MADRAS RECORD OF

Government of Madra

Revenue DEPARTMEN

G.O. No. 2059 — Pre
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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
13th August 1866.

No. 309. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 3rd August 1866, No. 5,336.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Coimbatore, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Ootacamund, 31st July 1866, No. 193 :—

1. In reply to your letter of the 14th instant, I have the honor to state that the information called for, as to "what quantity of food-grain is supposed to be available in your District for the consumption of the population," not being generally supplied from the Talooks, I am obliged to rely for it on the local knowledge of my chief and old ministerial officers, who are probably able to afford as correct an approximate estimate of the quantity of grain stored up by the merchants and wealthy Ryots in the country, as the Tahsildars, to whom they (merchants and Ryots) are not likely to disclose their circumstances.

2. This District contains a population of about 1,300,000 in round numbers. We may estimate the people engaged in agricultural operations at eight lacs, of whom about one-half will have grain stored for domestic consumption. About *nine lacs* of people subsist on grain purchased in the markets. The number of persons living on rice, as compared with those subsisting on the coarser grain, cholum, ragi, cumboo, &c., will be, I believe, in the proportion of three to six. The total quantity of paddy and of coarser grain that will be required per mensem will be 2,110 and 2,813 garces respectively, at the monthly rates of 22½ and 15 seers of the first and second kinds per soul.

3. Subjoined is a rough estimate of the quantity of grain supposed to be stored in the several Talooks :—

Names of Talooks.	Paddy in Salagays.	Cholum, Ragi, &c., in Salagays.
Coimbatore	30,000	30,000
Suttimungalum	40,000	20,000
Collegal	.....	10,000
Poolachy	1,000	30,000
Parindoray	50,000	20,000
Bhowany	.....	10,000
Palladum	.....	30,000
Dharapooram	40,000	15,000
Caroor	40,000	15,000
Oodoomulpettah	20,000	20,000
Total ...	2,21,000	2,10,000
Total of Madras Garces ...	4,420	4,000

4. It is thus evident that, according to the above statement, which, it is to be remembered, is merely an approximate one, the supply of grain in the District is barely sufficient to meet the wants of the people for more than *two months*; and that they must, therefore, look to the in-coming crops and other Districts for their future supplies. What with the high prices obtained for cotton and all kinds of agricultural produce within the last three years, the Ryots (a large portion of them at least) have made considerable profits and been enabled to lay up money; so that

If grain is to be had, they will be able to tide over the trying period before them. But the poorer Ryots, and the classes dependant on daily wages, are likely to be great sufferers, as they look to the markets for their supplies. But granted that the markets are well supplied, the failure of the rain has thrown many of the laboring people out of work, and thereby deprived them greatly of the means of purchasing food. The laboring poor are most to be felt for, and likely to suffer most in the present crisis. Already, as you will observe by the annexed extracts from letters from different parts of the District, the poor are beginning to feel with great severity the existing state of things.

A. Mr. Brandt's letter of the 14th instant was written from Caroor, but I am glad to learn, from a subsequent communication from that gentleman from Dharapooram, that the distress in that part of the country was not so great as at Caroor. He writes, "But there is not such palpable distress in these parts, I have come through, as they are near the river and therefore richer."

B. Mr. Hannett, the Supervisor in the Collegal range, gives a sad picture of the condition of the poor in Collegal, and no doubt there must be much truth in what he writes; for the south-west monsoon, on which that Talook is so dependant has, up to the present date, failed. The Ryots, I know, have considerable stores of ragi, but these stores, amongst, I fear, so great as reported in Mr. Hannett's letter; and the Mysore merchants are buying up large quantities to supply the wants of that country. In fact, I have received petitions from parties requesting me to put a stop to the export of grain from Collegal. In other parts of the District, there is distress more or less, both amongst human beings and cattle. Had the expected rain fallen, all would have been well; but even now, bad though the prospect be, I hope that the well cultivation will tend materially to alleviate the wants of the people. There are some 45,000 large wells with an average of 2½ acres under each, or in the aggregate 1,12,500 acres, which can, and doubtless will, be brought under cultivation. All this land will not, I fear, be used in raising grain crops, as tobacco and chillies are largely grown for export, and yield a handsome profit; but 1,00,000 acres, no doubt, will be appropriated to the cultivation of grain. Before their departure from the Hills, I communicated with Sir T. Pycroft and the Honorable Mr. Arbuthnott, on the state of the District, and at the request of the latter gave him a copy of Mr. Brandt's letter. Since then, I have been directed, by telegram, from the Chief Secretary, to place at the disposal of the Sub-Collector Rupees 1,000 for the immediate relief of the poor. I would now suggest that I be authorized to lay out money on useful works in such parts of the country as I learn, from time to time, demand it most, with reference to the actual condition of the people. If, for the present, a sum of 1,000 Rupees is placed at my disposal, I shall endeavour to control its expenditure, so as to prevent its undue waste. As my present Treasury Deputy Collector, Cooppa Row, possesses large experience, and a very considerable knowledge of the District, I requested him to give me his opinion as to its present condition. It will be observed that he takes pretty much the same view of the state of the people as has been expressed in this letter.

C.

Enclosure No. 1, A.

Abstract.—Memorandum regarding Mr. Brandt's report.

Enclosure No. 2, B.

Extract from a letter, No. 36 of 12th July 1866, *from the Supervisor in charge of Collegal Range, to the Superintending Engineer, Seventh Division.*

* * * *

"For want of rain there is great scarcity of water, pasture, and provisions, owing to which "the cattle are dying in large number, and the "poor inhabitants starving. Every village I "passed through I was stopped by the poor "people of the village, who told me that they had no food for two and three days, and asked me "(thinking that it was in my power) to issue orders to the Monigars to force the rich people to "sell the thousands and thousands of Kindies of ragi stored up merely to make more money. "and many have I heard cry and pray to God to send them rain, so that the wild herbage may "spring up, and they live by it, until the harvest come in. The misery suffered by the poor in "the interior of this Talook is beyond description."

Collegal Talook.

(True Copy)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Lieut.-Colonel, R. E.,
Superintending Engineer, 7th Division.

Coonoor,
18th *July* 1866.

To the Collector of Coimbatore, for information.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) P. GRANT,
Collector.

Enclosure No. 3, C.

Extract from a letter from B. Cooppa Row, Deputy Collector, dated 19th July 1866.

* * * *

As regards the condition of the District, I am unable to say that it is decidedly bad; it is true that rain failed, and the poorer classes suffer very much from high prices and scarcity of grain; but our collections have been more punctual in this year than in the last; the Stamp Revenue is on the increase, so the Land Revenue also; the Abkarry rent has doubled; gang robberries are not of frequent occurrence; price of labor and cattle has not fallen; the value of landed property is increasing; and demand for gold has not ceased; these are the indications of prosperity rather than of adversity. In the meantime it must be admitted that food for man and beast is getting scarce; the produce in this year has been very scanty, and the poorer classes suffer a great deal from want of means of subsistence. Even in Collegal, which is a favored Talook, the same difficulty is experienced, whilst the eastern portion of the District is reported to be worse (Nunjah tracts excepted). Under these circumstances it appears to me that all substantial landholders and merchants are well off, and that it is only the poorer classes of consumers that suffer by the scarcity of grain and high prices; the Nunjah and garden Ryots at present get more than what they would in years of abundance, and the difficulty falls chiefly upon pauper Ryots and poor non-agricultural classes.

If we could get Government to sanction some thirty or forty thousand Rupees to give employment to the poor, the distress may be partially alleviated; this sum being expended in earth-work on roads or tanks and channels, under the orders of the Revenue Officers.

There is not a large store of grain in any portion of the District. Paddy may be kept unsold by the Ryots in expectation of still higher prices, but this will be a comparatively small quantity,

here and there in Nunjah Talooks; it will not be sufficient for consumption throughout the District till next harvest, and we are, therefore, quite dependant upon Salem, Vellore, &c., for the supply of grain.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) P. GRANT,
Collector.

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1. Submitted for the information of Government.
2. The Board observe that the Government Order of 25th July gave the Collector all the authority he can require for employing the able-bodied poor.

No. 310. ORDER THEREON, 13th August 1866, No. 2,059.

Miscellaneous.

The Collector should not hesitate on G. O. dated 25th ultimo, No. 1,861, where the circumstances of his District render it expedient.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue,
" the Collector of Coimbatore.

Lrd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 2059.

The Collector should not
hesitate on G. O. dated
25th ultimo No. 1861 where
the circumstances of his
District render it expedient.

13th August 1866.

To the Board of Revenue
" the Collector of Coimbatore.

Reskript des Königl. No. 37 d. 24.8.1866