M.R.O. 14—13,000—27-0-24

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 459 Press / Mis.

376-380
Dated 18-2- 1868.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

459

Proceedings of the Madras Government. Revenue Department, 18th February 1868.

Read the following papers:—

No. 376. From the President of the Famine Relief Committee, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 26th September 1867.

1. With reference to the Proceedings of Government, under date 5th September 1866, requesting the Famine Relief Committee to submit periodical reports of their operations for the information of the Secretary of State for India, I have the honor, by desire of the Committee, to present to Government the accompanying Memorandum prepared by the Honorary Secretary.

2. The Committee are glad of this opportunity of recording how greatly they are indebted to Mr. Dalyell for the untiring energy, patience, and tact with which he has, in addition to his important official duties, aided them as Honorary Secretary from the beginning of their work until the present time, when any further labor on their part is happily unnecessary.

3. In Part I. of this Memorandum, the Honorary Secretary has brought together, for the purpose of comparison, a narrative of previous famines which have occurred during a period of more than a century in this Presidency. In Part II. he gives much information on the general condition of the people, and some interesting speculations upon the food supply of the Presidency. Part III. contains the history of the great agricultural distress which prevailed in this Presidency during 1866, culminating for a short period in actual famine in Ganjam, and the measures of relief which were taken, as well by the State, as by private individuals, whose charities were under the control and direction of the Famine Committee at Madras.

4. From paragraph 133, Part III. of the Memorandum, it will be observed that the total amount of private subscriptions was Rupees 2,72,932-13-5, and the contributions of the State to the Relief Fund are estimated to have been Rupees 2,94,347-4-11. In addition to this, contributions were received from the Court of Wards, the North-West Provinces Relief Fund, and the Lungherkhana Funds of the North Arcot District, raising the total amount available for the support of the poor who were unable to labor to Rupees 6,18,407-5-1.

5. It may be as well to mention here that much private charity was exercised in all places where distress prevailed, of which the Committee can give no exact detailed account, but which simultaneously with, and independently of the Committee, was of great importance in relieving the poor especially in towns to which they resorted. It will be observed from the statement at paragraph 134, that there is a considerable balance of funds unexpended. At their last meeting the Committee resolved that this surplus should be devoted to assisting charitable institutions in this and the Bengal Presidency, which may have been called into existence by the destitution arising out of the past year of scarcity, such as the orphanages of Orissa, Ganjam, Bellary, and Madura.

6. The action of the Famine Committee was strictly directed to the relief of the *helpless* poor; public labor, initiated and organized by the State being provided, so that the *able-bodied* poor might tide over the period of distress caused by the failure of the season. This failure interrupting for some months a large portion

of the usual field labor, threw out of employment almost the whole class of hired agricultural laborers, and had also a disastrous effect upon the petty shopkeepers and others who depended mainly on the poorer classes for their gains. About seven lacsof Rupees are estimated to have been spent by the Government in special works devised for the employment of unskilled labor, while the Department of Public Works were instructed to aid, as far as possible, in the employment on sanctioned works of such of the poor as were not engaged on special famine works.

7. The Committee desire to express their regret that, from want of information, public feeling was not roused to the necessity of exertion earlier in 1866, and that their own labors did not commence before the month of August of that year, although it is now certain that severe distress prevailed from the beginning of the year. They are, however, able to affirm that owing to the liberality with which their calls for assistance were answered, and the energetic action of the Government, substantial aid was afforded after the month of August 1866, about which period the distress was at its height, and much loss of life and suffering was, they rejoice to think, prevented. The detailed history of the distress which prevailed in this Presidency, and the means taken for its relief, are contained in Part III. of Mr. Dalyell's Memorandum, to which the Committee most respectfully beg the attention of Government.

8. The Committee are aware that the subjects of periodical famines, their prevention and mitigation, are under the consideration of those far more competent than they are to advise on one of the most difficult problems of administrative science. They venture, however, at the termination of their duties, respectfully to suggest to Government, measures which from the inquiries made in connection with their labors, appear to them peculiarly suitable and necessary in this Presidency for the prevention of the periodical famines which have hitherto occurred.

9. The means of prevention are specially noticed in the fourth part of the Memorandum, and are—

1st.—The completion of the means of communication between districts, a matter of essential importance when periodical scarcity, as is usually the case in this Presidency, is confined to particular districts.

2nd.—The projection and construction of important works of irrigation, and the provision by State loans of the necessary funds for these works.

3rd.—The maintenance of existing works of irrigation in a state of efficiency. The funds allotted for this purpose have in late years fluctuated in amount, and are still inadequate, and the proposal that a fixed per-centage of the revenue derived from irrigated land, should be specially allotted to the maintenance of these works, seems worthy of serious consideration.

10. The Committee would also urge upon Government that the several works suggested by the officers in charge of some of the distressed districts, as detailed in paragraphs 146 to 150 of the Memorandum, Part IV., should at once be undertaken. It is also of the utmost importance that, in the event of a general failure of the periodical rains, when the works of irrigation in this Presidency become inoperative, the Government should be prepared to meet the disastrous contingency, and that no time should be lost in the organization of measures of relief.

11. The Committee most respectfully call attention to the suggestions which, in anticipation of the approaching famine, were made in 1865 by Sir Arthur Cotton

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
18th February 1868.

(*vide* paragraph 155 of Memorandum), and which had they been adopted then, as they were later, would have averted much of the disastrous loss of life which has taken place in Orissa especially, and in a lesser degree in parts of this Presidency.

12. To save valuable time, when there are signs that scarcity of a severe character is to be expected, the Committee would draw special attention to the suggestion, *vide* paragraph 174, that in every district plans of works suitable to the employment of large numbers of unskilled laborers should be prepared beforehand, and sanctioned by the Government, so that on the occurrence of the necessity for such works, no delay should be caused by uncertainty as to the best means of applying labor.

No. 377. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE H. D. PHILLIPS.

There is nothing very novel in the suggestions made at the close of the Committee's letter, for meeting future difficulties similar to those of 1866. But we are bound to acknowledge with thanks the great and valuable assistance rendered by the Committee during the late crisis, and I would agree with them in the commendations bestowed on the services of Mr. Dalyell.

(Signed) H. D. PHILLIPS.

No. 378. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE A. J. ARBUTHNOT.

1. I concur with Mr. Phillips in thinking that the Famine Relief Committee should receive the thanks of Government for the aid rendered by them during the scarcity which prevailed in this Presidency in 1866. Mr. Dalyell's services as Secretary to the Committee should also be acknowledged.

2. At the same time I am unable to assent to the opinion which (rather impliedly than expressly) is given in the 7th paragraph of the letter from the President of the Committee to the effect that a special agency for the relief of distress throughout the Presidency ought to have been organized at an earlier period. There is abundant evidence in the reports which have been received from the various districts, and indeed in the printed narrative of the scarcity submitted with Mr. Ellis' letter, that if it had not been for the failure of the south-west monsoon in June and July 1866, there was no district in this Presidency, except Ganjam, in which there would have been any real necessity for the special interference of the Government, or of the public. Mr. Dalyell, in the 97th paragraph of his Memorandum, admits that "had there been a plentiful fall of rain throughout the country "in June, in all probability no such measures would have been needed;" but he goes on to say that "as matters eventuated, it cannot but be regretted that earlier "action was not taken, for had the system of State employment and semi-State "relief, which was subsequently adopted in Bellary, North Arcot, South Arcot, "Salem, and Coimbatore, been initiated in these districts during the month of June, "instead of during the month of August, a large amount of human suffering "would have been alleviated," or, in other words, that it was the duty of the Government to anticipate a drought which might not have occurred, and the occurrence of which could scarcely be regarded as a probability, and in anticipation of that improbable contingency to organize expensive measures of relief in the shape of works for the employment of the strong, and relief-houses for feeding the

weak—measures which should only be adopted in cases of proved necessity, and which, if prematurely resorted to, are most prejudicial in drawing away agricultural labor from the land, in checking private charity, and in destroying the self-reliance of the people. I consider that it is the duty of the Government to record its emphatic dissent from the opinion that the special relief measures, which were deemed necessary towards the close of July 1866, ought to have been brought into operation at an earlier date, and I make this suggestion, not only with the object of vindicating the Government of this Presidency from the serious charge of indifference to the sufferings of the people under its rule, which is contained in the observations to which I have alluded—a charge which, on the strength of the Memorandum now before us, and of the very incomplete narrative of the famine in Ganjam which was previously given to the public, has more than once been preferred in the leading Indian Journal—but also with the view of checking those precipitate applications for State interference to which recent events have shewn that there is now a strong tendency. It is well remarked by the Bengal Famine Commissioners in their Report on the Bengal and Orissa Famine that "it may be apprehended that one of "the effects of the recent unhappy events, and more especially of the unfortunate "errors which have occurred on the side of too much discouraging or resisting "applications for public aid, will be that such applications may, in future, be made, "very constantly and very freely; perhaps too much so; and that being made, "men in authority will have great difficulty in resisting them, and will feel it a very "heavy risk and responsibility to do so, even when they are not quite convinced "of the certainty of the necessity." I cannot but think that in the late Proceedings of our Board of Revenue, with reference to the District of Nellore, we have very cogent evidence that the apprehensions entertained by the Bengal Famine Commissioners were not uncalled for.

3. I have but few remarks to make on the narrative of the scarcity contained in Part III. of the Memorandum, or on the observations contained in Part IV. on the general question of the means to be taken for the prevention of famines, and on the duties of the Government when they actually occur. The narrative appears to me to be a tolerably correct statement of the facts, and in regard to the means of prevention of famines, there is and can be but one opinion that it is the bounden duty of every Government and Administration in India to do all that is in its power towards maintaining and extending the means of irrigation and improving the communications, with the object of increasing the supply of food and facilitating its transport from one part of the country to another. Much has been done of late years in both respects, and whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Madras Government in past times, it cannot now be justly reproached with indifference either to irrigation or to roads. And here I may remark that if one fact was more clearly established than another by the late scarcity, it was the importance of the Railways as a means of transporting large quantities of grain to the distressed districts. Their great superiority over other means of transport became especially manifest, when, as in the case of Bellary, the importation of grain by means of animal transit was rendered impossible from the want of water or forage for the cattle along the line of road. This consideration should be in itself a strong inducement for the vigorous prosecution of the new lines recently suggested by the Madras Government.

4. The course to be taken by an Indian Government when famine, or scarcity approaching to famine, actually occurs, involves questions of much difficulty which, for the most part, can only be determined when the exigency arises, and in regard to which it seems to me impossible to lay down any precise rules. Whether the condition of the people in a district known to be suffering from drought is such as to justify the establishment of special relief works, or the opening of relief houses; whether the persons employed on the works should be paid in money or in grain; whether the state and prospects of the local markets are such as to justify the interference of the Government in the grain trade by importing food from other districts, are questions which can only be determined by the local Government on the information at its command. The last of the measures here adverted to—the importation of food by Government—is confessedly a measure fraught with the most serious risk, and which can only be justified by the certainty that the ordinary trade will fail to meet the requirements of the distressed locality. I observe that in connexion with this point reference is made in the Memorandum to the course taken by Sir R. Peel in 1846 in importing Indian corn into Ireland on account of the Government at the commencement of the Irish famine, but the writer has omitted to mention (probably he was not aware of the fact) that the result of the measure was so far from satisfactory that it was found impossible to repeat it, and in order to restore mercantile confidence and to revive this branch of trade which had become paralyzed by the expectation of Government interference, it became necessary to announce "that no orders for supplies of food would be sent by the Government to foreign countries." The following is an account of the matter given in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1848, in an article which is supposed to have been written by Sir Charles Trevelyan:—

"The question which the Government had to decide, in regard to the renewal "of the Commissariat operations, was of the most momentous kind. After all that "had taken place during the last few months, it could not be expected that private "trade would return, as a matter of course, to its accustomed channels. Neither "the wholesale dealers in towns, nor the retail dealers in the rural districts, would "lay in even their usual stocks of food; still less would they make the extraor-"dinary provision required to meet the coming emergency, while they had before "them the prospect of the Government throwing into the market supplies of food "of unknown extent, which would make their outlay so much loss to them. The "Government could not therefore calculate, as it did on the last occasion, on find-"ing the private trade, by means of which the people are ordinarily supplied with "food, proceeding as usual, and on being able to add more or less, at its discretion, "to the resources which that trade afforded. Mercantile confidence in this branch "of business was for the time destroyed. The trade was paralyzed; and if this "state of things had been suffered to continue, the general expectation of the "Government again interfering would inevitably have created a necessity for that "interference, on a scale which it would have been quite beyond the power of the "Government to support.

"Under these circumstances, it was announced, first, that no orders for sup-"plies of food would be sent by the Government to foreign countries; secondly, "that the interference of the Government would be confined to those western "districts of Ireland in which, owing to the former prevalence of Potato culti-

Government ought to have had the machinery of employment and relief in readiness and at hand. The failure of the south-west monsoon in 1866, following hard upon an insufficient north-east monsoon in the autumn of 1865, precipitated Bellary into a catastrophe which could not be averted by measures planned and sanctioned in July, and carried into effect in August and September; and what occurred in Bellary, occurred on a smaller scale and in a milder form in many other districts. The failure of one monsoon ought to arouse all the vigilance of Government in regard to the next.

6. The suggestion that a large number of works not requiring skilled labor should be planned and estimated for in every village in anticipation of scarcity is, in my opinion, an exaggerated proposal. It would be sufficient, I think, if in every district the Collector kept constantly in view a certain number of works to which the people, in the case of the suspension of common agricultural labor, might be promptly transferred. Such works could easily be indicated in every district of this Presidency in connection with irrigation and communications. As soon as the contingency of scarcity appeared impending, the attention of the subordinate local authorities would be called to such works, and the Collector would enter into correspondence with the Officers of the Public Works Department with reference to their execution. A timely report to Government would elicit the appropriation of funds, and the Government would be enabled to judge from the magnitude of the danger, and the state of the executive body, whether the nomination of special agency was necessary or not. The designation of works, the provision of funds, the nomination even of special officers, are not measures which need cause any unreasonable outlay, or arouse any alarm. The machinery being all held in readiness, it need not be applied till the evil was actually demonstrated. But then it could be applied efficiently. The laborer would be secured before his strength was impaired, and his energies would be directed to objects deliberately selected and properly superintended. If the apprehended danger passed away, if a retarded rain-fall supervened to revive the demand for agricultural labor, the workmen would rapidly disperse to their homes and fields, in such cases some slight waste of precaution, activity, and expenditure might occur; but it would be incurred for a good object, it would be an honorable error—one on which the Government might be congratulated for which it never would be blamed.

7. I do not think that the measures of Government in the summer of 1866 were timely or effectual. I think they might have been rendered so by more foresight and earlier action. On this point I agree with the Memorandum under consideration, and I demur to the sentiments of Mr. Arbuthnot; but, as I said before, I do not think we are called upon to record an opinion.

29th January 1868.

(Signed) NAPIER.

No. 380. ORDER THEREON, 18th February 1868, No. 459.

Miscellaneous.

1. The Government deferred disposing of this final Report from the Famine Relief Committee nominated at the public meeting held in July 1866, because the extraordinary failure of the north-east monsoon at the close of 1867 afforded reason to apprehend that the

Committee's labors had not yet concluded, and that the funds remaining at their disposal might still have to be devoted to the relief of distress by alms-giving.

2. Happily the recent welcome fall of rain, and the more cheering reports received from the suffering districts, now warrant the expectation that such aid will not be required, or at least not on such a scale as to require the services of the Committee, to whose gratuitous labors the country was so much indebted in 1866-67.

3. Their report will now accordingly be forwarded for the information of the Secretary of State, and the Government request that the gentlemen of the Committee, and especially Mr. R. A. Dalyell, their Honorary Secretary, whose zealous labors they so highly estimate, will accept the best thanks of Government for their valuable and willing services, given, as the Government are well aware must have been the case, at very considerable personal inconvenience by gentlemen the great majority of whom were already fully occupied with other business.

4. Now that their voluntarily assumed task is completed, they have the satisfaction of knowing that their systematic administration of the Charity Fund placed at their disposal ensured the largest amount of benefit from its expenditure, and the most effective alleviation of wide-spread distress.

5. Their suggestions on the subject of the prevention of such disasters as that from which the country recently emerged, will receive all consideration at the hands of Government.

6. They are doubtless aware that of the special works recommended to them by the District Officers, as reported in paragraph 146, *et seq.*, of their Secretary's Memorandum, many are already in hand. The preliminary investigations are being made for the Upper Bellary project, for the Periyar project in Madura, and for the Neringipett Anicut restoration project in Salem. The estimates for the extension of the Pennair irrigation system in Nellore are before the Government of India.

7. Those for the Cheyar Anicut, in North Arcot, are under consideration, with reference to its probable effect on existing works on the same river.

8. The attention of Government is constantly directed to the general improvement of the irrigation system of the country, and the recent inauguration of a system of loan works will, it may be hoped, tend to release funds for the purpose.

9. The extension of the Coast Canal northward from Dugarazapatam has recently been again started. The Railway works are being pushed forward rapidly. The estimated expenditure for 1868-69 on district roads is about twenty-five lacs of Rupees.

10. Thus it may be hoped that progress is being made in the direction indicated by the Committee, and that when next a disastrous season occurs, the country may be in a better position to meet it than it was in the last occasion.

(Signed) R. S. ELLIS,
Chief Secretary.

No

From,

The President of the
Famine Relief Committee

To,

The Secretary to Government.
Revenue Department

Sir,

With reference to the Proceedings of Government, under date 5th September 1866, requesting the Famine Relief Committee to submit Periodical reports of their operations for the information of the Secretary of State for India, I have the honor by desire of the Committee to present to Government the accompanying Memorandum prepared by the Honorary Secretary.

2. The Committee are glad of this opportunity of recording how greatly they are indebted to Mr Dalyell for the unflagging energy, patience, and tact with which he has, in addition to his important official duties, aided them as Honorary Secretary from the beginning of their work until the present time when any further

labor

labor on their part, is happily, unnecessary.

3. In Part I of this Memorandum the Honorary Secretary has brought together for the purpose of comparison a narrative of previous Famines which have occurred during a period of more than a Century in this Presidency. In Part II he gives much information on the general condition of the people and some interesting speculations upon the food supply of the Presidency. Part III contains the History of the great agricultural distress which prevailed in this Presidency during 1876 culminating for a short period in actual famine in Ganjam, and the measures of relief which were taken, as well by the State as by private individuals whose Charities were under the control and direction of the Famine Committee at Madras.

4. From para 133, Part III of the Memorandum it will be observed that the total amounts of private subscriptions was Rupees 2,72,932-13-5 and the contributions

of

9. The means of prevention are specially noticed in the 4th Part of the Memorandum and are

1st The completion of the means of communication between districts, a matter of essential importance when periodical scarcity as is usually the case in this Presidency, is confined to particular districts.

2d. The projection and construction of important works of irrigation and the provision by state Loans of the necessary funds for these works.

3d. The maintenance of existing works of irrigation in a state of efficiency. The funds allotted for this purpose have in late years fluctuated in amount and are still inadequate, and the proposal that a fixed percentage of the revenue derived from irrigated land, should be specially allotted to the maintenance of these works, seems worthy of serious consideration.

10. The Committee would also urge upon Government that the several works suggested by the officers in the charge of some of the distressed districts, as detailed in paras 146 to 150 of the Memorandum Part IV should

at

at once be undertaken. It is also of the utmost importance that in the event of a general failure of the periodical rains, when the works of irrigation in this Presidency become inoperative, the Government should be prepared to meet the disastrous contingency and that no time should be lost in the organization of measures of relief.

11. The Committee most respectfully call attention to the suggestions which in anticipation of the approaching famine, were made in 1865 by Sir Arthur Cotton (vide para 155 of Memorandum) and which had they been adopted then, as they were later, would have averted much of the disastrous loss of life which has taken place in Orissa especially and in a lesser degree in parts of this Presidency.

12. To save valuable time when there are signs that scarcity of a severe character is to be expected, the Committee would draw special attention to the suggestion, vide para 174, that in every district plans of works suitable to the employment of large numbers of unskilled laborers should be prepared

before

before hand, and sanctioned by the Government so that on the occurrence of the necessity for such works no delay should be caused by uncertainty as to the best means of applying labor.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant.

R. J. Ellis
President.

Madras
26th September
1867

To,
The Secretary to Government
Revenue Department.

No. Minute by the Hon'ble H. D. Phillips
(Here enter ~~26th Sept 1867~~)

No. Do Do A. J. Arbuthnot (14 Jany. /68)
Here enter

No. Do by His Excellency the President
Here enter 29 Jany /68

Reported to England
D/ 28th Feby No 10. of 1868.
Mis:

Rev = 1867 - OV No.
Pro of Govt for Feby 68
No 2599

From
The President of the
Famine Relief Commee

To The Secretary to
Government R.D.

Dated 26 } September 1867
Desp 30
Recd 30

No.

Forwarding final report of the Famine Relief Committee's operations with certain suggestions for prevention of the periodical famines.—

S. Ack No 459 - 18 Feby/68

No 376

c D No 1767 R & R c 15 Jany/68 O.C.
O.C. 8 Feb 68 No 14

DEPARTMENT.

No. 2599

From The President of the Famine Relief Committee

Dated 26th September 1867

FOR ORDERS.

There is nothing very novel in the suggestions made at the close of the Committee's letter, for meeting future difficulties similar to those of 1866 - But we are bound back upon with thanks the zeal & valuable assistance rendered by the Committee during the late crisis and I would suggest with him - in the commendations bestowed on the services of Mr Dalyell -

No. 3771

32 Nov/67 R 14 Feb

before

Minute.

I concur with Mr. Phillips in thinking that the Famine Relief Committee should receive the thanks of Govt. for the aid rendered by them during the Scarcity which prevailed in this Presidency in 1866. Mr. Dalyell's services as Secretary to the Committee should also be acknowledged.

At the same time I am unable to assent to the opinion which (rather impliedly than expressly) is given in the 7th paragraph of the letter from the President of the Committee to the Effect that a Special agency for the relief of distress throughout the Presidency ought to have been organized at an earlier period. There is abundant evidence in the reports which have been received from the various districts, and indeed in the printed narrative of the Scarcity submitted with Mr. Ellis' letter, that if it had not been for the failure of the South West Monsoon in June & July 1866 there was no District

in

in this Presidency except Ganjam in which there would have been any real necessity for the special interference of the Govt. or of the public. Mr. Dalyell in the 97th paragraph of his memorandum admits that "had there been a plentiful "fall of rain throughout the country "in June in all probability no such "measures would have been needed," but he goes on to say that "as matters "eventuated it cannot but be regretted "that earlier action was not taken, for "had the system of State employment "and Semi-State relief which was Sub. "sequently adopted in Bellary, North "Arcot, South Arcot, Salem and Coimbatore "been initiated in these districts during "the month of June instead of during "the month of August, a large amount "of human suffering would have been "alleviated", or in other words that it was the duty of the Govt. to anticipate a drought which might not have occurred and the occurrence of which could scarcely be regarded as a pro. bability and in anticipation of that improbable contingency to organize expensive measures of relief in the

shape

shape of works for the employment of the strong and relief-houses for feeding the weak, measures which should only be adopted in cases of proved necessity and which if prematurely resorted to, are most prejudicial in drawing away agricultural labor from the land, in checking private charity and in destroying the self reliance of the people. I consider that it is the duty of the Govt. to record its emphatic dissent from the opinion that the Special Relief measures which were deemed necessary towards the close of July 1866 ought to have been brought into operation at an earlier date, and I make this suggestion not only with the object of vindicating the Govt. of this Presidency from the serious charge of indifference to the sufferings of the people under its rule, which is contained in the observations to which I have alluded,- a charge which on the strength of the Memorandum now before us and of the very incomplete narrative of the Famine in Ganjam which was previously given to the public, has more than once been preferred in the leading Indian journal,- but

also

also with the view of checking those precipitate applications for State interference to which recent events have shown that there is now a strong tendency. It is well remarked by the Bengal Famine Commissioners in their Report on the Bengal and Orissa Famine that "it may be apprehended that "one of the effects of the recent unhappy "events and more especially of the "unfortunate errors which have occurred "on the side of too much discouraging "or resisting applications for public aid "will be that such applications may "in future be made very constantly and "very freely; perhaps too much so; and "that being made men in authority "will have great difficulty in resisting "them and will feel it a very heavy "risk and responsibility to do so, Even "when they are not quite convinced of "the certainty of the necessity."

I cannot but think that in the late proceedings of our Board of Revenue with reference to the District of Nellore we have very cogent evidence that the apprehensions entertained by the Bengal Famine Commissioners were not

uncalled for.

I have but few remarks to make on the narrative of the scarcity contained in Part III of the Memorandum or on the observations contained in Part IV on the general question of the means to be taken for the prevention of Famines and on the duties of the Govt. when they actually occur. The narrative appears to me to be a tolerably correct statement of the facts and in regard to the means of prevention of famines there is and can be but one opinion that it is the bounden duty of every Government & Administration in India to do all that is in its power towards maintaining and extending the means of irrigation and improving the communications, with the object of increasing the supply of food and facilitating its transport from one part of the country to another. Much has been done of late years in both respects and whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Madras Govt. in past times, it cannot now be justly reproached with indifference either to irrigation or to roads. And here I may remark that if one fact was more clearly

established

of trade which had become paralysed by the expectation of Govt interference, it became necessary to announce "that "no orders for supplies of food would "be sent by the Govt. to foreign countries."
The following is an account of the matter given in the Edinburgh Review of January 1848 in an Article which is supposed to have been written by Sir Charles Trevelyan.

"The question which the Govt had to decide, in regard to the renewal of the Commissariat operations, was of the most momentous kind. After all that had taken place during the last few months, it could not be expected that private trade would return, as a matter of course, to its accustomed channels. Neither the wholesale dealers in towns, nor the retail dealers in the rural districts, would lay in even their usual stocks of food; still less would they make the extraordinary provision required to meet the coming emergency, while they had before them the prospect of the Government throwing into the market supplies of food of unknown extent, which would make their outlay so much loss to them. The Government could not therefore calculate, as it did on the last occasion, on finding the private trade, by means of which the people are ordinarily supplied with food, proceeding as usual, and on being able to add more or less, at its discretion, to the resources which that trade afforded. Mercantile confidence in this branch of business was for the time destroyed. The trade was paralysed; and if this state of things had been suffered to continue, the general expectation of

the Government again interfering would inevitably have created a necessity for that interference, on a scale which it would have been quite beyond the power of the Government to support."

"Under these circumstances it was announced, 1st. That no orders for supplies of food would be sent by the Government to foreign countries. 2dly That the interference of the Government would be confined to those western districts of Ireland in which, owing to the former prevalence of potato cultivation, no trade in corn for local consumption existed. And 3dly. That even in these districts, the Government depôts would not be opened for the sale of food, while it could be obtained from private dealers at reasonable prices, with reference to those which prevailed at the nearest large marts. It was also determined to adhere to the rule acted upon during the preceding season, not to make any purchases in the local markets of Ireland, where the appearance of the Government as a buyer must have had the effect of keeping up prices and encouraging interested representations; and a promise was given that every practicable effort would be made to protect the supplies of food introduced by private traders, both while they were in transit and when they were stored for future consumption."

"The Relief Committees of the preceding season were re-organized; the rules under which they had acted were carefully revised; and inspecting officers were appointed to superintend their proceedings, and keep the Government informed of the progress of events. A large proportion of the people of Ireland had been accustomed to grow the food they required, each for himself, on his own little plot of ground; and the social machinery by which, in other countries, the necessary supplies of food are collected, stored and

and distributed, had no existence there. Suddenly, without any preparation, the people passed from a potato food, which they raised themselves, to a grain food which they had to purchase from others, and which, in great part, had to be imported from abroad; and the country was so entirely destitute of the resources applicable to this new state of things, that often, even in large villages, neither bread nor flour was to be procured; and in country districts, the people had sometimes to walk twenty miles before they could obtain a single stone of meal. The main object for which the Relief Committees were established, therefore, was to provide a temporary substitute for the operations of the corn factor, miller, baker, and provision dealer, and to allow time and furnish the example for a sounder and more permanent state of things; but they were not precluded from giving gratuitous relief in cases of more than ordinary destitution. The agency of the Relief Committees was this season almost universally substituted for the Coast-guard and constabulary depôts, with the object of drawing out the resources of the country before the government depôts were had recourse to, of inducing the upper and middle classes to exert themselves, and of preventing a direct pressure of the mass of the people upon the government depôts, which in a time of real famine it would have been very difficult to resist."

It is apparent from the foregoing remarks that the state of Ireland in

in 1847 was very different from the state of India at the present time, and that while the same general principle of the inexpediency of the interference of Govt. in the course of trade is applicable to both countries, there were peculiar circumstances connected with the food supply of the Irish that may have justified a degree of State interference for which no corresponding reasons exist here.

The only other point in the Memorandum which appears to call for notice is the suggestion made near its close, and which appears to have been taken from the report of the Bengal Famine Commissioners, that in anticipation of famines "a large "number of works not requiring skilled "labor should be planned and estimated for in every village, the lists "and estimates being lodged with the "Tahsildars of the Taluk." This suggestion has been rejected by the Govt. of India on the ground that "the preparation of designs and estimates "solely as part of the provisions against "famines would be a useless expenditure

"expenditure of means and money; that
"it is better to leave it to Civil officers
"and Engineers to do their best when
"occasion arises, to propose wisely and
"carry out correctly what works are
"necessary to relieve the people, and that
"the Govt. should accept the risk and
"loss from mistakes which may be
"made on such occasions." To these
objections may I think be added the
increased danger which would arise
from the existence of such plans and
estimates in every Tahsildar's Cutcherry
of premature applications for per-
mission to commence Special relief
works whenever the prospects of the
season were more than usually un-
favorable. -

G. J. Christmas

14th January 1866.

Minute by H.E. the President

I agree with my Colleague Mr Phillips in thinking that the Government will do well in simply recording their high sense of the Services rendered to Government and the Country by the Famine Relief Committee and of the zeal and ability with which Mr Dalyell has performed the duties of Secretary to that Body. I would not keep any distinct opinion with reference to the Memorandum submitted by Mr Dalyell. I think myself that it is in the main a faithful narrative and that it contains a just and temperate appreciation of the conduct of Government during the crisis of 1866. There are, however, questions connected with that event which are open to controversy and as the Government would probably not be found unanimous in any expression of opinion which could be framed it is more discreet to keep (and the opinion as put forward by Mr Dalyell) over these transactions in silence. The

errors and neglects of Government if such
there ~~be~~ were cannot be retained, further
discussion would justably be deemed
superfluous and fatiguing, it might produce
recrimination. The events of 1866. have left
us lessons which must not be
forgotten, and which if wisely remembered will
enable us to meet similar contingencies
with greater energy and foresight than
were exhibited in 1866. yet with the
~~that~~ ~~exception~~ precipitation and that exception of
literality to which Mr. arbuthnot has
pointed in his Minute and of which
he sees some indications in the recent
proceedings of the Board of Revenue.

There is much in the Minute recorded
by Mr. arbuthnot in which I cordially
agree but I cannot avoid giving
expression to my dissent from his
views on one point with reference to
which I have already embodied my
sentiments when the action of the local
authorities in Bellary came under
discussion.

Mr. arbuthnot has affirmed the
opinion that if it had not been for
the failure of the South west Monsoon
in June and July 1866. there was no
district in the Presidency, except
Ganjam, in which there would have
been any real necessity for the Special
interference of Government and that
it was consequently not the duty of
Government to anticipate and
provide against a misfortune
which could not be regarded as
probable.

I hold on the contrary that the failure
of the South west Monsoon was a
contingency which ought to have been
contemplated in some districts in
which that rain fall is uncertain
both partial and scanty as for instance
Bellary, and that Government
ought to have had the machinery
of employment and relief in

readings and at last. The failure of the South west Monsoon in 1866. following hard upon on insufficient North East Monsoon in the autumn of 1865. precipitated Bellary into a calamity which could not be averted by measures planned and sanctioned in July and carried into effect in August and September; and what occurred in Bellary occurred on a smaller scale and in a milder form in many other Districts. The failure of one monsoon ought to arouse all the vigilance of Government in regard to the next.

The suggestion that a large number of works not requiring skilled labour should be planned and estimated for in every village in anticipation of scarcity is, in my opinion, an exaggerated proposal. It would be sufficient, I think, if in every district the Collector kept constantly in view a certain number of works which the people in the case of the suspension of common agricultural labour might be promptly transferred. Such works could easily be indicated in every District of this Presidency in connection with irrigation and communications. As soon as the contingency of scarcity appeared impending the attention of the subordinate local authorities would be called to such works and the Collector would enter into correspondence with the officers of the Public works Department with reference to their execution. A timely report to Government would elicit the appropriation of funds and the Government would be enabled to judge for the magnitude of the danger and the State of the executive body whether the nomination of Special agency was necessary or not. The designation of works, the provision of funds, the nomination even of special officers are

at measures which need cause any
unreasonable outlay or arouse any
alarm. The machinery being all held
in readiness it need not be applied
till the evil is actually demonstrated.
But then it could be applied efficiently.
The labourer could be secured before his
strength was impaired, and his energies
could be directed to its legitimate
object and properly superintended.
If the apprehended danger faded away
if a retarded rainfall intervened
to revive the demand for agricultural
labour, the workmen would rapidly
disperse to their homes and fields, in
such cases some slight waste of precaution,
activity and expenditure might occur,
but it would be incurred for a good
object, it would be a venial error;
one on which the Government ought to be
congratulated for which it never would
be blamed. — . . . . .

I do not think that the measures of
government in the summer of 1866. were
timely or effectual. I think they might
have been rendered so by more foresight
and earlier action. On this point I
agree with the Memorandum under
consideration and I demur to the
statement of Mr. Arbuthnot, but as
I said before. I do not think we
are called upon to record an
opinion. Napier.

January 29th

Revenue Departt
No. 459.

Proceedings of the Madras Govt
under date the 18th Febry 1868.

Read the following letter from the President of the Famine Relief Committee.

Forwarding final report of the Famine Relief Committee's operations with certain suggestions for prevention of the periodical famines.

(Here enter 26th Septr 1867.)

The Govt deferred disposing of this final report from the Famine Relief Committee nominated at the public meeting held in July 1866 because the extraordinary failure of the North East monsoon at the close of 1867 afforded reason to apprehend that the Committee's labors had not yet concluded and that the funds remaining

Wd

N.

Seen

The minutes [illegible] [illegible] and sent to the Home Govt.

N.

No. 30/

Remarks by the President

Rev. Pros: 18 Feby/68 No 376

Pr 18th Feby /68
B 376 to 380

at their disposal might still have to be devoted to the relief of distress by abuse giving:-

Happily the recent welcome fall of rain & the more cheering reports received from the suffering districts now warrant the expectation that such aid will not be required - or at least not on such a scale as to require the services of the Committee to whose gratuitous labors the country was so much indebted in 1866/67:-

This report will now accordingly be forwarded for the information of the Secy of State and the Govt request that the gentlemen of the Committee and especially Wm R: A: Salyell, this Honorary Secy, whose zealous labors they so highly estimate will accept the best thanks of

of Govt for their valuable and willing services - gratuitously as the Govt are well aware must have been the case - at very considerable personal inconvenience by gentlemen the great majority of whom were already fully occupied with other business:-

Now that this voluntary assumed task is complete they have the satisfaction of knowing that their systematic administration of the charity fund placed at their disposal ensured the largest amount of benefit from its expenditure - and the most effectual alleviation of wide spread distress.

This suggestions on the subject of the prevention of such disasters as that from which the country recently emerged will receive all consideration at the hands of Govt:-

They are doubtless

aware that of the special works recommended to them by the District officers as reported in para 146 et seq of this Secy's Memo: many are already in hand.- The preliminary investigations are being made for the Upper Bellary project-for the Cheyar project in Madura & for the Nenagipett anicut restoration project in Salem.- The estimates for the extension of the Pennair irrigation system in Nellore are before the Govt of India.-

Those for the Cheyar anicut in North Arcot are under consideration with reference to its probable effect on existing works on the same river.-

The attention of Govt is constantly directed to the general improvement of the irrigation system of the country & the recent inauguration of a system of Local works will it may be hoped tend to release funds for the purpose.

The extension of the Coast Canal Northward from Dugarazapatam has recently been again started. The Railway works are being pushed forward rapidly. The estimated expenditure for 1868/69 on District Roads is about 25 lacs of Rupees.

Thus it may be hoped that progress is being made in the direction indicated by the Committee- and that when next a disastrous season occurs the country may be in a better position to meet it than it was

pw

in the last occasion —

[signature]

41 To the Presidents of the Famine Relief Committees Dec 19 Feb
14 " the Board of Ores
21 " the Public Works Dept

Reported to England
D/ 28th Feby. No. 10 of 1868 Misc.

Revenue 1868 Despt.
No. of Govt. for Feby.

No. 459.
No. of the Madras Govt.
D/ 18th February/68-

No. 376 @ 380-

V

68 Feb Rev.