M.R.O. 14—18,000—27-9-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 2995 — 94-95 — Dated 5 — 11 — 1866.

Press ~~Mis.~~

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 5th November 1866.

No. 94. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Military Department:—

Recording certain correspondence on the state of the season, &c., in the Bellary District. } (Here enter 6th October 1866, No. 3,483.)

No. 95. ORDER THEREON, 5th November 1866, No. 2,995.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue, with Proceedings Military Department, No. 3,483.

Ext. S. T. Augustin.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers:—

Memorandum from the Adjutant General, Head Quarters, Ootacamund, 24th September 1866, No. 752; to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Fort Saint George.

The Commander-in-Chief has the honor to forward, for submission to the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, the within correspondence received from the General Officer Commanding the Ceded Districts, respecting the difficulties experienced by the contractors in providing rations for the troops.

2. Sir Gaspard LeMarchant does not submit these papers with a view to any alterations being made in the terms of the contracts, for His Excellency considers a contractor should be bound by his agreement, but with a view to put Government in possession of information which is of the highest importance, and with a hope that the Right Honorable the Governor in Council may be pleased to order every necessary step to be taken to meet the contingencies enumerated by Major General McLeod.

3. The Order of Government, dated 14th September 1866, No. 3230, has not been overlooked; but His Excellency considers that salt provisions should not be issued except in great emergency.

From the Officer Commanding Ceded Districts, Bellary, 15th September 1866, No. 138; to the Adjutant General, Ootacamund.

I beg that you will do me the favor, respectfully, to submit the accompanying letter to my address, from the Executive Commissariat Officer of the Division, for the consideration of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, the subject being one of vital importance, especially to the European portion of the Force at this station.

2. His Excellency is aware of the dire distress which continues to prevail throughout this District, amounting, indeed, to a famine—this is not confined to food alone, but embraces every article of consumption for man and beast.

3. In the town of Bellary, up to the 31st August, upwards of 11,000 Rupees have been collected to provide food for the starving population, who are unable to labor. The Central Relief Fund has given 39,000 Rupees. Besides this, Government is sending up a large quantity of raggee, valued at 8,000 Rupees, and has given 75,000 Rupees for the employment of the able-bodied men, and of women and children who can assist in any work, and more will be asked for immediately. In addition to the above, a work of great public utility, which will cost not less than 55 or 60,000 Rupees, has been undertaken. I merely bring these facts forward to show the real state of matters and the deplorable condition to which the population of the District would be reduced, but for the timely liberality of the Government and the Public.

4. Captain Heath has so clearly and forcibly depicted the state of matters, and the grounds for his apprehensions, that the contractors for the supply of ration and other articles will throw up the contracts, and the consequences of such an event on this Force, that I need not advert to the subject.

5. Knowing, as I do, the state of the country around Bellary at present, I very much question the probability of finding a new contractor should the crisis apprehended happen. The obstacles which exist to the Commissariat Department itself being called on suddenly to furnish supplies for the troops by direct purchases are insuperable, and, under existing circumstances, I cannot but view the proposal made by Captain Heath to assist the present contractors, though opposed to general principles, as that likely to be most beneficial to Government and the Troops.

6. The opinion expressed by the Controller of Military Accounts is, undoubtedly, sound; but the present case is an exceptional one, and the unprecedented dearth of every article of consumption in this District, and the difficulties attending supplies being brought here from a distance, might, I would observe, with every defference, be allowed to weigh, and the partial relaxation of the rule, on this instance, might be unattended with any injury.

7. If, however, the Government still consider it undesirable to adopt Captain Heath's suggestion, the only remedy left to meet the crisis, should it occur, appears to be for that Officer's being directed to purchase cattle, sheep, wheat, forage, &c., for the European portion of the Force and horses, equal to a fortnight's consumption, that they may not starve, until another contractor can be found and started, which, I consider very doubtful; there are serious disadvantages attending this arrangement however, as it will necessarily bring the Commissariat Officer in contact with the contractors' agents, who are employed in the neighbouring Talooks and Districts, making purchases and collecting supplies; the attendant expense, moreover, will be very great as live stock of all kinds is now most difficult to procure, and unless grazing can be found (of which there seems no prospect) forage for their consumption will have to be provided at a heavy outlay.

8. Yet some such arrangements are called for, as, in the impoverished state of the country, the interval required to obtain a contract might expose the Troops to most serious privation, and it cannot be expected, that a new contractor, if one is to be found, can have supplies ready at hand to commence operations at once; indeed, I question whether he could even collect the required supplies in the short time I have mentioned above.

9. I would earnestly beg that, in the event of the anticipated catastrophe, some discretionary authority should be delegated to the Commissariat Officer, with my concurrence, to make the best arrangements he can on the spot. I would not ask for such powers being vested in us, but the gravity of the state of affairs, demands that we should be prepared to meet any sudden exigency, without a moment's delay or any hesitation.

10. I forwarded Captain Heath's letter to the Collector for his perusal and asked for information as to the state of the District; so soon as his reply reaches me, I will transmit it to you. I do not however wish to delay this communication.

From Captain G. Heath, Executive Commissariat Officer, Ceded Districts, Bellary, 10th September 1866, No. 808; to the Major General Commanding Ceded Districts, Bellary.

I have the honor to forward, for your information, the enclosed Proceedings of Government in the Military Department of the 29th August, conveying their decision upon the cases of certain contractors of this Department, who have recently applied to me for support and assistance, to enable them to fulfil their engagements for the supply of ration and other articles to the Troops at Bellary and Ramandroog, during the present official year.

2. At the time these contracts were entered into, namely, in last February and March, prices of most articles were comparatively reasonable, and there was every prospect of an average season, under which no difficulties would have been experienced in obtaining the requisite supplies for the consumption of the Troops and cattle belonging to this Division. You are fully aware how entirely these hopes have been negatived, of the disasters which have consequently befallen the community at large, and of the wide-spread ruin and extreme destitution which has been thereby created in this District, and which is still unhappily on the increase, with little, if any, apparent hope of amelioration.

3. The prices of all necessaries of life have arisen to an enormous extent—cattle and sheep have perished by thousands for want of forage and water—traffic and cultivation are almost entirely suspended—multitudes are unable to obtain subsistence for themselves and have to be supported at a heavy expenditure by Public and Private charity.

4. The contractors for the supply of the Troops, upon whom upwards of 800 European Soldiers with a proportionate number of horses and other cattle are dependant for daily food, were naturally amongst the first to feel the effects of the present state of famine. So long as there were grounds to hope that the pressure was only of a temporary nature and that the losses of these people were in any sense compatible with the risks which a contractor must always take his chance of, I was reluctant to interfere; but when it became too apparent that the visitation was a general one, that famine stared us in the face, and that the failure of these people, would not only involve their own ruin, but menace the Troops and cattle with privation, I felt that circumstances imperatively demanded the adoption of some means to ensure their stability. I was fully aware that, technically speaking, a contractor should stand or fall by his agreement, and that the rules of the contract system provide for such contingencies in individual cases; but when these arose grounds for the remotest apprehension that failures might become general, that others might not be found able or willing to come forward, that Government would sustain enormous losses, and that the efficiency of the Commissariat would be paralyzed, I conceived it my duty to suggest the only apparent remedy calculated to meet the case, even though it demanded some relaxation in point of system. I recommended such modifications in the contract rates as I considered calculated to enable the contractors to carry out their engagements.

5. Government having adopted the views suggested by the Finance Department upon this matter, it would not of course be becoming in me to question how far those views realise the existing state of things at Bellary, or how far the remedies suggested are calculated to avert any disaster that may arise during the continuance of the present scarcity; my object in laying this matter before you is to show how this Department is situated, and what means it can command to avert a crisis.

6. Since the receipt of the above Order of Government, the contractors for oil, ration rice, elephant rice, salt and forage for public cattle have thrown up their contracts, the only hold that I posses over the others lies in their apprehensions for their security deposits; how long this consideration will preponderate against increasing losses probably depends upon the time that their resources may keep them from bankruptcy or until it becomes clear to them that they will lose less by letting these deposits go than by continuing to supply at present rates; the contracts have still eight months to run, so that this view of the case is worthy of careful consideration; these men are thoroughly disheartened and state that they are being ruined, moreover as they know that there is nothing to hope for from Government, but little compunction will be felt by them should their interests prompt them to desert us at the very moment when their aid is most required.

7. I have no wish to excite unnecessary alarm, but the facts speak for themselves—the case is not one of Departmental routine, but is open to the eyes and ears of every one. I ask you to imagine what would be the state of things if the contractors were to announce stoppage this evening, and I mere compelled to scrape together for the morrow's consumption, such food as I could obtain in the shops and bazars. I ask your consideration of how many consecutive days such a state of things could last, and what would be its probable effects, upon the health and efficiency of the European portion of the Force. And in conclusion, I appeal to your own personal knowledge whether anything I have stated above is in any way exaggerated, and whether even the most distant prospect of such a catastrophe should not be guarded against at any sacrifice of money, precedent, or technical form.

Order, No. 3387, 28th September 1866.

The Government having in their Proceedings, No. 3386 of this date, deputed the Deputy Commissary General to proceed to Bellary on special duty, resolve to communicate the foregoing correspondence to him, and to vest him with discretionary authority to carry out such of the suggestions of the Major General Commanding Ceded Districts as he may consider most advisable under existing circumstances.

2. He will act in concert with General McLeod, and report direct to Government the measures he may find it necessary to adopt.

Telegram to Major General McLeod, Bellary. | Here enter 28th September 1866, No. 3388.

(True Extract.)

Major General,

Secretary to Government.

To the Adjutant General, with an enclosure and copy of Telegram.

,, Commissary General.
,, Controller of Military Accounts.
,, Military Accountant,.....
,, Examiner Pay Department,..... } for information.
,, Examiner of Commissariat Accounts,

Exd. A. W. Cooke.

Enclosure in G.O. No. 3483 dated 6th Oct. 1866.

Rec'd 5th Oct. 1866.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following papers:—

Memorandum from the Adjutant General..... Here enter 28th September 1866, No. 770.
Telegram from General McLeod..... .... ,, 1st October ,,

Memorandum from the Adjutant General, Head Quarters, Ootacamund, 28th September 1866, No. 770; to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Fort Saint George.

Submitted to Government, in continuation of correspondence forwarded with this office endorsement of the 24th instant, No. 752.

From the Officer Commanding Ceded Districts, Head Quarters, Bellary, 22nd September 1866, No. 144; to the Adjutant General, Ootacamund.

As promised in the concluding portion of my letter, No. 138 of the 15th instant, I have the honor to forward, for submission to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, copy of correspondence with the Collector of Bellary, on the subject of that communication.

2. From paragraphs 2 and 3 of Mr. Wedderburn's letter, the disastrous effects of the long continued drought upon this District, and the unparalleled decrease in the extent of cultivation are but too evident. The actual consequences of this state of things upon the inhabitants generally cannot better be shown than by the Collector's statement of food grains for last month, (copy of which is also enclosed) from which it would appear that in many parts of the District the supply is not equal to more than a few days consumption.

3. As regards the mortality which has prevailed amongst cattle and sheep, the absence of reliable statistics is to be regretted. I would, however, invite attention to the fact, that the three Taluks, regarding which Mr. Wedderburn is in a position to speak positively, have alone lost upwards of 5,000 heads during one month—a larger number of casualties than occurred during the entire previous year.

Telegram from General McLeod, Bellary, 1st October 1866; to the Secretary to Government, Military Department, Madras.

Since receipt of your telegram, rain has fallen—all immediate anxiety, on points adverted to in my letters, has ceased.

ORDER, No. 3483, 6th October 1866.

Recorded, with reference to Proceedings of Government, No. 3387, dated 28th September 1866.

(True Extract.)

Major General,
Secretary to Government.

To the Adjutant General, with 3 enclosures.
To Major General W. C. McLeod, Bellary.
To the Commissary General,..... ... ...
,, Controller of Military Accounts, } for information. Send to shareholders
,, Revenue Department,..... .....

Exd. J. E. Cashart.

Rev: 1866 - Oct.
Pro: of Govt. for Nov.
No. 3541.

Proceedings of the Madras Govt. in the Military Dept.

Dated 6th Octr.
Received 10th 1866.

No. 3483.

Recording certain correspondence on the state of the Cuddapah Road in the Bellary District.

No. 2995 - 5th Novr.

With an Order

No. 2995.

Communicated to the Board of Revenue

5th Novr. 66

To the Board of Revenue Com. Inl. Ord. No. 3483 Dated 5th Nov.

No. 94895.

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