marking as "confidential" all letters which are of a confidential nature.

3. I am further to explain that the Government of India understands and expects that when a letter is marked "confidential" it will not only be withheld from publication, but will also be made known only to those particular persons who may be necessarily concerned to know it.

4. Such letters will of course be placed on record, but will be recorded in a manner consistent with the observance of the precaution just mentioned.

No. 71.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 710, dated December 30, 1873.

I am directed by the Governor General in Council to acknowledge your letter No. 4119 of the 23rd December (see above, No. 69 of this series), regarding the purchases of food grain in the Bhaugulpore District.

2. The explanation given in the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of your letter regarding these purchases is regarded by His Lordship in Council as generally satisfactory. It appears that there were ample quantities of grain in the markets of the Bhaugulpore District, consequently there was no objection to this article being purchased locally. As the Lieutenant-Governor justly observes "the natural course under ordinary circumstances would have been to buy in the local markets so long as these markets afforded an adequate supply."

3. But while communicating this general approval, His Excellency in Council must advert particularly to the effect of the instruction given by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Commissioner, as described in your 4th paragraph, namely "we authorize you to buy in the local market till you come to the point of price when your purchases have rendered it unprofitable to export."

4. I am to state that in the opinion of His Lordship in Council the view above stated is wrong in principle, as being an attempt to regulate prices and to interfere with the grain trade, upon the activity and resources of which the food supply of the people must mainly depend in event of scarcity occurring. It will doubtless be in the recollection of the Lieutenant-Governor that any attempt of this nature, whether the attempt be direct or indirect, is expressly prohibited by the instructions of the Government of India.

5. The Governor General in Council now requests that the Government of Bengal will be good enough to take this opportunity of again instructing the local officers that they are to carefully abstain from interference for the purpose either of regulating prices or of preventing or checking the exportation of grain from one district to another.

6. I am next to advert to the concluding part of your 12th paragraph where the Lieutenant-Governor asks for advice and instruction from the Government of India in respect to the purchases of rice in Bengal and Northern India to be made locally by the Government of Bengal. The Governor General in Council observes that the amount of these purchases has been, for the present, limited by the letter No. 3550 of the 6th December (see p. 88), and desires that the amount therein sanctioned may not be exceeded without previous communication with the Government of India. It is believed that local purchases have been or are being arranged fully up to that limit. If this be so, then further instructions do not seem to be necessary. But if, in fact, any purchases remain to be made within the limit, His Lordship in Council would be glad to receive a special report, on the receipt of which any instruction which might be required from the Government of India would be immediately given.

7. I am to convey the thanks of His Lordship in Council for the general remarks offered by the Lieutenant-Governor in your letter under acknowledgment on the subject of prohibiting exportation of food grains by sea. But the information on which these remarks are based is, in several respects, evidently imperfect. And the Governor General in Council deems it sufficient to state that the Government of India have no intention of altering the policy which has been already laid down, and which has received the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

8. The Governor General in Council agrees with the observation in your 11th paragraph "that the action of Government has an effect disproportioned to the actual magnitude of its operations;" and His Lordship in Council has noticed the influence on the people produced by the purchases of grain by Government. Great carefulness should be exercised in the explanation of the views of Government. The Governor General in Council therefore requests that the fortnightly Special Narratives of the drought may not be published by the Government of Bengal until these papers, prepared in the form in which the local Government proposes to publish them, shall first have been submitted to and approved by the Government of India.

9. In connection with the general question of the purchase and distribution of grain, I am desired to call the attention of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor to para. 3 of the letter from this office, No. 605, dated the 16th instant (see p. 101), relating to the principle on which the Government stores are to be used, and expressing some doubt as to the propriety of the ruling that food is to be sold to the people employed upon relief work when the market

price rises higher than ten seers for the rupee. This principle is of such vital importance, extending, as it ultimately will, to all the local relief committees, that the Government of India is anxious to know what general instructions the Lieutenant-Governor proposes to issue respecting it, in view to their being carefully considered and decided in conference with His Honor previous to publication.

10. Lastly, I am desired to ask for early information in detail as to what progress has been made in forming the Government depôts of grain, in opening the lines of communication with them especially to the more isolated points of each district, in preparing the organization of relief committees, and in forming the best approximate estimate of the probable demands upon each relief centre.

No. 72.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 77 P.S., dated January 3, 1874.

With reference to paragraph 6 of your letter No. 710, dated the 30th December 1873 (see above, No. 71 of this series), I am directed to submit that the Lieutenant-Governor will be careful not to order or purchase more grain without the previous sanction of the Government of India.

2. Sir George Campbell desires me at the same time to explain in detail the items of purchases or orders which have been made since, or in excess of the 6th December. In the first place the Lieutenant-Governor proposed, and the Government of India agreed, that a provision of 18,75,000 maunds should be made up to the end of January. When the account of all concluded orders and purchases was made up, it was found that the orders likely to be executed came to 19,25,000 maunds, and the Lieutenant-Governor noted the fact of this small excess, observing * that some of our orders might not be executed in time, and it was well to have a small margin.

* See paragraph 6 of Appendix C to the Sixth Special Narrative.

3. Since the Resolution noted in the margin of the foregoing paragraph was issued, and since the despatch of the Sixth Narrative, the following orders or purchases have been concluded:—

- (1). One lakh twenty-seven thousand maunds from Orissa, under the following circumstances. When the three lakhs of rice from Orissa was ordered, at Rs. 2-12 per maund, in Calcutta, (inclusive of freight from Orissa), the Officiating Commissioner, in reporting his arrangements, said that five lakhs of rice had been contracted for. The Lieutenant-Governor pointed out that this was in excess of the Government order, but added that the Government would be ready to take a further amount, up to 2,50,000 maunds, provided it could all be delivered at Calcutta in December. At that time the Lieutenant-Governor was, as His Excellency the Viceroy in Council is aware, extremely anxious to get a large quantity of grain at once, and to test all possible transport arrangements. The permanent Commissioner, Mr. Ravenshaw, returned from leave, and for some weeks no further supply of rice was arranged for; but after the despatch of the Sixth Narrative, the magistrate of Cuttack reported that, under the Commissioner's orders, he had arranged for a further 1,27,000 maunds of rice, three-quarters deliverable in December and January, at the old rate of Rs. 2½ delivered in Calcutta. As the permission to make such a contract had been given before the 6th December, and as the arrangement was a good one, the Lieutenant-Governor ratified it, and adverted to the matter in the Seventh Narrative, and now reports the circumstances in full detail.
- (2). Twenty-thousand maunds of rice, were bought in Dacca by the late Commissioner of Dacca, under orders given by the Commissioner of Rajshahye, before local purchases were suspended. The Lieutenant-Governor has ratified this purchase, and directed the grain to be sent up the Berhampooter at once.

- (3). Twenty-five thousand maunds of wheat from the Nerbudda Valley have been ordered during the last fortnight. A Hoshangabad dealer offered to supply good wheat of last year at Rs. 2-11, inclusive of bags, but exclusive of Railway freight. This rate was much lower than the limit given to the North-Western Provinces Government officers; the Bhaugulpore assignment of up-country grain seemed likely to fall short by reason of the bad quality of certain grain bought by Mr. Barlow through the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi. It was clearly very desirable to promote imports from the Nerbudda Valley, which always had an exportable surplus, and therefore the Lieutenant-Governor closed with the offer, adverting to the matter at paragraph 10 of the Seventh Narrative.
- (4). The excess grain ordered or purchased by this Government over and above the authorized supply, down to the end of January, is thus—
 - 1,27,000 maunds from Orissa.
 - 20,000 in Eastern Bengal.
 - 25,000 from the Nerbudda Valley.
 - 40,000 as reported in paragraph 6 of Appendix C to the sixth Narrative.
 - 1,00,000, the February quota of the original Orissa grain order, as noticed in paragraph 5 of the Financial Secretary's letter No. 3550, dated 6th December 1873.
 - 3,12,000 Total.

The Nerbudda Valley order, it will be seen, is the only one which has really been given since the date of the Government of India's orders setting a limit to the preliminary supply of grain up to the end of January 1874.

No. 73.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 51, dated January 9, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 77 P.S., dated the 3rd instant (see above, No. 72 of this series), submitting an explanation of the circumstances under which the Bengal Government has ordered 3,12,000 maunds of grain more than was sanctioned in the letter from the Government of India, No. 3550, dated the 6th ultimo.

2. The Governor General in Council observes that the purchase of 25,000 maunds of wheat from the Nerbudda Valley was commenced subsequent to the orders of the 6th ultimo, and was not reported specially to the Government of India. And although it was mentioned in the weekly Special Narrative, I am to point out that the Special Narrative should be strictly confined to its proper object, i. e., the latest available report of the condition of affairs and of what has been done in accordance with orders,—not superseding the necessity of special reports in cases which, like the present, may require it.

3. I am, however, to request that no more grain may be purchased without a previous reference to the Government of India.

No. 74.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 78 P.S., dated January 3, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 710, dated the 30th December 1873 (see p. 114), and to submit replies on the several points noted below:

2. Para. 5.—Non-interference with trade.

Orders have issued, drawing special attention of all officers in the distressed districts to the instructions which had been previously given, and which are now repeated.
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3. *Para. 6*—Additional purchases of grain by the Bengal Government. { On this point a separate report has * been submitted, giving full details. The net result of that report is, that one new order to the extent of 25,000 maunds of wheat has been given since the orders of the Government of India sanctioning the proposed preliminary supply of grain, up to the end of January 1874.

4. *Para. 8*—Non-publication of an expurgated narrative without the orders of the Government of India. { On this point a separate letter, No. 76 P.S., dated the 3rd January†, has been submitted, enquiring whether the Government of India

would be pleased to allow the expurgation to be done, and the communication to the public to be made through the imperial Government officer.

5. *Para. 9*—Regulations as to the rate and manner of selling grain on relief works. { On this point the Lieutenant-Governor's orders were issued on the 22nd December, and a copy of those orders was submitted as Appendix B to the Seventh Special Narrative (see p. 103, No. 64 of this series).

6. *Para. 10*—Progress in forming Government depôts of grain and in opening lines of communication with them. { On this point I am to solicit a reference to paragraph 17 of the last Narrative, where an account of the progress of grain transport to

the interior of each district is given; and to paragraph 9, which adverts generally to the store-house preparations. The Lieutenant-Governor believes that the Government of India would not wish to be furnished with long lists of the proposed grain depôts, but he hopes to be able to send before long maps of the distressed districts with all the grain depôts and proposed relief centres duly marked, and with the routes of transports noted thereon as far as possible.

* No. 77 P.S., dated 3rd January 1874 (see p. 116).

† No. 1.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 76 P.S., dated Calcutta, January 3, 1874.

With reference to paragraph 8 (see p. 115) of the Deputy Secretary Mr. Howell's confidential letter No. 710, dated the 30th December 1873, in which the Government is directed not to publish, as hitherto, portions of the fortnightly narratives of the drought till what is proposed for publication shall first have been submitted to, and approved by, the Government of India, I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to suggest that, as the Government of India is not willing that the matter should be left to the discretion of this Government, it would much simplify matters if His Excellency the Governor General in Council would permit the information which may be given to the public to be marked off upon the narrative in the offices of the Government of India, and to be communicated to the press, this Government being furnished with a copy of the expurgated narrative. I am, therefore, to solicit that this course may be adopted.

No. 2.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 47, dated Calcutta, January 7, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 76 P.S., dated the 3rd instant, regarding the publication of the fortnightly narratives of scarcity in Bengal.

2. In reply, I am to refer to the letter from this Department, No. 20, dated the 3rd instant (see below), in which it was pointed out what passages in the Seventh Narrative should not be made public, and it is now left to the Government of Bengal to publish the rest as it may think proper.

3. Similar orders will be issued in future, if possible, on the day after each Narrative is received, and it is hoped that this course will answer the required purpose.

No. 3.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 20, dated January 3, 1874.

With reference to my letter No. 710, dated 30th ultimo (confidential), I am to request that, should His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor think fit to give publication to the present Narrative, the following passages should be carefully omitted:—

(a.) On page 5, paragraph 11, from the commencement to the words "at the outside," and from the words "if the grain has to come" to the end of the paragraph.

(b.) Paragraph 14, the whole of the last sentence, beginning "The Lieutenant-Governor" to "themselves."

(c.) Paragraph 16, the whole of the last sentence, beginning "At Appendix" to "complete."

2. Appendix G should not be published.

NOTE.—(a.)—Paragraph 11, page 5, related to the quantity of grain which had been purchased. The figures were incorrect, and it was at that time undesirable to publish anything on the subject.

(b.)—The portion of paragraph 14 which was omitted related to the price at which Government grain should be sold on relief works—a subject which was then under discussion and about which some difference of opinion existed.

Both of the above paragraphs will be found in the Seventh Special Narrative, which is published in a separate volume.

(c.)—The last sentence of paragraph 16 was as follows:—"At Appendix G will be found copies of the correspondence which has passed with the Government of India regarding the effect of Government importations on price and in facilitating exports; these papers are appended to make the Narrative of the fortnight complete."

Appendix G contained a confidential letter from the Government of Bengal, No. 4119 of December 23rd, 1873. It is printed on page 111 of this volume.

7. *Para. 10*—Organization of relief committees and estimate of all the probable demands on each relief centre. { The Lieutenant-Governor directs me to explain that we cannot as yet say that all the arrangements for relief centres are ready; for this Government has not pressed officers much on this point, as grain transport affairs and preparations for relief works have had precedence. Attention has, however, been recently drawn to paragraph 18 of circular No. 80 (see p. 53), and early reports have been asked for on the points therein noted.

No. 75.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 52, dated January 9, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 78 P.S., dated the 3rd instant (see above, No. 74 of this series), furnishing information on the several points raised in the confidential communication from this Department, No. 710, dated 30th ultimo.

2. As regards paragraph 2 of your letter, I am to ask for a copy of the orders issued by the Government of Bengal, and to request that the numbers and dates of the previous orders referred to may be stated.

3. The subjects mentioned in your 3rd and 4th paragraphs have been separately disposed of, the former in my letter No. 51, dated 9th instant (see p. 117, No. 73 of this series), the latter in No. 47, dated 7th instant, (see footnote, page 118.)

4. It is mentioned in your 5th paragraph that the Lieutenant-Governor's orders regarding regulations as to the rate and manner of selling grain on relief works were issued on the 22nd December. I am, however, to call attention to paragraph 4* of my letter No. 40, dated the 6th instant, and to request that an early reply may be sent to the special enquiry already made by the Government of India on this very important point.

5. Referring to your 6th paragraph, I am to say that the Governor General in Council would be very glad to see maps of the description therein given; these maps should show the lines of communication, and, if possible, the population to each centre of relief. The subject of the organization of relief committees, raised in your 7th paragraph, has also been separately treated.

No. 76.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 106 P.S., dated Calcutta, January 12, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 52, dated the 9th January (see above, No. 75 of this series), and in reply to paragraph 2, I am—

1. To submit copy of the Lieutenant-Governor's Circular order, No. 8 S.R., dated 3rd January 1874 (see below No. 77 of this series), repeating the orders that had been given against non-interference with trade.

2. To submit that general instructions against interference with private trade have issued under—

(a.) Public Works Code, chapter XIII A, section 2.

(b.) Bengal Government circular, No. 80, of 17th November, para. 3, (see p. 49).

(c.) Government of India orders, dated 7th November, para. 4, (see p. 20), published in Gazette and circulated with Bengal Government circular No. 80.

* "The Governor General in Council notices the orders issued on the suggestion of the Commissioner of Patna on the subject of the prices at which rice is to be retailed to labourers on public works. His Excellency in Council is inclined to believe that, in view to avoid as far as practicable all interference calculated to check or even suspend local trade, prices at Government depôts should, as a rule, be regulated by those of the nearest large mart plus cost of carriage. But as a special enquiry has already been made upon this very important point, the Government of India will suspend any final expression of its views upon it pending further consideration."

3. To add that when any breach of these general orders has come to the Lieutenant-Governor's notice, the attention of the officers concerned has been drawn to the declared policy of the Government of India that there is to be no interference with trade. The only two cases that have as yet occurred are—

- (a.) The Deputy Commissioner of Sechsaugor circulated a notice warning mouzadars and ryots of his district not to sell too much of their grain, but to keep it against the coming scarcity.
- (b.) The Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree urged the zemindar of Kakinah not to carry grain from his Julpigoree estates for the use of the people on his Rungpore estates.

In both these cases the Deputy Commissioner has been informed that he must not interfere, authoritatively or otherwise, with free trade in grain.

No. 77.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Burdwan, Rajshahye, Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Chota Nagpore, No. 8 S.R., dated Calcutta, January 3, 1874.

The Government of India have expressed a wish that this Government should again "instruct the local officers that they are to carefully abstain from interference for the purpose either of regulating prices or of preventing or checking the exportation of grain from one district to another." His Excellency the Viceroy in Council has specially observed that any attempt "to regulate prices and to interfere with the grain trade, upon the activity and resources of which the foodsupply of the people must mainly depend in event of scarcity recurring," is, "whether the attempt be direct or indirect, expressly prohibited by the instructions of the Government of India."

2. I am accordingly to request that the previous instructions on this subject may be borne in mind, and that no interference with the trade in grain may be directly or indirectly attempted. The storage of large quantities of Government grain in the distressed districts does, no doubt, operate to keep prices down; but the Lieutenant-Governor trusts to the local officers to explain, as already directed, as widely as possible, that the grain is collected for labourers on relief works and for distribution from relief houses, and that Government does not expect to supply the place of private traders, nor has any desire to compete with them. On the contrary, the Government desires to give them every encouragement and facility, believing that on them the general public must depend.

No. 78.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 18, dated December 26, 1873.

We have to report that we have for the present directed that the Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal be submitted fortnightly, instead of weekly as heretofore. If the course of events shall hereafter indicate the expediency of collating information at shorter intervals than a fortnight, the submission of the weekly narrative will be resumed. By this opportunity, therefore, we do not transmit any narrative.

2. This arrangement will not interfere with our immediate treatment of any case which may be referred to us by the local Government.

3. We desire, however, to represent to Your Grace in general terms that, in respect to the consequences of the drought, the situation is unchanged.

4. In Bengal, and in most parts of Northern India, the weather has, during the past week, continued clear and cool. At some places in the north there have been showers, and in Behar there has been some very slight rain. In Eastern and South-Eastern Oudh, however, there has been a moderate and seasonable fall of rain, which will be highly beneficial, as it has occurred in some of the localities where it was most needed. As regards the prospect of the winter rains generally, we are not yet able to report anything.

5. On an examination of the local reports of the crops in Bengal and Behar transmitted from the districts to the local Governments, we find the

out-turn of the winter ("amun") rice harvest to be in some places slightly better, in others slightly worse, than previous reports, the net result being much the same.

6. These reports, too, enable us to test further the previous calculations of the probable area of distress in the event of winter rains failing, and the probability does not seem to exceed the anticipation already made.

7. There are fluctuations in the prices of food grains and differences between the range of prices in various localities. But there has been no appreciable decline in prices since the first fall consequent on the in-coming of the winter harvest. Nor, on the other hand, are there as yet any signs of the rise which is apprehended as likely to occur after the winter harvest shall have been garnered.

8. The internal grain trade of the country is active between the North-West Provinces and Behar, but not so active in regard to the despatch of rice up-country from Calcutta.

9. We continue to receive satisfactory accounts of the despatch and arrival of the grain ordered to Bengal from beyond sea. The steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company are proving of much use in the conveyance of these supplies.

10. The local preparations to meet distress wherever or whenever it may arise are in due train of preparation; but relief committees have not been announced, and are not proposed to be announced, until distress shall begin to show itself, which is not the case as yet.

11. We are in correspondence with the local Governments concerned regarding the terms of despatching emigrants from Bengal to Burmah—also regarding the employment of natives of Behar on the canal works of the North-Western Provinces.

12. We are considering the practicability of immediately laying down tramways from Patna to Gya and from Mozufferpore in Tirhoot to Hajeeapore on the Ganges, with special view to facilitating the transport of grain (see p. 140).

No. 79.

Despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, to the Governor General in Council, No. 20, dated London, December 1, 1873.

It is with much anxiety that I learn from your despatch of October the 30th last (see p. 1), which reached me by the mail of the 24th November last, and from the previous message by the telegraph, that the failure of the crops in a great part of Bengal will occasion severe distress, if not worse results.

2. Repeated experience has sufficiently proved that, when scarcity and the danger of famine arises in India, the ordinary operations of commerce, and the ordinary processes of supply and demand, cannot be relied on for any adequate supply of food to the affected districts, and that, without the active intervention of Government, the worst consequences are liable to ensue.

3. I have, therefore, to intimate to you, in pursuance of former telegraphic communications, that Her Majesty's Government are thoroughly satisfied of this conclusion, and I place unreservedly in your hands my sanction, by anticipation, to any measures which, acting on the spot and with full knowledge of the facts, you may consider necessary for the saving of human life.

4. You inform me that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal advocated the immediate prohibition of the export of rice from all Indian ports, and you explain some of the reasons which induce you to prefer other methods of action on the part of the Government. In particular, you specify that method of proceeding which consists in the Government entering, either directly or indirectly, as a purchaser into the market, and thus obtaining any supplies of rice which may be necessary.

5. It is obvious that this method of proceeding will of itself have the effect of preventing export to any injurious extent. There can be no doubt that it is a method of operation by Government less violent than the other, and has the additional advantage of tending to turn and invite commercial enterprise in the direction of increased imports of food.

6. Commercial enterprise, though it cannot be entirely trusted to bring sufficient food into the country, and can still less be trusted to bring it to the stricken districts or to distribute it there, must nevertheless be the most powerful agency in bringing the necessary supplies within reach of the Government, and is certainly an agency which ought not to be unnecessarily discouraged or thwarted in its operations.

7. I approve, therefore, of the preference you have given to the method of purchase. But I would impress on you the necessity of securing, by this method, whatever amount of supply the largest possible estimate of the need may appear to require.

8. Scarcity in India is apt to outrun in its amount and in its effects all previous estimates of the danger, and, if your Government is determined to secure in time an amount of food fully equal to the largest deficiency which can be calculated upon, it will be able to draw upon an adequate supply.

9. I entirely concur with Your Excellency in placing the utmost reliance on the ability, energy, and special knowledge of the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

No. 80.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 2, dated Calcutta, January 2, 1874.

We have the honor to transmit copies of the Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal for the fortnight ending the 1st January 1874, and its enclosures*.

2. We believe that these papers will be found to contain much matter of interest, as showing that the local Government and the local authorities in Bengal are energetically yet judiciously applying themselves to the circumstances, according as the results of the drought become developed.

3. Since our last despatch to Your Grace the general situation remains without essential change. If there be any difference at all, it is slightly for the worse.

4. There has not been any more rain in the North-West Provinces since the 26th ultimo (the date of our last despatch). In Oudh there has been rain, described by the Chief Commissioner as general†, so much so as to remove for the present the anxiety which had been felt regarding that Province. There have been some slight showers in parts of the Patna, the Bhaugulpore, and the Rajshahye Divisions, which have done some little good, and which may probably be followed by refreshing dews. But this rain has by no means satisfied the needs of the cultivators, and the want of moisture for the rising spring crops becomes felt with increasing severity. Otherwise the crops are as yet promising: and it is now manifest that the sowing and germination of these crops have been much better than was anticipated when the alarm of scarcity first arose. No signs are as yet apparent of the winter rains. There is yet time for them to come during the current month (January), by the end of which the fate of the spring harvest in Behar—that is, how far it will be saved or lost—will probably be known.

5. Prices, despite various fluctuations, are on the whole stationary, the winter rice harvest having been reaped with an out-turn much the same as the anticipation. In some places, however, they do show a tendency to rise, and any such symptom at the present time when the new rice crop has just come in is a presage of coming distress.

6. The area of distress may possibly extend somewhat in the Burdwan and in the Presidency Divisions beyond the anticipations entertained up to the date of recent advices.

7. Relief works are increasing in extent and in number at various places. The labourers who attend these works are numerically considerable perhaps, but do not at all approach the numbers whom we expect to see employed if distress shall become general.

8. The comparatively greater attendance of labourers on these works is the only sign of incipient distress which is perceptible as yet. And it has not

* Printed in a separate volume.

† Telegram from the Chief Commissioner, Lucknow, to the Viceroy, Calcutta, dated December 27, 1873.

Rain pretty general; prospects much brighter.

been yet found expedient to commence operations through relief committees anywhere.

9. Among the papers now forwarded there will be found much evidence on the part of district officers as to the activity of the grain trade in the interior of the country.

10. The supplies ordered by the Government of India from beyond sea are duly arriving. A copy is forwarded herewith of a letter written by our direction, acknowledging the services of the British India Steam Navigation Company in carrying these supplies*. The measures for storing and distributing in the interior of the country the stores, whether ordered by the Government of India or by the local Government, are advancing under the direction of the Lieutenant-Governor.

11. Among the enclosures of the Narrative there is an important letter (see below No. 82 of this series) received from the British Indian Association, written in compliance with our request (see p. 77) that they would state the reasons and the facts which induce them to form an apparently more unfavourable anticipation than that which the official accounts warranted. The reasoning of the Association, proceeding from native gentlemen of so much experience, is highly interesting and important. In respect to facts, however, as observed by the Lieutenant-Governor, the Association rely mainly on the official reports, and do not adduce any counter facts at all, and hardly any new facts. This circumstance may be taken as a corroboration of the official reports. For if any evidence of an opposite character were obtainable, the Association would be in the best position to obtain it. We are not prepared to affirm the general propositions made by the Association, which indeed are very general in their terms. The possible grain resources of Bengal itself—that is the known exportable surplus of certain districts, such as the rice delta district of Backergunj, and even to some extent Orissa—do not seem to have been thought of in sufficient detail. As regards the stocks in North-Western India, the Association form a much less favourable estimate than that repeatedly given by the best native authorities in that part of the country. We are, however, considering most carefully and practically the arguments urged by the Association and other cognate arguments, in order that we may be prepared to make immediately any arrangements which our well-founded anticipations may dictate. And we hope by the end of the current month to be in a position to present a more complete estimate of our ultimate anticipation. Meanwhile our preparations for meeting a degree of distress which may be considered very high, according to experience of past famines in India, have been arranged and ordered, and are in course of active execution.

12. Your Grace will observe that the Appendix G to the Narrative contains confidential letters which were not complete as transmitted by the Government of Bengal and which we have completed.

No. 81.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 4213, dated December 29, 1873.

The Government of India in the Financial Department was recently pleased to invite the British Indian Association to explain through this Government the grounds on which they based their estimate of the present situation in Bengal (see p. 77). I am now directed to submit copy of a letter (see No. 82 below) in which the committee of the Association have, with much care and ability, stated their views, and the facts and estimates on which those views are based. It will be observed that these are almost entirely derived from official documents, and the Lieutenant-Governor does not think that any new information is furnished by which his own views as already expressed can

* Letter from A. O. Hume, Esq., C. B., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co., No. 696, dated December 27, 1873.

With reference to the telegram from Mr. Mackinnon of the 7th instant, and the subsequent correspondence that has taken place on the subject between this office and your firm, I am directed to convey to you the cordial acknowledgments of the Government of India for the very liberal concession made by the British India Steam Navigation Company to facilitate importation of rice into the distressed districts of Bengal.

2. This communication will be reported to the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India.

be materially altered. But though subject to corrections on some points, the views and arguments of the Committee of the Association are certainly well worthy of consideration.

2. Copy of my letter in which the Lieutenant-Governor's acknowledgments were conveyed to the Association is also enclosed. (See p. 137.)

No. 82.

Letter from the Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association, to the Assistant Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated December 24, 1873.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters Nos. 3638 and 3871, dated the 26th ultimo and 9th instant, respectively, and to submit, in reply, the following statement of the grounds on which the committee of the Association have based their estimates as to the food prospects of the people in the present drought.

The two facts which the committee sought to bring to the notice of Government most prominently and pointedly in their last letter were: *Firstly*, their views as to the stock of old rice in the country; and *secondly*, the probable out-turn of the new crop.

The committee relied upon the following facts in forming their opinion upon the first point. They know it for certain that the great bulk of the people take to the new rice as soon as it is harvested and available for use, as it becomes available in the case of some descriptions ever since the middle of November. That rice recommends itself by its superior flavour and taste, and even a considerable number of the upper ten thousand take it after the ceremony of *Navarna*, or harvest home, which is celebrated in December; and indeed, there are very few people that in sound health continue the use of the old rice beyond the month of Bysack (April). People in a delicate state of health, particularly those who suffer from disorders of the digestive functions, do not take new rice, but it is not positively unwholesome, and even those that can afford to use old rice at a considerable difference in price prefer the new. The difference in the price of the old and the new rice is, at the commencement of the harvest year, from 6 to 8 annas, rising to a rupee and more by the month of April and May in favor of the former; this places the old rice quite beyond the reach of the masses of the population, even if they had a preference for it. This rise in the price can only arise from the stock being extremely limited, not above the requirements of the small number of persons who find it necessary for their health to take old rice and make it worth the while of the merchant to hold it on for them for a long time. The committee also know for a fact that, after the arrival of the new rice into the market, not a chittack of the old rice is bought for export by sea, except in the case of the moonghee rice, which, on account of difficulties of transport from the part of the district of Dinagepore in which it is grown, does not commence to arrive into Calcutta till the rains have set in, that is, between July and August. Arguing upon these data, the only conclusion the committee could arrive at was that the stock of old rice in the country was not such as in any way materially to supply the deficit in the yield of the current year's crops.

The committee are well aware that there is a belief current among district officers and others that the yield of an average annual crop is considerably in excess of the requirements of the country for home consumption and export. If so, and the excess be estimated at about three months' supply, the question would arise where does the old rice go to? The only answer that can be returned to it is, that it is held in the country. If so, the accumulations for four successive average years, such as the people had for the last four years, at the estimated annual surplus, would amount to 12 months' supply for the whole population. Now, it cannot be denied as a fact that, except in the eastern districts, that estate will be considered prosperous where fifty per cent. of the cultivators can after harvest hold grain for a whole year's consumption, that is to say, sufficient for food, as well as for the purpose of purchasing by the sale thereof, or by barter therewith, other necessities of life for the ryot and

his family, and for payment of rent. The remaining cultivators can only hold from four to eight months, and, at the lowest calculation, about 10 per cent. of them have to part with all they reap to meet their creditors; and then subsist from year's end to year's end by advances from the mahajuns and their personal labour. If then, as a rule, the ryots are not in the habit of holding rice for more than a year, and that even not in the case of all, the accumulated savings of four years, as assumed above, must somehow find their way into the hands of mahajuns, who, in the mofussil, are engaged in the sale and purchase of rice, or in lending out the same on the *baree* system, that is, on the condition of getting back the quantity they lend out with an addition of 50 per cent. by way of interest. Now, however large may be the number of such mahajuns scattered all over the country, that number cannot exceed 1 in 4,000 of the population representing, say 1,000 families at four souls to a house. In this calculation, the committee do not include the petty dealers or shop-keepers, who retail by purchasing from mahajuns from four to eight maunds at a time or even less. The number of these mahajuns cannot, therefore, at an average, exceed 500 in each district representing two millions of the population. Now, to suppose that rice, equal to one year's consumption for two millions, is at all times held by these 500 men would mean, taking the consumption at 4 maunds 20 seers per annum per head, that is, at half a seer per diem, and rice at cost price to them Re. 1.4 a maund,—that they, the 500 mahajuns, keep between themselves upwards of 11 millions of rupees always idle. Applying this test to the whole population of the country and taking the total of the rice-eating population at 57 millions, a year's store for them would imply the locking up in the hands of 14,000 mahajuns of Rs. 31,35,00,000 from year to year. The surplus of every succeeding year would *pro tanto* depreciate the value of the old stock, and make the merchant not only lose the interest, but also a portion of his capital; and there is no such extensive export trade as can remedy the evil. Under these circumstances, the committee are of opinion that it would be grossly absurd to imagine that such a state of things can exist in a country notorious for its poverty, a more incontestible proof of which could not be had than the income-tax returns.

That such is not the case the committee have every reason to believe. They know for a fact that mahajuns who deal in baree, like other merchants, calculate their stock of supply according to their calculation of demand upon it, and they consider it a great loss, if, after lending out for the season, any large stock is left, because that stock represented capital left unemployed for the year. As for mahajuns who make purchases for the purpose of selling at a profit, it would be absurd to suppose that they would ever keep a stock merely for the purpose of holding it on from year to year. In a country where the normal value of money is from 25 to 50 per cent., as the baree system still in full force in almost all districts proves, it is hard to believe that so much capital should be kept idle, unless it be to sell the reserved rice at its weight in gold, an opportunity which, however, according to past history, might not occur once in 100 years.

The committee would here take leave to observe that, if rice or rather paddy (for *osna* rice cannot be held more than a year without being materially damaged) equal to a whole year's consumption ever happened to be held in the country (as it must periodically be even on so modest a supposition as a surplus of three months over demand), and that there were 14,000 mahajuns, or on an average 400 men in every district, the stock of paddy in the country would, so to say, so obtrude itself upon every man's observation (the article being bulky and requiring large space for storage) that there could not possibly be room for such an uncertainty on the subject as has unfortunately prevailed from time to time, resulting, as in the case of the Orissa famine, in a serious loss of human life.

That under the natural conditions of commerce in passing through the hands of different classes of traders, there must be a quantity of rice, like other commodities under similar circumstances, in circulation in the country, the committee are ready to allow, but its measure cannot be equal to a three months' supply for the whole country or anything near it. To test this inference by the experience acquired during the Orissa famine, if the supposition of a surplus of three months over home consumption, and export by sea, were at all correct, there must have been a stock sufficient at least from two to three years' consumption, when the deficient crop of 1865 was harvested, since there was no

marked failure of crop in Bengal for a very long period previous to that year; and yet, in consequence of the scarcity caused by the failure of crop in a few districts, the price of ballam rice rose in Calcutta from Rs. 3-1 in October 1865 to Rs. 5-8 in September 1866, and it reached the highest point, *viz.*, Rs. 5-12, in November following. Could such a famine price have been possible on the eve of a magnificent harvest, such as the crop then about to be reaped promised and turned out to be, if there had been any large stock left in the country? And how could the old stock have been exhausted to meet the deficient harvest of a few districts only, which, on the supposition of an annually recurring surplus of three months over consumption, must have stood in 1864 at two to three years' consumption for the whole population? It might be said that the scarcity in 1866 was ushered in by a failure of crops in 1864 and 1865 successively. So far as Lower Bengal is concerned, it is true that in 1864 the southern part of the country was visited by terrible cyclone, but as it happened about the beginning of October, when the rice plants had not even flowered, it had little or no disastrous effects upon them, except in a very small part of the 24-Pergunnahs and the Midnapore District, where injury was done by the inundation of salt water. It did no harm elsewhere, except what a shaking of the plants without ears would cause wherever the cyclone had extended. So that the cyclone of 1864 could have made no sensible impression upon the stocks of previous years, as the prices which ruled until October 1865 would otherwise plainly show. It was only in November following, when the prospect of the ensuing crop was pretty correctly ascertained, that the price of grain rose above the normal rate. In no year, the committee believe, is there an equal or seasonable distribution of rain in every district of Bengal, nor even in any part of the same district, and the consequence is, that there are bumper crops in some districts, or in some parts of a particular district, and more or less a deficient crop in others, and by a complicated system of interchange the normal price is pretty uniformly kept up. When, however, once in a long series of years the crop of the whole country happens to be much in excess of the average one, it is instantly indicated by a great fall in the usual price, and the surplus is soon disposed of, either by larger export by sea or land or by increased home consumption, both in Bengal and the North-West, where with some it is a luxury for which they can only afford when the price is lower than usual, or when there is a deficient rubbee harvest. In this way the surplus, whatever it be, is soon disposed of, and is never, to the best of the committee's knowledge, held from year to year. It may be added also that a pretty correct knowledge of the requirements of the country, as also other economical causes, adjust the breadth of rice cultivation in the country, and a considerable surplus is not usually possible. As a rule, the committee have no hesitation in asserting that it does not exist, and there is nothing exceptional in the history of the present year to justify a different assumption.

With reference to the second subject of enquiry, namely, the probable out-turn of the standing crop, the committee beg leave to observe that the amun crop is cultivated upon three descriptions of land: 1st, the very low lands or bheels, which are sown broadcast; 2nd, lands, not so low, that is, lands in which monsoon water does not collect with the first heavy showers of rain, and are, therefore, reserved for cultivation by transplantation of seedlings previously reared in seed-beds; 3rd, lands still higher, but which are also cultivated precisely in the same way as the second. Now, a sixteen-anna crop means that by a seasonable fall of rain from May to November, all the three descriptions of lands have proved equally fruitful. But this consummation is seldom realized. The crop from the first description of lands is uncertain. The crop in such lands is ensured, only when there are slight showers of rain from the middle of Bysack (April) to the end of Jeyt (May), so as to admit of the lands being ploughed up and sown, but no such heavy showers in Assar (June) as to swamp the young plants. If there be heavy showers in Bysack and Jeyt, then the monsoon water collects in those hollows and they cannot be sown for the year; or, if after the plants had come up, there be heavy rains in Jeyt and Assar, so as to drown the plants, then the crop is destroyed, and the lands cannot be re-sown. The rains in Bysack and Jeyt this year were all that could be wished for the cultivation of this description of land. For the proper growth of paddy on the two other descriptions of land there must be seasonable rains from Assar (June) to Kartick (October). The transplantation is

commenced from the middle of Assar, and carried on even so late as the middle of Bhadur (August), as in the Soonderbuns. From other lands, unless the transplantation is finished by the end of Sraban (July), the yield must be less than the average. It is seldom that the rains hold off during the time the transplantation is carried on and finished. But in some years the rains set in late as was the case this year. Transplantation in many parts of the country could not be commenced before nearly the middle of Sraban (end of July). But, in the meantime, the soil had become so much enriched by the action of alternate sun and rain owing to scanty rainfall that the transplanted plants attained in 15 days the growth of a month. From the latter end of Bhadur (beginning of September) the rains held off; still the plants did well till nearly the end of Assin (beginning of October). In Kartick (middle of October) the plants on the third description of land began to suffer, and gradually withered away in most places by the middle, and entirely by the end of that month. It is only in the first two descriptions of lands that the plants freely flowered and put forth ears. But to enable the plants to flower freely, and for the proper development of grains in the ears, it is not enough that there should be moisture in the land, for the fall of a shower or two of rain is needed from the latter end of Assin to the close of Kartick to help this development. So by the cessation of rain from September, the crop even on the first and second descriptions of lands must have suffered, and the more so on the second than on the first. Accordingly, a large breadth of cultivation on lands of the second description, which began to be denuded of moisture from the end of Kartick, only partially flowered and put forth ears, which did not promise to contain properly developed grains. It was the crop on the first description of lands only, and such as are irrigated by fresh-water tidal streams, as in Backergunge, that promised to do well, and has done well, but not so well as it would have done, if at the time of flowering it had been helped by a good shower of rain. With these data it would be easy to make a fair estimate of the probable out-turn of the crop this year, if the respective area of the different kinds of land under cultivation could be accurately ascertained. This is, however, not practicable. No record exists in the country to show the respective areas devoted to particular crops, and even the extent of culturable lands existing in the province of Bengal can only be indicated by a guess.

In the absence of records the committee have to depend upon individual experience. Relying on it, they venture to state that the total area of the first description of lands is very small, hardly one-tenth of the whole area of amun lands of the country, and of that small area some portion is very often let fallow on account of the uncertainty of securing a crop therefrom, and as regards such portions as have been cultivated, the plants on the margin of those hollows cannot but have materially suffered in such a year of drought as the present. So that it is the crop obtained from the second description of land which will determine the question of the probable food supply for the ensuing year.

Knowing, as the committee do, from actual experience that the average out-turn from lands of the second class in such a year of drought cannot exceed eight annas, they thought that it would not be safe to estimate the new crop of the whole province at a higher figure than six annas of the average crop. This they did after taking into account the better produce of the lands of the first description and the crop of the districts that promised a full average crop, and making a due allowance at the same time for the utter loss of crop on the third description of lands. The last class embraces a very large breadth of amun cultivation in every district, and almost entirely that of the Behar Districts, and some districts of Lower Bengal, such as Dinagpore and Rungpore.

The committee are deeply sensible of the difficulty—nay, the impossibility under present circumstances—of making an accurate idea of either the stock or the probable out-turn; but in forming an estimate of them, the committee thought that it was much safer to go upon the grounds mentioned above, than to hazard mere guesses. Without any large stock at the close of the year and with a six-anna amun crop, the staple food of the country, to commence the year with, the committee thought that the absolute deficiency in the food supply of the country for some months was almost inevitable, which could not be met, except by importation from abroad. It is true that the Behar Districts are not entirely dependent upon rice, and that the rubbee crop of Bengal and Behar, and of all India, as also the two other rice crops, *viz.*, *boro*, which will

be harvested in April, and *aus*, which will be harvested in September, should be taken into account in calculating the food supply for 1874. But it must be borne in mind that the rubbee crop of Bengal consists principally, if not wholly, of pulses and oil seeds, and very little, indeed, of wheat; and as regards that of Behar, where wheat is produced,—even if it should turn out to be favorable—still it would only go to supplement, as it does every year, the staple food crop (rice) of the country, but cannot make up for the deficient out-turn in it by more than one-half, leaving the other half to be made up either by reduced consumption or importation from foreign countries. The same remark applies to the two other rice crops of the year, the breadth of cultivation of one of which, *viz.*, *aus*, has been materially reduced of late by the lands formerly devoted to it being appropriated to the cultivation of jute and oil seeds.

The committee will now put the case in another form. Let it be granted that the amun rice crop, which is harvested from November to the beginning of February, the rubbee food crop, which is harvested in April, and the two rice crops which are harvested in April and September, go towards supplying the country with food for the whole year without leaving any heavy stock at the end of the year. Let it be also granted that the rubbee and the two rice crops which are in prospect would yield an average out-turn; and the prospects of the people will stand thus: Of the four sources of supply, the amun crop will yield less than half the usual average crop, and it is well known that this crop constitutes $\frac{1}{3}$ ths of the food supply of the country. The rubbee crop is sown in October, and might be delayed at the most till the middle of November; but no sowing after that period, even under the most favorable circumstances, can be expected to yield an average out-turn. At the date of the committee's letter to Government, the 21st November last, it was but small breadth of rubbee lands in the Behar Districts that, for want of moisture in the soil, could have been sown, and what little had been sown had not come up, and what had come up was infested with insects. Under such circumstances, the committee thought that it would not be wise to calculate upon more than an eight-anna of the average rubbee crop. The ensuing *boro* rice crop is also not likely to turn out an average one. This crop is entirely dependent upon irrigation, and hence it is planted in the neighbourhood of beels and other reservoirs of water. But as most of these must have dried up this year, the cultivation of this crop must of necessity be limited to a very small area. As for the *aus* crop, it might be depended upon to meet the deficiency in the amun crop to an appreciable degree, if the cultivation of it were extended to all the lands suitable to the growth of that crop, which means the cultivation of all the lands with *aus* paddy, which are now appropriated to jute and oil seeds in addition to their ordinary breadth of cultivation. Taking the lands which may be disengaged from jute and oil seeds at one million of acres, these lands if cropped with *aus*, may, under favorable circumstances, yield 15 days' additional supply of food for the whole population. This is, however, not at all likely to take place, and the committee have therefore no reason to alter the estimate which they submitted to Government in their letter of the 21st ultimo.

The committee are willing to admit that some little benefit may be derived by drawing a supply from the rubbee crop of the rest of India; but they are not without apprehension that, like that of Bengal, the rubbee crop in these parts cannot, even under favorable circumstances, be much in excess of the requirements, of the people. Be that as it may, when the committee addressed to you their letter of the 21st ultimo, they were under an impression, from accounts then available to them, that the crop in several parts of the other provinces of India was not likely to turn out an average one. But as the prospects there have since improved, supplies may be now looked for from them.

These are the grounds upon which the committee came to the conclusion, which led them to approach Government with their views on the subject. They may be mistaken, and nothing would give them greater pleasure than to find themselves really so; but unable as they were to take a sanguine view of the position of things, and knowing as they did, the difficulties, not to say the expense, of procuring supplies from abroad sufficient to feed 60 millions for two months even, (leaving out Orissa and Assam) they humbly thought that no time should be lost in placing the results of their enquiries, views, and opinions at the disposal of Government, in the belief that, if they had erred, it was an error on the safe side, which was better than fancied security, the mischief of which it might be too late to repair.

If the committee's estimates of the stock of old rice, and of the probable out-turn of the present crop, as shown above, are at all reliable, the total stock will be only sufficient to feed the whole population for six months; and taking the ensuing rubbee, *boro* and *aus* crops as sufficient for two months more, there is every apprehension of a deficiency occurring in the food supply within four months. This deficiency might be easily met without unduly sending up prices and thereby causing starvation to many, if the whole available supply could be equally distributed. For people in that case would have only to live upon two-thirds of their usual rations, which might be safely done without any serious detriment to health or loss of physical powers. But as a matter of fact, this needful economy is never practised, until, in the natural course of things, high prices render it utterly unavoidable. It is then only that, according as the prices rule, it is only a comparatively small number of persons that supply themselves with full rations; a great number, representing the bulk of the population, must, according to their respective purchasing powers, live upon two-thirds, half, or one-third of their ordinary allowances, and many are reduced to a condition of destitution, when they have no means left to purchase any food for days, and starve until relieved by death. The duration of such a period, and the proportion of the population that must pass through the different stages of destitution, must mainly depend upon the degree of economy exercised from the beginning of the deficient harvest, and upon their respective purchasing powers. But, as in the usual order of things, rigid economy and equal distribution of food sufficient for eight months to do service for a whole year is not possible, prices must gradually rise to that pitch which will render food unattainable to many, and to a very large proportion of the population attainable only in quantities insufficient for the due preservation of the vital energies. By providing works on a gigantic scale, and at wages rising with the rise in the price of food, the Government might effect a more equal distribution of the food left than can otherwise be the case; but since the food stock is not sufficient for the proper sustenance of all, the pressure upon it will increase with the rise in price to the suffering and starvation of thousands over thousands, and that calamity can be averted only by pouring in grain into the country sufficient at any rate for a three months' supply. The committee say for three months, because the out-turns of the rubbee and *aus* crops are yet uncertain, and imagining that one or two months' deficiency might be made up by the economy, which would be necessarily exercised in consumption.

The Government is in a better position than the committee to judge whether the supplies in the other provinces of India would not be sufficient to meet the deficiency in Bengal. The Indian continent is so vast, and its population so numerous, that if a small contribution were made from each of the different provinces, it would go a great way to relieve this province. If, however, the food supplies in this continent be not sufficient, the Government, the committee respectfully submit, have no other alternative than to import food grains from abroad, if it considers, as the committee have had abundant testimony to believe it does consider, its sacred duty not to allow a single one of its subjects to die of starvation.

Since writing the above, the committee have been honored with a further communication on the subject, dated the 9th instant, forwarding copy of a letter from the Government of India, and requesting the committee's reply to the questions contained therein. The committee have also to thank the Bengal Government for a copy of Mr. Geddes' Compilation to assist them in making a comparison between the crops of 1865-66 and those of 1873-74. The committee humbly think that they have, to a great extent, anticipated in the above the information and opinion called for by the Government of India.

The committee have given above their own impressions as to the prospects of the crops and food supplies in the country at the date of their letter, *viz.*, the 21st November last, drawn from their own knowledge and observation. They will now, in compliance with the invitation of the Government of India, endeavour to institute a comparison between the crops of 1865 and 1873 with the aid of the official reports published by Government. They must, however, remark that the official reports are far from clear or full, and do not, therefore, afford sufficient data for an exact comparison. Even the reports connected with the famine of 1866 do not give the exact out-turn of crops in all districts, while the reports on the crops of this year are more incomplete. The Bengal Government seems to be alive to this defect. In the Special Narratives of

drought, dated the 21st November last, it is stated that "the district reports are very unequal in clearness and fulness; some of them, notably that from Bhaugulpore, are very distinct; while from districts where the sub-divisional system has not yet been fully introduced, the information is imperfect. The estimates offered by the district officers are confessedly rough and imperfect, and do not pretend to arithmetical accuracy. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that farmers, when they speak of "a full average crop" really mean a bumper crop, such as is very seldom harvested, and therefore a three-quarter crop (or twelve-anna crop, as it is called,) is in reality a good average yield. In one point most of the replies are more or less incomplete, namely, regarding the comparison between crops, the prices, and the general outlook of the present year with 1865." Thus, the materials for a fair comparison are wanting. The committee have arrived at the following conclusions upon the official data now before the public.

The Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866 described the result of the crops of autumn of 1865 in the following general terms: "In the eastern districts (beyond the Delta of the Ganges in that direction) material injury was not sustained. In the central districts of Bengal, that is, the districts of the Delta and those to the north of the Ganges, although there was on the whole a very serious shortness of crop and consequent enhancement of price, and a good deal of alarm was experienced in several quarters, scarcity amounting to famine did not result, except in a comparatively minor degree and in a comparatively limited tract in what may be described as the most western section of the Delta not far from Calcutta. This was chiefly in the Nuddea District. It lies in the midst of a rich and accessible country. Timely and liberal measures of a relief were adopted, and happily all considerable mortality was avoided." "The low-lying alluvial portions of the districts to the west of the Hooghly escaped with comparative immunity. It was only in the still more western districts of Orissa and higher parts of the western districts of Bengal, where the alluvium gives place to a laterite soil that the full extremity of famine was reached." The committee have compiled the following table from the extracts from official papers on the famine of 1866, and the returns published in the *Calcutta Gazette* on the prospect of the crops of 1873:—

Geographical Sections—Physical characters.	Districts.	1865-66.			1873-74.		
		Each district.	Average of the Geographical Section.	Source of information—Geddes' Compilation.	Each district.	Average of the Geographical Section.	Source of information—Geddes' Compilation.
The Lower Delta and Littoral Districts	Midnapore	or 5	77	35	or 5	77	22nd Oct.
	Jessore	or 75	77	41	or 75	77	17th Dec.
	Backergunge	or 875	77	172	or 75	77	10th Dec.
	Noakhally	or 875	77	172	or 75	77	26th Nov.
	Chittagong	or 875	77	172	or 75	77	26th Nov.
	Cuttack	or 33	77	18	or 875	77	17th Dec.
West Bengal between the Uplands	Balasure	or 33	77	18	or 75	77	10th Dec.
	Poorce	or 33	77	18	or 875	77	17th Dec.
	Burdwan	or 6	60 per cent.	31	or 5	50 per cent.	
	Howrah	or 6	60 per cent.	31	or 5	50 per cent.	
Central Delta districts	24 Pargunahs	or 5	Total 1978, average 391	39	or 25	Total 2162, average 432	26th Nov.
	Nuddea	or 1	391	43	or 375	432	17th Dec.
	Moorsheadabad	or 25	391	43	or 375	432	3rd Dec.
	Farrukhpore	or 875	391	172	or 375	432	3rd Dec.
Northern Bengal	Pubna	or 333	391	43	or 5	432	26th Nov.
	Rajshahye	or 875	Total 2958, average 591	42	or 477	Total 1349, average 249	3rd Dec.
	Maldah	or 75	591	42	or 250	249	3rd Dec.
	Dinapore	or 333	591	42	or 125	249	26th Nov.
Eastern Bengal	Bogra	or 5	591	42	or 250	249	
	Rungpore	or 5	591	42	or 187	249	
	Dacca	or 875	Total 4250, average 850	172	or 5	Total 3124, average 624	26th Nov.
	Mymensing	or 875	850	172	or 75	624	
North and South Behar	Sylhet	or 875	850	172	or 5	624	
	Cachar	or 875	850	172	or 624	624	
	Tipperah	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
	Tirhoot	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
The Upland-country of Bengal and Chota Nagpore.*	Bhaugulpore	or 75	Total 4250, average 850	172	or 5	Total 3124, average 624	26th Nov.
	Mouglhyr	or 875	850	172	or 75	624	
	Patna	or 875	850	172	or 624	624	
	Shahabad	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
The Upland-country of Bengal and Chota Nagpore.*	Gya	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
	N. Behar	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
	S. Behar	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
	Gya	or 75	850	43	or 75	624	
		1865.		1873.			
		Total 347 per cent.; average 57.4 per cent. about 10 annas or a little less than 10 annas.		Total 283 per cent.; average 47.14 per cent., about 7½ annas.			

* No precise information as to the outturn of this part of the country is given in the official reports of 1865-66, or of this year, and, therefore, no comparison can be made.

The committee deem it necessary to observe that in preparing the above table they have been compelled to assume the proportion of probable yield of some districts from the absence of precise information in the official returns. They have, however, endeavoured to make as approximate an estimate as they could form from the character of the official reports.

To elucidate the subject further, the committee propose to review the position of the different districts in 1865 and 1873.

MIDNAPORE.

1865.—"The main rice crop of 1865 is estimated to have been about a half crop; taking the whole district in the jungle mehals, it is said to have been about six-sixteenths; in the eastern parts, somewhat better."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 35.

1873.—"Reports received from all police stations show (after allowing for exaggeration) that the out-turn will be from about one-fourth in the worst to three-fourths in the best of an average crop. Taking the district as a whole, the crop will probably be a little over one-half of an average crop."—*Calcutta Gazette*, October 22, 1873.

Since then no improvement is reported from this district.

This is an exporting district, and failure of crops there mean scarcity not only for itself, but also for neighbouring districts which depend upon its surplus. With half a crop in 1865, Midnapore, according to the Famine Commissioners, stood "next in point of intensity of suffering, as well as next in geographical position," to Orissa and Maunbhoom.—*Vide Report of Orissa Famine Commission*, p. 105.

JESSORE.

1865.—The Collector of Jessore reports as follows on the crops in the sub-divisions of his district:—

Jessore.—Only a six-anna rice crop expected. Cold weather crops cannot be sown for want of rain.

Magoorah.—A twelve-anna crop. As in Jessore, the winter crops cannot be sown.

Narail.—More than an average crop, the lands of this sub-division being low. Cold-weather crops promise fairly.

Jenidah.—The worst sub-division of all—not so much as a six-anna crop. The prices are already more than double those of an average year.

Khoolna and Bagirhaut.—Believed to be very good, the ground, like that of Narail, lying low.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 40.

1873.—The out-turn of the rice crop may be expected, on the whole, to be an eight-anna one.—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 17, 1873.

The position of this district is thus worse in 1873, compared with 1865.

BACKERGUNGE.

1873.—This district is included in the Dacca Division. Its out-turn in 1865 was an average one; but the Commissioner reports that the crop was "about an average one throughout the division."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 102.

1873.—"On the whole, it seems almost certain that there will be a twelve-anna crop all over the district."—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 10, 1873.

Thus Backergunge is comparatively worse off this year.

NOAKHALLY.

1865.—This district is included in the Chittagong Division. According to the Chittagong Commissioner's report dated 2nd June 1866, "the rainfall last year was about the usual average in amount, but it was unequally distributed, being in excess in the early part and deficient at the end of the season. This caused some failure of the crops here and there."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

From this statement the committee conclude that the crop of 1865 was an average one in this district.

1873.—"In 106 of the 382 villages in Sudharam ten annas of the (Rajshail and Chaplais) late paddy are said to have been destroyed, and similar loss is

reported from 21 villages in Hatia. Loss of four annas of the crops is reported from Sundeeep, Luckipore and Ameergunge, and some loss (nowhere said to exceed two annas) from the remaining thannahs of Ramgunge, Begumgunge and Beunumie."—*Calcutta Gazette*, November 26, 1873.

"In Sudharam, Begumgunge and Ramgunge, the prospects are much what they were last week. The average loss at Sundeeep and Ameergunge is still reported at four annas."—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 3, 1873.

The committee did not take into account the crops of the Orissa Districts in their letter of the 21st November last, and so they omit here a comparison of these districts. It will be seen that the chief exporting districts named above are worse off this year than they were in 1865.

BURDWAN.

1865.—Over the whole district it probably did not average less than two-thirds of a full out-turn.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 31.

1873.—No definite information is given in the official returns of this district, but it is stated in Appendix B to the Bengal Government's Special Narrative for the week ending on the 21st November 1873, that the "total yield of the food crops of 1873 will be under one-half of the full average crop."

This district was considered a distressed district in 1866 with two-thirds of an average crop in 1865.

HOOGHLY AND HOWRAH.

These two districts import rice. The famine commissioners remark with regard to the Hooghly District that "so much of the soil is devoted to the fruits and more valuable products (sugar-cane, jute, potatoes, plantains, and fine rice) that coarse rice is always imported from other districts, and those supplies having been curtailed by the failure in the adjoining districts, the price of the food of the people was very greatly enhanced." Howrah also much in the same position.

Thus the scarcity in other districts will necessarily tell upon the districts of Hooghly and Howrah, which were considered distressed districts in 1866.

24-PERGUNNAHS.

1865.—The result of the inquiries which the Magistrate and Collector made throughout his district was that a failure of half the crop was expected.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 39.

1873.—"In Diamond Harbour Sub-Division about a seven-anna crop is expected, and some distress is apprehended in the southern parts of Thannah Sultanpore and Mathoorapore, where more than a two-anna crop cannot be hoped for. From Barripore the Deputy Collector reports that the paddy cut contains very little grain, and that the out-turn will be very poor. Cold-weather crops have been sown here and in Baraset, wherever water was available. In the latter sub-division the rice crop on the high lands is comparatively destroyed, but some good crops will be taken from the beels and low lands. In Satkhirah and Basserhaut prospects are reported to be getting worse and worse as the drought continues."—*Calcutta Gazette*, November 26, 1873.

No improvement has since been reported.

It is clear from the above statement that this district is also worse off this year. In 1866 it was considered a distressed district.

NUDDEA.

1865.—The out-turn would not be quite half of that produced in ordinary years.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 40.

1873.—The accounts are very indistinct. In the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 17th December 1873, it is stated that the late crop in the Kooshtea Sub-Division is expected to yield a six-anna out-turn.

This district was considered a distressed district in 1866.

MOORSHEDABAD.

1865.—"In Moorshedabad the late rice is chiefly grown on the right bank of the Bhagirutty. The crop will, I much fear, not be more than one-fourth of an ordinary one. In the neighbourhood of tanks and wells irrigation has

saved a part, but I can state from personal observation that a large portion of the area shown will produce nothing."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 43.

1873.—"The out-turn of the late rice crop in the Jungipore Sub-Division is still expected to be seven annas; in the Rampore Hât Sub-Division not more than a five-anna crop is expected."—*Calcutta Gazette*.

FURREEDPORE.

1865.—About an average.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

1873.—Harvest of this year will be three-fifths of an ordinary year.—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 3, 1873.

This district is thus worse off.

PUBNA.

1865.—One-third.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 43.

1873.—"It will be about an eight-anna crop."—*Calcutta Gazette*, November 26, 1873.

RAJSHAHYE.

1865.—Eight annas.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 42.

1873.—"The early portion of the amun or late rice crop is being reaped. What little has been saved in the lowest lands in the Bhurind has yielded from one to two annas. In Nattore the yield will be from six to eight annas. In Pootea and the east of Beaulah, about six annas. In Bagmara and part of Singhrah and Bhundaikhara, from six to eight annas. In parts of Barraigaon the paddy is good, and from eight to twelve annas will, it is hoped, be harvested. In Charghât and Beelmara, from six to eight annas."—*Calcutta Gazette*.

MALDAH.

1865.—"In Maldah little late rice is grown, but the cold-weather crops are suffering much from want of rain. The early rice crop was a good one, but owing to the large exportation which has lately been going on from the chief marts of the district, the retail price has been much enhanced."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 43.

1873.—Four-anna crop of amun rice.—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 3, 1873.

DINAGEPORE.

1865.—One-third.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 42.

1873.—The reports from this district are very indistinct and very gloomy. It would be scarcely safe to assume more than a three-anna crop all round in this district as in Rungpore.

BOGRAH.

1865.—In Bograh, as in Rungpore, half an ordinary rice crop may be looked for.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 42.

1873.—From this district the reports are also indistinct, but it may be safe to assume the probable yield at one-fourth the usual average.

RUNGPORE.

1865.—Half crop as observed above.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 42.

1873.—"The state of the rice crop is extremely bad, not much more than a three-anna crop can be expected. In one or two parts of the district it is hoped that a six-anna crop may be obtained, but in other parts it is expected that it will be as low as one anna."—*Calcutta Gazette*, November 26, 1873.

DACCA.

1865.—Average crop.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

1873.—No precise information is given in the official returns. The committee estimate half crop for this district.

MYMENSINGH.

1865.—Average crop.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

1873.—No precise information is given in the official returns. Crop estimated at three-fourths.

SYLHET.

1865.—Average crop.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

1873.—No precise information is given in the official returns. Crop estimated at one-half.

CACHAR.

1863.—Average crop.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 172.

1873.—An out-turn of ten annas on the average crop or more is expected.—*Calcutta Gazette*, November 26, 1873.

TIPPERAH.

1865.—Three-fourths.—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 42.

1873.—The reports from this district are indistinct. Crops estimated at three-fourths.

BANCOORAH.

1865.—The district suffered more from exportation than deficient crops.

"In ordinary years the district exports some little rice from the east primarily into Ghatal, a large mart in the Hooghly District. After the cutting of the cold-weather crop of 1865, much more than usual was carried away to supply the deficiency in Midnapore and Maunbhoom. Those who, as in ordinary years, had kept stocks for their own consumption through the coming year, were tempted by the high prices to sell, for which they suffered severely a few months later."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 32.

1873.—"In part an eight-anna crop is hoped for. But in others not more than a three or four-anna one is expected."—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 10, 1873. This was a distressed district in 1866.

MAUNBHOOM AND SINGBHOOM.

1865.—In Maunbhoom the distress in 1865 was intense, next only to the Orissa Districts. Out-turn one-third.

"The out-turn of cold-weather crops all over the district is estimated by the Deputy Commissioner to have been between one-third and half of a full crop; but it varied much in different parts of the district. Over a considerable tract the yield could not have exceeded one-fourth."

In Singbhoom it is stated that "at the best of times, the majority of the people, cultivators and others, live from hand to mouth, and grain is rarely stored."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 29.

1873.—Maunbhoom nine-anna crop. Singbhoom half crop.—*Calcutta Gazette*, December 10, 1873.

BEHAR DISTRICTS.

1865.—"In the years 1864-65, the general average rainfall throughout the districts under notice was both deficient in quantity as compared with that of previous years and unseasonable. The rain commenced so late in June that the sowings were generally backward, and this was followed by such an abundant fall in July that the young rice plant in the low lands was swamped. The rains in both years ceased for the most part early in September, and there was none at all in October in either year. This resulted in the crops in the higher lands, from which the water had been completely drained, and which form the main area of the rice cultivation in these districts, drying up, so that the out-turn of both years was more or less deficient, varying generally from two-thirds to one-third, and in some exceptional cases, such as the north of Tirhoot and Chumparun, not exceeding one-fourth of the ordinary produce."—*Mr. Geddes' Compilation*, p. 15.

1873.—"The Trans-Ganges tract* is highly cultivated, and very thickly peopled. In the belt of land which lies just under the Himalayas and ordinarily produces a vast surplus of rice, the late rice crop has almost entirely failed. Over the rest of this tract the yield of the late rice may be from a tenth to one-twentieth of an ordinary year's out-turn."

"South Behar contains much less indigo land; and it contains, moreover, a very great rich area which is annually inundated by the Ganges, and on which excellent crops of food are produced in ordinary years. The early

* Including the districts of Tirhoot, Sarun, Chumparun, parts of Bhagulpoore and Monghyr. Purneah.

(September) crops of South Behar were for the most part bad, ranging from one-quarter to one-half of a full average year. On the inundated lands, the September crop, as it is very often the case, was utterly destroyed.* The late rice over the whole of this tract will not yield one-quarter the out-turn of a full average year. The rubbee crops sown on the inundated lands will, if we get December rains, give a fair crop; but the area actually sown with spring crops is below the average of ordinary years. In the Gya District there is a certain amount of artificial irrigation, and in the Shahabad District some 80,000 acres of rice and wheat lands will have been watered from the canal. If copious rain does not come before Christmas (by that it almost always does come in Behar), the total yield of the food crops of South Behar can hardly exceed from one-quarter to one-third of the out-turn of a full average year." *Appendix B to Bengal Government Special Narrative of the Drought, dated 21st November 1873.*

It will be seen from the above whether the committee were justified in assuming at the date of their letter, viz., the 21st November last, that the average annual crop for the whole of the Bengal territories, excluding Orissa and Assam, would be six annas, and that, believing as they did that there were not left much old stores in the country generally, there would be a deficiency of food for some time for sixty millions of the population in round numbers, comprising those territories, after the harvest of the year was exhausted.

The committee observe that great stress has been laid upon the manner in which they expressed their sense of the heavy responsibility imposed upon Government in supplying any deficiency which might occur in the food supply of the immense population inhabiting this vast country, when they said that "the task of feeding 60 millions of people may well appal the stoutest heart." It is superfluous for them to say that they could not have meant thereby that the whole population of the country would even for a day be without food. Such a contingency was absolutely impossible. Instead of dividing the whole province under the Government of Bengal into areas of scarcity and sufficiency, which they could not well do, as neither of them was uninterrupted in its range or uniform in degree, the committee formed their own estimate of the probable average out-turn of the crop in the whole province and calculated therefrom the possible deficiency arising amongst the whole population, taking for granted that the existing supply was equally distributed amongst all, the deficiency of some parts being met by the sufficiency of the other, which to a great extent must be the case. But, supposing that the famine area was accurately defined, and the calculation of deficiency was confined thereto, the actual result would be exactly the same, inasmuch as any deduction in the number of sufferers would be made up by a corresponding rise in the duration of their suffering. So that if, upon the former supposition, there should be no food for 60 millions for one month, there would be no food for two months if the famine area were confined to a population of 30 millions. The price of the food anyhow must be kept within a reasonable figure, and that figure the committee consider to be at the most 50 per cent. above the normal price in the different parts of the country. With such a price for three or four months aided in the shape of works liberally provided by Government, the people might tide over the crisis. Any price beyond that figure, and even with such a price for longer period, must reduce thousands to the point of starvation.

While on this point the committee would invite the attention of Government to the following extract from the Report of the Famine Commission of 1866, showing what proportion of deficiency of crop will produce a famine in India:—

"A most important lesson is, we think, distinctly to be learned from the study of Colonel Smith's report. We are not quite sure whether, in estimating the losses, he takes fully into account the great destruction of the inferior grains of the rainy season, which depend

solely on rain, or chiefly refers to the subsequent crop, of which he saw the failure before him—the wheat and other main staples, a great portion of which is always kept alive by artificial irrigation; but his estimates seem to show that in his opinion the failure, taking broadly the whole of the distressed dis-

* Including the districts of Patna, Gya, Shahabad, parts of Bhagulpoore, Monghyr.

tricts, did not exceed that which was from the first admitted in the most sanguine estimates to have occurred in Orissa in 1865, *viz.*, half the produce. He specifically states the loss in several of the bad districts at about four-tenths; in some it was more, in some it is estimated to have been less. The famine country of 1861 is, generally speaking, a grain-producing country; with the exception of a good deal of cotton in some portion of it (and the cotton cultivation had not then been abnormally extended), food grains may be said to be the main staple throughout, and in good years there must no doubt be a large surplus produce. Particular estimate apart, it is plain that the failure of the produce of the whole tract was not complete—that there was in parts (good and bad being intermixed) a very considerable yield. Yet it is abundantly evident that if there had been no importations and no relief works, the famine would have been frightful and very fatal. It may be assumed, then, as the result of Colonel Smith's inquiry, that in the ordinary modern condition of things in India, something much short of the entire and absolute failure of the whole crops of a year in any province will suffice to produce that state of extreme famine when food is scarcely to be had for money, if the market be not relieved by importation from provinces more abundantly supplied. Still more will this be the case when either by previous short crops, or by exportation or both, the stocks have been already reduced below average; and as respects a famine caused by absence of grain as distinguished from one caused by absence of money, the effect of previous short crops and of exportation is much the same. Modern enterprise and means of communication, in relieving countries insufficiently supplied, drain those in which grain is more abundant to an extent which probably did not occur in the old days of native hoarding. In fact, in India, where famines have generally been present to the memories and traditions of the people, the want of means of communication was much counteracted by the disposition to hoard largely the grain for which little could be got in years of abundance. An unhappy combination of circumstances which renders exportation in time of abundance large, but brings no importation in time of want, produces such a terrible calamity as has just occurred in Orissa."

As to "whether the status of 1873 in the provinces under the Government of Bengal be materially worse than that of 1865-66," the committee venture to submit that they have adduced sufficient evidence and facts not to leave any doubt on that point. The disastrous effects of the failure of rain in 1865 were considerably more circumscribed than could be said of the same in the present year; and remembering that the population now affected is immensely greater than that in 1865, it would, the committee are humbly of opinion, be scarcely reasonable to take a more sanguine view of things in this year.

But supposing that the status of 1873-74 would not be worse than that of 1865-66, the mortality which followed in the last-mentioned year was appalling. In Orissa the lowest estimate was the loss of one-fourth the population by starvation. In Maunbhoom and Singbhoom the deaths amounted to 18 per cent. and 12½ per cent., respectively. Of the other distressed districts no mortuary returns are given, but in the Behar Districts the mortality was very heavy:—

Districts.	Number of deaths from starvation or disease engendered by want.
Champarun	56,000
Gya	3,387
Monghyr	1,247
Sarun	8,175
Shahabad	4,424
Tirhoot	60,821
TOTAL	1,33,564

Mr. Geddes' Compilation, p. 54.

If such was the disastrous effects of the drought of 1865, with a crop of from one-third to two-thirds in the Behar Districts, the gravity of the present crisis may be easily imagined when the probable out-turn of those districts in 1873-74 is estimated by Government from one-fourth to one-third.

In submitting these remarks the committee gratefully acknowledge the judgment, energy and liberality, which have marked the proceedings of Government to meet the threatened crisis, and they desire to record their humble belief and hope that everything will be done which can be done to mitigate suffering by a Government rich in resources and always ready to do its duty to the millions entrusted to its care by a merciful Providence.

No. 83.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association, No. 4214, dated December 29, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 24th December (see above, No. 82 of this series), stating at length the grounds on which the British Indian Association based their estimate of the food prospects of Bengal during the coming season.

2. I am directed to convey Sir George Campbell's best thanks for the care and labour which your committee have taken to sift and collate all the information which has been made available, and to say that he attaches much value to the views held on this all-important question by a body of gentlemen so deeply interested in the land of Bengal as are the members of your committee.

3. A copy of your letter will be at once submitted to the Government of India, and the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that His Excellency the Viceroy in Council will as much appreciate the labour and the judgment of your committee as does the Lieutenant-Governor.

No. 81.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 22, dated January 3, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 4213, of the 29th ultimo (see p. 123), forwarding in reply to the enquiries made* by the Government of India an explanation from the British Indian Association of the grounds on which they based their estimate of the present situation in Bengal.

2. I am to request you to convey to the Honorary Secretary of the Association the acknowledgments of the Government of India for this elaborate review. The Governor General in Council has given it very careful consideration, and without indicating the extent to which he may concur in all the conclusions of the Association, he cannot but express his appreciation of the value of the information now laid before the Government and the benevolent spirit in which it has been tendered.

3. At the same time, I am to point out that whereas the Association has, to a large extent apparently, obtained its facts from official sources which have been all along before the Government of Bengal, and upon which the Government of Bengal has formed and declared different estimates, the letter from the Association has not been accompanied by any definite expression of concurrence or dissent on the part of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. And yet the exact area and extent of the scarcity, the out-turn of the late harvest, and the percentage of the whole population likely to be seriously affected, are all matters upon which the local Government is able to obtain far fuller and more accurate information than any private body of gentlemen, however able and influential, and the local Government has further the advantage of being able to correct and modify its conclusions by wide official experience of seasons of scarcity in Bengal and elsewhere.

4. The Government of India is necessarily and almost entirely dependent on the local Government for its knowledge of the real condition of affairs, and upon this knowledge all its measures must be based: and on this ground I am again to call attention to the points of discrepancy specifically raised in Financial Secretary's letter No. 3156 of the 3rd ultimo (see p. 77) between the

* In No. 3156 of 3rd December 1873. (See p. 77.)

estimates of the Association and those of the local Government, and I am to enquire whether and to what extent the Lieutenant-Governor considers that the later estimates require modification.

No. 85.

Letter from H. Luttman Johnson, Esq., Additional Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce No. 85, PS., dated January 8, 1874.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 22, dated 3rd January 1874 (see above, No. 84 of this series), requesting this Government to compare the estimates of the deficiency of the crops of 1873, made by the committee of the British Indian Association and by this Government, respectively, with special reference to the discrepancies noted in the Financial Secretary's letter No. 3456, dated 3rd December 1873 (see p. 77).

2. I am to point out that the estimate of this Government quoted in paragraph 4 of that letter is an estimate of the out-turn of crops of 1873, whereas the estimate quoted in paragraph 2 as that of the British Indian Association is one of the amun or late-rain crop only. The former estimate comprises the early-rain crops called Aus, Bhadoi, &c., as well as the late rice crops. Now, in many or most parts of the country the early crops yielded fairly, and though they are small in quantity compared to the late crop, they materially affect the total proportion of yield. Viewed in this way, the estimate of the Association is not very widely different from that of this Government.

The committee estimate the late crop, excluding Orissa (and Assam, as they subsequently say,) to be scarcely six annas on the whole. The general result of the estimates of this Government was that about half the whole crop was lost, which seems not very wide of the committee's estimate of six annas for the late rice only.

3. It may not be out of place to repeat what was said in Appendix F to the Special Narrative of December 18th, where this Government's first estimates were reviewed. It was there said that the outcome of the whole review is, that the country has lost more or less, one-half of its annual food supply. If the half remaining could be equally distributed, and the spring crops turn out well, then probably with the help of increased cultivation of vegetables, the stocks in hand, and economy, and a fair spring crop, famine, at any rate, might be avoided. But unfortunately the existing food supply cannot be distributed with full regard to the necessities of every part. At page 5 of their second letter, the committee say: "This deficiency might be easily met if the whole available supply could be equally distributed; for people in that case would have to live upon two-thirds of their usual rations. But, as a matter of fact, this needful economy is never practised, until, in the natural course of things, high prices render it utterly unavoidable."

4. On the whole, and looking to the vagueness of our information in a country where the areas cultivated in different crops are unknown, and no systematic observation of the out-turn of crops has been undertaken, the Lieutenant-Governor cannot but think that the estimates made independently by the British Indian Association confirm in a remarkable manner those made by this Government.

5. Passing now to the other points of discrepancy adverted to in Financial Secretary's No. 3456, dated 3rd ultimo, the Lieutenant-Governor observes that the Association have in their second letter explained that the expression, "the cost of feeding 60 millions," was not to be taken literally. The Lieutenant-Governor's view has been, that want may possibly, if things were to turn out badly, affect districts containing say 50 millions of inhabitants, but certainly not that anything like the whole of the inhabitants of those districts must be fed by Government.

6. In reference to the last paragraph of the above-named letter, Sir George Campbell would merely repeat what was said in Appendix F to the Narrative of December 18th: "The year 1865 having been preceded by bad seasons while the crops of 1871, and 1872 were good, it is possible that the country may be now

in no greater danger than it was then, but there can be no question that the crops of 1873 have, at any rate, in the distressed tracts been worse than those of 1865." The Lieutenant-Governor still holds to the view that the present year is worse than 1865-66, though the preceding years were better.

No. 86.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 153, dated January 19, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 85 PS. of the 8th instant (see above No. 85 of this series), explaining the discrepancies between the estimates formed by the Government of Bengal and the British Indian Association, first, as to the out-turn of the late harvests, and, secondly, as to the proportion of the population likely to be affected by the threatened scarcity in Bengal.

No. 87.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 3, dated Calcutta, January 9, 1874.

In continuation of our previous despatches regarding the drought in Bengal, we desire to report the progress of affairs during the past week.

2. The winter rains have not yet fallen; there have been partial and slight showers in some of the Behar Districts, but not enough to do any real good.

3. The spring crops, on which attention and hope are now fixed, still continue to promise well in most districts. In some districts, however, they begin to show signs of withering, and everywhere they stand absolutely in need of rain within the next fortnight.

4. Prices are slightly rising in many places. On the whole, the anticipated tendency to rise of prices is generally manifesting itself.

5. It is now nearly certain that at the best there must be distress for several months in portions of Behar, especially in the populous district of Tirhoot. The extent of the area of distress will be enlarged or contracted according as rain may be vouchsafed or withheld during the next fortnight. At the worst, the distress may extend over many parts of the whole Behar Province, and may break out in some parts of the Bengal Province.

6. We trust that our arrangements for importation of rice from beyond sea, together with the amount already purchased in India, will be found adequate to meet the worst of the contingencies above stated. Quantities are coming in regularly by steamer: 24,000 tons have already arrived at the port of Calcutta, and 25,000 more will arrive before the end of the current month.

7. Our immediate attention is being given to the transport of the Government supplies of grain into the interior of the country. The railway carriage will, we trust, prove adequate for all demands, whether by the Government or by private trade. It certainly will meet fully the requirements of Government grain transport. We wish we could express a similar confidence in the sufficiency of the country carriage in land, which is being arranged for by the district officers under the direction of the local Government. We have not yet been able to obtain from the local Government such information as would enable us to form an accurate judgment on this very important point. We have repeatedly from time to time since November last drawn the Lieutenant-Governor's attention to this subject; and we have again forcibly impressed on His Honor the importance of timely arrangements being made. We hope soon to have more specific assurances than we possess at present. The Lieutenant-Governor has now accepted the offer which we made some time ago* of assistance from the Commissariat Department; and we have accordingly arranged for such assistance being immediately rendered.

* Letter from Secretary to Government of India in the Military Department, to Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 141, dated November 6, 1873 (see foot-note, p. 160).

8. The time has now come for calling into active operation in some districts the organization of relief committees. This organization is not indeed so fully or completely advanced throughout the districts affected as we had hoped to find it by the present date, but the attention of the local Government has been urgently drawn to this matter also.

9. We have ordered preliminary measures only to be taken for constituting a central relief committee, as after consulting the Lieutenant-Governor we have decided to postpone for some few days an appeal to the public for subscriptions, that is, until distress has begun to declare itself to some appreciable extent, which is not the case at present.

10. We still await the receipt of a general report from the local Government of the relief works proposed in the several districts. These works have been commenced in several places; but nowhere are they largely attended, save in the Sarun District.

11. Large numbers of labourers are employed on the Soane Canal, but most of them belong to those classes who would seek this kind of employment under any circumstances. We have authorized the immediate commencement of the western main branch of this project in addition to the portions previously undertaken. The Gunduck embankments and also the Northern Bengal State Railway works are proceeding gradually, being attended only by those whose regular profession is labour. It was at first feared by us that the scantiness of the winter harvest would greatly diminish work in the fields, and so throw much labour out of employ. This fear happily seems not to have been realized.

12. We have now finished our consideration of the projects for light railways or tramways between Hajeeapore on the Ganges opposite Patna and Mozufferpore, the capital of the Tirhoot District, and between Patna and Gya (see below No. 88 of this series). But after consulting the Lieutenant-Governor, we find that either the work could not be done in time, or that it would occupy resources needed for other operations relating to the scarcity, or that it would not subserve the purposes of relief. We therefore fear that these projects cannot advantageously be undertaken.

No. 88.

Office Memorandum from Captain K. C. Pye, Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 6 SR., dated January 3, 1874.

In reply to Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department's memorandum No. 677 ^{Agriculture and Horticulture} _{Famine}, dated 24th December 1873, the undersigned is directed to forward the accompanying joint report by Colonel C. H. Dickens and Mr. H. Leonard on certain light railways in Bengal suggested as famine works.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 88.

Report on certain light railways in Bengal suggested as famine works, as ordered in No. 677 of 24th December 1873, from the Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor asks for a report and estimate showing the feasibility and cost of light metre-gauge engine-worked lines of railway for the roads between Patna and Gya, and Hajeeapore and Mozufferpore, the time in which the work could be done, using up as much materials, rolling-stock, &c., now in India as can be made available, and the effects on the labour and foods of the districts.

PATNA AND GYA LINE.—60 MILES.—STATE OF THE ROAD.

The embankment.—The cross section of the road is such that a line of railway can be laid on the unmetalled edges without interfering much with room for fair road traffic, and there is no earthwork required beyond mere levelling up.

Bridges.—The whole line is bridged with the exception of one river, the Durdah, 30 miles from Patna, which is in hand. The rivers and large streams are crossed by bridges strong enough to carry the proposed railway. The smaller water-ways are crossed by *very light* bridges, but they are considered

strong enough to carry a 10 or 12-ton engine at low speed. (They have been tested by rolling a 6-ton roller over them.) They should, however, be strengthened if the line is to be used permanently. The new bridge being put up over the "Durdah" has a road-way of peculiar construction, which, we fear, will not be strong enough to carry an engine; if, however, it should be found too weak, it can be strengthened from materials in stock in Bengal, the road-way being narrowed, if necessary, to adapt it for the materials. Mr. Leonard has not had an opportunity of seeing the iron-work, and cannot give a reliable opinion on this point.

Generally.—The state of the road is such that, with the exception of the Durdah bridge, a line of railway may be laid down at once. For immediate use it might be laid without ballast being put down on the side of the road not intended for its permanent site, and could be worked till ballast could be prepared.

The Durdah bridge, if pushed on with great vigour, might be made ready by April or May next, and ballast, if ordered at once, might possibly be ready by June. This however would require immediate action and great energy in pushing on the work.

If materials, &c., could be given at once from the stock in India, they might be delivered on the ground in February next, and the line might be laid (without ballast) and be at work by the 1st May*. This estimate, however, supposes great activity and first-rate management. If materials, rolling-stock, &c., have to be got from England, they might be delivered,—permanent-way by May next, rolling-stock by July,—and the line could be ready for work in August or September; but these estimates suppose immediate action and great activity both here and in England. In the ordinary course of active work and without allowing for an abnormal state of the iron market, we might expect permanent-way materials in July, rolling-stock in October or November, and the line at work by January 1875.

ESTIMATED COST OF THE LINE.

Accepting the description of the state of the road given above as moderately correct, the estimated cost of a very light railway, consisting of 25lb. rails, creosoted pine sleepers, properly ballasted way, engines weighing 6 or 7 tons, and rolling-stock to run a train daily each way, would be:—

	Rs.
Rails, fastenings, &c., 47 tons per mile ...	6,20,000
Sleepers, 2,200 per mile, at Rs. 2 ...	2,64,000
Ballast, at Rs. 8 per 100 cubic feet ...	2,16,000
Laying line, at Rs. 1,000 a mile ...	60,000
	11,60,000
Sidings, 10 per cent. ...	1,16,000
Dressing up earthwork ...	12,000
Strengthening and altering bridges ...	1,00,000
Stations of all kinds, including small shop ...	1,20,000
	15,08,000
Rolling-stock and engines, £300 per mile ...	1,80,000
Total say ...	16,88,000
or say Rs. 28,000 per mile = 17 lakhs.	

HAJEEPORE AND MOZUFFERPORE LINE.—34 MILES.—STATE OF THE ROAD.

Embankment.—Mr. Leonard has never seen this road. It is reported to be a wide road, raised bank, in good order.

Bridges.—The line is reported as being bridged throughout, with the exception of one river of 96 feet waterway, the Bijah. Several small bridges, however, aggregating 300 feet waterway, are said to be so bad as to require renewing; these, with the unbridged Bijah, make about 400 feet of bridging to be provided.

Generally.—The road is said to be in such a state that if the bridges noted above were renewed and built, a line of rails could be laid down on it for immediate use, leaving ballasting to be done at some future time.

* It will be seen below, however, that the materials in India will not be available so soon.

If there be iron-work available, the bridging could, by using great exertions, be done by May next, or if teakwood timber bridges to last ten or twelve years be used, the work could be done in the same time. And if materials, rolling-stock, &c., can be given from stocks in India, the line might be laid and opened by 1st June next.

If all materials, rolling-stock, &c., have to be got from England, the line might be at work in August or September next by using *great* exertion, but most likely the time would be extended to the end of 1874.

<i>Estimate of the cost.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>
Rails, fastenings, &c., at 47 tons per mile	3,51,000
Sleepers, at Rs. 2,200 per mile	1,49,000
Ballast, at Rs. 8 per 100 c. feet	1,22,000
Laying the line, at Rs. 1,000 per mile	34,000
Sidings, 10 per cent.	6,56,000
Bridging 400 feet, at Rs. 150	65,000
Earthwork, say	60,000
Stations and small shop	10,000
Rolling-stock, £300 per mile	1,00,000
Total	9,81,000
say 10 lakhs, or Rs. 30,000 a mile.	

In regard to the supply of rails, the Government of India have urgent demands for State Railway works as fast as the rails can be supplied from England; and besides 15 miles are required for the Sirhind Canal head-works and 8 miles for the Lower Ganges Canal. These works were to have been supplied from the stock of Belgian rails on the Northern Bengal Railway, but they are now considered unfit for the purpose. The canals have a prior claim on the Government of India, except so far as other works are needed in view to the famine.

There are 100 miles of narrow-gauge rails in the Punjab, which will be available when the bridge foundations are finished in April and May; and there are about 80 miles at Kurrachee. Supposing the broad gauge is adopted for the Indus Valley and Punjab Northern lines, it is probable, but not certain, that sufficient rails will be available for the famine lines after supplying the urgent wants of the State lines and the canal works. Sleepers are all available (if the broad gauge is adopted) on conditions similar to the rails. A small supply of rolling-stock with engines will be similarly available.

But if we contemplate using the rails now in India, it will be necessary to indent for rails of the same description for these lines, and then the rolling-stock might be of the same kind as that of the State Railways also. The cost of the lines will then be increased by about £700 per mile.

If, on the other hand, it is preferred to use light rails and rolling stock, indents should be sent home accordingly, and we must give up the idea of using the material in this country.

The state of the markets at home leads us to the belief that the dates laid down in the foregoing part of this memorandum are not likely to be realized, and that probably six months' additional time will be necessary.

There will be no difficulty in providing engineering staff, and the necessary skilled labor in this country, if it be determined to give these works the preference to others.

The outlay required for the two lines mentioned will then be about £270,000 if special light material be procured from England, and £350,000 if the State Railway material now in India be adopted. It is to be decided whether the outlay, if sanctioned, should be charged to Imperial or Provincial Funds, and whether it should be treated as an extraordinary or ordinary expenditure.

As materials cannot be given immediately, the lines could hardly be open before the autumn harvest of 1874; while if materials must be got from England, the lines would probably not be ready till after the spring harvest of 1875.

The light railways would therefore hardly be of use for the present year's scarcity; and as relief works, they will be inferior as means of employing the population to ordinary roads or embankments.

As far as we can judge, the total strength of establishments and skilled labor and followers requiring to be imported into the districts for these works would be—

Patna line	...	800 persons.
Hajepore line	...	500 "
Total	...	1,300 persons.

While the population that would get employment would be about—

Patna line	...	5,000 persons.
Hajepore line	...	3,000 "
Total	...	8,000 persons.

These figures represent the greatest total number of persons we consider likely to be employed at one time.

No. 89.

Office Memorandum from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, No. 95, dated January 13, 1874.

The undersigned is directed to acknowledge the receipt of the communication from the Public Works Department, No. 6 SR., dated 3rd instant (see above No. 88 of this series), on the subject of the proposed tramways in Behar, and in reply to state that the question was brought up at the official conference held at Government House on the 8th instant, (see p. 161) and the estimates of the works, as sketched by the Department Public Works, were laid before His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. His Honor, however, decided against any attempt being made to carry out either project, and the matter may accordingly drop.

No. 90.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, No. 4212, dated Calcutta, December 27, 1873.

When, as expressed in my letter No. E, dated 11th November last (see p. 40), the Lieutenant-Governor begged that a famine credit of 50 lakhs of rupees might be placed at the disposal of the Government of Bengal, His Excellency the Governor General was not pleased * to comply with the request, and deferred the question till the requirements of the case should be more fully known.

2. I am now desired by the Lieutenant-Governor to submit that the time has come when it is absolutely necessary that a liberal grant should be made to this Government to meet the demands arising from the preparations in progress to guard against famine. The purchase and storage of grain, as already sanctioned by the Government of India, alone demands a credit to the amount previously asked for, and something more.

3. Leaving apart grain purchased by the Government of India, which this Government is permitted to use, but for which it is not anticipated that payment will be required, the Government of India has sanctioned arrangements under which 9,50,000 maunds of grain is to be bought and paid for before 31st January next by this Government. This Government has also, as the Government of India is aware, arranged to get some further supplies from

* Financial Secretary's letter No. 3003 of 13th November, paragraphs 13 and 19. (See p. 41).

Orissa in February. We must then, before the end of February, pay for 11,00,000 maunds of grain at the very least. The price, with cost of transport to place of storage, bags, and other expenses, will certainly not be less than Rs. 4 per maund—say 44 lakhs of rupees. Considerable expense must be incurred for storage, godowns, guarding, &c. It will not be safe to take less than 50 lakhs as the sum necessary to secure this quantity of grain.

4. Besides this there are the advances to private parties to purchase grain for which no separate provision has yet been made. Exact accounts of the advances have not yet been received, but we know that they are considerable; that considerable credits given by this Government have been exhausted, and that applications are coming in for further credits. It would not be safe to take less than 20 lakhs for this purpose.

5. Thus, even supposing that this Government can meet all other expenses for famine works, &c., for some time to come, a credit of 70 lakhs is required for the grain purchases sanctioned.

6. It is hardly necessary to remind the Government of India that "famine" is expressly reserved as an imperial charge,—see Resolution of the Government of India in the Financial Department, No. 2086, dated 30th March 1872, paragraph 2. "Famine charges" is there distinctly set down as an item to "continue in the imperial estimates and accounts."

7. The Lieutenant-Governor would respectfully submit that there can be no reason why an expense so clearly chargeable in the imperial accounts should not be duly entered there, or why trust and other funds of the provincial Government, held for other purposes, should be spent for this imperial purpose and the charge kept in the provincial accounts.

8. But further, that there may be no misapprehension regarding the fact that this Government really has not the money to meet these charges, and that unless the Government of India is pleased to give the money for the purpose, the necessary arrangements to guard against famine cannot be carried out, I am to submit the following explanations regarding the provincial balances.

9. The total balances to the credit of the provincial and local funds in the Bengal treasuries on 31st March 1873 were as follows:—

	Rs.
Provincial balance, including provincial reserve and deposits	
for special funds	46,23,762
Local funds	12,75,396
Municipal funds	1,40,914
Various other trusts	41,463
Total	60,81,535
Deduct debt heads (money advanced)	88,495
Gross balance	59,93,040

10. The local fund balances, so far as they are not special funds beyond the power of Government, are the balances of the several district road funds. So far from effecting any saving in these funds during the present year, the scarcity is causing them to be spent with great rapidity; instead of saving anything, the local funds are getting exhausted and demands for grants-in-aid to meet relief works are coming in. Clearly no local fund money can in any way be made available.

11. The provincial balances on the date above mentioned were as follows:—

	Rs.
Savings of 1870-71, 1871-72, and 1872-73	26,00,762
Special assignments for particular buildings; amount unspent	10,58,000
Balance of provincial reserve	9,65,007
Total	46,23,762

12. By the budget arrangements of this Government for the year 1873-74, as set forth in the published Resolution of 29th March 1873, it was determined

to spend in the current year a considerable portion of the accumulated savings, especially the balances of the old amalgamated district road fund, which is now practically represented by the provincial reserve. The Lieutenant-Governor considered that, in the expectation that the road cess would soon yield fresh funds, liberal grants might advantageously be made to the districts from the old balances, to enable them to carry on works of improvement till the time when the road cess is fully realised. It was also thought that to ordinary public works, especially jails, might properly be devoted the savings made in that Department in 1871-72. In all departments, except education and public works, an equilibrium between receipt and expenditure was estimated, the estimates being framed in the hope (which was then reasonable) that the year would be plentiful and prosperous. For the promotion of primary education a sum of Rs. 5,17,423 in excess of the imperial grant for education was given, while to public works, including the large grants to district road funds, grants were made which exceeded the public works assignment and income by Rs. 17,18,990. Thus a total sum of Rs. 22,38,413 was granted out of the balance in hand on 31st March 1873. It was calculated that this would give a closing balance at the end of the year of Rs. 18,37,500.

13. On final adjustment of the accounts of 1872-73, it proved that the balance at the end of that year had been a little over-estimated. But on the other hand, owing to the difficulty about a site for the amalgamated public offices, the full grant for public buildings has not been spent as intended in the present year.

14. When the budget for 1872-73 was drawn out, the distinction between provincial proper and provincial reserve, afterwards ordered by the Government of India, had not been made, but it was arranged to take 10 lakhs of the public works expenditure from the balance of the amalgamated district road fund which had stood at about 16 lakhs. When the accounts for 1872-73 were adjusted in the new form, it was ascertained that the grants to the district road funds in that year had exceeded the income of the provincial reserve by upwards of 6 lakhs of rupees, and the provincial reserve balance was reduced to the amount already stated, *viz.*, Rs. 9,65,017. The 10 lakhs assigned from this source, therefore, more than exhausts the whole balance; and as the needs of the district funds will certainly more than exceed the income of the reserve for the present year, the provincial reserve may be considered as wholly exhausted. It must then be put out of our calculation.

15. Against the savings of previous years stated at Rs. 26,00,762, we have now to set in the present year—

	Rs.
Excess grant for education	5,17,423
Balance of public works excess, after providing 10 lakhs from provincial reserve	7,18,990
Total	17,38,413
Balance	13,62,349
Add capitalized value of offices granted for building new offices	8,66,000
We have a total of	22,28,349

now in hand according to budget estimates.

16. In an ordinary year something might have been saved on the estimates, but (besides that they were made much more closely than hitherto) it has been mentioned that the estimates were framed in anticipation of a prosperous year. The year of scarcity which has now come on us must much affect our expenditure. Jail charges are greatly increased, extra police are required, and so on; the savings of the civil departments will no doubt be absorbed. In the Public Works Department, when the price of food must be dear everywhere, it is impossible to retrench any works which give employment to the people. The retrenchments are therefore few; and as the demands of the road committees for relief works must be very large, it is certain that, besides exhausting the local and reserve funds, large sums must be granted from provincial funds, and in the end from imperial funds, to carry on the relief works.

17. The money held for the new public offices if spent must be replaced; already the allowance for rents has ceased; and if our building money is taken, the rents must be returned to us. There seems no object whatever in borrowing this money.

18. There remains then only the provincial balance of Rs. 13,62,349.

The Lieutenant-Governor has pledged himself to the grant for primary schools for the ensuing year at least, and something over 5 lakhs must be reserved for that purpose. There will remain a little over 8 lakhs to meet immediate cash demands for relief works, enlarged jail expenditure, and other expenses. We shall be reduced to the lowest balance compatible with the fair and safe working of the provincial Government.

19. Under these circumstances, the Lieutenant-Governor trusts that His Excellency the Governor General in Council will not hesitate to place at the disposal of this Government the sums necessary for immediate expenditure on account of the famine arrangements. He is sure it will be acknowledged that it is right that the charges properly belonging to the imperial budget should be debited to that budget.

20. The Lieutenant-Governor would then ask for the sum of 70 lakhs of rupees which has been above shown to be required for the purchase and storage of grain.

No. 91.

Letter from D. Barbour, Esq., Under Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 61, dated January 5, 1874.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 4212 of the 27th ultimo (see above, No. 90 of this series), asking that a credit of 70 lakhs may be accorded to the Government of Bengal for expenditure on grain purchased or to be purchased by the local Government.

The Government of India understands that in respect to obtaining money for disbursements for these purchases no difficulty whatever has been experienced by the local authorities. Considerable payments have been and are being made. The Comptroller General has been instructed to authorize the several Accountants General to make the requisite cash advances on behalf of the Government of Bengal and of its officers duly empowered in this respect.

The Government of India does not contemplate prescribing to the Comptroller General a pecuniary limit on the amounts to be advanced, as the sums which may be required cannot be precisely known. But as the Government of Bengal knows the limit in amount of grain authorized to be purchased by them (*vide* paragraph 5 of this office letter No. 3550 of the 6th December, see p. 88), the Government of India relies on their taking care that the applications for advances do not exceed what is proper according to the above-mentioned limitation of quantity.

Therefore the Government of India does not see any necessity for issuing any special grant or credit as now requested.

The disbursements for purchases of grain will be treated as advances recoverable, which is a heading well known in the accounts. The sums thus entered under the advance heading will remain there until the grain enters into consumption for the public works or for relief committees. The cost of the grain consumed for public works will then be debited to those works; of these works three are imperial, namely, the Soane Canal, the Gunduck Embankment, and the Northern Bengal State Railway. The cost of grain consumed on them will be debited against imperial funds. All other works are provincial or local, and the cost of all grain consumed on them will be debited to provincial or local funds. These last-named debits will however be subject to the conditions laid down in paragraph 18 of this office letter No. 3003 of the 13th November 1873 (see p. 41).

The cost of the grain taken over by relief committees will be debited to them.

The cost of grain made over to corporations or individuals will be debitable according to the conditions and circumstances of each case.

No. 92.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 64, dated Calcutta, January 10, 1874.

With reference to the annexed extract* from an article published in the *Indian Observer* of the 10th instant, I am directed to enquire whether any representation has been received by the Government of Bengal on the subject of the wages of labourers on relief works

* * * "Will it be believed that the wages of the labourers on relief work in the Tirhoot district are already 15 days in arrear?"
"The fact is that the local officers are not sufficiently supplied with funds. The permanent advance for a Collector in a famine district is Rs. 8,000,—a sum which is now barely sufficient for a sub-divisional officer for one day only. It is perfectly insufficient for such promptitude of payment as is required to encourage and attract an unwilling population to labour on relief works and proclaim their poverty."

in the Tirhoot District.

No. 93.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 107 PS., dated January 12, 1874.

In reply to your letter No. 64, dated 10th January (see above, No. 92 of this series), I am directed to submit that no representation has reached this Government to the effect that the wages of labourers on relief works were in arrears in Tirhoot. The passage in the *Observer* newspaper quoted in your letter attracted the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor, who caused the issue of the accompanying letter upon the subject (see below, No. 94 of this series).

2. I am to add that, so far as the allotment of funds to districts is concerned, there can be no difficulty.

3. The Commissioners of distressed divisions have from the very beginning had authority to carry out relief works wherever needed, and have been assured* that, when local funds fall short, further grants will be made by Government.

No. 94.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners and Magistrate-Collectors of the distressed districts, including the Burdwan Division and all semi-distressed districts, No. 71 SR., dated January 10, 1874.

The Lieutenant-Governor has read today in a newspaper a statement that coolies on relief works in Tirhoot were kept fifteen days in arrears, because money was not ready to pay them; and another statement that district officers' hands are much tied by the smallness of the funds placed at their disposal. Sir George Campbell can hardly think that coolies on relief works can really have been kept in arrears; at the same time he directs me to say very clearly that in cases of necessity for relief purposes district officers of "distressed districts" under the general direction of the Commissioner have discretion to begin works and to pay the labourers at once.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor particularly begs all officers in the distressed districts to bear in mind that there should be no stoppage of works and no delay in paying coolies because sanction to a particular disbursement has not been received from higher authority. Funds will be always supplied to meet necessities, and the Lieutenant-Governor begs that all officers in distressed districts will understand this, and will not allow works or measures required for the alleviation of distress to be delayed or arrested on account of supposed shortness

* See Bengal Government Resolution of 3rd November 1873, para. 5, (p. 5).
See Bengal Government circular No. 80 of 17th November 1873, para. 8, quoting the Lieutenant-Governor's Patna memorandum (see p. 51).

of funds. District officers should see that the sub-divisional officers are fully supplied with money, and that no possibilities of stoppage of payment can arise.

If the road fund money is exhausted, advances may be made in anticipation of sanction, but there should be no delay in applying for sanction in good time.

No. 95.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 108, dated January 15, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 107 PS., dated the 12th instant (No. 93 of this series), regarding the alleged arrears in the wages of labourers on relief works in Tirhoot, and to state that the Governor General in Council will be glad to see any communications that may be received on this subject in reply to the circular* issued by the Government of Bengal on the 10th instant.

No. 96.

Despatch from the Governor-General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 5, dated Calcutta, January 16, 1874.

We have the honor to forward the Special Narrative of the drought and scarcity in Bengal for the fortnight ending the 15th January†, together with its enclosures.

2. Since our despatch of the 9th current to Your Grace on this subject, there have been slight and partial showers at some places in the Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye Divisions. Some benefit will be produced, but the general prospect of the spring harvest has not materially improved. In some parts of the districts concerned, this prospect continues fair; in other parts, it is indifferent and even bad.

3. In the districts of the North-West Provinces and Oudh which adjoin Behar, there has been some rain; and, excepting only the southern portion of the Mirzapore District, no apprehension seems now to be felt of any general distress in that quarter.

4. There has been a slight increase of prices in some places.

5. Some distress is manifesting itself in Northern Behar, and the Commissioner of Patna reports that, as we had anticipated, the distress in North Tirhoot will be severe. Excepting in Sarun, where the Lieutenant-Governor has enjoined increased activity on the part of the local officers, the relief works are reported to be sufficient to meet the existing demand.

6. In respect to supplies of grain for relief works and relief operations, we have made arrangements to secure such supplies arriving in Bengal and Behar from month to month, in quantities sufficient to meet the highest estimates that have been made of the demand for these important purposes. Among the enclosures of the Narrative will be found the confidential letter from the Government of Bengal on this subject of the 5th current (see below, No. 97 of this series). We take this opportunity of appending the confidential letters addressed to that Government in reply, bearing date the 6th (see p. 155) and the 12th (see p. 156), current.

7. We have engaged an adequate amount of steam tonnage for the service relating to these supplies, for the months of February, March, and April, and we shall be able to engage similar tonnage for the months subsequent to April.

8. We have received additional evidence of the ability of the railway companies to carry the daily quantities of grain likely to be despatched by Government in addition to that which will be sent by the trade.

* No. 71 SR. (see above, No. 94 of this series).

† Printed in a separate volume.

9. The activity of the trade is shown by many of the facts mentioned in the enclosures of this Narrative. And the condition of the local money market affords further proof to the same effect.

10. We are not yet free from the anxiety expressed in our despatch of the 9th (see p. 139), regarding the conveyance of the Government rice into the interior of the districts. The Lieutenant-Governor expresses confidence in the sufficiency of the means at the disposal of the local officers to distribute the supplies to the extent of the allotments among the several localities. We trust that this confidence may be justified by the result. Despite the efforts which have been made by the local Government and its officers, considerable accumulations of grain still exist at several of the railway stations awaiting transport into the interior. The enclosures of the Narrative show that the Lieutenant-Governor is fully alive to the importance and urgency of the matter. Before proceeding further, we await the receipt of the detailed returns relating to this subject which we have called for.

11. We hope soon to hear of relief committees having been formed, and being in active operation wherever required. We await the submission by the local Government of the rules under which the work of these committees is to be conducted. The final preparation of these rules will be expedited.

12. We enclose a copy of the record of the proceedings at a conference which we held with the Lieutenant-Governor on the 8th current (see p. 156).

13. It has been thought advisable to encourage zemindars to assist their people during the scarcity, and we have notified that in cases where the zemindar may be in temporary difficulty from rendering such assistance, the land revenue demand may be postponed for a time. A copy of our letter to the Government of Bengal on the subject is appended (see p. 180).

No. 97.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 36SR, dated January 5, 1874.

At paragraph 11 of last (the seventh) Special Narrative of the Bengal drought*, it was stated that the Lieutenant-Governor was anxiously considering how much more Government grain ought to be bought for the distressed districts when the preliminary supply sanctioned up to the end of January 1874 should be completed. I am now directed to submit a statement of the views at which Sir George Campbell has arrived on this important subject.

2. We still have not, and cannot have, certainty as to what will happen in Bengal and Behar during the next eight months. We have not, and cannot have, accurate information regarding the stocks of food held in the country. We do not know for certain that there will be great failure of actual food supply, but we know that there is risk of it, and we can only estimate for supplies as an insurance against risk. We now know that the failure of the rice crop is, speaking generally, as complete as we had before estimated it to be, except that we hope the rice harvest is better in the Dacca, the Mymensing, and perhaps the south of the Bhaugulpore District, than was at first feared. The failure of the rice crop in the districts north of the Ganges will be quite as bad as had been estimated.

3. The sowings of the spring crops were narrowed by the drought in a great part of Behar, particularly in the northern parts of the Patna Division; though in some parts they were pretty widely sown, and in most places they were better sown, and germinated much better than was expected. The

* "The Lieutenant-Governor is now anxiously considering the question how much more grain he ought to ask for when the supply sanctioned up to the end of January shall have been completed; if the grain has to come from across the sea it must be ordered soon, for any grain that is bought must be delivered and stored in the districts before the rainy season sets in. Sir George Campbell hopes to submit his views upon this matter within a few days' time. Meanwhile he has submitted to the Government of India his view that the rice from Burmah or elsewhere ought all to arrive before the 10th of May at latest, inasmuch as transport of grain to the interior will be almost impossible when once the rains have fairly begun." Extract from Seventh Special Narrative (from December 19th, 1873, to January 1st, 1874).

Christmas rain in Behar has been as yet only about a quarter of an inch as an average; but rain comes oftener in January than in December, so there is still hope of more rain. The spring crops may be said then still to be better than was anticipated at the sowing season, but to depend much upon further rain, the coming of which is doubtful. The low-lying lands, which are flooded every year, will yield a fair crop anyhow; all the rest of the spring crop lands depend on rain.

However the spring crop turns out, we must beware of relying too much on its yield to fill the gap in the food supply caused by excessive failure of the autumn crops. Unhappily we do not possess for Behar and Bengal any statistics of the area under spring food crops. But estimates have been furnished for some districts of the area or the proportion of the total cultivation under these crops, while for other districts an estimate has been offered of the proportion in which spring-crop food grains enter into the ordinary food of the common people. The general result is, that in Bengal the spring crops contribute very little, and in Behar they contribute in but a moderate degree (very far less than the autumn crops) to the food of the people. There must be uncertainty on a matter of the kind in the absence of agricultural statistics; but the Lieutenant-Governor's general impression is, that for Northern and Central Bengal the spring crops (wheat, barley, pulse, and spring millet,) furnish less than one-sixth, and that in Behar these crops furnish less than one-third, of the food of the people.

4. There has not yet been serious distress or famine anywhere, and prices are not so excessive as might have been feared. So far then the symptoms are all favourable. It has, however, generally been the case that, in seasons of difficulty and risk, prices and appearances are comparatively favourable in December and January, and get much worse afterwards. Still these symptoms are certainly at the present time so favourable that Sir George Campbell would derive much consolation from them if he were not oppressed with the fear that the present ease may be, to a considerable extent, attributable to an undue confidence in the importations and arrangements made by the Government. The Lieutenant-Governor has submitted (see letter No. 4119, dated 23rd December, p. 111) at some length his views regarding the effect of Government importations on prices and on the minds of the native public. From many sides comes the assurance* that natives believe "the Government are this time at any rate checkmating the knavish grain-dealers." And it was only yesterday that an intelligent native officer of Gya, who has served Government for 35 years and has risen to the top of his branch of the service, expressed his opinion that, "if the dealers had not seen that Government was importing and storing grain, prices would assuredly have reached 5 or 6 seers per rupee by this time," that is to say, we should have had famine prices at Gya.

Local trade is not active, except that about 80,000 to 1,00,000 maunds of private grain per week are imported into Behar from the North-Western Provinces; and this comparative dulness of private trade supports the local officers' view that dealers may fear competition with Government. This apprehension, that the people may place too great confidence in Government, and that private traders may exaggerate the action of Government, throws an element of uncertainty over present prices and appearances.

5. Some of the latest reports that have reached Government are as gloomy as the earlier letters; though perhaps it may be said that our officers

* Extract from the Report of the Collector of Monghyr for the fortnight ending December 13, 1873.

"I have no statistics on the subject of transport of food, except for the Jamui imports by rail. These have amounted to about 45,000 maunds of each of rice and Indian-corn, and about 10,000 of wheat, gram, and pulses, or about 1,00,000 maunds in all. The bulk of these imports came in before Government commenced its operations. In Jamui, at all events, these gave a most decided check to private speculation. I found, on inquiring, that a most absurd rumour had got abroad and received credence, even from large traders, who ought to have known better, to the effect that Government was going to set up as a wholesale food distributor to all and sundry at the uniform rate of 16 seers for the rupee. Not only did mahajuns materially curtail their imports, but began to re-export what they had just imported under fear of being undersold by Government. Several respectable men of the intelligent classes expressed their satisfaction at this paternal 'cherishing of the country,' and the 'bad nat mahajuns' being at last properly served out by Government. I did my best, by the issue of immediate proclamations as to the real purpose of Government, and destination of its imports to undeceive the people, and before I left Jamui heard that the mahajuns were about to recommence their operations free from the bogie of Government competition. The episode is a strong warning of the necessity for the most extreme caution, and shows how prone the oriental mind is to misconstrue the intentions of our Government by judging of us from their own point of view, and so attributing to us the motives which would guide themselves under similar circumstances.

"I suggested the necessity of inquiry as to the existence of some such latent artificial cause wherever considerable exportation from a distressed district was observed."

are beginning to differentiate the probable severity of the distress in different tracts, and are now able to say: "Here distress will be very bad anyhow, but there we shall pull through." In a demi-official letter of the 28th December, Mr. Bayley wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor: "My hopes have been raised by the late rain, but without this I should have said that the prospects of the north and east of Tirhoot, and of part of Chumparun, were worse even than I had anticipated, i. e., that I had hoped severe distress would not be felt till March or April, and I began to see that we should have to deal with it by the end of January." Mr. Bayley has since explained that the accounts of rain then received were exaggerated, and that his hopes on that score have been by no means fulfilled. Mr. Robinson, Relief Commissioner of Rajshahye, writes* as if grave distress and even absolute absence of food were nearly certain before very long in the north and north-west of Dinagepore; and this is the view of one who has known Dinagepore for many years, has always been a very active officer, and has now been touring in that particular tract and making full inquiries from village to village.

6. On the whole, then, the Lieutenant-Governor is compelled to think that there is still serious risk of subsequent running up of prices, of panic, and even of famine. He believes that, if we would ensure against that risk, we must go on laying in large supplies.

7. At paragraph 7 of the Seventh Narrative the difficulties experienced in transporting large quantities of Government grain have been adverted to, and mention has been made of the comparative failure of water carriage on inland streams. Sir George Campbell feels that, in the face of these delays and failures, we cannot omit for a single day to employ all means of transport if we wish to guard against risk in the more distant parts. He feels that we have gone so far that we can hardly draw back without going further.

Under this view, then, Sir George Campbell considers we must provide—

1st.—For a continual flow of food towards distant and inaccessible distressed tracts.

2nd.—For a reserve of food for the districts nearer the sea-board, the railway, and the navigable rivers, in case the supply fails there.

8. I am to observe that though, as stated at paragraph 11 of last Narrative, the traffic to more distant parts will be stopped at the commencement of the rainy season until such time as the rivers fill well, still food can at all times be sent to districts near railways and near perennially navigable rivers. Much country will also be opened to water navigation when the rains have fairly set in. The greatest need in these latter districts has always been at the last in the months of June, July and August, that is, when the stocks are lowest, and the small residue has been taken for seed grain. A supply for that season should certainly be in reserve.

9. It may, the Lieutenant-Governor considers, be reckoned that supplies received in Calcutta and despatched in February, March and April will reach the interior of the distant distressed tracts before the beginning of the rainy season; and that supplies despatched in May, June and July may reach many districts before the new crop comes in.

10. As regards the quantity required for despatch during February, March and April, everything depends on the view taken by the Government of India of the question of going beyond mere storage of food for labourers on relief works; that question is raised specifically in Mr. Robinson's letter submitted † yesterday for the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy in Council. Since the Government has gone so far, and has induced so much reliance upon itself, we must, Sir George Campbell thinks, go further, and send into the really distressed tracts as much grain as we can, leaving it possibly to local dealers to distribute it as Mr. Robinson proposes. The Lieutenant-Governor would wish to have, at any rate, another twenty lakhs of maunds (say 75,000 tons) of food to be forwarded into the less accessible parts of the three distressed divisions (marginally noted) during the three months following the 1st February next.

11. Regarding the further reserve for other divisions and the country generally, a good deal depends on the course of exports. Sir George

* See the letter submitted under cover of my letter No. 7 SR, dated 3rd January 1873 (see p. 181).
† Government of Bengal letter, dated 3rd January 1874 (see p. 180).

Campbell's view is, that Bengal Proper might probably, if taken by itself and if its produce had been retained, have supported its own population, but that it would not be safe to leave Bengal without replacing the drain caused by exports. If the Government of India should decide* to buy in this country, and if the effect should be to forestal and prevent large exports, the total supply needed from abroad would not be so large as it would be if we had to replace exports. But the Lieutenant-Governor has already expressed† his belief that we cannot stop exports from Calcutta effectually without raising the price so much as to cause a famine; he considers our object must be to keep the price in the supply districts, of which Calcutta is the focus, so low that there may be no such result, so that in fact there may be opportunity of private trade to the parts of the country where food is wanted. If, however, we thus avoid extreme famine prices, he fears we must calculate that much of the new rice crop will be exported. Taking the rice export year to run from the 1st October, he thinks we may expect that the export of food grains from Bengal will reach 150,000 or 200,000 tons by March or April next. For the purposes of the present letter, however, the Lieutenant-Governor would take the lower figure. Out of this total, about 78,000 tons have been already exported during the

		Tons.	three months ending on the 31st December 1873,
October	...	16,300	the amount of despatch during each month being
November	...	20,000	in round numbers as per margin. The export of
December	...	41,600	food grains sent from Bengal to Behar and beyond

has been during the last three months of 1873, exclusive of foreign rice imported by Government, about 45,000 tons; and it may by the end of May mount up to 75,000 tons.

12. If the Government of India be pleased to accept the view that we ought to provide another 75,000 tons for speedy despatch to the more inaccessible districts, and that we ought also to supply the vacuum caused by exports from Bengal, then we should require, in addition to the preliminary supply sanctioned up to the end of January, further supplies as follows:—

	Tons.
Supply to be pushed forward as fast as possible to distant distressed districts	75,000
Reserve to replace the vacuum caused by exports across the sea	150,000
And perhaps to replace exports from Bengal to Behar districts	75,000
If the last item be included, the total will be	300,000
If it be excluded, the total will be	225,000

It is understood that about 45,000 ‡ tons of foreign rice, in excess of this Government's estimate of the preliminary supply up to the end of January, has already been arranged for, so that it will remain to provide in the next three months say 180,000 tons, which is the lowest estimate at which the Lieutenant-Governor can safely put the amount proper to be provided against the risk we run.

13. It is quite impossible, as has been already said, to be at all certain. If a regular famine came upon Bengal and Behar, ten times the amount of grain mentioned in the next foregoing paragraph, even if it could be distributed, would not keep the whole population so that no one should starve. But in view of all the present circumstances, and subject to any modifications resulting from the course of the spring crop, of the exports or of other symptoms, Sir George Campbell would recommend that provision be made for supplying the additional amount of grain last named (180,000 tons) for the requirements of February, March, and April, and he would recommend that matters should be so arranged that in May, June, and July a further amount,

* See paragraphs 4 and 5 of Her Majesty's Secretary of State's despatch of the 1st December 1873, where this procedure is discussed (see p. 121).

† "The agents employed in Calcutta and Bengal assured the Lieutenant-Governor that, in the then delicate state of the market, it would not be possible for Government to buy largely without raising the price greatly and to some extent paralysing private trade." Third Special Narrative (21st to 28th November 1873), para. 4.

‡ The figures on which the calculation is made will be found at paragraph 11 of the last Narrative. It is known that 40,000 tons of Burmah rice have already been ordered; and it is believed that some 5,000 tons or so of the Saigon rice will be over and above the 25,000 tons required for the January supply, as per paragraph 2 of Bengal Government letter of 2nd December (see p. 87).

sufficient to fill the vacuum caused in Bengal by exports up-country, estimated at 75,000 tons, should be further available. He would himself have preferred that the whole Burmah crop should be held as a reserve; but if that cannot now be without great derangement of trade and enormous expense, he hopes so much as he has named could be obtained.

It will be remembered that if happily the whole amount kept in reserve is not needed, it will not be lost, nor will the whole cost fall on Government. Rice keeps well, and a good sum would be obtained on resale.

14. As regards the mode of purchase, and the most difficult question whether it is desirable to buy on the spot so as to enhance prices and stop exports, or whether it is desirable to import everything from a distance, and as regards other economic questions of the kind, the Lieutenant-Governor will not attempt to offer further opinions. The Government of India has already expressed its disapproval of Sir George Campbell's views on these subjects, and His Excellency in Council will best judge what course will be most beneficial.

One thing the Lieutenant-Governor must say as earnestly as he can, namely, that however much the internal trade of the country, if left to itself, might operate, we cannot look for any considerable private imports into Bengal from beyond the sea. We shall not get such imports unless severe famine breaks out in a very acute form and lasts for months before supplies come.

15. Any purchases of grain in this country will not, it must be remembered, add to the general food supply; though, if such purchases have the effect of diminishing export, so much might be deducted from the imports required.

From the North-Western Provinces and Central India private imports into Behar will, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes, continue if the spring crops there continue to fare well, and he hopes that in that case we may look to the northern supplies as a further reserve in case of need.

16. If the additional quantity of grain now asked for be deemed excessive, it will be remembered that one-half of the proposed supply is merely to replace the drain caused by exports—a measure of which Her Majesty's Secretary of State appears to recognise the necessity. The rest of the grain asked for is to supply Behar and the North Ganges Districts now classed as "distressed," or to replace the Bengal grain sent thither. If our total imports of grain from beyond the sea, including those already calculated, amount to, say, 350,000 tons, then—

	Tons of foreign grain.
(a) we shall have provided for the more remote distressed districts where the failure has been worst, say	125,000
(b) we shall get to replace supplies sent from Bengal to the same quarters, say	75,000
(c) we shall get to replace grain exports beyond the sea, say	150,000
Total	350,000

17. After all, this supply is but small in so great a population; but, as Sir George Campbell has before said, it sometimes happens that famine is averted by quantities of food far under what might have been calculated on to feed a whole population. If we cannot obtain or distribute more, so much as has been proposed would go a long way to stave off the risk of famine, and if that risk is averted, the loss sustained in the purchase of grain will have been well spent.

P. S.—Before this letter had been finally struck off, a further report, No. 54F, dated the 30th December 1873 (see below No. 98 of this series), was received from the Commissioner of Patna, stating that he feared severe famine in part of North Tirhoot. Copies of that letter and of the Lieutenant-Governor's orders thereon. No. 198R., dated the 5th January 1874 (see below No. 99 of this series), are appended to the present letter.

No. 98.

Letter from S. C. Bayley, Esq., Commissioner of the Patna Division, to C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 54F., dated Bankipore, December 30, 1873.

In reply to your letter No. 71PS. of the 24th instant, I have the honour to state that I shall be very glad to receive 1,00,000 maunds more grain for the North Gangetic Districts, as the accounts I receive from Tirhoot prove that even under the most favourable circumstances we must be prepared for very severe famine in the north and east of that district.

Colonel Burn, the manager of the Durbhanga Estate, estimates that there were not at the end of November more than five lakhs of maunds out of the total amount of fifteen and a half lakhs which will be required to feed the people of the estate up to the end of August next, at the rate of half a seer per head per diem. The population of the remainder of the tract in Tirhoot threatened with distress is certainly fully equal to that of the Durbhanga Estate, and there is no reason to believe that the stores of food are greater than in Durbhanga; indeed, the larger number of the men, cited by Colonel Burn as holding large stores of grain, do not live on the estate, so that if we double Colonel Burn's estimate (he does not allow for any stores held by ryots), we shall probably not be far from right in estimating the total stock in hand. This would give us a total of ten lakhs out of thirty-one lakhs wanted, leaving a balance of twenty-one lakhs to be made up from the new crops, private importations, and those made by Government and the Court of Wards.

2. The yield of the rice crop is not estimated at more than one anna in the Durbhanga Estate and at about two annas over the rest of the tract, and this will hardly give enough for seed for next year, so that this can hardly be reckoned on as available for food; and as for the rubbee crop, there is not much grown in that part of the country at any time, and during the present year the larger part of the area has remained unsown, therefore the yield, even should there be rain, cannot be set down as more than that of the rice crop, or say about three lakhs, leaving still a deficiency of eighteen lakhs.

There are plenty of rich traders in the country who are perfectly well able to import any amount of grain, and though they have been hitherto accustomed to do more as exporters than importers, I have no doubt they will import largely as soon as the difference of prices between the markets of Tirhoot and Lower Bengal is sufficient to give them hopes of a profit, but to import to anything like the extent required will take time, and while they are deliberating and forming their plans, the food may be already consumed, and the people left entirely dependent on importations made by Government, the Court of Wards, and planters.

3. Under these circumstances I do not consider that less than five lakhs, or six weeks' supply of food, will be sufficient to ward off the danger of starvation from large numbers of people; and I have already arranged for having two lakhs of Government grain stored in this tract: the Court of Wards have already ordered nearly 70,000 maunds, and I am authorizing Colonel Burn to make up his orders to two lakhs.

The planters' importations cannot be reckoned at much more than 25,000 maunds, leaving a balance of 75,000, which I propose to make up from the lakh now applied for.

4. The remaining 25,000 maunds I propose to send to Sarun, as the Collector has reported that he considers one lakh insufficient for his district.

With reference to the 2nd paragraph of your letter under reply, I would observe that the abundance of maize is no proof that the food supplies of the district are likely to last till next harvest. Even if there were sufficient maize in hand to feed the people for another year to come, there would probably be an almost total failure of the supply within the next three or four months, for maize requires so much care in storing in order to make it keep, that few natives care to attempt it, and their habit is to consume the grain as soon as possible, and to sell what they are not able to consume. The maize crop will doubtless prevent their encroaching on other food supplies, and with a fair rubbee crop, possibly, a considerable part of the district may escape without any

serious scarcity; yet things in the north appear so threatening, and the difficulties of getting grain to the district are so great, that I do not think it would be prudent to make a smaller allotment to the district than that which I have proposed.

No. 99.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Patna, No. 19SR., dated Calcutta, January 5, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 54F., dated 30th December 1873 (see above No. 98 of this series), and to say that the Lieutenant-Governor approves your proposals for distributing the extra one lakh of maunds of grain allotted to your division. Mr. Toynbee will be instructed to send off the extra lakh for your division to such stations as you may direct. More grain will be sent as soon as you have transported this additional lakh.

2. Sir George Campbell, I am to state, has all along feared that the greatest danger was in North Tirhoot, and doubted if the Magistrate was sufficiently alive and active on the subject. He trusts, however, that now more active steps are being taken, and he is quite sure that you yourself will see to this matter.

No. 100.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 41A, dated January 6, 1874.

I am directed by the Viceroy and Governor General to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 36 SR. of the 5th instant (see p. 149) received this day, and to inform you, with reference to the 10th paragraph of that letter, that the Lieutenant-Governor may, in addition to the 35,000 tons for which provision was made in compliance with His Honor's request of 2nd December last, rely upon having at his disposal 75,000 tons of rice during the three months beginning with the 1st of February next, provision having already been made for more than that quantity.

His Excellency desires to impress in the strongest manner upon the Lieutenant-Governor the absolute necessity of preserving complete secrecy in regard both to the amount of the demands made by His Honor, and of the provision made by the Government of India to meet those demands, on account of the effect which the public announcement of large purchases may have upon the market, and still more in regard to the probability that any such announcement will check private trade.

The information now placed before the Government of India satisfies His Excellency that the time has arrived for the constitution of relief committees, and probably of a central committee, at Calcutta. Upon this subject and upon the instructions which should be given to the relief committees, particularly in regard to the sale and distribution of grain, His Excellency considers it to be desirable that a conference should take place with the Lieutenant-Governor, and he therefore requests His Honor's attendance, accompanied by Mr. Bernard, at Government House, on Thursday next, at 3 o'clock.

Your letter of the 5th contains, in addition to the request for the further provision for despatch to the less accessible parts of the distressed districts, the compliance with which has been announced in this letter, further important estimates and suggestions which are not overlooked, and which will be subsequently dealt with.

The Viceroy and Governor General desires in the mean time, without any delay, to satisfy the Lieutenant-Governor that the full requirements specified

in the 10th paragraph of the letter under reply are at his disposal, in order that the local officers may be informed at once, and that no time whatever may be lost in making arrangements for the carriage of the grain up-country, which His Excellency has always regarded as a matter of great difficulty, and one to which the attention of the Government of Bengal should be specially directed.

No. 101.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 70A., dated January 12, 1874.

I am directed to reply to your confidential letter No. 36 SR. of the 5th instant, (see p. 149) communicating the Lieutenant-Governor's recommendations regarding the quantity of food grains to be supplied by Government for relief works or relief operations in the districts affected by drought during the months subsequent to January.

The Government of Bengal have been already informed by the Governor General (see my letter of the 6th instant, No. 100 of this series) that the 75,000 tons required by the local Government during the three months commencing with the 1st February have been already arranged for from beyond sea. This quantity will be in addition to the 35,000 tons which constituted the demand of the local Government upon the Government of India, as explained in your letter No. 46 of the 2nd ultimo (see p. 87).

The further requirements in addition to the 110,000 tons above-mentioned, as set forth by the Lieutenant-Governor, have received the careful consideration of the Government of India. Arrangements had been made, before the receipt of the letter under acknowledgment, for a further reserve, and such additional precautions will be taken as circumstances appear to require.

This portion of the arrangements for meeting the anticipated distress having been undertaken by the Government of India, I am to request that the Government of Bengal will not make any more purchases of grain.

One important point in respect to the quantity of grain which the Government of India may deem it necessary to provide, is the ability of the local Government and its officers to supply country carriage for the conveyance of the supplies into the interior of the districts affected. On this subject a separate communication has been addressed to the Government of Bengal. At present there appears reason for serious apprehension as to whether the local authorities can convey to the relief works and relief centres the supplies which the Government of India has already provided, and which can be conveyed by railway to the districts in question.

No. 102.

Memorandum of the Proceedings at a Conference held at Government House, Calcutta, on January the 8th, 1874.

PRESENT:

THE VICEROY.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

THE HON'BLE SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, K. C. S. I.

THE HON'BLE B. H. ELLIS, C. S. I.

MAJOR-GENERAL THE HON'BLE SIR H. W. NORMAN, K. C. B.

THE HON'BLE E. C. BAYLEY, C. S. I.

MR. A. O. HUME, C. B., Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce.

MR. C. BERNARD, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

MR. A. P. HOWELL, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce.

MR. TOYNBEE, Officer charged with the receipt and despatch of grain from Calcutta.

CAPTAIN E. BARING, R. A., Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

THE VICEROY said that a conference had been held at Government House on the 10th of November (see p. 31) to concert measures in view of the anticipated

famine in Bengal. Two months had now elapsed since that date, and as the latest letters from the Government of Bengal showed that the distress was coming on in some parts more rapidly than had been anticipated, it appeared a suitable time for holding another conference in order that stock might be taken of what had been done, and that the arrangement of any further measures which may be necessary might be facilitated.

The first point which he desired to discuss was transport, and, in considering this subject, HIS EXCELLENCY proposed to deal, in the first instance, with the transport of grain from Calcutta to the main centres in the distressed districts, and, secondly, with the local means of transport which were available for distributing grain. Mr. Bernard had furnished returns* of the available means of transport which were at the disposal of the Bengal officers. HIS EXCELLENCY had made a summary of those returns, and he thought the most convenient method to adopt would be to go through them *seriatim* in order to see what had been done and what remained to be done.

The Lieutenant-Governor had stated in his circular letter No. 10 SR. of the 3rd January (see p. 106) that arrangements had been made to distribute 16 lakhs of maunds before the end of January, besides 3 lakhs of maunds in reserve to supply any demand for quantities exceeding the assignments within that period, and that up to the 3rd of January about 4½ lakhs had been despatched from Calcutta by Mr. Toynbee, and about 1½ lakh more from the North-Western Provinces and Eastern Bengal, making 6 lakhs in all. There remained, therefore, 10 lakhs (erroneously computed at 9 in the letter from the Government of Bengal) to be distributed, besides 3 lakhs of reserve; total 13 lakhs.

MR. BERNARD explained that about 2,85,000 maunds, or say 3 lakhs, had to arrive from the North-Western Provinces. The amount, therefore, that had to be sent up-country from Calcutta amounted only to 8 lakhs, one lakh of the reserve having been appropriated, or 10 lakhs including the reserve.

THE VICEROY said that he presumed the reserve would be sent up-country, and, therefore, estimating the quantity to be distributed to be 10 lakhs, it became necessary to enquire whether it was possible to send that quantity up-country from Calcutta before the 31st of January.

Mr. Bernard had stated that "at a pinch" 40,000 maunds a day could be sent by the East Indian Railway, but "for a continuance" only from 25,000 to 30,000 maunds a day could be despatched to Behar, or say 27,500. He also estimated that "quite half as much a day," or say 14,000 maunds could be despatched to the Rajshahye Division by the Eastern Bengal Railway. The total quantity, therefore, that could be sent daily from Calcutta up-country amounted to 41,500 maunds.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR remarked that of the total originally assigned about one-fifth was for Rajshahye and about four-fifths for Behar.

THE VICEROY remarked that in that case 8 lakhs would have to go to Behar and 2 lakhs to Rajshahye. If grain were sent to Behar at the rate of 27,500 maunds per diem, in the 28 days between the 3rd and the 31st of January a total quantity of 7,70,000 maunds could be despatched, or very nearly 8 lakhs; as Mr. Bernard's estimate of the amount of grain that could be despatched to Rajshahye was 14,000 maunds per diem, it was clear that within the same period 2 lakhs could be despatched in that direction without any difficulty. It appeared, therefore, that the railways could meet the demands that would be made upon them.

MR. TOYNBEE remarked that there was already a block at Calcutta. The greatest quantity of grain which he had despatched in any one day by the East Indian Railway was 28,000 maunds. More rice was being received than could be sent forward.

THE VICEROY remarked that without doubt rice was being received by the Government of India at Calcutta quicker than it could be sent up-country, and this would very probably continue to be the case, but the main question now was whether a sufficient amount of rolling-stock was available to send the 8 lakhs which had been arranged by the Government of Bengal to be sent to Behar before the 31st of January.

* This information was furnished by Mr. Bernard on the 7th, in consequence of a request from the Viceroy made on the same morning through his Private Secretary.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that Mr. Batchelor, the Traffic Manager of the East Indian Railway Company, had explained to him that the resources of the Railway had not really up to the present moment been strained, and that they could work up to a very much larger maximum than was at present the case.

THE VICEROY observed that the railway company would be asked distinctly to state what they could do in the way of transport.

MR. ELLIS said it would be very objectionable to interfere with the transport of private stores.

THE VICEROY assented, but thought it was essential that the Government should know exactly what the railway could do.

MR. TOYNBEE said that private traffic was always given a preference to the Government demands.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE remarked that Mr. Stephenson, the Agent of the East Indian Railway Company, had assured the Government in November that he could send 2,000 tons a day in covered wagons, and could increase the quantity considerably by sending grain in open wagons.

After some further conversation, Mr. TOYNBEE said that he could send off 28,000 maunds a day from Calcutta by the East Indian Railway.

THE VICEROY said that the result of this portion of the discussion was, therefore, so far satisfactory, for it became evident that, though the railway would not, perhaps, be able to send up the rice so quickly as it was received at Calcutta, they would be able to send the 8 lakhs which were arranged to be sent to Behar before the 31st of January; and as regards the Eastern Bengal Railway, which would throw supplies into the Rajshahye Division, there appeared to be no difficulty.

HIS EXCELLENCY then passed on to the subject of local transport. He said that the returns on this subject which he had received from Mr. Bernard were very incomplete.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR observed that the demand for information of this sort had been made suddenly yesterday, and that it was not to be supposed that the papers which Mr. Bernard had given Captain Baring on so short a notice, and which were furnished so hurriedly that he himself had not seen them, represented all the transport that was available. No definite figures regarding the limit of transport capabilities had been in the first instance asked for from the local officers, because they themselves could not tell till they tried. The local officers had not yet stated the utmost they could carry; they had only stated what they had actually done when their reports were written. The plan which in the first instance the Lieutenant-Governor had deliberately followed was this: The grain sanctioned by the Government of India was put down at the Railway and river-side stations for the local officers, and they were told to do the utmost they could to get it into the interior. They had been making experiments, and a variety of routes and modes of transport had been tried with a view to see which was the best.

THE VICEROY said that he regretted that the information was incomplete, but the stage for experiments had now passed, and we were approaching a period when the whole of the transport service must be thoroughly well organized. The importance of this subject had been frequently pressed on the Government of Bengal by the Government of India, and he had hoped to receive more full information upon the subject and to hear that the organization of the transport was in a more complete state than it appeared to be. As it was, it appeared to him that, so far as he could judge from the returns he had received, the local transport which had been provided was not sufficient. Perhaps the best course would be to go through Mr. Bernard's returns in detail. First, as regards the Patna Division.—Mr. Bernard states that 37,000 maunds have to be supplied to the Patna District to make up their full requisition of 50,000 maunds before the end of January, which the magistrate says he can send off "in a few weeks" time if need be; say, therefore, that rice can be despatched in this district at the rate of 1,300 maunds a day. Mr. Bernard states that "grain can apparently be carried into Gya at the rate of about 3,000 maunds a day." In Shahabad, Mr. Bernard states that "when transport begins in earnest there, the Soane Canal and the local works could carry away quite as much as Gya could do, i. e., 3,000 maunds a day." Tirhoot, Mr. Bernard states, "ought to

work for some time to come" up to a total of 4,000 maunds a day. In Sarun the transport is reported to amount to "barely 1,000 maunds a day." Mr. Bernard states that "scarcely any grain has been carried to the interior" of Chumparun, but "contracts for carrying 8,000 to 10,000 maunds a week have been made;" say, therefore, that 1,300 maunds a day would be carried.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR explained that the Patna and Shahabad Districts might, for the purposes of the present argument, be left out of account. The Patna District could be easily supplied, and the Shahabad District was not considered by the Commissioner to need immediately as much as had originally been assigned to it. It was proposed to divert some of the stores which had been originally proposed for these districts to other tracts which stood more in need of them. It was desirable to push as much grain as possible to the north of the Ganges.

THE VICEROY said that if Shahabad and Patna were left out of account, the available amount of transport, according to Mr. Bernard's report, which seemed to him to embody the latest information, would be as follows: Gya 3,000 maunds per diem; Tirhoot 4,000; Sarun 1,000; Chumparun 1,300:—total 9,300, or about 65,000 maunds a week.

Next, as regards the Bhaugulpore Division, Mr. Bernard said that "the Bhaugulpore and Monghyr Collectors are transporting about 2,000 maunds a day each, and the Purneah Collector, who has been rather behindhand hitherto, hopes to carry away 4,000 maunds a day." This made a total of 8,000 maunds a day.

It appeared, therefore, that in the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions together there was, so far as we know at present, local transport available for 17,300 maunds a day; but as 28,000 maunds a day would be brought up by the railway from Calcutta, besides what is expected from the North-West, it followed that the local transport fell short of what was required to meet the exigencies of the case by more than 10,000 maunds per diem.

Turning next to Rajshahye, HIS EXCELLENCY said that Mr. Bernard had stated as follows: "Of the internal transport we cannot, I am afraid, say much at present." It appeared, therefore, that there was little or no information on the subject of transport in this division. Rajshahye was the place where the greatest difficulty was immediately apprehended, and it was doubtful what quantity of grain was now in store there.

MR. BERNARD observed that the transport of grain in the Rajshahye Division was a very tedious matter. He could not say that there was any considerable amount altogether in store there. There was certainly more than a lakh of maunds which had left Kooshtea and Goalundo, but very little of it had arrived at its final destination.

THE VICEROY said that he thought, on the whole, that the question of local transport was not in a satisfactory state. He did not wish to express any want of confidence in any of the Commissioners or district officers, but what he wished to say was that the ultimate responsibility rests with the Government of India, and that they were not at all satisfied with the present condition of the transport. So far as the means at our disposal enabled us to judge, the transport in different districts was not sufficient to carry out the Lieutenant-Governor's original programme for distributing grain up to the 31st of January.

It was possible that Mr. Bernard's report did not represent the whole of the transport that was available, but this was a matter of the first importance, and the Government could only go by the official information which they had before them. The Government of India had constantly called attention to this subject, and had suggested early in November that commissariat transport might be made use of.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR repeated that Mr. Bernard's note did not represent the whole of our means of transport, and it would be found that we could carry and were carrying more than His Excellency supposed. He further said that he was not aware that any public letter had been received on the subject of commissariat transport. The suggestion had certainly been made, and he had talked on the subject to Colonel Willes, the head of the Commissariat Department, but he found that Colonel Willes did not agree in the sanguine estimate of commissariat power which Colonel Macbean had given the Viceroy.

THE VICEROY observed that he believed such a letter had been written*, but at any rate the suggestion was made. In the present condition of affairs he thought the best thing to do would be to send an experienced commissariat officer to Patna to consult with the Commissioner and to give him *carte blanche* to do what he could.

SIR HENRY NORMAN said that without doubt a good commissariat officer could be found for this service.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that north of the Ganges the risk was so great that he should be glad to have assistance. He did not ask for any commissariat assistance in Rajshahye. He thought it would be advisable, if possible, to bring supplies from Oudh into Behar.

THE VICEROY said that he was unable at present to state positively whether any supplies would be available in Oudh. From enquiries he had made during his recent visit to Oudh some anxiety had been caused to him as to whether the supplies in that province would be sufficient to meet its own demands. Later accounts were somewhat better, but he was unable at present to say whether it would be possible for any large quantity of grain to be transported from Oudh into Behar.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE said that he had ascertained from the Commissary-General that 5,000 pack-bullocks could be supplied in one month and 7,000 in another, at the rate of Rs. 4 a month. He had received a specific enquiry from Colonel Willes on this subject, and he wished to know what answer should be sent to him. Was the special commissariat officer to ask the Commissioner whether or not he wanted those bullocks, and if so, was he to get them?

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said it was clear that the commissariat officer should consult the Commissioner, as it was impossible that the conference could settle such a matter.

SIR HENRY NORMAN said that as it was arranged to depute a special commissariat officer to Patna with full authority to act, this officer would be able to see for himself what were the requirements of the case.

THE VICEROY observed, before leaving the subject of transport, that he thought the Commissioners and Collectors should be called upon to state distinctly what their powers of transport were, not only for the present, but for the next four or five months.

* The public letter to which the Viceroy referred has been subsequently ascertained to be the following:—

Letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, No. 141, dated Fort William, November 6, 1873.

The Right Hon'ble the Governor General having requested the Commissary General to state what assistance could be given by the Commissariat Department for the transport of grain in Behar, if required, I am directed to transmit the annexed copy of a memorandum which has been received in reply, furnishing information as to the assistance in carriage that could be rendered for the conveyance of grain; and to state for the information of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor that although the commissariat contracts do not extend to Behar, it is probable that arrangements might be made through the contractors for camel transport if necessary.

2. I am to suggest that, under His Honor's orders, the information may be conveyed to the Commissioner of Patna, in order that he may give early intimation if he considers that the resources of the Commissariat Department could be utilized with advantage, competent executive superintendence being supplied by the Commissariat.

Memorandum by Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Macbean, Deputy Commissary General, dated Calcutta, November 5, 1873.

The assistance in carriage, not elephants, in possession of the Commissariat Department would be the loan of the

Station.	Camels.	Marches to Patna.	
Benares	51	15	Unladen could do double marches.
Cawnpore	71	32	
Lucknow	474	36	
Bareilly	333	46	
Agra	314	47	
	1,247		
Less 20 per cent.	247		
	1,000	At 5 Mds.	5,000 Mds.

camels at Benares, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Bareilly, and Agra; deducting 20 per cent. for sickness and station duties, 1,000 camels, which could be at Patna by 1st February, if ordered on the 1st January. They could only be employed to 1st June under existing contracts; other camels could not be demanded for Patna, as it is not in the range of the contract. But on two months' notice 8,000 camels could be exacted from the contractor placed at Allahabad and worked from thence, or he would forfeit his security of Rs. 25,000.

At Saugor and Jubbulpore there are 1,017 pack bullocks employed under contract.

Their load is 2½ maunds, and their pay is also half that of a camel, 4 Rs. a month, including their attendance. They could reach Patna, 44 marches, in 30 days, or they could be

brought up by rail. I have no actual data; but I believe with two months' notice 5,000 could be procured.

With this carriage 60,000 maunds could be sent 200 miles, and the carriage be back for a second trip in a month, at a cost of Rs. 96,000.

Grain being say 10 seers a rupee at starting place, this is an addition of 40 per cent. for its carriage 200 miles.

Letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, No. 3331, dated Calcutta, November 8, 1873.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 141, dated the 6th instant, and enclosure, and in reply to convey the thanks of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor for the assistance which the Commissariat Department propose to afford to this Government for the transport of grain to Behar.

There was another point on which he should like to have the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion. Proposals had been made for light railroads—one from Patna to Gya and the other from Hajeeapore to Mozufferpore. These railroads could not be constructed in time to meet the present distress, but Colonel Dickens had drawn up a memorandum showing that a tramway on which bullocks would be used might be laid between Hajeeapore and Mozufferpore and be ready by May.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR did not think it was advisable to construct such a tramway, and it was therefore decided that the project should be abandoned.

THE VICEROY said that the next subject to which he wished to call attention was the distribution of gratuitous relief. The last Narratives had made it clear to him that in Sarun and Tirhoot the time had arrived for the distribution of relief. The reports from Dinagepore, where severe distress was anticipated, were not quite clear as to the absolute necessity for gratuitous relief yet.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR remarked that the last Narrative seemed to say that such necessity had not yet actually arisen in Dinagepore.

THE VICEROY said that the last Narrative was to that effect; but Mr. Robinson's letter of the 25th of December was a little inconsistent with the Narrative of the 28th. As, however, the Narrative was the later of the two, it might be assumed that there would be no immediate necessity.

The reports from Sarun were very bad, and he could not but think that the local officers there had been somewhat slack in carrying out the orders of Government. These officers had been asked for reports on the constitution of relief committees, but they had not been yet organized, which might now give rise to difficulty.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR did not think that serious blame was to be attached to the local officers in this matter. The Government of Bengal did not, in the first instance, press *specially* for these committees. They felt that the most pressing thing was the transport of grain and the commencement of relief works, and that this might take precedence of the formation of relief committees. The Government had since more especially required the officers to proceed with relief committees. There were certain parts of the country in which it was desirable that relief committees should now be organized, and he thought that the time had arrived to consider the question.

THE VICEROY said that he would read Mr. Bernard's return, which would show how matters stood in respect to the formation of relief committees. Mr. Bernard said—

As yet we have not received replies from districts on paragraph 18 of circular No. 80 about relief committees. We have recently drawn attention to the subject in circular No. 9 of 3rd January.

As yet we have received no report from the local officers as to the constitution of the relief committees, and no general expression of opinion or advice on the subject has been received. Under paragraph 18 of circular No. 80 we had left much to the local officers' discretion, saying—'When it is evident that charitable relief must be given in any district, the magistrate will call a meeting of Native and European gentlemen who may be willing to serve on relief committees; he will nominate branch committees under the sub-divisional officers or other fit persons.'

Taking the several distressed districts in order by the light of the latest reports, we can say—

Patna Division.—No general remarks by the Commissioner at present.

Patna District.—Sites for relief centres in two of the sub-divisions not yet fixed. Magistrate has* the illustrated map in hand.

Gya District.—Sites for three classes of centres chosen; map sent† to Commissioner not yet reached Government. Buildings being arranged for; plenty of names of committee-men can be got, but Mr. Palmer is doubtful if Native members will exert themselves actively.

Shahabad District.—Plans not yet‡ settled. Paragraph 18 of circular No. 80 still under consideration. Centres will be established § where European supervision can be brought to bear.

Tirhoot District.—Nothing yet || done. We have now begged to have relief committees or agency organized at once, and in anticipation of orders in one part of the district.

Sarun District.—The ¶ different indigo factories in the district have been selected as relief centres, and a map of the nature prescribed by Government order is under preparation.

Chumparun District.—Scheme not yet drawn up; attention being given to it.

* 28th December.
† 29th December.
‡ 30th December.

§ Narrative of 16th December.
|| 31st December.
¶ 31st December Narrative.

Bhaugulpore Division.—General remark by Commissioner that 'Magistrate-Collector will shortly have all machinery ready for action. Sites for centres in all three stages of famine had been selected in all districts, and relief committees are being rapidly organized everywhere.'

Monghyr.—Thirty-one centres for charitable relief have been selected, and the district and sub-divisional officers are going round arranging for the appointment of committee-men. Map showing relief centres has been sent to the Commissioner.

Bhaugulpore District.—Relief centres not yet reported. Magistrate writes (30th December)—'I met both sub-divisional officers while in the north, and noted several places to which grain may have to be sent hereafter. I have not had time yet to put these notes into proper form.'

Purneah District.—For the three sub-divisions Mr. Kemble has selected 25 sites for relief centres. At 13 of these, committees have been formed either under the sub-divisional officer or under the Deputy Collector, who is sent out in charge of the distressed proportion of the sudder sub-division.

RAJSHAHYE DIVISION.

Moorshedabad District.—A meeting was to be held on the 3rd January at the Commissioner's Office with a view to appointing relief committees.

Subscriptions have been opened at the Lalibagh Sub-Division.

Scheme for relief centres in interior not yet prepared.

Maldah.—Scheme for relief centres, &c., not yet completed. A district committee and two branch committees of relief have been organized. The head-quarters committee was formed on 30th November, and some small funds were collected.

Rajshahye District.—Committees not yet formed; scheme for relief centres not yet framed.

Dinagopore District.—Same as preceding.

Bograh District.—Ditto. Meeting of a central committee convened for 7th January.

Rungpore.—A central committee has been formed at the head-quarters; a branch is being formed at one out-station; others are being prepared. Scheme of relief centres is not yet matured.

THE VICEROY said that he would read a further return by Mr. Bernard on the distribution and sale of grain, which was as follows:—

For the distribution or sale of Government grain to the public or to purchasers, as distinguished from people on works, we have as yet received proposals from Mr. Robinson only. His letter has been laid before the Government of India.

Mr. Ravenshaw, in the note he drew up of his experience in Orissa, adverts to the question of selling grain to the public, but he does not give any particulars as to procedure.

Mr. Bayley made* demi-officially a proposal that food should be sold at the market rates of the neighbourhood, and wages should be raised proportionately; to this proposal the Lieutenant-Governor could not agree.

Beyond this we have had no opinions or suggestions, except that Mr. Worsley of Tirhoot suggested we should aid middle-class women by furnishing them with in-door work and food through the village headmen.

At page 10 of the last (29th December) Monghyr Narrative will be found the instructions which Mr. Lockwood gave to his officers for starting local relief committees and regulating the distribution of food. He has been told that his action in this matter is a little premature.

THE VICEROY then remarked that the point to consider now was this,—the relief committees being constituted, what should be their functions? He should like to know what instructions it was proposed to give to the committees.

MR. BERNARD explained that they were collecting information with a view to determining what instructions should be given. Mr. Geddes had been entrusted with this duty. No final instructions had yet been issued.

THE VICEROY said that he thought that no time should be lost, and that the matter had better now be discussed. The primary object of the relief committees would appear to be to distribute food gratuitously to those who were unable to buy it.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR entertained a similar view, but thought that the change from relief works to charitable relief should be by gradations, of which there were several. All relief which was given apart from public works should be under the relief committees, and great care should be taken as to the manner in which relief was to be dispensed.

THE VICEROY thought that this, as a first principle, might form the foundation of the instructions to committees. A very important matter was the manner in which relief should be given to the respectable class of persons, especially women, in regard to whom inquiries must be made, as they would not apply for relief, and he presumed that this could only be done by employing natives to distribute the relief. He might mention that he had seen a letter

from Mr. Bayley, who stated that his former anticipations had turned out worse than he had expected, and that whatever we did he was very much afraid that a number of this particular class would die. The Government would do all they could to prevent this, but the question was a very difficult one.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR thought that it was the most difficult question of all, and that it must be very carefully dealt with.

THE VICEROY said the next thing was to consider, having formed the relief committees, what amount of superintendence was necessary. It would appear necessary to provide ample European superintendence, and, therefore, at once to strengthen the present European establishments.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that he would be very glad to have additional European superintendence.

THE VICEROY thought that in regard to this no time was to be lost. Unless we took measures at once, the local officers could not be held responsible. At the former conference it had been mentioned that the Government of India were prepared to give the services of some military officers to the Government of Bengal, if necessary. He thought the best thing to do would be to place military officers at the disposal of the Commissioners of the distressed divisions.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR wished to explain, in regard to the Rajshahye Division, that the people were, as a rule, rich, so that in a great portion of the district they would not want money but grain. There were no large labouring classes. On the other hand, in Patna there were thirteen millions of people, of whom the greater part were labourers, very poor, and if once severe famine set in, he thought that the numbers who would require charitable relief would be quite in the proportion of ten in that division to one in Rajshahye.

THE VICEROY thought that the only thing that could be done at present was to arrange that the best officers who could be found should be directed to proceed at once to the districts in question.

After some further conversation it was arranged that Sir Henry Norman should make out a list of the unemployed military officers who were available for service in the distressed districts, and that six should at once be ordered to place themselves at the disposal of the Commissioner of Patna.

In regard to the probable amount of distress likely to arise, THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that the information from Chumparun was very imperfect; the Commissioner was dissatisfied with the reports hitherto furnished; there was a good crop of Indian-corn, but the reports of the rubbee crop were very bad. As regards Monghyr, there was no cause for alarm, as it was in close proximity to three railways, and there would be no difficulty in sending large quantities of grain into that district. The Gya District had turned out better than was expected. In Rajshahye the people were not poor, and there was not much cause for anxiety as regards money. He hoped we should find the means of throwing sufficient supplies into Rajshahye. Sarun was to a considerable extent a rubbee district, and if the rubbee failed, it would be possible to throw supplies into the district from the rivers on the sides of it. If rain fell within the next ten days, it would have an excellent effect in Sarun. He believed that the greatest pinch would be in Tirhoot. This was a thickly populated district, and the relief operations would probably be heavier here than elsewhere.

THE VICEROY next desired to discuss the propriety of forming at once a central relief committee in Calcutta for the purpose of raising public subscriptions and aiding the local committees. It was a sound principle that when the Government came to give gratuitous relief, the people should be expected to contribute to a certain extent, and it had been already declared that the Government would double any subscriptions that were made either locally or generally, although they would, of course, be prepared to give more, if necessary.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR thought that before going further it might be well to look at the state of the country all over. On the whole he did not think that the apprehensions need now be greater than they were a few weeks ago. Burdwan Division now seemed to be better than we had at one time feared; Bhaugulpore was certainly better; as regards Eastern Bengal, our minds were a good deal relieved; the greater part of Rajshahye he did not think was worse than we expected; from South Behar the accounts were apparently better; so

* Mr. Hewitt's demi-official of the 11th December 1873.

that it came to this, that the prospects of the country as a whole did not appear worse than we had anticipated. The fact was that the apprehension of distress was now becoming more localised, and we were more prepared to say that in certain parts of the country the danger was becoming more immediate. The question was, if we once decided to appeal to the general public, in what form should we do so? Were we to say that the appeal would be final or only partial, and that it would be necessary to make a larger appeal afterwards? A final appeal could not be made so as to command the greatest amount of success unless the public believed that famine either existed or was very imminent. Some persons still believed that there would be no famine, whereas even *they* probably would believe if another fortnight passed without rain.

THE VICEROY thought that if the distress became at all bad, there would be great disappointment expressed both here and in England if relief committees were not instituted and subscriptions invited. He was inclined to think that even though it might not be expedient to call a public meeting and actually set on foot the central committee at once, in consequence of the information not being yet sufficiently complete to lay before the public, it would, at any rate, be desirable that the Lieutenant-Governor should have the members of the committee, chairman, secretary, &c., ready, and thus the people would know we were working in the matter. It would be unfortunate if action should be forced on the Government by pressure from without.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR agreed in the advisability of immediate preparations, and said that he would at once take the matter in hand.

THE VICEROY said that the next point was a very important one. Mr. Robinson, the relief commissioner of Rajshahye, had been over a part of Dinagepore, and had reported that there were very small supplies and no trade, and that, unless Government came forward and sold grain to the people, there would be within the next two months in the part of the country that he visited an actual dearth of food. That raised a great question. It was not very pressing as regards the particular district concerned, because the report stated that there was no great want at present, but it raised a very important principle, to which he would now refer. When the anticipated famine first came before the Government, they had discussed the question whether Government ought to interfere with private trade, and it was laid down in the Resolution of the 7th of November that it was most undesirable to interfere with private trade, because on private trade alone the general supply of the country must depend, but at the same time we added—

It has, however, been proved by the sad experience of famines in India that exceptional circumstances may arise whereby numbers of persons may be exposed to danger of starvation or to disease arising from want of food. In all such cases, where human life may be at stake, the Government and its officers will do their utmost to apply the most effectual remedy that may be practicable, and will strive, by forethought and management, to prevent the occurrence of any such misfortunes.

If the peculiar circumstances of any district upon full inquiry were found to be such that we could not depend on private trade to bring in supplies, it appeared to His Excellency right to supplement the private trade until such time as private trade could bring in supplies. That course was exactly in accordance with what took place during the Irish famine. In Ireland the potato crop failed over the whole country. It was the only food of the people. There was no trade organization capable of supplying the people with food. Relief committees were, therefore, organized and Government stores placed in convenient localities. The principle laid down in Ireland was that there should be as little interference as possible with private trade, and, therefore, where there was food to be had from private traders, the relief committees confined themselves to distribution of gratuitous relief, and only where there were no supplies in the hands of private traders did Government sell food to the people. In the latter case, the way in which Government sold was to take the market price at the nearest great mart where the fair price of grain could be tested, and to add to that something for the cost of carriage. Therefore, when the Government took the place of the grain dealer, it charged somewhat the same as the grain dealer would have charged, and the moment the private dealer came in, Government closed its stores. Now, the question was, supposing such circumstances to arise in India, should that principle be carried out, or

was there any other principle which would be better? Of course, as we have everywhere in India local grain dealers, either relief committees or officers of Government, or whoever it might be found right to employ, might be authorized to advance to such dealers grain on behalf of Government and let them sell it on their own account, or simply on Government account. This was a very important matter, and it struck him that the first thing to be done was to decide on the general principle which should be adopted.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that his own feeling was to get the grain upon the spot, and having done so to decide according to the circumstances of each case. He was inclined to think that the Government might in some places with great advantage take the place of wholesale dealers, which in the end would seem to be much the same thing as His Excellency had recommended.

THE VICEROY replied that it was very essential not to take any action of that kind, except in particular localities where it was distinctly proved to the satisfaction of men who had considered the subject carefully that the trade was not acting. All the local officers feared that trade might be paralysed by the action of Government, which he hoped would not be the case.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said that in Behar there was a very large trading class; on the other hand, we were told in regard to the Dinagepore District, about which Mr. Robinson had reported, that in ordinary times large quantities of grain were exported, but none was now imported. Mr. Robinson, he thought, should be told that he would get a good supply of grain to take up there, and if it were necessary to sell it that he might do so.

THE VICEROY thought it would be expedient that Mr. Robinson should submit his proposals more in detail. He did not think that a general authority to sell at a great mart, such as Raigunge, as proposed by Mr. Robinson, could be given without doing harm.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR thought that if they kept in mind the possibility of eventually selling the grain, there could not be anything wrong in sending up a large quantity.

THE VICEROY said that in regard to this subject he had taken the precaution from the beginning to say as little as possible about the action of Government in importing grain, and especially as regards the quantity which had been ordered. He was so apprehensive of the effect upon private trade, if the Government were supposed to be making large importations, that he thought the less said about the quantity of grain imported the better. The Government, however, were ready to meet further demands, and there could be no objection to Mr. Robinson storing the quantity which he suggested, namely, about 2,000 tons, but he thought it most essential that no idea should get abroad that Government was going to open stores and take upon itself the task of feeding the whole population. All the Government could do would be to supplement the action of private trade. This could not be too distinctly understood. But in special limited districts, where from one cause or another private trade might be found not to bring in supplies, Government might, he thought, properly sell grain at its price at the nearest large grain mart, with the addition of something for carriage, as was done in the Irish famine. The sale of Government grain in this manner would continue until the supply brought in by private trade was found sufficient to meet the wants of the people. It would then at once be discontinued, and the grain in Government stores would be devoted to its legitimate object, namely, the supply of food to people engaged on Government relief works, and the distribution through the relief committees of gratuitous relief to that limited portion of the population who stood in absolute need of it.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE could not understand how Raigunge, where Mr. Robinson proposed to form "a large reserve," being a place with water communication, could be destitute of supplies. In his judgment Mr. Robinson's report was vague and unsatisfactory. He believed that, if Mr. Robinson's plans were adopted, great difficulties would ensue. He had no local knowledge in the matter, but it appeared to him that Raigunge being a large place centrally situated between the Dinagepore and Purneah Districts, and being celebrated for trade, if it was known that Government had a great quantity of grain stored there, it would be hard to say what the effect would be. Whilst entirely

assenting to the principles laid down by the Viceroy, he thought that the information as to the condition of the extensive tract of country mentioned by Mr. Robinson was insufficient to show the necessity of opening Government stores for the sale of grain there.

After some further conversation, THE VICEROY said that a reply should be written to the Government of Bengal on the subject of Mr. Robinson's proposal (see p. 187).

The proceedings then terminated.

No. 103.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 82, dated January 12, 1874.

The Governor General in Council desires me to urge upon the Government of Bengal the necessity for immediate action in providing an adequate amount of inland carriage for the transport of grain.

2. The orders issued upon this matter by the Government of India will, doubtless, be in the recollection of the Lieutenant-Governor. I am desired, however, to recapitulate them *serialim*.

In paragraph 21 of the general Resolution of the 7th November last (see p. 22), it was stated—

"In those places where the means of water-carriage do not exist, the grain-traders must mainly depend on the country carriage. There may, indeed, be ground for apprehension that, as the dry season advances, mortality beyond the average must arise among the draught cattle. This subject will, doubtless, receive the anxious consideration of the local Government and of its officers. Every aid that can be afforded by the commissariat or other public departments will be rendered; and inquiries are being made as to the practicability of constructing tramways in the distressed districts."

Again, in the conference held with His Honor on the 10th November (see p. 33), the subject was specially treated, as will be seen from the following record of it :—

"His Excellency next adverted to the means available for transporting grain from the railway into the interior of the affected districts, as to which he expressed considerable anxiety, and remarked that the serious attention of the local officers should be directed to this subject; any assistance which the Government of India could give, either by utilising the commissariat or post office service, or in any other way, would be readily given. A communication had already been made to the Government of Bengal, stating the extent to which the commissariat could render assistance."

I am to point out that the conclusions of this conference were declared in Financial Secretary's letter No. 3003, dated 13th November (see p. 41), to be instructions for the guidance of the local Government.

Again, in paragraph 11 of the same letter, it was said—

"The Governor General trusts to the Lieutenant-Governor to obtain from each division and district statements in categorical form of all that is proposed to be done in consequence of the scarcity, to issue suitable instructions on each statement as soon as it is received, and to give the Commissioners and district officers discretion to act on emergency even in anticipation of His Honor's instructions."

This categorical information as respects transport, which would be most valuable, has not yet, I am to remark, been given.

In paragraphs 3 and 4 of Financial Secretary's letter No. 3004, dated 14th November (see p. 43), it was stated—

"One main difficulty will probably be want of draught animals for the transport of food grains to the interior of the districts.

"4. These considerations are well known to the Lieutenant-Governor, and will doubtless have formed the subject, among many other things, of His Honor's forethought."

In the final paragraph of Financial Secretary's letter No. 3402, dated 29th November 1873 (see p. 62), it is observed—

"So far as concerns the transport by rail to the stations in the distressed districts, the Government of India trusts that there will be no difficulty. The apprehensions of the Government of India are directed towards the prospect of despatching the grain from the railway stations into the interior of the country. The important subject will, doubtless, engage the constant attention of the local Government."

3. It was understood by the Government of India from paragraphs 13, 14 and 15, of the circular by the local Government, dated 17th November (see p. 52), that supervision would be exercised over the proceedings of the local officers in respect to inland transport, and that an early and most careful report would be obtained from them regarding the means of transport from the nearest railway or river-side station to the centres of relief works or distress. It was consequently hoped that such reports would by this time have been available for submission, if required by the Government of India. That the question was further receiving the attention of the Government of Bengal was understood from paragraph 3 of the letter from that Government, No. 3563, dated 22nd November (see p. 46)—

"The Lieutenant-Governor is very earnestly of opinion that we should transport grain to our places of storage at once before a block comes, at railway stations and on cart-roads, with new rice of the season 1873-74."

4. In the letter from the Government of Bengal, No. 3626, dated 25th November 1873 (see p. 64), some details were given of the provision for inland carriage, and in reply to that letter the Government of India remarked that the information was deficient, and that further details should be submitted as soon as they could be (see p. 65). Paragraph 2 was as follows :—

"2. In reference to your concluding paragraph (6), I am to state that the Government of India, while observing with satisfaction the reports of the district officers as to the present abundance of country carriage in some of the distressed districts, cannot fail to look forward to the time, which may arrive but too soon, when this carriage may begin to prove deficient; and to this prospect the special attention of the local Government is invited."

5. On the 2nd December the Government of Bengal made a requisition for 18½ lakhs of maunds of grain to be in the distressed districts or in depôt ready for them by the end of January (see p. 87). It was stated that for a large part of this consignment the Lieutenant-Governor would arrange for its despatch to the interior as promptly as possible. On the 6th December these proposals were sanctioned (see p. 88).

In Financial Secretary's letter No. 3586, dated 9th December, the Government of India furnished the Government of Bengal with a memorandum from the Commissary General on the possible supply of bullocks available for transport in certain localities*.

In paragraph 7 of the Fourth Special Narrative, the Government of India was assured that the district officers were forwarding to its destination all the grain which had reached them "without any hitch or hindrance so far." This assurance was repeated in paragraph 8 of the Fifth Narrative†.

6. The Governor General in Council has learnt at the conference held at Government House on the 8th instant (see p. 156), that while the railway transport was adequate for present requirements, yet the local Government had no sufficient information in its possession as to whether the inland transport and country carriage would or would not prove adequate and efficient, or whether the local officers had or had not succeeded in doing what was expected of them

* Letter from R. B. Chapman, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Financial Department, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 3586, dated December 9, 1873.

† I am directed by the President in Council to forward extract copy from a memorandum by the Commissary General, regarding the resources in bullock transport which were obtained in the last Bhutan campaign from the Julpigori District. This information may be useful to the authorities in the districts affected by drought.

Extract from a Memorandum by the Commissary General, dated December 2, 1873.

Sir Richard Temple yesterday, in the course of conversation regarding the employment of carriage obtainable through the agency of the commissariat, requested that I would state what the resources in carriage of the Julpigori District were found to be in 1865-66, when arrangements for the Bhutan campaign were being perfected, and with which force I was the principal commissariat officer.

2. On referring to the cattle returns, I find that we had, on 1st October 1865, pack bullocks in employ, 1,220—on 1st November, 11,836. It will thus be seen that 10,600 bullocks were procured in one month, and I distinctly remember the executive commissariat officer, Colonel Mackenzie, saying that he could have hired many more, though the bullocks were all to be employed in an unhealthy and many—for about half went to Gowhati for service with the Dewangiri column—in a distant and unknown country to the owners.

3. Between 1866 and the present time, I have not been in those parts, but nothing has occurred to lead me to suppose that pack bullocks are less plentiful than before, and if the owners so willingly took service to go to a distant province, they probably would be still more willing to be employed in the adjoining districts of Purneah, Dinagepore, and Rungpore.

I think, therefore, that the Julpigori District might now be expected to afford a very large number of pack bullocks, so much so as to render it unnecessary to go to any very distant districts for other carriage.

† "From all sides, except Goalundo, the local officers universally report that the carriage of the country suffices to carry all the Government and all the private grain importations." Fifth Special Narrative (from 6th to 12th December 1873), para. 8.

in this matter. The information that was available seemed to indicate a possible deficiency of country carriage, though the Government of India earnestly hope that such may not prove to be the case.

7. The Government of India fully recognizes the difficulty of the matter, but can no longer remain in uncertainty upon a point on which the success of all relief operations must mainly depend; and I am accordingly desired to enclose two forms, one for Commissioners of divisions and the other for magistrates of districts*, and I am to request that they may be submitted weekly to the Government of India with the required information to date. The returns should be sent on as received, and no one return delayed until another has arrived.

From each district the first submission of these returns will therefore be looked for on the 24th instant, and at weekly intervals subsequently.

His Excellency in Council desires that the district officers may be given to fully understand the importance he attaches to the punctuality and accuracy of these returns.

8. The Governor General in Council is indeed aware that the Lieutenant-Governor has urgently drawn the attention of the local officers to this subject by a circular dated the 3rd current (see p. 106). But His Excellency in Council thinks that the time has come when precise returns should be obtained, so that a remedy may be promptly applied wherever needed.

9. I am further desired to request that in any instructions which the local Government may think it necessary to issue to the district officers on this subject, it may be considered—(1) whether it will not be advisable to use the available carriage while it is fresh and strong, for the more remote centres of relief (the nearer ones can be supplied afterwards by coolies and other means); (2) what means can be adopted for carefully and continually inspecting and repairing the roads, especially in the worst parts, as good roads will double the transport power.

No. 104.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 83, dated Calcutta, January 12, 1874.

I am desired to call the immediate attention of the Government of Bengal to the subject of relief committees.

2. In paragraph 23 of the Resolution of the 7th November (see p. 22) last it was stated that—

“The Governor General relies upon the Lieutenant-Governor to take steps for organizing district and local committees in seasonable time, and in sufficient number, so that the measures for relief shall be far-reaching and comprehensive in proportion as the distress may become wide-spread. Whatever application His Honor may make for assistance from the ranks of the public service, with a view to effectively constituting these committees, will receive immediate attention from the Government of India.”

3. Again, in the conference held at Government House on the 10th November last (see p. 31), the duty “of being prepared beforehand” with all the machinery for relief was strongly urged, and the Viceroy expressed an opinion that immediate steps were necessary for obtaining from the district officers “detailed recommendations showing the places where relief centres should be established and the names of those who would serve on the committees.” A hope was expressed that the Secretary to the local Government would then be able to frame, for the Lieutenant-Governor’s consideration, detailed regulations for the guidance of these committees. I am to point out that the conclusions arrived at during this conference were expressly declared in Financial Secretary’s letter No. 3003, dated 13th November (see p. 41), to be instructions for the guidance of the local Government.

4. At the conference subsequently held on the 8th instant (see p. 156), the Governor General in Council was informed that the regulations have not yet been prepared, and that the organization of the committees has been postponed owing mainly to the more urgent calls upon the local officers in respect to the provision of transport and the storage of grain. His Excellency is ready to make

* These have not been included in this volume.

every allowance for this, but recent reports, especially from Sarun and Tirhoot, and the Government of India to apprehend that the preparation for bringing relief committees into action has been too long delayed.

5. The attention of the Government of Bengal was called to this subject by my letter of the 30th ultimo (see p. 116), and a circular was addressed on the instant (see p. 170), by the Lieutenant-Governor’s direction, to the Commissioners of Rajshahye, Patna, and Bhaugulpore, and the relief commissioner Rajshahye, asking for an early report of the state of their preparations. I am to request that the Government of India may be furnished, as soon as possible, with information of the number, names and sites of the relief centres proposed to be constituted, and of the committees actually formed. District maps should accompany your reply; but if the preparation of these maps will cause any delay, the rest of the required information should not on this account be kept back.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor was understood to say at the conference that the regulations for the guidance of relief committees were still under preparation. And as they may involve some questions of considerable importance, it is desirable that they should be submitted as soon as possible for the sanction of the Government of India.

7. The Government of Bengal will receive a separate communication to the effect that orders have been issued appointing certain military officers to place themselves at the disposal of the Commissioner of Patna to assist in the superintendence of the committees in that division.

No. 105.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 122 SR., dated Calcutta, January 14, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 83, dated 12th instant (see above, No. 104 of this series), regarding the organization of relief committees and charitable relief. The Lieutenant-Governor is sorry to understand that recent reports have led His Excellency in Council to think that the arrangements for bringing these committees into operation have been too long delayed. The views of the Government of India and of this Government, as repeatedly expressed, had been that the time for general charitable relief had not yet come; but district officers have from the outset had a discretion to start local committees wherever the necessity for this arose in any particular locality, and directions were given them to relieve any isolated cases of distress. The Lieutenant-Governor has not himself seen in the reports anything to make him think that action has been really too long delayed, but His Honor quite concurs with His Excellency in Council that the time has come when steps may very well be taken of the kind indicated. The circulars from this Government to local officers, Nos. 9 and 73 of the 3rd and 10th instant (see below, Nos. 106 and 107 of this series), copies herewith forwarded, will show what action this Government has already taken in this direction.

2. As regards the preparation of rules defining the functions of the committees and prescribing their mode of action, it must be owned that some little delay has occurred, but the Lieutenant-Governor did not feel that this was really urgently pressing, inasmuch as isolated cases and very local distress are best dealt with according to the circumstances of the locality rather than under general rules, and, as already stated, the local officers had a discretion to meet such cases. It is only when operations become large that general rules become necessary and applicable. The Lieutenant-Governor has already explained that he did not think fit to press specially for relief committees, while other matters were more urgent, and he thought that till committees were appointed, rules for regulating their action were not immediately required. He has, however, not by any means lost sight of the subject, and Mr. Geddes, an officer peculiarly fitted for the task, was at a very early date directed to compile, arrange, and classify all the most important and approved orders on this subject from the reports of all recent famines both in Bengal and elsewhere. No officer could do this sort of work better than Mr. Geddes, who has

considered such matters much; but, as he is thoughtful, his rate of work is a little slow, and delay has certainly occurred, as the Lieutenant-Governor has admitted. The work is, however, now done and in type, and its excellence will, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes, quite make up for the delay which after all has done no practical harm.

3. At the conference of the 10th November it was arranged, among other things, that relief rules for the guidance of committees should be drawn up, and Mr. Bernard was mentioned, being the Secretary in attendance on that day, as the officer who might prepare them. The Lieutenant-Governor wishes, however, to make it clear that no shadow of blame can attach to Mr. Bernard in this matter. He has been working under the Lieutenant-Governor's own eye and direction, and His Honor has deliberately to the full employed him in other matters, and has not made over to him this particular work. Far from Mr. Bernard being to blame in this or in any other matter connected with scarcity and relief, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to take this opportunity of declaring in the most emphatic manner that no mortal man could have rendered more constant, devoted, and efficient work from the very beginning of this famine business. The Lieutenant-Governor's only fear is that Mr. Bernard is injuring his health by excessive devotion to these duties, and His Honor dreads lest, by putting too much upon him, he may detract from his eventual power of work, a misfortune than which nothing could be greater.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt the Government of India will think him right in exercising his discretion as to the particular officers to do this or other work.

5. All the above however being said, the Lieutenant-Governor thoroughly recognises the urgency and importance of making arrangements for charitable relief, and entirely agrees that both committees should be organised and rules issued as soon as possible.

6. Every effort is being made to get the definite information requested in your 5th paragraph, and as soon as it is received it will be submitted. The rules shall be submitted in draft as soon as may be. Meantime a proposal as regards the best mode of meeting the wishes of His Excellency in Council for the appointment of a central committee, and for regulating and superintending relief operations, will be submitted in a separate letter.

No. 106.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Rajshahye, Patna, Bhagulpore, and to the Relief Commissioner of Rajshahye, No. 9 SR., dated Calcutta, January 3, 1874.

Hitherto the Lieutenant-Governor has considered that the hands of all officers in the distressed districts were fully occupied with preparing relief works and organising grain transport, and he has not troubled you for the report called for at paragraph 18 of circular No. 80, dated 17th November (see p. 53.) As yet the Lieutenant-Governor has received detailed proposals (with illustrative maps) for relief centres from the Monghyr and Purneah Districts only.

2. I am now to request that an early report may be furnished by you for each district in your division, giving the particulars required by paragraph 18 of circular No. 80. The Lieutenant-Governor will not insist on your immediately furnishing the names of the gentlemen you would propose for the relief committees, but it will be well that you should do so as far as possible, and it will probably be expedient that the names of the members of each district committee and of their secretary should be gazetted under your signature. The members of relief committees at sub-divisions or out-stations can best be appointed by the district officers, subject to your supervision and approval.

3. To repeat what is required, it may be said that in view of the possibility that relief committees may shortly be required in some of the more distressed tracts, the Lieutenant-Governor now asks for early report how far preparations have been made, especially—

- (a) the sites at which godowns and sheds may have to be erected and their cost;

- (b) map showing such sites for each grade of famine, with explanatory notes as to the reason why more centres are required in one tract than in another;
- (c) particulars as to the source from which each relief house will get its food;
- (d) schedules of the establishments which may probably be required at each relief centre;
- (e) any estimate you can frame of the demands likely to be made on each relief centre;
- (f) names of committee men, so far as you can now furnish them.

4. Copy of this letter will be forwarded direct to the district officers who will make their reports to you.

No. 107.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhagulpore, and Rajshahye, and to the District Officers of the Distressed Districts in those Divisions, No. 73 SR., dated Calcutta, January 10, 1874.

By Government letter No. 9 SR., dated 3rd January (see above, No. 106 of this series), your attention was specially called to the subject of relief committees and relief centres, and you were asked to report upon six several points in connection with the scheme of relief committees. The Lieutenant-Governor will anxiously await your replies to that circular; but meanwhile he directs the issue of the following instructions for organizing committees in anticipation of orders on those replies.

2. In communication with the Government of India, it has been determined that the time has now come for making definite and systematic arrangements for the distribution of charitable relief when the necessity for it shall arise. The harvest, which has hitherto given some employment to the labouring population, is now in most parts over; the preparation of the lands for the new crops has not yet commenced, and the season of want may be said to be approaching. Indeed, isolated cases of distress have in some districts already occurred.

It is considered that things are not yet so bad as to render an appeal for subscriptions to the general public expedient. The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that local committees will be able to raise sufficient funds to carry on, with the aid of the Government subsidy, such relief as may be necessary for a time.

3. Rules and instructions for the guidance of relief committees are now under preparation and will be shortly issued; meantime, it is hoped that want will remain confined to isolated cases and very limited areas. The form which relief is to take, whether it is to be given in money or by providing home-work, or otherwise, may for the present be left to the discretion of the committee in each case. The Lieutenant-Governor, however, would impress upon local officers that it is the desire of Government that in this time of scarcity cases of real want, which cannot be otherwise relieved, should not be left without charitable relief. Local officers of places where there may be any appearance of serious distress are, therefore, requested to put the committees in actual operation at once, and to raise subscriptions in their own districts; and they are authorized, without further reference to superior authority, to contribute on the part of Government a sum equal to the amount privately subscribed.

4. Should the distress unhappily become more severe, an appeal will be made to the general public, both in this country and in England, and funds will no doubt be forthcoming to supplement the means of committees in very distressed districts.

5. Pending more detailed instructions, the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that every care will be taken that relief shall not be given without work, where work is possible, being exacted as a test of necessity; but it must be at the same time remembered that there are classes of people, women and others, who cannot work on the roads. Many of these persons, too, are in remote villages and out-of-the-way-places; they will sometimes die without

complaint rather than come to relief houses and make their wants known. The Lieutenant-Governor feels sure that the members of the committees in each locality will be better qualified than he can be to judge of the existence of such classes and their position, their real wants or reasonable prejudices, and that the best arrangements which can be made will be made to combine economy of means with the most efficient relief which is possible.

6. The Lieutenant-Governor is glad to observe that, besides district committees, branch committees have in several districts been arranged for. He hopes that such local arrangements will be made as will bring the means of relief within a few miles of every locality where actual distress is expected.

7. Sir George Campbell trusts that these preliminary instructions will suffice to guard against the effects of immediate want, and that local officers will, to the utmost of their power, so arrange that poor people shall not die from starvation due to the present scarcity.

No. 108.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 112 SR., dated Calcutta, January 14, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 82, dated 12th instant (see p. 166), and to say that immediate instructions have been issued to obtain precise information as to the means of transport and despatch of grain into the interior of districts in the form prescribed by the Government of India. I am to take the opportunity of forwarding a copy of a circular No. 61 SR. of the 9th instant (see p. 109) on the subject of pushing on supplies of grain to the local depôts.

2. As regards that portion of your letter in which you set forth the orders already issued by the Government of India on the subject, I am to say that the Lieutenant-Governor has fully understood and acted on the instructions quoted by you. The only point in your recital to which he would take exception is that in which the desire of the Supreme Government to have in categorical form from each division and district statements "of all that was proposed to be done in consequence of the scarcity," is set forth as having a special application to the subject of transport and supply of carriage. The Lieutenant-Governor would only remark that the paragraph quoted was of perfectly general application, and had no special reference to the matter of transport; no special returns of transport were ever called for by the Government of India.

3. With reference to the 6th paragraph of your letter under reply, I am to submit that the manner in which the situation is there described can hardly be accepted as stated in a manner altogether just to this Government. It is true that being suddenly called upon in an unofficial manner to furnish forthwith on the same day precise information on the amount of transport available, the Secretary to this Government had not at hand any precise statement of the kind required, nor had he precise information up to date of the progress of all the grain slowly finding its way through devious water and other channels, many of which were being tried by way of experiment. But I am to submit that this Government is not without sufficient information of all that is going on, and has taken every means in its power to ascertain and develop the best and most efficient modes of transport.

4. The situation in regard to the question of carriage is really as follows. The despatch of a certain quantity of grain to distressed districts was sanctioned by the Government of India on the 6th December (see p. 88), and by orders of this Government, No. 3834 of that date (see p. 92), specific quantities were allotted to each such district, and local officers were instructed in clear and urgent terms to have the whole of the grain thus allotted despatched to their places of final storage, and as far as possible stored by the 31st of January.

5. As respects the quantity to be so disposed of, I am to observe that it was not $18\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs of maunds, as stated in paragraph 5 of your letter, but 15 lakhs of maunds. As duly reported and explained, $3\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs of maunds were

kept in reserve, and Mr. Secretary Hume's confidential letter of the 16th December, paragraph 8 (see p. 102), especially and emphatically approved of such reserve being made, and dwelt on the necessity of maintaining it.

6. The task then which was laid upon the district officers was that of despatching into the interior 15 lakhs of maunds before the 31st January; and since those orders were issued up till now, the subject of transport not only has not been overlooked and treated as of secondary importance, but has engaged the Lieutenant-Governor's most anxious thought and constant care. In all his orders and arrangements he has treated it as of primary importance, and whatever has been done or omitted in respect of it has been done or omitted of set purpose and after full deliberation.

7. To begin with, the Lieutenant-Governor had been assured, in personal communication with the local officers and otherwise, that in the distressed districts there is an abundance of local carriage, and that no serious difficulty would come in the way of storing the comparatively moderate amounts of grain allotted. It will be remembered also that the grain given is solely for expenditure on relief works, and that the Government of India has been most emphatic in insisting on leaving the ordinary supply of the people at large to the operations of private trade. Under these circumstances the Lieutenant-Governor thought it very undesirable to interfere too much with local resources, and to disturb the distribution of supplies which the demand for carriage would naturally effect, by pressing for the collection of carts and all manner of available carriage on the part of Government officers. He was, on the contrary, of opinion that our great object should be not to disturb ordinary channels and ways of transport more than could be helped. He looked on this first despatch of Government grain as experimental, and desired to have it so utilised as to lead to the ascertaining of the best routes for future despatches of grain to the places where it was most required. He was especially anxious to test all water routes, and to get at the necessary knowledge of these; maps and statements have been constantly before his eyes. It was, indeed, in the first instance, proposed to the Lieutenant-Governor to call on each district officer to state what amount of carriage he could supply in order to regulate the despatch of grain. But His Honor thought this would involve delay when there was so much besides to be done at starting. He felt that the whole work was new to Bengal officers. He was sure none of them really knew or could tell the resources of their districts in the way of carriage till they had actually tried them; and he deliberately therefore decided not to call for detailed estimate of available carriage. What he said to each officer in effect was: "Here is so much grain for your district. You must place it in your local store-houses by the best means available to you by the 31st January." With these instructions the Government set to work to despatch the grain to rail and river-side stations. The Lieutenant-Governor has systematically not waited to hear that carriage was ready, but has sent on the grain and laid it down at main depôts to be forwarded to the interior, urging and pressing on the local officers continually the importance of getting it away and of developing and testing their district transport resources.

8. Reports of progress have been received from time to time, but the Lieutenant-Governor's experience had from the first made him aware that difficulties by land and water would of necessity arise, and that there must be some delays and failures in beginning a great work of this character. He has the satisfaction of believing that his officers have done their very best. But at the end of the month in which they received their orders, the situation was this:—Much grain had been despatched; of some despatches information had reached Government, and of some the reports had still to come. Much was known to be in transit from different points, but it was impossible for this Government, at a moment's notice, to follow it and say at once exactly how much had actually reached its destination. Some delays and difficulties had, moreover, occurred, as the Lieutenant-Governor anticipated they must, and it was only gradually that the arrangements began to take shape and get into working order. With the first week of January, however, they did begin to take really effective shape, and though several of the reports had not come to hand when the Lieutenant-Governor conferred with His Excellency the Viceroy on the 8th instant, some important communications were then actually in the

post, and we now know that the grain was in fact being distributed much faster than Mr. Bernard could state in figures when he gave the Viceroy's Private Secretary the best information he could on such short notice put together.

9. The latest information on the subject is contained in a note appended to this letter (see below, No. 109 of this series). But specific reports have also, as intimated at the outset, been called for and will be forwarded.

10. The general result is, that the Lieutenant-Governor is sanguine that in by far the greater number of distressed districts, if not in all, the grain originally allotted will by the 31st have been distributed as ordered.

11. It is only within the last few days, since this Government has received by your letter of the 6th instant (see p. 155) information that a further supply will be forthcoming for despatch, that the Lieutenant-Governor has felt at liberty to allot the amount at first kept in reserve. Still he hopes that most of that quantity also will be despatched by the 31st to the interior of the districts, and he is sanguine that when it is seen how, as the result of the experiments and efforts made, the transport arrangements of the districts are fully brought into play, we shall in the next three months satisfactorily transport the whole of the further supply now promised and more, if need be.

12. As regards the particular divisions, I am first to notice that the Rajshahye Division, in regard to which Mr. Bernard's information was least definite, and where His Excellency the Viceroy thought things most unsatisfactory, has been that to which this Government has on its part devoted most thought and care. Dinagepore and other districts of the division have many carts, and had we devoted ourselves simply to moving up the first allotment without regard to other needs and the exigencies of private trade, it might probably have been easily done. The Lieutenant-Governor was, however, particularly anxious to find water routes, and strained all the resources of this Government to supply steamers and flats and get boats. A regular exploring expedition went up the Oorasagur and by the devious routes of the Chullun Bheel and Atrai; every effort was made to use the water route by the Mahanuddee to Raigunge; and much grain is going up by these routes. But, as already reported, the water routes this season are not satisfactory, owing to the abnormal lowness of the rivers, and we are being more and more driven to cartage. The time and labor spent in exploring has not been lost; but a large transport train is now being organised on the Rajmehal and Dinagepore road, and another is working from Dhaparee along the Northern Bengal Railway line, while the water routes will still be utilised as far as may be.

13. In the Bhaugulpore Division good water routes are not available, and supply is going on by carts, and works in a more simple way. The Lieutenant-Governor has just heard that the whole of the allotment of one district has reached the store-houses; in the two others things are well advanced; the allotments will be delivered in time, and probably more than the original allotments.

14. In the Patna Division the Commissioner has had a very heavy task, and met with many difficulties and disappointments, as was to be expected. Mr. Bayley has, however, striven to overcome these with persistent energy, and the Lieutenant-Governor knows he and his officers are doing all that can be done.

Here also the water routes have proved disappointing. Two or three from the east have been tried and proved failures. We are still trying another, which is more hopeful. Further to the west the Gunduck route has proved very little practicable, owing to difficulties of navigation, want of water, and of suitable boats. Ferry services have now been organised on the Ganges, and long trains of carts are taking grain inland, while we still make the most of water carriage, where possible at all.

15. With respect to the offer of assistance from the commissariat, I am to explain that the Lieutenant-Governor has never lost sight of this; but Colonel Wiles, the Head of the Department, seemed in conversation to be less sanguine about the Department's ability to supply camels than Colonel Macbean. The Commissioner of Patna also did not take a sanguine view of this mode of transport, and thought his local carriage would prove sufficient for the quantity of grain allotted. This being so, the Lieutenant-Governor did not apply for commissariat assistance, but experimented with our present

means, and waited results and reports on our ability to forward the further allotments before indenting for commissariat carriage.

The Commissioner of Patna has indeed just written to say that, after conferring with Colonel Mackenzie of the Commissariat Department, he is still of opinion that recourse should be had to that Department only as a last resource.

P. S.—While this letter was in course of issue letters have been received from the Commissioners of Bhaugulpore and Patna, which confirm much that has been said above. The former officer, replying to this Government's letter No. 10, dated 3rd instant, says:—

"The Government is quite right in believing that no actually pressing effort has yet been made anywhere to test the resources in the matter of carriage to any extreme degree."—"The despatches of grain into the interior of the districts of this division are in a more forward state than would appear from the portion of the report to the Government of India quoted in your letter."

Mr. Barlow then goes on to show what he is doing to push forward grain as indicated in the accompanying note.

Mr. Bayley, writing demi-officially, confirms in a striking manner the view taken by the Lieutenant-Governor of the danger that too great a pressure applied all at once to collect carriage would hamper and injure the operations of private trade. Urgent pressure brought to bear to clear away in a minimum time the deliveries at the Patna stations is said to have interfered much with the operations of that trade.

No. 109.

Note by G. N. Barlow, Esq., c. s. i., Officiating Commissioner, Bhaugulpore Division, as to the present condition and prospects of the grain transport arrangements so far as is known without waiting for special reports.

The total provision of Government grain up to the end of January was put (see Appendix C to the Sixth Narrative) at 19,25,000 maunds. By the first orders of the Government of India, dated the 6th December, the total was taken at 18,75,000; but the arrangements made by Commissioners of Divisions, and subsequently reported, brought the total up to 19½ lakhs. Of this there was to be sent into the distressed districts by the end of January 15,00,000 maunds of grain, a reserve being kept of 4,25,000 maunds. The total provision was to come thus—

	Maunds.	Maunds.
From the North-Western Provinces—		
Commissioners' orders	...	1,85,000
Tirhoot dealers, &c.	...	44,000
Government of Bengal orders through Mr. Colvin	...	1,50,000
		3,79,000
From Eastern Bengal direct into the Rajshahye Division, an amount at first reported to be only 40,000 maunds, but afterwards ascertained to be	...	80,000
From the Nerbudda Valley—		
Bunsee Lall's consignment and Manick Chund's consignment subsequently reported	...	65,000
		5,24,000
Balances to be provided from Calcutta, either by purchase there or in Orissa, or by importation from Burmah, Madras, &c.	...	14,01,000
		19,25,000

2. When the arrangements made by the Bengal Government were first reported to the Government of India, it was expected that the amount to be provided from Calcutta would be larger than the above figure (14 lakhs of maunds). But when the Commissioners reported all their arrangements, and the purchases made* in the Central Provinces were added to the total amount provided from the North-Western Provinces, the balance to

* One of these purchases was, as has been reported to the Government of India, made under special circumstances after other purchases had been quite stopped.

be provided from Calcutta remained as above shown. Of this balance 4,25,000 maunds were, as above mentioned, reckoned as unassigned reserve. Subsequently (during the first week of January), when the Lieutenant-Governor learned that he might reckon upon receiving a further supply of grain after the January supply was done, the whole reserve was allotted to the most necessitous districts. But notice of such fresh allotment, and promise of further supplies in February to April, did not reach the district officers until the month of January was well on. At the outset they had been told to arrange for transporting and storing only the 15,00,000 maunds.

3. The whole of the North-Western Provinces supply, the whole of the Eastern Bengal supply, and almost the whole of the Nerbudda Valley supply, are to be delivered in the distressed districts before the end of January. The arrangement of these supplies* is in the hands of the Commissioners; they report that it will all arrive within the required date, and the Government has accepted these assurances. There remain then the Calcutta despatches, which were to have been 9,76,000 maunds by the end of January, but which, now that the reserve has been allotted, should be 14,01,000 maunds.

4. Mr. Toynbee's statement shows that up to the morning of Tuesday (the 13th January) there had been sent away from Calcutta 8,39,000 maunds of Government grain, and there were thus 5,61,000 still to go out of the January supply. Eighteen days of the month are left. If the East Indian Railway can take away 30,000 maunds a day, then 5,40,000 maunds could, if need be, go to the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions, while about 1,70,000 maunds are due to the Rajshahye Division. Some part of the Rajshahye Division consignment must go *via* Rajmehal and the East Indian Railway, but we can hope actually to despatch from Calcutta the full 14,01,000 maunds before the end of January. If we fall short, the amount short should not be large.

5. Then, as to what the local officers are doing, can do, or promise to do, the Government has not received absolute final figures of what can be done. Replies to the questions on this point have not come, but we can say this much:—

Patna Division.

Mr. Bayley writes (demi-officially, on the 10th January) regarding Tirhoot and Sarun that he can carry away—

	Maunds.
By three different routes to Tirhoot ...	50,000 a week.
Ditto ditto to Chumparun ...	41,000 "
No recent information has come, but the Lieutenant-Governor estimates that Sarun can take ..	30,000 "
And that Gya can take ...	25,000 "
Regarding the Shahabad and Patna Districts, no recent information is to hand. The Soane Canal works are taking regularly 5,000 maunds a week; Mr. Levinge has been instructed to take more; Shahabad and Patna have comparatively small allotments of grain; private trade is there brisk, and no effort has yet been made to carry very large quantities of Government grain into the interior. The Lieutenant-Governor does not propose at present to call upon the local officers of these two districts to make any such effort, and so he reckons the weekly transport of Shahabad and Patna at ...	20,000 "

Total for the division ... 1,69,000 per week.

Mr. Bayley (under date the 12th January) telegraphed—"Grain despatched from Patna Ghât alone during past week, 82,000 maunds." Mr. Bayley has on the same date, demi-officially, informed the Lieutenant-Governor that by pressing on exceedingly the Government transport we are exhausting the whole carrying power of the country, and that there is risk of our interfering much with private trade. Under these circumstances, the Lieutenant-Governor has directed that the Government consignments may be so managed either by getting carriage and boats from far off, or by (if necessary) limiting daily consignments, that private trade shall not suffer. And thus it is perfectly possible

* Except the small Nerbudda Valley supply, regarding the arrival of which there is little doubt.

that the Government transport in the Patna Division, where private trade is fairly brisk, may not be kept up to the total that might be possible if Government grain only were considered.

Bhaugulpore Division.

The Commissioner, Mr. Barlow, telegraphs (on the 13th January): "Monghyr grain 1,07,000 maunds received; all reported stored." On the 12th January Mr. Barlow sent a statement and reports showing that Bhaugulpore hopes to have its full second lakh (that is, the additional lakh now given to the district, its original assignment being first completed) stored by the 15th February. Regarding Purneah, Mr. Barlow wrote that he had arranged for a second crossing over the Ganges at Colgong, whereat 3,000 maunds of grain daily could be crossed. With the help of the railway crossing at Sahebgunge, Mr. Barlow hopes to deliver from 5,000 to 6,000 maunds of grain daily at Caragola, all of which he believed Mr. Munro of the Police, the officer in charge of the carting work at Caragola, would be able to carry away. The total available transport for the Bhaugulpore Division thus amounts to—

	Mds.
Monghyr, which carries away all it receives, and may be put down at per week ...	30,000
Bhaugulpore may be put down at per week ...	40,000
Purneah, which may be put down at ...	35,000
Total per week ...	1,05,000

As yet no complaints of hindrance to private carriage have been received from the Bhaugulpore Division.

Rajshahye Division.

For this division we have as yet only reports of the grain *despatched* to a date not now very recent (Commissioner's Nos. 49 and 51 of 5th January); and owing to the distances to be travelled by letters over non-railway routes, the information from this division can never be so prompt as from Behar. For this division it may be said that during about one month there were despatched—

	Mds.
From Kooshtea ...	70,000
" Goalundo <i>via</i> the Oorasagor ...	46,000
" Calcutta by steamer to Kaligunge ...	20,000
" Dacca to Kaligunge ...	20,000
" Serajgunge ...	10,000
" Rajmehal ...	5,000
Mr. Robinson has now begun to organize a train of carts from opposite Rajmehal to carry 500 maunds a day, or say per month ...	15,000
Major Lindsay has prepared to cart from Rampore Beaulah and from Dhaparee at least 5,000 maunds a piece per week, or per month ...	40,000
Total per month ...	2,26,000

The Lieutenant-Governor anticipates that the Rajshahye officers will be able to carry into the interior of Dinagepore, Rungpore, Maldah, Rajshahye, and Bograh about 60,000 maunds a week. If the Dinagepore routes *via* the Mahamuddy cannot be worked up to the full extent required, Mr. Barlow is prepared to go on supplying the North-West of Dinagepore *via* Caragolah and Purneah road up to an amount of at least 50,000 maunds a month, when the full Purneah supply shall have been laid in.

6. To sum up the whole, it may be stated that the local officers can despatch to the interior per week—

	Mds.
Patna Division ...	1,69,000
Bhaugulpore Division ...	1,05,000
Rajshahye Division ...	60,000
Total per week ...	3,34,000

The Lieutenant-Governor hopes that in districts where private trade is brisk, the large amounts named may not have to be carried. And he does not feel sure that the East Indian Railway can deliver the full amounts shown in the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions without occasional delays, such as have occurred on one or two occasions, till at least additional rolling-stock is procured and arrangements made as the railway propose to do.

No. 110.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 126, dated January 17, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of letters No. 105 of the 13th (see p. 105) and Nos. 112 (see p. 172), 122 (see p. 169), and 123 SR* of the 14th instant.

2. In reply to letter No. 105, I am to say that the Governor General in Council approves of the allotment of 19,25,000 maunds of grain for distribution in the distressed districts up to the 31st of January, and of the provisional orders issued by the Lieutenant-Governor in his confidential circular No. 61 of the 9th instant, for the allotment of 75,000 tons placed at His Honor's disposal during three months commencing with the 1st February. The Lieutenant-Governor will probably before long be in a position to form an estimate of the relative necessities of the different parts of the country, and to make the final allotments accordingly. As at present informed, His Excellency agrees with the Lieutenant-Governor that the interior of Tirhoot, Sarun, Chumparun, and Dinagapore comprise the area of country where Government stores are particularly required.

3. With reference to the remarks contained in the 3rd paragraph of letter No. 112 (see p. 172), I am to observe that there has been no intention whatever of describing the situation with respect to local transport in a manner unjust to the Government of Bengal. The information furnished to the Viceroy by Mr. Bernard was asked for expressly with reference to the conference of the 8th; the circumstances admitted of no delay and the returns cannot be regarded as unofficial. Moreover, the Viceroy believes that they conveyed an accurate statement of the official information then in possession of the local Government. His Excellency thinks that the 6th paragraph of Mr. Howell's letter of the 12th instant (see p. 167) does not materially differ from the opinions expressed by the Lieutenant-Governor himself in his circular of the 3rd of January, No. 10 SR (see p. 106), in the Resolution issued by His Honor in the Statistical Department on the 6th January on scarcity and relief in the Patna Division, and in the circular No. 61 SR of the 9th January, paragraph 7 (see p. 110). Allusion was made in the 8th paragraph of Mr. Howell's letter to the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor had urgently drawn the attention of the local officers to the subject by his circular of the 3rd instant.

4. The only desire of the Government of India was to ensure proper arrangements for the inland transport, and the Viceroy is most anxious to give every aid in his power to the Lieutenant-Governor in the efforts which His Honor is making to secure such arrangements.

5. His Excellency agrees with the Lieutenant-Governor that the success of the endeavours of Government to meet the distress which is reported to be imminent in some districts hinges on the transporting power, and he is glad to find that since the conference of the 8th further information leads His Honor to hope that the local officers will be able to transport all the grain allotted to them up to the 31st of January, and that their powers of transport for the future will be much greater than was known at the conference. His Excellency awaits the returns that have been called for, and will only now observe that the Government of India expects to be able to furnish as much grain as the local officers will be able to transport to the distressed districts

* This letter is not printed in this series. It relates merely to matters of detail in connection with the appointment of the chairman, secretary, &c., of the central relief committee.

which may require additional supplies, and will, moreover, retain a reserve at Calcutta to meet the case of an unexpected outbreak of distress elsewhere.

6. The Viceroy entirely agrees with the Lieutenant-Governor's remarks and instructions as to the great importance of interfering as little as possible with the transport of grain imported by private traders.

7. Upon this point I am to observe that the observation made by Mr. Bayley that the operations of trade have already been much interfered with at Patna by demands of the Government upon the local transport, and the remark of the Lieutenant-Governor that "Government transport in the Patna Division, where private trade is fairly brisk, may not be kept up to the total that might be possible, if Government grain only were considered," would seem to lead to the conclusion that there should be no further delay whatever in bringing to bear the resources which the commissariat can supply from a distance, and the Viceroy is, therefore, surprised to hear that Mr. Bayley "is still of opinion that recourse should be had to that Department only as a last resource." His Excellency can hardly conceive it possible in the face of the alarming reports sent by Mr. Bayley as to the prospects of Tirhoot that this assistance can safely be neglected, and if it is not at once accepted, His Excellency requests that a special report may be made without delay upon the subject.

8. With reference to the letters Nos. 122 and 123 on the subject of the instructions to be prepared for the relief committees, and to the constitution of the central relief committee, I am to observe that the Viceroy had no intention, in alluding to what took place at the conference on the 10th November, to attach any blame whatever to Mr. Bernard, because the general instructions for the relief committees had not been prepared sooner. His Excellency is well aware that Mr. Bernard fully merits the praise which is bestowed upon him by the Lieutenant-Governor, and that he has acted entirely under His Honor's directions with respect to the order in which the famine work has been proceeded with.

9. The recommendations which His Honor has made in the last-mentioned letters for the provisional constitution of the central relief committee and the employment of Mr. Schaleh to draw up rules for the relief committees are approved, as well as the employment of Mr. Forbes and ultimately, perhaps, of Mr. Wood as secretaries. Orders will be passed in the Financial Department as to the remuneration to be given to these two latter gentlemen. As soon as a day can be fixed when the rules will be ready for consideration His Excellency desires to be informed, as he would arrange to consider them immediately at a conference, and thus avoid the delay which would ensue from their being submitted in a letter.

10. Now that all purchases of grain will be conducted by the Government of India, it is desirable, in order that business may be properly divided, and also the weight of the duties which are thrown upon the local Government be lightened, to place under the immediate direction of the Government of India the whole business of receiving and storing grain at Calcutta, and of preparing it for issue to the local Government for despatch up-country. Arrangements will, therefore, be made for the transfer of that part of Mr. Toynbee's present work to the Government of India. Mr. Toynbee, who, the Viceroy is glad to hear, is considered by the Lieutenant-Governor to have done heavy and responsible work in a very efficient manner, may still be advantageously employed under the Lieutenant-Governor in arranging for the despatch of the grain from Calcutta; but as his duties will be considerably lightened, the Government of Bengal will not, perhaps, wish to press for any further addition to his allowances.

11. This change is not made from any feeling on the part of the Government of India that the work has hitherto not been properly performed, but merely as a better and more convenient distribution of work for the future. The date of the transfer and the detailed arrangements for the transaction of business will be settled by communication between the Departments concerned. The questions raised in your letter No. 168 SR* of this date had also better be considered in personal communication with the officers concerned, and a joint report submitted.

* This letter is not printed. It related to inconvenience which arose from keeping consignments of different sorts of rice (Burmah, Saigon and Madras) separate.

No. 111.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 112, dated January 15, 1874.

In reference to the passage (quoted in the margin) in the letter No. 604 of the 16th December 1873 (see p. 99) from the Governor General to the Government of Bengal, I am to address you further as follows.

2. The Governor General in Council has observed with much satisfaction that, in view to the scarcity in the provinces under the Government of Bengal, many zemindars have incurred, or are incurring, outlay for the benefit of their estates or of their tenantry and dependents, and it is hoped that many more zemindars will act in a similar manner.

Under these particular circumstances, some zemindars may find temporary difficulty in paying the instalments of land revenue with the punctuality which is usually observed and enforced. In such cases Government would by no means desire to adopt the coercive measures which are authorized by law, and is ready to allow some reasonable period within which the zemindar might discharge fully his obligations to the State. But it would, on the other hand, be necessary that this measure should be restricted to cases where, by reason of his exertions for the public benefit, the zemindar might be in temporary difficulty. And it is to be understood that the occurrence of scarcity is not by itself a reason for postponement of revenue instalments in Bengal and Behar, where the land revenue has been permanently settled at rates which represent a small proportion of the revenue which would have been realised under temporary settlement, or of the rent paid by the land.

3. But it is not inconsistent with these principles that the State should deal liberally with those zemindars who may have distinguished, or who may yet distinguish, themselves by employing labour on works of permanent improvement of the land, or importing grain for distribution, or sustaining their ryots in a season of difficulty—or by any act of munificence towards their tenantry, or of charity towards the people in reference to the scarcity, which may be shown to the satisfaction of the Collector.

4. In such special cases the Collector should refrain from the application of any coercive process in respect to unpaid arrears of the instalment now due (12th January), and may exercise a discretion in postponing the discharge of part or whole of the coming instalments of the 28th March and the 28th June. Care should be taken that this course is adopted only in the cases specified above; and each case where the Collector may exercise this discretion should be afterwards fully reported for the information of the Divisional Commissioner and the Board of Revenue.

5. Ordinarily the arrear would have to be discharged together with the subsequent instalments, but the Collector might, with the sanction of superior authority, distribute the instalments over a longer term not exceeding two years from the date of the original postponement.

No. 112.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 7 SR., dated January 3, 1874.

I am directed to submit copies of a letter received from the relief commissioner of Rajshahye and of the Lieutenant-Governor's reply thereto (see below Nos. 113 & 114 of this series), and to solicit the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy in Council on the very important question which Mr. Robinson raises.

2. Mr. Robinson reports that the people believe (and he thinks they are right) that "in a couple of months' time there will be a great want of rice" in the part of Dinagepore which he has lately visited. He reports also that

the stocks held are small, so far as he can learn; that there are no traders or other people who both can and will import food from a distance; and that "something more is requisite than merely providing rice on relief works." He strongly recommends that the Government should import rice largely into a central depôt in that part of the country and sell it at the market rate, or slightly under the market rate, to petty dealers, village headmen, and others, who will themselves carry the grain to their villages and distribute it to their families and their dependants. He puts it that Government would and must do all it can to prevent the people dying of hunger, and that it will be very much better to let the people who will distribute the grain for themselves do so, rather than that Government should retain on its own shoulders the full burden of such distribution.

The Lieutenant-Governor has felt that he has no authority to sanction such a measure as the relief commissioner proposes; at the same time he is convinced that we can hardly have a better opinion than Mr. Robinson's as to facts and requirements of the position in Dinagepore. Perhaps further particulars might have been given regarding the petty stocks held by individual ryots themselves, as distinguished from large stocks held by wealthy landholders and dealers; but the Lieutenant-Governor is not sure that further reference to the local officers would furnish more accurate data, and he is prepared to accept Mr. Robinson's view of the position.

Under these circumstances, Sir George Campbell solicits orders whether he is permitted to authorise the sale of Government grain to the local public in tracts like the North-West of Dinagepore, where local trade can in no degree be trusted to supply the wants of the people. The Lieutenant-Governor's view is that such sale ought to be permitted so long as enough grain is kept for the requirements of relief works and relief houses. If such sale is permitted, the question of the price at which grain should be sold to the public could be settled for each tract; and the local officers would have to be trusted to take care that large quantities of Government grain were not taken away by people who would hoard it with a view to making high profits when the last extremity comes.

4. Meanwhile, and until the pleasure of the Government of India is known, the Lieutenant-Governor and his officers will press forward supplies of grain towards the tract in question as rapidly as possible.

No. 113.

From W. LeF. Robinson, Esq., Relief Commissioner, Rajshahye Division, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 125, dated Dinagepore, December 2, 1873.

With reference to the question of golas for the storage of rice in the Dinagepore District, it will, I am convinced, be necessary to provide more golas for the west and north-west of the district. On the west side of the district no golas have yet been sanctioned north of the Raigunge on the Koolik, to which point only is there water communication. I have during the last ten days ridden over across the country north of Hemtabad thannah as far north as Laharee in thannah Thakoorgaon to the Purneah border on the west and to the Tangon on the north-east. Taking it roughly, this is a tract of country 45 miles long by 30 broad, and throughout the length and breadth of it, there will not be more than a 4-anna crop of rice in the best parts, dwindling down to none at all in the worst. That there is no large amount of rice in store, I have satisfied myself by personal inquiry; one or two men here and there have a fair supply, but nothing like a stock sufficient to keep the country, and in many cases the amount they are said to have is exaggerated by their poor neighbours. For instance, when riding yesterday, I heard accidentally of a mundul who was said to have five large golas full, and to refuse to sell any; it was 6 or 7 miles out of my road, but I thought it worth looking into, and went to his house; he had five golas, but two were empty, one was three parts full, another half full, and the fifth had only a small quantity in it.

There are no large native gunjes or marts in this part of the country. In ordinary years the rice exported is all taken to Raigunge and shipped off from there.

From all I could learn after many inquiries from all classes, the impression among the people is (and I must say I think they are right) that in a couple of months' time there will be a great want of rice in this part of the country, and that in fact the present supply will be about exhausted.

Two roads from Purneah run from west to east through this tract: the southern one from Dingraghât enters the Dinagepore District at Bapla Tajpore, and runs through Minapore, Bindole, Maloon, Ajnabad, and Singaon, direct to Dinagepore. I have, as already reported, ordered work to be commenced on this line of road, and I now propose to have golas at once built at Minapore, Bindole, Maloon, and Ajnabad. Singaon is only twelve miles from Dinagepore, and can be fed from there. At Bindole the magistrate will probably be able to hire golas, but in other places they must be built. I would have room for 2,000 maunds at Minapore, Maloon, and Ajnabad, and for 5,000 maunds at Bindole. All these golas would of necessity have to be supplied from Raigunge in the first instance, and fed from these subsequently. The northern road from Kishengunge enters the Dinagepore District at Badasoree, and passing the Nekomurd fair goes through Peergunge thannah to Bochagunge, and there joins the southern road about six miles from Dinagepore. Work has already been begun by my orders on the portion from Badasoree to Nekomurd fair, and I propose to establish a gola at Badasoree, Nekomurd, Peergunge thanna, and Bochagunge. I would put 2,000 maunds at each except Peergunge, where I would put 5,000 maunds. Peergunge should be supplied from Raigunge, Bochagunge from Dinagepore, and Badasoree and Nekomurd from Kishengunge. I may say that Mr. Kemble, Magistrate of Purneah, told me the other day that he could send 5,000 maunds up the Caragola road to Kishengunge for me if I put it down at Caragola.

From Kishengunge to Badasoree is eighteen miles, and there is a fair-weather track all the way; and from Badasoree to Nekomurd is 8 miles, and a fair-weather track which is cartable, as I drove myself over it last week. It seems to me, therefore, that it will be easier to supply these two places *via* Purneah than Raigunge, and to do so will somewhat lessen the strain on Raigunge, which must, however, under any circumstances, be very great; the distance from Raigunge to Nekomurd direct is certainly over 30 miles. Besides the road running east and west, there are two tracks running north and south through this country, both joining at Raigunge to the south. The most westerly of these roads runs from Atwaree at the extreme north of the district through Laharee, Holdibaree, Nekomurd, Rancee Sonkoil thannah to Bindole, and so on to Raigunge. A very large traffic in jute comes down by this road; the more eastern road is about twelve miles east of it, and runs from the north of the district about Roona bungalow through Sheebgunge (from which there is communication with Thakoorgaon thannah) and Bonabaree to Peergunge thannah, and then *via* Maloon and Hemtabad thannah to Raigunge; and a very large traffic in jute and gunny also goes down this line.

Both these lines of roads are very important in a commercial point of view, and should, I think, be at once taken up as famine relief works. The soil is bad for road-making, being pure sand, but the work is easy, and there will be very little bridging necessary, as both roads run generally along high ridges. As I have already reported, I do not think the country north of Laharee will require relief; I would therefore, on the Laharee to Raigunge line, have golas at Holdibaree (six miles north of Nekomurd) and Rancee Sonkoil thannah; at Holdibaree for 2,000 maunds, and at Rancee Sonkoil for 5,000 maunds. Holdibaree I would supply *via* Purneah and Nekomurd; Rancee Sonkoil must be supplied and fed from Raigunge; Bindole and Nekomurd have already been provided for on the east and west lines.

On the Roona to Raigunge line it will not be necessary, I believe, to have any gola north of Seebgunge, which is a little south-east of Thakoorgaon thannah (Nischindpore on map on the Dinagepore—Darjeeling road); at Seebgunge I propose to have a gola for 2,000 maunds; at Bonabaree 1,000 maunds; at Peergunge thannah 5,000 maunds; at Hemtabad thannah 5,000 maunds. Maloon, the intermediate stage between Peergunge thannah and Hemtabad, is already provided for; all the golas on this line will have to be fed from Raigunge or Dinagepore—the former for choice. I shall request the Magistrate of Dinagepore to commence these golas at once, in anticipation of the sanction

of Government. With depôts at the above-mentioned places, we shall have a stock in hand against emergencies at about every eight to twelve miles, and a larger stock at each thannah or central place to feed the smaller ones; but whether I have put down a sufficient stock for each, I cannot tell until the pinch comes. It appears to me, however, that the great thing to do is to establish a large reserve at Raigunge available for drawing upon. I wish here to point out forcibly that there is no one in this part of the country (I allude to the north-north-west of Raigunge) who is at all likely to import on his own account as a mercantile speculation, and indeed throughout Dinagepore generally, I do not think private enterprise to be depended upon at all.

The rice trade is here essentially an export one, carried on principally through local agents by firms in Calcutta or elsewhere. The local agents report that there is no rice for export, and there the interest commercially of the firm and the local agent ceases; they do not care about supplying the country with food even as a speculation. The only people likely to exert themselves are the paikars or interior agents who visit the village hauts and markets, buy rice as cheap, and sell it somewhere else as dear as they can, and these of course are the men who run up prices; in fact, they combine for the express purpose. Where a profit is to be made, these men will try and make it for themselves; but they are by no means to be relied on to assist in time of need, nor have they any capital to enable them to import largely from a distance, or the knowledge of how to do so. Where there is a private trade, I should be very unwilling to interfere with it in any way; but when I have to face the great probability of having to feed the majority of the population before many months are over (though God grant I may be wrong), I cannot help thinking that something more is requisite than merely providing rice on relief works. I am strongly of opinion that if Government were to establish a good supply of rice at any fixed point, and sell to the people who require rice at the market rate, or slightly under it, perhaps people would do all the transport for themselves, and buy in a stock (as far as the better-off are concerned) enough to last them till next crop can come in; the well-to-do have the money, but not the rice; the poorer have neither, and we must give them work to enable them to buy.

Say we take Raigunge as a centre, and Government puts down a large stock of rice there and would sell. I believe the whole country up to Laharee that could afford it would go and buy and save Government all the trouble and expense of importing to distant localities. A limit might be put on what each man should be allowed to buy at a time, but I should not be chary on that score; if a local man would take 400 or 500 maunds to an out-of-the-way part of the country from the Government depôt as a speculation for profit, I would let him do so; if he does not do it, Government must if it comes to actual famine.

I am quite aware that the course I am proposing is opposed to the orders of Government on the subject, and those orders of course will be strictly attended to; but I do not think I should be doing my duty unless I pointed out, as forcibly as I can, that I do not believe private trade will do anything perceptible to avert famine in this district, and that I do not believe the people, or at any rate some portion of them, will do what they can to help themselves if the means are put within their reach. Many men who would die sooner than work on the roads would think nothing of going 20 or 30 miles to buy rice to keep themselves and their families alive, and village munduls and large cultivators are quite aware of the importance of helping their poorer neighbours as much as possible if only for safety's sake.

To put the question in another form: when actual famine begins, as I fear it must in some places, would not Government strain every nerve to save people from dying of hunger? If so, anything that will mitigate that strain must, it appears to me, be beneficial even in a £ s. d. point of view; and if the people will themselves do the transport inland, it must be cheaper to Government than doing it for them, no matter what interference there may be with the strict rules of political economy.

I trust, I shall be excused for having ventured to state my opinion on the point, but the subject is one so terrible to contemplate that I do not think I should be justified in avoiding a declaration of my opinion which, however faulty it may be, is at any rate genuine and sincere.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Relief Commissioner, Rajshahy Division, No. 5 SR, dated Calcutta, January 3, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 125, dated 2nd December* (see above No. 113 of this series), reporting upon new sites selected for grain stores in the north and north-west of the Dinagepore District, and submitting your recommendation that Government should sell its grain at some place like Raigunge, whence petty dealers and villagers could carry it themselves to their villages for the support of themselves, their families, and their dependants.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor fully approves the orders you have issued for beginning golas at once at the places you have named. He has every confidence that your knowledge of the country has enabled you to choose the best routes for supplying these golas. But Sir George Campbell thinks that it will be very much better for you to supply your northern golas yourself from Raigunge, rather than trust to getting supplies up from Caragolah by the Purneah and Dingraghat road. As yet the Magistrate of Purneah has not been able to cross his grain over at the ferry nearly as rapidly as it comes to him: there is doubt whether he will be able to carry even the supply for his own district before the end of January; and the Lieutenant-Governor is of opinion that, so long as the Mahanuddee is navigable, you had better carry your own supplies up to Raigunge and distribute it yourself from there.

3. The second point on which you write is of the very greatest importance, and the Lieutenant-Governor is much obliged by your unreserved expression of opinion formed after full and careful inquiry on the spot. Your view is, that in the north and north-east of Dinagepore the stocks are very small; that there has been a rice crop of under four annas, and that there are absolutely no dealers who will import food from a distance, though there are a great many people who could afford to buy if only they could find sellers. You recommend that Government should, with the view of saving the people from starving, carry a great deal of rice to Raigunge and sell it there to petty dealers, village headmen, ryots, or any one who will pay for it at fair rates and carry it away. The Lieutenant-Governor cannot himself sanction this procedure without reference to the Government of India; for, as you observe, such a measure would be contrary to the principles laid down by His Excellency the Viceroy. At the same time the Lieutenant-Governor is satisfied that no better and more reliable information on a matter of this kind could be got than what is given by an officer like yourself, who has known the district for many years, and has now carefully sifted the facts on the spot.

Sir George Campbell will lay the matter before the Government of India, and will hope to communicate orders thereon shortly. Meanwhile, no effort should be spared to get up from Godagaree to Raigunge, and to the store-houses you are establishing in that direction, every single bag of rice that is being delivered at Godagaree. Mr. Dawson is sending off rice from Kooshtea to Godagaree as fast as he can; if necessary, other arrangements for expediting the transport to Godagaree shall be made. But the difficulty will be for you to get the grain up to Raigunge. If you can manage to do this as quickly as we send rice from Calcutta, we shall have, by the time the pressure comes, grain enough to carry a considerable proportion of the people in that part of the district through the famine, if famine actually occurs. Your very special attention will therefore have to be given to collecting large numbers of boats for the voyage from Godagaree to Raigunge.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts to you, and to the Magistrates working under you, to carry the grain forward as soon as you possibly can, and to provide ample storage room in Northern and North-Eastern Dinagepore.

* The 25th is probably meant, as the letter arrived here on the 29th, and a demi-official letter to somewhat the same purport (so far as golas are concerned) was dated "Xmas Day."

Letter from W. LeF. Robinson, Esq., Relief Commissioner of Dinagepore, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 178, dated December 29, 1873.

I have the honor to submit herewith the fortnightly Narrative for the district of Dinagepore, bringing matters up to 28th December as far as they are known here.

A.—STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

No complaints have come to light regarding an insufficient supply of rice in the local markets. I went to several hauts myself when travelling in the north-western portion of the district during the past fortnight, and found rice procurable everywhere at a price, though it was a high one, ranging from ten to twelve seers of 80 tolahs a rupee.

The price of rice at Raigunge and the vicinity on the 20th was about twelve seers of 80 tolahs; at Patiram on 21st, it was Re. 1-14 to Rs. 2 a maund of 60 tolahs, which is about equivalent to ten or eleven of 80.

At Dinagepore itself the price is ten to twelve seers of 69, which is equivalent to twelve to fourteen seers of 80 tolahs. The greater part of the rice brought to the market is new rice.

There was no rainfall up to Saturday night; and Sunday morning there was a good shower accompanied by thunder; it came from the north and passed south and south-east apparently. I found on Sunday morning that the rain which had fallen during the night had saturated the ground to a depth of 4 inches, and there was a very considerable addition to the fall before 2 p. m. Wherever this rain has fallen much benefit will result, both as enabling the people to plough in preparation for the next bhadoi crop and in benefiting whatever cold-weather crops are in the ground. The only thing hurt by it will be mustard, still in flower; but as the greater part by far has flowered, the advantage to the grain, which will swell, will more than compensate the small loss of the few remaining flowers. No cases of actual destitution have been brought to notice during the fortnight, nor has there been any great increase of grain thefts or robberies; one case I have heard of in which a man had some rice which he insisted on selling in spite of the remonstrances of his friends and neighbours. When he had sold and realized the money, some of them went to rob him of it, and as he recognized one of them, they cut his head off to avoid detection. There is nothing to add fresh since the date of the last narrative regarding the state of the country.

B.—RELIEF WORKS.

Work has been commenced during the past fortnight on two new roads—1st, from Bindole, to connect with the Purneah-Dingraghat line and also a branch to Harreepore; 2nd, Neckmurd to Bodaseree, to connect with the Purneah-Kishengunge line. The first is in charge of a Public Works Department overseer, the second in charge temporarily of Baboo Hurrish Chunder (late Chanchal surveyor) till I get another man, which I shall do almost immediately.

There are now five sub-divisions for work:—

1st.—Raigunge and its vicinity, under Mr. Jones.

2nd.—Gungarampore and its vicinity, under Baboo, Hurree Mohun Chunder, Sub-Deputy.

3rd.—Patiram and Patnitola, under Mr. Finucane, Assistant Magistrate and Collector, and two new ones above mentioned; besides the three ordinary ones under the district engineer for the repair of the district roads, which are now on, 1st, the road from Maldah to Dinagepore; 2nd, Dinagepore to Darjeeling; 3rd, Dinagepore to Godagaree. Local labourers come in freely, and all professional coolies, such as Dhangurs, Sonthals, &c., are sent on to the railway works. Mr. Jones on the 23rd had 2,500 coolies at work, and expected another 1,000 before long in Raigunge and its vicinity. Baboo Hurree Mohun Chunder has over 3,000 in Gungarampore and its vicinity, and Mr. Finucane at Patiram and Patnitola between 400 and 500; and at Neckmurd the first day work was opened 44 men came, and I am quite sure plenty more will follow suit.

Work is paid for at the same rate as before, $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas for men, 2 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 anna to boys per day. It is very difficult to fix one rate of task-work which will be fair to all, as ordinary ryots are not and cannot be on a par with what may be called professional coolies; but in conjunction with the district engineer I am trying to arrange a scale for task-work. As a rule, the labourers bring their own tools, but a supply of 2,000 kodolies and 500 picks is on its way from Rajmehal.

C.—TRANSPORT OF FOOD.

Mr. Jones, with my sanction, has entered into a contract with Baboo Janoki Nath Giree Gossein at Raigunge to bring up a batch of rice from Godagaree to Raigunge for Rs. 16 per hundred maunds. If the plan answers, it will be extended if possible. The Gossein has property in Maldah, and can get his own boats there; he has also been doing good service in other ways, which I shall have to bring to the notice of Government hereafter.

At old Maldah 1,998 maunds of rice have arrived from Godagaree for Tamboolee. The Magistrate of Dinagepore has been directed to arrange for its conveyance either by cart or pack-bullocks to Tamboolee.

One of the boats with the rice for Neetpore from Godagaree stuck on a wreck in the Mohanunda and sank, and the cargo was recovered and being dried. I have received information that 3,000 maunds of Government rice from Godagaree reached Neetpore on the 23rd instant; and I have also heard from Patnitola that the first batch of rice had reached that place from Goalundo, but the sub-inspector has not given the amount actually received.

D.—STORAGE OF GRAIN.

Golas, where they can be found ready-made, have been secured at all the places sanctioned; and where necessary to build, the work is being pushed on as fast as possible.

E.—ADVANCES.

No advances have been made to private parties for purchase of grain, as no one will undertake the task. I have personally made offers to lots of men, who I thought might be willing to take an advance, but they all beg to decline. I have had one application from a zemindar for a loan of Rs. 5,000 for the improvement of his estate, which I hope to dispose of tomorrow; but I am quite certain that private enterprise will do almost nothing towards supplying food in large quantities as a mercantile speculation.

F.—CHARITABLE RELIEF.

There has been as yet no necessity for any measures of relief. I am engaged in preparing a list of places at which I think relief centres may be needed in Dinagepore for the assistance of the present Magistrate and Collector.

G.—FINANCIAL RESULTS.

The total expenditure from the treasury from the 14th up to the 28th instant was Rs. 8,755-14-0.

There was error in my last report in saying that the expenditure for the first fortnight was Rs. 18,290-14-8; some items drawn by the present Magistrate had been omitted from the account sent me. The sum actually expended from the treasury for the first fourteen days of December was Rs. 11,146-3-8, making a total of Rs. 19,902-1-8 from 1st to 28th December.

The Magistrate and Collector of Dinagepore will from today manage all relief operations in Dinagepore, and send in all the district returns, which have been or may be called for. I have explained to him personally what I have been doing, and in what way, and have drawn up a memorandum for him showing exactly how matters stand now, and the objects I have had in view.

No. 116.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 41, dated January 6, 1874.

Pending the issue of any further instructions upon your letter No. 7 SR of the 3rd instant (see p. 180), forwarding a communication from the Relief

Commissioner, Rajshahye Division, I am desired to enquire whether the Government of Bengal has any information as to preparations for the establishment of relief committees in the districts concerned, and if so, I am to request that it may be at once submitted to the Government of India.

2. I am also to ask for any maps that may be available showing the places mentioned.

3. I am further to enquire what supplies of grain have already been allotted and sent into these districts, and how much is estimated to be sent in by the 31st instant; and I am to add that the Government of India is ready to meet further demands, should any excess over the amount estimated for this district in No. 579, dated the 13th December (see p. 91), be considered necessary by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

No. 117.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 84, dated Calcutta, January 12, 1874.

I am now directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 7SR of the 3rd instant, (see p. 180) with enclosure from the Relief Commissioner of Rajshahye of the 25th ultimo, and the reply of the Bengal Government thereto.

2. The proposal made by the Lieutenant-Governor upon Mr. Robinson's representations is that he may be permitted to authorize the sale of Government grain "to the local public" in certain tracts where local trade can in no degree be trusted to supply the wants of the people; in other words, that in cases like the present the Government should undertake the supply of food and the regulation of its price in addition to relief works and relief operations.

3. The population of the tract affected is not stated, but, judging from the map, it would seem to include the "Hemtabad" and "Thakurgaon" thannals, or police divisions; and Mr. Robinson gives it as being 45 by 30 miles, or 1,350 square miles. The average density of population by census report is 364 to the square mile; consequently the population would be 491,400 souls, or about half a million, or one-third of the total population of the Dinagepore District.

4. It is difficult to understand what circumstances can immediately occur which would render such an undertaking by Government desirable—an undertaking which would cut off the hope of the supply of food by the ordinary means.

5. There may ultimately be some tracts towards the northern portions of the district where Government may well make advances to persons, especially landholders, who may be willing to import grain from a distance in accordance with paragraph 26 of the Governor General's Resolution of the 7th November 1873 (see p. 22). And this district is just one of those localities where the zemindars should be incited by the local officers to do their duty on this occasion by their peasantry. To such admonitions may be added the intimation that if funds are needed for the importation of grain from a distance, or for the employment of distressed persons on the permanent improvement of the land, advances are obtainable from the Government treasury. The Government of India indeed observe with regret that in a subsequent letter, dated the 29th, Mr. Robinson states that his efforts in this direction have hitherto proved unavailing. Nevertheless these efforts should be persevered in, especially if the distress should become more severe.

6. If, as Mr. Robinson apprehends, the outbreak of distress is imminent, then it would be satisfactory if he gave particulars to enable Government to form some judgment as to the measures to be undertaken. But he has not done so. It does not even appear whether the relief works have been commenced on any considerable scale, nor whether they are likely to be attended by any large number of labourers.

7. Neither is it stated whether additional relief works can be devised in the event of the works now contemplated proving insufficient to employ those who are in distress, though willing to work for their living.

8. Doubtless there are persons who will not work even to save themselves from hunger, as Mr. Robinson justly observes; but it is not stated whether this class is likely to prove numerous in Dinagepore District, from considerations of caste or other social reasons.

9. Again, Mr. Robinson is doubtless aware that one important symptom of coming distress is the range of local prices. Upon that he makes no particular report, and in his subsequent letter he even states that no complaints have come to light of an insufficient supply of rice. It would be well that he should at once report upon this point. If there be any reason to expect that prices, though comparatively low at present, may soon rise with rapidity, such reason should be stated.

10. But if relief works do not prove sufficient, the consequence will be that a very large number of persons will come upon the relief committees. When Mr. Robinson writes of the supplies becoming exhausted or failing two months hence, he does not give any estimate as to what percentage of the population affected (assumed, as above shown, to be half a million) will come on the hands of the relief committees. He writes of having to feed the majority of the population before many months are over. But what exact percentage does this mean, and what number of people would that calculation give? In framing the calculation, he might derive assistance from the records of past famines in other districts. It would be well that he should frame such an estimate as soon as possible, so that arrangements may be made to transport stores of grain to the remotest places where they may be needed, so that they may be well in time.

11. But it should be understood publicly that the stores of Government grain are either for relief works or for relief committees and for no other purpose, so that any discouragement may be avoided as regards any local trade which may exist or may yet spring up.

12. Then, if the work of the relief committees is likely to be so urgent and extensive as Mr. Robinson apprehends, he should complete the organization of the committees as soon as possible, so that they may be ready for their business the moment that occasion arises.

13. Further, it would be well if Mr. Robinson were to observe and collate information upon the local grain trade. Without at all impugning the correctness of his information, the Government may observe that it is *prima facie* probable that in a district where an export trade in grain has long flourished, an import trade would spring up as soon as the rise of prices shall afford an adequate inducement.

14. Mr. Robinson seems to believe that numbers of people will proceed to long distances to procure food, and that some will do this even to procure grain for distribution among the villages. If this be so, then there is good hope that all the relief centres will be well attended by applicants who cannot, by labour or otherwise, obtain sustenance, and in such a case the relief committees, if well organized, will prove successful, nor will they want, under such circumstances, for persons to serve as members of sub-committees or as agents.

15. Mr. Robinson seems to be aware of the advantages of water communication. But although people may be, as he anticipates, willing to resort to relief centres, still, if these centres be sufficiently numerous, especially in the more remote tracts, the questions relating to country carriage must force themselves on his consideration.

16. From these remarks it will be understood that although Mr. Robinson's proposals are not, in principle, opposed to the policy of Government for exceptional localities, there is not sufficient evidence to show the expediency of carrying them out in the district concerned. In my letter No. 41 of the 6th instant (see p. 186), the Government of Bengal was authorized to exceed the previously sanctioned estimate of grain required for the Dinagepore District; but it should be remembered that Government depôts for the sale of food are to be the last resource to supply the deficiency of trade, when this deficiency is unmistakably established, and not to take the place of trade; for if the population were to become entirely dependent on these depôts, as it soon would, the result must be a pressure which the machinery of relief would be inadequate to meet.

17. While, therefore, it may prove necessary to establish depôts for the sale of Government grain in isolated localities beyond the reach of regular trade, such localities must be carefully defined by the limits of proved necessity. *Primâ facie* it would not appear that Raigunge (where Mr. Robinson would apparently desire to store grain for sale) fulfils the above condition. On the contrary, it is understood to be a place of considerable trade.

No. 118.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 88 SK, dated Calcutta, January 12, 1874.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 41, dated 6th January (see p. 186), asking for information regarding the organization of relief committees, and the allotment of Government grain in the Rajshahye Division.

2. The following is the latest information received by this Government regarding the establishment of relief committees. It is extracted from the District Narratives for the fortnight ending 27th December:—

Moorsheadabad.—A meeting has been called for 3rd January in the Sudder Sub-division, and for 1st January in the Jungypore Sub-division.

Dinagepore.—The committees have not yet been established. Lists of places at which it is proposed to establish relief centres have not yet been received, but they are in course of preparation.

Maldah.—A district committee has been established, and branch committees at Old Maldah and Kaliachuck.

Rajshahye.—Nothing has been completed as yet. The Collector reports that he has consulted the Commissioner regarding arrangements.

Rungpore.—A relief committee has already been appointed at the head-quarter station. A branch one is to be established at once at Goibunda.

Bograh.—A meeting has been called for 7th January, at which preliminary arrangements will be settled.

3. The Lieutenant-Governor has allowed district officers to postpone this part of their arrangements to more pressing necessities. He has lately issued a circular letter, copy of which is herewith submitted (see p. 170), reminding them of the instructions contained in paragraph 18 of circular No. 80 of 17th November. Today the Lieutenant-Governor has issued a further letter containing instructions for the constitution and guidance of committees, pending the issue of the rules now being prepared, of which also copy is annexed (see p. 171).

4. A map of the places fixed upon for relief centres will be submitted when the lists of these places come in.

5. The allotments of Government grain to the districts of the Rajshahye Division, as originally made, are detailed in Appendix B to the Fifth Special Narrative. Since the submission of that Narrative an increased assignment of 1,55,000 maunds of the reserve has, in communication with the Commissioner of Rajshahye, been allotted to the Rajshahye Division, and the assignments to each district of that Division now stand thus—

	Mds.
Dinagepore	1,95,000
Maldah	20,000
Rajshahye	20,000
Bograh	20,000
Rungpore	70,000
Northern Bengal Railway	1,00,000
TOTAL	4,25,000

6. The following information regarding the arrival of rice at grain depôts has been compiled from the last set of fortnightly Narratives. Three thousand maunds of rice has arrived at Neetpore, and an amount, not stated, at Putni-

tola, in the Dinagepore District. At Rampore Beaulah and at Godagaree, in the Rajshahye District, 9,222 maunds and 13,241 maunds, respectively, have been received; while at Nowgong, on the borders of Bograh, 2,641 maunds have come to hand. At Kaligunge on the Brahmapootrah, in the Rungpore District, the arrival of 3,725 maunds is advised. At Old Maldah, in the Maldah District, 1,998 maunds are already in store. From 5,000 to 10,000 maunds of grain for the North Bengal Railway works has reached and been stored at the works, and 5,000 maunds went by Rajmehal and has reached Dinagepore and Parbuttypore, and the remainder was by the date of last reports either at Hilec or Sultanpore. A very small consignment has reached Bograh from Serajgunge. This information, it is to be remembered, is only brought down to 27th December. It is only valuable as showing the points to which the stream of importation had reached on that date. It is known that 1,25,000 maunds have been started for the interior of the Rajshahye Division from the river-side railway stations; but, as above stated, only the quantities above noted had been reported to Government, at the end of December, as actually stored at their final destination. A circular, urging the importance of pushing forward the transport of grain, has lately been issued.

No. 119.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 208, dated January 23, 1874.

In reply to your letter No. 88SR of the 12th instant (see above, No. 118 of this series), I am directed to state that, as the information therein given as regards the relief committees has been extracted from the District Narratives for the fortnight ending 27th December, since which date very considerable progress will have been made in organizing them, the Governor General in Council will await your reply to the request made in paragraph 5 of my subsequent letter No. 83 of the 12th instant (see p. 168).

2. And as regards transport arrangements and the progress made in conveying from the railway stations to the relief centres the amount of grain allotted to each, the Government of India will await the reports and returns called for in my letter No. 82 of the same date (see p. 166).

No. 120.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 155, dated January 19, 1874.

It has been brought to the notice of the Government of India that while Government grain conveyed by the East Indian Railway is carried away and cared for as soon as practicable after it reaches its destination, grain belonging to private traders sent by the same line is left exposed at the railway stations owing to the difficulty of getting carriage and labour to remove it, nearly all the available carriage and labour having already been taken up for Government purposes. Stringent orders* have already been issued to check all such interference with private trade, and meanwhile arrangements have been made for the supply of a sufficient number of tarpaulins to protect the grain of private traders from exposure at the railway stations. I am further directed to state that the Governor General in Council is pleased to authorize the Government of Bengal to issue the necessary orders for reimbursing any expense to which such traders may have been put by demurrage in consequence of available transport having been taken up by Government.

* See paragraphs 6 and 7 of our letter No. 126 of the 17th instant (see p. 178).

No. 121.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 6, dated Calcutta, January 23, 1874.

We have the honor to forward the Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal from the 16th to the 22nd instant*.

2. The Narrative extends over a short period, and is submitted in order that the dates of future Narratives may fit in more conveniently with the dates of the reports from local officers.

3. The district reports show that in the south of the Patna Division, and, on the whole, throughout the Bhaugulpore and Rajshahye Divisions, the recent rainfall, although not large, has done good; and altogether the prospects of the rubbee throughout that area of country cannot be considered as unsatisfactory.

4. The latest price lists show a slight increase in prices generally throughout the country but the price of common rice in Calcutta has somewhat fallen.

5. Our anticipation that the most severe distress would occur in the northern part of the district of Tirhoot and in the districts of Chumparun and Sarun has been realized, and the time has now arrived to put into full activity those measures upon which we originally determined to meet that distress. It is clear from the reports of the district officers that they are fully alive to the responsibility which rests upon them, and that active measures are being taken for the organization of relief committees and for the provision of relief works. We have, in communication with the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, associated Sir Richard Temple with His Honor, for the purpose of providing the presence of a high officer in Behar with full powers to direct and control the relief operations under the general instructions which have been issued by the Government of India and the Government of Bengal (see below Nos. 122, 123 and 124 of this series).

6. We believe that the presence of Sir Richard Temple on the spot, with full authority will materially conduce to the early and complete organization of those operations.

7. Your Grace is aware that Sir Richard Temple will succeed Sir George Campbell as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at the commencement of the hot season, and it will be an additional advantage that he should personally visit the distressed districts previous to his assumption of the Government.

8. We have at our hand ample supplies of grain from beyond the sea to meet any demands that may come upon us from the distressed districts. Notwithstanding this provision, Your Grace will be glad to observe, from the reports of the district officers generally, that private trade is active, especially in Behar, and that the measures taken by Government for the importation of grain in connection with the relief of distress are understood by the traders and have not interfered with their operations.

9. Our letter No. 126 of the 17th January (see p. 178), addressed to the Government of Bengal, will show the view that we then entertained as to the sufficiency of the arrangements for transport and the organization of relief committees. Although full particulars of the powers of local transport have not yet been received, we are glad to be able to assure Your Grace that, so far as we can judge from present information, every effort is being made to convey the supplies to the depôts that have been selected, and that the Commissioner of Patna has availed himself of the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Mackenzie, of the Commissariat Department, for the organization and supply, if necessary, of means of transport throughout that division. Further assistance from the commissariat will be rendered in other parts of the distressed districts, and we are prepared, after communication with His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, who has willingly rendered his assistance in the matter, to reinforce the local staff by a considerable number of excellent officers of the Quarter-Master General's Department, should their services be required. We have immediately complied with the request of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to hire steamers for the transport of grain across the Ganges. We have, moreover, given full authority for the construction of any temporary appliances on the railroads that may be necessary to prevent a block of grain at the different stations, as

* Printed in a separate volume.

also for such an increase in the number of engines as the East Indian Railway Agency may consider desirable.

10. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has undertaken to submit the regulations for the relief committees on Saturday next, on which day we hope to be able finally to arrange for their issue. We shall then decide upon a day for the institution of the central relief committee at Calcutta.

11. We propose to make an arrangement by which ships bringing rice from Chittagong and Orissa shall be relieved of all port charges at Calcutta, other than those for the payment of services actually rendered. By this means the disadvantage that at present exists with respect to shipments of rice from those ports to Calcutta, as compared with shipments to other ports, will be removed.

12. Further, we have undertaken to establish a systematic scheme of Government emigration from Bengal to British Burmah, and we have appropriated a sum of £50,000 as a fund from which advances will be made to cover the expenses of the transport of the emigrants, who will be required to refund a portion at any rate of those expenses, the refund being credited to the original grant. The measure appears to us highly desirable in itself, and the present opportunity is most favorable for commencing it, as we have arranged for very favourable rates for the conveyance of emigrants to Burmah in the vessels employed by Government for bringing rice from that province to Calcutta. We shall have the honor of forwarding to Your Grace the details of this measure by the next mail.

No. 122.

Circular from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Secretaries to the Governments of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, and to the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and the Central Provinces, Nos. 194-197, dated January 21, 1874.

I am directed to forward herewith a notification * published in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* of this day's date on the subject of the deputation of the Hon'ble Sir R. Temple, K.C.S.I., to the distressed districts of Bengal, and I am to request that any communication from Sir R. Temple may be considered as proceeding from the Government of Bengal.

No. 123.

Notification by the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 178, dated Fort William, January 21, 1874.

The accounts which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has communicated to the Viceroy of the present condition of parts of Behar, make it, in His Excellency's opinion, essential that some high officer should be present on the spot, with full powers to direct and control the operations in connection with the relief of scarcity and distress under the general instructions which have been issued by the Government of India and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

2. As it is impossible, under existing circumstances, that the Lieutenant-Governor should himself proceed to Behar, the Viceroy has agreed to associate with His Honor, for the above purpose, the Honorable Sir Richard Temple, who will visit first Behar, and afterwards other parts of the country where distress may exist, with full authority, to be delegated to him by the Government of Bengal, to direct the relief operations.

3. It has been arranged that the Lieutenant-Governor will give the necessary orders to all officers concerned.

4. Sir Richard Temple will report his proceedings from time to time to the Government of Bengal.

* No. 178, dated January 21, 1874. See below No. 123 of this series.

No. 124.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna and Bhaugulpore, and to all Magistrate-Collectors in those Divisions, No. 230, dated January 22, 1874.

I am directed to enclose copy of a *Gazette Extraordinary* issued by the Government of India on the 21st January 1874 (see above No. 123 of this series), and to ask your attention to its contents. Immediate effect will be given to the arrangement in accordance with which the Hon'ble Sir Richard Temple is about to proceed, first to the Patna and afterwards to the Bhaugulpore Division. He has arranged to leave Calcutta on the evening of Saturday, the 24th current, and he proposes to proceed direct to Patna and to reach Seetamarhee in the north of Tirhoot by the 26th or 27th of the month. All orders connected with scarcity and relief which he may give are to be received as the orders of the Government. All things must now, Sir George Campbell considers, yield to the necessities of the country, and any matters affecting general arrangements, such as the posting or transfers of particular officers, and everything else by which the relief services may be promoted, should also be arranged in accordance with Sir Richard Temple's suggestions and wishes, and may be carried out in anticipation of the orders of Government. The Lieutenant-Governor is sure that he need not ask the Commissioners to take every measure to facilitate Sir Richard's journeys and inquiries, and in every possible way to further the object of his mission, and thoroughly to carry out the measures which he may direct. Sir Richard will be accompanied by Mr. C. E. Buckland, c.s., and Mr. G. Hart, who will conduct his official correspondence.

2. Sir Richard Temple will communicate to Government in brief form any important orders which he may give, but it will best secure continuity of information and action, as well as save Sir Richard much official correspondence when on tour, if it be arranged that all that is done under his instructions should be stated in the usual narratives and reports, exactly as would be the case if the orders were those of Government. That course is accordingly to be followed.

If verbal orders are given, they will be noted; and if Sir Richard desire it, the Commissioners and local officers should inform the Government at once of so much as it is necessary specially to report, so as to save the necessity of his doing so when he is travelling rapidly.

3. The subjects of transport, of relief works, and of charitable relief, will no doubt engage mainly Sir Richard Temple's attention, and the Lieutenant-Governor is sure that the Commissioners will take full advantage of his presence to obtain a settlement of all that it is possible to settle on these most important subjects.

4. We have now gone through a period of much effort and experiment in regard to the means and the routes used for the transport of grain; we see our way much better than we did, and latterly our arrangements have been getting into better working order, larger quantities of Government grain are sent forward than was at first the case, and we understand better our needs and capabilities. The time has come then to go systematically over our plans, settle what we can do with our own resources, for what we must get aid from outside, and how the whole of these resources are to be administered and worked. All that can be added to the information already in the hands of Government, the Lieutenant-Governor trusts the Commissioners and local officers will now be able to lay before Sir Richard Temple on the spot, so that he may be in a position to give the necessary authority for anything further that is required, and to arrange matters in the best way.

5. The number of relief works already laid out and commenced is large, and it is hoped that in most cases we have a sufficiency of such works to meet the demand that has arisen or is likely to arise for some time; but in some cases there is still want of more working plans, especially in parts of Tirhoot and Monghyr; and everywhere we must feel that we do not yet know the extent to which the demand for employment may reach. We must be thoroughly prepared to give work to all the necessitous who are capable of working, while we must make every effort to render that work a lasting benefit to the

country rather than infructuous, as has too often happened when such things are undertaken in haste. It is hoped that the timely provision for occasions such as these, made under the orders of July 1872, has gone very far to render us prepared in most districts, but the present calamity has come upon us the very season following those orders and before the new public works' machinery has had time to do all that might be expected of it. The plans prepared under the orders of last year are not equally good and complete in all districts. Some of the plans since made have necessarily been somewhat hurried, and to some of them engineering and sanitary objections have been found. It is, therefore, very desirable that the schemes for each district should be once more very carefully gone over, supplemented as far as necessary, and finally revised and settled, with all the knowledge and information that can be obtained on the spot, and with the authority which will be exercised in communication with the local officers by an officer in Sir Richard Temple's position. The Lieutenant-Governor is sure that this subject has the very special attention of all officers of distressed districts, and that they will be able to present their plans and views in a clear and satisfactory manner.

6. It has become evident that the time for undertaking operations for charitable relief in Tirhoot, Chumparun, and some other districts has come, or is rapidly approaching. Preliminary instructions have been issued, and regular rules on the subject are being considered and settled. As soon as they are issued, it will be for the Commissioners and local officers to satisfy Sir Richard Temple that arrangements are made for giving effect to them in the promptest and most efficient manner. It is unnecessary to dwell here on the great delicacy and difficulty of the questions which arise in regard to the distribution of charitable relief, and the care necessary to give the maximum of aid to the helpless with the minimum of abuse; to go, on the one hand, as far as the interests of humanity and a due care for the lives of the people imperatively demand, and on the other to avoid any laxity which may render the population too dependent on the Government, and, in fact, pauperise them. All these considerations will be weighed in settling the rules, and when they are issued any necessary instructions will be given.

7. Much of the effect of our relief operations of all kinds will depend on the due posting of the right officers in the right places and the due apportionment of their duties and responsibilities. It has already been said that every attention must be paid to Sir Richard Temple's wishes in this respect. Commissioners will give immediate effect to any directions he may give regarding the posting of the various local officers under their control and the distribution of their duties, and the Lieutenant-Governor will at once attend to any suggestions which may come from him in regard to general arrangements and the appointment or posting of higher officers.

8. All expenditure which Sir Richard Temple considers necessary and directs may be incurred, also any temporary establishments which he deems proper may be entertained. In Tirhoot (which Sir Richard Temple will first visit) no time must be lost in preparing any poor-houses or making other arrangements which may be necessary, in anticipation of the action of the relief committees, and the funds must be advanced for doing all that Sir Richard Temple thinks ought to be done, and doing it with the utmost promptness.

9. The standing rules and instructions of the Government will be communicated to Sir Richard Temple direct, and copies of the fortnightly reports and other important papers will be sent to him as soon as printed. But as regards matters of the second degree of importance it will not be attempted to send from this office a great mass of papers. The Lieutenant-Governor will trust to local officers to lay before Sir Richard Temple on the spot from the records of their own offices all the necessary papers. Whenever he is within easy reach, his orders may be taken on any questions which may arise (the Government being informed as directed in the first part of this letter), and all information of importance must, under the same circumstances be speedily communicated to him. When a matter referred to Sir Richard is so important as to be communicated at the same time to the Government also, officers should be careful to note that they have referred it for Sir Richard's order, so that double orders may not issue. Any arrangements which he may deem

best should be made for putting Sir Richard in possession of the weekly reports and the contents of the fortnightly narratives with the least possible delay. It will probably be best that a copy of the weekly report for the *Gazette* should be sent to him direct from all the districts of the division in which he may be at the time, and he should see and pass orders on the fortnightly reports, either the Commissioner's or Magistrate's copy being presented to him, or the copy intended for Government being sent through him if he wishes it. Probably he will not desire to have separate copies made for himself except in cases in which he may especially so direct.

10. The Lieutenant-Governor believes that it is not necessary to elaborate instructions in greater detail at present. He is sure that all officers will work heartily together for the common good, and that as he and Sir Richard Temple will, he is confident, act in thorough concert, so all his local officers also, understanding fully Sir Richard's official authority and personal weight, will afford him their very utmost assistance and carry out his instructions in a manner which will fully satisfy him of the efficiency and sufficiency of arrangements designed to relieve the distressed districts.

No. 125.

Circular from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye, and to the Magistrate-Collectors of Distressed Districts, No. 267SR, dated January 26, 1874.

I am directed to forward copy of the instructions to relief committees as they have been finally settled in communication with the Government of India*. I am to state that a provisional central committee will be now appointed. Meanwhile district and sub-divisional committees are to be at once appointed and to be actually set to work wherever the Commissioner or the Magistrate-Collector may think it desirable. (See part I, rules 3 and 4). The names of district committee-men will be notified in the *Calcutta Gazette* by the Commissioner, and of sub-divisional committee-men by the Magistrate-Collector.

2. Any list of subscriptions or minutes of proceedings received by the editor of the *Calcutta Gazette*, under the countersignature of the Magistrate-Collector, will be published in the Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette*. Pending instructions from the central committee, the Magistrate or the sub-divisional officer will supply the district and sub-divisional committee with stationery, &c., from the district or sub-divisional store, and with such advance of funds as may be needed until subscriptions come in or until money is received from the central or district committees.

3. It will be observed that the instructions are short, and that very wide discretion is left to the sub-divisional committees as to the way they shall administer the funds placed at their disposal. But upon these sub-divisional committees is laid (Rule 7) the responsibility of taking care that relief operations are properly carried on, that the operations are constantly inspected, and that relief operations are extended to every place in the sub-division which may be in need of relief.

4. Commissioners will be good enough to issue very early orders for providing very ample storehouse room at central sites for the accommodation of reserves of Government grain from which sub-divisional committees can draw supplies of grain.

5. Bengalee translations of this circular and of the rules will follow this circular by the next post, and the Commissioner of Patna is requested to have Hindee translations prepared at once, and printed or lithographed at Patna for distribution to all the districts in the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions. If copies cannot be struck off at Patna, manuscript Hindee copies may be sent to Calcutta or Benares with an order for the immediate transmission of the number of copies required.

It may be well to mention that, for the present, there should be only one district committee for the Tirhoot District.

* These rules are given in Appendix A.—They were subsequently amended. The rules as amended and actually used during the famine are given on page 288.

No. 126.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 193, dated January 20, 1874.

I am directed to suggest, for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, that it would facilitate the transport of grain to the distressed districts north of the Ganges if commissariat agency were given to superintend and expedite the passage of grain across the river. All the accounts seem to show that it is in getting the consignments across the sands and running stream that most delay and difficulty occurs, and a trained subordinate agency is needed to superintend this in detail. Once on firm ground beyond the river, carts are said to be abundant. The scheme of commissariat employment for the Patna Division, which is being considered by the Commissioner and Colonel Mackenzie, has not yet been received. But the Lieutenant-Governor would be glad to have an officer and some active subordinates for Sahibgunge and Rajmehal at once, and perhaps for other places hereafter. Mr. Hankey will be asked to report where such agency is required. But if the Commissary General were instructed to place himself in communication with this Government, details could be easily settled.

No. 127.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 182, dated January 21, 1874.

In reply to your letter No. 193 of the 20th instant (see above No. 126 of this series), applying for further commissariat agency to superintend and expedite the transport of grain at Sahibgunge and Rajmehal, I am desired to state that the Military Department has been requested to instruct the Commissary General to place himself in personal communication with the Government of Bengal on the subject.

When any definite arrangement has been made, I am to request that it may be reported in detail to this office.

No. 128.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 7, dated Calcutta, January 30, 1874.

In continuation of our former despatches regarding the scarcity in Bengal, we desire to report the progress of affairs during the past week.

2. On the 24th instant we held a conference with the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal attended by a considerable number of experienced officers, and we discussed at length the principles on which the local and central relief committees should be formed and the rules by which they should be guided. We have forwarded these rules to the local Government for circulation among the district officers, and we enclose a copy of them*. We desire to call Your Grace's attention to the fact that we have not disregarded the varying circumstances of different localities; on the contrary, the rules contain an express provision to the effect that they are not intended to preclude relief committees or officers of Government from adopting special measures to relieve sudden or severe distress wherever it may occur. Nevertheless, we believe that, on the whole, the rules, as they stand, will be found to work well and to provide for some of the peculiar difficulties by which the relief of distress is attended in this country.

3. Among the subjects discussed at the conference, was the question of calling a public meeting at Calcutta in view to the constitution of a central

* These rules, as subsequently amended, are given on page 288.

committee, composed of official and non-official members, and charged with the duty of collecting subscriptions and aiding and supervising the district committees. We have often referred to this question and we have now decided on forming the central committee, not because the distress has already assumed proportions beyond the capacity of the local committees to cope with, but because in this as in other matters we think it better to be prepared beforehand with every measure that a sudden outbreak of severe distress may demand; whereas, if our arrangements were deferred until such a contingency actually arose, they would be less able to bear the unexpected pressure upon them. As to the constitution of the committee, we enclose our correspondence with the Government of Bengal; it will be seen that so far as superior agency is concerned, we are anxious to provide for the work of central relief being carried on with as little charge as possible upon the funds of the committee. We propose to hold the public meeting on the 4th proximo, of the result of which Your Grace will be informed next mail.

4. Sir Richard Temple, whose delegation to Behar we reported in our last despatch, left Calcutta on the evening of the 24th, and is already in the centre of the distressed districts. We await with interest the receipt from the Government of Bengal of intelligence as to his movements, and whether the estimate we have been led to form of the probable extent of the scarcity is confirmed by his observation and enquiries. We are also desirous to learn whether the measures that have been ordered by the Government of India and the local Government are really in that state of progress which district reports have led us to expect, and of which we have assured Your Grace. While we feel great confidence in the exertions of the district officers, we anticipate much good from Sir Richard Temple's presence in Behar.

5. It is with no little satisfaction that we are able to report that on the 25th and 26th instant there was a heavy rainfall, varying from half an inch to three and a half inches, all over Bengal, and extending to Oudh and the southern portions of the North-Western Provinces. In Mirzapore it has been very beneficial. As regards the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions in Bengal, the rain is too late to do any appreciable good to the cold-weather crops on the ground, but everywhere it will have done something to fill the tanks and promote the growth of fodder, besides rendering more easy the ploughing of the fields for the next early rice crop. A statement in detail will be found among the enclosures of our despatch, and it may be hoped that the rain which fell at Rajmehal, Bograh, Julpigoree and Rungpore, extended over the intervening district of Dinagepore from which actual reports have not yet been received. Unhappily, the rain has not extended to the chief spring-crop areas of the Patna and Bhaugulpore Divisions, though it reached to Rajmehal on the one side and to Lohardugga on the other. From Tirhoot and Chumparun no return has been received. In the Patna District there were only partial showers, amounting to about one-tenth of an inch, but even this cannot fail to have been useful to the low-land crops. What effect this fall may have upon prices has yet to be seen, but at present they still show the same gradual tendency to rise, and this so generally as to prove, coupled with the activity of trade, that the distressed districts are drawing largely upon the more favoured regions to the East and South.

6. We forward a correspondence with the Government of Bengal, prescribing the principle which, we think, should regulate the grant of advances to private companies for the purchase of grain in districts removed from the operation of ordinary trade, as also our reply to an appeal preferred by the landholders and others in the Hooghly District from the decision of the local Government refusing to remit the levy of the road cess or to suspend the ordinary land revenue demand.

7. As to the remission of the port dues at Calcutta, which we mentioned last week, we have decided for the present to postpone it.

8. We now enclose the details of our scheme of Government emigration to Burmah. The arrangements contemplated in the scheme are actually on foot, and we hope shortly to see setting in from Calcutta a steady and continuous stream of emigration, relieving the distressed districts of Bengal and diffusing itself over a province where a scanty labour market and a sparse agricultural population have hitherto formed the only obstacles to its development.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 8, dated January 30, 1874.

We have not before replied to Your Grace's despatch, Revenue, No. 20 of the 1st December last (see p. 121), because we desired in doing so to place before Her Majesty's Government, in a concise form, the measures that we have taken for the supply of grain to meet the anticipated scarcity in Behar and parts of Bengal.

2. We have to express our acknowledgments for the unreserved sanction, by anticipation, of any measures which we may consider necessary for the saving of life. We have derived much encouragement, under circumstances of some difficulty, from this mark of the confidence of Her Majesty's Government, as well as from the approval, which Your Grace's despatch conveyed, of our decision not to prohibit the export of rice from Indian ports. Upon this subject we enclose a minute written by the Viceroy, with which we entirely concur (see below No. 130 of this series).

3. Your Grace will have observed that, although some information has been given in our weekly despatches and in our correspondence with the Government of Bengal as to the measures we have taken for the provision of supplies of grain to the distressed districts, we have not yet reported the whole of those measures.

4. Obvious reasons, affecting the success of large transactions for the purchase of grain, induced us to adopt a prudent reserve upon the subject, and our desire to maintain that reserve was rendered stronger, because we received information that a general impression had begun to prevail that the Government proposed to take upon itself the duty of regulating the food supply of the people, and that there was much danger that such an impression would interfere with the activity of private trade in grain, to which alone we could look for supplies to meet any general deficiency in the markets situated upon the main lines of communication throughout the country.

5. The efforts of the Government of Bengal and of the local officers have, we are glad to say, succeeded in re-assuring the trade that their operations will not be interfered with by the Government, and the latest reports lead us to believe that the measures we have taken have not had an injurious effect upon private trade.

6. This being the case, and as our arrangements for the next three months are completed, there is no longer the same reason for silence, and we shall, therefore, proceed to inform Your Grace of the general arrangements which we have made.

7. In the despatch addressed by the Viceroy to Your Grace on the 7th November last (see p. 10), it was observed that "Her Majesty's Government may rely upon the Government of India not shrinking from using every available means at whatever cost to prevent, so far as they can, any loss of the lives of Her Majesty's subjects in consequence of the calamity which now threatens Bengal." In the remarks which the Viceroy made in replying to an address from the Municipality of Agra on the 24th of November (see p. 83), His Excellency, speaking on behalf of the Government of India, observed that "the Government is fully impressed with the grave responsibility which rests upon them, and we have taken without delay or hesitation measures in order to anticipate distress. Our aim and object is to prevent, so far as is possible, the loss of the lives of any of Her Majesty's subjects."

8. Your Grace is aware of the measures which were taken to enable the Government of Bengal and the local officers to commence at once public works of various kinds wherever there were people in want of employment; this course of action was indicated by former experience as well suited to preserve the general labouring population from arriving at a stage of distress at which any further relief might prove ineffectual.

9. In addition, however, to this provision, we contemplated from the first that, judging from the experience of the famine in Orissa and in Behar in the years 1860 and 1866, it would be necessary to store grain in the distressed districts for the payment in food of the labourers engaged upon Government works, should any scarcity of supplies exist at the places at which they might be

employed. The principles which we laid down for our guidance were expressed in the Resolution of Government of the 7th November. It was stated in that Resolution that, while the Government had confidence that the internal trade of British India would generally meet any deficiencies of grain in different parts of the country, exceptional circumstances might arise in which it would be necessary for Government to supplement private trade; that it was, therefore, proposed to lay in sufficient supplies of food for the sustenance of the labourers who would be employed upon the Government public works; that those supplies would be obtained in such a manner as to interfere as little as possible with the trade in grain; that the Government of India had arranged to obtain supplies from beyond the limits of the territories affected by the failure of the crops; and that purchases had consequently been ordered through the Government of Madras and the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah.

10. When that Resolution was issued, it was supposed that the condition of the country would have been such as to require the early assembly of a central relief committee at Calcutta, and our intention was to request the committee, when constituted, to undertake the purchase of such grain as might be required for gratuitous distribution. As, however, it was not considered desirable to constitute the central relief committee so soon, we took steps to provide supplies of food not only for the labourers employed upon public works, but also for such other relief operations as may be found necessary.

11. In order that no time might be lost in laying down supplies in those districts which are situated furthest from the railroads and rivers, we authorized the Government of Bengal to purchase supplies in the first instance, but subsequently we have considered it desirable to take upon ourselves the main provision of supplies.

12. We will now state shortly the extent of the operations of Government. The Government of Bengal have purchased 50,341 tons of food grains.

The purchases and arrangements of the Government of India have been as follows:—

	Tons.
Received in Calcutta up to present date	47,000
Arranged for and expected to be received in the next three months, say to the middle of May	244,500
TOTAL	291,500

The total provision of food grains, for which arrangements have been made up to the middle of May, amounts therefore to about 342,000 tons. This is exclusive of considerable quantities bought by the Court of Wards, and by planters, zemindars, and others, with funds advanced by Government.

13. Having thus informed Your Grace of our arrangements up to the present time, we will add a few remarks to show by what calculations we have been guided. We have not looked upon the prospects of the food supplies as indicating a probability that there will be a deficiency in the general food supply of Bengal which cannot be met from the resources which are obtainable by the trade from other parts of India; and nothing has occurred since the first intimation of the failure of the rice crop to lead us to entertain a different opinion.

14. Prices, no doubt, may be expected to rise to a high rate, and the rise must bring with it severe distress to a great number of people. The measures contemplated by Government are, that the distress, wherever it may arise, should be dealt with by relief works for the able-bodied, and by gratuitous relief for those who are unable to work, as well as for certain exceptional classes; but we have always endeavoured to avoid giving any impression that we could undertake the general supply and distribution of food. Such an undertaking on the part of Government is, in our opinion, an impossible task when the food supply of so vast a population is involved; while to have made the attempt would have paralyzed the exertions of the private traders, who in India, so far as inland trade is concerned, are numerous, and for the most part active and enterprising, and upon whom the main dependence of the country must always be placed.

15. We had, therefore, to calculate, from the best materials at our command, the probable number of persons who might require assistance from the

State. The total population of the districts threatened by the drought was estimated at 25 millions. The largest number of people who, upon former occasions, have been found to come upon relief works, or upon the charitable relief dispensed by relief committees and others, is 10 per cent. of the population of the most distressed tracts of country. We applied that proportion to the whole population of the districts threatened by the drought, and estimated that it would be possible that we should have to provide for the subsistence of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions of persons for a period of seven months. The food for that number, at the rate of one pound of rice per head a day, gave a requirement of about 240,000 tons of grain.

16. We thought, moreover, that it would be desirable to have in reserve a further quantity of grain, and we have therefore secured a supply of 100,000 tons in addition to the above estimate.

17. Such was the foundation upon which the measures of the Government were based; and the demands and estimates sent to us by the Government of Bengal, which were made independently, have strengthened our belief that the provision we have made will, so far as the supplies of food at the command of Government are concerned, be sufficient.

18. The first estimate forwarded to us by the Bengal Government was dated the 2nd of December. The Lieutenant-Governor wished, as a preliminary measure, to have in the distressed districts or ready in depôts before the end of January 1874 a sufficient quantity of grain to supply 5 per cent. of the inhabitants of those districts for three months, and His Honor thought that we should probably then be in a position to prevent starvation and to alleviate keen distress whenever it might occur to the end of April 1874;—before that quantity was consumed, we should know how far the scarcity was likely to deepen into a severe famine, and the Government of India would be able to order as much more rice as might be considered necessary. The Lieutenant-Governor added that his preliminary estimate included all requirements for imperial and local relief works, as well as for relief houses. In a further letter upon the subject, dated the 11th December, the Lieutenant-Governor remarked that if the quantity which he has demanded were in hand by the end of January, we might be able to bring in much more food during the remaining months, and to distribute it before the rains set in; but that we could hardly hope to distribute supplies beyond a total of 200,000 tons in the then distressed area by Government agency before the rainy season began. It was added that if distress should extend to, and Government aid be required in, Central and Western Bengal, a very much heavier amount might be distributed.

19. This first demand, which, in order to provide for a reserve, was put at 70,000 tons, was sanctioned, and has been obtained by the Government of Bengal and the Government of India well within the time mentioned.

20. On the 5th of January the Government of Bengal submitted a further estimate. The Lieutenant-Governor considered that provision ought to be made, *first*, for the continual flow of food towards distant and inaccessible distressed tracts, and *secondly*, for a reserve of food for the districts nearer the seaboard, the railway, and the navigable rivers, in case the supply should fail there. His Honor said that supplies received in Calcutta and despatched in February, March, and April would reach the interior before the beginning of the rainy season, and that supplies despatched in May, June, and July might reach many districts before the new crop came in; and he expressed a wish that 75,000 tons more of food grains might be placed at his disposal, to be forwarded into the less accessible parts of the Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye Divisions during the three months following the 1st of February. His Honor also considered that a reserve of 150,000 tons should be in possession of Government, and that it might be desirable to secure a further reserve of 75,000 tons in the months of May, June, and July.

21. We informed the Government of Bengal at once that a further quantity of 75,000 tons would be placed at their disposal; and Your Grace will observe that the additional provision we have made amounts to nearly 200,000 tons up to the middle of May. We anticipate no difficulty in increasing our supplies still further if in the course of the next three months additional necessities should appear to us to require it.

22. We are satisfied that the East Indian and Eastern Bengal Railways can carry ample supplies of grain to their principal stations. Every exertion is being made by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and the local officers to organize sufficient transport arrangements to carry the grain up the country, but the local difficulties which have to be encountered are very great.

23. From the best calculations that we can make, the cost of these supplies will amount to about three millions sterling—an expenditure which we have not hesitated to incur for the purpose of alleviating the effects of the calamity with which a large tract of country is threatened.

No. 130.

Minute by the Viceroy on the proposal to prohibit the export of rice from Indian ports, dated Calcutta, January 30, 1874.

When information was first received of the certainty that a portion of the winter rice crop would fail, the Government of Bengal * recommended that “the export of rice to foreign countries from the Indian dominions should be stopped.”

That recommendation was shortly afterwards repeated † in the somewhat wider terms—“that the exportation of food grains from British Indian ports might be prohibited;” and it was urged that if the larger measure was not approved, at any rate the export of common rice from Bengal ports should be prohibited.

At a later period the British Indian Association recommended ‡ that the export of food grains from British India, with the exception of Burmah, should be prohibited.

None of these suggestions have been adopted by the Government of India. As the question is one of great interest, I wish to state the reasons which led me to decide against their adoption during the time when it became my duty to exercise the full powers of the Government.

I do not think it necessary to discuss at length the proposal for the prohibition of the export of all food grains from Indian ports, including Burmah.

The exports of food grains from India consist chiefly of rice. Setting aside Bengal for the moment, about 700,000 tons of rice are exported annually from British Burmah, and 100,000 tons from Madras.

To have prohibited the export of rice would probably have inflicted a fatal blow on the trade of British Burmah. This is a sacrifice which I hardly think could have been seriously contemplated, especially as the Burmese rice is not usually consumed by the people of Bengal, and such quantities of it as either the Government might require for the distressed districts, or the trade might wish to purchase, were easily available without having recourse to such a measure.

The export of rice from Madras is almost entirely to Ceylon. I cannot look upon Ceylon as a “foreign country” on account of the accident that it is under the Colonial Office, and not under the Secretary of State for India. I think Ceylon is entitled to be treated as an integral part of British India; and we had no hesitation in assuring the Governor of Ceylon, who expressed some anxiety on the subject, that the usual export from India would not be stopped.

There is a small but increasing export of wheat, chiefly from Bombay and Kurrachee; to have stopped this could not have materially affected supplies in Bengal while it would have inflicted great injury upon the districts from which the trade is supplied.

The practical question appears to me to be whether the export of common rice from Bengal should have been prohibited; and to that proposal alone I will address such further observations as I have to make.

It will be convenient in the first place to state exactly the facts of the case.

In the year 1872-73 there was a larger export of rice from Bengal than in any year since 1864. The figures of the year 1872-73 may, therefore, be taken to show the extreme quantity of rice which is likely to be exported during the coming year.

The total exports of rice from Bengal ports amounted in round numbers in the year 1872-73 to 526,000 tons.

* No. 50 T, October 22, 1873 (see p. 2). | † No. 3300, November 7, 1873 (see p. 28).

‡ November 21, 1873 (see p. 72).

About 80,000 tons of this consists of "table rice," which, from its quality and price, is not suited to the ordinary consumption of the people. It could hardly have been intended to interfere with the export of this class of rice; for to have done so would have withdrawn from the growers means which they require in order to provide themselves with cheaper descriptions of food.

The total export of common rice was, therefore, in round numbers 446,000 tons; of this, 189,000 tons were sent to British Indian ports, including Ceylon, 160,000 tons to the West Indies, Mauritius, and other places where the consumers are mainly natives of India who have emigrated, and the remaining 97,000 tons to other parts of the world, principally to Great Britain and the Persian Gulf.

For my own part I entertain a strong opinion that it would have been very unwise to have interfered with the inter-portal trade, and that it would have been wrong, at any rate without considerable notice, to have stopped the main supply of the usual food of Bengal coolies in the colonies; but even if the whole export of common rice had been prohibited, the amount, reduced as it must necessarily be from the rise of prices, would be inconsiderable in comparison with the food supply for a population of 66,000,000, who require about 30,000 tons of food a day. It may, I think, be assumed that the addition taken by itself could have made no considerable difference in the general price of rice throughout Bengal.

It is said, however, that the action of Government in prohibiting the export of rice would have given confidence to the country, and have had a great effect in reducing prices.

It is very probable that, had the export of rice been prohibited, the action of Government would have had the effect of considerably lowering the price of rice. The confidence, however, that might have been thus produced would not have been justified by the addition which would have been made to the supplies of food.

One of the greatest safeguards against a famine in India, as in every country, lies in the diminution of consumption which naturally results from the rise of prices which the anticipation of scarcity occasions; and I can conceive no interference by Government more unwise than the reduction of prices below their natural level at the beginning of a period of scarcity. This would have been the effect which would probably have followed a prohibition of exports. The addition that would have been made to the general supplies of the country would in that case have been soon absorbed by the increase of consumption which would have been the result of an undue lowering of prices.

I will assume, however, for the purpose of argument, that I may be mistaken in my estimate of the effect which would have been produced upon prices by the prohibition of exports, and that the measure would have produced no undue reduction of prices. Consumption would upon this assumption not have been unduly stimulated, and there would have remained a distinct addition to the food supplies of the people.

Even on this assumption, I am of opinion that the advantage which would have been derived for the time would have been dearly purchased by the probable consequences for the future.

It seems to me that an export trade in food grains is a great advantage to a country in the condition of Bengal, raising its own food supplies, having no import trade in food, and whose population is poor. The existence of such an export ensures the production, in ordinary years, of more food than is required to meet the demands of the people. The natural rise of prices in times of scarcity must divert a portion of the ordinary export to home consumption, and thus a reserve easily and readily available is habitually maintained.

For example, the years 1865-66 and 1866-67 were years of scarcity, and the exports of rice from Bengal fell from 695,341 tons in 1864-65 to 336,211 tons in 1865-66, and to 222,659 tons in 1866-67. In the three months of October, November, and December last the exports were 64,425 tons, as compared with 113,277 tons in the corresponding months of 1872.

It follows that any measure that would diminish the export trade in common rice from Bengal would weaken the power of the country to meet any future period of scarcity. Trade is readily diverted from one channel to

another. The interference of Government with its free course may easily destroy it. If we refuse to supply our ordinary customers at any price, we oblige them to have recourse to other markets, and it is impossible to assume that when we want them again they will return to us.

Bearing in mind, therefore, the permanent harm that might be done by an interference with the export trade in food grains, and being satisfied that the Government could without difficulty bring in a larger quantity of rice than is exported even in ordinary years, I had no hesitation in preferring the latter course, and I see no reason to doubt the correctness of the conclusion at which I then arrived.

The British Indian Association in their argument, which is well and temperately stated, assume that the exports of rice from Bengal in the years 1865 and 1866 "if they could have been retained in the country, would have gone a great way in saving the famishing millions of Orissa."

The circumstances of the case do not seem to me to bear out this assumption. The loss of life in Orissa was not occasioned by a deficiency in the general food supplies of the country, but by the difficulty which the isolated position of Orissa presented to bringing supplies to the people who were suffering. In my opinion the same difficulty exists now, although in a less degree. The real difficulty of dealing with the present distress will probably be found, not in any general deficiency of food supplies throughout the country, or in a want of food supplies at the command of Government in Calcutta, or on the main lines of communication by railway or river, but in the transport of those supplies into the interior, and in making arrangements for distributing them.

The Government have gone far beyond the action heretofore taken in times of scarcity, by purchasing and laying in stores of grain for relief operations. Those stores of grain will, in the six months from November 1873 to May 1874, amount to about 340,000 tons, of which the greater portion will be obtained from beyond the sea; there will thus be an importation by Government about equal to the annual average export of rice to foreign countries from Bengal ports during the last five years.

The supplies purchased by Government will be especially applicable to the distressed districts, and therefore, I need hardly say, have a far greater effect for the relief of distress than an equal addition to the general food supplies of the country obtained by prohibiting exports could possibly produce; for the rice, the export of which would have been prohibited, would have come, not from the distressed districts, but from other parts, and must have been bought by Government or the trade, and carried to the distressed districts before being of use there.

In these remarks I have purposely abstained from alluding to the objections to an interference with the export trade of India, which depend upon general considerations connected with trade and finance, as I have desired to look upon the question entirely with reference to the present and future food supplies of the people.

No. 131.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 334 SR, dated January 31, 1874.

I am directed to submit the first set of weekly returns (not printed) of grain transport in the form directed by your letter No. 82, dated 12th January last (see p. 166).

2. I am to observe that these first returns, having been somewhat hurriedly sent out and made to meet the requirement of the Government of India, are not so complete or satisfactory as the Lieutenant-Governor could have wished, and that in some districts (especially in the Dinagepore District) the amount of Government grain which is returned as arrived at its final destination is still small. Grain does in fact take a long time to get through the various stages of transport and location till it is finally stored in the local depôts, and the returns of grain stored take a considerable time passing through

the various grades of employes and officers up to Government, so that the statements of actual stores are somewhat behind date. But the streams of which the heads have reached their final destination will now flow continuously, and Sir George Campbell hopes that subsequent returns may be more complete. Meanwhile he directs me to submit an approximate account of how the despatch and delivery of grain stands on the last day of January.

3. In the first place, the total quantity of grain despatched to the distressed divisions up to the 31st January stands thus:—

	Mds.
Despatched by Mr. Toynbee from Calcutta up to the evening of Saturday, 31st January	13,90,000
Received from the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces, and from local Patna Division dealers as nearly as can be ascertained...	4,30,000
Despatched or received from Eastern Bengal	1,11,000
TOTAL	19,31,000

It will thus be seen that something more than the whole amount which this Government had proposed for the supply up to the end of January had actually been despatched to the distressed districts before the end of January. Out of the total despatches the amount sent to the several divisions stands thus:—

	Mds.
Patna Division	10,10,000
Bhaugulpore	5,29,000
Rajshahye	3,92,000
TOTAL	19,31,000

A part of what goes into North Bhaugulpore and East Purneah is intended to supply the requirements of Tirhoot and Dinagepore. Of this amount it may moreover be generally said that, though many temporary blocks and difficulties have occurred, they have been solved in one way or another. We do not now know of any very serious blocks; the streams of grain are all moving forward.

4. According to the transport statements and the fortnightly narratives of 24th January the total amount of the receipts and despatches may be distributed thus:—

	Arrived at final destination according to return.	In transit as per district transport statements.	Not accounted for either since arrived or in transit, or on the railway, or in carts or in boats, or lying on the river side and other depôts.
	Mds.	Mds.	Mds.
Patna Division—(including Soane Canal)	3,03,582	93,183	6,14,235
Bhaugulpore	2,37,738	95,099	1,96,163
Rajshahye	1,30,955	88,398	1,73,491
TOTAL	6,72,275	2,76,680	9,83,889

The total shown as “in transit,” or “unaccounted for” is very large, and with reference thereto the following remarks are submitted:—

(a.)—The transport returns, though dated the 23rd and 24th January, cannot in reality give facts for remote parts of districts for any date later than the 16th or 18th. The Commissioner of Rajshahye indeed, who was on tour in the north of his division, writes on the reverse of his statement as if the 16th January was the latest date of his news from Kooshtea and other places. The Dinagepore returns show very little received, but the Rajshahye and Maldah returns show 88,398 maunds forwarded into that district. The telegrams from the officer in charge of the Patna Commissioner's office showed some days ago a much larger dispatch from the main depôts in that division than the district returns show.

(b.)—The Magistrate-Collector of Bhaugulpore speaks of his Koossee supply of 24,000 maunds having almost reached its destination by his last reports, and says that the rest of his stock on the north bank of the Ganges is going off day by day in carts. Evidently a large quantity is in course of slow transit in all the divisions.

(c.)—The Purneah statement does not reckon grain as received in the district until it reaches Caragola, so that the bags either at Sahebgunge or Colgong, or in boats crossing the river, do not come into the Purneah statement.

(d.)—Mr. Toynbee's despatches from Calcutta up to the 31st January would be nearly a fortnight in advance of the receipts in most districts up to the 20th or 21st January; and during the last 12 days of January the Calcutta despatches were larger than they had been before.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor is not able to say that he is fully satisfied with the results of the Government grain transport up to the end of January as indicated in this letter; but he is satisfied that all the officers engaged in the business are doing their best to push on the Government grain, and he believes that they are doing it in the best way. As has been already represented, the waterways of the country, which it was thought right to test to the utmost, are extremely slow and difficult at this time of the year, and this year have proved unusually disappointing. It is some consolation to the Lieutenant Governor that in the Rajshahye Division, where transport is now most backward, the first heavy rain in June will fill the many channels, and make the distribution of the Government grain much more easy than it is now.

On the whole subject, it will be remembered that till very lately this Government had only authority to send forward a limited supply of grain for relief works, and that it was rather desired to do so quietly without disturbing private trade, and to test routes by which that trade was least disturbed, than at once to strain all the resources of the country: very much was in that view left to the discretion of the local officers. Now that larger operations appear necessary, the Lieutenant-Governor is arranging for more systematic returns by which the onward movements of grain from stage to stage can be more promptly and exactly traced.

No. 132.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 9, dated February 6, 1874.

In continuation of our previous despatches, we have the honor to forward the Tenth Special Narrative of the drought in Bengal for the fortnight ending the 6th instant.

2. We have again to report that since our last despatch a copious rain has fallen over the whole of Bengal and Behar. The beneficial effect of this rain will be great. The result to the spring crops is described in detail in the Bengal Narrative. The rainfall has not been confined to Bengal; good rain has been reported from Mirzapore, Goruckpore, Ghazeepore, and Benares. Rain has also fallen generally throughout Oudh. Further north, in Rohilkund and some of the upper districts of the North-Western Provinces, there has been a plenteous supply. On the whole, we trust that we may now assume that the prospects of the rubbee crops in Oudh and the North-West are favourable.

3. The rain that has fallen will enable us before long to foresee with some degree of accuracy the real area of distress. The latest information which has been received from the Patna Division is contained in Sir Richard Temple's telegram of the 4th instant, which is quoted at page 4 of the Special Narrative.

4. Your Grace will observe that unfortunately the tracts most seriously affected are the least accessible to carriage. This is the gravest feature in the calamity, and the difficulty will be aggravated if ample supplies have not been conveyed to the distressed districts before the rains. Sir R. Temple has taken

the most energetic measures to provide the amount of transport required. As we have only this day received the Special Narrative, we are unable to say more than that the Lieutenant-Governor appears to have given a very complete and accurate account of the general condition of affairs, and that the District Narratives and the orders given upon them by His Honor show that the local officers generally are wisely and energetically carrying out the relief measures.

5. A public meeting was held at Calcutta on the 4th instant, for the purpose of forming a central relief committee to supervise and direct the charitable operations which the calamity will demand throughout the country. The committee was formed and has already appointed an executive committee to which the actual work of relief will be entrusted. The meeting was largely attended, especially by the native community. A copy of the proceedings is enclosed (see below No. 133 of this series), and a corrected copy will be submitted to Your Grace by next mail.

6. Our supplies are coming in rapidly and regularly from beyond sea, and we are making arrangements for storing them, temporarily, prior to despatch up-country. The inland trade still shows considerable activity in most parts of the country.

7. Partly in consequence of the rain, and partly, we believe, owing to the public being now fully informed as to the operations and policy of Government, the price of rice has fallen at Calcutta, but throughout the country generally the tendency is still upwards, and common rice is now selling in many parts at a rate nearly double that of an ordinary year.

8. We have been informed by the Resident in Nepal that famine is apprehended in some parts of that country which border upon Behar, and he has been requested by the Nepalese Government to ascertain if supplies of rice can be procured in Calcutta. We have instructed him to say that the Government of India will be happy to place at the disposal of the Nepalese Government 1,000 tons of rice at cost price.

No. 133.

Report of the Proceedings at a Meeting held at the Town Hall of Calcutta, on February 4th, 1874, to adopt measures for the relief of the Famine.

A meeting was held yesterday at 4 o'clock in the Town Hall, called by requisition to the Sheriff, to adopt measures for the relief of the famine. His Excellency the Viceroy presided.

MR. MANACKJEE RUSTOMJEE, the Sheriff, read the requisition calling the meeting, after which he said:—I need not detain you, Gentlemen, with any remarks of my own, as the occasion for which we have met here today eminently calls for action, and not for words. I will therefore at once proceed to declare the meeting open, and beg to propose that His Excellency the Viceroy do take the chair.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY now rose (amidst much cheering) and addressed the assembly as follows:—Sir George Campbell, Mr. Sheriff, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The object for which this meeting has been convened is—“to consider the necessity for taking measures to relieve the distressed people in the famine-stricken districts of Behar and Bengal.”

It is not necessary for me to dwell at any length upon the calamity which has visited a large portion of the population of these Provinces. No subject has been more in men's minds during the last three months than that calamity. It is sufficient indeed for me to say that the failure of the winter rice crop has affected a population which exceeds that of Great Britain; and that, notwithstanding the abundant and beneficial rain, which, by the blessing of God, has recently fallen throughout the greater part of these provinces, it still remains that a population, exceeding the population of Ireland, must now inevitably be visited with severe and protracted distress. I will not now dwell upon any of the measures which the Government have taken, because with them you are all of you familiar. We have to deal with a people patient under misfortune and perhaps devoid of some of those qualities which enable calamities of this nature to be most readily met—a people who come with a singular claim of affection to the Rulers under whom Providence has placed them. (Cheers.)

We have the advantage also of dealing with a people who are remarkably averse to relying upon assistance from the Government. Upon all former occasions it has been found that those who have been relieved during the great stress of a calamity of this nature have invariably returned to their own avocations, and have supported themselves by their own labor so soon as the immediate pressure has ceased. This meeting has been convened for the purpose of endeavouring to call to the assistance of the Government the public in this and in other parts, both of India and of the rest of the world. That assistance appears to the Government of India to be of the greatest value. The reasons for our conclusion are mainly two. In dealing with distress of the nature which is now threatened—and indeed, I may say, is come upon us,—it is difficult for any fixed rules to provide for all the different classes of distress which should be relieved; and specially in India it has been found, and has been recognized by the Government, that there are many classes of the population to whom it is necessary that relief should to a very considerable extent be brought to their own doors; otherwise from their feelings, sentiments, and social condition they can hardly be expected to apply for relief before they have arrived in that condition in which relief would no longer be of avail. It is in dealing with these classes of the population that assistance from outside is of the greatest advantage to Government. But besides this it is necessary, in taking measures to provide for a great amount of distress, that Government should be assisted here in Calcutta by those who will advise and direct the persons who will aid the Government in the different localities, and more especially that the Government officers should be assisted throughout the country by those benevolent men who are ready to help in assisting their fellow-countrymen, and who are the best agents for spreading the relief widely throughout the districts which require it. I think therefore that it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of assistance outside the fixed rules of the Government in dealing with a calamity of this kind. I am sure you will agree with me when I say that I look forward with the greatest confidence to the assistance which will be rendered. (Cheers.) First, in this city of Calcutta it is well known to you, and it is well known to me, from a most opportune publication issued recently by Mr. Wood—who has signalized himself by his exertions as secretary in aid of organizations for relief in many cases during the last 10 or 15 years (cheers)—it is well known to us all that there has been no object upon which public benevolence could appropriately be bestowed which has not met with a liberal and kindly support from the public of this city. On the occasion of the famine in 1866 and 1867 a public meeting was held in this Hall under the presidency of my distinguished predecessor, Lord Lawrence, and large subscriptions were raised in this city for the relief of distress; and in every case, whether the interest was connected with India or whether, as in the case of the cotton distress in England, the object was beyond their shores, the public of Calcutta have come forward liberally to support any application on behalf of a worthy object. Going a little further to the province of Bengal, I find that those who, from their wealth or position, were able to assist their fellow-countrymen in times of distress have always been ready to do so, and indeed it is part of the character of our native fellow-subjects to distribute relief upon such occasions perhaps with a more liberal hand than we, under similar circumstances, in England are accustomed to do. (Cheers.) His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal will no doubt in the course of his observations acquaint you with instances in which the wealthy inhabitants of these provinces have on the present occasion come forward in support of their neighbours and dependants who are suffering from the present calamity. I myself, in consequence of the liberal assistance which he rendered upon former occasions and of his position in this province, made a communication to the Maharajah of Burdwan, who expressed his readiness to become a member of the central committee, should it be instituted, and has promised us assistance, of which you will hereafter be made acquainted. (Cheers.) Outside this province I have communicated at the present time with but few. I communicated with the Maharajah of Benares, because the distress unhappily is not altogether confined to Behar, but stretches into districts of the North-Western Provinces with which His Highness is intimately connected, and I received in reply an intimation of the readiness with which His Highness

would join the central committee, if one was to be formed. I also thought it right to communicate with two distinguished men, who are members of the Legislative Council of India. His Highness the Maharajah of Jeypore has communicated his desire that his name should be placed on the central committee, and His Highness the Maharajah of Vizianagram has also, with his usual desire to associate himself with all objects of utility and benevolence in this country, expressed a wish to be a member of the central committee. (Cheers.) I have no doubt that if it had been desired to extend the central committee further than those provinces which are afflicted by the drought, I should have received similar assurances from all those whose rank and position would make them desire to belong to the central committee. But it appeared to me to be desirable that the committee should be confined to those who are connected with the parts of India which are afflicted with the drought, or who are connected with the Government. We have moreover reason to look with confidence for support on this occasion from outside the dominions of Her Majesty in India. Most of you know that as soon as it was anticipated that the failure of the rice crop would probably occasion great distress the Lord Mayor of London expressed a desire to raise a public subscription in London in aid of the sufferers from the calamity. At the time it was considered premature that such action should be taken, but I am certain that as soon as the people of London know that we in India are meeting together for the purpose of subscribing for the assistance of the distress a liberal response will be returned from England, and indeed it is upon these occasions in which we see how closely the British Empire is bound together, and how anything which touches the interests of one part of Her Majesty's broad domains excites a sympathy, not merely in words but in deeds, from every part of that great Empire. (Cheers.) I have also to inform you that Her Majesty the Queen, since the first news of the drought was received in England, has expressed the greatest interest and sympathy in the prospects of this country (cheers), and that I have been honored by Her Majesty with the expression of her anxiety that no effort should be spared adequately to meet the distress which is impending. (Cheers.) Since it has been announced that this meeting was to be held, I have received on behalf of Her Majesty a message by telegraph, desiring that the name of the Queen should be associated with the subscriptions in aid of the distressed districts, and I may perhaps be allowed to anticipate the motion which will be moved after I have concluded my observations, and to assume that a central committee will be formed, in order to say that Her Majesty from her private purse has placed a subscription of £1,000 at the disposal of the central committee. (Loud cheers.) I have also received other communications, which probably may more suitably be announced to you at the conclusion of the meeting. But I think it right to add that the Member of Her Majesty's Government in England who is charged with Indian Affairs, the Duke of Argyll, has also communicated with me by telegraph, desiring that his name should be added to those who will subscribe to the central committee. Having thus shortly stated the objects of this meeting, and having expressed the confidence which I feel that means will be found adequately to fulfil those objects, it only remains for me to call upon Sir George Campbell to move the first resolution; and, in doing so, His Honor no doubt will give to this meeting more particular information upon the present state of the distressed districts than I have thought it right to give in the remarks that I have made. The great immediate responsibility has been thrown upon him, and the interests, therefore, which he takes in those districts of this province, to which my observations have been addressed, will enable him to give you much fuller and more particular information, and to do so much better and more satisfactorily than I could. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

HIS HONOR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR now rose, and said—My Lord, Mr. Sheriff, Ladies and Gentlemen,—His Excellency the Viceroy has laid before you the object of this meeting, and I am sure it will be enough that I should confine myself to attempting to fill in the details which His Excellency has left to me. I am quite sure that His Excellency has placed before you most ample reasons why this meeting should be held, and he has said words to you which, through you, will resound to the people of British India and which, I am sure, will cause the appeal which we now make to be amply and liberally

responded to. I have heard it said that this appeal has been too long delayed. I hope those who hear me will believe that we have exercised our best judgment. The Government of Bengal, in conjunction with the Government of India, have exercised their best judgment. The Government has taken upon itself for some months past the duty of making preparations for the calamity which seemed to be looming in the distance. But we have thought that, having proposed the measures and thought over and considered the plans, it would be better that we should delay the appeal to the public till the time when the immediate need for charitable relief should be felt. That time, I grieve to say, we find has now come—to some extent it has come; we fear it will soon come to a much larger extent. That being so, we have felt that the time has come to appeal to you. I trust the public will find, if the appeal is liberally responded to, that preparations have been made to give effect to their liberality. Gentlemen, His Excellency the Viceroy has to some extent told you of the extent of the calamity. We know that the failure of the crops has extended over an extensive area, affecting an enormous population of these provinces. But, as His Excellency has told you, the people of this country are a patient and an enduring people, and, perhaps, a great many, by the exercise of that patience, may be able to bear the calamity without assistance from outside. His Excellency has told you that the people of this country during the last few days have been blessed with rain. That is an intelligence which made our hearts glad. We trust it will very largely remove the calamity from great masses of the people of this country; we trust it may to some extent narrow the field of our operations. But that field will still be wide, greater, perhaps, than the width of any similar calamity that has occurred in any country in the world in modern times. Gentlemen, I will now attempt to give you some of the details that are in my power. First, in regard to the season, you are aware that throughout the autumn the rains have unhappily been withheld from the country. We have lived in hopes of the cold-weather rains, and these cold-weather rains have been long withheld. Nevertheless, I am happy to say that over the greater part of these provinces the crops have survived in a manner much better than it could have been possible to expect. At the commencement of this calamity officers of the greatest experience and numbers of the public, possessed also of considerable experience, assured us that the calamity might be even greater than it has proved to be. They told us that if rain did not fall, the cold-weather crop could not be sown, and if sown, it would not germinate. I myself was inclined to think that that would be the case, but by the working of a merciful Providence so far the calamity has been mitigated. Speaking generally, I may say that those crops were to a considerable extent sown, and they germinated, and survived in a manner which we did not hope for. I trust that by the blessing of Providence the very general, genial, seasonable and fitting rain that we have had will save these crops, and so far mitigate the calamity. Still we must avoid the belief that we are free from anxiety with regard to vast tracts of country. I feel that we are still imperfectly acquainted with the resources of the country. Our feeling must still be very anxious, and this I may say that whatever may befall throughout the whole length and breadth of this country the situation is such that prices must be exceedingly high and the scarcity of food very great. The laborers, who live on small means, must be very much pinched, and all throughout this country there will be great occasion for the operation of charitable work. Setting aside for the present those great tracts in which the distress is not so immediate, I will explain to you the circumstances of the districts in which there is more distress. First, I will say a word in regard to the part the Government has so far taken in preparations for relief, and the success which has been achieved in mitigating this calamity. I will read to you an extract, which will explain the Government measures at this time. An experienced officer thus writes:—

“With the exception of those localities which I have already mentioned, there is no reason to believe that the condition of the people is become any worse. I believe that it has been greatly ameliorated in an indirect, and also in a direct, way by the efforts which Government has been making in opening out relief works and in importing grain. The old measures have prevented the panics which were so common in Orissa in the end of 1865 and beginning of 1866.”

His Excellency the Viceroy has already told you that the tracts in which even the best results of the cold-weather crop cannot avert famine must suffer calamity, or very great distress. There are tracts which exceed the area and

population of Ireland, and there are other tracts which exceed the area and population of Orissa. The tract in which the greatest distress is experienced is the country of North Behar—a country which is ordinarily blessed with plentiful rain, a country which produces rice in large quantities and exports it, and a country in which, in consequence of the failure of the almost only crop, the most terrible calamity and distress are experienced. I have brought down a map in order that I might make plain to the meeting the situation of the various tracts. Unfortunately we do not possess a general map of Bengal of sufficient size for this purpose. But the present map shows the whole of the northern countries of Behar and a portion of Bengal. The distressed country of Northern Behar is the whole of the northern part of the great district of Tirhoot and part of the district of Bhaugulpore and part of the district of Chumparun. The country is more inaccessible than any part of these provinces. The meeting will observe that the Ganges (pointing to the map) is here, and the line of railway is here, and here marked yellow is the most distressed tract. Now, when we speak of districts, it is necessary to remember that there are districts and districts. The district of Tirhoot alone contains a population larger than the population of Belgium and larger than the population of Orissa: therefore, when it is said that the most pressing distress is experienced in a part of this district, it must not be supposed that it is small. You have farther a great part of the district of Chumparun, containing a population of a million and three-quarters, and a considerable portion of the district of Bhaugulpore, containing two millions. You have altogether a population of four or five millions of people, whose condition is now rapidly approaching extreme distress. That there may not be any misapprehension with regard to the condition of these districts, I will read to you a telegram which has been received from Sir Richard Temple. You are aware that Sir Richard Temple, than whom no man can be better fitted, has been despatched to these distressed tracts. He has arrived on the spot, and has seen a good deal of the country. He has informed the Government of much that he has seen, and he has made several recommendations; but what I have now to do is to read to the meeting his latest communication, because he discloses a state of things so grave that you will be convinced that the Government are justified in appealing to the public:—

“In Tirhoot alone civil officers expect to have 800,000 to 1,000,000 on their hands for several months. Of a population of more than 4,000,000 in Tirhoot, one-third have lost their harvest almost entirely; one-third have lost greater part. In Chumparun 300,000 to 400,000 persons and perhaps 100,000 in Sarun expected to be on our hands, besides some considerable number in Gya and Shahabad—altogether about 1½ million in whole Patna Division. No marked distress anywhere, except towards eastern frontier of Tirhoot. In every direction daily hundreds of persons of classes which would not ordinarily labor are coming to relief works. In some places I have seen from 2,000 to 3,000 persons working. Certainly without help from Government and the public great mortality north of Ganges would occur, and many tracts throughout the northern border of Patna Division would be almost depopulated. Many experienced persons believe that already a large proportion of the population are limiting themselves to one meal a day. People appear generally anxious, but wonderfully patient. The worst feature is that the most afflicted tracts are the least accessible to carriage. Aspect of fields in two-thirds of Tirhoot quite wretched.”

That, Gentlemen, is an account which, I am sure, will satisfy you that this great tract is in a very critical state indeed, and stands very much in need of your assistance. Behar contains altogether a population close upon 20 millions of people. Four or five millions are in this part (pointing to the map), and there are one or two other tracts which are also much distressed. The district of Sarun, with upwards of two millions people, is in a very critical position, but the distress there is not so very immediate. In that district the population is very dense, and food is habitually imported. We are not yet in a position to say how far Providence will afflict this district, because it so happens that the proportion of cold-weather crops in that district is large. But our last accounts of the cold-weather crops from the Collector was very bad indeed, and if things turn out as we expected, I need not say that the effects will be terrible and the distress great. I am still, however, sanguine that the result of the recent rains may be that these crops may to a great extent be saved, and that a hard-working and enduring people may be able to come through this great calamity with your assistance. We come, then, to the south of the Ganges, and we hope that the calamity in some

portions of this tract may not be so severe. But there are tracts in which very great calamity must be apprehended. Parts of the district of Shahabad are high and dry. There is again in the district of Monghyr a large tract near the railway where the failure has been excessive. It was one of the first parts which I saw myself. I saw great tracts of rice-fields which were perfectly bare, and I am not surprised to learn that the people are now on the verge of serious distress. I am sorry to say that this map does not contain Bengal Proper. But it shows you here a part of the district of Purneah, which is now threatened with distress. Next to this is the great district of Dinagepore, where the failure of crops has been very extreme, as also in parts of adjoining districts. There the failure has been most terrible and complete. The rainfall in those districts, which usually averages from 80 to 90 inches, has been for the past year about 30 inches. The consequence is that we have here in Bengal Proper also a great tract, including the district of Dinagepore, part of the districts of Purneah, Rungpore, Bograh, and Rajshahye, which have suffered from a failure of the crops, and with regard to which also we must appeal to you for assistance.

Passing from these tracts and coming nearer home, I may say that Providence has not afflicted the lower parts of Bengal to so great an extent; in parts of the districts of Moorshedabad and Nuddea, and even in the 24-Pergunnahs, there has been failure in the crops, and we are not free from anxiety that great distress may be experienced by the people, and that there will be need for charitable relief among the poor and the helpless, and those less endowed with the gifts of Providence. But the southern districts, I am happy to say, are not in so bad a condition as at one time was apprehended. We trust that in the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Tipperah, although the crops are short, the people will be able to tide over the difficulty. But when we turn again to the great district of Burdwan to the west of us, I must say that our apprehensions are greater. Although the more western parts of this tract have not suffered this year so much as in 1865, they have still suffered very considerably. The district of Hooghly has suffered to a great extent, and so has the district of Burdwan. In both these districts there is some reason to fear that half, or nearly half, the crop is lost. These districts have also, as you are aware, been recently devastated by fever. I can assure you that they contain a very large and a very poor labouring population, and there are people who live from hand to mouth. Any prolonged scarcity must affect them very considerably. The more distant parts of the Chota Nagpore Division have been blessed with better rain. But I do fear that much of the western countries will suffer from an absence of money and from high prices of food. Gentlemen, I think that I have now gone through in a very general way the condition of these provinces, and I will not detain you with more minute particulars, which will be placed at your disposal in another form. I can only say that I trust that Government officers have, so far to the best of their powers, done their part to avert this calamity. Now we trust that the public will do their part—that they will perform that part which His Excellency the Viceroy has expressed as a part which can be better performed by them, not only by their subscriptions, but by their active aid in assisting their countrymen. Gentlemen, His Excellency intimated to you that Her Majesty the Queen, the Secretary of State, and several other great princes and chiefs of various parts of India had expressed their readiness to co-operate with you. His Excellency left me to announce to you some subscriptions which, in anticipation, have been communicated to the Government of Bengal. Before putting to you the motion which is placed in my hands, I will merely announce to you that the amount which His Highness the Maharajah of Burdwan has subscribed is Rs. 20,000. (Cheers.) That sum is in addition to the Rs. 6,000 which he previously placed at the disposal of the Commissioner, and it is also in addition to the various works of relief for the poor which His Highness has opened. No one will doubt that His Highness the Maharajah of Burdwan is a man who is always ready to come forward on such occasions—a man who has been most liberal in his aid on all occasions, and a man who is ready on this occasion to head the subscription list in Bengal. Another subscription of a most liberal character is from an eminent member of the native community of Calcutta—Rajah Komul Krishna, a relative of Rajah Kali Krishna. He has

intimated that he is unable to attend the meeting, but he places at the disposal of the meeting the sum of Rs. 10,000. (Cheers.) We have also from Nursing Rao, Esq., of Madras, Rs. 1,000; from the Nawab of Rampore, Rs. 2,000; from the Maharajah of Bettiah, Rs. 2,500; from Gredharee Singha of Bengal, Rs. 2,000; and from the Ranee of Bobbili, who has promised to contribute 40,000 maunds of paddy. In Patna a very large subscription of about Rs. 36,000 has been made I understand. In Monghyr Rs. 35,000, and in Durbhangah Rs. 15,000. We are also aware that in the district of Chumparun, where the planting interests abound, the planters have come forward and subscribed large sums; and not only by their subscriptions, but by their active exertions, have done much, and, I am confident, will do much more. (Cheers.) I now beg to propose the following resolution:—

RESOLUTION.—“That a Central Relief Committee, composed of the following gentlemen, be appointed for collecting subscriptions, with power to add to their number and with power to elect from their own number an Executive Committee, with a Chairman, to direct relief operations:—The Hon’ble Sir Richard Couch, the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, the Most Rev. Archbishop Steins, the Hon’ble Sir Richard Temple, K. C. S. I., the Hon’ble B. H. Ellis, Major-General the Hon’ble Sir Henry Norman, K. C. B., the Hon’ble A. Hobhouse, the Hon’ble E. C. Bayley, C. S. I., His Highness the Maharajah of Jeypore, G. C. S. I., the Hon’ble Louis Jackson, the Hon’ble J. B. Phear, the Hon’ble John Inglis, C. S. I., the Hon’ble R. H. Dalyell, the Hon’ble Rajah Romanath Tagore, Bahadoor, the Hon’ble H. H. Sutherland, the Hon’ble B. D. Colvin, His Highness the Maharajah of Benares, His Highness the Maharajah of Vizianagram, His Highness the Maharajah of Burdwan, Maharajah Sir Joy Prakash Singh, Bahadoor, K. C. S. I., Maharajah Sir Joymongul Singh, Bahadoor, K. C. S. I., the Maharajah of Bettiah, Maharajah Moneshur Bux Singh, Bahadoor, of Doomaraon, Maharajah Kishen Pertab Sahee, Bahadoor, of Hutwah, the Maharajah of Tikaree, Prince Mirza Jehan Kadir, Bahadoor, A. O. Hume, Esq., C. B., the Hon’ble G. C. Paul, the Hon’ble V. H. Schalch, the Hon’ble Lord Ulick Browne, the Hon’ble H. L. Dampier, the Hon’ble Digamber Mitra, the Hon’ble Rajah Jotendro Mohan Tagore, Bahadoor, the Hon’ble C. Bernard, the Hon’ble T. M. Robinson, the Hon’ble Abdool Lutif, Khan Bahadoor, Rivers Thomson, Esq., Alonzo Money, Esq., C. B., General A. C. Litchfield, Consul-General, United States, America, M. Sentis, Consul-General for France, M. Lamouroux, Consul-General for Italy, C. T. Buckland, Esq., E. W. Molony, Esq., Colonel E. T. Dalton, C. S. I., S. C. Bayley, Esq., G. N. Barlow, Esq., C. S. I., Colonel J. E. T. Nicolls, R. E., Colonel H. W. Gulliver, R. E., Stuart Hogg, Esq., W. LeF. Robinson, Esq., H. Levinge, Esq., Baboo Gopeshur Singh, of Durbhanga, Koomar Narendro Kishore Singh, Koomar Sheo Pershad Singh, Rajah Leela Nund Singh, Major J. Lindsay, R. E., the Rajah of Nattore, the Rajah of Dighapoota, Rajah Kalee Krishna Bahadoor, Rajah Komul Krishna Deb, Rajah Suttayanund Ghosal, Rajah Sheoraj Nundun, Rajah Rughtonundun Singh, Baboo Gunosher Singh, Baboo Radha Pershad Singh, Kooer Sree Nundun Singh, Kazee Abdool Baree, Abdool Kureem, Shirazee, Moulvie Abdool Hye, Hajee Abdool Wahid, R. Allardyce, Esq., Syud Moonshee Ameer Ali, T. A. Apear, Esq., W. S. Atkinson, Esq., G. Barclay, Esq., J. Beattie, Esq., H. Berners, Esq., W. M. Bourke, Esq., Brijo Mohun Tagore, Dr. J. C. Brown, C. B., T. A. Brooks, Esq., J. H. A. Branson, Esq., J. R. Bullen Smith, Esq., Baboo Bunwarce Lall, J. Crawford, Esq., J. DaCosta, Esq., Dhunput Singh, Rai Bahadoor, Baboo Doorga Churn Law, Baboo Dwarkanath Dutt, F. G. Eldridge, Esq., Esau bin Curtas, Esq., E. D. J. Ezra, Esq., E. S. Gubboy, Esq., Hurbullub Narain Singh, Hurry Mohun Tagore, Arthur Howell, Esq., Baboo Heera Lall Seal, Hossein Ibrahim bin Johur, Nacoda Syed Imdad Ali, Meer Inayet Hossein, Baboo Jodoo Lall Mullick, Baboo Kalee Kishen Tagore, Syed Cassim Hossein, J. P. Kennedy, Esq., J. B. Knight, Esq., Baboo Kristo Dass Pal, Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, Meer Latafat Hossein, Luchmiput Singh, Rai Bahadoor, Dr. C. Macnamara, J. Mackintosh, Esq., Moulvie Mahomed Hossein, Moulvi Mahomed Yahia, Shahzadah Mahomed Yahizuddeen, Mahmood Koonjee, Nacoda Syed Mahomed Raheemooddeen, Syed Mahomed Tukce Khan, Manockjee Rustomjee, Esq., Sheikh Morad Ali, J. H. Mudie, Esq., J. Murdoch, Esq., J. C. Murray, Esq., Narendra Krishna Deb, Koomar Bahadoor, Hajee Noor

Mahomed, Baboo Rajendro Lal Mitter, Rajendro Lal Mullick, Rai Bahadoor, Rajendro Narain Deb, Bahadoor, Rujeeb Lochun, Rai Bahadoor, Ram Narain Singh, H. Reinhold, Esq., H. Rivett-Carnac, Esq., T. M. Russel, Esq., Syed Sadik Shooostree, Dr. G. Smith, Cecil Stephenson, Esq., W. Macadam Steuart, Esq., Baboo Soobul Doss Mullick, J. Sutcliffe, Esq., J. Thomas, Esq., the Rev. T. Macalister Thompson, H. D. Tulloch, Esq., J. Wilson, Esq., and F. F. Wyman, Esq.

THE HON’BLE RAJAH JOTENDRO MOHUN TAGORE, in seconding the resolution, said:—My Lord, Sir George Campbell, Ladies and Gentlemen,—You are perhaps aware that, according to the programme of business as originally arranged, my friend the Hon’ble Digamber Mitra was to have seconded the resolution just moved by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. Unfortunately my friend has been suddenly taken ill, and it is almost at the last moment that I am called upon to take his place. I do so with great diffidence, for I need scarcely say that I was quite unprepared to take any part in the proceedings of this meeting; but after the very able and lucid statements made by His Excellency and by the Lieutenant-Governor my task becomes comparatively a light one, for I find that very little is left for me to add. The calamity with which we are at present threatened is, as we all know, a serious one, and the very thought of it likely to appal the stoutest heart. But we have the good fortune of being placed under a most generous and enlightened Government, and we have the satisfaction to find that the liberal relief measures already initiated by His Excellency the Viceroy and by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor are such as have evoked a general feeling of gratitude through the length and breadth of the land. But however great may be the benevolent exertions of the Government, and however vast its resources, it cannot be expected to do *all*. We, as individual members of society, have our duties to perform, and we should not forget them in a crisis like this. (Cheers.) Charity, they say, begins at home; and when we find that millions of our countrymen are about to suffer from starvation, shall we be wanting in our duties? Surely not! Charity, like mercy, blesses him that gives and him that takes. This precept has been taught to us, Hindus, by our religion for ages past, and we cannot forget it, for it is as it were engraved in our hearts. (Cheers.) But whether Hindus, Muhammadans, or Christians, the call of humanity is the same upon all of us, and I hope that we will all combine and act in earnest for the promotion of a good and holy work—the relief of suffering millions. Well has the poet said—

“In faith and hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind’s concern is charity.”

(Cheers.) If we will be but true to our instincts as men, I have every hope that, with Heaven above and our generous Government below, we shall be able to tide over the crisis with which we are now threatened. (Cheers.) With these few words I beg cordially to second the resolution just moved by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. (Cheers.)

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF VIZIANAGRAM said:—My Lord and Gentlemen,—I should wish, as a native of the country and speaking particularly to my fellow-countrymen, to add a few words to what has been said by my hon’ble friend Rajah Jotendro Mohun Tagore. Those of us who have been able, to a greater or less degree, to understand what has been and is being done by the Government to mitigate and alleviate the calamity impending over the population of the famine-stricken districts, have, in admiration of the energy, the promptitude, and the right tendency of the measures already taken, acquired a complete confidence that those who preside over the administration will do all that is humanly possible to relieve the distress. On the other hand, the more ignorant and poorer part of the population, without comprehending the nature of the steps taken to assist their wants, have no doubt but that the Sircar is willing to help them, and can do so to the full extent of their wants; and, strong in this assurance, they are in many places inclined to trust all to the Government without efforts of their own. In this state of things what I would wish to urge upon our native brethren is that those of them who are better informed and have the power to do so should both themselves strive to aid the Government and to teach and induce the lower classes to bestir themselves also in the works of their own relief. It is said that the bigoted and ignorant

Brahmins and Rajpoots would sooner starve than work, and it is feared that many may thus perish by Government not knowing that they are in such want. But the Hindu religion inculcates the preservation of life by every possible means in an honest manner, and exempts the higher classes from the reproach of labor in those places where the sufferings from famine are great. I would exhort those who, as landholders or otherwise, have authority over the poorer classes in the districts visited by the famine, personally to stir up those over whom they are placed to exert themselves in assisting in the measures taken by Government for their relief. Let the zemindars, &c., call out their ryots and organise them to carry and bring in the grain supplied by the Government to the villages where it is needed. One of the chief difficulties with which the Government now has to deal is the means of transporting food supplies to the less accessible portions of the famine-stricken district. If each village in these districts will, under the direction of the proprietors, send its own men to the stations where the grain is stored to carry in so much as is needed for their own particular localities, this difficulty will to a very great extent be overcome. By measures such as these, and by remission of rents for the time, the richer inhabitants of these districts may greatly aid in the work of well-doing, which the Government has so nobly and generously undertaken. The fact that India has never been blessed with such a benevolent and charitable Government is too well known for me to mention, and let those of us who have an opportunity of directly exerting ourselves in the relief of the famine-stricken districts liberally, and to the utmost extent of our means, contribute with purse or supplies to the alleviation of their want. Is there one of us who, if he saw another about to perish before his own eyes for want of that which we might give, would turn away, and to gain for himself some additional comfort would leave that other to starve? And yet the fact that others may thus perish is no less true, because we do not see it. Each contribution of ours, however small, may give a meal, where for want of it another life would be lost, and it is not to the Government but to each one of us who has the means that in a crisis such as this the lives of those who are in want are charged to save, or to leave to die.

BABOO JOYKISSEN MOOKERJEE said:—With His Excellency's permission, he would make a few remarks. After what had been stated by His Excellency and by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor and other gentlemen, he would only say a few words. The ryots were, he might say, the life-blood of the zemindars, and the latter should come forward now to help in mitigating the present calamity, because unless the ryots survived zemindars would not be required. If there were no ryots to be found to cultivate, the merchants would have no grain to deal in, nor would capitalists be able to lay out money. He hoped therefore that all classes would come forward liberally at the present crisis, and he would request His Honor, while their hearts were yet warm with sympathy, to have the subscription list circulated at once and without further delay. With these few observations he would beg His Honor to put him down for Rs. 1,000, and also his friend Baboo Chunderkant Mookerjee for another Rs. 1,000. (Loud cheers.) Before sitting down he must repeat his request that the subscription list should be circulated at once.

HIS HONOR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR:—I may say that the subscription list, as it is prepared, can be immediately circulated.

HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP STEINS said:—He had to support the resolution proposed by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. He must say that the resolution had been very ably and eloquently proposed. He thought the Committee that had been proposed ought to be approved of by all. We saw on the list of members several gentlemen who, on many similar occasions, had displayed great activity and shown that they were perfectly up to the task. From the valuable pamphlet issued by Mr. Wood, he gathered that many and great services had been rendered by these gentlemen, and their past services were surely a guarantee of the services which we were all entitled to expect. His Excellency the Viceroy had moreover brought to our notice that, in selecting the members of the committee, particular attention had been paid to select those who were perfectly acquainted with the distressed provinces. At the same time His Excellency had expressed a wish that the subscription should extend over all India, and therefore it was very creditable to those who

had formed the list for having made choice of gentlemen who were connected with nearly all parts of India as far as could be obtained. The meeting had heard what was the extent of the calamity. But he felt confident in saying that if there were general preparation all over India, there would be very little suffering, and he thought the relief would be quite general if we could only manage to secure general co-operation. He thought it was really incumbent upon the committee to endeavour to secure such a co-operation which, when achieved, would produce the happiest results. He would ask to be allowed to refer to one subscription in Europe, in which he had taken a part himself. It was at a time when there were many subscriptions going round for charitable purposes. However, a new calamity had arisen, and it was suggested that each individual should contribute one copper a month. This was agreed upon, and the whole amount after a few months came up to one lakh and a half, and this from a people numbering 1,200,000. And again, when this monthly copper was found to be too much for some people, gentlemen were found who came forward with a few pounds, and this made up for hundreds of contributions. How happy would it be if we could secure the general co-operation of all India; and he would ask,—where then would be the suffering? We had a population of 200 millions, and we know that 200 millions of pice would make 20 lakhs. He thought it was our duty, as much as we could, to make the co-operation as general as possible. In his humble opinion, he thought that charitable subscriptions had been too much limited to a certain number and class—that is, to those who could subscribe large amounts. However, he would ask the meeting not to despise the mite of the poor. He thought on many occasions we had seen that the small subscriptions, essentially when they went over an immense number of people, were of greater value than the splendid subscriptions which were generally given. He therefore thought we had to congratulate those who had formed the committee on having selected members who were acquainted with all the districts of India, so that the co-operation might be as general as possible. There was another point which the meeting ought not to lose sight of, and that was when all the different sections of the community were represented on the committee, there was less fear for what was called partial distribution. He was glad that the committee was so formed that there was very little chance of injustice being done. He knew from experience how difficult it was sometimes to get people to subscribe, if there was the least apprehension that all the parties would not be fairly represented, and it was well known how people laid hold of every possible pretext not to subscribe. (Laughter.) In connection with the general subscription it should not be forgotten that we ought not to frighten people too much. Sometimes we had lists of large subscriptions consisting of five, of four, and of three figures, but surely those gentlemen who had subscribed smaller amounts were entitled to equal gratitude. He was of opinion that lists should be published containing small subscriptions; that those who were not able to afford much might not be ashamed to have their names against two figures, or a unit, or even a fraction. (Cheers.) He would now ask to be allowed to express one wish, and it was this—We knew that Providence could make good come out of evil; we were now on the eve of a calamity, but it was to be hoped that good would come out of it. His Excellency had alluded to the confidence between the people and the Government, and *vice versa*, in a time of distress, when people see the noble exertions of Government. It was to be hoped that the effect of this calamity would be to make that confidence greater and greater, and that in the hands of Providence it might result in greater prosperity to the country. (Cheers.) They would also be able to look back with pleasure to the fact that in a severe calamity like the present everybody had been ready to come to the assistance of the sufferers. That such would be the case was sincerely to be hoped. It was well known how all the classes of Calcutta came forward on similar occasions, and he would repeat what he had said at the commencement that an endeavour should be made to make the co-operation more and more general. If the people were told that by small contribution they would be able to effect a great deal of good, he had not the slightest doubt that they would be only too happy to come forward and do all in their power. (Cheers.)

THE HON'BLE MR. H. H. SUTHERLAND was then called upon to address the meeting. He said:—My Lord and Gentlemen,—I have been asked to say a few words in support of the motion of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, but I am sure that after what has been already said no words are needed from me to commend the resolution to the acceptance of this meeting. From the time when the first note of warning was sounded of the impending scarcity in Behar and some parts of Bengal, the deepest interest and concern have been felt on the subject by the people of this city. We all looked eagerly and anxiously for the weekly Government reports, and for such information as was available from private sources. Hopes and fears alternated. For my own part, although I have some connection with North Behar, and have been receiving regular advices from the district, I am bound to confess that so varying were the reports of the situation, and so conflicting the forecasts as to the future, I was utterly at a loss to know whether we had to face a time of no more than high prices and hardship for the very poorest of the people, or a time of famine, disease, and death. From the later district reports, and from what we have heard in this hall this day, we now fear it is something beyond scarcity and high prices that is before us, and it is ours—the duty of this great Government and this great country—to see that by the timely, the noble provision which Your Excellency has made, and by the measures now being organised, we shall, with God's blessing, save alive those who are ready to perish, and, so far as humanly possible, cope with and conquer the calamity that overshadows us. My Lord and Gentlemen, I cordially support the resolution of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. (Cheers.)

THE HON'BLE MAULVI ABDUL LATIF, said:—Although deeply conscious of my utter unworthiness for the task which has been entrusted to me, of supporting the resolution which has been proposed by His Honor, yet I must say that it is one which barely requires any recommendation from the lips of the best or most eloquent of men. It is sufficient to know that regularly organised measures are urgently required for the salvation of many millions of human beings from that most horrible of deaths—starvation, and we hope to enlist public sympathy and co-operation in the objects of this meeting. It is, moreover, an occasion which obliterates all distinctions of race and nationality, all differences of creed and colour. Heavy as the apprehended calamity may be, it is of the greatest consolation to know that now, as in 1866, we may reckon upon the hearty assistance, the bounteous charity, of every nation having any connection with our country. Among ourselves it is to be hoped, and, indeed, as I do most firmly believe, that the crisis shall not find us divided in action or purpose. In fact, the best that all classes of men can do is to unite together and render the most cordial aid that is possible to the relief movements already set on foot by the Government. Of these measures it is impossible to speak without at the same time expressing the warmest admiration. Great and profound as no doubt the public alarm must be at the threatening visitation, it is some comfort that in the action taken by Government nothing has been left undone which could be done under the dictates of the highest benevolence and prudence; and I would hereby call upon every man in the country, European or Native, Christian or Hindu, Muhammadan or Jew, to do all within his power and capacity to further and promote the schemes of relief which have been put forward by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. It has unfortunately been too truly remarked that members of the Muhammadan community have, as a body, been rather backward in lending their countenance and active support to great and public movements of the day. There may perhaps be some reasons generally for this indifference, but the present movement is one in which indifference would be unpardonable. The giving of alms, particularly in the shape of food, to hungry multitudes is an act enjoined by the sublimest precepts of the Muhammadan religion, and I look forward with the most sanguine expectations to the most strenuous exertions being made by my co-religionists at this moment of peril and misfortune. In 1866 I well remember the noble example set by my late-lamented friend, Haji Jakaria Muhammad, who during the worst days of that famine daily fed 5,000 men chiefly at his own cost, taking an actual part, and with his own hands, in the distribution of cooked food. (Cheers.) Earnestly hoping that

such instances on the present opportunity may be a hundred-fold multiplied, I beg to support the motion made by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. (Cheers.)

THE LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA said he had been called upon to move that the committee be requested to commence their operations at once. They had had from His Excellency the Viceroy and from His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor a sketch of the greatness of the danger which still hung over the country. They had heard that some relief had been given by the rain which had lately fallen, and which had come at the exact time when it must have been of use. A day or two later it would probably have done more harm than good. It was satisfactory to hear that there was a diminution of the danger, but, whatever might be the extent of the relief thus derived, it was beyond doubt that a great many populous districts would still suffer, and that severely. If we only put together the figures which His Honor had mentioned—four millions here, nine millions there, and three in another quarter, and so on—they would come up to an aggregate greater than that of our own country. And we knew how insidious the approach of famine was: we knew how it gradually came creeping on before men were aware. It was only now at the last moment that men knew how very insidious its approaches were; how it crept on like the man-eater in the jungle: you heard a rustle, and then everything was still, and perhaps in a moment more the beast seized his victim. So it was in the present case: the rustle caused by the approach of the famine was heard, but the people had been warned of its approach. A great philosopher had observed that prevention was better than cure, but it was not always easy to put it in practice. We owed therefore much to the boldness and courage of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor and to the Government of India for making known long before the danger that was approaching. We had heard the first rustle which marked the approach of the destroyer, and we were thankful for all the preparations which they had so long been making and framing with such great care. And if there was to be such danger as the Lieutenant-Governor had sketched out to them in most clear and lucid language, it was very plain that it must tax our utmost energy to meet it, and it would tax the whole energy of the Government. It was remarked by Sir Henry Maine long ago that the common laws of political economy and the common laws which applied to distribution in other countries could not hold good in India. The Secretary of State and His Excellency the Viceroy had also recognized this great fact; and it was of the utmost importance that it should still be held fast. He believed that there would still be immense difficulty in carrying out the operations in the places where the famine was beginning. He was glad to observe that the Government recognized the difficulty of transit in this land. In all that country to which the Lieutenant-Governor had referred as especially suffering, even at this present time, there was scarcely more than one road traversing it and no lateral roads at all. He had been stumbling over the country himself, and he had lost himself at night. The country was wonderfully populous: there were no large towns, but it consisted of many villages situated within short distances of each other, and it would be most difficult to convey food to them. Therefore, if he understood rightly, it was the purpose of this meeting now to form here a central committee, and so to inaugurate a system of relief committees all over those parts of India which were threatened with this great disaster. We know what difficulty was experienced in conveying assistance to the many thousands in Orissa in what was really the famine of 1868. Government worked quietly and diligently in providing, more or less, such a system of relief as was now proposed. Notwithstanding, many perished in that famine—for so it was. He had heard—he did not know exactly how far correctly—that a million and a quarter of people perished in Orissa, and they could see the traces of that famine still in parts of Bundelcund, parts of the North-Western Provinces and Central India. They could still see, five years after the event, men who looked haggard and gaunt, and with all the traces and evidences of famine upon them. He was told by the authorities there that the traces and effects of that famine were still evident and still grievous. It was evident therefore that there must be a strong and united effort to meet this danger, even if it was only imminent, and that it should not actually come. He trusted therefore that there would be

continued and persevering effort to provide for the carrying of food into all the districts which were threatened with famine. He was quite certain that no care would be spared; and the appeal now made to India and to England was not in any way to compete or to interfere with the organization of Government. That organization seemed to be able and comprehensive; but Government wished to supplement it with those co-ordinate committees of relief who, co-operating with Government, might endeavour to supply the wants of the sufferers in such a sympathetic and kind way as might mark our affection. If the evil reached to any such proportions as sketched out by the Lieutenant-Governor, charitable aid must come altogether short. When millions were in danger it was the duty of the Government to come forward: it had come forward, and therefore it could fairly ask for our charitable assistance, because it would not be wasted. The organization by Government of these relief committees would ensure that the charity would be well applied. It might be desirable, if the evil became great, that Parliament at home should be asked to vote a sum—that all the tax-payers in England should help their brethren out here. He did not know whether this was possible, but he thought it would be a good thing to ask that Parliament should come forward as a nation to help us out here. Whether this was the practice or not, he did not know; still we had heard that the highest name in the land had sanctioned this charitable call, and he hoped we should, one and all, respond to it with all our power and ability. His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and other high authorities in England had proclaimed that they would rather spend anything than that one life should unnecessarily be lost. He saw that Government talked of three millions as the cost of which was necessary to make the provision which it intended. Here was a large sum, but it would still require large contributions to lighten the burden which would hereafter come upon those who were in need. He hoped then that we should all feel the individual responsibility which was assigned to us by our presence here to-day, and by our being entrusted with the government and management of this land.

It had been truly said that the people were gentle and patient, and therefore it might be necessary that they should be sought out and even treated as a child was treated by its nurse. He hoped then that the appeal which had been made by His Excellency the Viceroy and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor would come home to us all; that we would all respond to it cheerfully, gladly, and to the utmost of our ability endeavour to arrest the approach of the destroyer; that we would check him before he could seize his prey, and if that was altogether impossible, that we would alleviate, as far as in us lay, those sufferings and afflictions which it was painful to contemplate. It was sad to go through the country at a time of calamity such as this, and it did touch the heart when you saw human bones strewn under every green tree and at every resting-place, and when you saw, as it were, the orphan rescued from the jaws of the hyena or the leopard, with the marks of his teeth still fresh upon him. He believed it was very difficult sufficiently to comprehend what a terrible affliction a famine was. It was most painful and most distressing, and when you saw the traces of it even afterwards, you shuddered and felt that you could not do too much to relieve the suffering. It was this point that he wished particularly to impress upon the meeting, and he would now ask that this committee should immediately begin its operations; that it should enter into immediate communication with Government; that all the relief committees should be encouraged far and wide—that so a great net, not of gift but of mercy, might be spread over all those vast and populous provinces, and so avert the impending calamity to those numerous millions who without our aid must perish. (Loud applause.)

MR. BULLEN SMITH said:—After all that they had heard that day, he felt that there was nothing left for him to urge. It had been very clearly set before them by His Excellency that they had a duty to perform altogether apart from those measures which the Government were undertaking; remembering that we were now approaching the period when the pinch of severity would be felt, he thought it was a very evident proposition that the more promptly the organization of the committee was completed and its operations began the more complete could be the relief afforded. He had much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The resolution was put and carried.

MR. ALONZO MONEY, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Chair, spoke as follows:—Your Honor, Mr. Sheriff, and Gentlemen,—The proposal I have to make to you is one which calls for very few remarks from me, as it must necessarily commend itself to your judgment and sympathy. That proposal is that you give a vote of thanks to the nobleman who has so ably and thoroughly fulfilled this day the duties of Chairman of this meeting. (Cheers.) In asking you, Gentlemen, to do this, I would beg of you to look back a little further than today, and to remember all that Lord Northbrook has already done in furtherance of the object of this meeting. That object is the mitigation of suffering in the districts of Bengal threatened with famine. To further that object, we, Gentlemen, are now asked to put our hands in our pockets, and to contribute subscriptions and money. But Lord Northbrook has given far more than we are even asked to give. During the last three and a half months he has given hours of anxious care, days and nights of thought, consideration, and mental labor. (Cheers.) He has avoided no difficulties, shirked no responsibilities, but, in the defence of the people entrusted to his charge, he has met the great public foe boldly and face to face, as an Englishman should. (Cheers.) Let us hope and pray, Gentlemen, that the victory may yet rest with him. (Loud cheers.)

HIS HONOR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR said:—I would ask to be allowed to second this motion, because I have been in a position which has enabled me, more than any other man, to bear testimony with regard to the services which His Excellency the Viceroy has already rendered the country in connection with the calamity which is, we fear, before it. (Applause.) I can most heartily and entirely testify that from the first moment when it was my painful duty to telegraph to His Excellency the Viceroy the very serious apprehensions I entertained, from that moment when His Excellency, leaving his retreat at Simla, came here to do whatever was possible for the millions of this country, he has never ceased to devote himself to the subject, and has ever been ready to give the promptest consideration to every proposition that has been made for the mitigation of the impending calamity (cheers), and to support all those engaged in the work to the utmost of his power. I claim to have this opportunity of affording my humble testimony to all that has gone before the particular action which His Lordship has taken on the occasion for which we now thank him, and I beg most cordially to second the motion made by Mr. Money. (Loud cheers.)

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY replied:—The manner in which the usual motion with which a meeting of this kind is concluded has been put to you by my friends, Mr. Money and Sir George Campbell, makes it difficult for me to say anything adequately in reply. What I will say, however, is this—that it has afforded me the greatest satisfaction to see so large and so unanimous a meeting assembled here today (applause), as also to hear the remarks which have been made as to the manner in which the Government of India (because I cannot accept any merit personally to myself) have fulfilled their duty in regard to the scarcity up to the present time. I am sure that the Lieutenant-Governor, who has so heartily and so cordially recognized the attention which has been paid by the Government of India to the absorbing subject, will agree with me in asking you to give all the assistance in your power towards supplementing the measures taken by the Government of India and the Government of Bengal. (Applause.) I am sure, too, that Sir George Campbell, who has devoted the whole of his great energies and abilities to this arduous task, will agree with me that the present occasion, when we are asking you to give us this assistance, is not a time when we can accept with propriety any recognition, however gratified we may feel with the confidence which it conveys, of the sufficiency of the measures we have taken. His Honor, I am sure, shares with the Government of India the hope that on some future day the remarks which now have been made may be truthfully applied to the conduct of the Government and the measures which they have undertaken. (Applause.) Before the central committee assembles for the first time, I have to announce some other subscriptions, and, in doing so, my duties today will be ended. I may observe, however, that I heartily

concur in the remarks with respect to subscriptions which have fallen from two gentlemen who have spoken. I agree with Baboo Joykissen Mookerjee that it is right to strike while the iron is hot, and that no time should be lost in circulating subscription lists; and I also agree with Archbishop Steins in expressing a hope that no one will be deterred, however small a subscription it may be in his power to give, from partaking in this good work. (Applause.) I would also say that there are many men who have already rendered most valuable aid, and there will no doubt be still more in the future whose names may never appear on subscription lists. (Hear, hear.) The Maharajah of Bettiah, for example, has been mentioned by the local officers as worthy of the highest commendation for the manner in which the people on his estate have been, and will be supported. (Applause.) I have to announce the following subscriptions: His Highness the Maharajah of Jeypore begs that his name may be put down for a subscription of Rs. 20,000. (Applause.) The Maharajah of Puttialah some time ago communicated to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab His Highness's wish that, should a subscription be raised, his name should be put down for Rs. 10,000. (Applause.)

I mentioned in my former remarks that the Duke of Argyll intimated his wish that his name should be put down as a subscriber to the Relief Fund, and the sum which he subscribes is Rs. 5,000. Some Members of the Indian Council have also telegraphed to me that their names should be placed on the subscription list. Sir Frederick Halliday, whom many of you remember as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, wishes his name to be placed on the list for Rs. 1,000. Sir Henry Montgomery, Sir Erskine Perry, Sir William Baker, and Mr. Arbuthnot wish their names to be put down for a similar sum, namely, Rs. 1,000 each. Sir Bartle Frere, whose name is well known to you as having been a Member of Council here, and subsequently Governor of Bombay, subscribes Rs. 500, and Mr. Ross Mangles, who is now one of the senior Members of the Council at home, and whose family is intimately associated with Bengal, has expressed his wish to subscribe Rs. 500. I may also mention that a gentleman, Mr. Mackinnon, who has treated the Government very liberally with regard to the freight for the transport of rice by the ships of the British Indian Steam Navigation Company, of which he is the chairman, has sent a communication desiring that his name should be put down for a large subscription, the precise amount of which I am not at present able to state. (Hear, hear.)

I have, in conclusion, to thank you most sincerely for the manner in which you have received the vote of thanks proposed to me, and I hand over the rest of the business of the day with the utmost confidence to my friend the Chief Justice, than whom no one is better qualified to forward any business of this nature. (Cheers.)

The central committee then held a meeting,—Sir R. Couch in the chair— at which, in accordance with the terms of the first resolution, an executive committee was appointed, composed of the following gentlemen:—The Hon'ble Mr. Schaleh (Chairman), the Hon'ble Mr. Inglis, the Hon'ble Mr. Dalyell, the Hon'ble Mr. Sutherland, the Hon'ble Digamber Mitra, the Hon'ble Mr. Robinson, the Hon'ble Mr. Bernard, the Hon'ble Rajah Jotendro Mohun Tagore, Mr. J. Bullen Smith, Munshi Amir Ali Khan, and Baboo Durga Charn Law.

Resolution by the Government of Bengal on the expediency of making advances to ryots in the distressed districts during the present season of famine, dated February 3, 1874.

His Excellency the Viceroy, after his tour in Behar, caused the remarks

"13. The Commissioner of Bhaugulpore brought to Lord Northbrook's notice the probability that certain classes of cultivators might be unable to obtain sufficient credit to carry them through the time of scarcity, but would not resort to public works or apply for relief in any other form, and suggested that advances of money or grain might be made to them to be recovered afterwards with interest.

"It is the obvious and natural duty of the landlords under whom such cultivators hold to do their utmost to assist them in passing through this temporary difficulty. The issues of advances of public money to any zemindars for this purpose should be held to come within the authority already given by the Government of India in respect to advances, and where apprehension is felt that this class will experience distress which cannot be otherwise met, it will be the duty of local officers to point out to zemindars the action which they should take, and the manner in which Government is prepared to assist them. The instructions contained in the circular letter addressed by His Honor's directions to the Commissioners of Patna and Bhaugulpore of the 24th November (see p. 81), with respect to advances for the digging of wells, appear to His Excellency to be very judicious, and might perhaps be extended with advantage to other purposes. Lord Northbrook does not doubt that, on such communications being made to them, zemindars will either make advances to such cultivators from their own funds or accept with alacrity the assistance offered by Government for this purpose; but if these expectations should not be realized, and difficulty is found with regard to the security for advances made directly to cultivators, His Excellency is ready to consider whether some legislative provision should not be made to the effect that their landlord shall stand security for the repayment."

quoted in the margin to be conveyed to the Government of Bengal in regard to the expediency of making advances of money or grain to well-to-do ryots who might be unable to support themselves. When conveying His Excellency the Viceroy's orders to the Commissioners of distressed divisions, the Lieutenant-Governor expressed a wish* that the zemindars should be urged to perform their duty to their ryots, and

asked for an early expression of opinion from Commissioners whether legislative provision was required to make the landholders responsible for the due repayment of advances made to their ryots.

2. The Commissioner of Rajshahye has reported that he does not see his way to making advances to sure ryots on the security and responsibility of the zemindars. And the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt but that in districts where there are many gradations of tenures, most of which are unregistered, there would be much practical difficulty in fixing the responsibility on the zemindar properly so-called. In Behar, however, where the tenure is simple, and there is ordinarily no one but a short-term farmer (ticcadar) between the ryots and their zemindar, the question may be less complicated. Mr. Barlow has (27th January) recommended that recourse be had to legislation, whereby the zemindar should have the power of recovering such advances as arrears of rent after a period of two years, and Government should have the power of realizing from the zemindars as an arrear of revenue. Mr. Barlow suggests that the special law should take effect in specially distressed tracts only, and that when advances are to be given in such tracts the zemindars be first invited to give them, and direct advances be given only in the event of the zemindars holding back.

3. Since the reference was made in December last to the Commissioner, local officers have been authorised to suspend the Government revenue demand from zemindars who distinguish themselves by helping their ryots or by other liberal action to the relief of distress. It is thus made the direct interest of zemindars to help their ryots; and if the Government expects them to do something, it on the other hand is ready to show them every consideration in respect of its own demands.

4. The Magistrate-Collector of Rungpore in his narrative of the 24th January has observed that if recourse is to be had to legislation no time should be lost; and he further notes that, as the orders at present stand, he cannot advance money to the substantial class, locally called *jotedars*, who may wish to help their ryots, because *jotedars*, though they have very frequently ryots

* "4. With reference to paragraph 13 of His Excellency's orders, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to urge upon Commissioners and Magistrate-Collectors to do all they can to make the zemindars see that it is both their duty and interest to assist their ryots with advances during the coming crisis; and he directs that advances of public money may be made without interest to zemindars who desire to help their ryots, on the same terms as advances are made to zemindars who will import grain. Particular engagements regarding the expenditure of such advances must be taken, and great care must be exercised to see that they are expended in the manner intended. The Lieutenant-Governor will be glad to be favored with an early expression of opinion from the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye on the question whether it would be possible, as suggested by His Excellency the Viceroy, that advances should be made direct to cultivators, and legislative provision be made requiring the landlords to be security for the repayment of the advances."

under them, are not zemindars. Mr. Glazier, however, insists strongly that in a rich district like Rungpore, where jotedars and ryots are well-to-do, very many ryots who will not come to relief works should be kept alive with their families, if only they could receive small advances of money. Mr. Glazier appears to consider that the repayment of such advances would in ordinary cases be fairly secure.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor considers that at the present season of the year, when distress is already beginning, it would not be safe to wait for special legislation in a case of this kind. He apprehends that in the orders of the Viceroy the word zemindar was not used in a technical sense, but was applied to all landholders possessing rights of property. He is willing to give the Commissioner discretion to advance money to trustworthy putneedars and other holders of substantial and valuable tenures, including jotedars in Rungpore, who are willing to help their ryots, on the terms allowed for zemindars in the foregoing extract (paragraph 1 of this Resolution), and the Commissioner is hereby authorised to use such discretion or to delegate it to Mr. Glazier if he thinks fit. The position of the jotedars of Rungpore is strong and peculiar, and therefore the Lieutenant-Governor feels warranted in extending the concession to them.

6. There remains the question of advances to ryots direct through the agency of Government officers. Mr. Barlow points out that if advances are made direct to ryots by Government officers, a largely increased establishment of deputy collectors or sub-deputy collectors would be required.

Extract from page 2 of the Instructions for Relief Committees.

(f).—"To provide in such manner as may be considered the best in each particular locality for the relief of such persons whose caste, usages, and feelings prevent them from going to the Government public works—women of good family and others—who would die of starvation if not relieved. Relief for this class of persons might be afforded either wholly gratuitously, or partly gratuitously, by the sale of grain under the market rates, or even in some cases, with due precautions, by the advances of money or grain to be subsequently repaid."

of Muhammadan ryots at any rate cannot, and will not, go on the works. As the season for sowing seed approaches, if it be thought really necessary that in any particular state in default of the zemindar the Government should undertake the duty of making advances to the ryots generally for the ensuing harvest, a special report must be made in each such case showing the circumstances under which such an abnormal course is recommended.

No. 135.

Letter from R. Knight, Esq., for Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 572 SR, dated February 10, 1874.

I am directed to submit copy of a Minute recorded by Sir Richard Temple (see below No. 136 of this series) regarding the threatened scarcity in that part of Nepal which lies below the Himalayas and to the north of the British districts of Tirhoot and Chumparun. The Lieutenant-Governor has not seen Mr. Girdlestone's report of the 1st February, and he feels unable to advise any particular course until he knows more exactly what the threatened tracts are, where they lie, what is their population, and what their condition. He can, therefore, only submit Sir Richard Temple's minute for the orders of the Government of India.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor desires, however, to add that, though at the beginning of the scarcity there was some alarm about Nepal and the demands its people might make on the resources of our districts, yet recent reports from Tirhoot and Chumparun have contained no suggestion that considerable quantities of grain have been carried from North Behar into Nepal. On the other hand, the last Tirhoot narrative stated that above 200,000 maunds of maize had come from the Nepal Terai into Seetamurhee, but that the importation had now

stopped. From some other quarters fear has been expressed that exportations to Nepal might affect the food supplies of North Behar, but, as above stated, the official reports do not give any facts or opinions in support of such an apprehension.

3. On the general question of assisting the Nepalese, the Lieutenant-Governor would submit his opinion that we cannot on relief works, or at relief centres, or at relief hospitals, make any distinction between British subjects and people from Nepal, but we must treat all who come for aid alike as well as we can.

No. 136.

Minute by Sir Richard Temple, on the threatened scarcity in Nepal, No. 11, dated Motiharee, February 5, 1874.

The Resident at Nepal (Mr. C. Girdlestone) having forwarded to me copy of his letter, No. 27 C of the 1st February 1874, addressed to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, regarding the impending scarcity in the Nepalese Terai Districts which march along with British territory, I desire at once to state my view on a matter which may at any moment become urgent.

2. On approaching the northern frontier of the Tirhoot and Chumparun districts, I was concerned to find that between our border and the Terai there is generally some narrow strip, of varying breadth, of Nepal territory, with villages much in the same circumstances and condition as the distressed British sub-divisions. I do not know what the population of the strip may be, but I see that in one sub-division of it, Jaleysur, the Resident puts the population at 225,000 souls; and possibly the adjoining sub-division of Sirha may have a similar number. Thus it may be that in contact with our distressed people we shall have half a million of equally distressed Nepalese. This circumstance constitutes an aggravation of our difficulties, which must be met.

3. On the civil officers inquiring whether Nepalese subjects applying in our territory for work of relief must be treated in the same manner as British subjects, I replied that they must.

4. But the larger question remains—how are the Nepal authorities to get grains, which they may purchase in India, conveyed upwards from the northern or left bank of the Ganges? Of course they may get carriage locally if they can. But practically they can hardly do so, when all available carriage is engaged for our grain transport. In this way I apprehend little or nothing will be done.

5. One thing the Nepal authorities could, I should think, do, which is this: their distressed strip of territory has resources in carts and bullocks. They could collect such carriage and send it down to the left bank of the Ganges to fetch grain. The British authorities would give due protection to such convoys, deputing officials to take care of them, so that the carriage might not be detained or seized for other purposes. Even this plan, however, would not probably bring all the grain that might be needed.

6. Therefore, I think we must be prepared to let the Nepal authorities have a portion of the grain supplies, which we shall be sending to the north part of Tirhoot, on payment of the cost which may have been incurred in purchase, transport, and the like by the British Government. I should be happy to arrange this in negotiation with the Resident of Nepal.

7. It will be found that we cannot properly refuse succour to the distressed people beyond our frontier, who cannot obtain supplies save through British jurisdiction.

8. Also if any starving or sick Nepalese present themselves at our hospitals or relief houses, we must, I think, admit them.

9. At the same time I think that the Resident would do well to impress on the Nepalese Government the wrong and the mistake they commit in prohibiting free trade in grain between their districts and ours.

No. 137.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 462, dated Calcutta, February 12, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 572 SR of the 10th instant (see above No. 135 of this series), with enclosed Minute from Sir Richard Temple, regarding the threatened scarcity in that portion of the Nepal territory which borders on Tirhoot and Chumparun.

2. In reply, I am to inform you that the Governor General in Council has been in communication with Mr. C. Girdlestone, the Resident in Nepal, on the subject of the assistance which may have to be rendered to the Nepalese Government to meet the distress which is apprehended in the above-mentioned districts.

3. The Government of India have offered the Nepalese Government 1,000 tons of rice at cost price, but, as Sir Richard Temple very truly observes, the difficulty lies mainly in arranging for its transport from the railway to Nepal. Mr. Girdlestone has accordingly been directed to place himself in communication with Sir Richard Temple, and in his communications with the Nepalese Government to be guided by the instructions that he will receive from him.

4. The Government of India entirely concur with the Lieutenant-Governor and with Sir Richard Temple that no distinction should be made between British subjects and subjects of Nepal if the latter should apply for relief in British territory, and that we should do what we can to assist the distressed people beyond our border with supplies. No interference, therefore, should be permitted with the free transit of food grains on private account from British territories into Nepal.

5. At the same time it is the obvious duty of the Nepalese Government to provide, as far as possible, for the relief of their people, a duty which, from the information received from Mr. Girdlestone, that Government seem entirely to recognise.

6. As the arrangements will be carried out by Sir Richard Temple in communication with Mr. Girdlestone and the Nepalese Government, no further orders can with advantage be given by the Government of India. I am to request that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will furnish Sir Richard Temple with a copy of this letter.

No. 138.

Minute by Sir Richard Temple, on the grain requirements of the district of Tirhoot, dated Camp, Durbhanga, January 31, 1874.

Having visited the Tirhoot District, seen some of the tracts most affected by drought, conversed with the Commissioner and the civil officers and with most of the principal non-official residents, European and Native, I desire to state the amount of Government grain which we should be prepared to bring into the district, and the arrangements for transport from the left bank of the Ganges into the interior.

The principal relief officer, Mr. Worsley, calculates the amount of grain required for his operations at four millions of maunds, or 148,200 tons.

The Collector, Mr. Halliday, estimates 3,500,000 maunds, which estimate is approved by the Commissioner, Mr. Steuart Bayley.

It is borne out to some extent by Colonel Burn, Manager of the Durbhanga Estate, which has a population of half a million of people situated in the most drought-stricken parts of the district. He states the requirement for his portion of the district at 740,000 maunds.

Mr. Macdonnell, civil officer of the Durbhanga Sub-Division, expects that at the worst period 400,000 persons will come on the hands of Government in his sub-division.

Mr. Cochran, civil officer of the Mudhobanee Sub-Division, states his fear that at the worst period more than 400,000 persons will require relief in his sub-division in some shape or other from Government.

Mr. O'Reilly, the civil officer of the Seetamurhee Sub-Division, informed me that he expected to have 150,000 persons on the hands of Government during the worst months.

There will be distress throughout the north-west corner of the Tajpore Sub-Division. The Collector thinks that 30,000 persons may here come on our hands.

In the rest of Tajpore, and in the two remaining sub-divisions of Hajee-pore and Mozufferpore, there is not likely to be any general distress. But in Mozufferpore there will be some thousands of persons seeking relief.

Thus, the estimates of local officers give about one million as the number of souls who will come on our hands in the Tirhoot District out of a total population of upwards of four millions, or 25 per cent.; and this is the district most severely affected in the whole Behar province.

The estimate of a million of persons corresponds very much with the estimate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of maunds, or 129,700 tons as separately made by the Collector.

These statements represent nothing more than anticipations regarding subjects wherein certainty is not possible. But the time has now come when we must make the best estimate we can of the amount which will have to be transported into the interior from the left or north bank of the Ganges.

Looking at all the statements together, I consider that it will not be safe to provide carriage for less than four millions of maunds of food grain, or 148,200 tons, which gives a margin over and above the Collector's estimate.

The worst two months will be May and June, though the month preceding that period (April) may be bad; and the three months subsequent, July, August, and September, will almost certainly be so. Up to July, land carriage only will be available. From July there will be help from water carriage, but the land carriage would fall off, and it would be preferable to bring the whole, or four millions of maunds, into the northern part of the district by the 15th June, the distances for inland carriage being from 40 to 80 miles from the Ganges.

Such being the present requirement, I have to see how it is to be met.

It was ascertained at Patna that the transport agent there (Mr. Hewitt) had despatched from there 2,00,000 maunds to arrive in the distressed sub-divisions of Tirhoot by the 15th February, and had arranged to send from that date 50,000 maunds a week, which arrangement would place 8,00,000 maunds in those sub-divisions by the 15th June, making up one million in all.

The Court of Wards (Durbhanga) has already arranged to bring 2,00,000 maunds.

The amount for which cash advances have been granted by Government to zemindars, indigo planters, and others, on condition that they bring the grain up in time, may be taken at 50,000 maunds.

The Collector, under the direction of the Commissioner, has just made contracts with trustworthy European contractors to bring up 1,10,000 maunds a week from Chumpta Ghât, opposite Barrh, from the 15th February, which arrangement up to the 15th June would place 17,60,000 maunds in the distressed sub-divisions.

I have invited tenders on the suggestion of the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces, for contracts, to be concluded there, to carry 2,00,000 maunds a week from the left bank of the Ganges to these sub-divisions from the 1st April to the 15th June, which arrangement, if effected, would bring in two millions of maunds.

These figures give the following results up to the 15th June :—

	Maunds.
Patna Agency	10,00,000
Court of Wards	2,00,000
Zemindars, indigo-planters, and others	50,000
By local contracts	17,60,000
By North-West contracts	20,00,000
TOTAL	<u>50,10,000</u>

These arrangements will, if successful, provide more than the four millions required by the 15th June, and will leave a fair margin to cover those partial failures which must be expected in operations of this kind.

I have provided a reserve of carts to be at the disposal of the Commissioner in event of need or accident, by ordering purchase of 500 pair of draught-bullocks in Nepal, the carts to be made in Tirhoot; 500 carts with bullocks will be purchased on the frontier of the Chumparun District, or, failing that, the bullocks will be purchased at Shahabad cattle-fair and carts made up in Tirhoot; 500 carts with bullocks are being obtained through the Government of the North-Western Provinces. Thus, the reserve will be made up of 1,500 carts drawn by bullocks.

I have further, at the instance of the Commissioner and the Collector, recommended the laying down of a tramway from the left bank of the Ganges to Mudhobanee *via* Durbhanga to relieve the country carriage during the hot season.

Again, the Commissioner hopes to conclude a contract for the carriage of 50,000 maunds a week from the 15th February from the Ganges opposite Monghyr to Durbhanga. This arrangement, if successful, would place 8,00,000 maunds in the distressed sub-divisions by the 15th June, and may be regarded as a reserve to make up for deficiencies in other parts of the general plan.

We cannot be sure that the contracts asked for in the North-West Provinces will be taken up. If they are not, we have still time to purchase or hire large quantities of carriage in those provinces.

Also, further purchases of draught-cattle can, if necessary, be probably effected in Nepal or elsewhere, the carts being made up in Tirhoot.

We can, if absolutely necessary, obtain pack-bullocks from Central India; but we are averse to that plan if it can be avoided, because of the difficulty of fodder.

We can, as a last resource, obtain camels through the commissariat at Agra, but the expense and the distance detract from the value of this plan.

By the advice of the Commissioner and the Collector, I have sent a requisition to the Government, North-Western Provinces, for 50,000 maunds of cotton seed (highly recommended as fodder) to be sent by railway to Patna, and a similar requisition to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, or 1,00,000 maunds in all. I am assured by the best informed persons in Tirhoot that this supply will be most useful to the transport service during the hot months.

By the excavation of wells and old tanks along the routes of the grain transit, the Commissioner and the Collector hope to provide drinking-water for the cattle employed in the transport. They have arranged their relief works with this view.

The resources of the Tirhoot District in carriage are more than ordinarily great. The indigo-planting and manufacture cause a large number of carts and bullocks to be kept up by the ryots and villagers. There is a large export trade, in prosperous years, of produce from the district (estimated, inclusive of rice, at five millions of maunds annually), which is chiefly carried to the Ganges by carts. There are many European non-official gentlemen resident in the district engaged in trade or industry. Thus, it becomes possible to effect contracts, the execution of which can be relied upon to a considerable extent. The Commissioner and the Collector have very properly decided to resort to contracts for carriage, and not to collect carriage by the direct agency of the police or other establishments.

Lastly, if notwithstanding all these precautions something more should be required after the 15th June, there would still remain two more months up to the 15th August during which supplies could be brought up to distressed districts by water-carriage.

These transport arrangements hold good only as far as the principal points within the distressed tracts. There will still remain detailed arrangements for the conveyance of grain to the villages. These will be made separately.

It is assumed that the railway will bring the requisite quantities of grain to the south or right bank of the Ganges. There will remain the provision of boats for crossing the Ganges, and for this purpose from 400 to 500 boats will

suffice. This number Mr. Hewitt will certainly be able to obtain, and he has been instructed accordingly.

According to the above estimate I have, by the advice of the Commissioner and Collector, to recommend that 2,00,000 maunds a week may be sent forward from Calcutta for the service of the Tirhoot District, consigned to the care of Mr. Hewitt.

I hope that the arrangements explained in this Minute will not be thought larger than what the occasion demands. Unless we act effectively now regarding transport, the opportunity for action will pass away. The tracts most severely affected by scarcity happen to be those which are the most distant, the most isolated, and the most helpless. In most parts of Mudhobanee and in many parts of Durbhanga the September crop is always small, consequently the distress will be more than ordinarily protracted, will last through the autumn, and will not disappear at the earliest till December. And during the rainy season the rivers in that quarter (the Tiljooga, the Bolan, and the Kumla) are navigable only for small boats.

No. 139.

Note by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on Sir R. Temple's Minute regarding the supply of grains for the Tirhoot District, dated Calcutta, February 5, 1874.

This Minute (see above, No. 138 of this series) only reached me very late yesterday evening. I think that it should be at once laid before the Government of India, and therefore submit it early this morning with this general note without delaying to refer to recent figures.

I confess that the estimate now made exceeds what I had thought that Government could undertake in any distressed district, and also exceeds my estimate of our powers of transport. I have always supposed that there must be some stocks; that the year's produce, small though it be, will one way or another last for some time; that private trade will do something; that something will be saved by pinching, and a resort to food not usually consumed; and that Government can only supply the margin left when all these resources are taken into account. Admitting that the people of this country are more self-reliant in the matter of food, and less inclined to throw themselves permanently on Government or the public than in some other countries, I yet feel that this may to some extent be due to the fact that they have been obliged to help themselves in default of other means. And though all humane men would be glad if it were possible to maintain the people in full comfort and health in times of scarcity, the attempt to do so might not only prove an impossible task, but, if it were possible, might have the effect of rendering the people much less self-reliant than hitherto. I believe, then, that it is necessary that we should hedge in our aid by severe tests; that, painful though it be, we cannot in practice do more than so much as will avert actual starvation, while the people must still submit to severe privation and suffering on such an occasion as that which has overtaken us.

I am certainly not one of those who place an undue reliance on private trade for imports of food from abroad into Bengal. I have had no reliance whatever on any such trade. But for the distribution of food within this country I have throughout believed that private trade will in most quarters do much and should be permitted to do so, though there are some limited tracts in which it fails and where Government must undertake almost the whole task. Wherever private trade exists or can be developed, I have not the least doubt that it acts in every way more beneficially than the operations of Government.

Now, as regards a great part of Tirhoot, private trade cannot be overlooked. Patna is in fact at this moment overflowing with private grain seeking an outlet, and, if that outlet be found, farther private supplies are forthcoming in large quantities from the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces. Private trade certainly reaches Mozufferpore. We learned from the last report that 20 new grain-shops had lately been established there by outside dealers. And by giving facilities for carriage and advances, I cannot doubt that private trade may be led to do much in Central and North-Western Tirhoot.

The last report stated that 2,00,000 maunds of grain had lately been imported from Nepal into the Seetamurhee Division alone. In other quarters, by driblets, something no doubt finds its way into the distressed country. We have always then contemplated that the route from Patna by Mozufferpore should, as much as possible, be left open to private traffic, and that this traffic should be as much as possible stimulated by advances. I have relaxed the rule which originally required persons taking advances to import grain from a distance so far that the Tirhoot and other local dealers may have advances for importations from Patna and other railway stations. I cannot but think that Sir R. Temple has much under-estimated what may be done by these advances when he puts the amount to be obtained by this means at 50,000 maunds only. I hope it will prove to be very much more.

So much I have said regarding private trade merely to clear the ground ; but I most entirely agree that we must not too much rely on private trade. For North-East Tirhoot, I believe, we must ourselves undertake most of the work.

The tract in Tirhoot which chiefly depends on rice and where the failure has been most excessive is not the whole, but, speaking roughly, about half the district. In this view the estimate of a million people on our hands assumes nearer 50 per cent. than 25 per cent. of the population of the most distressed tract—a very liberal estimate.

Accepting that estimate of the number to be supported, I still cannot but think that the supply of food for them is estimated too liberally. Sir Richard Temple says three and a half million maunds tallies with the estimate of one million people. To be safe, he says four millions of maunds. This implies a provision of three and a half to four maunds per head. Now, we have estimated the food required for the whole support of an adult male to be three-fourths of a seer or one and a half pound per diem, *viz.*, one pound of rice or wheat and half a pound of pulse, vegetable, fish, &c. The failure has been chiefly a rice failure ; the pulses are good. The present rain will allow some quick-growing grains and vegetables to be sown. Fish, milk, &c., are still in the country. Many classes habitually eat meat, even in the shape of dead bullocks, mice, &c. If Government supplies one pound per head of rice or other grain, I think the people may find the remaining quantity of food necessary to subsistence ; and the above estimate is for an adult male, and if we extend it to the whole population, men, women, children, and infants, it becomes very liberal. I have been inclined to think that if, infants and all included, we supply a maund of 82lb for 90 days, or three months, that ckd out in other ways will probably suffice. Certainly one and a half maund or 123lb for four months would be a very ample provision.

As regards the time for which provision must be made, it must be remembered that it is not till comparatively late in the season that the largest numbers come on our hands ; then, if the people survive the worst months before the rains without being too entirely reduced, they gradually withdraw to cultivation. Tirhoot is a moist district ; if the present genial fall moistens the ground well, and augurs the early rain supply, which very frequently follows a bad year, a good deal may be grown even in the hot months, and what is called the bhadoie, *i. e.*, the fast-growing maize, murwa, &c., come in in August. I have been inclined to think a four months' supply for the distressed population about a fair estimate, especially if we have some further reserve for the rains ; that four months' supply would be one and a half million maunds.

At any rate it appeared to me that if we could secure two million maunds in the tracts distant from river and rail before the rains, and arrange for a reserve, which could be thrown in early in the rains in case of necessity, we should have done our duty fairly by the Tirhoot District.

Now, as regards transport. For some time I was not satisfied that so much in proportion had been done in Tirhoot as in some other districts ; less has been despatched to Tirhoot than to Chumparun, and Tirhoot is certainly the district regarding which I have felt most cause for anxiety. Latterly things have got into better train, but seeing all that has passed I was inclined to feel satisfied if the arrangements were such that 1,00,000 maunds per week were actually and without fail despatched by the direct land routes to the north of Tirhoot, the routes being so arranged as to leave room for a good private traffic on the Mozufferpore route. Latterly the local officers had promised more, and I have continued for some time past very distinctly to

say that the need of the Tirhoot District exceeded the means of carriage on which we can rely, and that the local officers were simply to send forward as much as they probably could, any excess over my minimum demand being so much gain. Though they have held out hopes of more than the rate I have stated, still, looking to previous shortcomings, I had not ventured recently to calculate on more than 1,00,000 maunds per week by the direct routes. At this rate the supply would stand somewhat as follows :—

	Mds.
Despatched by Mr. Hewitt to the end of January ...	2,00,000
I put aside grain imported on advances as private traffic, but there is, in addition to the above despatch, imported by local dealers for Government ...	45,000
To be despatched in three months from the 1st February to the 1st May, say thirteen weeks, at 1,00,000 maunds per week	13,00,000
May be despatched in May, so as to be placed before the rains, say ...	3,00,000
Arranged by Durbhanga Estate (a quantity which may be increased) ...	2,00,000
TOTAL ...	20,45,000

This gives upwards of 20,00,000 maunds provided before the rains, exclusive of what I may call reserve side-routes. These latter are the routes by Monghyr and the Ghugree Rivers, which are being tried, and the route by the Bhaugulpore District and Soopool, whence we propose to assist Tirhoot if we can supply anything in excess of the needs of Soopool. I fear, however, we cannot calculate on much from this quarter.

I would, however, make sure that we have in boats (taken as far up the rivers as they can go) a very considerable supply, which would be ready to go forward to Durbhanga and other points the moment the rivers open, and further supplies would be stored at the river-side stations. In this way I calculated on our being able to supply two millions of maunds (or half what Sir Richard Temple proposes) before the rains, and say another million of maunds in the early months of the rains if need be. If the rains are long delayed we can continue to cart ; if they come early, our water arrangements would come into play early.

According to Sir R. Temple's statements it appears that the local officers now calculate on forwarding by local carriage much more than I had ventured to calculate on, that is, they have arranged to send forward 1,60,000 maunds per week. I can only say that, if they really can do so, I think they should. It will all be clear gain to go forward, as much as we can, as soon as we can. Now that we are a good deal relieved as regards our fears for some other districts, we can, I believe, supply for Tirhoot this amount of grain, or rather the whole 2,00,000 maunds per week at which Sir R. Temple puts the present demand. But when we come to the additional supply of another 2,00,000 per week from the 1st April, by means of carriage to be obtained from the North-Western Provinces, I confess I have the greatest doubts of the practicability of the measure. I doubt if the railway could supply so much to Tirhoot with due regard to the needs of other districts. I still more doubt if the enormous supply of carts from the North-Western Provinces which is calculated on is a possible thing. I understand that Sir R. Temple has contemplated obtaining 20,000 carts from the North-Western Provinces. To carry 2,00,000 maunds per week would require at least so many carts of a description superior to the ordinary ten-maund carts of our districts. We must allow at least ten days for each trip ; for more distant depôts a fortnight, besides an allowance for reserve, breakdowns, and rest. I am not sure that we have ever in India put 20,000 soldiers into actual active movement in one field of operations at one time. An army of 20,000 carts brought from a distance, with bullocks and attendants and all, would be an astounding undertaking. Whence are they to come ? how are they to be brought down ? and where are men and bullocks to get food and provender and shelter ? And if it were done, this would be for one large district alone without calculating the needs of other districts. My own view is that if from the neighbouring districts of the North-Western Provinces we can get carriage sufficient to

assist and secure the immediately adjoining districts of Chumparun and Sarun, we shall do very well.

For Tirhoot I am inclined to think that if local means can do all, or nearly all, that Sir R. Temple calculates on obtaining from them, we may be satisfied with that supply with only moderate assistance from the outside for special purposes.

No 140.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 474, dated Calcutta, February 13, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 300A. of the 6th instant, with enclosed note of the Lieutenant-Governor (see above No. 139 of this series) upon a Minute by Sir Richard Temple, (see p. 224) regarding the supply of food in the Tirhoot District.

2. These documents have been laid before the Government of India, and the Governor General in Council cannot but express the disappointment which he feels at the local officers having for so long neglected fully to appreciate the requirements of those parts of the country, and thereby occasioned the postponement to the present time of arrangements for transport which should have been made many weeks ago.

3. Although it may hereafter be found that the estimates now sent forward are somewhat in excess of the actual requirements, yet, bearing in mind that those estimates have been made by the local officers who are immediately responsible, and moreover that subsequent information has been received to the effect that a considerable number of people in Nepal may not improbably come upon the hands of the British Government, the Government of India think that Sir Richard Temple has exercised a wise discretion in recommending that four millions of maunds of grain shall be provided for the district of Tirhoot, and that arrangements should be made for the transport into the interior of a larger quantity, in order that the probability that part of the transport arrangements will break down may be guarded against beforehand.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor expresses some doubt as to the advantage of obtaining the supply of transport for which tenders have been called for from the North-Western Provinces. His Honor will be glad to hear that Mr. Molesworth has reported that a tramway can be constructed from Chumpta Ghât to Durbhanga, and that orders have been given for the immediate commencement of the work. This may perhaps modify the views of Sir Richard Temple as to the requirements for transport after April, when the contracts contemplated will commence; but the Government of India desire to comply with the requisitions which Sir Richard Temple may make after visiting the localities and conferring with the local authorities.

5. From information given by Sir George Campbell to the Viceroy, His Excellency believes that the Government of Bengal have taken measures to comply with Sir Richard Temple's request, that 2,00,000 maunds a week should be sent from Calcutta for use in the district of Tirhoot.

No. 141.

Letter from C. E. Buckland, Esq., on special duty with Sir R. Temple, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 56, dated Bankipore, February 12, 1874.

I am directed to submit, for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, copy of a Minute, No. 18, dated February 12th,* recorded by Sir Richard Temple regarding the state of affairs in the Sarun District, and to express a hope that the arrangements therein mentioned may meet with His Honor's approval.

* Printed in a separate volume.

2. Sir Richard especially begs that Mr. Toynbee may at once be instructed to despatch 5,000 maunds of grain a day for the Sarun District to the Arrah Station, instead of to any other station on the East Indian Railway, and to continue despatching this daily supply until the required amount of 5,00,000 maunds (of which some 1,30,000 have been received) shall have been acknowledged by the Collector of Sarun. At Arrah the grain will be taken charge of by Major Jackson, on special duty, for the Collector of Sarun: arrangements have been made for its transport to the ghât on the Ganges near Dooreegunj, where Mr. C. E. F. Tonnerre will take it over also for the Collector, and from whence it will be conveyed to Chuprah and other places for distribution in the interior of the district.

3. The object of this proposal is to relieve the pressure at the Patna Station, and to enable the Collector of Sarun to receive his consignments in the manner most convenient to him.

N. B.—Mr. Toynbee is sending 2,500 bags (5,000) daily to Arrah for Sarun as an emergent indent, Major Jackson having telegraphed that carts had been arranged for this quantity. The quantity is cut from the Patna Ghât allotment, pending orders.

No. 142.

Letter from C. E. Buckland, Esq., on special duty with Sir Richard Temple, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 85, dated Bankipore, February 26, 1874.

I am directed to report that Sir Richard Temple, having visited the Tirhoot, Chumparun, and Sarun Districts of the Patna Division, as well as the Soopole Sub-division of the Bhaugulpore District, proposes to return to Calcutta for the purpose of conferring with His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, before proceeding to the other distressed districts, especially those of Purneah and Dinagepore. After visiting these, he can revisit the Patna Division if that course shall be deemed desirable.

2. I have duly forwarded to you, for submission to His Honor, all the Minutes of substantial importance, recorded from time to time by Sir Richard, regarding the districts inspected and the questions submitted to his notice. Recapitulation of the facts therein contained is therefore unnecessary.

3. But Sir Richard cannot leave the Patna Division for a time without offering to the Lieutenant-Governor the expression of his sincere acknowledgment for the cordial approval so promptly accorded to his suggestions, and his hope that his recommendations, submitted after personal investigation on the spot, may continue to coincide with the policy of Sir George Campbell.

No. 143.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to C. E. Buckland, Esq., on special duty with Sir Richard Temple, No. 1236 SR, dated Calcutta, March 4, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge your letter No. 85 of 26th ultimo (see above No. 142 of this series), in which you announce the completion of the tour in Behar which Sir Richard Temple was so good as to undertake, and his return to Calcutta for a time before undertaking another tour. The Lieutenant-Governor begs most heartily to acknowledge, as he has already acknowledged to the Government of India, the very great advantage to the public service from Sir Richard's most zealous and energetic labors in inspecting and supervising the relief operations in Behar, and settling on the spot very many things which could not have been so well or so promptly disposed of in any other way. The Lieutenant-Governor is much gratified to know that Sir Richard Temple feels

that his action has been facilitated by the cordial support of this Government, and Sir George Campbell on his part desires prominently to acknowledge that Sir Richard Temple's aid and co-operation have been rendered to him in a manner calculated to promote, to the utmost, harmony and common effort for the public good.

2. In regard to the further tour which Sir Richard Temple is about to undertake, the Lieutenant-Governor having fully conferred with Sir Richard need say little in this letter. Copies of the most recent letters and reports from Purneah, Dinagore, and the Sonthal Pergunnahs have been furnished to Sir Richard.

3. There has been so much variation in the accounts regarding Purneah, that, although the last accounts are on the whole favorable, it will be a great relief to the Lieutenant-Governor to have Sir Richard Temple's deliberate opinion of the needs of that district, formed after inquiry on the spot.

4. The demands made for assistance for the Sonthal Pergunnahs have till now been very indefinite and very insufficiently supported by proper information. The last account of a small portion of those Pergunnahs is, however, more precise, and so alarming that the Lieutenant-Governor has thought it right to direct the immediate despatch of a small supply of grain. He trusts that Sir Richard Temple will be good enough to give him the opinion which he may be able to form after hearing the local officers, and making such inquiry as he deems requisite on the question whether farther arrangements are necessary to secure the safety of the Pergunnahs.

5. As respects Dinagore and Maldah, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes it will be found that the arrangements of the local officers are good; that relief work has been given promptly, judiciously, and in good time; that the transport arrangements are now sufficient; and that the provision for charitable relief is organised on a good plan, and is being brought into active operation as fast as the circumstances require.

6. The situation in Dinagore and Maldah, and to some extent in Purneah, is somewhat different from that in the districts of North Behar, which contain a much denser and poorer population. The people generally are better off and not so much accustomed to labor for hire. In certain tracts very extensive relief will be necessary, but it is hoped that more may be done by selling grain in places insufficiently supplied by private trade and allowing the people to distribute it themselves, and that less gratuitous relief will be necessary than in those poorer districts where we may be obliged thus to feed a very large proportion of the population. The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that in considering the arrangements made by the local officers, Sir Richard Temple will give full weight to the circumstances of that part of the country.

7. The Lieutenant-Governor has expressed a hope that when Sir Richard Temple again visits Patna, he will be good enough to give a final opinion as to whether it is necessary to provide any further supplies of grain at present for Gya and Shahabad.

8. The district officers of several districts of the Burdwan and Chota Nagpore Divisions have made application for supplies of grain. The Commissioner of Burdwan has not yet thought this necessary, and the Commissioner of Chota Nagpore has only recommended it for some very limited localities to a certain extent. Still prices must be high, and much of the population in the western districts is poor; and the Lieutenant-Governor would be glad if, returning by the Chord Line from Patna, Sir Richard Temple would take the opportunity to make such inquiries as he can and favor the Lieutenant-Governor with his opinion on his return.

No. 144.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 681 SR, dated February 13, 1874.

With reference to the Financial Secretary's letter No. 3328, dated 26th November (see p. 66), and other communications, I am now directed to

submit an estimate, as far as it is possible to frame one, of the expenditure to be incurred in consequence of the drought of 1873-74 in Behar and Bengal. Much of this estimate must still be very conjectural, but it is given as well as this Government now can give it. The expenditure will be of two kinds, namely—

- (a) expenditure for which there will be no money return;
- (b) expenditure on advances and loans, most of which will be eventually repaid.

2. First, with reference to the absolute expenditure, this may be ranged under five heads, namely—

I.—Special temporary establishments.

II.—Direct expenditure for the promotion of private trade in grain.

III.—Relief work expenditure either on roads or public works, or in the shape of aid to private relief works.

IV.—Purchase, handling, transport, storage, &c., of Government grain.

V.—Charitable relief.

I.—SPECIAL TEMPORARY ESTABLISHMENTS.

3. Under cover of my letter No. 3888, dated 11th December (see p. 66) was submitted a statement of establishments "likely to be required." The total charge shown was Rs. 38,000 a month. One or more of the higher appointments then proposed and sanctioned by the Government of India may perhaps not be required. But, on the other hand, there are—

- (1) Mr. Hankey, as inspector of transport arrangements, Patna.
- (2) An additional relief commissioner for North Behar.
- (3) The officers of the Commissariat and Quarter-Master General's Department, and of the Staff Corps Departments who are deputed on famine duty.
- (4) The medical superior and subordinate staff which will be required.
- (5) The temporary deputy collectors and sub-deputies, whose appointment is now becoming necessary, over and above the six sub-deputies shown at the foot of Appendix A of the letter above-mentioned.
- (6) The charge (Rs. 5 a month a piece) for sepoy employed on grain transport work, and the need, already becoming apparent in the Patna Division, for a staff of extra police and guards in excess of the 250 men shown in Appendix B.
- (7) The apparent probability that the work of accounting for the expenditure of the large quantity of grain which is going forward will require more accountants than were estimated for in December last.

For these additional establishments the Lieutenant-Governor would estimate as follows:—

	Rs.
Cost of Mr. Hankey's deputation, he himself drawing only Rs. 500 special allowance, but his place being supplied by an acting officer	1,500 a month.
Cost of relief commissioner for the Patna Division, similarly calculated on acting allowance	1,500 "
Twenty-five military officers of different departments, with an average deputation allowance of Rs. 400 each	10,000 "
Two extra medical officers, at Rs. 600 each, eight apothecaries or sub-assistant surgeons, at an average of Rs. 200 each, and sixty native doctors with establishments, averaging Rs. 60 each	6,400 "
Twenty-four temporary officers of the rank of deputy collectors, at Rs. 200 each, and twenty-four temporary sub-deputies, at Rs. 150 each	8,400 "
100 sepoy and 500 additional police guards, at Rs. 6 average	3,600 "
Twenty additional clerks and accountants above what was at first estimated, on an average of Rs. 80 a month	1,600 "
TOTAL	32,000 "

Sir George Campbell will take care that no more temporary appointments are made than is absolutely necessary, and he is sure that Commissioners will also

exercise every possible economy. The Lieutenant-Governor suggests no charge against "Famine" for the services of the police officers and others who are employed exclusively on relief work, as he considers that all other departments must be pinched and worked at something under full power, so as to make as many officers as possible available for famine work.

The total charge for establishments (exclusive of engineering staff), will then be, as per letter of 11th December 1873...	Rs. 38,000
As now estimated in addition to the above ...	32,000
Per mensem ...	70,000
Or for, say, six months ...	4,20,000

But as the demands will probably increase, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks we should estimate for Rs. 5,00,000.

II.—EXPENDITURE ON PROMOTING PRIVATE GRAIN TRADE.

4. The Government has taken off road and ferry tolls, except such small dues at deep rivers as may reimburse the ferry-men. In 1872-73 the total ferry and road tolls income of—

	Rs.
The Patna Division was about ...	2,57,000
„ Bhaugulpore ...	22,000
„ Rajshahye ...	1,10,000
TOTAL ...	3,89,000

of this total at least Rs. 2,80,000 will, it is expected, be lost by reason of the suspension of ferry and road tolls.

5. The other measure for promoting private trade has been the payment by Government of half the railway freight of all grain coming into the distressed districts, either from Bengal or the North-Western Provinces. It is not quite possible to estimate exactly the amount of this outlay; much of the private importations come from Loodiana, much from Calcutta, and perhaps it may be safe to reckon the average journey taken by private grain at 400 miles. The total imports of private grain into the distressed districts have been from 7,00,000 to 8,00,000 maunds a month. If import goes on at this rate for seven months in all, we shall have a total of about 50,00,000 maunds of private grain imported into the distressed districts before the middle of June 1874. The Government share of the railway freight on this quantity will be about one anna per maund for every hundred miles, or an average of four annas per maund all round. The total charge on this account may thus, if private trade continues to be as brisk as the Lieutenant-Governor hopes it may do, amount to Rs. 12,50,000, which, with the Rs. 2,80,000 of tolls remitted, gives a total of Rs. 15,30,000, or say in round numbers Rs. 15,00,000.

III.—RELIEF WORKS' EXPENDITURE.

6. As yet the special grants for relief works have * amounted to only Rs. 16,25,000. The Lieutenant-Governor cannot hope that this will nearly suffice for the expenditure which will have to be incurred. Indeed, he trusts that as necessity arises much more will be spent. Already in the one district of Sarun, with a population of two millions, 33,000 persons are employed daily on relief works, and it is to be expected that when the pressure comes, Government will be able to find relief works for about one million persons daily, besides the regular labourers on the Soane Canal embankment and railway works. A million of workmen, women, and children included, will cost at least thirty lakhs a month; and the Lieutenant-Governor thinks we may estimate for the spending at the rate of thirty lakhs a month for two months, and of ten lakhs for four months, or for a total expenditure of one million sterling. This estimate includes the cost of food supplied to the labouring classes at selling rates.

7. Some charges may also have to be made on account of the extra cost of *bona fide* relief works on the Soane Canal and embankment works. It is hoped that nearly all the non-remunerative and weakly labor may, in the Rajshahye Division, be kept on the road and other local works, only able-bodied persons being drafted on to the works.

* See enclosure No. 9 to the Tenth Narrative.

8. The Lieutenant-Governor has recently had to make a special grant of Rs. 3,00,000 to cover the cost of providing tools for workmen. It was early found that there were not enough tools in the country for nearly all the relief works, and so large orders for new tools had to be given. By the end of March all the tools required will be on the spot.

9. It is not possible to foresee what may be the famine charge under the head of inefficient labor on "extraordinary" public works, but it may perhaps be possible to keep the total one crore of rupees (one million sterling) for all relief works, as being likely to cover all charges for tools and for inefficient labor on "extraordinary" works.

It will be observed that the works to be undertaken from these funds are over and above the ordinary provincial works on which provincial money is being expended.

IV.—PURCHASE, HANDLING, TRANSPORT, AND STORAGE OF GOVERNMENT GRAIN.*

10. In the despatch published in the *Gazette of India* on the 31st January, the Government of India puts the prime cost of the 340,000 tons of Government grain at about three millions sterling. If the whole provision can be put down in Calcutta for this sum, then there will remain the charge for the bags*, for handling the grain in Calcutta, sending it up-country, transporting it to the interior, storing and watching and selling it. Into these charges will come the cost of the steamers which have been hired, the coal, &c. (but not the up-keep) of the Government steamers employed on famine duty, and the establishment for selling the grain. The charge in Calcutta for handling will not be less than one anna a maund, and it may be more; the railway freight (which has to be paid at full rates) will not be less than six or seven annas a maund all round; the unloading and ferrying charges will be from one to two annas a maund; and the cartage or boat-carriage to the store-houses can hardly fall short of about fourteen annas a maund on the average†. Thus, it will be unsafe to estimate the expense of transporting the grain to the interior, and storing and guarding it there, at a lower average than—

	Annas per maund.
Handling in Calcutta ...	1
Railway freight ...	7
Ferrying and handling and transshipment ...	2
Cart and boat transport into interior ...	14
Add for storing, re-bagging, and miscellaneous ...	2
TOTAL ...	26

or about Rs. 42½ a ton. The total charge for transport and purchase and storage of Government grain would thus be—

	Rs.
Prime cost as estimated by the Government of India ...	3,00,00,000
Transport, &c., at Rs. 42½ a ton ...	1,44,50,000
TOTAL ...	4,44,50,000

Some of this outlay will be recouped by the sale of Government grain, or by disposal of surplus left at the end. It is quite clear that labourers on Government works alone will not be numerous enough to consume more than a small proportion of the Government provision of grain. There will, therefore, be a good deal of grain available for sale for those who can buy in parts where private trade does not supply the markets, over and above what may be required for charitable distribution. Some of the grain will perhaps be left unspent at the end of the famine, if happily Behar and Bengal have a good summer crop. Reckoning on a fair summer crop, Government may perhaps estimate the proceeds from sale of grain, and from the yield of surplus stores at the

* The Bengal Jails alone are manufacturing for the Government rice, about 45,000 to Rs. 50,000 worth of gunny bags per month.

† The most expensive cart route of which the Government has yet received report, is that from Rajmehal to Dinagepore, where as much as Re. 1½ a maund has been charged, though the rate is now being lowered. On other long journeys up to the north of Purneah and Chumparan, the cost of carrying each maund will not fall much short of a rupee. Seeing how much of the grain will have to go long distances by land routes, the Lieutenant-Governor can hardly estimate the average cost of internal transport at less than fourteen annas a maund. As the Government require more and more carts, the rates of hire have to be raised. The Commissioner of Patna recently reported that the contract rate for 1,00,000 maunds a week was three pie per maund per mile, for a journey of up to 80 miles.

end of the famine, to approach a crore, while the receipts from sale of grain to the relief labourers to be charged against their wages may be taken at say 50 lakhs; the total receipts on account of the sale of Government grain may be nearly one and a half crore of rupees (or one and a half million sterling). These figures are necessarily conjectural, but if any estimate is to be made, the Lieutenant-Governor would take about these figures. The net cost of the Government grain transactions will thus be about Rs. 3,00,00,000. The Lieutenant-Governor is decidedly of opinion that in the end nothing will be obtained for grain from the charitable relief committees. He believes that it will be quite as much as they can do to meet their other expenses, and that whatever is, in the first instance, debited to them for grain (it will at first be so debited) will be balanced by additional grants which it will be necessary for Government to make subsequently. He therefore calculates on no returns for grain supplied for charitable relief, but assumes that the committees will meet other charitable expenses with the aid which Government has promised.

V.—CHARITABLE RELIEF.

11. It is not possible to foresee what charge the Government may have to accept under this head. Subscriptions beyond those of a few leading individuals are as yet comparatively small. If the Indian and English subscriptions reach a total of ten lakhs, the Government share of the relief fund will be another ten lakhs promised. Sir George Campbell can hardly hope that a total relief fund of £20,000 will be able to compass all that the "Instructions to Relief Committees" lay upon them; and he apprehends that Government will have either to give its grain to relief committees at reduced rates, or in the end to supplement their funds. He therefore would estimate the Government share of the charitable relief at not less than £100,000 independent of the grain supplied to the relief committees.

12. There is one other item of Government expenditure which does not come within any of the above heads, and that is the Government subscription (paragraph 23 of circular No. 80, Appendix D to the Second Narrative) towards private works "which contribute to the water-supply or general well-being of the people of any village or tract" in the distressed districts. As will be seen from a subsequent paragraph, there are at present no sufficient materials for estimating what the amount of such subscriptions may eventually be. But they may perhaps be estimated at Rs. 5,00,000, or a sum of three lakhs for the estimated land improvements executed from advances, plus a sum of two lakhs to cover the Government subscription in the case of useful relief works undertaken by landholders from their own funds (see paragraph 18 of the Tenth Narrative, and also paragraph 5 of the first paper in enclosure No. 4 to the same Narrative).

13. The total probable expenditure of public money upon the famine is thus estimated at—

	Rs.
I.—Special temporary establishments	5,00,000
II.—Promotion of private trade in grain	15,00,000
III.—Relief works expenditure	1,00,00,000
IV.—Purchase and transport of Government grain, less by possible receipts, and amounts charged to relief works, &c.	3,00,00,000
V.—Charitable relief apart from the supply of grain	10,00,000
VI.—Government grants-in-aid to private relief works	5,00,000
TOTAL	4,35,00,000
	or £4,350,000

14. There remain the several kinds of advances, which, though they cause a present drain on the treasury will for the most part be repaid (in part with, and in part without) interest, after the famine is over. These advances or loans are of several kinds, namely—

- (a)—advances for purchase of grain to be sold at cost price, made without interest, and advances for purchase of grain to be sold at the applicant's discretion;
- (b)—advances under the "Land Improvement Act;"

(c)—advances to municipalities or other bodies under the "Local Public Works Loans Act."

15. The total sum advanced for the purchase of grain up to the 10th January last was Rs. 6,14,500. In North Behar and other places, advances are still being taken, and the Lieutenant-Governor hopes (see paragraph 7 and enclosure No. 6 of the Tenth Narrative) largely to promote the transport of private grain into Tirhoot by private dealers, by relaxing the rules for giving small advances for the purchase of grain. The same policy is being followed elsewhere. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that before the end of April next the total advances for the purchase of grain may amount to twenty lakhs (£200,000 at the very least); he has intimated to the Commissioners of Divisions that the more money that can be safely and usefully spent on advances to petty dealers who will distribute grain for sale in the interior, the better Government will be pleased.

16. By the latest reports, the advances actually made for land improvements were comparatively small. But in Maunbhoom, Bancoorah, Nuddea, Monghyr, and some other districts the total sums applied for under the Act are already considerable. The assignments to meet these advances are as yet only twelve lakhs (as per paragraph 25 of circular No. 80, Appendix D, to the Second Narrative, and also paragraph 15 of the Sixth Narrative). But it is hoped that further advances will be largely taken both for land improvements and also by zemindars for advances to their ryots. And the Lieutenant-Governor would estimate the possible outside expenditure under this head at thirty lakhs of rupees.

17. As yet only one or two municipalities have made proposals for loans, wherewith to undertake special relief works. Municipalities in Behar and Bengal are by no means rich bodies; they have a very natural dislike to increasing taxation and undertaking burdens which they can possibly avoid. The Lieutenant-Governor is unwilling to put pressure on them; and, as matters stand, he does not expect that municipal or other local bodies will take very large loans, beyond a few thousand rupees in all, for special relief works during the present season. These small advances can be met from the assignments proposed in the next foregoing paragraph.

18. As has been explained in a foregoing paragraph (see paragraph 12 above), the Government has undertaken to contribute one-third of the cost of land improvements of general or public utility which may be undertaken during the current season. Most of these works will probably be tanks, reservoirs, and water channels, many of which will be of general use to the neighbouring villagers and their cattle. So that the Government contribution will have to be paid in a large number of cases of private land improvements. As three lakhs out of the advances have been reckoned as absolute Government expenditure under paragraph 12 above, only nine lakhs of advances need be estimated for under the present heading. If, happily, landholders and others should come forward more freely for advances of this kind, the Lieutenant-Governor would very gladly indeed see the present estimate of thirty lakhs (£300,000) exceeded.

19. The total expenditure, according to the estimate now submitted, will therefore be—

	£
A.—Absolute expenditure of Government money, less by possible receipts for the sale of Government grain	4,350,000
B.—Expenditure on advances, which will for the most part be recovered	500,000
TOTAL	4,850,000

To allow for expenses not foreseen, we may say altogether £5,000,000.

20. The Lieutenant-Governor desires to take the opportunity of the submission of this estimate to invite the attention of the Government of India to the fact that the provincial funds are wholly unable to bear any considerable share of this immense outlay. The provincial funds were not intended, as it appears from the orders of March 1871, to bear any charges on account of "famine" or special disasters of that kind. Paragraph 18 of the Financial Secretary's letter No. 3003, dated 13th November (see Appendix C to the Second

Narrative, and p. 41 of this series) directs that provincial and local public (relief) works should be in the first instance debited to provincial and local funds; and the same paragraph says that the portion of such expenditure which may be undertaken for the relief of distress will be transferred to "famine" charges, while that portion which represents value received by the different districts or local funds will be left at the debit of provincial or local funds, unless the aggregate of such debits be found to be more than the provincial finances can properly bear. Sir George Campbell would ask leave to submit that the provincial finances of Bengal cannot possibly bear the charge. He would hope that, when the time comes for making up the accounts of the famine expenditure, a no larger sum may be charged against the provincial accounts than they can fairly be called upon to bear; and that the provincial balances may not be so far depleted as to prevent the Bengal Government from doing justice to the several provincial services, and to the many schemes which were in hand when the drought of 1873 unhappily intervened.

21. It should perhaps be added that no very high estimate has been framed of the subscriptions which may come from England. If such subscriptions should be very large, the net cost to Government of the grain supplied to relief committees would be so far reduced; but, on the other hand, there may remain at the end of the famine possible charges for orphanages and orphans such as have remained after other famines.

22. I am to add that, as regards the question how much of the expenditure is to be charged to the current financial year 1873-74, and how much to the ensuing year 1874-75, the Lieutenant-Governor is unable to offer an accurate estimate, as this will principally depend on the date on which the grain supplies are paid for. Since, however, it appears that the greater portion of these supplies are to be shipped and probably paid for in the present financial year, the Lieutenant-Governor would recommend that the money thus expended, *plus* all actual expenditure of the *present year*, should be charged as finally spent in the present year. Setting the part of the imported rice not paid for against the other expenses incurred, the Lieutenant-Governor would take £3,000,000 as a fair estimate of the expenditure to be charged in 1873-74.

In 1874-75 much of the expenditure, but not the whole, will probably be recovered, including in the recoveries the whole of the cost of transporting and buying grain beyond the three millions to be charged in 1873-74.

Probably £1,350,000 may be taken as the net expenditure of 1874-75.

Beyond 1874-75 we may hope that recoveries will balance any remaining expenditure.

No. 145.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 378, dated February 5, 1874.

With reference to paragraph 12 of despatch No. 8, dated the 30th ultimo, to the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India (see p. 199), published in the *Gazette of India* of the 31st idem, I am directed to forward, for the information of the Government of Bengal, the following explanation of the purchases of grain arranged for by the Government of India up to the middle of May.

Burmah.—The arrivals of Burmese rice up to the date of the despatch amounted to 27,172 tons. The following shipments will, it is expected, be made:—

	Tons.
In February	87,328
„ March	35,000
„ April	35,000
TOTAL	157,328

Saigon.—Nine thousand four hundred and eighty-three tons of Saigon rice have already arrived: 10,517 tons may be expected during the month of February. A further order for 35,000 tons of Saigon rice has been given. This quantity will probably commence to be shipped about March 15th, and may be expected to arrive between April 1st and May 15th.

Chittagong.—One thousand five hundred and fifty tons of Chittagong rice have already arrived. About 20,450 tons more may be expected in February.

Madras.—Four thousand nine hundred and forty-four tons of Madras rice have already arrived. About 25,000 tons may be expected before April 1st.

2. These figures will not exactly correspond with those of the despatch, because credit was taken in the despatch for the cargoes of the *Nankin* and *Busheer*, which vessels had arrived at Calcutta, but had not been unloaded.

I am further to explain that the quantities given above are outside limits, which may not possibly be reached during the months stated, because the precise dates of the arrivals of ships are of course uncertain.

No. 146.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 476, dated February 13, 1874.

As the central relief committee will act in communication with the Government of Bengal, the Government of India wish to make some observations upon the subject of its action and functions, and upon the general conduct of relief operations.

2. The Government of India does not wish to interfere in any way with the discretion of the central committee in the allotment of funds to the different local committees; but in the exercise of the general supervision over district committees, which, under the rules agreed to at the meeting of January 24th, was delegated to the central committee, His Excellency in Council thinks that it is essential that care should be taken lest any instructions to be issued by the central committee should clash with those issued by the local authorities, upon whom the responsibility of relieving distress will devolve.

3. His Excellency considers that unity of control and distinct responsibility are essential to the success of measures for the relief of distress when applied to a large area of country, such as North Behar. The whole force of the administrative machinery of Government, largely increased from its ordinary strength, must be directed to the transport and distribution of food. The responsibility for ensuring a supply of food to those who cannot obtain it by other means must rest with the Commissioner of the division and the local officers charged with this duty by him.

4. His Excellency is, therefore, of opinion that the functions of the central committee, when dealing with such areas of country as North Behar, should be mainly confined to the collection of subscriptions, and to arranging for the supply of food or money to district committees; that the supervision to be exercised by the central committee over the district committees should only be of a general nature; and that it would be undesirable that the central committee should issue detailed instructions for the relief of distress. These details must, in His Excellency's opinion, be very much left to the discretion of the district and sub-divisional committees under the direction of the local officers, who must necessarily possess more complete knowledge than can be attained by any body, however zealous and efficient, acting at a distance from the actual scene of operations.

5. His Excellency does not doubt that the central committee will take this view of the subject, but he thinks that it is desirable to prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding arising.

6. It will probably be undesirable that the central committee should purchase grain except from Government stores, and any arrangements as to price will be made that may be considered equitable and proper by the committee.

7. In connection with this subject, and with reference to an observation contained in a note written by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor on Sir Richard Temple's Minute in respect to the provision of supplies in North Tirhoot, I am to observe that where distress, as is the case there, arises from a general deficiency of the food supply of a large area of country, which deficiency

cannot be met by private traders, stringent labor tests are not applicable. The labor test was tried during the earlier portion of the Irish Famine; it failed, and ultimately gratuitous distribution of cooked food was substituted. It was under the latter system, coupled with the sale of grain at market rates by Government where private traders could not supply it, that the Irish Famine was at last successfully dealt with. The circumstances in India are not entirely similar, but it appears to His Excellency that where they differ, the difference would point to an extension of the system of gratuitous distribution of food, and especially to the establishment of a system of advancing supplies of food to cultivators. When distress extends to whole classes of the population, His Excellency relies upon the local knowledge of the persons entrusted with the distribution of relief to prevent abuses.

8. This subject is one of very great importance. The provision of employment for the laboring population upon public works was directed—and in His Excellency's opinion properly directed—at the outset of the period of scarcity as a preliminary and precautionary measure, so that the means of providing themselves with subsistence might be afforded to the laboring population, and to the smaller cultivators who were not altogether unaccustomed to labor for hire. This application of public works has been proved to be sound by the experience of former periods of scarcity in India; but any system of relief by public works becomes impracticable when applied to a very large proportion of the population of a country. In order to apply it under those circumstances unprofitable work must be found simply as a test by which to prove that the persons applying for relief are proper objects upon which to bestow it. Any application of such a test upon the scale that would be necessary in dealing with North Tirhoot would, in His Excellency's opinion, inevitably break down, and moreover, by congregating cultivators at centres for the purpose of giving them employment, entail not only considerable hardships upon the people, but, as was found to be the case in Orissa, more serious evils.

9. These observations are by no means intended to imply that wherever useful work can be found, whether of a public or of a private character, advantage should not be taken of it as affording a most valuable aid to the general system of relief, but they have been made for the purpose of preventing the relief committees from considering the universal application of a rigid labor test to be recommended by Government.

10. I am to request that a copy of this letter may be furnished to the central relief committee, to Sir Richard Temple, and to the Commissioners of Patna, Bhaugulpore, and Rajshahye.

No. 147.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 11, dated February 13, 1874.

In continuation of our weekly despatches, we have the honor to forward a copy of the Supplement of the *Calcutta Gazette* of Wednesday last. It contains the most recent reports of the prices of food in Bengal and of the general condition of the province. Your Grace will observe that the effects of the rainfall which we reported in our despatch of the 6th instant have been most beneficial, and that the condition of the country generally has been materially improved.

2. We have received no information that the rainfall has materially improved the means of communication by river in the distressed districts, and indeed this was hardly to be expected at the present season.

3. The accounts from the North-Western Provinces and from Oudh lead us to hope that the rubbee crop will be large, and this will afford means for meeting any demand for food which may arise in the districts of those provinces which have been affected by the failure of the autumn rains.

4. We informed Your Grace that we should before long be able to foresee, with some degree of accuracy, the extent of the country in which severe distress is inevitable. We are now in possession of the conclusions at which Sir Richard Temple has arrived after visiting the worst parts of North Behar, and we enclose, for the information of Your Grace, copies of Sir Richard

Temple's Minutes of the 31st January, the 1st, the 5th, the 6th, the 8th, and the 10th instant, and of a telegram of the 12th since received.

5. Sir Richard Temple estimates that a provision of 40,10,011 of maunds of food grains should be made for Tirhoot, 10,00,000 for Chumparun, and 5,50,000 for Sarun (if the amount of food at three-quarters of a seer per head, per diem, is calculated upon the number and for the time mentioned in the telegram; but Sir Richard Temple has not as yet made a requisition of the quantity required for Sarun). For the north of the Patna Division, therefore, there will be a requirement up to the 15th June of 55,50,000 maunds in all, of which a portion will be provided by the rajahs, zemindars, the Court of Wards, and persons who have received advances from Government. We calculate that about 180,000 tons of food grains, to be provided by Government, have to be conveyed into the north of Behar before the 15th of June. We are in a position to meet this demand without difficulty, and we thought it right to approve, without hesitation, of the arrangements which Sir Richard Temple has made for the provision of transport from the railway to the northern parts of Tirhoot. We trust that these measures will be effectual, but we shall await further reports before expressing complete confidence upon this matter. Your Grace will observe that we have expressed to the Government of Bengal our disappointment that the requirements of North Tirhoot have, up to the present time, been under-estimated by the local officers. The arrangements for transport to Chumparun and Sarun are not expected to occasion any great difficulty.

6. We deputed Mr. Molesworth, Consulting Engineer for State Railways, to proceed to Barrh in order to take immediate steps for constructing a tramway from Chumpta Ghât on the northern bank of the Ganges, opposite Barrh, to Durbhanga (44 miles), and we are glad to find that he considers the work to be feasible within such time as to be useful for the conveyance of food to the north of Tirhoot. It will be pressed on with the greatest possible expedition.

7. We alluded in our last despatch to the apprehension of distress in Nepal. We enclose copy of a correspondence which has passed with the Government of Bengal upon this subject, from which Your Grace will observe that it has not escaped the notice of Sir Richard Temple, and that we have given instructions to Mr. Girdlestone, the Resident in Nepal, to confer with Sir Richard Temple and to act upon his advice in his communications with the Nepalese Government.

8. We enclose a return showing the quantities of rice exported from the port of Calcutta and Chittagong since the 1st of October last, divided into the different qualities of rice and distinguishing the places to which it has been exported.

The figures for last year are also given for the purpose of comparison.

The statistics of the export from Orissa will be furnished as soon as they have been received.

9. We enclose a copy of a letter which we have addressed to the Government of Bengal on the subject of the action to be taken by the central relief committee, and the general conduct of relief operations (see above No. 146 of this series). We have thought it desirable to explain our opinion that the rigid application of a labor test is inapplicable to the relief of distress where it extends over a large area of country, such as North Behar.

10. Your Grace will observe from the instructions for relief committees*, which we forwarded in our despatch No. 7 of the 30th ultimo, that we did not lay down any rules enforcing such a test, and on reference to our original orders issued on the 7th of November, at the commencement of the period of scarcity, it will be seen that the institution of public works and the extensive employment of the people upon such works were intended as preliminary and precautionary measures, and by no means as the only manner in which relief should be extended to the people at a latter period of the scarcity. We make these remarks, as some misapprehension appears to exist as to our views upon this important subject.

11. With respect to those parts of the country which have been affected by the drought, but do not lie within the Province of Bengal, we have to

* See p. 288.

observe that Sir William Muir is taking every necessary measure for the relief of distress in the south-eastern districts of the North-Western Provinces, and we have not received from him any intimation that he will require assistance in the way of supplies from the Government of India in respect to those districts, the prospects of which have on the whole been materially improved by the late rains.

12. The Viceroy has received from Sir George Couper, the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, a carefully prepared Minute, explaining the measures which he proposes to take for the relief of distress in the northern parts of Oudh adjoining the Terai. As this Minute has not yet been received officially, we will only observe that Sir George Couper has personally visited those districts, and that the measures which he proposes to take have been framed in communication with the local officers and with the Rajah of Bulrampore, in whose estates the most distressed parts of the country lie, and we believe that they will be found sufficient. Sir George Couper has no apprehension that there will be any difficulty in laying in supplies in advance for any part of the country that may require them during the rains.

13. The drought that has now affected North Behar, coupled with former droughts within a short period of years, has necessarily attracted our attention to the provision of a system of irrigation, which may, so far as is humanly possible, provide against the recurrence of similar calamities. Much consideration was given to the subject after the famine of 1866; but the plans which we have now before us do not extend to that portion of the country which is suffering the most severely from the drought. We have accordingly, as Your Grace will observe from our despatch No. 271 in the Public Works Department of the 12th instant, given directions for the immediate institution of surveys and enquiries throughout that district with the object of deciding as soon as possible upon a scheme which may be taken in hand at the next working season. It would not be desirable to commence a work of such permanent importance without careful previous enquiry and deliberation, but Your Grace may rely upon the subject receiving prompt attention from us so soon as the necessary information has been obtained.

14. In accordance with the 5th para. of our last despatch No. 9 of the 6th instant, we have the honor to forward a corrected copy of the proceedings of the public meeting held at Calcutta on the 4th instant (see p. 206), for the purpose of forming a central relief committee.

No. 148.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 322, dated January 29, 1874.

I am directed to submit, for the orders of the Government of India, a very important question in connection with the provision of adequate relief works in the tracts where actual and severe distress may be expected soon to appear.

2. In the enclosed circular of the 30th December, (not printed) the Lieutenant-Governor admitted that tank-works and other such works might have to be taken in hand for relief purposes; but at the same time the Lieutenant-Governor said that the financial question must be faced and laid before the Government of India, with a view to the settlement of the point whether public money could be spent on works situated on, and which would more or less improve, private permanently settled estates.

3. The appended letter (not printed in this series), dated 18th January, from the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore, puts the matter broadly; it in effect says—"We cannot provide a sufficient number of embanked roads which can usefully be undertaken, and which can supply all the labour that ought to be supplied. There are plenty of excellent and useful tanks, which would do much good, and which will bring the work near to the homes of the people, but there is little hope of our getting the zemindar to undertake a sufficiency of these works either from advances or otherwise."

Such being the position, it might be quite possible to issue orders urging the district officers to press upon the zemindars that their interests and their duty required them to undertake such works. There can be little doubt that the landholding interest is directly concerned in the matter; but there is equally, the Lieutenant-Governor fears, little doubt but that it will in many cases be difficult and tedious to bring the zemindars to take that view of their interest; and there is risk that, while the work of persuasion is going on, the relief works may fall short, and the people may be left without work and without wages.

4. It is not only from the Bhaugulpore Division that such works have been recommended as the best kind of relief works we can undertake; in the Patna Division and elsewhere similar proposals have been made, and a very pressing form which representations have taken is, that the cattle will die in many districts if the people are not employed to deepen the tanks till they come to water. The managers of the great estates under the Court of Wards have undertaken a large amount of relief work in the shape of tanks, but beyond these estates it is always a question whether the zemindar can or will undertake the duty, and where he will not very great difficulty arises.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor is very glad to be able to say that many zemindars have done and are doing much for their estates; but there will remain many estates where they do not. In one case there may be legal disabilities; in another case there may be many shareholders who cannot agree; in a third, the responsible man may live in another district and refuse to answer the Collector's letters; and in such cases no one will have any legal power of compelling the zemindars to do their duty. Probably zemindars may be induced to allow such works to be done, and may even agree to the stipulation which has been attached to the part payment by Government in case of advances, viz., that works on which public money is spent should be for ever accessible to the people for drinking and such like purposes. But it might be difficult to put that stipulation in binding and effective shape in all cases; and if Government decided to do this and to enforce a contribution, it might be necessary to have recourse to legislation.

6. This subject was discussed at the conference at Government House on the 24th instant, and it was agreed that it should be reported for more mature deliberation. Possibly Sir R. Temple's local inquiries may assist in forming a conclusion. The Lieutenant-Governor's present view is that in some cases, when proper public works cannot be found, either the Government or the relief committees must undertake works, which are not public works in the ordinary acceptation of the term, in order to give employment to the people and save the cattle. Unless Government is prepared to legislate, we must confine ourselves to those works which seem most beneficial to the people, and make the best bargain we can with the landholders in each case. In such circumstances Government might undertake works of a large and heavy description or very emergently required to save the country, while petty village works necessary for relief might be undertaken by the relief committees.

No. 149.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 415, dated February 9, 1874.

In reply to your letter No. 322, received on the 7th instant (see above No. 148 of this series), I am directed to state that as it appears clear that tank-works are in some places the only works upon which the people in want of employment can usefully be employed, and as the urgency of the case prevents recourse being had to legislation for the purpose of distributing the cost of such works upon those who would receive benefit from them, the only course open to Government seems to be that indicated in the 6th paragraph of the letter under acknowledgment; and the Governor General in Council gives the Lieutenant-Governor full discretion to act accordingly.

No. 150.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 554 SR, dated Calcutta, February 9, 1874.

In reply to your letter No. 84, dated the 12th January 1874 (see p. 187), I am directed to submit herewith copy of a further correspondence* (see below Nos. 151, 152 and 153 of this series) with Mr. Robinson, the Relief Commissioner of Rajshahye, in connection with his proposal to sell Government grain in certain exceptional tracts of the Dinagepore District.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor thinks that, in the peculiar circumstances described by Mr. Robinson, the Government should, where it finds it has the grain, act as wholesale dealer and sell the grain, as Mr. Robinson proposes, at stated main points for the people to distribute it themselves.

3. Thinking so, His Honor would be glad if the Government of India would permit him to order the sale of Government grain where circumstances seem to demand this, and the Government store of grain admits of a concession of such an exceptional kind.

No. 151.

Letter from W. LeF. Robinson, Esq., Relief Commissioner, Rajshahye, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 153, dated January 27, 1874.

In reply to your No. 112 PS of 14th January, received by me at Bogra on the 19th, I have the honor to submit the following report on the points noted for comment:—

A.—POPULATION OF THE AFFECTED TRACT.

The area to which my proposition for selling grain in my letter No. 125, dated 22nd December (2nd December was a clerical error of the copyist), originally applied was for the whole of Thannahs Hemtabad, Kallygunge, Pargunge, Rancee Sankul, and a small portion of the south-west of Thakurgaon. The population of those tracts is, according to the census returns, as follows:—

Hemtabad	...	...	...	87,089
Kallygunge	...	...	...	94,728
Pargunge	...	...	...	89,296
Rancee Sankul	...	...	...	78,696
Part of Thakurgaon	...	...	...	349,809
				20,000
TOTAL POPULATION				369,809

B.

The principal resident zemindars in this part are Narayan Chunder Choudery of Chooramon, and the Hurrpore family at Hurrpore, close on the Purneah border at Bopla Tajpore; the Hurrpore estates are in the possession of women. There are other smaller resident zemindars, and the Dinagepore Rajhurry, and Radha Govind Roy Shahab also hold land in this part of the country. No zemindars in that part of the country are willing to take advances for importing grain from a distance, because, as I have previously explained, they do not know how to do it. I firmly believe, as I have already reported, that if Government will put the rice down at points to which Government had comparatively easy access by water or otherwise, many zemindars who would not otherwise import, and who will not take advances from Government, would buy from those depôts, if permitted, at cost price and would themselves transport from there to their estates to assist and preserve their ryots.

* From Relief Commissioner Rajshahye, No. 153, dated 27th January 1874.
To Relief Commissioner, Rajshahye, No. 552 SR, dated 9th February 1874.

C.

Relief works have been commenced on a very considerable scale in the parts alluded to. Mr. Jones at Raigunge has had, since the beginning of December, an ever-increasing number of men coming to work on the roads under him, and he is now, according to my accounts, paying Rs. 10,000 a week in wages. Mr. Scanlan, also, at Neckmund has begun work, and though I have no recent return of his expenditure, I know from inquiries I made in that part of the country in December, that there are hundreds of men, not to say thousands, who will have to come and work or starve before any rice crop comes in.

D.—NUMBERS OF NON-WORKING CLASSES.

I cannot state what is the number of non-working castes; I do not myself believe that more than a very small percentage of the people would refuse to work merely on a question of caste. Caste is not much considered in these parts, as is proved by the men who flock to the road-work where it is properly managed. I myself have seen this year a village mundul working with his kodai among the coolies; and on my stopping and asking him about it, saying that such work was not meant for men of his class, the reply I got was literally this—"Do you think I would be such a fool as to work for you like this if I could provide for my family in any other way?"

E.—PRICE AND ABUNDANCE OF GRAIN.

Prices have been higher in this part of the district than elsewhere, certainly for the last three months. By my last accounts they were scarcely over ten seers for the rupee, but the Government must be in possession of later price currents than I have got. At the price there was, when I was there, a fair amount of rice in all the hauts and markets, but the new crop was coming in then and calculated—and I do not think the calculation far wrong myself—to carry the people on at those prices up to the end of February or thereabout.

F.—PROPORTION OF THE PEOPLE EXPECTED TO COME ON RELIEF COMMITTEES.

Taking the female population as half of the male, and the number of children and old people unable to work themselves from one cause or another at 25 per cent. of the remainder, we should have $1,84,904 + 46,216 = 2,31,130$ to support.

The women will not work as labourers on road-work or such like; they may do a little rice-husking or thread-spinning which they can do at home, but beyond that I see no chance of making them do work.

G.—ORGANIZATION OF RELIEF COMMITTEES.

In places like Raigunge or Ram Sankul, or where there is a thannah, it will be possible to have relief committees, but if the Government think that such committees will be possible in every three or four, or five or six villages throughout the distressed country, I am quite certain that a very great mistake is being made. The population is essentially an agricultural one, and an ignorant one. The only plan would be to group so many villages together, and make the headmen the committee. But when they are made they will do nothing; they have no idea of how to manage matters or of responsibility; they are ignorant, and would be unable to keep any accurate accounts even, and as to sending in statements or making requisitions, &c., with a view to future wants, I do not hesitate to say that they are quite incapable of it. In fact, if Government intend to depend upon local committees all over the country to afford relief, some one will have to be appointed by Government as manager for each committee, and to him the Government must trust to do all the work. The committee will exist in name, but the work will, in 99 out of 100 cases, have to be done by some one man; the people are too ignorant to manage such a weighty business for themselves, and if Government trust to

them alone, confusion and disaster will assuredly be the result as far as the agricultural population in the interior is concerned. I hope, however, to be able to send in the scheme for the relief committees in Dinagepore on my return there next week.

H.—LOCAL TRADE.

As I said in my last letter, the trade is entirely an export one as far as food is concerned; it is carried on by non-resident firms chiefly, who send agents yearly to buy up rice for export, but there being no rice to buy this year the agents will not come, and the firms who export have not the slightest interest in importing rice into the district. Not being able to get their rice here, they simply send their agents to some other place where rice is procurable. If I saw the slightest hope of an import trade springing up in consequence of a rise in prices, I should not have urged the course I did; but I say unhesitatingly that no such trade will spring up. There is no one with either the knowledge, capital and energy combined which are necessary to enter into such an undertaking on the scale required. Trade connections are not formed in a month or two; the routes are long and difficult, and the risk of partial or total loss is proportionate.

Taking the present price of rice at Calcutta which, I believe, is Rs. 3-2 to Rs. 7-6 per maund, as compared with the latest price I know of at Raigunge, viz., ten seers per rupee, no private speculator could import rice from Calcutta to Raigunge and sell at ten seers per rupee at a profit, and Calcutta is the most accessible point from which to get rice to Raigunge. I may be wrong in my calculation, but I base it upon this—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Price of rice in Calcutta at Rs. 3-4	3	4	0
Rail—1 anna for 90 miles per maund; Sahebgunge is about 250 miles from Calcutta,—say 2½ annas per maund from Calcutta to Sahebgunge	0	2	6
Sahebgunge to Hyatpore by boat, loading and unloading, &c., about 0-1-6 per maund	0	1	6
Hyatpore to Kurbah, I know, is	0	6	6
Kurbah to Raigunge is about half	0	3	0
TOTAL	4	1	6

say 3 annas a maund, to say nothing of risk and losses in transit, establishment and other expenses incident to opening a new trade.

It has been suggested to me that Government might sanction rice being sold through a relief committee. If one were nominated, I am not the least wedded to any theory of my own, and perhaps this may be the intention of Government; in case it is, I submit herewith a nomination for members of a relief committee at Raigunge—

H. L. Jones, Esq., District Superintendent of Police.

The Moonsiff of Hemtabad.

Baboo Janokinath Gus Gossein, the native doctor attached to the Rajburry Dispensary at Raigunge.

The Naib of the Rajburry Estates at Raigunge.

The Head Master of the School at Raigunge.

I would suggest that they should, as an experiment at any rate, be allowed to dispose of 10,000 maunds of rice, say in all February, at ten seers for the rupee, and that they should not sell more than 50 maunds, or less than a whole bag, to any one person, though for my own part I would prefer no restriction beyond keeping a sufficient supply in hand for relief-work labour. If such a scheme meets with Government approval, I would suggest that another sale depôt should be formed at Godagaree, and a third at Patintola. If this were done, I believe the people of the district and the petty local traders would do all the transport into the worst part of the country for themselves, and thereby save Government enormous expense. I enclose a copy of a letter from the present Magistrate and Collector of Dinagepore, which also recommends some such course being adopted.

I base my recommendation to sell on the grounds that there is some money in the country and very little grain; that if the people can get rice within a reasonable distance at a fair price they will go and buy it, and take it themselves to their home (or to neighbouring markets if petty dealers), and so supply places difficult of access. I argue that all the better class will do this in preference to first spending all they have and then resorting to relief works, while their families are left either to starve or to be supported by Government. If the working portion of the population is employed on relief works and paid in rice, Government will have to provide for their families or let them starve; but if the men who can afford to buy now were enabled to purchase even one or two months' supply, it would immensely lessen the strain on the Government resources; I also urge the plan as a measure of economy to the Government itself. Indeed, it appears to me to be the only way of recovering a portion of the enormous expenses which must be incurred; if things come to the worst Government will then have to feed at least 70 or 80 per cent. of the population, whereas if rice is sold I firmly believe that 50 or 60 per cent. would provide for themselves.

With reference to the transport of rice to Raigunge by the Mahanuddee route, in ordinary years boats of 500 maunds can get up the Mahanuddee to Chooramon, and smaller boats, 250 or 300 maunds, up the Coolik to Raigunge; but this year the water in all the rivers is less than usual, and I doubt if such large boats will be able to come up. The voyage from Godagaree to Raigunge is estimated to take from 16 to 21 days. I have written to Mr. Jones for a full report on the present state of both the Mahanuddee and Coolik, but his reply has not yet reached me. A plan is now being tried to make use of the *Flame* from Godagaree to Old Maldah, and then do the rest in country boats, which will, if feasible, considerably reduce the time; but I do not know the result of the trial trip. If the Government still decide upon not selling on any terms, I by no means wish it to be understood that I think it will be impossible to provide food for the people; that, I believe, can be done, but the expense will be enormous.

With reference to paragraphs 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Government of India's letter I do not enter into the details alluded to, because information on all the points had been at one time or another reported as fully as possible to the Government of Bengal. I may, however, be allowed to add that, as far as relief work in road-making is concerned, Government need be under no apprehension of work falling short so long as funds are forthcoming. I can make useful roads in all parts of the distressed country, and village paths, or "pugdundeas" can be multiplied almost indefinitely; the work certainly will not be brilliant or likely to make a show, but it will be eminently practical and useful to the people generally. On that score I have no fear, but I confess to having great apprehensions as to the support of the women and children, unless rice is sold by Government under some scheme or another.

Incessant travelling must be my apology for the week's delay which has occurred in my replying to your letter.

No. 152.

Letter from E. E. Lewis, Esq., Magistrate of Dinagepore, to the Special Relief Commissioner, Dinagepore, No. 3 Ct., dated Camp, Bhaduria, January 15, 1874.

I have the honor to report, for your information, the state of things in the country visited by me and the measures that require to be taken to relieve the distress.

2. I went first to Patiram, halting one night at Baragaon, and, indeed, beyond up to Chundgunge, on the Atrai, crops are not bad. I rode out and conversed with several batches of villagers, who admitted they were getting from 15 kuttahs to 1 bis, and 1½ bis from land that usually yielded from 3 to 4 bis in a good year; in other words, they admitted having got about a four-anna crop, and that in this district may mean scarcity, but not famine or absolute want. I may say, then, that Rajarampore Thannah will not suffer from famine.

3. Just at Koomergunge, the other side of the river, the crops were even better than they were at Baragaon. I inquired of three ryots, and all three admitted having got 2 bis per beegah, rather under an eight-anna crop.

4. It was only on the bank of the river, however, that the good crop could be found. From thence to Patiram the yield very soon became 20 seers per beegah and then *nil*.

5. About Patiram the ryots have had nothing, and beyond that as far as I went, some three miles beyond Baharghât, matters do not mend. Mr. Finucane also tells me that the other side of the river towards Foolburry on the Darjeeling Road is just as bad.

6. I met Sirazdi Mundul of Forshiparah at Patiram and had a long talk with him; he says the state of Patnitola, so far as he can gather, is a little, but not much, better than that of Patiram; he calculates that four annas of the population, well-to-do-munduls and others, can hold out for another ten months or a year; that these men have supplies stored in their houses. Again, another six annas, comprising holders of 50 beegahs and upwards, will, with what they have in hand and what they can buy, hold out for another six months or so. Again, another four annas, including all the smaller proprietors, have enough to last them for perhaps a couple of months; the remaining two annas have nothing just now and are living by selling their ornaments, cattle, &c. This last class includes all the agricultural labourers, and those small ryots who have had absolutely no return at all this harvest; in other words, three-eighths of the population of Patiram and Patnitola will require to be supplied with rice, certainly from March or April next. I include Patiram and Patnitola, for if Sirazdi's calculation applies to the latter it certainly does to the former, where the harvest has been more scanty.

7. To meet the want, Government are storing a few thousand maunds of rice at Patiram and Patnitola, and trust to the local trade supplying the rest. I am afraid the local trade will not supply the deficiency, and if it fails to do so, many lives will, I fear, be lost.

8. The local agency for the import of rice consists of the local mahajans, the commercial population residing at the various marts and bunders, and the zemindars. The local mahajans cannot be trusted to import rice on the scale required, for they are not men of sufficient capital, nor have they been in the habit of dealing in grain except in a very small way; the harvests in Dinagepore have up to date always been abundant, and with rice bought up by large traders or their agents on the spot, the ryots have not had much occasion to deal with the village mahajans except in their capacity of money-lenders.

9. The mahajans, I mean the small village ones, have had little or nothing to do with the large trade in rice, traders at the marts on the rivers having dealt either personally with the ryots or through their paikars and agents who buy at the hâts. In such a case it may be asked why should these traders not be available for import as well as for export? The reason is that the traders at all the large bunders are not trading on their own account, but are mere agents or gomashas for firms in Calcutta, Coomerkally, Dacca, the North-West, &c., and this year, there being no rice to export, the agency has been withdrawn altogether, or only some inferior servant sent probably to try and recover any advances that have been made to the ryots for grain.

10. I do not consider that we can depend on the village mahajans or the commercial population at the marts to import rice in the quantity that will, I am sure, be required. If it were a question of getting rice in from Rungpore or Rajshahye, I think the local trade might be trusted to rise to the occasion; but when it comes to be, question of getting rice from Burmah or Madras, it is a different thing. The firms who are engaged in the export trade of this district undoubtedly could do so, but the principals are not here to appeal to, and such of the gomashas as I have seen say they will write and ask their masters, but that in their opinion the profit is not worth the risk. I may add that the people generally are convinced that the Sarkar is going to help them in the matter of rice, and this may account in some measure for the traders' gomashas thinking that their masters will not make much profit by importation.

11. There remain the zemindars and other well-to-do inhabitants: many of these are willing enough to import if they could see their way to do so.

They say, however, the importation of rice from distant places is not a business they are acquainted with, or which they have any means of starting; if it were a question of mere inland transport, then many of them profess their willingness to accomplish that, but importation from a distance they shrink from.

12. Rice, however, must be brought into the district, if not by the local traders then by Government, and this can be done without a very ruinous expense. There is no difficulty in this district about inland transport. Government need not trouble about that; if rice is put down at certain bunders on the river, and if it is known that rice is to be had, I am quite sure the paikars and beparies who frequent the hâts, to say nothing of the well-to-do munduls, will see that it is distributed at the different hâts wherever wanted. There was a large quantity of rice stored on the banks of the Jomoonah at the end of the rains, which could not be exported owing to want of water in the river; that rice has since been gradually distributed all over this district and Rungpore, and the process is still going on. I saw strings of carts belonging to beparies going to and from Berhampore bundar. Again, in Kallygunge Thannah I asked the people where, as they had no crop and no old stock, they got their rice? They said, "The beparies bring rice to the hâts from Dinagepore or elsewhere."

13. It may be that firms in Calcutta or elsewhere may see their way to pushing rice into Dinagepore; if they will only do so and sell at the existing bunders on the river-bank, where plenty of golas are to be had, they may depend on the beparies buying from them and taking grain into the interior. Whoever brings in rice, it should be imported speedily, for the pinch of want will be felt soon; in fact, it is being felt in some places already, and will be more manifest when what there is of new rice in the market has been consumed.

14. If no one else comes forward to import, Government must, and by doing so now the expense will be very much lessened, for once the people get beyond a certain stage, and have neither money nor strength to labour to get any, Government will not only have to convey and store rice at the bunders, but will have all the trouble and expense of inland transport, village distribution, relief committees, &c.

15. In riding about the country I am in the habit of conversing with the villagers, and I have not yet met a man who hoped to get any help in the way of importation from the local traders; they all seemed to think that it was the duty of the Sarkar to supply the market in some way. In fact, as regards the mahajans, the very general complaint is that they will not now advance money or grain on any terms; one respectable old Mohamedan even asked me, if Government would not take the place of the money-lenders and undertake to make advances to enable the villagers to tide over their difficulties.

16. I may be mistaken in my estimate of the resources of the district, but the fact remains that no rice has as yet been imported except by Government, and none, I fear, will be, and I would submit, in deference to your opinion, it would be wiser for Government to send rice now to almost any amount into the district, and let it be known that it is for sale at a certain price, than to incur the future expense of keeping the country from starvation by gratuitous door-to-door relief.

17. I marched from Patiram to Chintamon; as soon as I got within the jurisdiction of the latter thannah I observed a marked improvement, and from all I could gather there seems to be no fear of want in that quarter; there has been a four-anna crop of rice, and cold-weather crops of mustard, sugarcane, chillies, &c., promise very well. As soon as I passed Berhampore, however, on my way to Ghoraghât, things began to look bad again; my first halting-place was Bijnihar, the other side of the line of rail. There the ground was dried up and the villagers evidently had not reaped any harvest at all, the crop had been eaten down by cattle or cut for fodder. From Bijni to this place, Bhadoora, things are no better; in a few places the villagers have got some 20 or 30 seers per beegah, but in many places not even that. I am told that all the way to Ghoraghât there is no improvement, and as the people here, as well as at Bijni and elsewhere along the road, are very anxious to get something to do, and as work on the rail has not yet been opened, I intend, in anticipation of sanction, commencing work on the road from Ghoraghât *via* Berhampore to join the Bograh and Dinagepore Road near Suntapur.

18. I do not consider that any steps are necessary for taking up the land; there is a road in existence; all that is required is earth from the two sides to raise it, which will in some cases have to be obtained by encroaching a little on the fields on either, but as the fields appear to have encroached on the land originally taken for the road, I think our retaking what is now wanted cannot be complained of. I will however, if you like, send word to the proprietor of the land through which the road passes.

19. I intend to put Prem Chunder Goopta, the head clerk in the district superintendent's office, in charge of the work; his name has been forwarded to me as a candidate for a sub-deputyship; this will be a good opportunity of seeing what he is made of.

It will be necessary certainly to establish golahs in this vicinity, for there has been very little crop here; the rice sold in the hâts, what there is of it, is all new; and most significant of all I have seen strings of carts going to Berhampore and Hillee for rice, or returning with it from those places for Ghoraghât. I will write again as soon as I get to Ghoraghât, which is my next march from here; but I am sure rice will have to be stored, and I mention the fact in case you should think it advisable to bring the state of things described in this letter to the notice of Government.

No. 153.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Relief Commissioner, Rajshahye, No. 552 SR, dated Calcutta, February 9, 1874.

With reference to your letter No. 153, dated the 27th January 1874 (see p. 244), I am directed to state that, in the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion, the great thing to be done is to get up the grain as close as possible to the parts of Dinagepore where scarcity is likely to be most felt.

2. To this end His Honor requests that you will be good enough to arrange with Mr. Molony for sending up as much as you are able for storage at Raigunge and other main depôts in the district without displacing the private trade, which, the Lieutenant-Governor understands, still in some measure exists. The question of selling the grain or otherwise disposing of it will shortly be settled.

No. 154.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 498, dated February 14, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge your letter No. 554 SR of the 9th instant (see p. 244), with enclosed correspondence with Mr. Robinson, the Relief Commissioner of Rajshahye, in connection with his proposal to sell Government grain in certain exceptional tracts of the Dinagepore District, and in reply to the inquiry made in your 3rd paragraph, I am to state that the Government of Bengal is authorised to sanction the sale of Government grain in especial and exceptional cases of the kind under notice.

2. The Governor General in Council will for the present, and pending further information from the Dinagepore District, defer making any observations on the apparent condition of the arrangements made by the Commissioner for the formation of relief committees and for the transport of grain. Meanwhile measures will be taken to supply some additional officers to assist in carrying out relief operations.

No. 155.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Rajshahye, No. 817 SR, dated Calcutta, February 18, 1874.

With reference to the correspondence noted in the margin, I am directed to enclose copies of the letter of this Government to the Government of India, No. 554 SR, dated 9th February (see p. 244), and the reply of that Government, No. 498, dated 14th February (see p. 250). You will see that the Government of India has accepted the principle of the proposal of this Government, viz., that in certain very exceptional circumstances Government, if it has the grain to spare, may sell grain wholesale, leaving it to the people themselves to distribute it retail, and has given this Government a discretion to permit grain to be sold in such exceptional cases.

2. The conditions under which this permission can be granted are two-fold, viz., first, that Government has a sufficient supply of grain to enable it to sell in this manner without stinting its relief works and poor-houses; and second, that there is an absolute dearth of grain in the country and a want of trade at the chief marts, but a sufficiency of local trade and local activity to distribute the supplies sold by Government. It is the character of wholesale transactions at large centres that distinguishes the plan now permitted from the charitable sales which are permitted under certain circumstances by the charitable relief rules. The latter presumes that food is brought almost to the people's doors: the present plan will enable Government to stop short at the main marts without undertaking the task of further distribution, thus making the Government task much easier.

3. It is evident that wherever such a system is tried, it will be necessary to take great precautions that the food grain is not allowed to fall into the hands of monopolists and retail grain dealers, who will hoard it up for their own profit. The system can only be permitted in rare instances. The place which was originally mentioned by Mr. Robinson as fitted for the trial of this system is Raigunge. Supposing then, for instance, that there really is not, and we cannot by advances or otherwise create, a private wholesale trade to Raigunge, and that we have ourselves arranged for sufficient supplies there (which is by no means apparent yet), and supposing we find the country to be really denuded of supplies, then with the precautions above indicated we might allow individuals and petty dealers to buy and carry away quantities varying from, say, 20 seers to 10 or 20 maunds, or large quantities in some cases when it can be allowed safely under an arrangement which should ensure its use or its speedy sale to the people of some distressed village.

4. You are requested, in communication with Mr. Robinson, to work out and report the details of any action you would recommend in this matter, and to give the Government your and his opinion when we shall be in a position safely to make such sales, and the country in such a condition as to require them.

5. Before recommending such sales at Raigunge or anywhere else, you should satisfy yourself thoroughly that private trade cannot reach the place. You should state if there are any other places in the division besides Raigunge where you think such a system may be required. Will grain find its way up the Berhampootra by private trade? Or may it be necessary to establish a Government depôt at Goalundo or at Kaleegunge? You will be very careful and cautious in making any such recommendations.

No. 156.

Despatch from the Government of India in the Public Works Department, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 31 SR, dated February 13, 1874.

The difficulty experienced in transporting food grain into Tirhoot as fast as it is required has led to earnest representations that a railway or tramway for engine-power should be constructed as rapidly as possible from the Ganges.

Before taking action on this, we thought it desirable to send our Consulting Engineer for State Railways, Mr. Molesworth, to inspect the country and advise us as to the course to be pursued, and this has been done.

2. Mr. Molesworth so far concurs with the local authorities as to recommend that a railway should at once be constructed from Chumpta Ghât, opposite to the Barrh Station of the East Indian Railway, to Durbhanga in Tirhoot, a distance of 44 miles, and he considers that while the construction of this line is required as a means of facilitating the transport of food grain, it will also be very valuable as a permanent line of communication.

3. We have decided on constructing the proposed section as rapidly as possible, making use of the existing road where necessary, and where it can be arranged that the cart traffic shall not be interfered with, a point on which Mr. Molesworth is confident. The whole of the rails and fastenings required are in Calcutta, as the deliveries of the permanent-way for the Rajpootana Railway had been kept back in order to give food grains the preference in transport over the East Indian Railway. These materials have now been diverted to the Tirhoot Railway, and sleepers from indigenous deodar timber will also be brought from the Rajpootana Railway, where they are lying ready cut. Major Stanton, the Superintending Engineer of the Delhi District of the same railway, has been summoned from Delhi and placed in charge of the line. Two of the engines which have this day arrived in the Hooghly from London will be sent up at once, and 40 ballast wagons, which are needed as a first supply, as well as the covered goods wagons that will soon be required, will be provided from the stock of the Rajpootana or Punjab Northern Railway. For the present emergency the three rivers that have to be crossed by the Tirhoot Railway* will be spanned by girders (made available in Calcutta from the supplies for barracks) resting on teak piles: but before the next rains these will probably need to be replaced by screw piles.

4. We thus are enabled by drawing on the supplies for other railways to concentrate all the materials that are required for this line on the bank of the Ganges opposite to the point from which it will start, and in this way to provide for its immediate construction. In presence of such an emergency, this course becomes necessary. But the consequent irregularity in the supply of materials and rolling-stock to the other railways is much to be regretted. We shall in due course submit to Your Grace an indent for the materials required to replace those now taken for the Tirhoot Railway, but in anticipation of this we would beg that arrangements may be made for the supply of 52 miles of rails and fastenings, and the established proportion of rolling-stock for 44 miles of railway; and we would more especially beg that all indents for materials and rolling-stock, which have already received Your Grace's sanction, may now be fully acted on as rapidly as possible in order to provide for the wants that we have foreseen, as well as for the sudden demands that the exigencies of the time have caused.

No. 157.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 616 SR, dated February 11, 1874.

I am directed to submit copies of the letters marginally noted, and to solicit sanction to the temporary appointment of an Additional Commissioner for relief work in North Behar. The Additional Commissioner's first duty would be to organize and set in working order the relief committees and relief centres in North Behar; and the Lieutenant-Governor would put under him, for certain purposes, if found expedient, the Soopol part of the Bhaugulpore District, which is very far from the Bhaugulpore Station, and belongs to the same famine area with Mudhobanee of Tirhoot.

Commissioner of Patna's No. Z, dated 5th February 1874, with enclosure, (see below No. 158 of this series).
Bengal Government letter in reply, No. 614 SR, dated the 11th February 1874 (see below No. 160 of this series).

* Dulsing Serai, Little Gauduk, Bagmuttee.

2. I am to submit that it is somewhat difficult to arrange on paper the relations between the Relief Commissioner, the Commissioner of the division, the central relief committee, and the Government, without either making too long a chain on the one hand or dividing the responsibility on the other. The Lieutenant-Governor thinks it must be understood that the Relief Commissioner is to be under the Commissioner of the division, so far as the latter desires or has time to exercise his authority; but that he may correspond direct with the central committee, sending copies of important communications to the Divisional Commissioner, who will send such copies on to Government with his remarks. The Government, in its turn, would arrange for getting from the central committee full information of all their important proceedings.

3. As bearing upon this point of the relation to subsist between the central committee and the Divisional Commissioner, I am directed to submit

Executive Central Relief Committee's letter No. 7, dated 8th February, with copy of proceedings of the committee, (see page 256).

Bengal Government's reply No. 611 SR, dated the 11th February 1874 thereupon, (see page 258).

copies of the papers noted in the margin, and to suggest that for the present and until the central committee settle down quietly to their work, it may be well to postpone any more defined settlement of their relations with the Divisional Commissioners, with the Relief Commissioners, with the district committees, and with the Government.

4. If the Government of India should be pleased to sanction the appointment of an Additional Commissioner for relief purposes in North Behar, then the Lieutenant-Governor would suggest that this officer be allowed to draw deputation allowance, &c., as though he were an Acting Commissioner.

5. In regard to the executive committee's second resolution, I am to solicit the favorable consideration of the Government of India to the proposal that Mr. Forbes should be allowed to act as the central committee's secretary. I am to propose that he be allowed to draw his ordinary salary as an acting joint-magistrate in the regular line of the service, and he be permitted to draw a deputation allowance of Rs. 300 a month as a local officer of the third grade under Appendix A of my letter* No. 3888, dated 11th December 1873. With reference to your letter of the 26th January, suggesting that one of the officers already sanctioned for famine work might undertake the duty of secretary to the committee, I am to explain that Mr. Geddes has almost finished his work of compiling past famine literature and preparing forms of accounts, and that, probably before the end of the current month, Mr. Geddes will be either taken off famine duty or sent as an executive famine officer into the Patna Division. The officers employed on famine duty in Calcutta will thus be reduced by one. Under these circumstances, the Lieutenant-Governor would hope that the arrangement may be sanctioned, and that Mr. Forbes may be paid in the way proposed.

No. 158.

Letter from S. C. Bayley, Esq., Commissioner of Patna, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. Z, dated February 5, 1874.

In forwarding, for the information of the Lieutenant-Governor, a copy of the enclosed letter which I have addressed to the Magistrate and Collector of Tirhoot, I have the honor to recommend the appointment of an Additional Commissioner for the supervision and management specially of relief centres and relief works in these three northern districts. My recent tour has convinced me of the enormous amount of work to be done and of the impossibility of my adequately supervising it from Patna. I do not at all wish to divest myself of the responsibility for their proper working, but with the enormous transport operations under me I feel that I cannot properly attend to both, and I am of opinion that the full time of any officer, however energetic he may be, will be fully taken up in getting these relief centres properly started.

Hereafter when the committees are in full swing, he may be able to assist me in other work also; but for the present I would wish his whole energies to be devoted to this one business. I would suggest that if Mr. Hankey's services are still available, he might be employed on it.

* See Schedule A, page 69.

No. 159.

Letter from S. C. Bayley, Esq., Commissioner of Patna, to the Magistrate and Collector of Tirhoot, No. 11, dated February 5, 1874.

I have to make the following remarks on Mr. Worsley's report No. 98F for the fortnight ending 24th January last :—

Paragraph 15.—I should be glad to have a special report regarding the authenticated case of death from starvation at Jhungharpore.

Paragraphs 16 to 18.—Mr. McDonnell's account of the relief work at Bahera is very lamentable. It, no doubt, shows great want of supervision, and that again is due to the difficulty of finding qualified overseers; but I have, as you are well aware, authorised more than once in the most distinct terms the entertainment of any supervising agency that can be locally obtained, and I must request some further explanation of the order under which the overseer turned away the helpless and infirm, and of the steps taken by the local authorities to seek out men qualified to supervise the work.

Mr. Worsley and the executive engineer rejected my offer to obtain unprofessional European superintendents, and if only the professional staff give proper instructions in the first instance and can come round for occasional supervision, I admit that a qualified and respectable mohurir could do all that was needed; but if, as appears to be the case, the professional staff cannot afford the time to look after their subordinates, then unprofessional European superintendence should be availed of largely, and it might have saved the scandal which Mr. McDonnell has brought to light.

It has been clearly explained already that the Department of Public Works cannot provide the requisite staff of subordinates, and some endeavours, either by public notice in the cutcherries or by advertising, should have been made to obtain them locally. You are requested to report if such measures or any others have now been adopted.

I trust Mr. McDonnell has now opened the Government rice stores at Bahera and also in the Hathee and Singhya tracts.

Paragraph 28.—The number of people on the Government relief works is wholly inadequate, and I should like very much to be assured that ample arrangements are made for receiving all that come. The Bahera incident leads me to fear that this is not at all the case, and I have unfortunately had no opportunity of seeing either Mr. Urquhart, Mr. Anderson, or Lieutenant Wright. I have already had to address you in regard to the unsatisfactory way in which the works were being started in the Seetamurhee Sub-Division. I may mention here that the Court of Wards' relief works are shown incorrectly in paragraph 29. Those for Seetamurhee should be 2,561 instead of 1,541, and Mr. Stevens informs me that altogether the Court of Wards is now employing some 20,000 labourers, including those on previously sanctioned roads and on brick-making. While agreeing mainly with the view taken by Mr. Worsley in paragraphs 29 and 30, I cannot altogether pass by, without remark, the tone of these paragraphs. To a person not acquainted with the facts they would imply that Mr. Worsley had been continually urging the multiplication of works, and especially of village works, and had made proposals thereon which had been refused either by Government or by myself.

The Lieutenant-Governor has already pointed out that he has been continually urging the construction of village works. It will be within your recollection that when I saw you and Mr. Worsley together at Christmas, I urged the necessity of providing more works, and I may also refer you to my circular of the 29th, urging strongly the immediate excavation of village tanks that had dried up.

Mr. Worsley must distinctly understand that it is the duty of the local officers to provide for such works as he proposes, and that there is and will be no hesitation whatever about sanctioning them. The blame, if these works are not provided, will rest with the local authorities, and cannot be shifted to the central authorities merely by complaining that "Government relief works are miserably few and insufficient," and by strongly urging that "village works must be our mainstay." It is for the local authorities to arrange for remedying the defects pointed out, and I trust that in the next fortnightly Narrative Mr. Worsley will be able to state what steps have been taken for this purpose.

Paragraph 31.—I would again repeat here that the local authorities should issue notices and advertise in the newspapers for as many subordinates as they require, instead of sitting with folded hands till Government can supply them.

Paragraph 33.—I beg to point out that Mr. Worsley's estimate of the local carriage available is happily very inadequate. You have already arranged contracts now for 8,00,000 maunds a month, besides what I may be able to get taken up elsewhere, and therefore there should be no real difficulty in putting three millions of maunds into the district by the middle of June.

Paragraph 38.—My tour through the north-eastern portion of your district has impressed me strongly with the necessity of immediately starting relief centres without further loss of time. Matters in this direction have not pushed on rapidly enough, owing to our attention being more immediately directed to transport arrangements; but scarcity is rapidly deepening into famine, and I cannot too strongly urge the importance of beginning the work at once. Sir R. Temple has already sanctioned the construction of mat houses, and has called attention to the matter*; but the first thing for Mr. Worsley to do is to arrange, in conjunction with the sub-divisional officers and with the Manager, Raj Durbhunga, where these centres are to be and how the circles are to be divided. There may be some delay in providing supervising officers for each circle, but he should select and get together subordinate establishments at once, should provide for storing grain, and should set to work on the mat bungalows at once. In this work I trust to the Court of Wards officers giving him the fullest possible assistance, as their relief operations will eventually have to be undertaken probably under the direction of the same committee that guide those of the Government, and in the meantime, their subordinates may be of the greatest use in making arrangements at those centres which are situated in the Raj property. In the meantime, in order to secure both work and relief in the Raj villages, it will probably be necessary for the Manager to increase his staff of subordinates, and this should be done in anticipation of sanction to any extent which may be deemed necessary. I cannot hide from myself that time is slipping by, and that adequate village works and arrangements for village relief are not sufficiently provided yet either in the Raj property or elsewhere. The establishment for providing these should immediately be taken on by the Raj; the village authorities being made use of as far as possible. I have said in my memorandum of February 1st, copy of which has been forwarded to you, that I hoped 20 of these centres would suffice for the three northern sub-divisions; but this estimate is not sufficient, and as the centres should have radii of not more than 10 to 15 miles, I expect from 30 to 40 will be required.

I have already directed certain roads to be undertaken with the view of providing communication in the rains with the north-east corner of the Alapore Pergunnah, which would otherwise be completely isolated, and the matter should not be lost sight of.

In conclusion, I would add that Mr. Worsley should take up his headquarters as soon as possible at Durbhunga, where I request that arrangements may be made to vacate either the school or the new dispensary (the latter is preferable, I think, as providing more accommodation) for the use of Mr. Worsley and any other officers that it may be necessary and possible to accommodate there; and that while I wish you to interfere with him as little as possible, his reports, &c., should, for the present at least, go through you, and your responsibility as district magistrate should not wholly cease.

No. 160.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Patna, No. 614 SR, dated February 11, 1874.

I am directed to say that the Lieutenant-Governor entirely approves of the remarks contained in your letter No. Z, dated 5th February (see p. 253). What you now say of Mr. Worsley and the executive engineer rejecting your offer of unprofessional assistance, coupled with some passages on other reports, on

* See his minute No. 2 of 1st February.

which the Lieutenant-Governor has already commented, makes him think that there has certainly been mismanagement (in the form of a disposition to stick to departmental routine) in the arrangement of relief works in Tirhoot. Sir George Campbell trusts that there will now, after the orders passed, be no shortcoming. The best agency locally available should be entertained.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor is very glad indeed to learn that the local resources in the way of carriage prove to be so much larger than previous estimates, and he trusts that the present arrangements will ensure a sufficient supply of food for the distressed northern parts.

3. Sir George Campbell regrets to see what is said as to the delay in the arrangement of relief centres in the north-east of Tirhoot, and he trusts that nothing that can by any exertion be done will now be wanting. He entirely approves of the instructions to increase the Raj staff as much as may be necessary.

4. I am to add that immediate application will be made to the Government of India, soliciting sanction to the appointment of an Additional Commissioner.

No. 161.

Letter from V. H. Schalch, Esq., Chairman to the Central Relief Executive Committee, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 7, dated February 8, 1874.

With reference to your No. 169 FR, dated the 6th instant, and to No. 245 of the 26th ultimo (not printed), from the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, I have the honor to enclose a copy of the proceedings of a meeting of the executive committee of the central famine relief committee, which was held on the 7th instant. (See below No. 162 of this series.)

2. With reference to the first letter under notice, you will see (Resolution I) that the committee have accepted the alterations proposed by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in the draft rules prepared by them, with the view of avoiding further delay in their publication; but the committee wish still to leave the question regarding the rate of pay to be given to labourers on relief works open, the majority still being in favor of the rule that His Honor objects to, viz., "that the rate of wage should bear a fair proportion to the price of grain."

3. With reference to the letter from the Government of India under notice, the committee (Resolution No. II) have expressed their opinion of the undesirableness of allowing their Secretary, Mr. Forbes, any salary from charitable funds, especially as they have already accepted a charge of Rs. 400 a month for their Treasurer, Mr. Wood. At the same time, they are aware that Mr. Forbes' work will be heavy, and they desire to retain his services. The committee therefore express a hope that the additional charge of making Mr. Forbes' salary up to what it was before he joined his present work, may be accepted by the Government.

4. The committee desire that the attention of the Government may be drawn to Resolutions IV and VI, and they would beg to request that, should His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor concur in their opinion of the advisability of the measures proposed, the necessary instructions to the district officers and Commissioners may be issued with as little delay as possible. It is also desirable that the Government equivalent to subscriptions already received should be paid in to the credit of the central committee as soon as possible, in order to place the committee in funds: the return of such subscriptions will be forwarded by the Treasurer to-morrow, and weekly memoranda showing additional subscriptions in future.

No. 162.

Proceedings of a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Famine Relief Fund, held on the 7th February 1874.

PRESENT :—

The Chairman.
The Hon'ble J. Inglis, c. s. i.
" R. H. Dalyell.
" H. H. Sutherland.
" C. Bernard.
" Rajah Jotendro Mohun Tagore.
J. R. Bullen Smith, Esq.

READ—

I.—Letter No. 169 SR, dated 6th February, from the Government of Bengal. Its purport was to approve generally the executive committee's draft instructions with two exceptions.

RESOLVED—That the alterations proposed by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor be accepted with a view of avoiding further delay in the publication of the instructions, the issue of which is urgently required. The executive committee, however, propose hereafter to communicate further with His Honor on the subject of the rule regarding the rate of wages to be paid to labourers on relief works. The majority of the committee are still in favor of the principle involved in the sentence which has been omitted from their draft rules.

II.—The chairman then laid before the meeting the question of the salary to be paid to Mr. A. Forbes, c. s., who is acting as their secretary.

The chairman intimated that the Government of India, in a letter dated 26th January, had expressed a desire that as little charges as possible for establishments should be laid upon the charitable relief fund, and had directed that the committee should be consulted before any expenditure of the kind were incurred.

RESOLVED—That the committee are very unwilling to sanction any salary from charitable funds for their working secretary, who is to be a member of the civil service. The committee has already accepted a charge of Rs. 400 a month for their treasurer, who is to be charged with collecting subscriptions and keeping accounts. They are afraid that any arrangement for paying another secretary from the fund would prejudice them before the public and would have practical ill effects in reducing subscriptions.

At the same time the committee are aware that there will be heavy correspondence with the district committees and with the Commissioners, and they would decidedly wish to have as their secretary an officer like Mr. Forbes who has had much experience in the interior of Tirhoot, the chief distressed district. The committee venture to hope that the Government may be pleased to bear the cost of their correspondence secretary. Mr. Forbes' salary as officiating joint magistrate can, the committee understand, be paid to him without extra cost to the State whether he works for the committee or not; and the committee hope that any additional charge involved in making Mr. Forbes' salary up to what he recently drew may be accepted by the Government, seeing that they (the committee) have accepted the full charge for one secretary. This latter, Mr. Wood, has, it should be stated, distinctly intimated, that though he has accepted the treasurership for the committee, he cannot undertake their correspondence or transact their other business.

III.—RESOLVED, on the suggestion of the chairman, that in Mr. Schalch's absence from Calcutta of ten days for the purpose of conferring with the three Commissioners of the distressed divisions, Mr. Inglis preside as chairman at any meetings of the executive committee, and dispose of any current business which may demand early settlement.

IV.—RESOLVED, that the Government of Bengal be invited to instruct the Account Department and the district officers, that all charitable subscriptions collected by district relief committees should be credited to the central famine relief fund, and that such funds be held in trust for the central committee; also that the Government equivalent to all relief subscriptions wherever raised be paid in, to the credit of the central committee, to the Bank of Bengal. The executive committee undertake to furnish to the Accountant

General weekly memoranda of the amounts collected and the place of collection.

V.—RESOLVED, that as the transport of grain to the afflicted tracts will be a matter of great practical difficulty, the committee, at the instance of one of the members, submit for the consideration of Government, that pack-bullocks for the transport of grain should be procured from Mirzapore and from the Terai country between Goruckpore and Julpigoree. It is submitted that pack-bullocks can travel without roads and in any weather.

VI.—RESOLVED, that the Government of Bengal be moved to instruct Commissioners to correspond with the central committee instead of with Government on all questions of charitable relief and its administration for any district in which a district relief committee has been formed.

No. 163.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Chairman, Central Relief Committee, No. 611 SR, dated February 11, 1874.

Your letter No. 7, dated 8th February, (see p. 256) enclosing extract of the committee's proceedings has been laid before the Lieutenant-Governor, and I am now directed to ask that the Lieutenant-Governor's remarks to the following effect may be laid before the committee for their consideration.

2. With reference to the question of the rate of wages to be paid on relief works, I am to say that, before the committee's proceedings reached the Lieutenant-Governor, he had had some conversation on the matter with Mr. J. Inglis, who, Sir George understands, brought the question forward. The Lieutenant-Governor understood Mr. Inglis' view to be directed to the object of not paying *too high* wages. He quite agrees with Mr. Inglis that relief wages should never be more than will suffice for mere maintenance; and he thinks there is nothing in the Government orders, or in the committee's further instructions (as they now stand), to prevent this object being compassed.

So far the Lieutenant-Governor quite agrees that wages given for relief may fairly have reference to the price of food. The question whether it is the habit of the district for women and children to work, would have to be considered before settling the rate of wages. On this point I am directed to forward copy of a note by the chief engineer with the Lieutenant-Governor's remarks and the orders issued thereon. But the Lieutenant-Governor's wish is that, when food is extraordinarily dear, near any relief works, wages should not be raised to an exorbitant rate far beyond ordinary wages. The Lieutenant-Governor would prefer that the difficulty should be met in the other way by supplying food at reasonable rates. Sir George Campbell hopes that there is thus no substantial difference between himself and the committee.

3. With reference to the committee's second resolution, I am to state that the question of Mr. Forbes' appointment and his salary will be submitted for the orders of the Government of India.

4. With reference to the third resolution, I am to request that an expression of the Lieutenant-Governor's thanks may be conveyed to Mr. Inglis for undertaking the duties of chairman during your own absence.

5. With reference to the fourth and sixth resolutions, I am to state that instructions will issue for Commissioner and district officers to act upon the committee's rules, and that the Accountant General will be directed to pay once a week to the central committee's credit the Government grant equal to the subscriptions realised during the preceding week. Commissioners will be directed to correspond with the central committee on all questions relating to the administration of charitable relief, and its administration in districts where relief committees have been formed. Commissioners will, however, be directed to communicate direct to Government all matters of very great importance, and I am to ask that the committee may be so good as to arrange that you and your secretary may communicate to Government all important orders that may issue or may be proposed for issue.

6. There is one point in the fourth resolution on which the Lieutenant-Governor has some little hesitation. It might, he fears, create some doubt and

dissatisfaction, if all local subscriptions raised in distressed districts were credited to the central committee. Sir George Campbell's impression is, that local subscribers would wish to see their subscription given by them for local relief spent locally; and he thinks it will be better that the central committee should leave such subscriptions at the credit of the district relief committees, and merely get an account of them, supplementing them from the central funds to such extent as may seem necessary in each case. Subscriptions collected in non-distressed districts for the famine relief fund, would, of course, be credited to the central committee, as also would any subscriptions specially given for that fund.

7. With reference to the fifth resolution, I am to submit, for the committee's information, that Government has undertaken the transport of grain from the places of supply into the distressed districts. The committee may depend that the question of transport by pack-bullocks has not been, and is not being, overlooked. It is being very fully considered, and the committee's suggestion will be communicated to the local officers and submitted for the consideration of Sir Richard Temple, who is now investigating the grain transport question in Behar.

No. 164.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 563, dated February 19, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge your letters Nos. 616 SR of the 11th (see p. 252) and 705 SR of the 16th instant, (see p. 274) and, in reply to the former, to state that the Governor General in Council is pleased to sanction the appointment of an Additional Commissioner to assist Mr. S. Bayley in relief operations in North Behar. This sanction is accorded on the distinct understanding expressed in my letter No. 476 of the 13th instant, (see p. 239) that the responsibility for the direction of these relief operations shall rest with the Commissioner of the division, and shall not be divided between that officer and the Additional Commissioner or the central relief committee. There would be no objection to the Additional Commissioner being required to give similar assistance to the Commissioner of Bhaugulpore, in respect of the Soopole portion of the Bhaugulpore District, provided only that it be given on the same understanding as regards responsibility.

The salary to be allowed to the Additional Commissioner will be decided in the Financial Department.

With reference to your 5th paragraph, I am to observe that the Viceroy understood from the Lieutenant-Governor that Mr. Forbes' services would be made available for the districts where officers of his knowledge and local experience are much wanted, and His Excellency would be glad if this arrangement could be carried out under His Honor's orders.

3. The Governor General in Council is still doubtful whether the services of a paid secretary, in addition to those of Mr. Wood, are necessary for the committee, and if no officer is forthcoming from the committee to undertake the work, in accordance with previous precedents, or if the Government of Bengal is unable to secure an officer, who can perform the duty of honorary secretary in addition to his regular duties, the Government of India will endeavour to supply one for the purpose.

4. In view to the speedy settlement of this question and the other questions relating to the action of the central relief committee to which your letters under acknowledgment refer, the Governor General would be glad if His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor could attend a conference at Government House on Saturday next at 12 o'clock accompanied by Mr. Schalch and the other members of the executive committee, and he would be much obliged by a copy of the letter to the central committee, No. 169 SR, referred to in the correspondence.

No. 165.

Despatch from the Governor General in Council, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, No. 12, dated Calcutta, February 20, 1874.

We have the honor to transmit the Eleventh Special Narrative of the drought in Behar and parts of Bengal for the fortnight ending the 19th instant.

2. Your Grace will observe that the Narrative confirms the reports which we gave in our despatch of the 12th instant, and that there is little to be said in addition to that despatch. Her Majesty's Government will learn with satisfaction that, although severe distress is anticipated in many parts of the country, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal reports that it has been met and relieved, up to the present time, effectually.

3. The reports from Sir Richard Temple of the requirements of the Bhaugulpore Division and for the south of the Patna Division have not yet been received.

4. The estimate of the quantities of grain required for the distressed districts given in the 26th paragraph of the Narrative cannot as yet be considered to be more than approximate. The supplies required are within our means, and we have already in former communications explained our ability to enlarge our arrangements for the provision of rice if we find it necessary.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor appears to have entertained some apprehension of the supplies of Government grain in Calcutta being insufficient; there is, however, no ground for such an apprehension. The great increase in the supplies required for Behar in consequence of Sir Richard Temple's requisitions has taxed to the utmost the powers of the local officers, of the railway, and of contractors employed in unloading vessels as they arrive in port; and it is to be expected that some temporary obstructions may occur to prevent the uninterrupted flow of the large quantities of grain which have now to be conveyed from Calcutta. But every effort is being made by those in charge of the several parts of the transport arrangements to ensure success. To obviate any delay in the working of the transport from Patna to North Tirhoot and Chumparun, we have authorized the Commissioner of Patna to buy in the local market, where supplies are now plentiful, sufficient grain to keep the carriage in full work, should the arrival of grain from Calcutta be temporarily delayed from any cause.

6. The report of the price of common rice in the Purneah District occasioned us some anxiety. The Lieutenant-Governor has noticed the subject in the Narrative, and we have since ascertained by telegraph from the Collector that the price has somewhat fallen, and is now ten instead of eight seers for the rupee.

7. Your Grace will observe that the correspondence given in Appendix I of the Narrative is not complete; it will be completed next mail. The estimate of the famine expenditure summarised in paragraph 41 and contained in Appendix L has not yet been examined in the Financial Department, and cannot consequently be accepted as conveying our views upon the subject. As regards the correspondence in Appendix K as to the action of the central relief committee, we have invited the Lieutenant-Governor, accompanied by the members of the committee, to attend a conference on the 21st instant, in view to the settlement of such further questions as were not finally disposed of in our letter No. 476 of the 13th instant, (see p. 239) forwarded to Your Grace last mail.

8. We have been informed by telegram from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces that the last week's report is most favorable for the whole province, and that prospects are decidedly brighter in the eastern districts.

9. As we observe that considerable notice has been attracted by a work written by Dr. Hunter, entitled "Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts," we enclose a copy of our Resolution of the 14th January on the subject of its circulation (see below No. 166 of this series).

No. 166.

Resolution of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 100, dated Calcutta, January 14, 1874.

The volume named "Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts" has been prepared by Mr. W. W. Hunter, Director of Statistics, in accordance with a request by the Government of India that he would embody in a compact form, out of the materials which he has collected for the gazetteers of Bengal, such information as might be useful at the present time.

2. The work has been well and quickly executed, and will be found to contain much practical information. It is to be understood that the preface is not intended to give expression to the views of the Government, but only to the conclusion which Mr. Hunter has himself deduced from the information at his command.

3. The thanks of the Government are due to Mr. Hunter for this valuable contribution to the famine statistics of Bengal.

Copies of the work will be transmitted for the information of the Government of Bengal and for circulation, together with this Resolution, to departments, local officers, and others concerned.

No. 167.

Office Memo. from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Director General of Statistics to the Government of India, No. 101, dated Calcutta, January 14, 1874.

The undersigned is directed to request that Mr. Hunter will be good enough to state how many copies of his work, entitled "Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts," he can spare for circulation, as ordered in the enclosed Resolution of the Government of India issued to him this day. It should be understood that this Resolution is to be tacked into every copy of the work.

No. 168.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 566 SR, dated Calcutta, February 10, 1874.

With reference to your letter No. 378, dated 5th instant (see p. 238), and the despatch published in the *Gazette of India* of the 31st January 1874 (see p. 198), regarding the provision of grain for the distressed districts, I am directed now to submit for consideration the Lieutenant-Governor's view regarding the distribution of the supplies which are to be provided. I am to request a reference to the general view mentioned in Mr. Bernard's letter No. 36 SR, dated 5th January (see p. 149), of forming reserves of food on railways and navigable rivers; and also to my letter to Commissioners, No. 429 SR, dated 4th February (see p. 264), of which another copy is hereto appended.

Paragraphs 2 and 7 of the last-quoted letter, and one or two other passages in recent communications, indicate the Lieutenant-Governor's view, which is that as much grain as possible should be pushed up into the interior of the distressed districts before communications are interrupted by the rains; and that in addition to what it may be possible thus to carry by land transport into the interior during that interval, we should send on as much more as can be moved by rail and river to selected points of storage, where it would be available for transport by water the moment the water channels are opened by the rains, all possible arrangements being meantime made to facilitate its eventual distribution. The quantity of grain which the Government of India now intimates that it has arranged to procure will enable us both to do this and to keep in reserve at Calcutta, and other head-quarter depôts, something to secure against

risk in places not at present immediately threatened. It is understood, also, that additional importations are likely to be available for this purpose if required.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor proposes, then, that the resources of the East Indian Railway should be utilised to the very utmost now in pushing up as much grain as possible. He hopes that all that can be carried into the distressed districts will thus be applied, and anything in excess of that that can be carried up can very well be stored at Patna, Barrh, Monghyr, Bhaugulpore, Colgong, Sahebgunge, Rajmehal, and Azimgunge. At several of these places any quantity of storage can be got, and sheds can be put up where required. It may also eventually prove desirable to store some grain on the Burdwan and Burrakur line and along the chord line, and also on parts of the loop line below Rajmehal; but the Lieutenant-Governor is at present unwilling to do anything to frighten away private trade from places where Government has not hitherto imported, and where the facilities for carriage are considerable. The Eastern Bengal Railway will have no difficulty in carrying up as much as may be required of it, and grain should be pushed on in considerable quantities to Kooshtea and Goalundo.

3. In addition to carrying up grain by rail as above proposed, as much as possible should be taken across the Ganges and stored in depôts on the other side. It should be taken also up the secondary rivers as far as good-sized boats can be got in the dry weather, and be there stored. It is believed that the navigability of some of the larger rivers improves as the snows melt in the Himalayas. The Gogra is a very fine river and always navigable. The Gunduck, it is said, rises somewhat in the spring. The Coosy no doubt does so; also the Teesta, which rises in the snows of Kinchin-junga. Possibly it may be easier to send boats up these streams in April, May, and June than at present. The Little Gunduck, Gugree, Mahanuddy, and Burrall are not affected by the snows, but it is believed that good-sized boats can now go some little way up or towards these streams, and storage depôts might be arranged as far up as practicable like the one at Godagaree at the mouth of the Mahanuddy, or at Nownugger, near the mouth of the Burrall. If steamer-power beyond that taken up in ferrying grain across the Ganges is available, it might be used to carry grain up those streams which are in any degree navigable. If the Government of India approve of this plan, details will be worked out.

4. There can be no doubt that the utmost possible supply must be made available for Behar and for the district of Dinagepore. With regard to the more eastern districts of Rungpore and Bogra, which depend on the Berhampooter and Teesta system of water-ways, the Lieutenant-Governor is not so apprehensive. Seasonable rain has done much for Rungpore, and the root crop is said to be good. The people have sold their jute well and have money. What private trade there is goes on briskly. But the Lieutenant-Governor is afraid that this trade is very small, and he fears that even when the south winds blow, and the navigation of the Berhampooter becomes easier, and melting of the snows makes the bar at the mouth of the Teesta passable, it may be found that there is not grain enough in the eastern districts to supply the private trade which would otherwise spring up. There has already been so brisk a trade from Sylhet, Tipperah, and the east of Mymensing, that the Lieutenant-Governor sees reason to fear that those districts are pretty well exhausted. He is disappointed to find how little natural trade there has been from Backergunge and Noakhally to the north-east. He had hoped these districts would have largely drawn from the sea-board rice tracts. But there is reason to believe that almost the whole surplus crop of Backergunge and Noakhally has gone either to Calcutta for export and for the supply of the metropolis or to Chittagong.

5. The Lieutenant-Governor would wish then to send at least as much as has been brought at Chittagong to Goalundo and to depôts on the Berhampooter for sale to the private traders in case such sale should be found desirable. He fully believes that if grain is thus sold at main depôts, private trade will distribute it in the north-east districts of itself, except perhaps in a few special tracts for which provision is now being made.

6. I am desired to call attention to what the Lieutenant-Governor has said in the 7th paragraph of my letter of the 4th February regarding short tramways at points where such might be found desirable. The Commissioner of Patna

is urgent in asking that, failing the execution of the greater project of the Durbangha tramway, a short temporary line may be laid for a distance of four miles at Chumpta Ghât, and if the letter of the 4th instant elicits other proposals, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes the Government of India will make Mr. Molesworth available to look into and settle such schemes.

7. Another important point to which the Lieutenant-Governor has given attention is the provision of steam-power not only for crossing the Ganges now, but to aid in distributing the grain as soon as the secondary rivers open. For this purpose small steamers would be most useful. The Lieutenant-Governor may say, also, that he believes any expenditure of this kind would be most advantageous for many permanent purposes. We very much require in Bengal small steamers of a simple construction that could be worked by natives. The expense of building and maintaining the present large river steamers is great, while nearly all our purposes would be served by extremely cheap ones. We have built one or two such in the dockyard for the Eastern Bengal Railway Company and to private orders. That for the Eastern Bengal Railway may be taken as a model; and Mr. McGregor, the chief engineer of the dockyard, thinks a steamer of the kind, 80 feet long with 12 feet beam, and of quite sufficient power, could be turned out for about Rs. 14,000 in three or three and a half months from now. The Lieutenant-Governor has authorised him to lay down one such steamer at once. Mr. McGregor further believes that as soon as the Hooghly Bridge pontoons are launched, he could lay down another steamer to be ready a fortnight later than the first, and by contracting with outside firms for the parts of two other steamers on his moulds and models, he could put them together so as to have four such vessels ready within four months. Seeing that the success and cheapness of the Eastern Bengal Railway steamer have been tested fully in practice, the Lieutenant-Governor recommends that four steamers as above should be ordered at once. They can be worked entirely by a cheap establishment of natives. Mr. Prestage says that of the Eastern Bengal Railway has already earned several times her cost.

8. It has further been suggested by Colonel Haig that what are called small screw gun-boats, such as were at one time got out from home and are now plying on the Orissa canals, are probably in stock in the dockyards in England and might be got out at once. The Lieutenant-Governor understands they work up to about 60-horse-power, and they would be most useful. They are too large to be shipped bodily on board a canal steamer, but could be easily taken to pieces, and ten of them could be put together here in six weeks. The Lieutenant-Governor would recommend that, if available, ten such steamers should be procured by the Suez Canal. The steamers on the Godavery are long and of very light draft, but perhaps the Government of India would consider whether they could be made available.

9. It should be understood that for our Bengal rivers power and working and towing against stream is more important than very light draught. Most Bengal boats draw a good deal, and when the rivers are open at all there is generally a fair depth of water. It would, therefore, be no objection to small steamers that they drew, say, 2½ feet light or 3 feet loaded, though if they have power enough with less draught and without much increase of length so much the better.

10. In many parts of Bengal distribution of grain in the interior may be made by small boats after the rains begin, and where the water-ways do not admit even of these, the Lieutenant-Governor has suggested that the people may very well come from some distance and carry away a supply of grain for themselves on their heads. But steamers to take the grain near the affected tracts are much required.

No. 169.

Letter from Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, No. 223 SR, dated February 11, 1874.

I am directed to forward, for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, copy of the correspondence noted in the margin, from which it will be seen that the Government of India have authorized the construction of a tramway for engine power from Champta Ghât to Dhurbhanga, 44 miles in length.

1. Telegram from Mr. Molesworth, dated 10th February 1874.
2. Telegram from Mr. Molesworth, dated 10th February 1874.
3. Telegram to Major Stanton, dated 10th February 1874.
4. To Agency, East Indian Railway, Public Works Department, No. 226 SR, dated 11th February 1874.

2. Materials will be supplied from Delhi, Agra and Calcutta, and will be concentrated at the Barrh

Station of the East Indian Railway.

3. The whole work will be placed in charge of Major F. T. Stanton, who will carry it out under the direct orders of this Department, but will be directed to pay every attention to the wishes of the Lieutenant-Governor Sir R. Temple and the local civil officers. I am to request that the civil officers of districts may be requested to give all possible assistance to Major Stanton in carrying out this important work.

No. 170.

Circular from A. Mackenzie, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioners of the Rajshahye, Bhaugulpore, and Patna Divisions, No. 429 SR, dated February 4, 1874.

I am instructed to address you in continuation of my letters No. 10 SR of 3rd January (see p. 106), No. 61 SR of 9th January, (see p. 109) and No. 110 SR of 13th January, on the subject of transport arrangements. You will have seen from correspondence published in the *Gazette of India* that Government is prepared to send up large quantities of grain to the distressed tracts where it may be necessary. The railway can carry large quantities, and steamers and boats have been made available for conveying the grain across the Ganges to the districts on the north of that river, where most of it will be required. But the difficulties attending the transport from the points where it is landed into the interior have already proved exceedingly great. The grain has not gone forward as fast and as easily as it was hoped it would. The water routes in the interior of districts have this season proved most disappointing; and though in most places carts are available in numbers, it is doubtful if land carriage of this kind will suffice for all our wants; especially it will be very difficult to use it sufficiently without interfering unduly with private trade. Under these circumstances the subject of land transport causes the Government great anxiety. In the early stages of the famine operations the local officers were allowed to use their discretion freely and to experiment upon the different routes. Experience of a very needful kind has thus been gained; but it has become necessary to face the difficulties and to systematise our arrangements. The Lieutenant-Governor is sure that success in this, as in all other great operations whether in India or elsewhere, can only be attained by careful attention to method and system. And he must ask you thoroughly to review the means and system of transport in your division, and to mark out fully what has to be done and the best way of doing it.

2. The matter has, as it seems to the Lieutenant-Governor, a double aspect. First, we have to settle the routes and means of carriage for the months before the rains. Next, we have to consider and work out plans and preparations for guarding against surprise and danger thereafter, and this will probably best be done by storing grain at points where it will be most available for distribution the very first moment that the rains open the water channels, and settling how best to facilitate its further distribution at that season.

3. The Government of India has been good enough to lend for this work several excellent and experienced officers of the Quarter Master General's Department who are conversant with the duty of prospecting routes and

making transport arrangements. One such officer has been allotted to the Rajshahye Division, one to the Bhaugulpore Division, and one superior officer, with assistants, to the Patna Division. The Lieutenant-Governor hopes the services of these officers will be utilised to the utmost. His view is that they should first be employed to prospect the routes and inquire about the means of transport and modes of bringing it into use, and to suggest to the Commissioners the best routes and plans of working. They will thus be at first inspecting and supervising officers. The question of employing them executive should be considered when the plans of each division are more settled.

4. In the Rajshahye Division the Lieutenant-Governor fears that, owing to the absence of the Commissioner in the north of his jurisdiction, there has been some want of general supervision hitherto. It is hoped that Mr. Molony has now returned, and that he will, in concert with Captain Kerr, take stock of his arrangements. Besides attending to other routes, he should develop and systematise the working of the Rajmehal route. The Lieutenant-Governor has much faith in Mr. Molony's local knowledge and discretion, and trusts that now, with the aid of Captain Kerr's practical experience, he will arrange thoroughly good plans and make up for the hitherto somewhat slow progress of his divisional distribution.

5. In Bhaugulpore, Mr. Hankey has been looking into transport matters, and with his help it is hoped that difficulties have been overcome and effective arrangements made; but to keep things going for the future, the service of the officer lent by the Quarter Master General will be most useful.

6. In the Patna Division, Colonel Mackenzie, of the Commissariat, a very able officer, has been giving a certain amount of general supervision to transport arrangements, and the Lieutenant-Governor would be sorry to displace him. But the division is so large, and its requirements so heavy, that the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt work for all exists, and the duties ought to be distributed. It has occurred to him that the best plan would be for Colonel Mackenzie to retain the superintendence of the supply arrangements, that is of the receiving grain from the railway and loading and despatching it across the river; while the officers of the Quarter Master General's Department should undertake the duty of prospecting routes and arranging for the transport on the north of the Ganges, and possibly in some tracts south of the river, though in the latter quarter such an arrangement may, it is hoped, not be so much required. The settlement of the distribution of duties will, however, best be made locally by the Commissioner (under Sir Richard Temple's directions, if Sir Richard is still there when the officers arrive), in consultation with Colonel Mackenzie and Colonel McGregor.

7. The possibility or otherwise of laying a tramway into Tirhoot is being ascertained by the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India in the Railway Department; but apart from this larger question, it has occurred to the Lieutenant-Governor that, with special reference to the facilities for distributing grain by water after the rains set in, perhaps some short local tramways might be very useful, for example, where a land journey separates two lines of water carriage, a tramway connecting the two might be of great use. A light tramway might be worked in such places by coolies, who would do less harm by cutting up the ground under a tramway laid without ballast than would be caused by animals; while the coolies could load, unload, and manage the trucks, lifting them off and on in case of need, and thus utilise an imperfect tramway in a manner impossible where animal traction is employed. The work would, moreover, be suited to the people in the distressed districts. Looking to the map only, and judging without any exact local knowledge, it might, for instance, be possible that such a tramway would be of use at or above Monghyr, where the Ganges and the Gugree Rivers are not very far apart, though the way round from one to the other is long and tedious. If the ground admitted of it, a tramway between the two might save much time. Again, Rampore Beaulah is not far off the whole river system of Dinapore. A tramway here might connect the Ganges and these rivers, and save much tedious voyaging. At any rate the Lieutenant-Governor trusts that, in the inspection and examinations of routes, this point will not be overlooked, and that the subject of how best to distribute grain at the commencement of the rains will be carefully considered, so that if the supplies now sent by land

suffice till then, further supplies may be facilitated instead of being hindered by the advent of the rainy season.

No. 171.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 523, dated February 17, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letters Nos. 566 SR, of the 10th instant, (see p. 261) and 429 SR, of the 4th instant, (see p. 264) and in reply to say that the general views of the Lieutenant-Governor as to the transport of grain are quite in accordance with those of the Government of India.

2. A separate communication has been made by the Government of Bengal, and replied to by the Government of India, No 506, dated 16th instant (see p. 271), as regards East Indian Railway transport.

3. In reply to paragraph 2, I am to observe that it is very desirable that every information should be obtained and advantage taken of the river routes as soon as they are practicable.

4. In reply to your 6th paragraph, I am to point out that the question of the tramway from Chumpta to Durbhanga has already been disposed of in the orders issued in the Department Public Works of the 11th instant, No. 223 SR. (see p. 264).

5. The Governor General in Council approves of orders being issued by His Honor for the provision of as many small steamers as can be built in the Government Dockyard or by private trade, of such descriptions and on such terms as the Lieutenant-Governor may think good, provided only that the services of such steamers can be ensured within the time when they will be most required. With regard to the proposal to order four small steamers and ten screw gun-boats from England, it is advisable that some more definite and particular specification should be given, and I am to request that the Government of Bengal will in communication with Mr. McGregor prepare and submit a draft telegram on the subject, which might be forwarded at once to the Secretary of State. The substance of this paragraph has already been communicated to the Lieutenant-Governor in personal communication with His Excellency.

6. With regard to any steamer being available for service in Bengal from the Godavery, enquiry has already been made from the Government of Madras, but no reply has yet been received.

7. Adverting to the question (raised in your 5th paragraph) as to the sale of grain at Government depôts, I am to remark that it has been treated in a separate communication* from the Government of Bengal, and need not be further noticed here.

8. I am to request that in all future communications similar to that under acknowledgment, relating to the transport of grain, the best approximate estimates of quantities in maunds or tons may always, so far as practicable, be given.

No. 172.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 596, dated February 21, 1874.

I am directed to request that when the Eleventh Special Narrative is communicated to the press and to the public, the following parts of the narrative and appendices may be omitted for the reasons mentioned in the margin:—

Paragraph 4 from "since" in line 6 to the end of the paragraph.

Appendix A, paragraph 1 from "the import of food grains" to the end of the paragraph.

Paragraph 19 from "during the last three weeks" at page 7, line 3, to the end of the paragraph and appendix T.

Paragraph 41 and appendix L.

The figures of Government imports are not correct. In future, these figures should not be given in the Special Narratives or appendices, the information in regard to those passed by the Government of Bengal being necessarily imperfect.

This correspondence is incomplete, and under order No. 576 of the 12th December should not have been included in the Narrative.

This estimate is under consideration, and the result will be dealt with by the Government of India.

* No. 7 SR., dated 3rd January 1874 (see p. 189).

The Viceroy believes that the local officers are now doing their duty thoroughly, and therefore does not desire to make public his disappointment at former shortcomings.

In Appendix D, paragraph 2 of letter No. 474 of the 13th of February, from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department, to the Government of Bengal.

I am to add that some inaccuracy results from the omission in the Appendices to the narrative of the date of issue of letters proceeding from the Government of Bengal.

No. 173.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., for Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 564 SR, dated February 9, 1874.

I am directed to submit copies of the papers marginally noted received from the Patna Division. Sir Richard Temple's orders and instructions, for the completeness of which the Lieutenant-Governor is very much obliged, have been communicated to the local officers. At the same time the Lieutenant-Governor has considered it right to draw special attention to the extreme urgency of some of the points Sir R. Temple has so properly taken up.

2. There is one point on which the Lieutenant-Governor desires to solicit that orders may issue and action may be taken at once, and that is in regard to the four miles of double-line tramway required at Chumpta Ghât opposite Barrh. I am to solicit that if the major scheme of a tramway from Chumpta Ghât to Durbhanga be set aside, immediate orders may issue for making and stocking with wagons (the latter is as important as the former) four miles of double line from Chumpta Ghât across the sands to such terminus as the local officers may direct.

No. 174.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 493, dated Calcutta, February 14, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 564 SR, dated the 9th instant, (see above No. 173 of this series), and in reply to state that orders, already communicated to the Government of Bengal from the Public Works Department on the 1st instant, have been for the immediate construction of a tramway from Chumpta Ghât to Durbhanga in Tirhoot (see p. 264).

No. 175.

Letter from A. Mackenzie, Esq., for Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 620 SR., dated Calcutta, February 11, 1874.

I am directed to submit, for the consideration of the Government of India, that the Patna grain-dealers have represented, and that the Lieutenant-Governor has heard from other quarters, that there is difficulty in getting grain away from the Loodiana Railway Station in the Punjab. A good deal of grain is being despatched from Loodiana, and the Lieutenant-Governor presumes that the Railway authorities there are doing their best. But as there was an enormous stock of grain in the Punjab, as the spring crops there promise so well, and as the need in Behar is so great, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to lay the representations of the Patna people before the Government of India. It may

be that the Supreme Government, with its large resources, could arrange for borrowing rolling-stock from other lines, or by other ways facilitate the transport of private grain to the distressed districts of the central part of the Gan- ges Valley.

ENCLOSURE to No. 175.

MEMORANDUM BY MR. TOYNBEE REGARDING THE DESPATCHES OF RICE FROM HOWRAH BY THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

Table showing the despatches advised to, and actually sent by, East Indian Railway, from January 26th to date.

Number and date of letter advising Mr. Batchelor.	For what week despatches advised.	Daily number of bags advised.	Daily average number actually sent.	Daily difference (less).	REMARKS
206 SR, dated 21st January ...	26th January to 1st February ...	16,714	12,786	3,928	
336 SR, " 30th " ...	2nd February to 8th February ...	17,357	15,473	1,884	
489 SR, " 6th February ...	9th February to 15th February ...	30,000	18,167	11,833	Four days average.
632 SR, " 12th " ...	16th February to 22nd February ...	33,000	...	...	

From the above it will appear that, although a gradual improvement in despatches has taken place since we first advised the railway of our wants in the way of carriage, and though the railway very nearly worked up to the requisitions made on them in the first two weeks, there is reason to fear that the demand for carriage for 30,000 bags daily is more than they will be able to meet. This, at any rate, is the result of the last four days' average. For next week we require carriage for 33,000 bags, and I presume that arrangements are being made up-country to carry away this amount from the railway. We have never yet sent away 22,000 bags, the best day's work we ever did, being yesterday's (21,920 bags). This is little more than is now required by Futwah Ghât and Barrh new stations alone. It would seem to be necessary either to reduce the present list of despatches, or to give the wants of certain stations precedence over those of others. I do not think that, under present arrangements, the railway can carry more than 20,000 bags a day on an average, and continuously. We must, therefore, either, (1), ask the railway to increase their present means, and let us know reliably up to what quantity they can work, or, (2), reduce our despatch list to such a quantity as the railway can carry, and advise the mofussil officers to adapt their means of carriage to the real power of the railway.

No. 176.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 664 SR, dated February 13, 1874.

I am directed to submit, for the consideration of the Government of India, the following statement of the present outlook in regard to the despatch of Government grain from Calcutta.

2. In order to meet the demands made by Behar officers under Sir R. Temple's orders, and in order to give full employment to the carriage which has been collected, the Lieutenant-Governor has had to notify to the East Indian Railway Company that he wishes to despatch 2,500 tons of grain daily from Howrah during the week beginning on the 16th February next. The despatches by the East Indian Railway Company notified for the current week were 2,000 tons a day. If the Railway should be able to give wagons for all this quantity of grain daily, our despatches by the East Indian Railway alone will be from the present date (13th February) to the end of the month 35,000 tons. Besides this, we have to send up before the end of the month from 7,000 to

reckoned as to p^r of u.
enough rice in Cal's
the carriage our officers
timely information should b.

4. I am to explain that, wagons for 2,000 tons a day this week, still there have never yet been sent up 1,500 tons) in any one day from Howrah. Still with more confidence make its arrangements to meet sufficient rice always ready to fill all the wagons they can g-

No. 177.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 689 SR, dated February 14, 1874.

I am directed to submit the appended copy of a memorandum by Mr. Toynbee, the Calcutta grain-officer, and to invite the attention of the Government of India to the apparent inability of the East Indian Railway to carry away daily the full quantity of grain which the Lieutenant-Governor desires to send from Calcutta.

2. For the last three weeks, and for the coming week, the Lieutenant-Governor has, under the directions of the Government of India, advised the East Indian Railway Traffic Manager of the quantity of Government grain which was to be despatched from Howrah during each ensuing week. Sir Richard Temple's visit to Behar has resulted in a very large increase in the estimate of the necessities of Behar; and the Lieutenant-Governor has notified to the East Indian Railway Officers that he wished to despatch 30,000 bags (about 2,222 tons) a day during the current week, and 33,000 bags (about 2,444 tons) during the coming week.

3. But the East Indian Railway, though it has gradually and steadily increased its supply of wagons, has not yet carried * away more than an average of 18,167 bags (about 1,410 tons) a day. The East Indian Railway Officers, who have throughout most cordially and effectively aided this Government in a way the Lieutenant-Governor cannot sufficiently acknowledge, have not, indeed, stated that they cannot do more than this. The Traffic Manager (Mr. Batchelor) observed that the Government requirements for the current week amounted to fully eight train-loads a day, while his company was now carrying a daily downward traffic of 2,200 tons (of which about 1,350 tons is food grains) past Mirzapore; and he truly pointed out that the railway was "carrying a very large traffic, apart from the large grain traffic from Howrah."

4. The Lieutenant-Governor had hoped that during the comparatively cool months the Government might be able to send up the East Indian Railway a good deal more than 2,000 tons daily, and on the 10th February he caused Mr. Cecil Stephenson to be asked whether his line could carry up to 3,000 tons, or even 4,000 tons a day. As yet Mr. Stephenson has not been able to reply; but the Lieutenant-Governor deems the matter to be so important and so pressing that he directs me to lay this statement of the case before the Government of India.

* In past weeks the Government has sometimes not had sufficient rice ready stacked for despatch. But this failure will not, it is believed recur.

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is hoped, greatly expand.

ment (four millions of maunds)

for Tirhoot will have to be made more

meanwhile the despatches, merely to supply the

to 4,37,000 * maunds a week (or about 16,200

ons daily, including Sundays.

enant-Governor is much afraid that the East Indian Rail-

be able to carry all this grain away daily. Yet, as has been

, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes that the local officers will be able

take even more grain than the above despatches contemplate. There

will now be a demand for carriage of material for the Durbhanga tramway,

and that demand will have to be treated as the *most emergent* of all.

The Lieutenant-Governor is also apprehensive, lest, with the heavy and con-

tinuous strain now put on the East Indian Railway, its drivers and guards

should knock-up in the coming hot months. As Mr. Batchelor has pointed

out, all this extra traffic on the East Indian Railway and on the Punjab line

necessitates the lifting and storing along both lines of so much extra coal from

the Bengal coal-fields. And there seems to be much ground for fearing that

the resources of the East Indian Railway may be taxed beyond what they can

perform, unless means of extending them can be devised.

7. Sir George Campbell would solicit that the advisers of the Government

of India on railway matters may look into the matter, and that, if necessary,

steps may be taken, by borrowing wagons, engines, and men from other lines, to

enable the East Indian Railway to carry the whole of its ordinary traffic, to

cope with the large and important down-trade in private grain, and to despatch

from Howrah to the distressed districts up to 3,000 tons of Government grain

a day during the months of March and April.

8. It may be well for the Lieutenant-Governor to add, while he is writing

about railway carrying-power; that, so far as experience goes, the Eastern Bengal

Railway, by which Dinagepore and most of the Rajshahye Divisions are chiefly

supplied, can fully and easily carry away from Sealdah all the grain this

Government requires to send.

No. 178.

Letter from C. Bernard, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 708 SR, dated Calcutta, February 16, 1874.

Since the Lieutenant-Governor directed the submission of the remarks contained in my letter No. 689 SR, dated 14th February, (see above No. 177 of this series) regarding the carrying-power of the East Indian Railway, he has communicated with Mr. Batchelor, the General Traffic Manager, and with Mr. Urban Broughton, the Howrah Traffic Superintendent.

2. Batchelor writes as if the East Indian Railway means were already (that is, ^{this} despatch of only 18,000 bags of Government grain from Howrah) ^{at} the utmost; but he also writes of doing his best to work up to the Gov. demand. Mr. Batchelor was in Calcutta yesterday, and he intimated ver. that by dint of using coal wagons he would be

* The despatches notified, or No. 632 of 12th Febru.

partment for the coming week are contained in the statement annexed

power of
R. Temple's
Lieutenant-Governor
going to indent on
Bhaugulpore and Purneah
otherwise arranged to increase
from Howrah will have to be increased
notified.

No. 179.

Letter from A. P. Howell, Esq., Deputy Secretary to the Government, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 506, dated February 16, 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letters No. 664 SR of the 13th (see p. 268) No. 620 SR of the 11th (see p. 267) and No. 689 SR of the 14th instant, (see p. 269) on the subject of the despatch of Government grain from Calcutta.

2. It is understood from these communications that the Government of Bengal is desirous that the Government of India should take in hand the subject of the transport of grain by the East Indian Railway. Arrangements will, therefore, be made without delay to ensure the most complete and regular provision possible for the purpose.

3. I am to observe, however, that, although the requirements of North Behar are known to the Government of India, full information has not yet been received as to the requirements of—

Gya, Arrah, and the Soane Canal.
Bhaugulpore.
Purneah.
Dinagepore.

And I am to state that, in order to work out a regular programme of transport arrangements, it is necessary to have further particulars as to the provisions made for the transport of grain from the stations to which it will be sent, or for its storage at such stations.

4. The Governor General in Council would be glad if all these particulars can, under instructions from His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, be prepared by Mr. Toynbee, in order that he may be ready to give every information to His Excellency on Tuesday afternoon at 3 P.M., or on Wednesday at 11 A.M. at the latest, at which time His Excellency hopes to see the Railway authorities, and to arrange the programme.

Information is requested as to the date on which Mr. Toynbee may be instructed to supply these particulars.

5. As regards the statement made in your No. 620 SR, as to the detention of grain at the Loodiana Station, the Governor General in Council desires to be furnished with any representations made to the Government of Bengal, in view to inquiry being made as to the causes of such detention.

6. Your letter No. 664 SR, informs the Government of India that 7,000 to 9,000 tons of grain are to be sent up by the Eastern Bengal Railway before the end of the current month, and that this Railway can certainly meet all the requirements of the local Government. On this point also I am to inquire as to the stations to which the grain is to be sent, and as to the arrangements for transport or storage actually made for such grain at those stations. The Government of Bengal may rest assured that so far as it is possible to calculate beforehand there will be no want of Government grain for despatch up-country.

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Department
dated February

our letter No. 506, dated (this series), regarding transport. The Lieutenant-Governor did not wish that he should undertake the executive detail of railway work, as it would be impossible, as our requirements vary according to local carriage and fresh reports of the state and needs. It was only because the railways are under the Government that it was not only the East Indian Railway, but the railways in other parts of India from whence the East Indian Railway may borrow, that the Lieutenant-Governor asked the Government of India to look into the general question of railway power.

2. With respect to your paragraph 3, I am to say that the Lieutenant-Governor does not feel yet prepared to say what will be wanted for South Behar. He asked Sir R. Temple thoroughly to discuss the needs of the Gya District, regarding which His Honor has found much difference of opinion, and Sir R. Temple has said after doing so as far as was possible he hopes to come to more definite conclusions when he comes to Patna again a week hence. The Lieutenant-Governor's hope is that beyond the moderate provision for relief works which we are making, the private trade, which already brings about 1,000 tons a day from the North-Western Provinces, may supply Shahabad, Gya, and South Bhaugulpore, as well as much of South Monghyr. He is more and more inclined to think that as Government cannot do everything, we must leave a good deal to private trade, even at some possible risk; that as regards provisions for large masses of the population when such become necessary, private trade and Government operations cannot work side by side; that we must divide the country into portions for which we must do everything and portions for which we will (unless the state of things very much change) do nothing beyond relief work and poor-houses, so that private trade may have its fair scope in these latter. He understands that the dearness at Gya town has been mainly caused by the difficulty of getting transport for private trade; otherwise that trade would work freely. At any rate, the Lieutenant-Governor much believes that, since the rain has secured the rubbee in most of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and secured another abundant harvest in the Punjab, whether by means of private trade or by Government imports, we may and should trust largely to those provinces to supply a great part of our needs, so as to relieve the demands from this end, and enable the railway to carry both ways equally, and so to avoid the difficulty of supplying both North and South Behar from this end. In this view he is inclined to add nothing for South Behar to what we are now sending from here for those districts, so far as transport from this end is concerned.

3. He would, however, wish to raise the supply for Bhaugulpore certainly to 60,000 and possibly to 80,000 maunds per week. If Sir R. Temple's arrangements for the supply of carriage for 60,000 maunds per week from the North-Western Provinces for Bhaugulpore take effect, it might want up to 1,00,000 maunds per week.

4. As regards Purneah, the estimate already made need not be increased. My letter No. 689 R.R., dated the 14th February (see p. 269), puts this at 80,000 maunds a week.

5. As regards Dinagepore, my letter of the 14th February omitted to make allowance for a route already in use, viz., that by Sahebgunge and Hyatpore. By the two routes of Sahebgunge—Hyatpore and Rajmehal-Maldah—we may hope to throw into Dinagepore and Maldah at least 30,000 maunds per

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