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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 381

Press
Mis.

Dated

4-4-1870

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,
4th April 1870.*

No. 23. Read the following Despatch from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council, dated India Office, London, 27th January 1870, No. 9, (Public.)

I forward, herewith, copy of a letter,* and of a Memorandum by the West India Committee, together with the reply† I have caused to be returned to the same, on the subject of emigration to British and Foreign, especially French, Colonies.

* 16th December 1869.

† 22nd January 1870.

2. I desire to be furnished with periodical information as to the number of coolies who leave India for British and Foreign Colonies, and of those who return—men, women, and children, respectively—with such accounts as can be obtained of the sums of money brought back with them and remitted by them during their sojourn in the Colonies.

From A. MACGREGOR, Esq., to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated Walbrook House, 16th December 1869.

I have the honour to enclose, on behalf of the West India Committee, a Memorandum relative to the emigration of coolies from Bengal, which the Committee beg leave to submit for your Grace's consideration.

They trust that your Grace will deem the great interest which the West India Colonies have in the continuance of beneficial intercourse between the British East and West Indies a sufficient apology for soliciting attention to this subject.

Memorandum relative to Cooly Emigration from Bengal.

1. Ever since permission was first granted by the Government of India to engage coolies in Bengal for service under indenture in the British Colonies, the utmost jealousy has been evinced to ensure thorough good treatment to these people from the moment of their embarkation at Calcutta until their repatriation, if they should determine to return.

2. The Government of India, aware that the coolies could not have any knowledge of the countries to which they were invited to remain, very properly acted as their guardians, and would not permit them to be engaged for service in any Colony where they were not sure of being comfortably settled, and of earning good wages, upon plantations possessing suitable houses, hospitals, and medical attendance.

3. Emigration was in the first instance restricted to the Island of Mauritius, and the observances for regulating it were gradually improved, until an active and successful intercourse was established. Latterly, the immigrant population there appears to be sufficient, and the stream of passengers to and fro is about equal in numbers. An official return from Calcutta reports that these were respectively 1200 and 1400 during the past year.

4. In the year 1843 permission was granted to some of the British West India Colonies to resort in like manner to India for labourers, and for many years past a well-organized system of communication has prevailed between Bengal and the West Indies, especially the Colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad, where the cooly families now constitute a large portion of the population. These Colonies have long had agents resident in Calcutta for conducting the collection of the emigrants, engaging the ships to convey them, and preparing them in the depots where they are medically inspected. Their conveyance is regulated by Acts of Parliament 15 and 16 Vic., Cap. 44, and 16 and 17 Vic., Cap. 84. When the coolies arrive in the West Indies they come under the special protection of a magisterial officer called Immigration Agent General, who has them conducted to the estates where he has previously made arrangements for their reception and employment, and he continues to act as their guardian during the whole period of their sojourn.

There is in each Colony an Act or Ordinance to regulate the immigration, and to secure the rights and interests of the immigrants. These laws, the terms of the Passenger Acts, and the appointment of the agents, have all of course been sanctioned if not dictated by Her Majesty's Government, and the conduct of every person concerned is under the constant supervision of the Governors nominated by the Crown.

5. The introduction of the coolies into the British West Indies has indeed proved to be one of those transactions which produce nothing but advantage, and it is especially beneficial to the coolies who are thus enabled to realize comparative wealth. It appears by the reports of the Emigration Commissioners that those who return after a few years' service to India carry back large sums of money. The following is an extract from one of these reports :—

“ The amount of money accumulated by these persons may be in some degree conjectured from what is known respecting the ships *Zenobia*, *Eliza*, and *Eliza Stewart* : about 300 coolies returned to India in the *Zenobia*, and were supposed to carry with them about £30,000, *i. e.*, about £20 a-piece ; and 65 of the number are reported by Mr. Caird to have carried home with them in drafts on their respective districts Rupees 15,579, giving a somewhat larger average amount of savings. One man, who landed at Madras, was possessed of 1000 Spanish dollars and Rupees 30. The 20 sirdars who went to India in the *Eliza* carried with them £1073-13-11, more than £50 a-piece, and the 354 persons who went by the *Eliza Stewart* (comprising 49 women and 34 boys and girls) carried back £3532-2-3, being about £10 a-head on the whole number. We state these facts in detail as they appear to us to afford the best possible evidence as to the opportunities which are open to these persons of thriving in the West Indian Colonies.”

6. The general success of this movement has been well described by a very competent and disinterested witness, the Rev. Dr. Underhill, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, who, having resided several years in Bengal, afterwards visited Trinidad.

The following extracts from a report which he subsequently published show how beneficial has been the introduction of coolies, not only to themselves, but to all classes of the population :—

“ You may now ask how does this system work. It is approved by every class of persons in the Island. I conversed with Government officials, planters, Managers, Missionaries, store-keepers, and with the coolies themselves, and I did not hear a single complaint. Men of the most opposite political opinions, men who very frequently criticise the acts of the Government, as well as men who naturally view the planting interest with suspicion, all concurred in this that the immigration system as worked in the Island of Trinidad is a success. My own observation on such estates as I visited or passed through, quite corroborates the testimony of parties in the Island. The houses of the coolies, to say the least, are better than the houses usually inhabited by them in India. They look well fed, happy and contented. I spoke to men from many parts of India—from East Bengal, Behar, the North-West Provinces, and from Oudh—every one expressed himself as pleased with his lot. ‘ This good country ’ was a very frequent reply to the questions I put. The lowest rate of wages earned is 10d. for a task occupying about four hours ; many earn double or treble that.

“ Many years must elapse before the population in Trinidad will overtake the means of easy subsistence. At present not one-twentieth part of the soil is under cultivation. Noble forests clothe the mountain sides, where coffee and cocoa would grow in great abundance ; while the land adapted for sugar is overrun with brushwood, or forms extensive savannas of grass. However rapidly immigration may proceed, it cannot but conduce, under its present wise regulations and further discretion, to the welfare of all classes and to the commercial prosperity of the Island.”

7. Such being the state of the relations between the British territories and peoples of the East and West Indies, the West India Committee learnt with great surprise and regret in the year

1861 that Her Majesty's Government had entered into a convention with the Emperor Napoleon to permit the French to hire labourers in Bengal and transport them to the French Colonies. The Committee could not believe that the Government of India had consented to the adoption of this policy, because it implies an utter abandonment of their coolly subjects, for whose welfare they had always manifested great solicitude. Of the treatment of the coolies who may be taken to foreign countries, they can know nothing ; the Convention, indeed, adverts to the British Consuls as if they should be able to afford them some protection from maltreatment. But a perusal of the only Despatch which appears to have been published, one dated from Réunion, 21st January 1863, will at once prove the futility of this expectation. The French under this Convention may in fact promise, and, do what they please, without any effective control.

8. As eight years have elapsed, it is now time to review what has taken place, and to inquire how many coolies have returned to Bengal from the several French Colonies to which they had been sent. The Emigration Commissioners in Westminster, who control all the arrangements connected with the British West India immigration, have no charge of the Indian emigration to the French Colonies, and they do not possess any official information respecting it.

9. The West India Committee, therefore, beg to suggest that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India should order returns from Calcutta containing full information with regard to the number of coolies—men, women and children—who embarked for the several French Colonies in each year, and the number who have since returned to Bengal, with all particulars respecting their condition, and whether they have brought or remitted money, as the coolly emigrants returning from the British Colonies have done, and, if anything, how much.

10. This investigation is the more desirable, because other nations, having tropical or quasi-tropical possessions, may claim similar privileges with those accorded to France ; and, even apart from the personal interests of the coolies, it is evident that a corps of foreign agents, recruiters and ship-owners, acting in competition with each other to collect emigrants on behalf of France, Holland, the United States, perhaps Spain and Brazil, could hardly fail to occasion a very inconvenient commotion in Bengal, which would have a most injurious influence on emigration to the British West Indies.

11. Although the British Colonies present an ample field for the beneficial employment of the people of India who may desire to improve their condition by emigrating, that West India Committee could not suggest the exclusion of foreign competitors on the ground alone. But the conduct of coolly emigration cannot be compared with ordinary traffic. It cannot be made free. There is a necessity not only for regulation in Bengal, but for protection to the coolies during the period of their contract service, and it is impossible to place British and foreign competitors in this case on equal terms. Emigration to the British Colonies being now well-known, foreign agents may induce emigrants to believe they are going to countries perfectly similar to those of which they have heard favourable reports.

12. Even if coolies were to return from foreign Colonies, they would come back imbued with the notions of foreigners inimical to British power in India ; whereas those who return from the British West Indies come with the habits of British subjects, able generally to understand and speak English.

13. The coolies who elect to remain in the British West Indies are paid in money, the amount of the back passage commuted at fifty dollars. Latterly, they have preferred in Trinidad to receive grants of land. This year seventy families have, at their own request, been thus settled near to states upon which they have formerly worked under indenture, and where they intend to continue to work frequently. As their children, who grow up vigorously, speak English well, they will be amenable to instruction, and, it is hoped, become Christianised. All coolly orphan children are already taught in schools provided for them.

14. The Convention with France may be abrogated by giving eighteen months' notice in the month of July.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department.
4th April 1870.

Return showing the number of Coolies who have returned to the East Indies with the amount of Savings remitted on their behalf, from 1843 to 1868.

Year.	Number returned.	Amount of savings.		
		£	s.	d.
1843 to 1856				
1857	6602	46,721	14	2
1858	1218	19,647	15	0
1859	808	11,535	9	10
1860	797	15,018	12	8
1861				
1862	377	4,076	13	8
1863	414	24,387	1	8
1864				
1865	467	13,939	7	9
1866	983	26,396	5	2
1867				
1868	455	11,500	0	0
	364	4,037	17	2
Total ...	12,485	177,260	17	1

Average amount of savings per head £14-3-11½.
 „ number returned since 1843 499 per annum.
 „ savings remitted each year since 1843. £7090-8-8.

Note.—The ship *Ganges* sailed with return coolies from British Guiana for Calcutta on the 11th September 1869. The coolies numbered 407 souls, or 357½ per statute adults, classified as follows:—229 men, 97 women, 37 boys, 26 girls, and 18 infants. The amount of earnings remitted to India on their behalf, together with the estimated amount of valuables taken by themselves, is stated to have been \$70,677, being an average of more than £36 per capita on the whole number.

From H. MERIVALE, Esq., Under Secretary of State for India, to A. MACGREGOR, Esq., dated India Office, London, 22nd January 1870.

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th ultimo, transmitting a Memorandum by the West India Committee on emigration from India to British and foreign Colonies.

2. In reply, I am instructed to inform you that the Duke of Argyll has called for a general return of the number of coolies who leave India for British and foreign Colonies, and of those who return—men, women and children—respectively—with such accounts as can be obtained of the sums of money brought back with them and remitted by them during their sojourn in the Colonies.

No. 1230.

Copy forwarded to the Government of Madras for information and guidance.

By order of the Governor-General in Council,
 FORT WILLIAM, HOME DEPARTMENT, (Signed) J. GEOGHEGAN,
 PUBLIC, 7th March 1870. Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 24. ORDER THEREON, 4th April 1870, No. 331.

Communicated to the Protector of Emigrants who will furnish the return called for by the Secretary of State for India for the year 1869; and arrange for furnishing similar returns, in future, at the close of each year.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Protector of Emigrants.

Ed. J. Wright.

Govt. of 1870 Address.

PUBLIC.

To

THE PROTECTOR OF EMIGRANTS.

Dated April, 4th.

Recd.

Recd.

G. O., 4th April 1870, No. 381.

APRIL

Nos. 23-24.

Requesting the Protector of Emigrants to furnish the return called for by the Secretary of State for the year 1869, of the number of coolies who leave India for British and foreign Colonies, and of those who return, &c., and to arrange for furnishing similar returns, in future, at the close of each year.

India Office;
London, 27th January 1870.

Public,

No. 9.

**To His Excellency the Right Hon'ble the GOVERNOR
GENERAL of India in Council.**

MY LORD,—I forward herewith copy of a letter* and of a memorandum by the West India Committee, together with the reply† I have caused to be returned to the same, on the subject of emigration to British and foreign, especially French, Colonies.

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I have, &c.,

ARGYLL.

Dated Walbrook House, the 16th December 1869.
From—A. MACGREGOR, Esq.,
To—Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

I HAVE the honor to enclose, on behalf of the West India Committee, a memorandum relative to the emigration of coolies from Bengal, which the Committee beg leave to submit for your Grace's consideration.

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2. The Government of India, aware that the coolies could not have any knowledge of the countries to which they were invited to remain, very properly acted as their guardians, and would not permit them to be engaged for service in any Colony where they were not sure of being comfortably settled, and of earning good wages, upon plantations possessing suitable houses, hospitals and medical attendance.

3. Emigration was in the first instance restricted to the Island of Mauritius, and the observances for regulating it were gradually improved, until an active and successful intercourse was established. Latterly, the immigrant population there appears to be sufficient, and the stream of passengers to and fro is about equal in numbers. An official return from Calcutta reports that these were respectively 1,200 and 1,400 during the past year.

4. In the year 1813 permission was granted to some of the British West India Colonies to resort in like manner to India for laborers, and for many years past a well organized system of communication has prevailed between Bengal and the West Indies, especially the Colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad, where the cool families now constitute a large portion of the population. These Colonies have long had agents resident in Calcutta for conducting the collection of the emigrants, engaging the ships to convey them, and preparing them in the depôts where they are medically inspected. Their conveyance is regulated by Acts of Parliament 15 and 16 Vic., Cap. 44, and 16 and 17 Vic., Cap. 84. When the coolies arrive in the West Indies they come under the special protection of a magisterial officer, called Immigration Agent General, who has them conducted to the estates where he has previously made arrangements for their reception and employment, and he continues to act as their guardian during the whole period of their sojourn. There is in each Colony an Act or Ordinance to regulate the immigration, and to secure the rights and interests of the immigrants. These laws, the terms of the Passenger Acts, and the appointment of the agents, have all of course been sanctioned if not dictated by Her Majesty's Government, and the conduct of every person concerned is under the constant supervision of the Governors nominated by the Crown.

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"The amount of money accumulated by these persons may be in some degree conjectured from what is known respecting the ships *Zenobia*, *Eliza*, and *Eliza Stewart*: about 300 coolies returned to India in the *Zenobia*, and were supposed to carry with them about £30,000, i. e., about £20 a piece; and 65 of the number are reported by Mr. Caird to have carried home with them in drafts on their respective Districts Rupees 15,579, giving a somewhat larger average amount of savings. One man, who landed at Madras, was possessed of 1,000 Spanish dollars and Rupees 30. The *Eliza Stewart* was supposed to have carried with them £1,078-13-11, more than £50 a piece, and the 354 persons who went by the *Eliza Stewart* (comprising 49 women and 34 boys and girls) carried back £3,532-2-3, being about £10 a head on the whole number. We state these facts in detail as they appear to us to afford the best possible evidence as to the opportunities which are open to these persons of thriving in the West Indian Colonies."

6. The general success of this movement has been well described by a very competent and disinterested witness, the Reverend Dr. Underhill, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, who, having resided several years in Bengal, afterwards visited Trinidad.

The following extracts from a report which he subsequently published show how beneficial has been the introduction of coolies, not only to themselves, but to all classes of the population:—

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"Many years must elapse before population in Trinidad will overtake the means of easy subsistence. At present not one-twentieth part of the soil is under cultivation. Noble forests clothe the mountain sides,

where coffee and cocoa would grow in great abundance; while the land adapted for sugar is overrun with brushwood, or forms extensive savannas of grass. However rapidly immigration may proceed, it cannot but conduce, under its present wise regulations and further discretion, to the welfare of all classes and to the commercial prosperity of the Island."

7. Such being the state of the relations between the British territories and peoples of the East and West Indies, the West India Committee learnt with great surprise and regret in the year 1861 that Her Majesty's Government had entered into a Convention with the Emperor Napoleon to permit the French to hire laborers in Bengal and transport them to the French Colonies. The Committee could not believe that the Government of India had consented to the adoption of this policy, because it implies an utter abandonment of their cool subjects, for whose welfare they had always manifested great solicitude. Of the treatment of the coolies who may be taken to foreign countries, they can know nothing; the Convention, indeed, adverts to the British Consuls as if they should be able to afford them some protection from maltreatment. But a perusal of the only despatch which appears to have been published, one dated from Réunion, 21st January 1863, will at once prove the futility of this expectation. The French under this Convention may in fact promise, and, do what they please, without any effective control.

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14. The Convention with France may be abrogated by giving 18 months' notice in the month of July.

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Average amount of saving per head ... £14-3-11½.

„ number returned since 1843 ... 499 per annum.

„ savings remitted each year since 1843 ... £70,90-8-8.

Note.—The ship *Ganges* sailed with return coolies from British Guiana for Calcutta on the 11th September 1869. The coolies numbered 407 souls, or 257½ per statute adults, classified as follows:—229 men, 97 women, 37 boys, 25 girls, and 18 infants. The amount of earnings remitted to India on their behalf, together with the estimated amount of valuables taken by themselves, is stated to have been \$70,677, being an average of more than £36 per capita on the whole number.

Dated India Office, London, the 22nd January, 1870.

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No. 1230.

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tion and guidance.

By Order of the Governor General in Council,

FORT WILLIAM,
HOME DEPARTMENT,
PUBLIC;
The 7 March 1870.

Henry James

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No 381 - 4 April 1879
 Communicated to the Protector of Emi.
 N. Grant who will furnish the Return calling
 for by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs
 year 1869; and arrange for furnishing
 similar Returns, in future, at the close of
 each year.

MM

The Protector of Emi.
 to the Secretary of State

Public 1870 DEPARTMENT.

From
 Under Secy of the India
 Home Dept

No. 1230

Dated 7
 Received 14 } March 1879

666
 No. 391

Forward copy of despatches
 with the enclosed from
 Home Dept. respecting
 Education to British and
 Foreign, especially French,
 Colonies

W. H. ...

Govt. of (1870) Madras.

Public

the Protector of Immigrants

Dated April 4.

Recd

Encl.

G O April 1870 No. 381

Nos. 23. 24.

No. 957.

Respecting the Protector of Immigrants
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