

Gobt. of {1891} Madras.
REVENUE.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 10th April 1891, No. 283.

APRIL.

Kalahasti zemindari.

Concurring generally with the Board's remarks on the report of the Deputy Collector on special duty, Kalahasti, regarding the state of the season and condition of the people in the Rénigunta valley of the —:

With order.

1891 ✓
P.W. CN^o 4301

Recd. at Co. 15.11.91
20/4/91

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20.56
No. 1122 W. 4/22 April 1891

Communicated to
the Supt. Engineer Fourth
Circle.

Ald.

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of these works and induce the people to resort to them without fear. For those absolutely incapable of working the Government has already sanctioned the opening of kitchens. From reports received to-day from Mr. Watson and the Dewan, it would appear that not more than 740 coolies had resorted to the works now in progress up to the 28th instant, although a far larger number could be easily employed on them.

3. The Commissioner hardly thinks it necessary to print the notes of house-to-house inspection as the main points are generally noted in the reports themselves, and complete copies of the notes are sent to Government. That an enormous failure of crops was bound to bring distress and the probable need of opening works for the relief of distress was never doubted. That laborers who refuse to leave their villages to go to the works opened for them must inevitably endure grave privations is a matter equally beyond doubt. But little practical good is gained by these careful inspections and these voluminous reports, unless the District officers will set to work to remedy the evil of which they complain. The Commissioner searches through the whole report in vain for one instance in which a village has been induced to devote a few hours to deepening a well on which it is said to be dependent, or in which a single man has been induced to abandon a life of starvation on one anna a day to a life of plenty on the Government works where three annas a day can easily be earned.

4. The Commissioner does not consider that the Collector has done his duty in sending on reports of this nature with an endorsement. He must himself visit all parts of his district and direct the actions of his subordinates to some more useful object than that of merely reporting.

5. In order that he may be able to devote his whole attention to the direction of relief operations, Mr. LeFanu should not take up the settlement of any taluk himself during the current year. The work can well be distributed between the Sub-Collector and the Deputy Collectors, including the officer recently appointed for the Head Assistant Collector's division. If, however, he finds it impossible to carry out this arrangement, he might take up the jamabandi of Wandiwash. He would then be able to watch the condition of the people in that taluk while the jamabandi is in progress, occasionally visiting also the affected tracts in the Kálahasti zemindari.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department;
„ Collector of North Arcot.

ORDER—dated 10th April 1891, No. 283, Revenue.

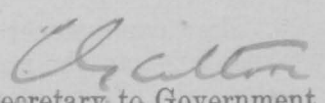
Miscellaneous.

His Excellency the Governor in Council concurs generally in the Board's remarks except in regard to the charge of failure of duty in paragraph 4, to which he does not consider that Mr. Le Fanu is obnoxious.

2. It should be explained why M.R.Ry. P. Rajaratna Mudaliar is being employed on village inspection. His services were placed at the Collector's disposal for the special purpose of making inquiry as to the value of the security tendered for the loan applied for by the Rajah of Kálahasti, and of carrying out all the formalities in connection therewith. Mr. Buckley was set free for village inspection in the Kálahasti zemindari by the appointment of a Deputy Collector to carry on the ordinary work of his division, and M.R.Ry. P. Rajaratna Mudaliar should be employed on his legitimate duty. A Special Deputy Collector has also been appointed to assist in conducting the jamabandi of the district generally, so that the Collector may have time to supervise relief operations properly; and he should at once visit the Kálahasti zemindari to see what can be done to induce the people to go to the works which have been opened for their relief.

3. The Government desires that it may be definitely ascertained and reported whether the villages referred to in paragraph 14 of the Special Deputy Collector's report are either shrotriem or inam as surmised by the Collector.

(True Extract.)


Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture,
„ the Collector of North Arcot.
„ the Public Works Department.
„ the Commissioners of Land Revenue.

Exd. A. Aubert.

100 Copies.

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with order.

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C. E. for S.
22/4/91
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10TH APRIL 1891, No. 283, REVENUE.

14. In various villages I have seen the zemindari authorities have not yet divided the produce with the cultivators and many a hard-pinched ryot, and probably also the farm servant dependent on him are therefore kept out of their rights just now. I request that the Dewan may be moved to make special arrangements to complete the division at once.

15. The situation of some of the villages in the Rajigunta valley as regards water supply for drinking purposes is not satisfactory. In the villages of Kothakundigai, Krishnapuram and Korakallu and also in some others there are one or more wells existing, but they have no water in them sufficient to supply the whole village. People in them complain that each family has to wait a long while before it could get a potful of water and that they are afraid that even the random supply may soon be lost by the scorching sun. I have encouraged them to repair the existing wells and to dig new ones. They have already repaired some and dug others in some villages, but other villages are faring badly and I request that orders may be issued to the Deputy Tahsildar to encourage the ryots to dig wells wherever possible and to repair the existing ones.

16. In conclusion, I beg to bring to your notice the utter incapacity and ignorance of the zemindari village servants. They have no idea that in a season like this it is their bounden duty to acquaint themselves with the condition and mode of living of the laboring classes and bring to notice any abnormal state of things which may happen in their respective jurisdiction. They are blind to what is going on around them and it was not until they accompanied me to the houses of the destitute persons were they able to know by what means the Malavandalooos and the Yenadis were subsisting in some villages.

Endorsement by W. J. H. LE FANU, Esq., Collector of North Arcot, dated Chetpat, 29th March 1891, No. 1400 Rev. Gl.

Forwarded to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture. Although this is not the report of the Divisional officer, I think it well to forward it, as it shows that the views of the District officers are confirmed by a fresh and independent observer. In fact in some matters, and especially as regards the Kalahasti taluk, the Deputy Collector seems to take a less sanguine view than Mr. Buckley. I would be obliged if the Commissioner would allow the house-to-house inquiries to be printed along with the letter. The apathy of the zemindari officials is deplorable and not overdrawn. I have called the immediate attention of the President, Taluk Board, Ranipet, to the deficiency of the drinking-water supply alluded to in paragraph 15. I have already told Mr. Buckley to take action in anticipation of the sanction of his Board, and that if he runs out of funds, the District Board will give him a grant. As to the statement contained in paragraph 14, I have reason to hope that these are shrotriem or inam villages over which the zemindar has no control. The Dewan has assured me that there has been no delay in dividing the produce on the part of the zemindari officials.

Resolution—dated 1st April 1891, No. 184.

Submitted for the information of Government.

2. Distress is doubtless increasing in the Kalahasti division also, but most of the villages visited by the Special Deputy Collector are within ten or fifteen miles of Yerpedu, where a large estimate for the repair of a tank has been ready for some time, but on which Mr. Watson has not been able to start work for want of laborers. The Commissioner was personally informed by Mr. Watson that Mr. Buckley was written to on the subject, and it is hoped that that officer has since been able to visit Yerpedu and discover the true cause of the unwillingness of the people to resort to that work. Both Mr. Watson and the Dewan have now several works on hand and it is necessary that the Collector or his Head Assistant should visit the villages in the neighbourhood

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10TH APRIL 1891, No. 283, REVENUE.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 1st April 1891, No. 184:—

MR. CLOGSTOUN.

Read—the following letter from M.R. Ry. P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR, Avargal, Deputy Collector on Special Duty, Kalahasti, to the Collector of North Arcot, dated Kalahasti, 18th March 1891, No. 41:—

I have the honor to submit my report on the state of the season and condition of the people in the Ragigunta valley of the Kalahasti zemindari which is situated to the south-east of the town of Kalahasti.

2. The notes taken by me at the time of my inspection of each village as well as a statement showing the villages inspected by me from the 12th to the 15th instant are herewith submitted.

3. The tract above referred to is the worst I have yet visited in these parts and the state of things I have observed there is far from being satisfactory. The number of people affected by the season in the villages is greater and the mode of their living and general condition worse.

4. The people in the zemindari may be divided into three classes. The first is the cultivating classes which corresponds to the pattadars in Government villages. The second is the Pariahs, or, as they are called here, Malavandloos, and the third is the Yenadies. In the first class are included the Elamas, the Kammavas and the Reddies. A section of the last two castes work, both male and female, in the fields and even now may be seen working in their ragi and cholum fields. I have seen even women irrigating the fields. These are generally in a more thriving state than the rest and at present are not so badly off as either the Elamas or the other Sudra castes. The sections of the Kammavas and the Reddies, amongst whom males alone work, occupy a middling position and may perhaps not be seriously affected generally by the present distress unless there is a further failure of the season. Then come the Elamas. These observe a sort of gosha system and the women do not even appear in the public and seldom work in the fields. The men are generally indolent, and agricultural operations are carried on mostly by paid servants, and it is said that the rajah levies a reduced rate of rent from them as they are of the same caste as he. These classes are generally in reduced circumstances, and I have observed several families of them in a state of actual starvation, but often not even willing to explain their circumstances. The condition of several families will gradually get worse as the season advances, and I have no doubt that help of some kind will be needed in their case hereafter.

5. But in all the three classes above referred to there are the poor ryots who represent the petty pattadars in Government villages paying Rs. 10 and under. These subsist partly by agriculture and partly by doing cooly work, and this year the crops having failed, they are obliged to depend on cooly work alone.

6. The cultivating classes above referred to generally subsist at present by borrowing and by the sale of their moveable property, chiefly cattle. The season having failed also last year, I have very seldom come across with a family having any stock of grain belonging to last year even amongst the well-to-do ryots, and the generality having either totally lost their crops this year, or, having had a very poor harvest sufficient to maintain the families for a few months only, or in some cases for a few days alone, they have naturally begun to borrow and to sell their cattle. This I found to have taken place already and to be going on in most of the villages visited by me this time. In the majority of cases borrowing simply means the sale of agricultural stock finally, as the families which have recourse to such means have very little other property and they think they have no right in the land which they have been cultivating for generations past.

7. I have also found that people have generally changed their usual meals. Ragi is more largely eaten at present than rice even in well-to-do families though the night meal consisted of rice alone when the season was good. The middle and the lowest class of the cultivating classes are mostly subsisting on ragi alone though occasionally they indulge in a rice meal. The case of those who subsist by doing cooly work will be dealt with later on.

8. The farm servants employed under the ryots, either on payment of a *muntha* of paddy daily or for daily feeding and payment of an annual sum of Rs. 6, have been in most villages dismissed from service as their masters are themselves pinched and are unable to maintain their servants. This is taking place everywhere and in consequence of the numbers of those who subsist solely on cooly work will be increased considerably before long.

9. The second class of the population is the Malavandloos; unlike their brethren elsewhere, some of them at least have cultivation to boast of, and they subsist partly by that means and partly by doing cooly work. The majority of them are daily laborers. It is about these and the Yenadies, who form the third class, that we must chiefly concern ourselves at present. The bad harvest of last year followed by the failure of the season this year has rendered the condition of these classes miserable everywhere. The Malavandloos, who usually subsist by agriculture, have lost their crops and have taken to cooly work when the usual daily coolies themselves have no work to do. The farm servants are also being gradually dismissed and are joining these in large numbers. To these must be added the Sudras, who subsist by daily labor alone and the large number of the Yenadies who usually subsist by the sale of fuel gathered in the jungle and by supplying the produce of the forest to the villagers, but who would gladly do any cooly work at present. All these require work at present and do not find it generally either in their own villages or at reasonable distance from them except in certain specified localities. It is not easy to suppose that these have absolutely no work to do at present. Some of them, as a matter of fact, find work of some kind occasionally in villages where the small extent of ragi or cholam crop belonging to a rich ryot may require a little watering or when the ryot wants to keep his land ploughed and ready for sowing when the rain falls again; but the majority of them having no other work to do have solely taken to gathering fuel and selling it in Kalahasti. Wherever I go and question the laboring classes the invariable answer is that the sole means of subsistence of the family is sale of firewood in Kalahasti. The Malavandloos and the Yenadies carry their fuel by head loads and the Sudra laborer sells his in hired carts. This unusual supply of fuel in the town has tendered to reduce the prices. The cooly who had from 3 to 3½ annas for a head-load before gets only Rs. 1½. Then there is the consideration that it is often impossible for a cooly to gather fuel and take it all the way to Kalahasti the same day. If there are two working members in a family, one of them gathers it every day and the other takes it

for sale, so that the family earns two annas daily; but if there is only one working member, it can earn only two annas every alternate day or one anna a day.

10. An adult requires about 1½ seers of ragi per day, the cost of which, according to the prices prevailing at present, is one anna. This quantity is required for a robust and hard-working man, and if ordinary people eat a little less, the difference at least is necessary for condiments. It has been estimated that one anna and three pies will be enough to keep an ordinary man in health. If so, the family, consisting of man and wife and a number of children, which is almost always the case with the working classes, cannot have sufficient food when its earnings are only two annas and much more so when it is only an anna.

11. From the house-to-house inspections I have made, I gather that the wages of labor have generally fallen considerably. The working classes are in consequence generally suffering from insufficiency of food. The earnings are often sufficient for man and wife alone. In such families the children are fed properly and the adults live on insufficient food. In some families having one or more old imbecile members the earnings are sufficient for them alone, and the working members live on half rations obtained by various means. In the villages of Krishnapuram and Thongala Mudur and in some other villages also I ascertained that both men and women, and the latter generally, eat tamarind seeds in the mornings and that they do not get as much of them as they require. The seeds are roasted and steeped in water before they are eaten. In some villages the Parayas and the Yenadies eat leaves largely to make up for deficiency in the food they take. The *thavathori* and *bathi* leaves are largely eaten. It is said that these leaves are eaten even in ordinary seasons not as food, but as a sort of *curry* and are only occasionally picked up from the forest. They are now consumed in a larger quantity and to supplement the deficiency in the supply of food. The general complaint is that even these leaves are not procurable in the jungle. The Yenadies supplement their random meals by roots picked up in the jungles. They call them *Yellugadda* and *Echetigadda*. These, like the leaves, are also eaten in ordinary seasons, but are now more eagerly sought after but not obtained in large quantities. The former sort is eaten in some villages when ever they are obtained and it is said that the latter cannot be dug easily as they are found deep in the soil. I have noticed these facts in some of the villages I have inspected and the day laborer patiently submits to his lot and makes no fuss about it, but his health is being gradually undermined and it is only a question of time for him to be rendered unfit for work. Some of the Yenadies in Perunthesam are examples of what the state of the working classes would be if sufficient work is not given them before long. At this place a number of emaciated figures—men, women and children—appeared before me, some clamouring for work and others asking me to let them know what they should do.

12. In all the villages I inspected I invariably told the laborers who asked for work to go to Yerpedu, Chavali or the proposed works at Kathur. "What am I to do with these," pointing out to the children and old members, was the invariable answer. But their refusal is also due to fear. The idea of going out of their villages brings to their minds at once the horrors of the last famine. They point out to the spots in the village where such and such family lived and describe how it went out to distant villages and fell a prey to starvation and disease. But I have assured them of safety and explained to them how the Government have arranged to give them work and told them that if they wanted to keep themselves and their family in health and strength, it was their plain duty to go to the works provided for them. After consideration they begged of me to give them work near their villages, if possible. The love of their homes and their near relations who cannot work and the fear of going to different parts on account of "famine" is so great that I do not think it an easy matter to persuade them to leave their homes at present, but I have no doubt that they will do so when their condition becomes worse and they actually see some people die of starvation in their midst and they themselves are reduced in health and strength.

13. The Dewan has, however, already furnished us with lists of works to be taken in various centres of the zemindari and the Special Executive Engineer is so busy preparing estimates that there will be no necessity here for driving the people to such extremes.