M.R.O. 1—77,003—8-6-57.

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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

[illegible] DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	Press Mis.
	173-184
Dated	18 [illegible].

6/7

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Famine.

No. 183. Read the following Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, dated 18th February 1875, Nos. 1—59—71:—

Agriculture and Horticulture,
Famine.

Read—

Letter from the Government of Bengal of the 24th November 1874, submitting copies of two Minutes regarding the services of Government Officers, and of non-official residents, during the recent scarcity in Bengal and Behar (published in Special Supplement to Calcutta Gazette of the 28th December 1874).

Letter from the Government of Bengal of the 8th December 1874, submitting copies of a Minute recorded by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on the scarcity in Bengal and Behar during 1873-74, and the measures taken to alleviate the distress caused by it.

Letters from the Government of the North-Western Provinces of the 1st, 11th, and 29th of January 1875, forwarding reports on the scarcity of 1873-74 in certain districts of the North-Western Provinces, with a brief narrative of the scarcity so far as it affected those Provinces, and the remarks of the Lieutenant-Governor on the conduct of the Civil Officers engaged in relief operations. (The letter of January 29th will be published in a separate volume.)

Letter from the Government of the North-Western Provinces of the 11th of February 1875, forwarding the report of the Central Famine Relief Committee, North-Western Provinces.

Letter from the Chief Commissioner of Oudh of the 16th October 1874, submitting a copy of a letter, with enclosures, from the Commissioner of the Fyzabad Division, together with a summary of the measure taken in the northern parts of the Province of Oudh in order to avert famine. (The letter from the Commissioner of Fyzabad, with the enclosures, will be published in a separate volume.)

Preliminary report by Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. MacGregor, Director of Transport, of the 19th of October 1874, on the operations of the Transport Department in Behar (published in the *Gazette of India* of the 19th December 1874).

Report by Lieutenant-Colonel F. S. Taylor, R.E., Consulting Engineer to Government for Guaranteed Railways of the 23rd December 1874, on the traffic operations of the East Indian Railway in 1873-74.

Reports by Major J. Graham, on special duty, of the 1st of August 1874 and 4th of February 1875, on the arrangements made for the receipt, despatch, and sale of Government rice in Calcutta.

Statement showing the quantity of rice (distinguishing table and other kinds), paddy, wheat, gram, and other food-grains exported from the Presidency of Bengal in the twelve months from 1st October to 30th September of the years 1872-73 and 1873-74.

RESOLUTION.

The Governor-General in Council has read, with all the attention which the importance of the subject deserves, the Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the narrative received from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and the letter of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, giving an account of the measures adopted in consequence of the failure of the winter crop of 1873-74.

2. Sir Richard Temple, in the Minute which he has recorded on the scarcity in Bengal and Behar and the measures taken to alleviate the distress caused by it,

has given a clear and full account of the origin of the scarcity, of the manner in which it declared itself, of the general plan of operations, of the measures which were adopted, and of their result. On all these subjects Sir Richard Temple's excellent narrative conveys full and accurate information, and nothing need be added by the Government of India in regard to the history of those transactions.

3. The reports received from the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and from the Chief Commissioner of Oudh show that the distress in those Provinces was limited in extent, and much less severe than in Bengal and Behar. The observations of the Government of India upon these reports will be separately communicated to the Governments concerned.

4. On November the 7th, 1873, the Secretary of State was informed that "Her Majesty's Government might rely upon the Government of India using every available means, at whatever cost, to prevent, as far as they could, any loss of the lives of Her Majesty's subjects in consequence of the calamity which threatened Bengal." The result has shown that the resources of the country and the energy of those who were entrusted with the conduct of the relief operations have been sufficient, by the blessing of GOD, to secure success.

5. The measures that have been taken have not only prevented the extensive mortality which must otherwise have occurred, but the general productive power of the country has not been allowed to deteriorate, and there is no reason to believe that any demoralization has followed from the relief operations. The strongest assurances of the gratitude of the people have been received, and it may confidently be expected that the assistance which has been given by the State during a time of calamity will be long remembered and appreciated, not only on the scene of the distress, but throughout the whole of Her Majesty's Indian Empire.

6. The cost of the relief operations cannot as yet be accurately stated; but it may safely be assumed that the total net cost will not exceed the sum of £6,500,000, which was the estimate given in the Budget for the current year.

7. Without further reference, excepting incidentally and by way of illustration, to the history of the past year, it may be profitable to put on record, while the recollection of the circumstances is fresh, some general observations which may serve for future guidance.

8. The Resolution of the Government of India of the 7th of November 1873, which was mainly founded upon the experience of previous famines in India, embraces the chief subjects upon which general instructions appear to be required at the beginning of a period of scarcity.

9. Recent experience has shown, however, that greater attention should be directed, as soon as the certainty of a serious failure of one of the principal grain crops has been ascertained, to obtain at once complete reports of its extent, and of the probable consequences upon the food-supply of the people. The admirable series of Minutes written by Sir Richard Temple, when he was deputed to visit the distressed districts, will serve as a model for such reports. The general accuracy of the data supplied to Sir Richard Temple by the Local Officers is remarkable, and illustrates the value of the information which can thus be obtained.

10. The anticipation of the effects of the scarcity was found to be somewhat greater than the reality from two causes. The stock of food in the hands of the people turned out to be larger than was anticipated; and sufficient allowance was not made for the extraordinary exertions which were used by the cultivators to grow a greater quantity than usual of the grain crops which ripen in the autumn. It was impossible to reckon beforehand upon either of these circumstances; but the experience that has now been gained shows, *first*, that where a scarcity follows a fair season, considerable supplies of food will probably be in the possession of the people, and, therefore, sufficient time may be reckoned upon for the purpose of organizing the relief which may ultimately be required; and, *secondly*, that the cultivators of the soil in India are able and willing to make considerable alterations in their agriculture for the sake of increasing the food-supply at the earliest possible moment, by which means the period over which the scarcity would otherwise extend is considerably shortened. The outturn of the autumn crops of 1874 was further increased by the unusual quantity of rain that fell early in the season.

11. It is also important that early assistance should be given, without any hesitation, to the officers who are employed in districts where the scarcity is known to be imminent, so that they may be left free to move constantly through their districts and to watch the progress of events. Thus accurate information will be secured from the first of the area which is likely to be most severely afflicted, and relief operations may be adjusted accordingly. The critical position of a part of Tirhoot, at an early period of the scarcity of last year, is mainly to be attributed to the weakness of the staff. This deficiency was promptly supplied, but the lesson should not be forgotten.

12. The experience of former famines with respect to the advantage of opening public works, especially at an early stage of the distress, has been fully confirmed. Large works should be opened at once, smaller local works subsequently, as the necessity for them arises. There should be no hesitation in providing sufficient superintendence. When the distress becomes extensive, it is essential that employment should be available near the usual homes of the people. Sir Richard Temple has justly observed that where very large numbers have to be employed upon public works, piece-work is preferable to other methods for their payment.

13. In dealing with the most distressed districts, it was found that the tests of cooked food and of poor-houses were inapplicable. Such tests can be usefully applied only where the distress is less severe and extensive, and where there is reason to suppose that improper advantage is being taken of the relief offered.

14. Where distress is not great, and where, although it may be great, there is no serious deficiency in the supply of food, relief works, the distribution of gratuitous relief under proper precautions, and advances of money upon sufficient security, will be found (as was the case in the North-Western Provinces, in part of Oudh, and in considerable portions of Bengal) to be sufficient. It is only where there is a great deficiency—and there is also good reason to believe that the traders will be unable to meet that deficiency—that it is right for the State to intervene for the purpose of supplementing the general food-supply. Under such circum-

stances, however, this is the only means whereby a dearth of food can be prevented; and, during the past year, there can be no reasonable doubt that the measure was imperatively required in order to prevent a very great mortality. The principal reason of this necessity was the absence of sufficient means of transport by railway or canal. The river communication was but of little use at the time of year when supplies were required, and the carts of the country were not available for ordinary traders in any quantities, and could only be brought out in sufficient numbers by means of an organization which was quite beyond the power of private individuals. As railway communication is extended, the probability of Government being called upon to interfere in this manner with the functions of trade will diminish.

15. The operations for the supply of food by Government on a large scale were novel. The difficulty experienced at first was to arrange that the supplies should reach the people who required them. In fact the Government had, for the time, to fulfil the functions of both wholesale and retail dealers. Every available channel of distribution had to be brought into play. Sir Richard Temple has fully described the method which was adopted. Dealers in grain were assisted in prosecuting their business, which must otherwise have ceased to exist. Advances of grain were freely made to cultivators for the purpose of enabling them to support themselves and to till their land until the next crop should be gathered. This measure was in entire accordance with the customs of the country, and proved very successful.

16. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal will be requested to cause the returns which have been received from the Local Officers to be carefully analyzed and condensed for the purpose of exhibiting the extent of the failure of the crops in different parts of the country, as compared with the number of people who have been relieved by the State or who have been supported by food imported by the State. In Durbhunga and Mudhobunee, the two subdivisions of North Tirhoot where the failure of the rice crop was most complete, half of the population was supported for about four months by food imported by the State. It is therefore unlikely that in the event of any failure of crops which is not prolonged for more than one year, Government can have to supply a larger quantity of food than would be sufficient to support for about two months the whole population of the area most severely visited. This calculation, however, and others which are likely to be valuable hereafter, will be elaborated by the Government of Bengal.

17. The stores laid in by the State were not brought into the market until the deficiency of supplies in the local markets proved the necessity of doing so. Up to that time they were only used for the benefit of the people who were collected upon the Government works. When sales to the public were authorized, the price was determined by the principle which was adopted during the Irish famine. This principle was that the price should be regulated by that which prevailed at the nearest large mart situated upon one of the main lines of communication, some addition being made to cover the cost of carriage to the place of sale. It was found in Ireland that, under the operation of this principle, the inconvenience attending an interference with trade was reduced to a minimum, because as soon as traders were able to obtain supplies they could resume their business, and the Government could withdraw from the field, without any serious

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19*th April* 1875.

disturbance of prices. The same result was found to follow in Bengal. Moreover, the supplies of grain provided by Government consisted mainly of Burmese rice, to which the people were not accustomed, and which could not compete upon equal terms with Bengal rice when the latter again appeared in the market. It is remarkable that throughout the whole of these operations no complaints came from traders on the spot that they were injured by the action of Government. On the contrary, Sir Richard Temple received assurances from them of their entire concurrence, and he had to refuse applications for an extension of the sales by Government, a compliance with which rightly appeared to him to be contrary to the principle, which had been laid down from the first, that unnecessary interference with trade should be avoided.

18. It will be seen from Sir Richard Temple's Minute that a balance of about 100,000 tons of rice remained after the relief operations had been concluded. To this extent the measures taken have been in excess of the requirements of the case. The responsibility for this excess rests entirely with the Government of India. Having to deal with so vast a population, whose support depended upon many uncertain contingencies, it would have been imprudent not to have been prepared to meet larger demands than those which were actually made upon the Government. If a substantial reserve had not been provided, the success of the relief operations would properly have been attributed rather to good fortune than to foresight. The experience of last year shows the necessity of such a reserve. In the beginning of September 1874 very great apprehensions were felt that the scarcity would be prolonged. This was only averted by a fall of rain at the very last moment when it could have been of use to allow the winter crops to be sown; and, if the rain had not then fallen, the rice in reserve would have been urgently required. It must not be forgotten that on previous occasions it has occurred that a second year of drought has followed the first.

19. The food-supplies of India, including British Burma, proved amply sufficient to meet the demand occasioned by the failure of the rice crop. Out of the total quantity of grain purchased by the Government, which amounted to 479,696 tons, only 54,300 tons were obtained from beyond British India. The rice exported from British Burma in the year 1874 amounted to about 815,000 tons. Of this quantity about 290,000 tons were sent to Bengal, and about 470,000 tons to Europe—the exports to Europe having been only 33,000 tons less than in the previous year. The import of food-grains by railway from the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab is calculated by Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor to have amounted to 289,000 tons. This large export from Upper India did not greatly affect prices in the producing districts. The total quantity of food-grain carried into the distressed districts can hardly have been much less than 1,000,000 tons.

20. Great advantage was derived from the arrangement made to reduce at once the rates for the carriage of grain by railway, the difference being paid to the Railway Companies by the Government. The effect of this measure was to stimulate the importation of grain by railway into the distressed districts; but, owing to the great distances to be traversed and the necessity to traders of quick conveyance in order to secure the profit offered by the rise of prices, this

advantage given to the railways did not materially injure the river trade, which is slow, and, moving in regular course, does not readily adapt itself to a sudden demand.

21. The statistics of the foreign trade in food-grain for the year show that the reasons for which Government determined not to prohibit the export of food-grain, either in whole or in part, were sound. Notwithstanding the home demand, the exports of food-grain from India, including British Burma, were considerable. The return of the quantities of food-grains exported by sea from Bengal during the year ending on September 30th, 1874, shows that the exports were diminished by about one-half owing to the rise of prices. The exports of rice fell from 410,712 tons in 1872-73 to 217,355 tons in 1873-74, of which 121,065 tons were sent to the Colonies and other places to which natives of India have emigrated, and where, according to official representations which have been received in the course of the year, great evils must have resulted if the usual sources of supply had been suddenly interfered with. Of the remainder, 29,968 tons consisted of the finer descriptions of rice, which are not consumed by the poorer classes. The residue only amounted to 66,332 tons, and thus no bad effects can have followed from an adherence to sound principles, while the foreign trade has been preserved for a shock from which it might not have easily recovered.

22. Some representations were made, urging interference with the distribution of grain between different parts of Bengal. All action, direct or indirect, in this direction was prohibited, and the result of leaving supplies to be adjusted according to the demand has been that prices were equalized in a remarkable manner throughout the whole of Bengal; the effects of the scarcity were thus spread over a large area, and, therefore, were less severely felt in those parts which otherwise would have been most seriously affected. The only exception to this was in Orissa, where, probably owing to the deficiency of the means of communication, the price of rice was, during the whole period, very much lower than elsewhere, notwithstanding a considerable export.

23. The supplies purchased by Government were drawn mainly from sources at a distance from the scene of the scarcity. It was found better to buy by private arrangement with merchants, rather than that the Government should appear openly in the market. The limited experiments made in the latter direction showed that the public action of the Government produced an effect upon prices quite out of proportion to the actual amount of the transactions.

24. The facility with which large supplies of rice were imported from British Burma without any excessive rise of freights proved the value of the arrangements made with the British India Steam Navigation Company whose ships were largely engaged in the operation, as well as the great resources for purposes of transport which are afforded by the magnificent mercantile steam fleet trading to Calcutta. It was also satisfactory to find that the private firm which took the contract for landing the rice in Calcutta were able to carry through a business of considerable difficulty without any check from first to last. The traffic arrangements of the East Indian Railway Company showed the power of the Company to meet the strain of a very large additional traffic within a limited time. It is not too much to say that the relief operations could not have been successful, had it

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not been for the trunk line of railway which, passing through Behar, unites Calcutta with the Punjab. An additional proof has thus been afforded of the wisdom of the measures for railway construction in India which were commenced by the Marquis of Dalhousie, and have since been steadily prosecuted.

25. The manner in which the grain was conveyed from the railways to the places where it was required has afforded a remarkable instance of the great resources of the country in wheeled conveyance, and of the facility with which they may be brought to bear by the offer of profitable rates of hire. The Government of India entirely approved of the contracts made, at Sir Richard Temple's recommendation, for the transport of rice to North Behar. The cost was great, but the danger was not exaggerated. The immediate superintendence of the transport, when it assumed its full dimensions, was entrusted to officers of the army, and the manner in which this duty was performed shows the confidence which may be placed in the efficiency with which such transport would, if necessary, be brought to bear upon military operations.

26. The vast business of distributing relief was most successfully carried on by minutely subdividing the country to be dealt with in accordance with its requirements, maintaining the same organization throughout, and leaving great discretion to the officers in local charge, after the main principles by which they were to be guided were laid down. In carrying out this work, Sir Richard Temple reports that the services of the native officers of the army were found to be particularly useful.

27. The Central Relief Committee, who undertook the duty of distributing the subscriptions which were raised in India and elsewhere for the relief of the sufferers from the scarcity, have not yet closed their accounts; but their reports, published from time to time, show that the appeal which was made to the liberality of the public has been promptly and liberally answered. The Secretary of State has already taken occasion to express to the Lord Mayor of London the value which is attached by the Government of India to the sympathy exhibited by the people of England towards the sufferers in India, not only on account of the material help which has been afforded, but also because its effect has been to strengthen the bonds of union between Her Majesty's subjects in England and in India. The Princes and Chiefs of India have distinguished themselves by the alacrity with which they have contributed; and liberal subscriptions have been received from all parts of British India, especially from Zemindars and landholders in the distressed districts. The Government of India are satisfied that the assistance which has been bestowed is gratefully acknowledged by those who have benefitted by it, and they desire to take this opportunity of expressing the sincere thanks of the people to all those who have generously contributed to the Famine Relief Fund.

28. The Government of India have already, from time to time, expressed their approbation of the conduct of some of the officers of Government and others who have been engaged in the relief operations. The services rendered by Sir George Campbell during the time that he held the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal were acknowledged in April last. The thanks of the Government of India have been conveyed to Mr. Ashley Eden, the Chief Commissioner of British

Burma, for the able and successful manner in which the purchases of rice were made under his directions. The Viceroy has taken advantage of the opportunity of addresses, which have been presented to him during his visit to Behar and in Calcutta, to convey the thanks of the Government of India to the Zemindars and other gentlemen who have rendered active and valuable aid to their neighbours and fellow-countrymen. The Government of India now desire to express their entire concurrence with the Minutes published by Sir Richard Temple, in which he has tendered, in suitable terms, the thanks of the Government of Bengal to the Commissioners and other Officers of Government, Civil and Military, as well as to the Zemindars and all others who have assisted in different capacities during the time of scarcity. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and the Chief Commissioner of Oudh have been requested to accept themselves, and to convey to those who have done good service in those Provinces, the thanks of the Government of India.

29. Early in the month of March of last year, when the pressure of the distress had begun to be felt, but the power to deal with it successfully had not yet been proved, the Government of India expressed their confidence that the officers engaged upon the relief operations "would perform the arduous task imposed upon them with the zeal, ability, and self-sacrifice which had always distinguished the servants of the Crown and of the East India Company in times of difficulty and danger." This confidence has been entirely justified by the result, and another signal proof of the high qualities of the Civil and Military Services has been afforded by the manner in which their duty has been performed during the past year. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, who has given every assistance in his power to the Government of Bengal, will be requested to convey to those Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men under His Excellency's command who have been employed in the distressed districts the thanks which Sir Richard Temple has expressed in his Minute of the 24th of November. Similar communications will be made through the proper channels to those who are serving under Local Governments or Departments.

30. The Government of India desire, in conclusion, to convey to Sir Richard Temple their recognition of the distinguished services which he has rendered to the people of Bengal and Behar during the time of difficulty through which the Province has passed. As a Member of the Council of the Governor-General, Sir Richard Temple was from the first intimately associated with the policy adopted by the Government of India in respect to the scarcity. He took a prominent part in carrying that policy into effect under Sir George Campbell's administration; and, since he assumed the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in April last, he has unremittingly devoted himself to the personal direction and superintendence of the relief operations, which owe their complete success mainly to his exertions.

Madras.	Central Provinces.
Bombay.	Burma.
N. W. Provinces.	Mysore and Coorg.
Punjab.	Ajmere.
Oudh.	Assam.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Government of Bengal, and to the Local Governments and Administrations noted in the margin.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
19*th April* 1875.

Ordered, also, that the Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India.*

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. H. M. BATTEN,
Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Transferred to the Financial Department.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
5*th April* 1875.

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

No. 184. ORDER THEREON, 19th April 1875, No. 871.

To be recorded.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue Department.

Exd. J. Wright.

Gobt. of India Records.

FINANCIAL.

Letter from the REVENUE DEPARTMENT

Dated April 19th.

Issued

Read

G.O., 19th April 1878, No. 873

APRIL.
Nos. 183-184.

Famine.—Resolution of Government of India, reviewing correspondence on the subject of the famine relief operations in Bengal, North-Western Provinces, and Oudh, recorded.

Financial Depart
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Revenue 1875. Depto

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE,
AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE.

[AGRI. and HORTI.
FAMINE.]

RESOLUTION.

To

№ 864

Nos. 1 / 39—71.

Dated Calcutta, the 18th February 1875.

Rec'd 23rd March/75

SUBJECT.

Review of famine relief operations in Bengal, North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

19 to Accts. Dec 871

O. S. G. P.—No. 1863, R., A., & C.—15-3-75.—80.

Revenue Depts 1/5/75

Transferred to the Financial Department.

5th April 1875.

Secretary to Govt

Govt. of {1875} Madras.

To The Revenue Dept.

Famine

to

G. O. 19 April 1875 No. 871

Nos. 183-184.

Famine. Reports of 1874 relating correspondence on the subject of the famine relief operations in Bengal, N. W. Provinces and Oudh, received.