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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / B.P. No.	251	Press / Mis.
Dated	24. 2.	1984.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 24th February 1874.

No. 216. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 23rd February 1874 :—

Read the following letter from J. H. GARSTIN, Esq., Collector of South Arcot, to J. GROSE, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Cuddalore, 19th February 1874, No. 82 .

As the Board, in their Proceedings of the 2nd instant, throw on me the responsibility, as a matter of course, of foreseeing any scarcity which may be coming on, and of providing against it, I have the honour to state that I do anticipate scarcity during the months of April, May, June, and July, in some parts of this district, more particularly in the western and north-western portions, and I, therefore, beg to have the sum of Rs. 30,000 at once placed at my disposal for the purchase of grain and for defraying the expenses attendant on its storage, distribution, and the establishment of relief houses.

2. The sum asked for may seem large, but I fear it is not more than what the necessities of the case may require. The present prices of the staple food-grains at the very moment of harvest are, as set forth in the table given below, side by side with the prices ruling at this time last year and in the last year of scarcity, very high :—

Grains.	Number of local Measures sold per Rupee.						
	1874, February	1873, February	1872, February	1866 (famine year).			
				February.	June.	July.	August.
Rice, 1st sort	6¾	11¾	11¾	7	6½	5¾	5
,, 2nd ,, ...	7	.....	12½	7½	7¼	6	5¼
Paddy, 1st ,, ...	15	27	25	16	15	12	11
,, 2nd ,, ...	15½	.....	30	18	16	13½	11¾
Horse-gram	10½	10	14	12¼	10¼	7¾	6½
Cholum	11	.....	40½	15	13	7¾	8
Cumboo	11¼	18	29	13½	11½	8¼	8
Ragi	11½	19	32	14	12½	8½	6½
Varagu	.....	12	57	24½	18	15	6
Salt	10¾	11	10½	13½	13	13	12¼
Wheat	4¼	4½	5¾	4	3¾	3¾	3¼
Ulundu	6¼	7½	9¼	7	5¾	5	4¼

3. Large quantities of rice are being exported, *via* Porto Novo, to Ceylon ; and it is but too manifest that prices will rise, thus putting it altogether beyond the power of the poorest classes to purchase those grains which they are accustomed to eat, and I, therefore, think the present moment should be seized to buy and store up in those parts where the scarcity is likely to be most severely felt a sufficient quantity of grain, wherewith to pay and feed those who may come to the Government for food and are able to work for it, and to feed those who may not be able to work.

4. Twenty thousand Rupees laid out at once in buying paddy, ragi, and cambu, will purchase enough to feed about 1,200 persons for four months, and I

shall consider myself very fortunate if there are no more than that number to be assisted during that period throughout the district. Should the number be less and the grain not required, it can easily be sold without any loss; but it will be of little use granting money hereafter if food is not to be bought. Now is the time to take measures against any possible famine by storing food, and, therefore, I do not hesitate to take on myself the responsibility of asking for

5. The jamabundi will not be over till the middle or end of April throughout the whole district, and till then I cannot expect to receive the reports from the divisional officers which I called for in my Circular Memorandum, of which a copy was sent to the Board; so that I shall not be in possession of detailed information, gathered from all the village-officers of the district, as to the stocks of grains in their villages and the prospects of scarcity in their vicinity, till such scarcity has actually begun, and it will then be too late to take preventive measures; so that in the present crisis, time being an element of the greatest value and detailed official reports not being available, I am obliged to act on such information as I can get; and from what I learnt yesterday in a long conversation with the Trikalore Tahsildar, who has just finished a three-month tour throughout his taluq (during which he has revised the ayacuts of all the tanks in his taluq which required revision), there seems to be little doubt that in the western portion of that taluq and throughout much of Trinomalay and in the Gingee Frikah of Tindivanum severe distress from scarcity of food will be felt.

6. I propose, therefore, that if the sum I ask for be granted to place most of it at the disposal of the divisional officers for the purpose of at once buying and storing in the centres of the tracts most likely to be affected all the grains of different kinds which they can for the sums placed at their disposal, arranging for the employment of all persons who can work and who require relief as much as possible on the repairs of their own village tanks and channels, payment being always made in grain. For those who cannot work food would have to be supplied at relief houses. The rest of the funds would be held in reserve to meet contingent expenses.

7. I have again called on the divisional officers for immediate reports as to the probability of scarcity in their divisions, and hope soon to receive them. They will be at once forwarded to the Board.

8. I deprecate the employment on new works of such persons as may be employed as labourers receiving relief, because, in the first place, as they will probably be, for the most part, people accustomed to agricultural labour, they will all the more readily and easily devote themselves to repairing tanks and clearing channels, while this work will prove certainly more remunerative to Government than any other, and will admit of supervision by village-officers.

9. As to the source from which the funds asked for may be supplied, I cannot think of any better one than Local Fund balances which, up to the end of last month, amounted to a sum of Rs. 2,10,766 for the two Circles in this district, after making provision for all charges, except that of Department of Public Works supervision which may be set down as under Rs. 75,000.

SUBMITTED for the orders of Government.

2. The Collector of South Arcot, referring to the Board's intimation in their Proceedings of the 2nd February 1874, No. 198, that "the Collector will, of course, be careful that if a scarcity is really coming it is foreseen and provided against," reports that he expects scarcity in the western part of Trikalore, in a great portion of Trinomalay, the Gingee part of Tindivanam, and applies sanction to buy Rs. 20,000 worth of grain and spend Rs. 10,000 more in storing and distributing it, and establishing relief houses, He proposes to employ the distressed on tanks and channels and pay them in grain, and to establish relief houses wherever they may be necessary. He suggests that the Rs. 30,000 may be taken from the Local Fund balances.

3. The price list given by the Collector, which states the number of "paddies" (each of which is equal to 1·63 imperial seers) selling for a rupee, is ominous, inasmuch as it shows that prices are rising rapidly, and have reached the level which they attained at the same time of 1866, "the famine year;" but it is not, as the Collector thinks, a significant fact that prices are so high at the very time of the harvest, for the experience of the Settlement Department shows that prices are not lower during the ryots' selling months than during any other part of the year. The exports of grain, so far as the Board can gather from a hasty inspection of the returns before them, are unusually large. The exports of rice from Cuddalore and Porto Novo from November to January in 1872-73 were valued at Rs. 13,304. In the same months in 1873-74, they were valued at Rs. 34,129.

4. Beyond the rise in prices and activity in exports, the Collector has no definite information, and he does not expect to have such information in time.

5. His chief reason for applying for leave to purchase grain immediately seems to be that it will become dearer, but this is not enough. A large purchase of grain in the local market would make prices rise suddenly, and would probably cause a panic. The mere raising of prices would enormously increase the number of people unable to buy grain enough to support life. Nothing would justify such a disturbance of trade, except a reasonable assurance that the stock of grain in the afflicted areas is too small, and that the creation of a demand for it by distributing money will not attract grain in the ordinary course of trade. This is not proved. On the contrary, the areas which are threatened are small, and within three or four days' journey of the coast, so that grain can be carried into them promptly either from the ports or from the surrounding tracts. Even if it ever becomes necessary for the Collector to buy grain, the Board think he should import it from Madras or one of the northern ports.

6. The Board resolve to recommend Government to authorize the Collector to proceed with all works (situated in the threatened tracts) which are entered in the Local Fund Budget for 1874-75, which is now before Government, and to begin as relief work the cleansing of tanks and channels in any villages which may appear to be in a specially bad condition. Payment must, of course, be made in money as long as grain can be bought by the labourers. The cost of these relief works, the Board think, should be paid from Imperial Funds. It may eventually be necessary to establish relief houses, and this also should be left to the Collector's discretion.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
24th February 1874.

No. 217. ORDER THEREON, 24th February 1874, No. 251.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government approve of the Board's proposals, contained in the last paragraph of their Proceedings, for the execution of Local Fund works in anticipation of the budget being passed, and for the commencement of relief works of the nature described where absolutely necessary. The question of provision for the latter will be referred to the Department Public Works for consideration. Should it prove necessary relief houses must be opened.

2. Further particulars regarding the state of this tract of country should be submitted on receipt.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Acting Secretary to Government.

Collectors Office
Cuddalore 19/2
19th February 1874

No 82

From,

J. Mc. Carthy Esqre,
Collector of South Arcot

To,

C. Grant Esqre,
Secretary to the Board of Revenue
Madras

Sir,

I have the Board, in their Proceedings of the 2nd instant, drawn my attention to the reported scarcity which may be coming on and desiring me, if I perceive any reasonable ground for it, to submit my proposals for providing against it, I have the honour to state that I do anticipate scarcity to a considerable degree during the months of April, May, June and July in consequence of the very deficient and unequal distribution of the rainfall in the western Taluks and Shevaroy hills to have that arm of the Dist affected, more particularly in the western and north western Taluks, and Shevaroy hills to have been the arm of the 30000 attached to the Dist a few years ago, disposed for the purchase of grain and for defraying the necessary attendants and storage charges, and

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Govt. of {1874} Madras.

REVENUE.

To

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated February 24th.

Read. *Encl.*

G. O., 24th February 1874, *No.* 251.

FEBRUARY.

Nos. 216-217.

Anticipated Scarcity in South Arcot District.—Approves Board's proposals regarding the execution of Local Fund Works and the commencement of certain relief works on account of the —; refers to Public Works Department the question of provision for the latter; directs the opening of relief houses, if necessary, and the submission of further particulars on the state of the district.

and the establishment of relief houses.

2. The sum asked for may seem large, but I fear it is not more than what the necessities of the case may require. The present prices of the staple food grains at the very moment of harvest, are, as set forth in the table given below, side by side with the prices ruling at this time last year and in the last year of scarcity, very high.

Grains	Number of local measures sold per Rupee 1876 (Famine year)						
	1874 February	1873 February	1872 February	February	June	July	August
Rice 1st sort	6 3/4	11 3/4	11 3/4	7	6 1/2	5 3/4	5
Do 2d sort	7	"	12 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/4	6	5 1/4
Paddy 1st sort	15	27	25	16	15	12	11
Do 2d sort	15 1/2	"	30	18	18	13 1/2	11 3/4
Horsegram	10 1/2	10	14	12 1/4	10 1/4	7 3/4	6 1/2
Cholum	11	"	40 1/2	15	13	7 3/4	8
Cumboo	11 1/4	18	29	13 1/2	11 1/2	8 1/4	8
Ragi	11 1/2	19	32	14	12 1/2	8 1/2	6 1/2
Varagu	"	12	57	24 1/2	18	15	8
Salt	13 3/4	11	10 1/2	13 1/2	13	13	12 1/2
Wheat	4 1/4	4 1/2	5 3/4	4	3 3/4	3 3/4	3 1/2
Allundu	6 1/4	7 1/2	9 1/4	7	5 3/4	5	4 1/4

3. Large quantities of rice are being exported via Porto Novo to Ceylon; and it is but too manifest that prices will rise, thus putting it altogether beyond the power of the poorest classes to purchase those grains which they are accustomed to eat, and I therefore think the present moment should be seized to buy and store up, in those parts where the scarcity is likely to be most severely felt, a sufficient quantity of grain wherewith to pay and feed those who may come to the Government for food and are able to work for it, and to feed those who may not be able to work.

4. Twenty thousand rupees laid out at once in buying Paddy, ragi, and Cumbu will purchase enough to feed about 1,200 persons for 4 months, and I shall consider myself very fortunate if there are no more than that number to be assisted during that period throughout the District. Should the number be less

and

and the grain not required it can easily be sold without any loss, but it will be of little use granting money hereafter if food is not to be bought. Now is the time to take measures against any possible famine by storing food, and therefore I do not hesitate to take on myself the responsibility of asking for funds.

5. The Jamabundi will not be over till the middle or end of April throughout the whole District, and till then, I cannot expect to receive the reports from the Divisional Officers which I called for in my circular Memo of which a copy was sent to the Board, so that I shall not be in possession of detailed information, gathered from all the Village Officers of the District, as to the stocks of grains in their villages and the prospects of scarcity in their vicinity till such scarcity has actually begun, and it will then be too late to take preventive measures, so that in the present crisis, time being an element of the greatest value and detailed official reports not being available, I am

1/251

am obliged to act on such information as I can get; and from what I learnt yesterday in a long conversation with the Trikalore Tahsildar who has just finished a 3 months' tour throughout his taluq (during which he inspected the Ayacuts of all the Tanks in his taluq which required revision) there seems to be little doubt that in the western portion of that Taluq and throughout much of Trinomalay and in the Gingee Trikkal of Tindivanum, severe distress from scarcity of food will be felt.

6. I propose therefore that if the sum I ask for be granted, to place most of it at the disposal of the Divisional Officers for the purpose of at once buying and storing in the centres of the tracts most likely to be affected, all the grains of different kinds which they can for the sums placed at their disposal, arranging for the employment of all persons who can work and who require relief as much as possible on the repairs

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of their own village Tanks and channels, payment being always made in grain.

For those who cannot work, food would have to be supplied at relief houses. The rest of the funds would be held in reserve to meet contingent expenses.

7. I have again called on the Divisional Officers for immediate reports as to the probability of scarcity in their Divisions and hope soon to receive them. They will be at once forwarded to the Board.

8. I deprecate the employment on new works of such persons as may be employed as labourers receiving relief, because in the first place, as they will probably be for the most part people accustomed to agricultural labour, they will all the more readily and easily devote themselves to repairing tanks and clearing channels, while this work will prove certainly more remunerative to Government than any other and will admit of supervision by village Officers.

9. As to the source from which the funds asked for may be supplied I cannot think of any better one than Local Fund Balances which upto the end of last month amounted to a sum of Rs 2,10,766 for the 2 circles in this District after making provision for all charges except that of Department of Public Works supervision which may be set down as under Rupees 75,000.

I have &c

(Signed) J. H. Garstin
Collector.

(True Copy)

J. Lovell
Secretary

Revenue Department

251

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
dated 23d February 1874

Read letter from the Collector of South Arcot dated 19th February 1874 No 82 informing that he anticipates scarcity in parts of the District from April to July and requesting that Rupees 30,000 be placed at his disposal for the purchase of grain and for defraying the expenses attendant on its storage and distribution.

Submitted for the orders of Government.

The Collector of South Arcot referring to the Board's intimation

Enclosures in Proceedings of the Board of Revenue to Government, dated 23d February 1874

Read the letter from the Collector of South Arcot, informing that he anticipates scarcity in parts of the District from April to July and requesting that Rupees 30,000 be placed at his disposal for the purchase of grain and for defraying the expenses attendant on its storage and distribution.

Submitted for the orders of Government.

P.C. D 24 February 1874

in their Proceedings of the 2nd February 1874 No 198 that "the Collector will of course be careful that if a scarcity is really coming it is foreseen and provided against," reports that he expects scarcity in the Western part of Trikalore, in the greater portion of Trinomaly and the Gingee part of Tindivanam, and applies for sanction to buy Rupees 20,000 worth of grain, and spend Rupees 10,000 more in storing and distributing it, and establishing Relief Houses. He proposes to employ the distressed on tanks and channels, and pay them in grain and to establish Relief Houses wherever they may be

necessary. He suggests that the Rupees 30,000 may be taken from the Local Fund balances.

The price list given by the Collector which states the number of "padies" (each of which is equal to 1·63 imperial seers) selling for a Rupee is ominous inasmuch as it shows that prices are rising rapidly and have reached the level which they attained at the same time of 1866 the Famine year; but it is not, as the Collector thinks, a significant fact that prices are so high at the very time of the harvest, for the experience of the Settlement Department shows that prices are not lower during the ryots' selling

selling months than during any other part of the year. The exports of grain, so far as the Board can gather from a hasty inspection of the returns before them, are unusually large. The exports of rice from Cuddalore and Porto Novo from November to January in 1872-73 were valued at Rupees 13,304. In the same months in 1873-74 they were valued at Rupees 34,129.

Beyond the rise in prices and activity in exports the Collector has no definite information, and he does not expect to have such information in time.

F.C. is chief reason for applying

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applying for leave to purchase grain immediately seems to be that it will become dearer, but this is not enough. A large purchase of grain in the local market would make prices rise suddenly and would probably cause a panic. The mere raising of prices would enormously increase the number of people unable to buy grain enough to support life. Nothing would justify such a disturbance of trade except a reasonable assurance that the stock of grain in the afflicted areas is too small, and that the creation of a demand for it by distributing money will not attract grain in the ordinary course