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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 680	Press Mis.
674-75	
Dated 28 2 1868.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department.
28th February 1868.

No. 674. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Revenue Department, dated 18th February 1868, No. 459.

Read the following papers :—

From the President of the Famine Relief Committee, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 26th September 1867.

1. With reference to the Proceedings of Government, under date 5th September 1866, requesting the Famine Relief Committee to submit periodical reports of their operations for the information of the Secretary of State for India, I have the honor, by desire of the Committee, to present to Government the accompanying Memorandum prepared by the Honorary Secretary.

2. The Committee are glad of this opportunity of recording how greatly they are indebted to Mr. Dalrymple for the untiring energy, patience, and tact with which he has, in addition to his important official duties, aided them as Honorary Secretary from the beginning of their work until the present time, when any further labor on their part is happily unnecessary.

3. In Part I. of this Memorandum, the Honorary Secretary has brought together, for the purpose of comparison, a narrative of previous famines which have occurred during a period of more than a century in this Presidency. In Part II. he gives much information on the general condition of the people, and some interesting speculations upon the food supply of the Presidency. Part III. contains the history of the great agricultural distress which prevailed in this Presidency during 1866, culminating for a short period in actual famine in Ganjam, and the measures of relief which were taken, as well by the State, as by private individuals, whose charities were under the control and direction of the Famine Committee at Madras.

4. From paragraph 133, Part III. of the Memorandum, it will be observed that the total amount of private subscriptions was Rupees 2,72,932-13-5, and the contributions of the State to the Relief Fund are estimated to have been Rupees 2,94,347-4-11. In addition to this, contributions were received from the Court of Wards, the North-West Provinces Relief Fund, and the Lungherkhana Funds of the North Arcot District, raising the total amount available for the support of the poor who were unable to labor to Rupees 6,18,407-5-1.

5. It may be as well to mention here that much private charity was exercised in all places where distress prevailed, of which the Committee can give no exact detailed account, but which simultaneously with, and independently of the Committee, was of great importance in relieving the poor especially in towns to which they resorted. It will be observed from the statement at paragraph 134, that there is a considerable balance of funds unexpended. At their last meeting the Committee resolved that this surplus should be devoted to assisting charitable institutions in this and the Bengal Presidency, which may have been called into existence by the destitution arising out of the past year of scarcity, such as the orphanages of Orissa, Ganjam, Bellary, and Madura.

6. The action of the Famine Committee was strictly directed to the relief of the *helpless* poor; public labor, initiated and organized by the State being provided

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department
23rd February 1868.

so that the *able-bodied* poor might tide over the period of distress caused by the failure of the season. This failure interrupting for some months a large portion of the usual field labor, threw out of employment almost the whole class of hired agricultural laborers, and had also a disastrous effect upon the petty shopkeepers and others who depended mainly on the poorer classes for their gains. About seven lac of Rupees are estimated to have been spent by the Government in special works devised for the employment of unskilled labor, while the Department of Public Works were instructed to aid, as far as possible, in the employment on sanctioned works of such of the poor as were not engaged on special famine works.

7. The Committee desire to express their regret that, from want of information, public feeling was not roused to the necessity of exertion earlier in 1866, and that their own labors did not commence before the month of August of that year, although it is now certain that severe distress prevailed from the beginning of the year. They are, however, able to affirm that owing to the liberality with which their calls for assistance were answered, and the energetic action of the Government, substantial aid was afforded after the month of August 1866, about which period the distress was at its height, and much loss of life and suffering was, they rejoice to think, prevented. The detailed history of the distress which prevailed in this Presidency, and the means taken for its relief, are contained in Part III. of Mr. Dalrymple's Memorandum, to which the Committee most respectfully beg the attention of Government.

8. The Committee are aware that the subjects of periodical famines, their prevention and mitigation, are under the consideration of those far more competent than they are to advise on one of the most difficult problems of administrative science. They venture, however, at the termination of their duties, respectfully to suggest to Government, measures which from the inquiries made in connection with their labors, appear to them peculiarly suitable and necessary in this Presidency for the prevention of the periodical famines which have hitherto occurred.

9. The means of prevention are specially noticed in the fourth part of the Memorandum, and are—

1st.—The completion of the means of communication between districts, a matter of essential importance when periodical scarcity, as is usually the case in this Presidency, is confined to particular districts.

2nd.—The projection and construction of important works of irrigation, and the provision by State loans of the necessary funds for these works.

3rd.—The maintenance of existing works of irrigation in a state of efficiency. The funds allotted for this purpose have in late years fluctuated in amount, and are still inadequate, and the proposal that a fixed per-centage of the revenue derived from irrigated land, should be specially allotted to the maintenance of these works, seems worthy of serious consideration.

10. The Committee would also urge upon Government that the several works suggested by the officers in charge of some of the distressed districts, as detailed in paragraphs 146 to 150 of the Memorandum, Part IV., should at once be undertaken. It is also of the utmost importance that, in the event of a general failure of the periodical rains, when the works of irrigation in this Presidency become inoperative, the Government should be prepared to meet the disastrous contingency, and that no time should be lost in the organization of measures of relief.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
23rd February 1868.

11. The Committee most respectfully call attention to the suggestions which, in anticipation of the approaching famine, were made in 1865 by Sir Arthur Cotton (*vide* paragraph 155 of Memorandum), and which had they been adopted then, as they were later, would have averted much of the disastrous loss of life which has taken place in Orissa especially, and in a lesser degree in parts of this Presidency.

12. To save valuable time, when there are signs that scarcity of a severe character is to be expected, the Committee would draw special attention to the suggestion, *vide* paragraph 174, that in every district plans of works suitable to the employment of large numbers of unskilled laborers should be prepared beforehand, and sanctioned by the Government, so that on the occurrence of the necessity for such works, no delay should be caused by uncertainty as to the best means of applying labor.

Minute by the Honorable H. D. PHILLIPS.

(Here enter ———)

Do. do. A. J. ARBUTHNOT.

(Here enter 14th January 1868.)

Do. by His Excellency the President.

(Here enter 29th January 1868.)

Miscellaneous.

1. The Government deferred disposing of this final Report from the Famine Relief Committee nominated at

the public meeting held in July 1866, because the extraordinary failure of the north-east monsoon at the close of 1867 afforded reason to apprehend that the Committee's labors had not yet concluded, and that the funds remaining at their disposal might still have to be devoted to the relief of distress by alms-giving.

2. Happily the recent welcome fall of rain, and the more cheering reports received from the suffering districts, now warrant the expectation that such aid will not be required, or at least not on such a scale as to require the services of the Committee, to whose gratuitous labors the country was so much indebted in 1866-67.

3. Their report will now accordingly be forwarded for the information of the Secretary of State, and the Government request that the gentlemen of the Committee, and especially Mr. R. A. Dalrymple, their Honorary Secretary, whose zealous labors they so highly estimate, will accept the best thanks of Government for their valuable and willing services, given, as the Government are well aware must have been the case, at very considerable personal inconvenience by gentlemen the great majority of whom were already fully occupied with other business.

4. Now that their voluntarily assumed task is completed, they have the satisfaction of knowing that their systematic administration of the Charity Fund placed at their disposal ensured the largest amount of benefit from its expenditure, and the most effective alleviation of wide-spread distress.

5. Their suggestions on the subject of the prevention of such disasters as that from which the country recently emerged, will receive all consideration at the hands of Government.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
23th February 1868.*

6. They are doubtless aware that of the special works recommended to them by the District Officers, as reported in paragraph 146, *et seq.*, of their Secretary's Memorandum, many are already in hand. The preliminary investigations are being made for the Upper Bellary project, for the Periyar project in Madura, and for the Neringipett Anicut restoration project in Salem. The estimates for the extension of the Pennair irrigation system in Nellore are before the Government of India.

7. Those for the Cheyar Anicut, in North Arcot, are under consideration, with reference to its probable effect on existing works on the same river.

8. The attention of Government is constantly directed to the general improvement of the irrigation system of the country, and the recent inauguration of a system of loan works will, it may be hoped, tend to release funds for the purpose.

9. The extension of the Coast Canal northward from Dugarazapatam has recently been again started. The Railway works are being pushed forward rapidly. The estimated expenditure for 1868-69 on district roads is about twenty-five lacs of Rupees.

10. Thus it may be hoped that progress is being made in the direction indicated by the Committee, and that when next a disastrous season occurs, the country may be in a better position to meet it than it was in the last occasion.

(Signed) R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

No. 675. ORDER THEREON, 28th February 1868, No. 680.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 55.

Communicated to the Superintending Engineers.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineers.

Capt. Henry

Krd. S. T. Augustin.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th February 1868.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 376. From the President of the Famine Relief Committee, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 26th September 1867.

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No. 377. Minute by the Honorable H. D. PHILLIPS.

(Here enter ———)

No. 378. Do. do. A. J. ARBUTHNOT.

(Here enter 14th January 1868.)

No. 379. Do. by His Excellency the President.

(Here enter 29th January 1868.)

No. 380. *Order* 18th February 1868, No. 459.

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(True Extract.)

P. S. M. S.
Chief Secretary.

To the President of the Famine Relief Committee,
.. the Board of Revenue.
.. the Public Works Department.

Exd S. T. Augustin.

W. B. B. D. 1860
Pro: of Ex: for February

Pro: of the Madras Com:
Revenue Dept

Ex: 10. February 1860
Ex: 20. February 1860

No 459

Paying orders on the
final Report of the Family
Relief Committee.

No 180-28 February 1860

With an Order

No 674 & 675