Public Works (1897) Department.

G.O., No. 2250 W

DATED ~~16~~ 17th August 97

[Despatch Abstract.]

Distress at Calicut: Pro: Revenue Dept. recording Board's Pro: passing orders on letter from the Collector of Malabar regarding — and the opening of relief works, Commt. to S.E. IV Circle.

D.C./178

[P.W. 25. / 5,000—30-11-96.]

Indexed. 18/8

Public works (1897) department

Current No: 7929

Government {1897} of Madras.

REVENUE.

Recd. 9. 8. } 1897.
Regd. 9. 8. }

Enclosures ~

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G.O., No. 621, 24th July 1897.

No. 2250 W, d 17-8-97

JULY.

Communicated to the S. S. IV circle.

11/8/97

S. S. IV Circle. with 8 copies 2 copies to orig

Distress at Calicut. D 17/8/97

Recording Board's Proceedings passing orders on letter from the Collector of Malabar regarding — and the opening of relief works.

O.L.S. 368 R 13/9

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

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 13th July 1897, Mis. No. 5270 :—

Read—the following letter from the Collector of Malabar, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 4th July 1897, C. No. 18-Confidential :—

I have the honour to report that I have recently had reason to modify the opinion expressed in my letter, No. 1317, Public, dated 2nd ultimo.

2. There is a great deal of distress in the town of Calicut as well as in the other towns. This exists to some extent every year between the months of June and August, when the modan crop is reaped. But this year it has been aggravated, not only by the high price of rice, but by the almost total failure of the mango and jack crops, which in ordinary years help the poor to tide over the bad months.

3. When rice was distributed to the poor of Calicut on the 22nd ultimo, some twelve thousand persons attended. They must all have been in want, for persons who had enough to eat would not have come for the small dole—a measure of rice and three pies—which was given to them. I am also informed that some 500 persons in the town are in receipt of daily doles from the richer natives who have formed associations for this purpose.

4. An improvement may be expected as soon as the modan crop is harvested at the beginning of next month. Fortunately, it promises to be bumper crop in most places. But if there should again be a failure of rain throughout India, as was the case last year, we shall certainly have to open relief works in the towns towards the end of the year. The agricultural labourer is generally paid in kind and will not therefore be greatly affected by the high price of rice. But work will have to be found for the fishermen and artisans of the towns. I do not think it will be necessary to open relief works to any large extent in the rural tracts.

5. The existing staff will probably be able to undertake the task. There are many public improvements of obvious utility which can be taken in hand at a short notice in all the Municipal towns. I do not therefore propose to call for any schemes of relief works for the present, as such a measure would probably cause unnecessary alarm, relief works being practically unknow in Malabar. But if there should not be a considerable improvement in the season elsewhere by the end of the month, I will arrange to have schemes drawn up at once.

Resolution—dated 13th July 1897, Mis. No. 5270.

The report read above will be submitted for the information of Government.

2. The Board does not doubt that the current high prices must cause great privation amongst such of the labouring classes as are not permanently employed on a grain wage.

It is observable however that in the week ending July 3rd the district average price of rice was 8·5 seers per rupee, as against 7·8 seers in July 1877, and when no Government relief was afforded.

3. The Board doubts whether the fishermen, as a class, will be the first to need relief. In the intervals between the bursts of the monsoon, fish is taken in large quantities and can always be got by casting nets. Shell fish of sorts are abundant in the back waters, and the fishermen have in fact many resources which labourers on the land do not possess.

4. On the other hand, it can hardly be said of the Moplah population of Ernad and Walavanad, who subsist by agriculture, that they receive regular grain wages. A vast number of them are day labourers living from hand to mouth, and in 1877 it was certainly amongst this class in the interior that distress was the greatest. It was endured without Government help.

5. The Board does not attach importance to the symptoms quoted by the Collector in paragraph 2.

It is commendable that the richer natives should form charitable associations to relieve the poor, and the Board would fain hope that in all the larger bazaars, kitchens may be started by private charity for the distribution of cooked food as was largely and usefully done in the famine of 1877.

6. The Board finds it difficult to adopt the Collector's opinion that relief of the sort contemplated by him will become necessary.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAR,
Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
„ the Collector of Malabar.

Order—No. 621, Revenue, dated 24th July 1897.

Miscellaneous. Recorded.

(True Extract.)

for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner.
„ the Public Works Department.
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Financial Department.
„ the Accountant-General.
„ the Public Department (for information).

Exd. Shaik Karim.

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order No. 2250 W.D. 17-8-97

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(By D.mc. IV.
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