GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following letter from C. S. BAYLEY, Esq., C.S., Officiating Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department (Famine), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Simla, 21st May 1885, Circular No. 71-F.—1-6 :—

I am directed to enclose, for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council, a copy of correspondence which has taken place between the Government of Bombay, the Government of India, and Her Majesty's Secretary of State, in connection with certain points of famine administration which have been under consideration in connection with the compilation of a draft Famine Code for Bombay.

(1) From the Government of Bombay, to the Government of India, No. 39, dated 4th January 1884 (Bombay Famine Code, Chapter III, Sections A and B).
(2) From the Government of India, to the Government of Bombay, No. 64-F., dated 12th June 1884.
(3) From the Government of Bombay, to the Government of India, No. 7715, dated 27th September 1884, and enclosure.
(4) From the Government of India, to the Secretary of State, No. 3, dated 9th December 1884.
(5) From the Secretary of State, to the Government of India, No. 27, Revenue, dated 12th March 1885.

2. With reference to this correspondence, I am to invite special attention to paragraph 145 of the Report of the Famine Commission, Part I, on the subject of relief houses. The question whether the poor residents of villages who are unable to perform even light labor by reason of age, sickness, or other infirmities should be relieved in time of famine in their own villages, or should be compelled to enter and receive relief in a poor-house, which has been the subject of considerable discussion and much difference, has now been settled finally by Her Majesty's Secretary of State, who has concurred in the views held by the Government of India. Attention is also called to the great importance, pointed out in the 6th paragraph of the Secretary of State's despatch, of sufficient elasticity in the rules of a Famine Code to admit of their application to the very varying conditions in which the problem of famine relief presents itself. It is desirable, therefore, that when the regulations of a Famine Code already sanctioned are brought into action, a careful watch should be kept over the working of them, and that a modification of any rules which may be found too stringent should be suggested at as early a date as possible to the Government of India.

ORDER—dated 23rd June 1885, No. 763, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue.

2. The Government observe that the provisions of the Madras Famine Code are in complete accordance with the views of the Government of India and the Secretary of State in the matter of relief in villages and poor-houses.

3. The attention of all Collectors will be drawn to the closing words of paragraph 2 of the Government of India's letter and to paragraph 6 of the Secretary of State's despatch.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. WILSON,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Financial Department.

No. 763A.

Copy to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

(Signed) W. WILSON,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

Exd. W. H. French.

120 Copies.

Govt. of {1885} Madras.

REVENUE

Issued

Recd. *Encl.*

G.O., 23rd June 1885, Nos. 763, 763A.

JUNE.

Bombay Famine Code.

Letter from the Government of India forwarding copy of correspondence regarding the —, communicated to the Board of Revenue, with remarks.

No. 39, dated Bombay Castle, 4th January 1884.

From—J. MONTEATH, Esq., C.S., Acting Under-Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Revenue Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

As desired by the Government of India in paragraph 30 of their Resolution No. 44F., dated 9th June 1883, and with reference to paragraph 6 of my letter No. 5043, dated 6th July following, I am directed to forward herewith, for submission to the Government of India, copy of a report, with its acompanying draft of a Famine Code, received from the Committee appointed under the orders of this Government for the preparation of a Provincial Famine Code, and also a copy of the Code as revised and finally approved by this Government.

2. The revised Code has purposely been made brief as being so more easily intelligible and adapted for practical use, and in the portions where it touches on the functions of the Director of Agriculture, on improvements in the Subordinate Revenue Establishments, such as village accountants and the inspecting officers immediately above them, on the class of supplementary works indicated in paragraphs 21-23 of the Resolution of the Government of India above quoted, and on the co-operation of local bodies, the occasions when these will come in have, for the sake of conciseness, been simply indicated in the Code as a preferable course to an amplification on these points which might cause confusion in the minds of the subordinate officials who will have to study the Code in the vernaculars. This course has more especially commended itself on the ground that some of these subjects are novel and the measures in connection with them have not yet been fully matured.

3. It will be observed that the alterations in the Committee's draft Code which His Excellency in Council has thought it desirable to make are not many, and do not affect the main principles recommended by experience in this presidency, which are that employment on professional agency works should be the chief instrument of relief to the working population, and that civil agency works should be subsidiary and for special times and objects only; that gratuitous relief in villages should be kept within narrow limits; and that helpless people who can be collected in poor-houses without inhumanity should be brought there for relief.

4. In modification of the Committee's plan, His Excellency in Council has thought it advisable to collect the sections describing the action of Government—such as the Committee's sections 3, 6, 7—in a first part of the Code preceding that headed "Civil Officers," and to make some additions to complete the exposition of the administrative scheme for famine.

5. In the letter of this Government, No. 3234, dated 6th June 1881, His Excellency in Council has already expressed to the Government of India an opinion in favour of the appointment of a special Famine Commissioner in certain circumstances, and provision for such an appointment, which was omitted by the Committee, has been added to the revised Code. In the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the circumstances which would require such an appointment would be exceptional, but they are possible and should be kept in view. The remarks of the Committee in paragraph 5 of their report are entitled to weight, but the evils suggested need not necessary arise. It is most improbable that a Famine Commissioner would be selected by the Governor in Council who should be deficient in local knowledge.

6. His Excellency in Council believes that the latter portion of Section 37 of the Committee's Code, from which Mr. Macpherson dissents, is taken generally from the report of the Famine Commission. There is, however, some reason to believe that the relaxation of the rule of non-interference with trade should be defined with even greater caution than is observed in the section as framed by the Committee, and the draft has been somewhat modified to that end.

7. In Chapter III, "Gratuitous Relief," the Committee differs somewhat from the Famine Commission, by reducing to the narrowest dimensions the

s who may continue to receive relief in their villages. The view of the mittee is, in short, that none should be left in their homes who can be ved to poor-houses. His Excellency in Council concurs in the conclusion, h is the result of experience in the late famine, that distressed people t to be transferred from their villages to poor-houses as a rule, but would e an exception in cases where this could only be done at the sacrifice of anity. It will not be difficult for the district medical officer or special f officer to discriminate such cases, and no better limit can be devised. le the Governor in Council would give the poor-house ration to the per- whose names are entered on the list of those entitled to village relief, he is pinion that no relief at all should be given in villages to those who ought o to poor-houses, but refuse to do so. If a dole not quite sufficient to pro- life is given in order that it may compel the recipients to leave the vil- s, His Excellency in Council fears, with the Sanitary Commissioner, that opposite effect would be produced, and that the recipients would be tempt- y the dole to linger on at home with daily decreasing strength. It appears er to give them nothing beyond what is needful to support them until they reach a work or poor-house. The Committee proposes the dole as an rnative of taking power by law to clear the villages, and His Excellency Council fully admits that distressed persons not admitted to the village- must be removed by authority which it is very desirable to legalize. But he absence of special legislation His Excellency in Council believes that hority will be best assisted by absolutely refusing relief in villages to those ought to seek it elsewhere.

His Excellency in Council adheres to the opinion already expressed by Government that, as recommended by the Famine Commission, special islation is necessary (1) to enforce the performance of their duty by village cers; and (2) to empower the officers of Government to apply reasonable rcion to the distressed people. I am to invite the attention of the Govern- nt of India to the remarks on this subject contained in the concluding agraph of the letter of this Government, dated 6th June 1881, above quoted, l in again urging the same view, to suggest that, if it is thought objectionable add such an enactment to the statute-book at present, a draft Bill may be epared and approved, to be kept ready to pass into law on the next occasion which it may be required.

9. In the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council the princi- ple adopted by the Committee in Section 124 of their Code for regulating the signment of the various scales of wage is sound. With regard to the amount wage, I am to observe that the maximum wage is below the Madras rate; d as compared with the Famine Commission's estimate of 1½ lbs. of flour as e consumption of an able-bodied man, inasmuch as the Committee gives the antities in grain and not flour, it properly allows a little more to cover wast- ge. Mr. Elliot's Code gives as the maximum wage the value of 1½ lbs. of our *plus* ½ anna. The Bombay Committee proposes to give the value of 1½ lbs. f grain *plus* the value of ¾ of a pound to allow for fluctuations in the cost of e nitrogenous grain (dal), which is also a necessary element in the diet, nd of vegetables. This seems to His Excellency the Governor in Council to e a fair arrangement.

Section 135 of revised Code.

10. As stated in my letter No. 6340, dated 27th August 1883, paragraph 6, the members of the Committee were also requested to consider the question f suspensions and remissions of land revenue in times of scarcity, and the esult of their deliberations on the subject has been embodied in Chapter VI f the draft Code. His Excellency the Governor in Council has, however, con- idered it advisable to draft some new and fuller sections for the guidance of fficers in the matter which will be found under Chapter VI (*a*) of the Code as inally approved.

11. I am to add that the approval of the Government of India will be awaited before the Code is translated into the vernaculars and published for general information and guidance.

G C, B. Press, Simla.—No. 153 R. & A. D.—21-5-85.—700.

No. 64F., dated Simla, 12th June 1884.

From—E. C. Buck, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bombay Revenue Department.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt, under cover of Mr. Monteath's letter No. 39, dated 4th January 1884, of the report and draft submitted by the Committee appointed to prepare a Provincial Famine Code, and of copies of the Code as revised by the Government of Bombay.

2. His Excellency the Governor General in Council has given the Code his careful consideration, and congratulates the Government of Bombay on the excellent results obtained by the Committee, whose draft is clear, concise, and well arranged.

3. In one important respect, however, His Excellency has to observe that the general principles indicated in the Resolution of the 9th June 1883, No. 44, Revenue and Agriculture, have in framing the Bombay Code not been accepted, and that the rules for the administration of village relief are based on a policy differing from that which has commended itself to the Government of India, the Famine Commission, and the Secretary of State. The Committee strongly deprecate any system of famine relief which will in any way tend to keep the people in their villages and necessitate their being fed there by the State. They consider that such a system would lead to peculation and increased mortality; that it would demoralize the people, and render worse than useless other more important and general measures of relief. Holding these views, they have so framed the proposed rules as to practically abolish village relief by limiting it to such period as may be necessary to arrange for the transfer of the recipients to the poor-house. With the object of compelling distressed villagers to seek the relief works or poor-houses, the Committee have further proposed a special dole for village relief below the scale of the poor-house rations. They consider, however, that it would be better to give district officers legal power to clear villages of all persons who should be sent to poor-houses or relief-works. His Excellency the Governor of Bombay in Council, while concurring with the Committee that gratuitous relief should be confined, as far as possible, to poor-houses, has made an exception in the case of those persons who cannot be removed from their homes "without inhumanity." His Excellency has also decided that the village dole should be same as the poor-house ration; and that, in the absence of the legal powers referred to by the Committee, it will better effect that object in view if all relief in villages is absolutely refused to those who ought to seek it in the poor-house or on relief-works, as otherwise the recipients might be tempted by the dole to linger on in their village with daily decreasing strength.

4. Briefly stated, the difference between the principle adopted by the Government of Bombay and that recommended by the Famine Commission is that, while the Government of Bombay would make poor-house relief for persons incapable of labour the rule and village relief the exception, the Famine Commission make the latter the rule and confine poor-house relief to vagrants and beggars.

The question at issue is one on which opinions have throughout differed not a little; but the conclusions at which the Famine Commission arrived were based on a very wide survey of the subject, and have been accepted by the Government of India and by the Secretary of State. The attention of the Government of Bombay is invited to paragraphs 140 to 146 of the Report of the Famine Commission, which deal with the subject of poor-house and village relief. The proper object of the poor-house is stated in paragraph 141 to be the reception "of such persons as have separated themselves from their homes and villages, aimless wanderers, habitual beggars, or debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers and require to be fed up or to receive medical attendance in order to regain strength and return to work." Again, in paragraph 145, relief-houses are described as "intended for the

reception of persons who have no homes or have cut themselves off from their homes and are unfit for employment on relief-works, and for professional beggars who cannot be made to work." The Famine Commission were not insensible to the dangers and abuses likely to arise from village relief, or to the greater economy of poor-houses. But, after summing up all these considerations most carefully, they state (paragraph 140) that "there is no doubt left in our minds that the village system should in the present condition of India be preferred for general adoption, insomuch as while this system may involve the risk of a too free grant of relief, the poor-house system involves the more serious risk of insufficient relief." They also mention, as partly influencing their decision, that "there is a great accumulation of evidence to the effect that the feeling of the people towards relief administered in the form is in most parts of India one of extreme repulsion"; and they record their opinion in another place that an efficient system of village relief will tend to prevent that "wandering of the poor which leads to the dissolution of the village communities, and is one of the principal causes of famine mortality." This opinion was concurred in by the Government of India in its despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 14th March 1881, and received the assent of Lord Kimberley in his despatch of 22nd February 1883.

6. The Government of India is persuaded that the system laid down in its provisional Famine Code on the lines of the recommendations made by the Famine Commission will, in practice, be found to be attended with fewer evil results than the course advocated by the Bombay Committee. If in the one case there is a risk of allowing persons capable of labour to be relieved at home, there seems to be in the proposed plan of clearing the villages by sending people to the poor-houses and drafting from the poor-houses to relief-works the double danger of, first, not relieving a great many persons who have no means of support; and secondly, of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor who ought to go to the relief-works. It seems probable that no measure short of direct legislation would succeed in compelling the people to resort to the poor-houses, and the Government of India has strong objections to any legislation which would authorize the compulsory transfer of large bodies of people from their homes to a poor-house. Compulsion of this nature is likely to increase the disfavour with which poor-houses are already regarded, and might, as in the Mysore famine,* be productive of panic and increased disorganization. The Committee anticipate that village relief would involve increased mortality, but they appear to have overlooked the great liability to epidemic outbreaks which attaches to poor-houses. This danger is considered by the sanitary authorities to be as one of great and vital importance.

* Mysore Famine Report, by E. C. Elliott, Esq., paragraph 53.

7. In desiring that the question should be reconsidered by the Government of Bombay, the Government of India is anxious that its views in regard to village relief should not be misunderstood. It entirely agrees with the Famine Commission as to the necessity of exacting labour from every person capable of doing any work at all, and of exercising great caution in admitting persons to the gratuitous relief list. It also considers that the enquiry into each case should be as rigorous as possible; that gratuitous relief should be refused to any person capable of any kind of labour; and that as laid down by the Famine Commissioners, "claimants for relief whose real need is doubtful" should be referred to the poor-house. Subject to these safeguards, His Excellency the Governor General in Council thinks that village relief will be found to be capable of being worked without the inordinate expenditure and demoralization which the Bombay Committee justly deprecate.

8. In paragraph 8 of the letter under acknowledgment, it is proposed to prepare a draft Bill to be passed into law when occasion requires for the purpose (1) of enforcing the performance of their duty by village officers; and (2) empowering the officers of Government to apply reasonable coercion to the distressed people. On this point I am directed to state that if the Government of Bombay should be willing on reconsideration to restrict poor-house relief in the manner above proposed, His Excellency the Governor General in Council would have no objection as a measure of precaution to the preparation of

a draft Act, but the expediency of passing such a draft into law would still have to be considered with reference to the circumstances of the time and the severity of the famine to which it might be deemed proper to apply it. The Famine Commission recommend that the power to confine distressed people in a poor-house should be limited to those who have cut themselves off from home, and who are either wandering along roads or begging in towns; and any legislation which the Government of Bombay may undertake with the view of conferring legal authority in this respect on the officers in charge of poor-houses should, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, be confined to these limits. Nor will the Government of India object to the duties and powers of village officers in time of famine being defined by law, provided that among these duties is not that of compelling the incapable poor to leave their villages with a view to being detained in a poor-house.

9. In regard to the scale of wages and the system adopted for regulating it, I am desired to say that the Government approves of the principle followed by the Bombay Committee in making the entire wage vary with the price of food. The scale of poor-house rations appears sufficient, considering the class of people who will receive it. The adequacy of the scale, however, should be tested from time to time.

10. Referring to section 29, I am to suggest the insertion of the words "if possible" in the second clause, as it may not always be feasible to contrive a relief work fulfilling the several conditions laid down.

Govt. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158, R. & A. D.—21-5-87.—700.

No. 7715, dated Bombay Castle, 27th September 1884.

From—W. P. Symonds, Esq., C.S., Acting Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bombay,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Dept.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 64F., dated 12th June 1884, communicating the observations of His Excellency the Viceroy in Council on the draft Famine Code for the Bombay Presidency submitted with the letter from this Government, No. 39, dated 5th January last. As the Government of India differed from this Government on a very important point, His Excellency the Governor in Council considered it desirable to refer the letter for consideration to the members of the Committee appointed in 1883 under the orders of this Government to draft a Provincial Famine Code. It was requested that if the Committee were unable to modify the views expressed in paragraph 16 of their previous report, copies of which were forwarded to the Government of India with the letter of this Government above quoted, facts might be supplied—

(i) showing the dimensions likely to be reached by village relief on the plan preferred by the Government of India; and

(ii) illustrating the working of the Bombay system in 1876-78, the amount of suffering and mortality in the poor-houses, and the feeling with which the village people regarded residence in poor-houses.

2. The further report of the Committee has now been received, and I am to say that on consideration of the important part taken by a majority of the gentlemen who formed the Committee in the measures for the relief of famine in this Presidency in 1876-77, the Governor in Council feels it to be his duty to submit the letter in which they support their views on the subject of poor-houses and village relief with the opinion of this Government that their arguments are of much weight and force.

3. His Excellency the Governor in Council does not contest the conclusion of the Famine Commission on a review of the history of poor-houses and village relief in all parts of India that the village system is generally preferable. I am however to submit that the Famine Commissioners arrived at this conclusion after balancing the objections to either system and did not fail to point out that in all past famines certain disadvantages have attached to each of them. I am also to point out that the facts on which the poor-house system was condemned were not drawn from experience in Bombay. If it can be shown that in any province the poor-house system can be worked without risk of the relief afforded being insufficient, while the condition of efficient village inspection, on which the Famine Commission insists, is from local circumstances comparatively difficult of attainment, it may be held that a case has been established for an exception to the general rule. The case submitted by the Bombay Committee in their present report is that in a sparsely inhabited tract such as is the famine tract of the Deccan and Southern Maharáta Country efficient village inspection and medical relief can be supplied only with an establishment and at a cost which is out of proportion to the population to be succoured, whereas the incapable people whom it is proposed to collect in poor-houses under medical supervision and good sanitation, and with wholesome and sufficient food, are not very numerous. The repulsion to residence in poor-houses which was remarked in other provinces is stated by the Sanitary Commissioner and other officers of personal experience to have been absent in Bombay and the feeling with which the poor-house is regarded by the incapable poor will doubtless depend on the care and humanity with which these institutions are organized. The Committee points out with much force that the class of persons who are to be relieved either in the village or in the poor-house is not the whole body of distressed people, but only those who are incapable of work; and that as thorough control is far more practicable in the poor-house than in the village, it is much more likely that the able-bodied poor who ought to go to the relief-works will elude detection in the village than in the poor-house. It also seems indisputable that with the power of selecting a site and of maintaining efficient sanitation and supplying wholesome food and with medical aid

constantly available on the spot, the danger of epidemic outbreaks must be less in poor-houses than in villages "without water, half-deserted, and replete with decay and neglect." It would seem probable that if the population to be dealt with is not too large for centralized management, if the poor-houses are sufficiently numerous and are organized with forethought and humanity it is more practicable to remove the grounds of repulsion to poor-houses by provision for the comfort and self-respect of the inmates, than to remedy the objections which lie against the alternative plan of village relief and which the Committee declare to be insuperable. It must also be admitted as a fact of past famine history that the mismanagement of village relief has been attended with more disastrous results than any due to the mismanagement of poor-houses.

4. I am to add that in the instance quoted in your letter under reply from the Mysore famine, the panics, wandering and distress of the starving people were due to quite exceptional want of plan, foresight and discipline, whereas the object of preparing a Famine Code is that a distinct and complete plan may be laid down and perfect organization secured from the beginning. Confusion and irresolution in the authorities must in famine always lead to disaster whatever system is adopted.

5. His Excellency the Governor in Council desires to invite the attention of the Government of India to the greatly increased facilities which the great extension of the railway system and the improvement of roads will give to the due regulation and inspection of poor-houses. In the last famine, travelling in the Deccan was in a primitive condition. After two years more there will not be a place in the districts hitherto liable to famine which will be more than fifty miles from a railway station, while roads in every direction will render it comparatively easy for officers to supervise the measures undertaken for the relief of the distressed in convenient centres. On the other hand the supervision of village relief must always present immense difficulties.

6. As regards special legislation in connection with poor-houses, I am to say that if the views of the Committee are on reconsideration accepted by the Government of India, it is obviously desirable that legal authority should be given to responsible officers to transfer to poor-houses those whom it is thought best to lodge in them. It must be borne in mind that all the vigorous and healthy villagers with their wives and children will have left the villages for employment on works, and that the incapable poor who are left, in the confusion of mind caused by their unwonted circumstances, will hardly be in a condition to exercise their volition healthily, and that this fact is a justification for using a benevolent coercion to secure their safety. If it is unobjectionable to restrain aimless wanderers, it seems equally so to allow no option as to the place and method of their maintenance to the decrepid and feeble in mind and body whose support devolves wholly on the local officials. On these considerations His Excellency the Governor in Council would deprecate the condition imposed by the Government of India on special legislation that either poor-house relief should be restricted or that legislation to compel the incapable poor to leave their villages with a view to being detained in a poor-house should be excluded.

Report by the Members of the Famine Code Committee, dated Poona, 5th September 1884.

We have the honour to report, in accordance with the orders contained in Government Resolution No. 5115 of the 25th June 1884, that we have met in Committee and discussed the objections raised by the Government of India to certain principles connected with the administration of gratuitous relief embodied in the Bombay Draft Famine Relief Code.

2. The question at issue is the suitability of the poor-house system for general adoption in this Presidency in preference to the village-relief organization which the Famine Commission approved of for general adoption in India.

3. The Famine Commission sought to combine the two systems, and so far we are thoroughly in accord with their recommendation. But the conditions

of our Presidency and the experience gained in the Famine of 1876—1878 have led us to reduce village-relief to the narrowest limits compatible with safety and therefore to enlarge the functions of poor-houses.

4. The grounds on which this extension of poor-houses did not find favour with the Famine Commission were :—

(*a*) that the poor-house system involves a risk of insufficient relief—a risk more serious than that arising from the village-relief system,—Section 140;

(*b*) that there is in *most parts* of India a feeling of "extreme repulsion" towards poor-houses,—Section 140;

(*c*) that by taking away the inducement to wander, village-relief prevents wandering, and hence demoralization,—Section 146.

To these the Government of India adds :—

(*d*) the danger of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor, who ought to go to the relief works;

(*e*) its strong objection to any legislation which would authorize the transfer of large bodies of people from their homes to poor-houses;

(*f*) the great liability to epidemic outbreak which attaches to poor-houses.

5. We think that these various objections can easily be met, and we proceed to deal with them *seriatim* :—

(*a*) Insufficiency of relief on the poor-house system.

We hold a very decided opinion that the risk referred to would be far greater in the villages than in the poor-houses. In support of this view we would adduce the following facts which are known to us.

1st.—It cannot be denied that in famine it is a characteristic of native officials to make relief as general as possible. They will dole out a ration for 50 people to double that number, rather than weed out the undeserving.

2nd.—Village headmen rather than put a whole family on the register would on their own responsibility be almost certain to admit half and tell the whole to make the best of what the State in its liberality had provided for them.

3rd.—Nothing is more common than for the able-bodied to try to eke out a subsistence from the dole given only to those whom they can put forward as "deserving as far as outward signs go." Village inspection cannot be made so efficient as to prevent these abuses; and what is the natural result? The dole-fed paupers receive insufficient relief and fall off from bad to worse.

4th.—No proper check, moreover, can be kept on the quality of the food dispensed. Innutritious food is as bad as insufficient food. On the other hand we know by experience that the food in poor-houses is sufficient in quantity and good in quality and that it can be distributed under proper and trustworthy supervision.

6. (*b.*) Extreme repulsion against residence in poor-houses.

The reception of cooked food by such persons as would be the recipients of gratuitous relief in this Presidency is not repulsive. It is freely taken on works by the children of relief-labourers. We have no classes so difficult to deal with as were met with in the Bengal Famine and, we believe, in the North-West Provinces. If in very rare cases in a poor-house a genuine caste objection to taking the food is encountered, it will be within the discretionary power of the medical officer in charge to have the food specially prepared by a Bráhman or else by the objector himself if he has the strength to cook it. In the Bengal Famine the recipients of cooked food were put out of caste.

That was not the case in Bombay. On the contrary, men now in good repute among their caste-fellows freely admit that in the Famine they went to the poor-houses.

7. (*c.*) Village-relief prevents wandering.

In Section 141 of the Famine Commission Report village-relief is declared impracticable as the rule, unless two safeguards can be counted upon—

(1) that those who can work should be made to work;

(2) that an efficient system of village inspection be devised.

As regards the former condition, we consider that legislation to authorize (*a*) the removal to and detention at works of all persons receiving relief who are or become capable of work, and (*b*) the removal to and detention at the poor-house of those incapable of work who may without hardship be taken from their homes is not only absolutely and imperatively necessary, but if prudently applied at the early stages of Famine would reduce the need for charitable relief in this Presidency to very small dimensions.

As regards the possibility of devising an efficient system of village inspection, we candidly admit that it is beyond our powers. The village organization is feeble and cannot bear a greater strain on it than we have put. Our villages, especially in tracts most liable to Famine, are distant one from the other and our population sparse (*vide* table under clause *f*). Under these conditions we think that aimless wandering cannot be checked by means of the village system of relief without the certainty of a widespread pauperization of the labouring class.

8. (*d.*) Danger of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor who ought to go to the relief works.

We cannot but express some surprise that this objection should have been formulated. We need only call attention to paragraph 103 and clause 5 of paragraph 50 of our Code. It is not our experience that the majority of those admitted to the poor-house in reduced condition desire to remain there when fit for work; most prefer the greater liberty and more familiar life of the works.

9. (*e.*) The inadvisability of compulsory transfer of large bodies of people from their homes to poor-houses.

We desire respectfully to join issue on this point. It is laid down that all aimless wanderers should be compelled to go to the poor-houses. If it is further laid down that gratuitous relief is intended only for those who cannot work, we have only to deal with the small residuum of incapable poor who still cling to their villages.

These are either—

(1) the physically incapable, or

(2) those incapacitated through domestic or social causes, *e. g.*, pardanishin women and the like,—Sections 96-100

For these latter full provision has admittedly been made. The former comprise the temporarily and the permanently incapable. We have made provision for all cases in both these classes where transfer to a poor-house cannot be made without inhumanity. We go further and admit an exception where such transfer cannot conveniently be made. But for the temporarily unfit the care and medical attendance of the poor-house is especially desirable and we hold that of the permanently incapable some will be found who may with advantage to themselves be removed to poor-houses.

With these provisions we cannot admit that our scheme would involve any such thing as the transfer of large bodies of people to poor-houses.

10. (*f*) Liability to outbreak of epidemics in poor-houses.

Our recommendations in this connection are based on the results of considerable experience. In our Committee are many officers who were employed in the worst Famine districts, including the Sanitary Commissioner, and our unanimous testimony is that the heavy mortality which took place, was principally caused by the absence of powers to compel attendance at works or relief

centres. Whenever the needy were got to poor-houses and relief—camps their health, as a general rule, commenced to improve. An epidemic of cholera and small-pox prevailed extensively throughout the districts, whilst there was never any serious outbreak of epidemic disease in the poor-houses. We are confident that should in a future Famine epidemic disease appear in the poor-houses, it would be more successfully combated there than is possible in villages.

We contend that poor-houses such as our Code contemplates are not insanitary. But on the contrary, if compared with villages in time of Famine without water, half deserted, replete with decay and neglect, they afford incalculably greater protection against disease.

We say nothing in favour of open feeding houses, such as were at first established in Mysore, where all comers crowded twice a day for a meal, and shifted for themselves in the intervals and at night, where the strong often obtained the relief which was intended for the weak, where medical care was an almost impossibility. The poor-houses which our Code insists upon partake more of the nature of dispensaries. They are provided with an organized staff of medical attendants. Strict supervision is kept over food, water and the like. The inmates are not only fed but clothed.

We seek to bring in not only "aimless wanderers, habitual beggars and debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers and require to be fed up or receive medical attendance in order to regain strength and return to work," but also Famine-sufferers who have not left their homes, but who, if permitted to remain there, out of the reach of medical care, with bad water to drink and food insufficient in quantity and bad in quality, and deserted by those who are their ordinary support, must inevitably fall victims to epidemics or to slow starvation.

We would call attention to the fact that villages in the Bombay Presidency are frequently very much scattered. A famine in a thickly-populated area requires, we submit, different treatment from that in an area where the population is sparse.

The following table taken from the Census Report of 1881, shows the comparative density of population in certain districts of Bengal, North-West Provinces, and Madras, with that of the nine districts of Bombay which were affected by the Famine of 1876-1878:—

Bengal.		North-West Provinces.		Madras.		Bombay.	
Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.
Howrah ...	1,130	Benares ...	894	Tanjore ...	583	Sáttára ...	212
Sarun ...	843	Ballia ...	808	Vizagapatam ...	515	Dhárwár ...	194
Mozafarpur ...	824	Jaunpur ...	778	Ganjam ...	484	Belgaum ...	185
Darbhanga ...	763	Azamgarh ...	747	Malabar ...	410	Poona ...	168
Hooghly ...	737	Lucknow ...	704	South-Arcot ...	372	Násik ...	131
Dacca ...	713	Ghazipore ...	688	Chingleput ...	345	Sholápur ...	128
Faridpur ...	704	Fyzabad ...	640	Trichinopoly ...	341	Khándesh ...	124
Pabna ...	688	Bareilly ...	638	Tinnivelly ...	315	Ahmednagar ...	112
24-Parganahs ...	679	Basti ...	592	Godaveri ...	273	Kaládgi ...	110
Average...	787		721		404		152

11. We have thus categorically discussed at perhaps too great length the various objections to the system which after full and mature consideration aided by our practical and local experience we had prescribed.

We need only add that further consideration has strengthened our conviction of the necessity for more rigidly adhering to the general principles enunciated in the 16th paragraph of our report, dated Poona, 30th October 1883. Our Government has decided against any attempt to diminish the necessity of legislation by making the village dole equal to the poor-house ration. We are glad of it and desire to urge with, if possible, greater earnestness than before our appeal for legislation.

12. A modified acceptance of the principle that legislation is necessary is given in the 8th paragraph of the Government of India's letter, but there the condition is imposed that we should accept the suggested restriction of poor-house relief. This we cannot, and dare not do. We invite attention to the reply given before the Commission by Sir Richard Temple (answer to question No. 209, pp. 54-55, Appendix II). We are willing to allow these remarks to express our views. If legal power is not given us to make those who can work, accept relief on works, the alternative must be frankly admitted that those who need relief and can work but will not, must starve. It is indeed the only alternative. It seems to have been accepted by the Famine Commission (p. 62, Section 192). For with the limited legislation which in this paragraph they propose, we must either let necessitous persons who persist in remaining in their homes starve there altogether or else wait till hunger and distress have so acted on them, that they are driven to wander and thus become liable to be legally conducted to poor-houses, or we must abandon the first principle that those who need relief and can work must do so and thus commit ourselves to pauper relief in its worst and most indefensible form offering the premium of the charity dole to persons who remain long enough at home starving to become unfit for work.

13. Referring now to the Resolution under reply, as we are unable to modify our views, we proceed to give the facts asked for in paragraph 3 to the best of our ability.

14. (1) As regards facts showing the dimensions likely to be reached by village relief on the plan of the Government of India.

There is obvious difficulty in adducing facts which cannot be taken from actual experience. Such indeed are properly speaking not facts at all, but at best estimates.

We have, however, the facts of the Madras Famine to call to our assistance. We conceive that before the visit of the Viceroy in 1877, it will be admitted that village relief was the rule and poor-house relief the exception, and that the figures of that period may not unfairly be taken as the figures which would be recorded under similar conditions.

These figures are quoted by Sir Michael Kennedy, in his evidence (Famine Commission Report, Appendix II, pages 66-67). The experience was that as village relief extended, so did the expenditure of public money and so did the mortality. A remarkable instance is quoted. In a táluka under the charge of an experienced Famine officer, in one week the numbers on gratuitous relief exceeded the total population of the táluka!

The Viceroy's visit ushered in a return to a system of checks and a *restriction of the village dole*. The improvement, though of course gradual, was marvellous. We will not re-produce these figures, but we will content ourselves by stating that before we had reperused this evidence of an officer who had the fullest experience of both the poor-house and village-relief systems, we had resolved to reply to the query put to us that, supposing the distress to be very acute, we saw no unlikelihood that the plan of extended village-relief without legislation would practically bring the population of the affected districts wholesale on the charity registers.

15. (2) Next, as regards facts illustrating the working of the Bombay system in 1876—1878.

We have in paragraph 6 (*b*) of this report expressed our opinion as to the feeling with which the people regarded residence in poor-houses. We desire also to refer to the facts already mentioned in paragraphs 10 and 11 of this report which are amply borne out by the records in the possession of Government.

16. We approve of the suggestion made in paragraph 10 of the letter from the Government of India that in clause 2 of Section 29 the words "if possible" should be inserted.

17. We would ask that the footnote to Section 89 of our draft be restored and also our provision that a branch poor-house should be attached to every professional agency work (Section 93 of our Code).

C. J. MERRIMAN,

J. B. RICHEY,

E. P. ROBERTSON,

G. F. SHEPPARD,

J. G. MOORE,

T. B. BEATTY,

T. G. HEWLETT,

C. G. W. MACPHERSON.

G. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 153 R. & A. D.—22-5-85.—700.

No. 3, dated Calcutta, the 9th December 1884.

From—The Government of India,

To—Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

In compliance with the request of Your Lordship, conveyed in paragraph 5 of the Despatch marginally noted, we have the honour to transmit the Famine Code prepared by the Government of Bombay, together with the correspondence* which has taken place between ourselves and that Government on the subject.

No. 95 (Revenue) of 20th December 1883.

* Proceedings Volume (Famine), June 1884, Nos. 2—6, pages 205 to 365.

2. We have expressed our entire approval of the Code, except on one point, in respect of which we have the misfortune to differ from the Government of Bombay. As an important question of principle in famine administration is concerned, and as the proposals of the Government of Bombay, if accepted, must entail legislation of an exceptional and hazardous character, we think it best to ascertain the views of Your Lordship on the matter, especially as to the proposed legislation, before authorising the Government of Bombay to promulgate the Code.

3. The point at issue is, whether the poor residents of villages, who are unable to perform even light labour by reason of age, sickness, or other infirmities, should be relieved in time of famine in their own villages, or should be compelled to enter and receive relief in a poor-house. We hold with the Famine Commissioners† (including the two dissenting Members) that gratuitous relief to the poor of these classes should be given to them in their own villages, and that the poor-house should be reserved for the reception of wanderers, professional beggars, debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers, and applicants for gratuitous relief respecting whose necessities there may be reasonable doubt. We intimated our concurrence with these views to Your Lordship in our Despatch No. 4 (Famine), dated the 14th March 1881. The Government of Bombay, on the other hand, considers that, as a rule, the incapable poor should not be relieved in their villages, but that every person eligible for gratuitous relief, who can be moved without inhumanity, should be transferred to a poor-house. Village relief is thus confined in the Bombay Code to persons whom the inspecting officer considers it inhumane to move, and to the class of women known as *parda-nashin*, who by custom are unable to appear in public. The Government of Bombay also considers that, to ensure the success of the system of relief, an Act should be passed empowering famine officers to send the incapable poor, whether residents of villages or homeless wanderers, to poor-houses, and to retain them there until the distress is at an end.

† Report, Part I, pages 45-48.

4. The two questions of village relief and of legislation were very carefully considered by the Famine Commissioners. Confining ourselves at present to the former question, we would remark that the preference expressed in the Famine Commissioners' Report for village relief was evidently based on a review of a large body of evidence as to the comparative merits of the two systems. It was one of the points on which the Local Governments were specially asked to report when the Famine Commission entered upon its inquiry, and most of the witnesses, whose evidence is reported in Appendix II. to the Report, were asked their opinions on it. The references to that volume given in the margin will acquaint Your Lordship with the views held by Sir R. Temple, Sir M. Kennedy, and other competent authorities‡ on the subject of gratuitous relief, and we consider that, on the whole, they support the conclusions arrived at by the Famine Commission. Sir R. Temple, after describing his experience in Madras and Bombay, stated§ that in the height of a famine he should depend on village relief rather than upon relief camps, though he considered relief-camps valuable at the outset of distress. Questioned as to

‡ Pages 53, 54, 55, 63, 64, 67, 70, 80.

§ Appendix II, page 53, Q. 202.

e rule in force in the Bombay famine, which required that everybody who uld walk from his village should not be relieved except in the central poor-house, he gave his opinion* that persons "who could not properly walk a y's march" should be relieved in their villages, and that if the Bombay rule ere thus modified, it would secure village-relief to a large number of persons ho would be in danger of death if not relieved at home; and he added that, addition to the aged and infirm people, who under his rule would become igible for village-relief, there are other classes, such as persons attending ck relatives, very young children, and the like, who, though able to walk, nnot properly leave their homes and should be relieved in their own villages. e explained how village-relief could be administered without difficulty in ombay and Madras by the hereditary village headmen, who are accus- med from generation to generation to perform duties cognate to those of village relief.† He expressed himself in favour of maintaining the village ganisation, as far as possible, especially with regard to the weak and infirm,‡ and considered that the best prevention of "wandering"—the first mptom of distress in Southern India—is in the timely preparation of a system of village-relief.§ Sir Michael Kennedy's evidence was to much the me effect. He was disposed to give village-relief to those "who e unable to leave their homes, or who are otherwise disqualified from seeking d elsewhere, and from giving any return for the assistance they receive." He efined such persons as follows:—Idiots, cripples, blind, diseased persons, and ose who are too ill to move, old, decrepid, and past any work, young children ving with and dependent on such persons, and women in an advanced state of pregnancy, or who have been recently confined."‖ With regard to poor-houses e described them as a necessary evil, but stated that they are needed "for ne intermediate class of the people between the incapables, whom it is alone dvisable to relieve in their villages, and those able to travel to some distance nd to perform some light labour; also, for the reception of wanderers."¶ The objections to relief-camps were strongly stated by Mr. Bernard,** who expressed himself entirely against them as being calulated to lead to excessive mortality.

* Q. 213.

† Q. 205.

‡ Q. 192.

§ Q. 191.

‖ Page 63, Q. 8.

¶ Page 64, Q. 12.

** Page 70.

The weight of authority is, therefore, we consider, against the poor-house ystem of relief, and this is apparently admitted by the Government of Bombay, s it says that it does not contest the conclusion of the Famine Commission nat the village system is generally preferable. It is, however, contended by he Local Government that the facts on which the Famine Commission based s conclusions were not drawn from experience in Bombay. We do not think hat this position is defensible, as the officers to whose evidence we have referred nd whose views seem to us to be more in accord with the recommendations of he Famine Commission than with the provisions of the Bombay Code, had large nd exceptional experience in famine administration both in the Dekkan country f Bombay and also in Madras districts closely resembling the Bombay Dekkan n physical peculiarities.

With regard to the second question—the enactment of a law to compel ersons to resort to, and to enforce residence in poor-houses—we informed Your Lordship, in paragraph 21 of our Despatch No. 4, dated the 14th March 881, that we did not agree with the Famine Commission that such legislation as necessary even to meet the special case of homeless vagrants and mendicants. When the Bombay Code came before us we reluctantly decided to consent to a Bill being provisionally prepared by the Government of Bombay, on the conition that it was strictly confined to the proposal of the Famine Commission, nd that it did not empower famine officers to remove residents of villages to poor-houses. Sir R. Temple and Sir M. Kennedy,†† both of whom played a leading art in the administration of the Bombay famine of 1877, had expressed them-

†† Appendix II, page 52, Q. 191, and page 64, Q. 9.

selves in favour of compulsory legislation if confined to cases of vagrancy, and in yielding to the wish of the Government of Bombay to legislate we were partly influenced by the fact that these experienced officers had considered legislation necessary to meet the special circumstances of Southern India. But we entirely agreed with Sir M. Kennedy that "a compulsory law to force persons to accept relief is neither advisable nor practicable," that it would be likely to cause a panic not only among the famine-stricken but among other classes, and that it would be liable to great abuse, and might also give rise to a strong public feeling against a Government enacting it.* As the poor-house system of the Bombay Famine Code appeared to involve a compulsory law of this objectionable character, we felt ourselves justified in requesting the Government of Bombay to adopt the alternative system of village inspection and relief as a condition to our assent to the Local Government taking power by law to deal with the practice of wandering. It would now appear from the reply of the Government of Bombay that the poor-house system is considered by its advocates to depend for success on a compulsory Act, and that it must break down if the officers administering it are not vested with legal powers. It is true that the Poona Committee strongly urge that the poor-house is not regarded by the poorer classes of the Bombay Presidency with the feelings of repulsion which it excites in Northern India. But the fact that the poor-house relief is not expected to prove efficacious even in the Dekkan unless it is made compulsory by the law, seriously tells in our opinion against this contention. We admit that the physical peculiarities of the Dekkan tend to make village inspection and relief more difficult than in the populous plains of Bengal, and that owing to the wandering habits of the people the poor-house must always be a necessary and important adjunct to famine administration in Southern India. But we think that the scheme provided by the Bombay Code, with the questionable legislation which it entails, presents more serious dangers than any which are likely to arise from the defects of village relief, and we note that the Government of Madras, which has to deal with tracts resembling the Bombay Dekkan, has found no difficulty in fully accepting the system of village relief for the incapable poor.† In this connection we would point out that the Poona Committee is mistaken in supposing that village inspection and relief on the system recommended by the Famine Commission was tried and broke down in the Madras famine. On the contrary, the chief feature of the administration of that famine was the collection of the people in great relief-camps or poor-houses, and one of the reforms introduced by Sir R. Temple, when specially deputed to Madras, was to break up these camps, and to send the inmates who were considered unfitted for work to their own villages to be gratuitously relieved there by the village officers. We cannot therefore assent to the argument of the Committee that the experience of the Madras famine tells against the system of village relief which the Famine Commission has recommended.

* Appendix II, page 64, Q. 9.

† Madras Code, pages 11 and 13, accompaniment to Despatch No. 12, dated 2nd October 1883.

G. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R. & A. D.—22-5-85.—70.

No. 27(Revenue), dated India Office, London, 12th March 1885.

From—The Secretary of State for India,

To—The Government of India.

PARA. 1. I have considered in Council your predecessor's letter No. 3 (Famine), dated 9th December last, transmitting the Famine Code prepared by the Government of Bombay, together with copies of the correspondence which has passed regarding it.

2. The leading features of the Code, which has been drafted with much care and ability, are these—

The duties of the Government, of the civil officers, of the Public Works Department, and of the Medical and Police Departments, on the approach of famine, are clearly laid down in the first chapter. The principal point to be noted is that, although the Code permits the appointment of a special Famine Commissioner, the Government of Bombay, agreeing with the view of the majority of the Committee who originally drafted the Code, consider that such an appointment will be advisable only in exceptional cases, and that the duties which the Famine Commissioner would perform ought ordinarily to be carried on by the Divisional Commissioners with some extra assistance. With this view I concur.

3. Regarding relief and relief agency, and the classification of sufferers from famine, the principles adopted in the Code appear to be these—

Public relief to be, as far possible, regulated by the labour test.

Employment on professional agency works to be the chief instrument of relief.

Works under civil agency to be rare, special, and subsidiary only.

People unable to work to be, as far as possible, collected and detained in poor-houses.

Relief to such people in their own homes and villages to be discouraged, and to be confined almost entirely to persons whom it may be found impracticable to remove to the poor-house; and to semi-gratuitous relief to "pardanashin" women, to weavers, and the like.

On works, the people relieved to be classified as—

(*a*) Full work gangs, composed of able-bodied and experienced labourers, capable of a full day's work;

(*b*) Ordinary gangs, composed of able-bodied but inexperienced labourers, capable of three-quarters of a full day's work.

(*c*) Light labour gangs, composed of people equal to half a day's work only;

(*d*) Aged and decrepit gangs; and

(*e*) Special gangs composed of people able to do a little light work only.

The three first classes to be employed usually on *task*, not *piece* work. The full task to be for classes (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) respectively a full day's work, three quarters or half of a full day's work. Labourers fulfilling the task to have the maximum wage; those falling short of it to have not less than the minimum. The maximum wage to be the value of $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of grain a day; the minimum, the value of $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. for men, and proportionately for women and children. In ordinary circumstances, the wage to be paid in money, not in grain, and for Sundays as well as working days. Piece-work, however, to be permissible for the able-bodied, and to be remunerated a little more highly than by the maximum task wage. Class (*e*) to receive the maximum wage, being chiefly composed of convalescents whose strength wants getting up; class (*d*) the minimum wage. The poor-house and village doles to be the same, about 1 lb. $2\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. of food.

4. As regards food supply, in ordinary circumstances Government will merely provide wages for the people relieved by works, leaving it to private trade to supply the food to be bought with these wages. The Code, however, leaves Government the power of exceptional action in exceptional circumstances. While I quite approve of the principle adopted by the Bombay Government on this subject, I would call Your Excellency's attention to paragraph 17 of my Despatch No. 14 (Revenue) of 22nd February 1883.

5. The foregoing appear to be the leading principles which the Bombay Government have laid down for their own guidance, and that of their officers in the event of famine. Before proceeding to communicate to Your Excellency my judgment on the two points regarding which the opinion of the Government of India is at variance with that of the Bombay Government, I desire to make one observation relative to the application in practice of Famine Codes generally.

6. The object of the preparation of a Provincial Famine Code is, as explained in paragraph 113 of the First Part of the Report of the Famine Commission, that, on the occurrence of the calamity of famine, time may not be lost in improvising a system of relief, mistakes may be avoided, and Government itself and its officers may, without hesitation and vacillation, be able at once to decide what is to be done, and to organize the machinery for carrying into effect the measures determined upon. I am glad to be able to agree with your Government that the Code now under consideration is, on the whole, well adapted to secure these objects. At the same time there is a danger, which must be carefully guarded against, that by laying down hard and fast rules the elasticity of administration essential to the successful treatment of a famine may be impaired. Experience shows that not only do circumstances vary in different provinces, of even the same presidency, but also in different famines, and even in different periods of the same famine. For example, the Bombay Government lay down that "employment on professional agency works should be the chief instrument of relief to the working population, and that civil agency works should be subsidiary and for special times and objects only." Of this principle, if applied when a famine has fully developed itself, I approve, and that this condition is implied is, indeed, shown by paragraph 15 of the Committee's Report of 30th October 1883. But such a qualification of a distinct rule is not unlikely to be overlooked, and it is evident that, when famine is threatening, civil agency works are at once the readiest and the least costly means of supplying the immediate relief which may perhaps save the population from falling into the depressed condition which is so injurious, and from which it is so difficult to raise them.

7. I now turn to the points on which the Government of India differ from the opinion of the Bombay Government. According to both views, for the relief of those who are unable to work, there must be, to some extent, both poor-houses and a system of village relief. But while Your Excellency's Government, agreeing with the Famine Commission, consider that village relief should be the rule, and that poor-houses should be reserved for those who have no homes, the Government of Bombay and their officers generally consider that, with a few strictly defined exceptions, people who cannot work should be removed from the villages to poor-houses, and detained there till the emergency is passed. The arguments on both sides are of considerable force, and the Bombay Government strongly urge the special circumstances of a great part of that presidency, where there is a thin population, easily moved and living in widely scattered villages, rendering efficient village relief much more difficult, and efficient poor-house relief much easier and less unpopular than in more densely peopled parts of India.

8. Although I feel strongly the evils of the breaking up of family and social ties, and of the dissolution of the village communities which the system advocated by the Bombay Government could hardly fail to occasion, yet local knowledge and opinion ought to carry so much weight on a question of this kind, that I should feel some difficulty in arriving at a decision adverse to the opinion of that Government, were it not that the Bombay authorities themselves admit that the poor-house system could be brought into general operation only by one of two alternative means—by special compulsory legislation, or by reducing

the village dole to an amount insufficient for maintenance (paragraph 20 of Committee's Report of 30th October 1883); in other words, by letting people starve who will not enter the poor-house. I agree with the Bombay Government that it would be impossible in dealing with a famine to resort to the latter alternative; and I concur with your Government that a law to force people to accept relief would be unpopular, liable to abuse, and likely to cause panic, and thus to defeat its own objects.

9. It is urged that at present officers are expected to compel persons who are unable to work, and who prefer to the poor-house aimless wandering, to accept relief; that this shows that the necessity for compulsion is admitted, and that such necessary action should no longer be illegal. It does not, however, appear to me that the action of an officer who places a starving mendicant in a poor-house is really illegal, but I do not think that the detention of such a person after he has gained sufficient strength to be able, at least in his own opinion, to shift for himself, would be justifiable. In fact, with reference to the observations of the Bombay Committee (paragraph 12 of the Report of 5th September 1884), I must state that I concur with paragraph 7 of the Government of India's letter of 12th June 1884 that "gratuitous relief should be refused to any person capable of any kind of labour, and claimants for relief whose real need is doubtful should be referred to the poor-house," and I think that no attempt should be made to compel people to accept relief; if they refused it, the risk is their own.

10. Of course, where the conditions of any tract are such as to render village relief impracticable—where, for instance, villages are deserted from want of water,—there will be no resource but to establish a system of poor-house relief on the scale contemplated by the Bombay Government. In such a case, as it is stated that the poor-house system is not generally unpopular in Bombay, there will be no difficulty in inducing the really necessitous to enter poor-houses.

11. With reference, therefore, to the second paragraph of your letter under acknowledgment, I must express my concurrence with the views of Your Excellency's Government, and request that the Bombay Famine Code may be modified in accordance with them before promulgation.

G. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R. & A. D.—22-5-85.—700.

CHAPTER III.—GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

A.—In Villages.

94. Village relief is to be confined within the narrowest practicable limits. It will be granted to those who are capable of being moved without inhumanity only until they can conveniently and safely be transferred to a poor-house.

Village relief to be very exceptional.

95. Subject to this general principle, the following classes of persons are eligible for gratuitous relief in their villages, provided they have no relatives able and willing to support them:—

Who are eligible.

(1) The aged and infirm.

(2) The blind, crippled, and insane.

(3) Any others who are physically incapable of travelling without suffering.

(4) And those whose attendance on the sick or on infants in their own homes is absolutely necessary.

96. On the notification of famine the Collector shall cause registers of such persons to be prepared by the Patel, assisted by the accountant, of each village in the notified area. The village officers will forthwith submit to the Mamlatdar copies thereof, together with the name of the grain-dealer through whom it is proposed to distribute the dole. The Mamlatdar will satisfy himself that the grain-dealer chosen is a fit and proper person, and will appoint him or any other if preferable to provide, from such date as the Collector may direct, the daily supply.

Village dole register.

97. The dole will be weighed out by the grain-dealer and given to each person on the register in the presence of the Patel or accountant and at least two respectable villagers (section 98). If any recipient cannot attend by reason of illness, the Patel or accountant, in his absence, should receive and deliver the dole to that person. The grain-dealer will submit weekly, through the Patel, a statement of the grain distributed, and its cost, in the form prescribed (Form No. 11). The Mamlatdar will check the bill, and send the passed amount back by the bearer of the bill to the village officers, who will pay it to the grain-dealer and take his receipt in the presence of two members of the committee.

Precautions.

98. In each village the Mamlatdar will nominate a committee of five respectable villagers, whose duty it will be to prevent dishonesty, and to see that the intentions of Government are rightly carried out.

The village Panch.

99. In municipal towns and cities the Collector will utilize to the utmost extent the municipal organization and establishments, so as to secure the distribution of relief and the maintenance of statistics as far as possible in accordance with the spirit of this Code; the charitably disposed being dissuaded from giving private relief, and persuaded rather to subscribe to the general relief fund.

Relief in municipal towns, &c.

100. The dole to be given under this chapter will be the poor-house ration defined in section 129.

Amount of dole.

101. The Collector shall direct the entry on the village dole register of such of the village watchmen, shetsandis, messengers, and sweepers as may be necessary for the due performance of their duties in times of famine, when he is conced that their normal means of support have failed.

Relief of inferior village officers.

102. The village officers will, as far as is practicable, daily visit every house in the village to enquire into fresh cases of sickness or destitution. If it is decided that any person staying in a village is not entitled to receive the village dole, the village officer will offer such person a ticket of admission to the nearest poor-house and refuse gratuitous relief after due warning. They will seek out distressed wanderers within the village boundary and relieve them. They will do their utmost to induce distressed villagers to go to the relief works or poor-houses.

Duties of patels and accountants in villages.

B.—Poor-houses.

103. Poor-houses will be of two kinds—central and branch. Branch poor-houses are intended for the infirm, who can be transferred thither from their villages. Central poor-houses will receive all classes of applicants, who will be classified, and either drafted to relief works, sent to hospital, or retained as ordinary inmates. These latter, who will comprise wanderers and professional beggars incapable of work, will be kept there compulsorily until the famine is so far at an end that private charity can again be relied on.

Central and branch poor-houses.

The poor-house may also be used as a rest-house for those on their way to a relief work who come with an order from a relief officer entitling them to food and shelter for the night.

104. There will be at least one central poor-house in each taluka, which will generally be situated at the head-quarter town, and as many branch poor-houses as may be requisite.

Number of poor-houses.

105. A hospital will be attached to each central poor-house and, where necessary, to branch poor-houses.

Hospitals attached to poor-houses.

106. The strength of establishment required for the poor-houses will be decided by the Collector. Rules for general guidance and hints as regards the details of management are given in Appendix II.

Establishments.

Govt. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R.- & A. D.—21-5-35.—700.

No. 39, dated Bombay Castle, 4th January 1884.

From—J. Monteath, Esq., C.S., Acting Under-Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Revenue Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

As desired by the Government of India in paragraph 30 of their Resolution No. 44F., dated 9th June 1883, and with reference to paragraph 6 of my letter No. 5043, dated 6th July following, I am directed to forward herewith, for submission to the Government of India, copy of a report, with its acompanying draft of a Famine Code, received from the Committee appointed under the orders of this Government for the preparation of a Provincial Famine Code, and also a copy of the Code as revised and finally approved by this Government.

2. The revised Code has purposely been made brief as being so more easily intelligible and adapted for practical use, and in the portions where it touches on the functions of the Director of Agriculture, on improvements in the Subordinate Revenue Establishments, such as village accountants and the inspecting officers immediately above them, on the class of supplementary works indicated in paragraphs 21-23 of the Resolution of the Government of India above quoted, and on the co-operation of local bodies, the occasions when these will come in have, for the sake of conciseness, been simply indicated in the Code as a preferable course to an amplification on these points which might cause confusion in the minds of the subordinate officials who will have to study the Code in the vernaculars. This course has more especially commended itself on the ground that some of these subjects are novel and the measures in connection with them have not yet been fully matured.

3. It will be observed that the alterations in the Committee's draft Code which His Excellency in Council has thought it desirable to make are not many, and do not affect the main principles recommended by experience in this presidency, which are that employment on professional agency works should be the chief instrument of relief to the working population, and that civil agency works should be subsidiary and for special times and objects only; that gratuitous relief in villages should be kept within narrow limits; and that helpless people who can be collected in poor-houses without inhumanity should be brought there for relief.

4. In modification of the Committee's plan, His Excellency in Council has thought it advisable to collect the sections describing the action of Government—such as the Committee's sections 3, 6, 7—in a first part of the Code preceding that headed "Civil Officers," and to make some additions to complete the exposition of the administrative scheme for famine.

5. In the letter of this Government, No. 3234, dated 6th June 1881, His Excellency in Council has already expressed to the Government of India an opinion in favour of the appointment of a special Famine Commissioner in certain circumstances, and provision for such an appointment, which was omitted by the Committee, has been added to the revised Code. In the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the circumstances which would require such an appointment would be exceptional, but they are possible and should be kept in view. The remarks of the Committee in paragraph 5 of their report are entitled to weight, but the evils suggested need not necessary arise. It is most improbable that a Famine Commissioner would be selected by the Governor in Council who should be deficient in local knowledge.

6. His Excellency in Council believes that the latter portion of Section 37 of the Committee's Code, from which Mr. Macpherson dissents, is taken generally from the report of the Famine Commission. There is, however, some reason to believe that the relaxation of the rule of non-interference with trade should be defined with even greater caution than is observed in the section as framed by the Committee, and the draft has been somewhat modified to that end.

7. In Chapter III, "Gratuitous Relief," the Committee differs somewhat from the Famine Commission, by reducing to the narrowest dimensions the

classes who may continue to receive relief in their villages. The view of the Committee is, in short, that none should be left in their homes who can be removed to poor-houses. His Excellency in Council concurs in the conclusion, which is the result of experience in the late famine, that distressed people ought to be transferred from their villages to poor-houses as a rule, but would make an exception in cases where this could only be done at the sacrifice of humanity. It will not be difficult for the district medical officer or special relief officer to discriminate such cases, and no better limit can be devised. While the Governor in Council would give the poor-house ration to the persons whose names are entered on the list of those entitled to village relief, he is of opinion that no relief at all should be given in villages to those who ought to go to poor-houses, but refuse to do so. If a dole not quite sufficient to prolong life is given in order that it may compel the recipients to leave the villages, His Excellency in Council fears, with the Sanitary Commissioner, that the opposite effect would be produced, and that the recipients would be tempted by the dole to linger on at home with daily decreasing strength. It appears better to give them nothing beyond what is needful to support them until they can reach a work or poor-house. The Committee proposes the dole as an alternative of taking power by law to clear the villages, and His Excellency in Council fully admits that distressed persons not admitted to the village-list must be removed by authority which it is very desirable to legalize. But in the absence of special legislation His Excellency in Council believes that authority will be best assisted by absolutely refusing relief in villages to those who ought to seek it elsewhere.

His Excellency in Council adheres to the opinion already expressed by this Government that, as recommended by the Famine Commission, special legislation is necessary (1) to enforce the performance of their duty by village officers; and (2) to empower the officers of Government to apply reasonable coercion to the distressed people. I am to invite the attention of the Government of India to the remarks on this subject contained in the concluding paragraph of the letter of this Government, dated 6th June 1881, above quoted, and in again urging the same view, to suggest that, if it is thought objectionable to add such an enactment to the statute-book at present, a draft Bill may be prepared and approved, to be kept ready to pass into law on the next occasion on which it may be required.

9. In the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council the principle adopted by the Committee in Section 124 of their Code for regulating the assignment of the various scales of wage is sound. With regard to the amount of wage, I am to observe that the maximum wage is below the Madras rate; and as compared with the Famine Commission's estimate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of flour as the consumption of an able-bodied man, inasmuch as the Committee gives the quantities in grain and not flour, it properly allows a little more to cover wastage. Mr. Elliot's Code gives as the maximum wage the value of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of flour *plus* $\frac{1}{2}$ anna. The Bombay Committee proposes to give the value of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of grain *plus* the value of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound to allow for fluctuations in the cost of the nitrogenous grain (dal), which is also a necessary element in the diet, and of vegetables. This seems to His Excellency the Governor in Council to be a fair arrangement.

Section 135 of revised Code.

10. As stated in my letter No. 6340, dated 27th August 1883, paragraph 16, the members of the Committee were also requested to consider the question of suspensions and remissions of land revenue in times of scarcity, and the result of their deliberations on the subject has been embodied in Chapter VI of the draft Code. His Excellency the Governor in Council has, however, considered it advisable to draft some new and fuller sections for the guidance of officers in the matter which will be found under Chapter VI (*a*) of the Code as finally approved.

11. I am to add that the approval of the Government of India will be awaited before the Code is translated into the vernaculars and published for general information and guidance.

G C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 153 R. & A. D.—21-5-85.—700.

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No. 64F., dated Simla, 12th June 1884.

From—E. C. Buck, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department,

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bombay Revenue Department.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt, under cover of Mr. Monteath's letter No. 39, dated 4th January 1884, of the report and draft submitted by the Committee appointed to prepare a Provincial Famine Code, and of copies of the Code as revised by the Government of Bombay.

2. His Excellency the Governor General in Council has given the Code his careful consideration, and congratulates the Government of Bombay on the excellent results obtained by the Committee, whose draft is clear, concise, and well arranged.

3. In one important respect, however, His Excellency has to observe that the general principles indicated in the Resolution of the 9th June 1883, No. 44, Revenue and Agriculture, have in framing the Bombay Code not been accepted, and that the rules for the administration of village relief are based on a policy differing from that which has commended itself to the Government of India, the Famine Commission, and the Secretary of State. The Committee strongly deprecate any system of famine relief which will in any way tend to keep the people in their villages and necessitate their being fed there by the State. They consider that such a system would lead to peculation and increased mortality; that it would demoralize the people, and render worse than useless other more important and general measures of relief. Holding these views, they have so framed the proposed rules as to practically abolish village relief by limiting it to such period as may be necessary to arrange for the transfer of the recipients to the poor-house. With the object of compelling distressed villagers to seek the relief works or poor-houses, the Committee have further proposed a special dole for village relief below the scale of the poor-house rations. They consider, however, that it would be better to give district officers legal power to clear villages of all persons who should be sent to poor-houses or relief-works. His Excellency the Governor of Bombay in Council, while concurring with the Committee that gratuitous relief should be confined, as far as possible, to poor-houses, has made an exception in the case of those persons who cannot be removed from their homes "without inhumanity." His Excellency has also decided that the village dole should be same as the poor-house ration; and that, in the absence of the legal powers referred to by the Committee, it will better effect that object in view if all relief in villages is absolutely refused to those who ought to seek it in the poor-house or on relief-works, as otherwise the recipients might be tempted by the dole to linger on in their village with daily decreasing strength.

4. Briefly stated, the difference between the principle adopted by the Government of Bombay and that recommended by the Famine Commission is that, while the Government of Bombay would make poor-house relief for persons incapable of labour the rule and village relief the exception, the Famine Commission make the latter the rule and confine poor-house relief to vagrants and beggars.

The question at issue is one on which opinions have throughout differed not a little; but the conclusions at which the Famine Commission arrived were based on a very wide survey of the subject, and have been accepted by the Government of India and by the Secretary of State. The attention of the Government of Bombay is invited to paragraphs 140 to 146 of the Report of the Famine Commission, which deal with the subject of poor-house and village relief. The proper object of the poor-house is stated in paragraph 141 to be the reception "of such persons as have separated themselves from their homes and villages, aimless wanderers, habitual beggars, or debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers and require to be fed up or to receive medical attendance in order to regain strength and return to work." Again, in paragraph 145, relief-houses are described as "intended for the

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reception of persons who have no homes or have cut themselves off from their homes and are unfit for employment on relief-works, and for professional beggars who cannot be made to work." The Famine Commission were not insensible to the dangers and abuses likely to arise from village relief, or to the greater economy of poor-houses. But, after summing up all these considerations most carefully, they state (paragraph 140) that "there is no doubt left in our minds that the village system should in the present condition of India be preferred for general adoption, insomuch as while this system may involve the risk of a too free grant of relief, the poor-house system involves the more serious risk of insufficient relief." They also mention, as partly influencing their decision, that "there is a great accumulation of evidence to the effect that the feeling of the people towards relief administered in the form is in most parts of India one of extreme repulsion"; and they record their opinion in another place that an efficient system of village relief will tend to prevent that "wandering of the poor which leads to the dissolution of the village communities, and is one of the principal causes of famine mortality." This opinion was concurred in by the Government of India in its despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 14th March 1881, and received the assent of Lord Kimberley in his despatch of 22nd February 1883.

6. The Government of India is persuaded that the system laid down in its provisional Famine Code on the lines of the recommendations made by the Famine Commission will, in practice, be found to be attended with fewer evil results than the course advocated by the Bombay Committee. If in the one case there is a risk of allowing persons capable of labour to be relieved at home, there seems to be in the proposed plan of clearing the villages by sending people to the poor-houses and drafting from the poor-houses to relief-works the double danger of, first, not relieving a great many persons who have no means of support; and secondly, of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor who ought to go to the relief-works. It seems probable that no measure short of direct legislation would succeed in compelling the people to resort to the poor-houses, and the Government of India has strong objections to any legislation which would authorize the compulsory transfer of large bodies of people from their homes to a poor-house. Compulsion of this nature is likely to increase the disfavour with which poor-houses are already regarded, and might, as in the Mysore famine,* be productive of panic and increased disorganization. The Committee anticipate that village relief would involve increased mortality, but they appear to have overlooked the great liability to epidemic outbreaks which attaches to poor-houses. This danger is considered by the sanitary authorities to be as one of great and vital importance.

* Mysore Famine Report, by E. C. Elliott, Esq., paragraph 53.

7. In desiring that the question should be reconsidered by the Government of Bombay, the Government of India is anxious that its views in regard to village relief should not be misunderstood. It entirely agrees with the Famine Commission as to the necessity of exacting labour from every person capable of doing any work at all, and of exercising great caution in admitting persons to the gratuitous relief list. It also considers that the enquiry into each case should be as rigorous as possible; that gratuitous relief should be refused to any person capable of any kind of labour; and that as laid down by the Famine Commissioners, "claimants for relief whose real need is doubtful" should be referred to the poor-house. Subject to these safeguards, His Excellency the Governor General in Council thinks that village relief will be found to be capable of being worked without the inordinate expenditure and demoralization which the Bombay Committee justly deprecate.

8. In paragraph 8 of the letter under acknowledgment, it is proposed to prepare a draft Bill to be passed into law when occasion requires for the purpose (1) of enforcing the performance of their duty by village officers; and (2) empowering the officers of Government to apply reasonable coercion to the distressed people. On this point I am directed to state that if the Government of Bombay should be willing on reconsideration to restrict poor-house relief in the manner above proposed, His Excellency the Governor General in Council would have no objection as a measure of precaution to the preparation of

a draft Act, but the expediency of passing such a draft into law would still have to be considered with reference to the circumstances of the time and the severity of the famine to which it might be deemed proper to apply it. The Famine Commission recommend that the power to confine distressed people in a poor-house should be limited to those who have cut themselves off from home, and who are either wandering along roads or begging in towns; and any legislation which the Government of Bombay may undertake with the view of conferring legal authority in this respect on the officers in charge of poor-houses should, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, be confined to these limits. Nor will the Government of India object to the duties and powers of village officers in time of famine being defined by law, provided that among these duties is not that of compelling the incapable poor to leave their villages with a view to being detained in a poor-house.

9. In regard to the scale of wages and the system adopted for regulating it, I am desired to say that the Government approves of the principle followed by the Bombay Committee in making the entire wage vary with the price of food. The scale of poor-house rations appears sufficient, considering the class of people who will receive it. The adequacy of the scale, however, should be tested from time to time.

10. Referring to section 29, I am to suggest the insertion of the words "if possible" in the second clause, as it may not always be feasible to contrive a relief work fulfilling the several conditions laid down.

Govt. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158, R. & A. D.—21-5-85.—700.

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No. 7715, dated Bombay Castle, 27th September 1884.

From—W. P. Symonds, Esq., C.S., Acting Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bombay,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Dept.

I am directed to reply to your letter No. 61F., dated 12th June 1884, communicating the observations of His Excellency the Viceroy in Council on the draft Famine Code for the Bombay Presidency submitted with the letter from this Government, No. 39, dated 5th January last. As the Government of India differed from this Government on a very important point, His Excellency the Governor in Council considered it desirable to refer the letter for consideration to the members of the Committee appointed in 1883 under the orders of this Government to draft a Provincial Famine Code. It was requested that if the Committee were unable to modify the views expressed in paragraph 16 of their previous report, copies of which were forwarded to the Government of India with the letter of this Government above quoted, facts might be supplied—

(i) showing the dimensions likely to be reached by village relief on the plan preferred by the Government of India; and

(ii) illustrating the working of the Bombay system in 1876-78, the amount of suffering and mortality in the poor-houses, and the feeling with which the village people regarded residence in poor-houses.

2. The further report of the Committee has now been received, and I am to say that on consideration of the important part taken by a majority of the gentlemen who formed the Committee in the measures for the relief of famine in this Presidency in 1876-77, the Governor in Council feels it to be his duty to submit the letter in which they support their views on the subject of poor-houses and village relief with the opinion of this Government that their arguments are of much weight and force.

3. His Excellency the Governor in Council does not contest the conclusion of the Famine Commission on a review of the history of poor-houses and village relief in all parts of India that the village system is generally preferable. I am however to submit that the Famine Commissioners arrived at this conclusion after balancing the objections to either system and did not fail to point out that in all past famines certain disadvantages have attached to each of them. I am also to point out that the facts on which the poor-house system was condemned were not drawn from experience in Bombay. If it can be shown that in any province the poor-house system can be worked without risk of the relief afforded being insufficient, while the condition of efficient village inspection, on which the Famine Commission insists, is from local circumstances comparatively difficult of attainment, it may be held that a case has been established for an exception to the general rule. The case submitted by the Bombay Committee in their present report is that in a sparsely inhabited tract such as is the famine tract of the Deccan and Southern Maharáta Country efficient village inspection and medical relief can be supplied only with an establishment and at a cost which is out of proportion to the population to be succoured, whereas the incapable people whom it is proposed to collect in poor-houses under medical supervision and good sanitation, and with wholesome and sufficient food, are not very numerous. The repulsion to residence in poor-houses which was remarked in other provinces is stated by the Sanitary Commissioner and other officers of personal experience to have been absent in Bombay and the feeling with which the poor-house is regarded by the incapable poor will doubtless depend on the care and humanity with which these institutions are organized. The Committee points out with much force that the class of persons who are to be relieved either in the village or in the poor-house is not the whole body of distressed people, but only those who are incapable of work; and that as thorough control is far more practicable in the poor-house than in the village, it is much more likely that the able-bodied poor who ought to go to the relief-works will elude detection in the village than in the poor-house. It also seems indisputable that with the power of selecting a site and of maintaining efficient sanitation and supplying wholesome food and with medical aid

constantly available on the spot, the danger of epidemic outbreaks must be less in poor-houses than in villages "without water, half-deserted, and replete with decay and neglect." It would seem probable that if the population to be dealt with is not too large for centralized management, if the poor-houses are sufficiently numerous and are organized with forethought and humanity it is more practicable to remove the grounds of repulsion to poor-houses by provision for the comfort and self-respect of the inmates, than to remedy the objections which lie against the alternative plan of village relief and which the Committee declare to be insuperable. It must also be admitted as a fact of past famine history that the mismanagement of village relief has been attended with more disastrous results than any due to the mismanagement of poor-houses.

4. I am to add that in the instance quoted in your letter under reply from the Mysore famine, the panics, wandering and distress of the starving people were due to quite exceptional want of plan, foresight and discipline, whereas the object of preparing a Famine Code is that a distinct and complete plan may be laid down and perfect organization secured from the beginning. Confusion and irresolution in the authorities must in famine always lead to disaster whatever system is adopted.

5. His Excellency the Governor in Council desires to invite the attention of the Government of India to the greatly increased facilities which the great extension of the railway system and the improvement of roads will give to the due regulation and inspection of poor-houses. In the last famine, travelling in the Deccan was in a primitive condition. After two years more there will not be a place in the districts hitherto liable to famine which will be more than fifty miles from a railway station, while roads in every direction will render it comparatively easy for officers to supervise the measures undertaken for the relief of the distressed in convenient centres. On the other hand the supervision of village relief must always present immense difficulties.

6. As regards special legislation in connection with poor-houses, I am to say that if the views of the Committee are on reconsideration accepted by the Government of India, it is obviously desirable that legal authority should be given to responsible officers to transfer to poor-houses those whom it is thought best to lodge in them. It must be borne in mind that all the vigorous and healthy villagers with their wives and children will have left the villages for employment on works, and that the incapable poor who are left, in the confusion of mind caused by their unwonted circumstances, will hardly be in a condition to exercise their volition healthily, and that this fact is a justification for using a benevolent coercion to secure their safety. If it is unobjectionable to restrain aimless wanderers, it seems equally so to allow no option as to the place and method of their maintenance to the decrepid and feeble in mind and body whose support devolves wholly on the local officials. On these considerations His Excellency the Governor in Council would deprecate the condition imposed by the Government of India on special legislation that either poor-house relief should be restricted or that legislation to compel the incapable poor to leave their villages with a view to being detained in a poor-house should be excluded.

Report by the Members of the Famine Code Committee, dated Poona, 5th September 1884.

We have the honour to report, in accordance with the orders contained in Government Resolution No. 5115 of the 25th June 1884, that we have met in Committee and discussed the objections raised by the Government of India to certain principles connected with the administration of gratuitous relief embodied in the Bombay Draft Famine Relief Code.

2. The question at issue is the suitability of the poor-house system for general adoption in this Presidency in preference to the village-relief organization which the Famine Commission approved of for general adoption in India.

3. The Famine Commission sought to combine the two systems, and so far we are thoroughly in accord with their recommendation. But the conditions

of our Presidency and the experience gained in the Famine of 1876—1878 have led us to reduce village-relief to the narrowest limits compatible with safety and therefore to enlarge the functions of poor-houses.

4. The grounds on which this extension of poor-houses did not find favour with the Famine Commission were :—

(*a*) that the poor-house system involves a risk of insufficient relief—a risk more serious than that arising from the village-relief system,—Section 140;

(*b*) that there is in *most parts* of India a feeling of "extreme repulsion" towards poor-houses,—Section 140;

(*c*) that by taking away the inducement to wander, village-relief prevents wandering, and hence demoralization,—Section 146.

To these the Government of India adds :—

(*d*) the danger of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor, who ought to go to the relief works;

(*e*) its strong objection to any legislation which would authorize the transfer of large bodies of people from their homes to poor-houses;

(*f*) the great liability to epidemic outbreak which attaches to poor-houses.

5. We think that these various objections can easily be met, and we proceed to deal with them *seriatim* :—

(*a*) Insufficiency of relief on the poor-house system.

We hold a very decided opinion that the risk referred to would be far greater in the villages than in the poor-houses. In support of this view we would adduce the following facts which are known to us.

1st.—It cannot be denied that in famine it is a characteristic of native officials to make relief as general as possible. They will dole out a ration for 50 people to double that number, rather than weed out the undeserving.

2nd.—Village headmen rather than put a whole family on the register would on their own responsibility be almost certain to admit half and tell the whole to make the best of what the State in its liberality had provided for them.

3rd.—Nothing is more common than for the able-bodied to try to eke out a subsistence from the dole given only to those whom they can put forward as "deserving as far as outward signs go." Village inspection cannot be made so efficient as to prevent these abuses; and what is the natural result? The dole-fed paupers receive insufficient relief and fall off from bad to worse.

4th.—No proper check, moreover, can be kept on the quality of the food dispensed. Innutritious food is as bad as insufficient food. On the other hand we know by experience that the food in poor-houses is sufficient in quantity and good in quality and that it can be distributed under proper and trustworthy supervision.

6. (*b.*) Extreme repulsion against residence in poor-houses.

The reception of cooked food by such persons as would be the recipients of gratuitous relief in this Presidency is not repulsive. It is freely taken on works by the children of relief-labourers. We have no classes so difficult to deal with as were met with in the Bengal Famine and, we believe, in the North-West Provinces. If in very rare cases in a poor-house a genuine caste objection to taking the food is encountered, it will be within the discretionary power of the medical officer in charge to have the food specially prepared by a Bráhman or else by the objector himself if he has the strength to cook it. In the Bengal Famine the recipients of cooked food were put out of caste.

not the case in Bombay. On the contrary, men now in good repute
eir caste-fellows freely admit that in the Famine they went to the
es.

c.) Village-relief prevents wandering.

ection 141 of the Famine Commission Report village-relief is de-
practicable as the rule, unless two safeguards can be counted upon—

hat those who can work should be made to work;

hat an efficient system of village inspection be devised.

egards the former condition, we consider that legislation to authorize
emoval to and detention at works of all persons receiving relief who
come capable of work, and (*b*) the removal to and detention at the
se of those incapable of work who may without hardship be taken
eir homes is not only absolutely and imperatively necessary, but if
y applied at the early stages of Famine would reduce the need for
le relief in this Presidency to very small dimensions.

regards the possibility of devising an efficient system of village inspec-
candidly admit that it is beyond our powers. The village organization
and cannot bear a greater strain on it than we have put. Our villages,
y in tracts most liable to Famine, are distant one from the other and
ılation sparse (*vide* table under clause *f*). Under these conditions we
at aimless wandering cannot be checked by means of the village
f relief without the certainty of a widespread pauperization of the
g class.

(*d.*) Danger of the poor-houses retaining able-bodied poor who ought
the relief works.

cannot but express some surprise that this objection should have been
ted. We need only call attention to paragraph 103 and clause 5 of
ph 50 of our Code. It is not our experience that the majority of those
d to the poor-house in reduced condition desire to remain there when
work; most prefer the greater liberty and more familiar life of the

(*e.*) The inadvisability of compulsory transfer of large bodies of
from their homes to poor-houses.

e desire respectfully to join issue on this point. It is laid down
l aimless wanderers should be compelled to go to the poor-houses.
s further laid down that gratuitous relief is intended only for those
nnot work, we have only to deal with the small residuum of incapable
ho still cling to their villages.

nese are either—

(1) the physically incapable, or

(2) those incapacitated through domestic or social causes, *e. g.*, parda-
women and the like,—Sections 96-100

or these latter full provision has admittedly been made. The former
ise the temporarily and the permanently incapable. We have made
ion for all cases in both these classes where transfer to a poor-house cannot
le without inhumanity. We go further and admit an exception where
ransfer cannot conveniently be made. But for the temporarily unfit the
nd medical attendance of the poor-house is especially desirable and we
hat of the permanently incapable some will be found who may with
tage to themselves be removed to poor-houses.

Vith these provisions we cannot admit that our scheme would involve any
hing as the transfer of large bodies of people to poor-houses.

). (*f*) Liability to outbreak of epidemics in poor-houses.

ur recommendations in this connection are based on the results of con-
ble experience. In our Committee are many officers who were employed
worst Famine districts, including the Sanitary Commissioner, and our
nous testimony is that the heavy mortality which took place, was princi-
caused by the absence of powers to compel attendance at works or relief

centres. Whenever the needy were got to poor-houses and relief—camps their health, as a general rule, commenced to improve. An epidemic of cholera and small-pox prevailed extensively throughout the districts, whilst there was never any serious outbreak of epidemic disease in the poor-houses. We are confident that should in a future Famine epidemic disease appear in the poor-houses, it would be more successfully combated there than is possible in villages.

We contend that poor-houses such as our Code contemplates are not insanitary. But on the contrary, if compared with villages in time of Famine without water, half deserted, replete with decay and neglect, they afford incalculably greater protection against disease.

We say nothing in favour of open feeding houses, such as were at first established in Mysore, where all comers crowded twice a day for a meal, and shifted for themselves in the intervals and at night, where the strong often obtained the relief which was intended for the weak, where medical care was an almost impossibility. The poor-houses which our Code insists upon partake more of the nature of dispensaries. They are provided with an organized staff of medical attendants. Strict supervision is kept over food, water and the like. The inmates are not only fed but clothed.

We seek to bring in not only "aimless wanderers, habitual beggars and debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers and require to be fed up or receive medical attendance in order to regain strength and return to work," but also Famine-sufferers who have not left their homes, but who, if permitted to remain there, out of the reach of medical care, with bad water to drink and food insufficient in quantity and bad in quality, and deserted by those who are their ordinary support, must inevitably fall victims to epidemics or to slow starvation.

We would call attention to the fact that villages in the Bombay Presidency are frequently very much scattered. A famine in a thickly-populated area requires, we submit, different treatment from that in an area where the population is sparse.

The following table taken from the Census Report of 1881, shows the comparative density of population in certain districts of Bengal, North-West Provinces, and Madras, with that of the nine districts of Bombay which were affected by the Famine of 1876-1878:—

Bengal.		North-West Provinces.		Madras.		Bombay.	
Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.	Districts.	Population per square mile.
Howrah ...	1,130	Benares ...	894	Tanjore ...	583	Sáttára ...	212
Sarun ...	843	Ballia ...	808	Vizagapatam ...	515	Dhárwár ...	194
Mozafarpur ...	824	Jaunpur ...	778	Ganjam ...	484	Belgaum ...	185
Darbhanga ...	763	Azamgarh ...	747	Malabar ...	410	Poona ...	168
Hooghly ...	737	Lucknow ...	704	South-Arcot ...	372	Násik ...	131
Dacca ...	713	Ghazipore ...	688	Chingleput ...	345	Sholápur ...	128
Faridpur ...	704	Fyzabad ...	640	Trichinopoly ...	341	Khándesh ...	124
Pabna ...	688	Bareilly ...	638	Tinnivelly ...	315	Ahmednagar ...	112
24-Parganahs ...	679	Basti ...	592	Godaveri ...	273	Kaládgi ...	110
Average...	787		721		404		152

11. We have thus categorically discussed at perhaps too great length the various objections to the system which after full and mature consideration aided by our practical and local experience we had prescribed.

We need only add that further consideration has strengthened our conviction of the necessity for more rigidly adhering to the general principles enunciated in the 16th paragraph of our report, dated Poona, 30th October 1883. Our Government has decided against any attempt to diminish the necessity of legislation by making the village dole equal to the poor-house ration. We are glad of it and desire to urge with, if possible, greater earnestness than before our appeal for legislation.

12. A modified acceptance of the principle that legislation is necessary is given in the 8th paragraph of the Government of India's letter, but there the condition is imposed that we should accept the suggested restriction of poor-house relief. This we cannot, and dare not do. We invite attention to the reply given before the Commission by Sir Richard Temple (answer to question No. 209, pp. 54-55, Appendix II). We are willing to allow these remarks to express our views. If legal power is not given us to make those who can work, accept relief on works, the alternative must be frankly admitted that those who need relief and can work but will not, must starve. It is indeed the only alternative. It seems to have been accepted by the Famine Commission (p. 62, Section 192). For with the limited legislation which in this paragraph they propose, we must either let necessitous persons who persist in remaining in their homes starve there altogether or else wait till hunger and distress have so acted on them, that they are driven to wander and thus become liable to be legally conducted to poor-houses, or we must abandon the first principle that those who need relief and can work must do so and thus commit ourselves to pauper relief in its worst and most indefensible form offering the premium of the charity dole to persons who remain long enough at home starving to become unfit for work.

13. Referring now to the Resolution under reply, as we are unable to modify our views, we proceed to give the facts asked for in paragraph 3 to the best of our ability.

14. (1) As regards facts showing the dimensions likely to be reached by village relief on the plan of the Government of India.

There is obvious difficulty in adducing facts which cannot be taken from actual experience. Such indeed are properly speaking not facts at all, but at best estimates.

We have, however, the facts of the Madras Famine to call to our assistance. We conceive that before the visit of the Viceroy in 1877, it will be admitted that village relief was the rule and poor-house relief the exception, and that the figures of that period may not unfairly be taken as the figures which would be recorded under similar conditions.

These figures are quoted by Sir Michael Kennedy, in his evidence (Famine Commission Report, Appendix II, pages 66-67). The experience was that as village relief extended, so did the expenditure of public money and so did the mortality. A remarkable instance is quoted. In a táluka under the charge of an experienced Famine officer, in one week the numbers on gratuitous relief exceeded the total population of the táluka!

The Viceroy's visit ushered in a return to a system of checks and a *restriction of the village dole.* The improvement, though of course gradual, was marvellous. We will not re-produce these figures, but we will content ourselves by stating that before we had reperused this evidence of an officer who had the fullest experience of both the poor-house and village-relief systems, we had resolved to reply to the query put to us that, supposing the distress to be

15. (2) Next, as regards facts illustrating the working of the Bombay system in 1876—1878.

We have in paragraph 6 (*b*) of this report expressed our opinion as to the feeling with which the people regarded residence in poor-houses. We desire also to refer to the facts already mentioned in paragraphs 10 and 11 of this report which are amply borne out by the records in the possession of Government.

16. We approve of the suggestion made in paragraph 10 of the letter from the Government of India that in clause 2 of Section 29 the words "if possible" should be inserted.

17. We would ask that the footnote to Section 89 of our draft be restored and also our provision that a branch poor-house should be attached to every professional agency work (Section 93 of our Code).

C. J. MERRIMAN,

J. B. RICHEY,

E. P. ROBERTSON,

G. F. SHEPPARD,

J. G. MOORE,

T. B. BEATTY,

T. G. HEWLETT,

C. G. W. MACPHERSON.

P. W. Enc 4
6020/85

No. 3, dated Calcutta, the 9th December 1884.

From—The Government of India,

To—Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

In compliance with the request of Your Lordship, conveyed in paragraph 5 of the Despatch marginally noted, we have the honour to transmit the Famine Code prepared by the Government of Bombay, together with the correspondence* which has taken place between ourselves and that Government on the subject.

No. 95 (Revenue) of 20th December 1883.

* Proceedings Volume (Famine), June 1884, Nos. 2—6, pages 205 to 365.

2. We have expressed our entire approval of the Code, except on one point, in respect of which we have the misfortune to differ from the Government of Bombay. As an important question of principle in famine administration is concerned, and as the proposals of the Government of Bombay, if accepted, must entail legislation of an exceptional and hazardous character, we think it best to ascertain the views of Your Lordship on the matter, especially as to the proposed legislation, before authorising the Government of Bombay to promulgate the Code.

3. The point at issue is, whether the poor residents of villages, who are unable to perform even light labour by reason of age, sickness, or other infirmities, should be relieved in time of famine in their own villages, or should be compelled to enter and receive relief in a poor-house. We hold with the Famine Commissioners† (including the two dissenting Members) that gratuitous relief to the poor of these classes should be given to them in their own villages, and that the poor-house should be reserved for the reception of wanderers, professional beggars, debilitated people who have fallen out of the ranks of the labourers, and applicants for gratuitous relief respecting whose necessities there may be reasonable doubt. We intimated our concurrence with these views to Your Lordship in our Despatch No. 4 (Famine), dated the 14th March 1881. The Government of Bombay, on the other hand, considers that, as a rule, the incapable poor should not be relieved in their villages, but that every person eligible for gratuitous relief, who can be moved without inhumanity, should be transferred to a poor-house. Village relief is thus confined in the Bombay Code to persons whom the inspecting officer considers it inhumane to move, and to the class of women known as *parda-nashin*, who by custom are unable to appear in public. The Government of Bombay also considers that, to ensure the success of the system of relief, an Act should be passed empowering famine officers to send the incapable poor, whether residents of villages or homeless wanderers, to poor-houses, and to retain them there until the distress is at an end.

† Report, Part I, pages 45-48.

4. The two questions of village relief and of legislation were very carefully considered by the Famine Commissioners. Confining ourselves at present to the former question, we would remark that the preference expressed in the Famine Commissioners' Report for village relief was evidently based on a review of a large body of evidence as to the comparative merits of the two systems. It was one of the points on which the Local Governments were specially asked to report when the Famine Commission entered upon its inquiry, and most of the witnesses, whose evidence is reported in Appendix II. to the Report, were asked their opinions on it. The references to that volume given in the margin will acquaint Your Lordship with the views held by Sir R. Temple, Sir M. Kennedy, and other competent authorities‡ on the subject of gratuitous relief, and we consider that, on the whole, they support the conclusions arrived at by the Famine Commission. Sir R. Temple, after describing his experience in Madras and Bombay, stated§ that in the height of a famine he should depend on village relief rather than upon relief camps, though he considered relief-camps valuable at the outset of distress. Questioned as to

‡ Pages 53, 54, 55, 63, 64, 67, 70, 80.

§ Appendix II, page 53, Q. 202.

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the rule in force in the Bombay famine, which required that everybody who could walk from his village should not be relieved except in the central poor-house, he gave his opinion* that persons "who could not properly walk a day's march" should be relieved in their villages, and that if the Bombay rule were thus modified, it would secure village-relief to a large number of persons who would be in danger of death if not relieved at home; and he added that, in addition to the aged and infirm people, who under his rule would become eligible for village-relief, there are other classes, such as persons attending sick relatives, very young children, and the like, who, though able to walk, cannot properly leave their homes and should be relieved in their own villages. He explained how village-relief could be administered without difficulty in Bombay and Madras by the hereditary village headmen, who are accustomed from generation to generation to perform duties cognate to those of village relief.† He expressed himself in favour of maintaining the village organisation, as far as possible, especially with regard to the weak and infirm,‡ and considered that the best prevention of "wandering"—the first symptom of distress in Southern India—is in the timely preparation of a system of village-relief.§ Sir Michael Kennedy's evidence was to much the same effect. He was disposed to give village-relief to those "who are unable to leave their homes, or who are otherwise disqualified from seeking aid elsewhere, and from giving any return for the assistance they receive." He defined such persons as follows:—Idiots, cripples, blind, diseased persons, and those who are too ill to move, old, decrepid, and past any work, young children living with and dependent on such persons, and women in an advanced state of pregnancy, or who have been recently confined."‖ With regard to poor-houses he described them as a necessary evil, but stated that they are needed "for the intermediate class of the people between the incapables, whom it is alone advisable to relieve in their villages, and those able to travel to some distance and to perform some light labour; also, for the reception of wanderers."¶ The objections to relief-camps were strongly stated by Mr. Bernard,** who expressed himself entirely against them as being calculated to lead to excessive mortality.

* Q. 213.

† Q. 205.

‡ Q. 192.

§ Q. 191.

‖ Page 63, Q. 8.

¶ Page 64, Q. 12.

** Page 70.

The weight of authority is, therefore, we consider, against the poor-house system of relief, and this is apparently admitted by the Government of Bombay, as it says that it does not contest the conclusion of the Famine Commission that the village system is generally preferable. It is, however, contended by the Local Government that the facts on which the Famine Commission based its conclusions were not drawn from experience in Bombay. We do not think that this position is defensible, as the officers to whose evidence we have referred and whose views seem to us to be more in accord with the recommendations of the Famine Commission than with the provisions of the Bombay Code, had large and exceptional experience in famine administration both in the Dekkan country of Bombay and also in Madras districts closely resembling the Bombay Dekkan in physical peculiarities.

With regard to the second question—the enactment of a law to compel persons to resort to, and to enforce residence in poor-houses—we informed Your Lordship, in paragraph 21 of our Despatch No. 4, dated the 14th March 1881, that we did not agree with the Famine Commission that such legislation was necessary even to meet the special case of homeless vagrants and mendicants. When the Bombay Code came before us we reluctantly decided to consent to a Bill being provisionally prepared by the Government of Bombay, on the condition that it was strictly confined to the proposal of the Famine Commission, and that it did not empower famine officers to remove residents of villages to poor-houses. Sir R. Temple and Sir M. Kennedy,†† both of whom played a leading part in the administration of the Bombay famine of 1877, had expressed themselves in favour of compulsory legislation if confined to cases of vagrancy, and in yielding to the wish of the Government of Bombay to legislate we were partly influenced by the fact that these experienced officers had considered legislation necessary to meet the special circumstances of Southern India. But we entirely agreed with Sir M. Kennedy that "a compulsory law to force persons to accept relief is neither advisable nor practicable," that it would be likely to cause a panic not only among the famine-stricken but among other classes, and that it would be liable to great abuse, and might also give rise to a strong public feeling against a Government enacting it.* As the poor-house system of the Bombay Famine Code appeared to involve a compulsory law of this objectionable character, we felt ourselves justified in requesting the Government of Bombay to adopt the alternative system of village inspection and relief as a condition to our assent to the Local Government taking power by law to deal with the practice of wandering. It would now appear from the reply of the Government of Bombay that the poor-house system is considered by its advocates to depend for success on a compulsory Act, and that it must break down if the officers administering it are not vested with legal powers. It is true that the Poona Committee strongly urge that the poor-house is not regarded by the poorer classes of the Bombay Presidency with the feelings of repulsion which it excites in Northern India. But the fact that the poor-house relief is not expected to prove efficacious even in the Dekkan unless it is made compulsory by the law, seriously tells in our opinion against this contention. We admit that the physical peculiarities of the Dekkan tend to make village inspection and relief more difficult than in the populous plains of Bengal, and that owing to the wandering habits of the people the poor-house must always be a necessary and important adjunct to famine administration in Southern India. But we think that the scheme provided by the Bombay Code, with the questionable legislation which it entails, presents more serious dangers than any which are likely to arise from the defects of village relief, and we note that the Government of Madras, which has to deal with tracts resembling the Bombay Dekkan, has found no difficulty in fully accepting the system of village relief for the incapable poor.† In this connection we would point out that the Poona Committee is mistaken in supposing that village inspection and relief on the system recommended by the Famine Commission was tried and broke down in the Madras famine. On the contrary, the chief feature of the administration of that famine was the collection of the people in great relief-camps or poor-houses, and one of the reforms introduced by Sir R. Temple, when specially deputed to Madras, was to break up these camps, and to send the inmates who were considered unfitted for work to their own villages to be gratuitously relieved there by the village officers. We cannot therefore assent to the argument of the Committee that the experience of the Madras famine tells against the system of village relief which the Famine Commission has recommended.

†† Appendix II, page 52, Q. 191, and page 64, Q. 9.

* Appendix II, page 64, Q. 9.

† Madras Code, pages 11 and 13, accompaniment to Despatch No. 12, dated 2nd October 1883.

G. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R. & A. D.—22-5-85.—70.

P. W. Ec 3
6020 J85

No. 27(Revenue), dated India Office, London, 12th March 1885.

From—The Secretary of State for India,

To—The Government of India.

PARA. 1. I have considered in Council your predecessor's letter No. 3 (Famine), dated 9th December last, transmitting the Famine Code prepared by the Government of Bombay, together with copies of the correspondence which has passed regarding it.

2. The leading features of the Code, which has been drafted with much care and ability, are these—

The duties of the Government, of the civil officers, of the Public Works Department, and of the Medical and Police Departments, on the approach of famine, are clearly laid down in the first chapter. The principal point to be noted is that, although the Code permits the appointment of a special Famine Commissioner, the Government of Bombay, agreeing with the view of the majority of the Committee who originally drafted the Code, consider that such an appointment will be advisable only in exceptional cases, and that the duties which the Famine Commissioner would perform ought ordinarily to be carried on by the Divisional Commissioners with some extra assistance. With this view I concur.

3. Regarding relief and relief agency, and the classification of sufferers from famine, the principles adopted in the Code appear to be these—

Public relief to be, as far possible, regulated by the labour test.

Employment on professional agency works to be the chief instrument of relief.

Works under civil agency to be rare, special, and subsidiary only.

People unable to work to be, as far as possible, collected and detained in poor-houses.

Relief to such people in their own homes and villages to be discouraged, and to be confined almost entirely to persons whom it may be found impracticable to remove to the poor-house; and to semi-gratuitous relief to "pardanashin" women, to weavers, and the like.

On works, the people relieved to be classified as—

(*a*) Full work gangs, composed of able-bodied and experienced labourers, capable of a full day's work;

(*b*) Ordinary gangs, composed of able-bodied but inexperienced labourers, capable of three-quarters of a full day's work.

(*c*) Light labour gangs, composed of people equal to half a day's work only;

(*d*) Aged and decrepit gangs; and

(*e*) Special gangs composed of people able to do a little light work only.

The three first classes to be employed usually on *task*, not *piece* work. The full task to be for classes (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) respectively a full day's work, three quarters or half of a full day's work. Labourers fulfilling the task to have the maximum wage; those falling short of it to have not less than the minimum. The maximum wage to be the value of $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. of grain a day; the minimum, the value of $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. for men, and proportionately for women and children. In ordinary circumstances, the wage to be paid in money, not in grain, and for Sundays as well as working days. Piece-work, however, to be permissible for the able-bodied, and to be remunerated a little more highly than by the maximum task wage. Class (*e*) to receive the maximum wage, being chiefly composed of convalescents whose strength wants getting up; class (*d*) the minimum wage. The poor-house and village doles to be the same, about 1 lb. $2\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. of food.

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4. As regards food supply, in ordinary circumstances Government will merely provide wages for the people relieved by works, leaving it to private trade to supply the food to be bought with these wages. The Code, however, leaves Government the power of exceptional action in exceptional circumstances. While I quite approve of the principle adopted by the Bombay Government on this subject, I would call Your Excellency's attention to paragraph 17 of my Despatch No. 14 (Revenue) of 22nd February 1883.

5. The foregoing appear to be the leading principles which the Bombay Government have laid down for their own guidance, and that of their officers in the event of famine. Before proceeding to communicate to Your Excellency my judgment on the two points regarding which the opinion of the Government of India is at variance with that of the Bombay Government, I desire to make one observation relative to the application in practice of Famine Codes generally.

6. The object of the preparation of a Provincial Famine Code is, as explained in paragraph 113 of the First Part of the Report of the Famine Commission, that, on the occurrence of the calamity of famine, time may not be lost in improvising a system of relief, mistakes may be avoided, and Government itself and its officers may, without hesitation and vacillation, be able at once to decide what is to be done, and to organize the machinery for carrying into effect the measures determined upon. I am glad to be able to agree with your Government that the Code now under consideration is, on the whole, well adapted to secure these objects. At the same time there is a danger, which must be carefully guarded against, that by laying down hard and fast rules the elasticity of administration essential to the successful treatment of a famine may be impaired. Experience shows that not only do circumstances vary in different provinces, of even the same presidency, but also in different famines, and even in different periods of the same famine. For example, the Bombay Government lay down that "employment on professional agency works should be the chief instrument of relief to the working population, and that civil agency works should be subsidiary and for special times and objects only." Of this principle, if applied when a famine has fully developed itself, I approve, and that this condition is implied is, indeed, shown by paragraph 15 of the Committee's Report of 30th October 1883. But such a qualification of a distinct rule is not unlikely to be overlooked, and it is evident that, when famine is threatening, civil agency works are at once the readiest and the least costly means of supplying the immediate relief which may perhaps save the population from falling into the depressed condition which is so injurious, and from which it is so difficult to raise them.

7. I now turn to the points on which the Government of India differ from the opinion of the Bombay Government. According to both views, for the relief of those who are unable to work, there must be, to some extent, both poor-houses and a system of village relief. But while Your Excellency's Government, agreeing with the Famine Commission, consider that village relief should be the rule, and that poor-houses should be reserved for those who have no homes, the Government of Bombay and their officers generally consider that, with a few strictly defined exceptions, people who cannot work should be removed from the villages to poor-houses, and detained there till the emergency is passed. The arguments on both sides are of considerable force, and the Bombay Government strongly urge the special circumstances of a great part of that presidency, where there is a thin population, easily moved and living in widely scattered villages, rendering efficient village relief much more difficult, and efficient poor-house relief much easier and less unpopular than in more densely peopled parts of India.

8. Although I feel strongly the evils of the breaking up of family and social ties, and of the dissolution of the village communities which the system advocated by the Bombay Government could hardly fail to occasion, yet local knowledge and opinion ought to carry so much weight on a question of this kind, that I should feel some difficulty in arriving at a decision adverse to the opinion of that Government, were it not that the Bombay authorities themselves admit that the poor-house system could be brought into general operation only by one of two alternative means—by special compulsory legislation, or by reducing the village dole to an amount insufficient for maintenance (paragraph 20 of Committee's Report of 30th October 1883); in other words, by letting people starve who will not enter the poor-house. I agree with the Bombay Government that it would be impossible in dealing with a famine to resort to the latter alternative; and I concur with your Government that a law to force people to accept relief would be unpopular, liable to abuse, and likely to cause panic, and thus to defeat its own objects.

9. It is urged that at present officers are expected to compel persons who are unable to work, and who prefer to the poor-house aimless wandering, to accept relief; that this shows that the necessity for compulsion is admitted, and that such necessary action should no longer be illegal. It does not, however, appear to me that the action of an officer who places a starving mendicant in a poor-house is really illegal, but I do not think that the detention of such a person after he has gained sufficient strength to be able, at least in his own opinion, to shift for himself, would be justifiable. In fact, with reference to the observations of the Bombay Committee (paragraph 12 of the Report of 5th September 1884), I must state that I concur with paragraph 7 of the Government of India's letter of 12th June 1884 that "gratuitous relief should be refused to any person capable of any kind of labour, and claimants for relief whose real need is doubtful should be referred to the poor-house," and I think that no attempt should be made to compel people to accept relief; if they refused it, the risk is their own.

10. Of course, where the conditions of any tract are such as to render village relief impracticable—where, for instance, villages are deserted from want of water,—there will be no resource but to establish a system of poor-house relief on the scale contemplated by the Bombay Government. In such a case, as it is stated that the poor-house system is not generally unpopular in Bombay, there will be no difficulty in inducing the really necessitous to enter poor-houses.

11. With reference, therefore, to the second paragraph of your letter under acknowledgment, I must express my concurrence with the views of Your Excellency's Government, and request that the Bombay Famine Code may be modified in accordance with them before promulgation.

G. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R. & A. D.—22-5-85.—700.

CHAPTER III.—GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

A.—In Villages.

94. Village relief is to be confined within the narrowest practicable limits. It will be granted to those who are capable of being moved without inhumanity only until they can conveniently and safely be transferred to a poor-house.

Village relief to be very exceptional.

95. Subject to this general principle, the following classes of persons are eligible for gratuitous relief in their villages, provided they have no relatives able and willing to support them:—

Who are eligible.

(1) The aged and infirm.
(2) The blind, crippled, and insane.
(3) Any others who are physically incapable of travelling without suffering.
(4) And those whose attendance on the sick or on infants in their own homes is absolutely necessary.

96. On the notification of famine the Collector shall cause registers of such persons to be prepared by the Patel, assisted by the accountant, of each village in the notified area. The village officers will forthwith submit to the Mamlatdar copies thereof, together with the name of the grain-dealer through whom it is proposed to distribute the dole. The Mamlatdar will satisfy himself that the grain-dealer chosen is a fit and proper person, and will appoint him or any other if preferable to provide, from such date as the Collector may direct, the daily supply.

Village dole register.

97. The dole will be weighed out by the grain-dealer and given to each person on the register in the presence of the Patel or accountant and at least two respectable villagers (section 98). If any recipient cannot attend by reason of illness, the Patel or accountant, in his absence, should receive and deliver the dole to that person. The grain-dealer will submit weekly, through the Patel, a statement of the grain distributed, and its cost, in the form prescribed (Form No. 11). The Mamlatdar will check the bill, and send the passed amount back by the bearer of the bill to the village officers, who will pay it to the grain-dealer and take his receipt in the presence of two members of the committee.

Precautions.

98. In each village the Mamlatdar will nominate a committee of five respectable villagers, whose duty it will be to prevent dishonesty, and to see that the intentions of Government are rightly carried out.

The village Panch.

99. In municipal towns and cities the Collector will utilize to the utmost extent the municipal organization and establishments, so as to secure the distribution of relief and the maintenance of statistics as far as possible in accordance with the spirit of this Code; the charitably disposed being dissuaded from giving private relief, and persuaded rather to subscribe to the general relief fund.

Relief in municipal towns, &c.

100. The dole to be given under this chapter will be the poor-house ration defined in section 129.

Amount of dole.

101. The Collector shall direct the entry on the village dole register of such of the village watchmen, shetsandis, messengers, and sweepers as may be necessary for the due performance of their duties in times of famine, when he is conced that their normal means of support have failed.

Relief of inferior village officers.

102. The village officers will, as far as is practicable, daily visit every house in the village to enquire into fresh cases of sickness or destitution. If it is decided that any person staying in a village is not entitled to receive the village dole, the village officer will offer such person a ticket of admission to the nearest poor-house and refuse gratuitous relief after due warning. They will seek out distressed wanderers within the village boundary and relieve them. They will do their utmost to induce distressed villagers to go to the relief works or poor-houses.

Duties of patels and accountants in villages.

B.—POOR-HOUSES.

103. Poor-houses will be of two kinds—central and branch. Branch poor-houses are intended for the infirm, who can be transferred thither from their villages. Central poor-houses will receive all classes of applicants, who will be classified, and either drafted to relief works, sent to hospital, or retained as ordinary inmates. These latter, who will comprise wanderers and professional beggars incapable of work, will be kept there compulsorily until the famine is so far at an end that private charity can again be relied on.

Central and branch poor-houses.

The poor-house may also be used as a rest-house for those on their way to a relief work who come with an order from a relief officer entitling them to food and shelter for the night.

104. There will be at least one central poor-house in each taluka, which will generally be situated at the head-quarter town, and as many branch poor-houses as may be requisite.

Number of poor-houses.

105. A hospital will be attached to each central poor-house and, where necessary, to branch poor-houses.

Hospitals attached to poor-houses.

106. The strength of establishment required for the poor-houses will be decided by the Collector. Rules for general guidance and hints as regards the details of management are given in Appendix II.

Establishments.

Govt. C. B. Press, Simla.—No. 158 R.-& A. D.—21-5-85.—700.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following letter from C. S. BAYLEY, Esq., C.S., Officiating Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department (Famine), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Simla, 21st May 1885, Circular No. 71-F.—1-6 :—

I am directed to enclose, for the information of His Excellency the Governor in Council, a copy of correspondence which has taken place between the Government of Bombay, the Government of India, and Her Majesty's Secretary of State, in connection with certain points of famine administration which have been under consideration in connection with the compilation of a draft Famine Code for Bombay.

(1) From the Government of Bombay, to the Government of India, No. 39, dated 4th January 1884 (Bombay Famine Code, Chapter III, Sections A and B).
(2) From the Government of India, to the Government of Bombay, No. 64-F., dated 12th June 1884.
(3) From the Government of Bombay, to the Government of India, No. 7715, dated 27th September 1884, and enclosure.
(4) From the Government of India, to the Secretary of State, No. 3, dated 9th December 1884.
(5) From the Secretary of State, to the Government of India, No. 27, Revenue, dated 12th March 1885.

2. With reference to this correspondence, I am to invite special attention to paragraph 145 of the Report of the Famine Commission, Part I, on the subject of relief houses. The question whether the poor residents of villages who are unable to perform even light labor by reason of age, sickness, or other infirmities should be relieved in time of famine in their own villages, or should be compelled to enter and receive relief in a poor-house, which has been the subject of considerable discussion and much difference, has now been settled finally by Her Majesty's Secretary of State, who has concurred in the views held by the Government of India. Attention is also called to the great importance, pointed out in the 6th paragraph of the Secretary of State's despatch, of sufficient elasticity in the rules of a Famine Code to admit of their application to the very varying conditions in which the problem of famine relief presents itself. It is desirable, therefore, that when the regulations of a Famine Code already sanctioned are brought into action, a careful watch should be kept over the working of them, and that a modification of any rules which may be found too stringent should be suggested at as early a date as possible to the Government of India.

ORDER—dated 23rd June 1885, No. 763, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue.

2. The Government observe that the provisions of the Madras Famine Code are in complete accordance with the views of the Government of India and the Secretary of State in the matter of relief in villages and poor-houses.

3. The attention of all Collectors will be drawn to the closing words of paragraph 2 of the Government of India's letter and to paragraph 6 of the Secretary of State's despatch.

(True Extract.)

W. Wilson

Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Financial Department.

No. 763A.

Copy to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department.

(Signed) W. WILSON,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

Exd. W. H. French.

120 Copies.

No 2 will be sent to Allahabad

No. 1628 W dy 13th July 1885

To

Communicated to Officers of the P. W. Dept. for information.

M.
7-7-85

Govt. of 1885 Madras.

REVENUE

SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT
6 JUL 85
DEPARTMENT

Issued

Recd. 9th July 1885 Encl. 6

G.O., 23rd June 1885, Nos. 763, 763A.

No. 1628 W dated 13th July 1885

JUNE.

Chief E. for Legn. M.

Sd. H. Sugrove
Supt. for D. H. S.

2d
13/7/85

Asst. 21/7

17/7 17/7

Bombay Famine Code.

Letter from the Government of India forwarding copy of correspondence regarding the —, communicated to the Board of Revenue, with remarks.

With Order