M.R.O. 14-5,450-22-10-25.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1891	Press ~~Mis.~~
562. 563	
Dated 31-7-1866.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
31*st July* 1866.

No. 562. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Works Department :—

Communicating Revenue Proceedings to certain Public Works Officers, with instructions to place themselves in communication with the Revenue authorities with a view to arranging for the immediate prosecution of certain works, and, at the same time, for providing suitable employment for unskilled labor, in order to alleviate the distress which at present exists. } (Here enter 26th July 1866, No. 2,369.)

No. 563. ORDER THEREON, 31st July 1866, No. 1,891.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. GROSE,
Under Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue,
„ the Famine Relief Committee, } With Proceedings Public Works Department, No. 2,369.

Erd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 619. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Revenue Department, dated 25th July 1866, No. 1,861 :—

Dated 25th July 1866, No. 1,861.

Miscellaneous.

The Governor in Council has had under his serious consideration the Reports which have been received from the Collectors of several of the Districts in this Presidency in which, owing to the long continued drought, and the high prices of the necessaries of life, excessive distress at present prevails. For some time past the scarcity, amounting to actual famine, which has prevailed in Ganjam, has compelled the Government to make special contributions for the relief of the starving poor, in addition to subscriptions which have been raised for the same purpose both in the District and at Madras. The latest accounts from Ganjam are somewhat better. There has been a copious fall of rain since the beginning of the present month, and there is a prospect of a tolerable harvest. Up to this time, however, the south-west monsoon has not reached the Districts in the south-eastern portion of the Presidency, and in North Arcot, Salem, South Arcot, and Coimbatore the distress caused by the high price of food, and by the want of water and of pasture, is most severely felt. The pressure is apparently greatest in that part of the country which includes the Southern Talooks of North Arcot, the North-Western Talooks of South Arcot, the Western Talooks of Salem, and in the Southern and Eastern Talooks of Coimbatore. It is also very severely felt in Bellary. The Acting Sub-Collector of Coimbatore, in a letter addressed to the Collector on the 14th instant, adverting to the straits to which the poorer classes in the Upland Talooks of his Division are now reduced, has urged the necessity of immediate relief. He writes that it is impossible not to "be struck with the poverty-stricken "appearance of the lower classes, with hardly a rag to cover their nakedness, and "hardly any flesh to cover their bones;" that "the cattle were even worse off, they "were mere moving skeletons; that he had seen wretched beings, with hardly a rag "on them, eating the fruit of the prickly-pear and berries from trees;" and that "every night hundreds of poor wretches skulk about the streets of Caroor picking "up what wretched garbage they can collect; that the coolies are so weak that, "when they first come to the Public Works Department for work, they have to be "fed before they can be worked at all." It is to be feared that a very similar state of things exists in the other Districts already referred to, and as regards the cattle the Collector of Salem reports that thousands have died for want of pasture and want of water. In one village alone, which Mr. Arbuthnott lately visited, upwards of a thousand head of cattle have perished.

2. A Public Meeting was held at Madras on the 21st, at which a sum of upwards of Rupees 20,000 was subscribed for the relief of the starving poor in the distressed Districts, and also for the relief of the poor in Madras, in the event of an actual famine arising in the Presidency Town; and a Committee which was appointed at the Meeting, and which includes representatives of all the wealthier classes of the community, is now engaged in raising additional subscriptions for the same purpose, and in devising measures for organizing and aiding local efforts for the immediate relief of such of the starving poor as cannot obtain employment. The Governor in Council resolves to contribute to the Relief Fund from the Public Treasury the sum of Rs. (20,000) twenty thousand in aid of the subscriptions raised at the

Meeting, in addition to the sum of Rs. 1,000 which has already been placed at the disposal of the Acting Sub-Collector of Coimbatore, and he will be prepared to grant the equivalent of such further sums as may be raised for the same purpose at Madras and in the Provinces. These grants will be disbursed to the Madras Committee, who will arrange with the local authorities for their appropriation. It is to be hoped that by this means sufficient funds will be available for the relief of the old, the infirm, and the young, who are not in a position to earn by their labour the means of existence. The principle of confining charitable relief to those who cannot work will of course be carefully acted on.

3. But in order that this species of relief may be confined within the narrowest possible limits, and also with the view of obtaining some return for the expenditure which the State may be compelled to incur in providing for the necessities of the lower classes, the Governor in Council deems it essential that, in the Districts to which reference has been made, immediate measures should be taken for employing large numbers of the suffering but able-bodied poor on useful public works.

North Arcot.
South Arcot.
Salem.
Coimbatore.
Bellary.

He accordingly directs that the Collectors of the Districts named in the margin will at once arrange, in communication with the local Officers of the Public Works, for the immediate commencement in those parts of their respective Districts in which the distress is greatest, of such works as they may deem most useful either for improving the communications or the sources of irrigation, and at the same time suitable for the employment of unskilled laborers. The works to be undertaken should be so selected as to admit of the people being employed in gangs of moderate strength, either at or in the vicinity of their own villages; for, in the present state of the public health, it is advisable to avoid, as much as possible, the collection of large bodies of laborers, and as the rates of wages should not exceed what is requisite for the actual maintenance of the laborers, it is not desirable that they should be required to leave their homes. The wages of the laborers should be paid daily, and in some cases it will be necessary to make the payments in grain. Many of these works may be carried on under the immediate supervision of the Revenue Officers of various grades, and, in order that that supervision may be as complete as circumstances will admit, the Government resolve to transfer temporarily the Assistants named in the margin* to the Districts specified opposite to their respective names. These gentlemen will join the Districts, to which they are severally transferred, with as little delay as possible. The circumstances of the case do not admit of the delay which would be involved in the previous submission of Estimates or Reports, in regard to the works to be undertaken or the amount to be expended. This must be left to the judgment of the several Collectors, aided by the advice of the local Public Works Officers, and of course of the Superintending Engineers, where these Officers are within reach. The Government, however, will expect to be furnished, with as little delay as possible, with full reports as to the works which may be commenced, and the amount of expenditure which is being incurred.

* North Arcot, Mr. E. Gibson
South Arcot, Mr. C. W. W. Martin.
Salem, Mr. J. D. B. Gribble.
Coimbatore, Mr. E. N. Overbury.
" Mr. H. W. Wellesley.

4. Although the pressure on the poor of the Presidency Town is at present not to be compared with that which exists in the Districts above referred to, the Governor in Council deems the present a suitable opportunity for commencing two important works, which have been projected for some time. One is the series of works planned by Mr. Fraser for improving the water supply of Madras, and the other is the formation of a tank near Saint Thomas' Mount in connexion with the project of uniting the Northern and Southern Canals. Orders will be issued in the Public Works Department for the immediate commencement of these works, which will afford employment to a large body of laborers from Madras and its neighbourhood, and as a part of the arrangements for the effectual supervision of the working gangs the services of an additional Assistant,* to be stationed at the Red Hills, will be placed at the disposal of the Collector of the Madras District, who will depute one of his present Assistants to the Mount for the same purpose. It will be the duty of these young Officers, acting in co-operation with the Officers of the Public Works Department, to see to the payment of the coolies and the arrangements for hutting them where such may be necessary, and to the due observance of such sanitary precautions as may be prescribed by the Sanitary Commissioner.

* Mr. H. F. Clogstoun.

5. The Governor in Council trusts that the foregoing measures for providing work for the able-bodied poor, combined with the efforts which are being made for affording relief to those who, from physical infirmity, are incapable of earning a livelihood, will go far to alleviate the distress which at present exists.

No. 620. ORDER THEREON, 26th July 1866, No. 2,369.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 92.

1. Communicated to the Superintending Engineers of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 7th Divisions and to Mr. W. Fraser, C. E., with instructions to place themselves in communication with the Revenue authorities with a view to arranging for the immediate prosecution of such works as may be deemed most useful for improving communications or the sources of irrigation, and at the same time for providing suitable employment for unskilled labor.

2. Mr. Fraser will take immediate steps for marking out the Mount Tank and for distributing the work of its construction to such parties as may seek employment on it, retaining the executive control of the work under his own charge.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineers, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 7th Divisions.
" Controller of Public Works Accounts.
" Revenue Department.
To W. Fraser, Esq., C. E.
Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Rev. 1866. Orissa
Pro. of Govt. for July
No. 2273

Proceedings of the
Madras Govt. in
the P. W. Dept.

Dated 26th July
Received 30th } 1866.

Ref 2369
Abs. P.W. Dept. dy 31st July 66
& No. 2504 —

Communicating Revs. Pro:
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Nos 562-563

Ch.
Revs.
Dept.
1891.

Communicated to the
Bd of Revenue.

To
The Bd of Revenue.
Famine Relief Cell

31st July 1866
with Pro. No. 2369
Dept. dated 31 July