[G/40]
5,000—20-7-98.

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Financial (1895) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 571

Dated 28-7-97

INDEXED.

4/4

[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording proceedings of the Revenue Department passing orders on the endorsement of the Government of India communicating the Secretary of State's despatch regarding famine and relief operations in the affected provinces of India.

BACK PAPERS.

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

FURTHER PAPERS.

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

Financial Dept

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Order No. 571 dated 23rd July 97
Recorded.
Cmd
mls
23-7-97

Recd. } 1897. *Enclosures*

Regd. 2 July *Spare copies*

G.O., No. 516, 1st July 1897.

JULY.

Famine and Relief Operations.

Recording endorsement of the Government of India communicating the Secretary of State's Despatch regarding — in the scarcity affected provinces of India.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following :—

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, dated 17th June 1897, No. 21–1—61F.

READ—

Resolution.

The following Despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council, dated India Office, London, 20th May 1897, No. 81 (Revenue) :—

No. 4, dated 6th January, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 9, dated 13th January, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 13, dated 20th January, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 23, dated 27th January, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 27, dated 3rd February, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 31, dated 10th February, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 39, dated 17th February, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 9, dated 24th February, from the Government of India, with enclosures.
No. 45, dated 24th February, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 50, dated 3rd March, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 11, dated 10th March, from the Government of India, with enclosures.
No 57, dated 10th March, from the Secretary to Government, with enclosures.
No. 15, dated 17th March, from the Government of India, with enclosures.
No. 65, dated 17th March, from the Secretary to the Government, with enclosures.
No. 69, dated 24th March, from the Secretary to Government, with enclosures.

Since my Despatch, dated the 15th January 1897, I have received from your Excellency's Government the further papers noted in the margin concerning the famine and relief operations, while your weekly and monthly telegrams bring the narrative of events down to the present time. Two sets of famine papers have already been presented to Parliament, and a third set is in the press.

2. The area of relief operations has considerably extended since January, and by the latest accounts relief of some kind was being given in parts of one hundred British districts, in four districts of the Nizam's territory, and in some other Native States. According to your monthly telegram of the 12th April, the main relief numbers were as follows :—

RELIEF statistics, as per telegram, for week ending the 9th April 1897.

Province.	Number of districts in which relief operations of some kind are going on.	Distressed tracts.						Affected tracts.				Total number in receipt of relief of all kinds in 000s.
		Area in square miles.	Population in 000s.	Number on relief works in 000s including dependents.	Number on gratuitous relief in 000s.	Total number on relief in 000s.	Percentage of numbers on relief to total population.	Area in square miles.	Population in 000s.	Number on relief works in 000s.	Number on gratuitous relief in 000s.	
Madras	5	12,400	1,742	90	10	100	5·7	3,300	1,495	4	1	105
Bombay	9	42,100	6,709	423	26	449	6·7	2,300	388	1	1	451
Bengal	16	17,700	9,144	303	197	500	5·4	1,800	848	11	6	517
Punjab	11	14,900	3,199	92	12	104	3·2	..	..	..	..	104
North-West Provinces and Oudh.	37	35,400	14,967	695	268	963	6·4	17,600	9,099	4	44	1,011
Central Provinces ..	16	49,500	6,036	405	70	475	9·7	..	..	..	..	475
Burma	3	3,900	381	23	1	24	6·3	..	..	..	..	24
Berar	3	6,000	819	19	1	20	2·3	1,700	202	1	..	21
Total for British India.	100	181,900	42,997	2,050	585	2,635	6·1	26,700	12,032	21	52	2,708
Native States ..	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	145
	114	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Grand total on relief, 2,853,000.		

The total numbers on relief had been as high as 3,216,000 during the week ending the 9th March, and they have again risen to 3,608,000 by the middle of May. Out of the earlier total, 1,654,000 were in the North-West Provinces and Oudh; afterwards the numbers on relief in those provinces fell by 650,000 in consequence of the demand for labourers at the spring harvest, and in consequence of the partial improvement of the situation caused by the ingathering of the spring crops. In the Central Provinces, Bengal, Bombay and Madras, the numbers on relief have advanced more or less steadily; and in these tracts the spring crops have not lessened the strain on the relief administration.

3. The result of the spring harvest over India is now approximately known. The rain from November to February has been unusually favourable to the spring crops. In the Punjab a good harvest has been realised or is expected over 85 per cent. of the usual wheat area; the spring grains form a much larger part of the food supply for the common people than in other provinces; the relief numbers have fallen; and any fear of famine for the greater part of the Punjab has practically passed away, though prices are still high, and some relief may continue to be needed until August next. In the North-West Provinces and Oudh a fair spring harvest has been obtained over two-thirds of the normal area devoted to that crop, with the result that prices have remained steady or have fallen; that the food supply has nowhere failed; and that the numbers receiving relief were, on the 16th April, 32 per cent. less than they were on the 5th March, though subsequent telegrams have shown that the numbers on relief had again risen to 1,316,000 by the middle of May. It appears to be uncertain how far into the autumn relief operations on a large scale may continue to be required. But it is quite clear that relief administration was begun in good time, and has been wisely and carefully conducted in those provinces. Even if relief should be required until October in the unfortunate districts of Bundelkund, there is ground for hoping that in the remainder of these provinces the people will be in good condition and good heart for returning quickly to their usual occupations, when the monsoon shall have favourably begun.

4. In Bengal the spring harvest has been satisfactory over South Behar; but the spring crops count for little in North Behar, where distress has been keenest. Prices have not fallen in Bengal despite the large importations of Burma rice. There is one feature in the Bengal relief administration, which may be susceptible of explanation, and that is the large amount of gratuitous relief. According to the telegram of the 12th April, Bengal had 293,048 relief-workers and 223,784 dependents and persons on gratuitous relief of different kinds. At the end of a famine, after out-door work is stopped by rains, the numbers on gratuitous relief may be expected to increase in comparison with the relief-workers. But the proportion of people relieved gratuitously, 43 per cent. in Bengal is high for the month of April, in the North-West Provinces the corresponding proportion was 41 per cent., in the Central Provinces 27 per cent., and in Bombay 26 per cent. It is possible that the difficulty of devising and superintending a sufficient number of village works has led to the Bengal and North-West Provinces placing very large numbers on gratuitous relief thus early in the season. It is manifestly right to run no risks by causing weakly people to travel considerable distances to large relief works. But you and your officers are doubtless fully alive to the undesirability of giving gratuitous relief on an excessive scale early in the season.

5. In the Central Provinces the spring harvests appear to have been poor and to have been reaped over a very reduced area only. Prices are very high, especially in some of the Satpura districts. And it appears that relief on a large scale will be required far into the autumn. In Bombay the numbers on relief have not advanced rapidly during the eight weeks ending on the 16th April; the spring harvests have been beneficial; and notwithstanding the aggravation caused by plague in the coast districts, the prospect is not so serious as was at one time feared. In Madras the numbers on relief have gone up recently, but the area of distress is limited, and good crops have been harvested in other parts of the presidency.

6. In regard to the results of the relief operations you were able to telegraph on the 12th April that the condition of the people in the affected tracts continued to be

generally good in Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Burma, and fair in the Punjab and Berar, while in all these six provinces the death-rate continued to be normal. In the North-West Provinces and Oudh the condition of the people is reported to be fair to good, though the death-rate is considerably above normal in the districts of Bundelkund and in some of the Oudh districts. Regarding the Central Provinces you report that in the wilder parts the poorer classes show signs of privation, some cases of emaciation still occur, and the mortality exceeds the normal rate. The latest complete statistics that have reached me are for the month of February, and in the undermentioned districts, the death-rate of 1897 is 50 per cent. or more above the normal rate for the month, thus—

Districts in which the death-rate of 1897 exceeds the normal death-rate by 50 per cent. or upwards.

Central Provinces (10 out of a total of 20 districts).			North-West Provinces and Oudh (17 out of 37 distressed and affected districts).		
—	February 1897.	Average, ten years.	—	February 1897.	Average, ten years.
Murwara Sub-division	16·5	2·5	Lalitpur	4·84	2·40
Balaghat	4·8	1·7	Banda	4·81	2·22
Saugor	4·9	2·7	Hamirpur	3·64	2·39
Damoh	4·3	2·5	Allahabad	3·48	1·93
Jubbulpore	6·9	2·1	Jhansi	4·16	2·42
Narsinghpur	4·0	2·3	Rae Bareilly	4·38	2·0
Mandla	7·1	2·0	Hardoi	4·00	1·66
Seoni	4·4	1·9	Gonda	3·20	1·90
Bhandara	2·6	1·7	Mirzapur	3·80	1·81
Bilaspur	3·9	1·7	Azimghar	2·75	1·48
			Lucknow	3·33	2·12
			Unao	3·31	1·81
			Budaon	3·19	1·86
			Shahjahanpur	3·00	1·90
			Basti	2·65	1·73
			Partabgarh	3·84	1·90
			Sultanpur	3·27	1·84

The death-rate in some parts of the Central Provinces was very high; I observe the monthly famine statement gives the "deaths due directly or indirectly to the effects of privation" in the whole of the Central Provinces as 4,885 during the month of January, while your telegram of the 16th April reports the January death-rate in six of the districts of those Provinces to have ranged between 5·3 and 6·9 per thousand and in one sub-division, whither immigrants flock from Native States, to have reached 10·6 per thousand; but even here, in spite of exceptional difficulties, I trust that relief operations are now, and have for some time been, adequate and effective.

7. It is satisfactory to find that food supplies are nearly everywhere sufficient, local deficiencies being met by private imports. During the three months, January to the middle of April, nearly 268,000 tons of Burma rice were imported, and a large further surplus of rice (estimated at one million tons) is still available there. Your decision to trust to private trade for supplying food to the country has so far been amply justified. I approve your decision to take steps to secure supplies of food for certain parts of the Central Provinces, where transport is difficult during the rainy season.

8. The contributions to the Mansion House Fund and other public funds raised for the succour of sufferers from the present famine in India, exclusive of gifts in kind, appear to have reached a total about 142 lakhs of rupees (887,000*l.*) by the middle of May; and the Central Relief Committee report that the local committees in the several provinces ask for grants aggregating 166 lakhs. Already 50 lakhs have been distributed to the provincial committees in British India and in Native States, who are devoting the money to supplying clothing and small comforts to sufferers and to giving doles to the respectable poor. Voluntary associations and workers are helping to husband these resources, to prevent abuses, and to make the money do as much good as possible. Arrangements are being made to distribute the remaining funds at the proper season so as to enable the poorer cultivators to buy seed-corn and cattle, and thus to recover their position. The splendid liberality, shown by the

United Kingdom, Canada and other British Colonies, and also by many charitable people in foreign countries, will be greatly appreciated in India; and I am confident that these funds, which have been contributed by all classes, will be administered as a sacred trust by all committees and individuals engaged in their distribution.

9. It was not to be expected that India could pass through a severe and far reaching famine without much suffering to her people and some loss of life; but I am satisfied that, on the whole, Your Excellency's Government and the many local authorities and local bodies engaged in the contest with famine, have been unquestionably successful, and I am glad to assure you that the arduous and self-sacrificing labours of those on whom this duty has fallen are fully appreciated in this country.

Order.—Ordered that the above despatch be communicated to all Local Governments and Administrations and to the Vice-Chairman and Honorary Secretary, Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund, for information, and that it be published in the supplement to the *Gazette of India*.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. HOLDERNESS,
Dy. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

To the Secretary to the Government of Madras.

Order—No. 516, Revenue, dated 1st July 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

(True Extract.)

for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).
„ the Public Works Department.
„ the Financial Department.
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Honorary Secretaries, Famine Charitable Relief Fund.

Exd. Shaik Karim.

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