

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

1145

Press
~~Mis.~~

Dated

28-4-1868

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
28th April 1868.*

No. 636. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 27th April 1868:

Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Camp at Alloor, 17th April 1868, No. 74 :—

1. I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Board of Revenue, copy of a report received from Mr. Foster, the Sub-Collector, on the state of the Hindupoor talook.

2. Mr. Foster has carefully traversed the talook, and the Board will observe with satisfaction that the gloomy forebodings of the Tahsildar, who it would appear did not take the trouble to make

Vide his report, dated 9th February, forwarded with my letter of the 28th ultimo.

himself personally acquainted with the real state of matters, have not been realized. The prices of grain have not risen as he prognosticated, and the result of Mr. Foster's enquiries is that up to the present time the poorer classes are able to earn sufficient to maintain themselves, although this is the time of year when the demand for labor is most slack. The "repast of leaves," which gives the finishing touch to the Tahsildar's gloomy picture, turns out to be a common and rather palatable salad, which is partaken of by the people at all seasons.

3. The only cause for anxiety which at present exists, is the possibility of a failure of water in the wells before the rains set in, and to meet this difficulty I would suggest that where, agreeably to the present rules, the inhabitants of a village are unable just now to pay half the cost of deepening and improving their wells, the whole amount should be advanced to them on the understanding that half would be recovered through the village officers after the next harvest. I have inspected a number of wells in this talook, and found in many of them a very fair supply. Where it was deficient, I found in most instances that the cause was the neglected state of the well, the sides having been allowed to fall in and choke it.

4. I hope that the Board and Government will accept Mr. Foster's report as representing correctly the state of matters in the Hindupoor talook, and will agree with me that at present there is no necessity for any extra expenditure on the part of Government. Should such arise, the Board may be assured that prompt measures will be taken,

5. I will forward a report on the state of this talook in the course of a few days. I have just returned from that portion of it where distress was said to exist. I may as well state here that it is purely imaginary.

From W. S. FOSTER, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector, to the Collector of Bellary, dated Penconda, 10th April 1868, A.

1. I have the honor to inform you that I have inspected the Hindupoor talook, and am glad to say I have not found distress existing yet. I have taken a longer time than I expected in looking at this talook, owing to the entire ignorance, of the state of their respective charges, displayed by the Tahsildar and his Revenue Inspectors, this will form the subject of a future letter to you.

2. I stopped and made enquiries at all the principal villages in the talook, as well as several of the smaller ones.

3. Grain is selling as follows :—

Cholum from 18 to 27 seers per Rupee.

Ragi „ 18 to 24 „ „

Rice „ 10 to 14 „ „

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These prices are very low, and the merchants say there is a sufficiency of grain. I do not anticipate that any difficulty in buying grain will be caused by any actual scarcity of it.

4. The question then arises, can the poorer classes get food at these favorable prices? I believe that as yet they can. Those who work say that they can get sufficient to keep themselves by their labor, though labor is not in great demand at this season, and the beggars say they are not starving. In no village have I been able to find any one who could not get one meal a day. In several villages, certainly, I was told by the chief men that distress existed; but when I have asked them to shew me any one on whom the bad season was pressing heavily, they have been able to produce none but very old people, or lame, or blind, or young children who had lost their parents. And all those who were brought to me were, without exception, provided with food by the care of their relatives or the charity of the villages. Of course, I have often heard the cry, "we have got no food, and are starving," a cry that is always being raised by rich as well as poor. I have always asked these people what it was they wanted, and I have always found that it was not food they wanted, but the redress of some grievance without the trouble of going to the Civil Court, or something else equally unconnected with the idea of dying for want of food.

5. The remark that people are living on roots and leaves, gives one an impression that is not true now. The idea at first presented to one's mind by this remark, is that of a set of emaciated, hungry beings, seeking for the least atom of food, nourishing and not injurious, and eagerly devouring it when found. But this is not the case now. I could only find people in one village who had eaten "roots," and it could not be called roots that they had eaten, it was the heart of the aloe: this they take and after carefully removing a part rather more fibrous than the rest, boil it and season it with salt, and leave it for a day before eating it. The "leaves" are boiled and seasoned with salt and pepper and eaten at once. The people who eat these say, that they have been in the habit of doing so for years, that they do not eat them because driven to it by want of more suitable food; the leaves certainly when cooked are not unpalatable.

6. I may remark that no one has remarked lately any increase in the number of beggars; the people generally look stout and well; no diminution has been noticed as yet in the number of buyers and sellers at the different weekly markets; and during the month of March the death-rate has not been high. I have heard of no one dying of starvation or cholera.

7. And now as to the difficulty of getting water: the tanks are nearly all dry. There are, however, generally pits sunk in the tanks from which water is obtained for drinking, and it can also be obtained from the rivers. But the people complain of the distance they have to bring drinking water. I think this is unreasonable, as at all times almost they get drinking water from the tanks and rivers, the wells situated in the towns having, for the most part, water too salt to be used for drinking though not for cooking purposes: these wells still have some water in them. The water in the wells and in tanks may be expected to last for a month or so.

8. I do not wish to give you an idea that this talook is in a very prosperous state; I only wish to say that its state is not yet so bad as to call for extraordinary expenditure on the part of Government for charitable purposes. But I am quite aware that the villages in this talook, and more especially those away from the rivers, must be carefully watched, as the wells may dry up suddenly, and then distress will ensue.

9. In a day or two I will send you a list of works that, should any famine grant be necessary, I would propose to carry out.

1. Submitted for the information of Government, with reference to G. O. dated 10th April 1868, No. 958 A.

2. The Board are glad to learn that the Hindupoor talook is not in the bad state previously represented by the Tahsildar.

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3. Under the exceptional circumstances of this talook, the Board would recommend a special grant for deepening and improving existing, as well as obtaining fresh, sources of water-supply, irrespective of the condition that a moiety of the cost be defrayed by the people.

No. 637.

ORDER THEREON, 28th April 1868, No. 1,145.

Miscellaneous.

The Collector will report what amount he requires for deepening wells in Hindupoor talook.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Collector of Bellary
" the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

W-1145

The following
report that are the
equine for despatching
taken in kind for
take.

28th Apr 1868
Ordinary mail
28th Apr 1868

ms copy of the Catalogue of Bellary Dept. 1. Dec 1860
and a copy of the Catalogue of Bellary Dept. 14. Dec 1860

Special grants for deepening and improving water-
 ways as well as obtaining fresh sources of water
 supply irrespective of the conditions that a majority
 of the cost be defrayed by the people.
 (Blue Copy and Extract)

Alfred W. Thompson
 Secretary
 U. S. Secretary of Government
 Revenue Department.

Wm. Thompson
 Secretary of Government

Pro. 10th April/68 & 233rd 233rd
Reported to England
8/12th May No 27 of 1868
H.L.

Rev. 1863 Depart.
Pro. of Grant for April
No. 1410.

Proceedings of the
Board of Revenue

Dated 27th
Decr - 27 } April 1868
Decr - 28 }
E.L.

Pro. Board of Revenue
of 1868 Enc. 1548

No. 1115-28 April
Submitting report on
the state of the Hendapur
Talook Bellary District
And recommending a
Special grant for deepening
And improving existing
as well as obtaining fresh
Sources of water supply &
With order

A. 6364637