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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

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Press
Mis.

Dated

13. 4. 1877 197

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Famine Relief.

No. 305. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department, dated 27th March 1877, No. 398:—

Read the following letter from Surgeon-Major W. R. CORNISH, F.R.C.S., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Honorable D. F. CARMICHAEL, Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madanapully, 23rd March 1877, No. 5.

I HAVE the honor to report, for the information of His Grace in Council, the results of my inspection of the people on relief-works in Chittoor, Palmanair, and Poonganoor, in the North Arcot District.

2. CHITTOOR.—I arrived at Chittoor on the morning of the 17th instant. Before leaving Vellore, on the 16th, there was a light shower of rain with thunder. On reaching Chittoor, I found that the rain had been heavier in this direction, and that $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch had been registered. I met here Mr. Whiteside, the Collector, and Mr. Tremenhare, the Assistant Collector, and we inspected some gangs of coolies who were working on roads close at hand, to the number of 483.

These people, for the most part, appeared to be in good health, and did not give one the idea that they had been suffering to any extent from want of food. The women and children were fairly plump and healthy looking, though, even in these people, the earlier symptoms of anæmia were not entirely absent. I noted forty-seven persons in this gang, or about 10 per cent., who were feeble, and who appeared to have been reduced physically by low living, but who were still able to do light work.

3. JAIL.—In the evening I visited the district jail which, at the present time, is very much over-crowded, having more than 600 inmates. Some are placed in sepoys' tents in the jail yard, and others in a mud shed recently put up, but with all this relief the jail wards are still much too full. A bad epidemic of cholera has been prevailing in this jail since November last, and about sixty prisoners have died of it. From the accounts I had heard, I was led to think that some of this mortality set down to cholera might have been due to famine diarrhœa or bowel-complaints, induced by bad living; but an examination of prisoners convinced me that the disease was genuine cholera, and that there was no apparent complication of it with previous bad living. Some patients, convalescent from cholera, were shown me, who were young able-bodied men, in good physical condition, and in the jail hospital I found only one old man who appeared to be suffering from the "diarrhœa" of famine, or bad living.

The prisoners, as a rule, were in good muscular condition, and in this respect contrasted favorably with the working gangs of relief coolies outside. Their appearance spoke well for the diet they received. The prison clothing was not in good condition, and the Superintendent informed me that he had indented for new clothing, which had not been supplied.

5. The construction of the jail building is bad in reference to epidemics. Each barrack is sub-divided by partition walls which run up only half way to the roof, so that the prisoners throughout a barrack breathe one common air. The buildings are very old, and being so crowded are no doubt saturated with animal exhalations.

The water-supply is drawn from a well within the jail, and is said to be so good that many of the residents send to the jail for drinking water. I have desired the Superintendent to have a specimen of the water sent to the Chemical Examiner for analysis and report, as the persistence of cholera in the jail seems to indicate some local causes of disease, which (beyond the over-crowding) are not apparent. The cleanliness of the jail is well attended to. I should state that cholera has been most prevalent amongst the new admissions into jail, that the disease is still prevailing in the town of Chittoor, and that giving full value to these facts there may still be causes in and about the jail itself which tend to keep up the epidemic.

6. There seems to be some difficulty about the transfer of prisoners to other jails so long as cholera is prevailing, and to meet this it might perhaps be feasible to select gangs for transfer, and to put them for ten days or a fortnight away from the infected locality of the old jail, or until they were declared free of disease, so as to relieve the present over-crowding. If the cholera does not soon abate in this building, it will be necessary to vacate it altogether for a time and to subject every part of it to a thorough purification and disinfection.

7. *Relief Coolies.*—On the morning of Sunday the 18th instant about 750 other relief coolies whom I had not seen on the Saturday were assembled for my inspection. Of these nearly 400 were men and the rest women and children. Of the men who were present I noted that 60, or about 15 per cent. were feeble and in bad condition, either from age and bad living or from the latter simply. Of the children nearly one half were anæmic, but neither the women nor the children of these gangs were reduced in flesh to the extent I have noticed elsewhere. I think it is clear from the condition of these people, who mostly come from Chittoor and the neighbouring villages, that no great amount of distress has up to this time prevailed amongst them, and that although they come to earn a trifle on relief-works at a slack time of the year, they will not be tempted to remain when the season has so far advanced as to enable them to resume agricultural operations in their own villages.

8. On questioning many of those who were physically reduced, we ascertained that they were generally feeding young children out of their wages, and I have no doubt that this was the case also with many who were not reduced in flesh, but who had probably other means of help besides the relief wages. I should not be inclined to accept the condition of the people in the neighbourhood of Chittoor, as evidence in favor either of the sufficiency or insufficiency of the present amount of relief, because I judge from the general appearance of them that they have not to any great extent felt the pressure of famine.

9. *Relief Camp.*—After inspecting the coolies on relief-works, I visited the Civil Dispensary, and here I did not see much evidence of privation amongst the sick poor. I then inspected a relief camp which Mr. Whiteside is constructing about a mile and half out of the town for the accommodation of the taluq poor who may require food and be unable to work. The huts are approaching completion, and will soon be ready for occupation. The enclosing fence of this camp is closer to the huts, and not so costly as the work at Arcot and Vellore camps. Mr. Whiteside does not wish to open this camp while he has accommo-

dation at Vellore, and while there is so little apparent distress in Chittoor. Meanwhile the camp is being made ready to meet possible wants.

10. *PALMANAIR.*—I left Chittoor at 10 p.m. and arrived at Palmanair on Monday morning, the 19th instant. I found that the rain of the preceding Friday had fallen here to the extent of one inch, and already, in patches, where the ~~had been retained near the surface~~ was sprouting, so as to give a green tinge to the barren soil. The rain had not, however, done any thing for the filling of tanks, or raising the level of the sub-soil water, which on this high plateau is far removed from the surface.

11. The surrounding country is destitute of cultivation. Water is scarce, and some of the useful public relief-works here consist in deepening and excavating public wells.

12. *Relief-works and Coolies.*—At Palmanair I had the advantage of meeting Mr. R. K. Puckle, Member of the Board of Revenue, and of inspecting with him coolies on relief-works in the neighbourhood. A few were employed in deepening wells, but most of them in repairing roads or collecting material for road-making.

13. Out of a total of 427 persons seen by us, we selected 50, or more than 12 per cent., who were in our judgment so feeble, either from age or bad living, as to be unfit for work. A considerable proportion of those who appeared fit for work were not in good health, and showed decided evidence of anæmia and poor living.

14. The general health of the gangs here was much worse than in Chittoor. Some of the people at work were dropsical, others had ulcers on the legs, and probably one half were more or less below the normal state of health. Nearly all were emaciated.

15. The road-work on which these people were employed is a task-work requiring so many cubic yards of material to be collected and heaped; and fines are imposed for short work. According to Mr. Puckle the work demanded of the people is heavy, and the rates low in comparison with quantities and prices in other districts.

16. The coolies complained that they got paid for three days' work when they had done four, and the Tahsildar explained that stoppages were being made for short work. The tools appeared to be generally too heavy or unsuitable, and owing to the hardness of the soil, the collection of road material does no doubt require more severe labor than usual.

17. *Relief Camp necessary at Palmanair.*—No relief camp for the distribution of cooked food has been established as yet in Palmanair Taluq. At present any destitute persons sent in by village officials are sent off in carts to the Vellore Camp more than 40 miles away below the ghauts, and to a country where the language and customs of the people are different to those in Palmanair. This method of procedure is not only costly, but from the repugnance of the people to leave their district is ineffectual in relieving distress. Mr. Puckle agreed with me in thinking that a relief camp should be established near Palmanair, and that its operations might be supervised by the European official of the Settlement Department who has his head-quarters in Palmanair.

18. *Prisoners and Subsidiary Jail.*—The subsidiary jail at Palmanair had 37 inmates, and they all appeared to be in pretty good condition. The cells are only intended to accommodate 14. On inquiry I found that some of these prisoners had been three or four months awaiting the disposal of their cases, and that they had been allowed 2 Annas per diem for their food. This fact accounted for their good condition. They had enjoyed good diet and done no work.

19. *Civil Dispensary. Cholera prevalent.*—The Civil Dispensary, under the charge of an intelligent Native Assistant Apothecary, was inspected and found to be in good order. Cholera is still prevailing in the town, and has increased somewhat since the rain.

20. *Unusual Food in famine Times.*—As bearing on the condition of the poorer classes of this district, I must notice briefly some of the expedients to which the people resort to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

The American aloe is common in waste dry soils, and is used also for fencing. The flowering stalk of the aloe contains a sweet fibrous substance something like the pith of the Sago palm, and for miles around Palmanair every flower stalk of the aloe has been cut down for food. The people boil it with tamarind and it is by no means disagreeable to the taste. The nutritious matter is sugar and starch, but the great bulk of the pith is woody fibre.

The interior of the lower part of the leaf stalk of the aloe is used in the same way, and the dried aloe leaf is given to the cattle. The green part of the aloe leaf contains a bitter purgative juice, but when dried in the sun, cattle will eat a little of the lower and thicker end of the leaf. I fear it cannot be a very nourishing diet for them.

The prickly-pear is fruiting very abundantly this year, and the children, especially are eating the fruit to a great extent. The ripe fruit is sweet and juicy, and probably not unwholesome, except where it is used in undue proportion to other kinds of food.

The seeds of the fruit of the tamarind are also being largely eaten at the present time all over the country. They are cooked in various ways, but under any conditions remain, I fear, an indigestible article of diet. Several kinds of green leaves from the jungle are also eaten, regarding which, I will make further inquiries.

21. *POONGANOOR.*—From Palmanair I went on to Poonganoor on the evening of the 20th instant. The road runs for the most part through a desolate scrub jungle; but in Poonganoor itself and the neighbourhood there was water in all the tanks from the late rains, and the villagers were busy in ploughing. I met Mr. G. B. Clerk, of the Revenue Settlement Department, at Poonganoor, he being in charge of the relief-works.

22. *Coolies on Relief-works.*—On the 21st I inspected about 1,500 coolies employed in making a road towards the Mysore frontier to meet a road in course of construction there leading from Colar to Muddanapully and Poonganoor. There were several gangs of Brinjaries and many Musselmans employed.

23. Of the 1,500 coolies, Mr. Clerk and myself picked out 250, or 16 per cent. who, in our judgment, were in very bad condition, and many of them more fitted for a relief camp than for labor on relief wages. There were about 50

men and perhaps 30 women out of the whole number in good muscular condition. The children were nearly all feeble, emaciated, and anæmic. The young girls who, from their ages, should have been women, were arrested in their development, and showing no signs of puberty. A few women brought their infants with them to the works, and these youngsters were literally starving for want of nourishing breast milk.

24. Mr. Clerk informs me that he has about 2,000 coolies altogether on relief-works, which is not a large proportion to the population of the Zemindari. Many of these people, owing to the thinly-inhabited country, have to traverse distances of from four to eight miles to get to their work, and this excessive walking exercise is, in the case of weakly people, equivalent to a day's labor. Mr. Clerk is of opinion that the people on the works are generally falling off in condition, and has already protested against the insufficiency of the reduced wage to keep them in health. My recorded opinions on this subject are abundantly confirmed by the condition of the relief coolies on the Poonganoor Estate.

25. *Poonganoor Town and Private Charity.*—The town of Poonganoor contains many comfortably-built houses, and the better classes of the population are well to do. The grain-trade is active and many of the dealers in cloth have taken to it during the temporary inability of the people to purchase clothing. All trading classes and the Brahmins looked in good condition. I visited the place where food was being distributed by the Raja, and here from 200 to 300 very wretched objects were assembled. The quantity of cooked food was miserably inadequate for the numbers who expected to share in it. There appeared to be no definite weight or scale of food, and the young children were being regaled with congee-water containing a few grains of boiled rice. A large number of Musselman women and children were recipients, and they all bore famine-marks in their faces.

26. *Necessity for a Relief Camp.*—A relief camp should be established at Poonganoor without loss of time, and the Raja should be requested to give his contributions through it, or to discontinue the present system of feeding, which is not calculated to keep life in the people. A site for the camp was selected by Mr. Clerk and myself, and I recommended the construction of small "lean-to" huts for families in place of the larger huts as at Vellore and Arcot.

27. *Medical Aid.*—A medical subordinate of the Revenue Settlement Department is temporarily employed at Poonganoor, owing to an outbreak of cholera in the subsidiary jail. From this jail a gang of nine Brinjaries escaped through the roof a few days before my visit. It is a new building and kept clean, but already seventeen prisoners have died of cholera in it.

28. Mr. Clerk is a very active officer, and spends many hours every day in supervising and directing the works in progress. I am sure he would efficiently supervise a relief camp, and see that the people sent to it were proper objects for Government charity.

29. I left Poonganoor on the morning of the 22nd instant, en route to Muddanapully and Royachoty, in the Cuddapah District, and after inspecting these stations intend proceeding, via Cuddapah, to the Bellary District.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
13th April 1877.*

ORDERED that this letter be transferred to the Revenue (Famine) Department for consideration and disposal as regard famine relief coolies and works.

2. Paragraphs 3 to 6 will be referred to the Inspector-General of Jail for inquiry and early report.

3. Paragraph 18 will be referred to the District Magistrate of North Arcot for report regarding the delay in the disposal of the cases of of the prisoners for "three or four months" in the subsidiary Jail at Palmanair.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Offg. Chief Secretary.

No. 306.

ORDER THEREON, 13th April 1877, No. 1,416.

Miscellaneous.

COMMUNICATED to the Collector of North Arcot, whose particular attention is directed to paragraphs 17, 24, 25, and

26. Relief camps should be opened at Palmanair and Punganur, and the Raja of the latter place should be urged to discontinue his present system of feeding the poor on his estate, and to let his distribution of food be conducted through the medium of the camp.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. H. GARSTIN,
Additional Secretary to Government.

To the Collector of North Arcot.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Financial Department.
,, the Accountant-General.
,, the Sanitary Commissioner.

Hrd. F. R. Bantleman.

C. No 5

Office of Sanitary Commissioner
Madras 23rd March 1844.

From

The Sanitary Commissioner
for Madras.

To

The Chief Secretary
to Government,
Fort Saint George

Sir,

I have the honor to report for the information of His Grace in Council the results of my inspection of the people on relief works in Chittoor, Palamaner, and Ponnaganoor, in the North Arcot district.

Chittoor

2. I arrived at Chittoor on the morning of the 1st instant. Before leaving Vellore on the 16th there was a light shower of rain with thunder. On reaching Chittoor I found that the rain had been heavier in this direction and that $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch had been registered. I met here Mr. Whiteside, the Collector and Mr. J. Mencher the Assistant Collector, and we inspected some gangs of coolies who were working on roads close at hand, to the number of 483.

These people for the most part appeared to be in good health, and did not give one

Govt. of (1877) Madras.

REVENUE.

THE COLLECTOR OF NORTH ARCOT.

cc, cc, cc.

Dated April 13th.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O. 13th April 1877, No. 1,416.

APRIL

No. 305-308.

PAVING HILL, No. 928.

Reference to Order, Palamaner, and Ponnaganoor, in North Arcot District. - Communicated to the Collector, Sanitary Commissioner's inspection report of - and directing his particular attention to paragraphs 17, 18, 25, and 26. Intimating that relief camps should be opened at Palamaner and Ponnaganoor, and the heads of the latter place need to distribute food to the poor on his estate through the medium of the camp.

The idea that they had been suffering to any extent from want of food. The women and children were fairly plump, and healthy looking, though even in these people the earlier symptoms of anæmia were not entirely absent. I noted 64 persons in this gang, or about 10 per cent who were feeble, and who appeared to have been seduced physically by low living, but he were still able to do light work.

3. In the evening I visited the district jail which at the present time is very much overcrowded, having more than 600 inmates. Some are placed in sepoys tents, in the jail yard, and others in a mud shed recently put up, but with all this relief, the jail wards are still much too full. A bad epidemic of cholera has been prevailing in this jail since November last and about 60 prisoners have died of it. From the accounts I had heard I was led to think that some of this mortality set down to cholera might have been due to famine diarrhoea or bowel complaints induced by bad living, but an examination of prisoners convinced me that the disease was genuine cholera, and that there was no apparent embelation

Jail

of it, with previous bad living. Some patients convalescent from cholera were shown me, who were young, able bodied men, in good physical condition, and in the jail hospital I found only one old man who appeared to be suffering from the "diarrhoea" of famine, or bad living.

4. The prisoners as a rule were in good muscular condition, and in this respect contrasted favorably with the working gangs of relief coolies outside. Their appearance spoke well for the diet they received. The prison clothing was not in good condition, and the Superintendent informed me that he had indentured for new clothing, which had not been supplied.

5. The construction of the jail building is bad, in reference to epidemics. Each barrack is subdivided by partition walls which run up only half way to the roof, so that the prisoners throughout a barrack, breathe one common air. The buildings are very old, and being so crowded, are no doubt saturated with animal exhalations.

—The water supply is drawn from a well within the jail, and is said to be so good that many of the residents send to the jail for drinking water. I have desired

Superintendent to have a specimen of the water sent to the Chemical Examiner for analysis and report, as the persistence of cholera in the jail seems to indicate some local causes of disease, which (beyond the overcrowding) are not apparent. The cleanliness of the jail is well attended to. I should state that cholera has been most prevalent amongst the new admissions into jail, that the disease is still prevailing in the town of Chittoor, and that giving full value to these facts, there may still be causes in and about the jail itself, which tend to keep up the epidemic.

There seems to be some difficulty about the transfer of prisoners to other jails so long as cholera is prevailing, and to meet this, it might perhaps be feasible to select gangs for transfer, and to put them for ten days or a fortnight away from the infected locality of the old jail, or until they were declared free of disease, so as to relieve the present overcrowding. If the cholera does not subside in this building, it will be necessary to vacate it altogether for a time, and to subject every part of it to a thorough purification and disinfection.

Relief coolies

On the morning of Sunday the 18th inst, about 750 other relief coolies whom I had not seen on the Saturday were assembled for my inspection. Of these nearly 400 were men, and the rest women and children. Of the men, who were present, I noted that 60 or about 65 per cent were feeble, and in bad condition, either from age, and bad living, or from the latter simply. Of the children nearly one half were anemic, but neither the women nor the children of these gangs were reduced in flesh to the extent I have noticed elsewhere. I think it is clear from the condition of these people, who mostly come from Chittoor and the neighbouring villages, that no great amount of distress has, up to this time, prevailed amongst them, and that although they come to earn a trifle on relief works at a slack time of the year, they will not be tempted to remain when the season has so far advanced as to enable them to resume agricultural operations in their own villages.

On questioning many of these who were physically reduced, we ascertained that they were generally feeding young children out of their wages, and I have no doubt that this was the case also with many who were not reduced in flesh, but who had probably other means of help besides the relief wages. I should not be inclined to accept the condition of the people in the neighbourhood of Chittoor, as evidence in favor either of the sufficiency or insufficiency of the present amount of relief, because I judge

Bluish white
tongue
Camp Inn.

from the general appearance of them, that they have not to any great extent felt the pressure of famine.

After inspecting the coolies on relief works I visited the Civil Dispensary, and here I did not see much evidence of privation amongst the sick poor. I then inspected a relief camp which Mr. Whiteside is constructing about a mile and a half out of the town, for the accommodation of the sick poor who may require food, and be unable to work. The huts are approaching completion, and will soon be ready for occupation. The enclosing fence of this camp is closer to the huts, and not so costly as the work at Arcot and Vellore camps. Mr. Whiteside does not wish to open this camp, while he has accommodation at Vellore, and while there is so little apparent distress in Chittoor. Meanwhile the camp is being made ready to meet possible wants.

10. I left Chittoor at 10 P. M. and arrived at Palmanair on Monday morning the 19th inst. I found that the rains of the preceding Friday had fallen here to the extent of one inch, and already in patches, where the moisture had been retained near the surface, grass was sprouting, so as to give a green tinge to the barren soil. The rain has not however done anything for the filling of tanks, or raising the level of the subsoil water, which on this high plateau is far removed from the surface.

11. The surrounding country is destitute of cultivation. Water is scarce, and some of the

Relief works
and coolies.

useful public relief works here consist in deepening and excavating public wells.

12. At Palmanair I had the advantage of meeting Mr. P. H. Purckle member of the Board of Revenue and of inspecting with him coolies on relief works in the neighbourhood. A few were employed in deepening wells, but most of them in repairing roads or collecting material for road making.

13. Out of a total of 42 persons seen by us, we selected 50, or more than 12 per cent, who were in our judgement so feeble, either from age or bad living, as to be unfit for work. A considerable proportion of those who appeared fit for work were not in good health, and showed decided evidence of anæmia and poor living.

14. The general health of the gangs here was much worse than in Chittoor. Some of the people at work were dropsical, others had ulcers on the legs, and probably one half were more or less below the normal state of health. Nearly all were emaciated.

15. The road work on which these people were employed is a task work, requiring so many cubic yards of material, collected, and heaped, and fines are imposed for short work. According to Mr. Purckle the work demanded of the people is heavy, and the rates low in comparison with quantities and prices in other districts.

16. The coolies complained that they got paid for three days work when they had

done four, and the Tashildar explained that stoppages were being made for short work. The tools appeared to be generally too heavy or unsuitable, and owing to the hardness of the soil, the collection of road material does no doubt, require to be more severe labour than usual.

No relief camp for the distribution of cooked food has been established as yet in Palmanair taluk. At present any destitute persons sent on by village officials are sent off in carts to the Belore camp more than 40 miles away, below the ghats, and to a country where the language and customs of the people are different to those in Palmanair. This method of procedure is not only costly, but from the repugnance of the people to leave their district, is ineffectual in relieving distress. Mr. Buckle agreed with me in thinking that a relief camp should be established near Palmanair, and that its operations might be supervised by the European official of the Settlement department who has his headquarters in Palmanair.

The subsidiary jail at Palmanair had 37 inmates, and they all appeared to be in pretty good condition. The cells are only intended to accommodate 14. On enquiry I found that some of the prisoners had

Relief camp necessary at Palmanair.

I am not sure about this

I do approve of this

Prisoners in subsidiary Jail.

Oral dispensary Cholera prevalent

Unusual food in famine times

been 3 or 4 months awaiting the disposal of their cases, and that they had been allowed 2 annas per diem for their food. This fact accounted for their good condition. They had enjoyed good diet, and done no work.

19. The Oral dispensary, under the charge of an intelligent Native Assistant Apothecary, was inspected and found to be in good order. Cholera is still prevailing in the town, and has increased somewhat since the rain.

20. As bearing on the condition of the poorer classes of this district, I must notice briefly some of the expedients to which the people resort to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

The American aloe is common on waste dry soils, and is used also for fencing. The flowering stalk of the aloe contains a sweet fibrous substance something like the pith of the sagu palm, and for miles around Palmanair, every flower stalk of the aloe has been cut down for food. The people boil it with tamarind, and it is by no means disagreeable to the taste. The nutritious matter is sugar and starch, but the great bulk of the pith is woody fibre.

The interior of the lower part of the leaf stalk of the aloe is used in the same way,

and the dried aloe leaf is given to the cattle.

The green part of the aloe leaf contains a bitter purgative juice, but when dried in the sun, cattle will eat a little of the lower and thicker end of the leaf. I fear it cannot be a very nourishing diet for them.

The prickly pear is fruiting very abundantly this year, and the children especially are eating the fruit, to a great extent. The ripe fruit is sweet and juicy, and probably not unwholesome, except where it is used in undue proportion to other kinds of food.

The seeds of the fruit of the tamarind are also being largely eaten at the present time, all over the country. They are cooked in various ways, but under any conditions remain, I fear, an indigestible article of diet. Several kinds of green leaves from the jungle are also eaten, regarding which I will make further enquiries.

21. From Palamanur I went on to Ponganoor on the evening of the 20th inst. The road runs for the most part through a desolate scrub jungle, but in Ponganoor itself, and the neighbourhood there was water in all the tanks, from the late rains, and the villagers were busy in ploughing. I met Mr. G. B. Clerk of the Revenue Settlement

Department at Ponganoor, he being in charge of the relief works.

Coolies on relief works.

22. On the 21st I inspected about 1500 coolies employed in making a road towards the Mysore frontier, to meet a road in course of construction there leading from Bolari to Hinddanasully and Ponganoor. There were several gangs of Bambaries, and many Mussulmen employed.

23. Of the 1500 coolies, Mr. Clerk and myself picked out 250, or 16. per cent, who in our judgement were in very bad condition, and many of them more fitted for a relief camp, than for labor on relief works. There were about 50 men and perhaps 50 women out of the whole number in good muscular condition. The children were nearly all feeble, emaciated, and anemic. The young girls who from their ages should have been women, arrested in their development, and showing no signs of puberty. A few women brought their infants with them to the works and these youngsters were literally starving for want of nourishing breast milk.

24. Mr. Clerk informs me that he has about 2000 coolies altogether on relief works, which is not a large proportion to the population of the Zemindary. Many of these people owing to the thinly inhabited

country, have to traverse distances of from
four to eight miles to get to their work, and
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against the insufficiency of the reduced
wage to keep them in health. My recorded
opinions on this subject are abundantly
confirmed by the condition of the relief coolies
on the Pongamoor estate.

25. The town of Pongamoor contains
many comfortably built houses, and the better
classes of the population are well to do. The
grain trade is active, and many of the
dealers in cloth have taken to it, during
the temporary inability of the people to purchase
clothing. All trading classes, and the
Brahmins looked in good condition. I
visited the place where food was being
distributed by the Rajah, and here from
200 to 300 very wretched objects were
assembled. The quantity of cooked food
was miserably inadequate for the numbers
who expected to share in it. There appeared
to be no definite weight, or scale, of food, and
the young children were being regaled

Pongamoor
town and
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with congee water containing a few grains
of boiled rice. A large number of Mussulmen
women and children were recipients, and
they all bore famine marks on their faces.

Necessity for a
Relief Camp-

26. A relief camp should be estab-
lished at Pongamoor without loss of time,
and the Rajah should be requested to give
his contributions through it, or to discontinue
the present system of feeding, which is not
calculated to keep life in the people. A
site for the camp was selected by Mr. Clerk
and myself, and I recommended the con-
struction of small "lean to" huts for families,
in place of the larger huts as at Vellor
and Arcot.

Medical and.

27. A medical subordinate of
the Revenue Settlement Department is tempo-
rarily employed at Pongamoor owing to an
outbreak of cholera in the Subsidary Jail.
From this jail a gang of nine Birmgases
escaped through the roof, a few days before
my visit. It is a new building, and kept
clean, but already 17 prisoners have died
of cholera in it.

28. Mr. Clerk is a very active
officer and spends many hours every day
in supervising and directing the works
in progress. I am sure he would efficiently

to the District Magistrate of
North Brest for report regarding
the delay in the disposal
of the cases of some of the
prisoners for "3 or 4 months"
in the subsidiary jail at
Pleasant.

Spence Extract.

W. H. Spence
Offg Chief Secretary

✓

To The Revenue (Finance) Dept.
at the Colonies

