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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
18th December 1876. No. 2352.*

Export of Grain.

No. 222. Read the following letter from W. LOGAN, Esq., Collector of Malabar, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Calicut, 4th December 1876, No. 91:—

Referring to G O, Financial Department, No 2117, dated 25th November 1876 (just received), I have the honour to enclose copies or extracts from three letters, Nos. 804, 805 and 808, dated 1st instant, from the Deputy Collector in charge of Wynaad regarding the scarcity of grain in the Wynaad markets on last October 29th, and the action of the Gudalur Deputy Tahsildar in the matter.

2. The first notice I had of what had occurred was contained in a letter from Mr. J. W. Minchin (copy enclosed). On the same evening I also obtained from another source the information contained in the enclosed extract from a letter, dated 29th October, from Mr. Griffin of the "Seaforth" Estate, and, on receipt of this information, I at once telegraphed to the Deputy Commissioner of Mysore as follows:—

"I have reliable intelligence that some persons are stopping export of grain from Mysore to Wynaad. Please stop this, else consequences to peace of this district will be most serious. Imperative—should be done before Sunday."

I was careful, you will observe, in refraining from bringing any accusation against the Mysore officials because it occurred to me that possibly there had been some combination among the merchants or that some other persons had officiously interfered.

3. Of the fact that on 29th October grain was only procurable at famine rates in the Devalah and Gudalur bazaars there can be no doubt whatever. The "principal trader" of Gundlepet, referred to in paragraph 3 of the Ashtagram Commissioner's letter, himself amply attests the fact, because when four and six scers of rice and raggy respectively are selling for 1 Rupee, those are famine rates.

4. That these famine prices were demanded because of the scarcity of grain does not admit of doubt.

5. How then did the scarcity arise? Mr. Macgregor reports, as the result of his inquiries, that "the bandymen state that no grain was obtainable," and he mentions the case of one man who heard tom toming going on at the time he was endeavouring to obtain grain, and that he was told that it was an order not to sell grain. Moreover Mr. Griffin's maistry, you will see, had *carte blanche* as to the price he was to pay, and yet even he had failed to obtain a supply for the 600 coolies his master had in his employ. It is extremely difficult to obtain exact accounts of what happened from the bandymen, because they are all natives of Mysore, and, if they were to give information against any officials who did interfere, they themselves and their relatives would certainly suffer for it. It is not contended that there was absolutely no grain in Mysore to purchase, because since then the markets have been pretty fairly supplied, and, in the absence of any other explanation, I remain still of opinion that the scarcity was, somehow or other, artificially caused.

6. The rise in prices was a sudden thing, and it is obvious that it would be a most advantageous speculation for the Gundlepet traders and others to import

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only limited quantities of grain if assured that other people would be prevented from obtaining supplies. Whether the traders and officials were playing into each others' hands (as I feel inclined to suspect) can be ascertained only by the Mysore officials, and I would point out that the statements of the Gundlepett trader, referred to by the Ashtagram Commissioner, should be very cautiously accepted.

7. Meanwhile it must clearly be remembered that the ~~above~~ ^{above} ~~facts~~ ^{facts} of the facts is—

- (1.) Sudden scarcity in the markets
- (2.) Interference on the part of the Gudalur Deputy Tahsildar.
- (3.) Outcry that the scarcity had been artificially caused in Mysore.
- (4.) Markets again fairly supplied.

That order of the facts also shows that the Deputy Tahsildar's action did *not* drive traders from the market as anticipated in paragraph 5 of the Commissioner's letter, and does not justify the conclusion to which he gives expression in paragraph 2 thereof.

8. As regards the Deputy Tahsildar's action in the matter, I am not yet prepared to say that he acted unwisely, though at the same time, in the face of the facts related by the "principal trader" of Gundlepett, I am not yet in a position to say that his action did not bring about the alleged riot. Mr. Macgregor's report is not, you will see, sufficiently detailed to enable an opinion to be formed on this point. In fact it may be inferred from it that there was no loot at all, and that would agree with the Police reports, which say there was an alarm, but no looting. Mr. Minchin and others had to interfere at Devalah and persuade the bazaarmen to give out what grain there was at equitable rates, and thus no doubt a riot was thereby averted. I am calling for a further and more detailed report on this point.

From A. M. MACGREGOR, Esq., Officiating Deputy Collector, to the Collector of Malabar, dated Manantoddy, 1st December 1876, No. 804.

With reference to your request for a "report how the scarcity of grain in the Wynaad markets was caused," I have the honor to inform you that no reliable information can be obtained.

2. The bandymen state that no grain was obtainable, and only one man stated that when he was endeavouring to purchase grain in the village of Tirucanama, he heard some tom-toming and was told that it was an order not to sell grain.

3. Another stated that his cousin was stopped at the Mysore town toll-gate with a bandy of grain for the Wynaad and was not permitted to pass. The bandyman however was not forthcoming. The villagers however at Devalah and Gudalur state that they believe many of the bandymen spent their advances for other purposes, and then made out they had spent them in travelling about in search of grain.

4. The men, who are all Mysoreans, evidently decline to say anything which they think may be visited on themselves or families by the petty Mysore officials.

5. I can obtain no further information on the subject. One thing however is certain that until there was an outcry, no Mysore grain was to be found in any of the Wynaad markets.

6. The Commissioner of Mysore informed me that it was rumoured the Madras officials had prohibited the exportation of raggy from Collegal, and suggested that this might be the cause of the absence of that grain in these markets.

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From A. M. MACGREGOR, Esq., Officiating Deputy Collector, Wynaad, to the Collector of Malabar, dated Manantoddy, 1st December 1876, No. 805.

With reference to the enclosed petition, I have the honor to inform you that ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~matter~~ ^{matter} must have greatly ~~hattered~~ ^{hattered} themselves, as during my late visit to Devalah rice was selling at 10

From A. M. MACGREGOR, Esq., Officiating Deputy Magistrate, Wynaad, to the Magistrate of Malabar, dated Manantoddy, 1st December 1876, No. 808.

As requested I have the honor to inform you that the Gudalur Deputy Tahsildar does not appear to have interfered with the traders and prices at the market.

He states that he used no compulsory measures but persuaded the traders to sell at certain rates. On the day in question, he heard that the bazaarmen had closed their bazaars and refused to sell. Numbers of coolies as usual had arrived at the market and as a loot appeared inevitable, the Sub-Magistrate used his influence with the merchants, assured them their bazaars should be protected, and thus prevented a general riot.

I consider the Sub-Magistrate ~~more~~ ^{merely} performed his duty.

From J. W. MINCHIN, Esq., to the Collector of Malabar, dated Devalah, 30th October 1876.

I have the honor to inform you that ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~stoppers~~ ^{stoppers} of the ~~market~~ ^{market}

This district has always depended on Mysore for its grain supplies, and sufficient raggy has always been forthcoming, and from all I can learn there are now ample stocks of raggy in the Mysore taluqs adjoining Wynaad, while the crops in those districts, now in the ground, have had sufficient rain, and will be harvested in about two months.

The Mysore authorities apparently desire to supply the wants of their northern taluqs from the stocks in the southern districts, and regardless of the necessities of the large number of Mysore laborers now employed in Wynaad, have suddenly stopped the supply of grain on which they have hitherto depended, and this without warning, so that there is not grain enough in the district to supply the immediate wants of the people. The cart that went for the usual market supplies returned this week empty. There was a loot in the Gudalur bazaar on Saturday, and a loot was commenced in the Devalah bazaar on Sunday the 29th, but was stopped by the influence of the Planters, who arranged with the coolies and bazaarmen to serve out what grain there was at the rate of 2½ Mysore seers per half rupee, which was all that could be given to each man. The position is most serious, I cannot see where food for all the people is to be obtained in time. The bazaarmen are afraid to bring in small supplies for fear of loot.

The Monlahs who suffered the worst in the loot yesterday and today to frighten the Malabar people from bringing in supplies from Wundoor, and although every Planter is doing his best to get in grain by his own carts from Ootacamund and Wundoor, I think that there cannot be a sufficient supply for all the people by next Sunday, and the probability of a grain riot then is imminent.

I think you should use all your influence in getting the restriction in the export of grain from Mysore removed, at all events until the Planters have had time to import stocks from other quarters. I have addressed the Government on the subject, as immediate action is imperative, and I have called on the Planters in this district to protect the bazaar next market day. I hope the coolies, seeing the efforts now being made to supply grain immediately, may in the meanwhile remain quiet.

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From Mr. A. C. GRIFFIN, *Seaforth Estate*, dated 29th October 1876.

"A maistry who was sent out to purchase raggy at any price has just returned unsuccessful. Day there will be no grain brought in to the Gudalur shandy, as the Tahsildars on Mysore from are said to have seized the grain carts and forced them to sell in order to starving villagers. I have 600 coolies to feed and don't know what to do!"

No. 223 ORDER THEREON, 18th December 1876, No. 2352.

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore.
(True Extract.)

[Signature]
Chief Secretary

To the Chief Commissioner of Mysore.
.. Revenue Department
.. Collector of Malabar
.. Board of Revenue.

Exd. T O'Connor.

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FILE NO. 1070

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With Order

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Robert

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