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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 2748 Press ~~Mis.~~

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Dated 11 — 10 — 1866.

Not to be folded or roughly handle

No. 270. Read the following letter from the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Madras, 6th October 1866, No. 7,165 :—

1. I am directed by the Board of Revenue to submit, for the consideration of Government, Minute by their first Member, the Honorable Mr. Pelly, on the state and prospects of the Bellary District, and the measures which may become necessary to mitigate the apprehended increased distress, should rain not fall there abundantly in the course of the next few weeks.

2. Mr. Pelly's long and intimate acquaintance with the District in question, and his actual experience of a famine season there as Collector in 1853-54, render his remarks most valuable, and the Board can add nothing to them beyond the expression of their general concurrence in his views.

3. They see reason to hope that the price he has assumed for cholum, viz., four measures for the Rupee, will not be exceeded, and perhaps need not be assumed as likely to rule for any length of time.

4. According to the latest return from Bellary, the present price of cholum is measures four or four and one-sixth per Rupee; but the Board doubt whether the pressure on the general market is likely to increase, or even to be maintained at its present intensity. For although, in the event of a continued and complete failure of rain in the District, the local supply would speedily become still more insufficient to meet the demand, and prices then would rapidly rise if the supply were not supplemented from elsewhere, still the present state of the market is in some measure due to pressure elsewhere, and to the difficulty from drought and want of pasture in the way of throwing in supplies.

5. But pasture and water supply are now rapidly improving in the District surrounding Bellary, and the prospects of the season generally in the Presidency are so encouraging, that the Board count confidently upon a fair outturn from the next crops, and they trust that abundant supplies will be attracted to Bellary by the scarcity there, so as to prevent prices from rising above their present standard, even if they do not recede below it.

6. The food will find its way there if there is money to buy it, and the Government will not hesitate to furnish the means of purchase in the shape of wages for work, which must ultimately prove very beneficial to the District, while meanwhile it will save life.

7. The Board would suggest that a copy of Mr. Pelly's Minute be sent to the Sanitary Commissioner, who is now in the District, as well as to the Collector and Superintending Engineer.

MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE MR. PELLY.

1. We have now arrived at the month of October, and within five weeks of the latest period within which rain can be expected to fall in the Bellary District. The entire failure of rain up to the present time in that District causes the greatest anxiety. Should the rains which may yet be expected during October fail also, the District will be visited with a severe famine, and even should the expected rain fall now, there must (owing to the enormous prices at which food is

now procurable, and which cannot probably be expected to fall much for some time to come) still be great scarcity and distress. In the year 1853-54, when the rains failed, the prices during the whole time of that severe season were not at any time so high as they have been for some weeks past in the District; and until November 1853, it was not deemed necessary, in that season of scarcity, to apply for special aid from Government. Notwithstanding the far greater prosperity of the District generally since that time, and the greater wealth of the agricultural classes, the distress at the present time is as great certainly as it was in the end of 1853, and the distress must go on increasing, and will, I fear, exceed greatly that of any time in 1854, and to meet, and in some measure to alleviate this distress, and if possible to avert the terrors of famine, the assistance of Government will be needed to a much larger extent than in 1853-54.

2. It becomes a question of great moment how this aid may be most advantageously afforded The measures already adopted by Government point in the right direction. But they will necessarily have to be continued and greatly extended. It is the part of the Board to review the measures which are to be adopted, and to express their opinion regarding them, and as far as lies in them, to strengthen the hands of the local officers in giving effect to them.

3. In a part of the District the Railway Company is in operation, and they have a work in hand extending over some 150 miles. These works should be pushed forward with vigour. Much employment would be most profitably afforded to a large number of men and women able to work on such works.

4. The Irrigation Company in Kurnool District must also have drawn away a goodly number of laborers from Bellary and its vicinity, and if their operations are re-commenced, they will continue to afford employment to many who otherwise would perhaps be starving for want of work.

5. There are no other great works in progress that would employ large numbers of people in the District or its vicinity.

6. It has been suggested, and has been strongly urged by the Collector, that the great work of an Irrigation Canal from the Toombadra river should be at once commenced. It would indeed be very desirable that this long projected work should be undertaken as early as possible; but it is clear that, for several reasons, this project cannot at present be undertaken: neither can we look to it as a work which at this crisis can be counted on as one for relieving the present distress. There are a few other irrigation schemes which, if undertaken, would beneficially employ a number of the people; but for some reason or other scarcely any of them can be commenced at once. The works alluded to are mentioned in Captain Fischer's letter to Government, dated 2nd August 1866, in Proceedings of Government, Public Works Department, 20th August last, No. 2,606. They are as follow:—

1 The Bookacherla Reservoir Project.
1 Yeparal or Joojooramanhully Supply Canal from the Pedda Huggry river.
1 Gootloor Tank.
1 Pennar Canal for supplying the Roddam Tank.
1 Another Pennar river canal for supplying tanks in the Hindupoor Talook.
1 The project for supplying water to the town of Bellary.
1 The Chinna Huggry Reservoir Project in the western part of the District.

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7. These seven main irrigation projects would more or less, if carried out, improve the country. The four first might, I think, be commenced at an early date, as the plans appear only to require revising. The scheme for supplying water to Bellary Town is also apparently in a complete state, though I understand another line of channel has been suggested, and delay is thus occasioned.

8. But these few works will ill-afford the relief that is, and will yet to a much greater extent be required.

9. The only way of meeting this want is to employ the multitudes, who will shortly be clamouring for food, on lines of road running throughout this large District, which contains about

11,000 square miles. The Collector has applied for, and sanction has been given, to spend 1¼ lacs of Rupees on some forty or more pieces of road entered in the Statement which accompanied the Collector's letter, dated 18th September last. The roads, from being entered in this list of Talookwar, appear as small detached portions, but they seem to form parts of a few grand roads through the District. I have been in communication with Captain Fischer, lately and for several years District Engineer of Bellary, and we are of opinion that the following lines of road should be at once selected as being those which would be most generally useful, and would afford ample employment for many months to the needy population of all parts of the District:—

	Miles to be made.	These numbers refer to the Number of the roads in Major Moberly's list.
Western Part of District.		
1 Road running westward from Bellary, commencing near Tornagul, by Avenmadagoo, Koodlighy, Cootoor, Harpunhully, Hollal, and joining the high road in the Dharwar Districts of the Bombay Presidency	85	24,26,27,29,30
1 Hamsangur by Hoovenhadgally to Harpunhully, to join the main line above	30	0
1 Hospett to Harpunhully and Hurryhur	45	28
1 Hospett to Koodlighy and Ooginy to join road in Mysore country from Chittledroog	50	0
1 Coodatani, Darojee, Cumply, Hospett	40	0
1 Koodlighy to Goodicotta and Hanagul on the Bangalore and Royadroog road	30	31
Centre and Southern Parts.		
1 Royadroog to Callyandroog, Cumbadoor, Peiroor, Cogerna, and Pennaconda	80	37, 39
1 Cumbadoor viâ Paugur to Mudducseerah and Madageesy to Mysore frontier to join roads there (in Bellary District.)	20 in the	34
1 Dharmaverum to Peiroor	25	14
1 Mudducseerah to Amlapur	30	32
1 Mudducseerah to Muddodi and Seerah	25	33
1 Mudducseerah to Hindoopoor	20	21
Eastern Parts.		
1 Hindoopoor to Codiconda	20	18
1 Hindoopoor to Pennaconda, Bookaputnum, Dharmaverum, Tadmurry joining the next line (Anantapoor and Tadpatry road) near Sengannamuller	80	20,30,6,13,42
1 Anantapoor to Tadpatry	30	7
1 Ooravaconda to Gooty	30	16, 17
1 Anantapoor viâ Ooderpidroog and Ooravaconda to Bellary	60	0
1 Callyandroog to Ooravaconda	30	38
Northern Part.		
	Miles.	Nos.
1 Bellary to Seragoopah	35	8
1 Adoni to Seragoopah	30	1
1 Adoni to Naguldinna	25	2

10. There are other smaller branches, railway feeders, &c., which will doubtless suggest themselves to the Collector as useful connecting roads; but the foregoing embrace the principal and most important lines still requiring to be opened in this large District, to which every facility of access should be afforded for the export of its produce, and for the importation of food in seasons of scarcity such as we are now suffering from.

11. The selection of the roads to be first undertaken need not be a matter of any difficulty. The rule should be to adopt those which would afford employment to the largest number of people at convenient distances from their villages.

12. The Collector is now actually giving employment to the people on some of the roads mentioned. But if the famine continues, the sum of Rupees 12,500 applied for, and an expenditure of 100 Rupees or 200 Rupees per mile, as provided for in the Engineer's list, will be utterly insufficient to meet the urgency of the case. The present price for the common food of the country is now four measures or a trifle more for a Rupee. To feed a working man requires not less than three-fourths of a measure daily, and at least half a measure a day on an average for men, women, and children, they could not work on less; and (allowing nothing for condiments) at this rate let us see how many men could be maintained during thirty days for a lac of Rupees—

1,00,000 Rupees would, at 4 measures a Rupee, purchase 4,00,000 measures of Cholum, which, at the rate of 15 Measures per man per month of 30 days, would suffice for 4,00,000 ÷ 15 = 26,666 persons. In the year 1854, when the prices were considerably lower, and the famine much less fearful than the present scarcity threatens shortly to be, the number of applicants for relief on the famine works continued to rise until it amounted to about 1,20,000 persons, men, women, and children; so that we may anticipate having to provide eventually for this number of people monthly, and if prices remain as at present, the cost cannot be calculated at less than 4 or 4½ lacs of Rupees per month.

13. The method of operation should, I venture to think, be as follows:—

The Tahsildar of each Talook should be entrusted with the general management of the people. He should be assisted with such extra establishment as might be found necessary.

The coolies should be put in regular parties consisting each of so many men, so many women, and so many boys and girls, according to circumstances, generally perhaps 50 men and 100 women and children, and all about 150 for a party, who should have about a quarter of a mile of road allotted to them. It is desirable not to put them closer, but it may be necessary to do so, and even to double the number on each mile. Each party should be superintended by a Maistry, who would keep the accounts of names and residence of each person, and allot to each his particular work. He should have nothing to do with the payment. No party should, if possible to void it, be nearer to the next party than quarter mile.

The parties should be made up of the villagers nearest their own villages.

A specified hour should be named for beginning and ending work.

The people should be paid every day, or tickets given them for three days, when that method is found to answer.

Payment should be made by persons specially deputed by the Tahsildar for that purpose, who would keep regular accounts, and take vouchers from the Maistries of parties.

Shops should be encouraged on the line of road.

Huts or sheds, when necessary, should be erected for the coolies.

Ample and a timely supply of tools and baskets to be provided.

Tahsildar should keep an active superintendence over all the works of his Talook. The Collector's Assistants to be employed in general superintendence of the works.

The members of the Department of Public Works should mark out roads, give directions, &c., for the proper mode of construction, digging of pits, &c.

In the black lands deep or indeed side channels at all as a rule should not be permitted. Pits for gravel should be dug, and the gravel laid about two feet deep on the soil for 18 feet width, and for 18 feet on either side of this raised road the black soil dug off the surface of the pits should be laid in a gentle slope. No side drains would be necessary, they only do mischief on the black soils. Experience of much waste leads me to make this suggestion.

As a rule payment in money rather than in food should be made.

No children under 10 years, nor infirm persons, male or female, should be employed on the works. If it is necessary to feed them, as well as to give employment to their relatives on the roads, it should be done by doling out small portions of *cooked* food at places suitable for this work, and away from the working parties.

14. Dear as the price of food is, I yet believe there is food in the Ryots' stores throughout the District. They may be loth to send this to the general markets, but for feeding their own people employed on these famine roads extending throughout the length and breadth of the district, I think the stores will be available.

15. That Government are, as some people assert, to blame for these disasters in Bellary is, I conceive, a great mistake. The works of irrigation have not been neglected in that District so as in any way to cause the present famine. The tanks and channels are in order generally, and all the available means of supplying these reservoirs have for the most part been availed of. Great attention has been paid to the assessment; the Ryots of late years have greatly improved in their circumstances; and the cotton market has poured riches into the District. Here are the reservoirs, but who can fill them if the rains fail. The one grand project which, after much thought and discussion, is supposed to be feasible for watering a part of the District, should be worked out by all means. It will water one corner of this vast district, and some minor projects already alluded to may be undertaken; they will increase the general irrigation of the country in some slight degree, but still the greater portion of it will be dependant, as heretofore, on the local rains; if they fail the tanks will, as now, be left empty. And if, at the same time, there is dearth in all the Presidency, the famine of Bellary cannot be averted, though it may be alleviated by the greater supply of food from the cultivation which the Toombadra project, if successfully carried out, will doubtless secure to this portion of the Madras Presidency which, situated midway between the two monsoons, is so liable to drought from failing to secure either.

16. I would urge the execution of every feasible project for storing the water from our rivers, even though the pecuniary profits should be small or nil, provided the project afforded a good prospect of bringing a large quantity of land under irrigation. To obtain this result we must not be too regardful of expense. Even a large outlay may not effect what we could desire, and if our works are to be regulated with a view to obtaining a high interest on the outlay, they will not be undertaken at all in Bellary. At present the people are threatened with starvation; no work promising a good return in the way of interest can be undertaken; relief must be given in the most practical manner by employment of the people in making useful roads. The plan answered well in 1853-54, and it should be again liberally carried out, even at a cost which may be roughly calculated by estimating the probable cost of food for the next twelve months at present or even higher rates, (should the next five weeks fail to give us a plentiful rain,) and the number of persons whom it may be necessary to save from starvation. The whole energies of the local authorities should be earnestly directed to providing employment for the people on the roads. The grand Toombadra Canal scheme cannot, for the present, be undertaken, and must, as a measure of immediate relief so urgently required, be left in abeyance.

1st October 1866. (Signed) C. PELLY.

No. 271. ORDER THEREON, 11th October 1866, No. 2,748.

Miscellaneous.

A copy of the Honorable Mr. Pelly's Minute, which the Government have perused with much interest, will be forwarded at once to the Honorable Mr. Ellis and the Collector of Bellary.

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

2-2748. 4

A copy of the Hon'ble
Mr. Pelly's minute
which the first Lord
perused in the Board
in Council with Letter
recorded at meeting of
the Hon'ble Mr. Elliot
and the Sec'y to
Secretary

1 Copy to the Secretary Commrs. Deputy Sec'y
1 — Collr of Bellary
14 — Bd of Revenue

11th. October 1806.

Reported to England No. 48 d 26.10.66.