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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / ~~B.P. No.~~	1653	Press / Mis.
Dated	5th May	1977

Not to be folded or roughly handled

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EPARTMENT.

5th May 1877, No. 1,653.

Famine Relief.

Read the following papers:—

No. 124. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 26th April 1877, No. 1,932.

Read the following letter from W. S. WHITESIDE, Esq., Collector of North Arcot, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Gudiatkum, 18th April 1877, No. 248:—

I have the honor, with reference to the remarks of the Board of Revenue in paragraph 4 of the Proceedings, dated 16th instant, to observe that I learn from Captain Cox that the influx of beggars to Madras from this district began as soon as the importations of grain commenced there. There was then, as the Board are aware, a very great deal of promiscuous disorganised charity in Madras, and as soon as the news of what was going on was noised abroad the villagers of the northern portion of the Maderpak Division of the Calastri Zemindari in great numbers started for Madras, and once the idea had got into their heads, it was impossible to stop them. It was the same in the southern parts of the Vellore District. The poorer classes are bent on getting as much relief as they can with as little trouble to themselves as possible; and as the journey to Madras from that part of the district is certainly shorter than that to Ranipet, although a considerable portion of the latter is done by rail, they chose the easiest route.

2. I beg again to assure the Board that the moment I received instructions on the subject of providing village relief, I issued, and repeated again and again, the most positive orders on the subject; and my divisional officers, I know, have done the same, and every taluq official was supplied with money for local expenditure in feeding people. The actual distribution of relief must, in great measure, be left to the petty local officials in the villages, and it is impossible for a Collector, no matter how zealous or efficient he may be, personally to supervise the operations in every portion of a large district, many thousand square miles in extent. So far as lies in my power, I see to everything; but if village officers are negligent or disobedient, it can hardly with justice be imputed as the fault of the head of the district who is personally instant and constant in his endeavours to carry out the wishes of Government. The greatest difficulty is experienced in getting a trustworthy and intelligent local agency to superintend relief. The Tahsildars all oppose the issue of money to village officers for expenditure, as being the most certain means of provoking frauds of all kinds; and I therefore deemed it better to give them absolute liberty in the way of providing food for all actually in want of it rather than placing cash at the disposal of village officers, though even this was in no case refused when required.

3. I think it better to quote here extracts from Mr. Cox's Report, No. 97, dated the 23rd ultimo, on the state of the Maderpak Division.

* * * *

"In your letter under reply you express dissatisfaction with the Deputy Tahsildar Krishna Row, for his remissness in not forcibly sending the destitute poor to Government relief camps. I can assure you that he has found it a very difficult duty to carry out, as the most terrifying and ridiculous rumours are afloat regarding the treatment of paupers at Ranipet and Vellore. Whence these rumours originated I cannot guess, but there is an undoubted panic among the poor of the towns and villages of the division, who at my approach run and hid themselves. When found and argued with, they were almost, without exception, vehement in there opposition to being sent to the relief camps. I have, however, given strict orders that they shall be sent. One great difficulty will be to keep sight of them during the time which must intervene until notice of their intended despatch has been sent to the Superintendent of Camps. During this interval some will doubtless escape and will have to be hunted up again. * * * *"

"I find that Circular Notices have been issued by the Deputy Tahsildar to all Village Munsifs directing them to feed and send in to Maderpak all destitute persons found in their villages, and also to make known by beat of drum that works are in progress in the railway line with the rates

of ready aid there. These notices have been signed by every Munsif, and in those villages that I visited I found that the notification regarding the railway works had been heard by all. Few, however, have availed themselves of this relief, and I found none willing to do so. The general excuse of those I spoke with was that they had cattle which they must tend, * * * *

"I found less distress in the Madurpak Division than I had anticipated. In the southern villages there are flourishing crops under wells. In the north, on the other hand, where the soil is dry, there is great want of water which the proposed works in the shape of digging wells will greatly alleviate. Great numbers of the poorest classes have deserted their homes and gone to Madras. Those who remain are, for the most part * * * employed. The rest earn a scanty subsistence by godey * * *

4. The Board will perceive that Mr Cox therein distinguishes for the feeding of the destitute and for removal of others to the relief camps have been thoroughly understood and widely promulgated; and that my later orders as regards people going to adjacent relief-works have likewise been made known, but that in both cases the people obstinately refuse to do what is wanted of them. They refuse to go to the relief camps, and when taken there by force they escape as soon as they can. They also refuse to go a short distance from their villages for relief-works. Can I ask, this be fairly ascribed to remissness or negligence on the part of the head of the district? I have issued the necessary orders over and over again. The divisional officer who has visited the locality and personally inspected the state of affairs reports that my orders are thoroughly understood, and that the local officials are baffled in their efforts by the perverse obstinacy of the very people whom we are all so anxious to benefit. In their Proceedings, No. 1,347, dated 24th ultimo, the Board of Revenue remark on a letter from the Collector of Kistna District, and in reply to a question of his, "If able-bodied persons refuse to work they should not be admitted to relief."

This is exactly the difficulty we experience in Madurpak. The able-bodied people will not work, but are not ashamed to beg. They will not go to the relief-works not very far off from their villages to seek honest employment, but they are ready to wander off to Madras to beg. Those who stay at home abstain from accepting the work we offer them until they are really so reduced as to be objects of charity, and they still refuse to go to the relief camps, and when carried off there by force they seek the first opportunity to escape to their villages. I respectfully ask can this be fairly attributed to negligence or indifference on my part, or on that of the divisional officer? In a report, dated 14th instant, received this day, Mr. Cox observes: "Showers are reported to have fallen in the outlying villages of the M[illegible] Division, but there has been none at the cudaie. The Deputy Tahsildar is on circuit inspecting his range endeavouring to persuade persons in distress to take advantage of the railway relief-works, but I anticipate no success in his efforts." Yet these are the very people who are ready to flock into Madras for charitable relief. I submit, with all deference to the Board, that this state of things is not to be attributed to neglect of duty on the part of the district officers, but to the mistaken and obstinate prejudices of the people themselves.

5. I am conscious that I have, so far as lies in me, done all in my power to afford relief short of absolutely scattering money broadcast amongst the people. I have placed money at the disposal of every taluq and divisional officer for expenditure, and for issue, if need be, to the village officers whom I have held responsible for the saving of life and feeding the distressed people; and, as soon as such an establishment was sanctioned, I issued the necessary orders for the appointment of a special local agency to inspect villages, and see that relief was freely dispensed. If, in spite of this and in spite of my divisional officer's assurances that my oft-repeated instructions are thoroughly understood by the local officials, the Board continue to be of opinion that the emigration of beggars to Madras is the result of shortcoming on my part, I can only ask them to point out what additional steps (consistent with observance of the orders of Government as to the mode in which relief should be dispensed) I ought to have taken. The Board are aware that my main difficulty has been in the obstinate resistance I have experienced at the hands of the Calastri Zemindari who (as detailed in my letter, No. 459, dated 13th instant) refused all along to do anything that I wanted. Similar resistance was offered to the Nellore officials by the Venkatagherry Zemindar whose territory borders on Calastri, and from which many people also emigrated to Madras. I am not aware whether such emigration from Nellore has been regarded as the result of neglect of duty on the part of the officers of that district.

Secretary to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, 16th April 1877, No. ——.

2. In this letter Mr. Whiteside repeats what he said before, and the Board see no reason to modify what they have written on the subject. They cannot call the resistance of the people to deportation to Ramipett, or to the railway-work perverseness. The fact is, that the works started in Madurpak were not sufficient and were not opened sufficiently early.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) H. E. STOKES,
Secretary.

Revenue Department, 5th *May* 1877, No. 1,653.

No. 125. ORDER THEREON, 5th May 1877, No. 1,653.

Miscellaneous. RECORDED.

(True Extract.)

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

REVENUE.

To the Board of Revenue.
" the Financial Depart[illegible]

Ed. F. R. Bardsman.

Revenue Department

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue

Dated 25th April 1877

No. 1274 Read the following Ltr. No. 248

from

Lr. J. Whiteside Esquire

Collector of North Arcot.

To

H. E. Stokes Esquire

Secretary to the

Board of Revenue

Madras.

Sir,

I have the honor, with reference to the Remarks of the Board of Revenue in para 4 of the Proceedings dated 16th Instant, to observe that I learn from Captain Cox that the rifles of Peggars to Madras from this District began

an

as soon as the importation of grain commenced there. There was then, as the Board are aware, a very great deal of promiscuous disorganized charity in Madras and as soon as the news of what was going on was noised abroad, the villagers of the Northern portion of the Moodapak Division of the Collastri Zemindari in great numbers started for Madras, and once the idea had got into their heads, it was impossible to stop them. It was the same in the Southern parts of the Nellore District. The poorer classes are best

best on getting as much relief as they can with as little trouble to themselves as possible, and as the journey to Madras from that part of the District is certainly shorter than to Ramipet, although a considerable portion of the latter is done by Rail, they chose the easiest route.

3. I beg again to assure the Board that the moment I received instructions on the subject of providing village relief, I issued, and repeated again and again, the most positive

positive orders on the subject, and my Divisional officers I know, have done the same, and every Taluq. official was supplied with money for local expenditure in feeding people. The actual distribution of relief must in great measure be left to the petty local officials in the villages, and it is impossible for a Collector, no matter how Zealous or efficient he may be personally to supervise the operations in every portion of a large District. Many thousand Squire Rupees in Extent. So far as lies in my power, I see to every thing, but if village officers are negligent or disobedient, it can hardly with justice be imputed as the fault of the Head of the District who is personally assistant and Constant in his endeavours to carry out the wishes of Government. The greatest difficulty is experienced in getting a trustworthy and intelligent

intelligent local agency
to superintend relief: the
Tahsildars all opposed
the issue of money to village
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for leaving the most certain means
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and I therefore deemed it
better to give them absolute
liberty in the way of providing
food for all actually in want
of it rather than placing
cash at the disposal of
village officers, though even
this was in no case refused
when required.

3. I think it better to quote here Extracts from Mr. Conn's report dated the 28th Ultimo, on the State of the Underpak Division -

" " " " "

" In your letter under reply you expressed dissatisfaction with the Deputy Tahsildar Krishnarow for his remissness in not forcibly sending the destitute poor to Government Relief Camps. I can assure you that he has now formed with a very difficult duty

N° 97

duly to carry out, as the most terrifying and ridiculous rumours are afloat regarding the treatment of paupers at Ranipet and Vellore - Whence these rumours originated I cannot guess, but there is an unfounded panic among the poor of the towns and villages of the Division, who at my approach ran and hid themselves - When found and argued with they were almost without exception reluctant in their opposition to

to being sent to the Relief Camps - I have however given strict orders that they shall be sent - One great difficulty will be to keep sight of them during the time which must intervene until notice of their intended despatch has been sent to the Superintendent of Camps. During this interval some will doubtless escape and will have to be hunted up again - " x x x x - - - - - "

" I find that circular notices have been issued by

by the Deputy Tahsildar to all village Munsiffs directing them to feed and send in to Madrapak all destitute persons found in their villages; and also to make known by beat of drum that works are in progress in the Railway line with the rates of coolys paid there. These notices have been signed by every Munsiff, and in those villages that I visited I found that the Notification regarding the Railway works had

had been heard by all. Few however have availed themselves of this relief, and I found none willing to do so. The general excuse of those I spoke with was that they had cattle which if they parted with ×××

"I found less distress in the Madrapak Division than I had anticipated. In the southern villages there are flourishing crops under wells. In the North on the other hand where the soil is dry, there is great want of

dealers

water which the proposed
works in the shape of digging
wells will greatly alleviate.
Great numbers of the poorer
classes have deserted their
homes and gone to Madras.
Those who remain are
for the most part sub-
stantial ryots, or weavers
who seem fairly employed.
The rest earn a scanty
subsistence by coolly or by
cutting firewood in the
jungles."

* * * * *

The Board will perceive
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that Mr. Cox therein distinctly
assures me that my orders
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to the Relief camps have
been thoroughly understood
and widely promulgated;
and that any later orders
as regards people going to
adjacent Relief works
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known, but that in both
cases, the people obstinately
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the Relief Camps and taken there by force. they escape as soon as they can - They also refuse to go a short distance from their villages for Relief Works. Can I ask this be fairly ascribed to remissness or negligence on the part of the Head of the District? I have issued the necessary orders over and over again - The divisional officer who has visited the locality and personally inspected the state of affairs reports that my orders are thoroughly understood, and that the local officials

are baffled in their efforts by the perverse obstinacy of the very people whom we are all so anxious to benefit - In their Proceedings No. 1337 dated 24th Ultimo, the Board of Revenue remark on a letter from the Collector of Kistna District, and I reply to a question of his, "If able bodied persons refuse to work they should not be admitted to relief". This is exactly the difficulty we experience in Madras - The able bodied people will not work, but are not ashamed to beg.

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Similar

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I have &c
(Sd) W. S. Whiteside
Collector

North Arcot
Coll[r]'s Office
Cuddalore
18th April 1877

Submitted to Government in continuation

Continuation of Board's Proceedings 16th April 1877 No.

2. In this letter Mr Whiteside repeats what he said before and the Board see no reason to modify what they have written on the subject. They cannot call the existence of the people to deportation or to the railway work perverseness. The fact is that the works started in Nellore were not sufficiently early, or sufficiently extended and were not kept open.

True copy of Extract
Sd/- [illegible]
Actg Sec. to Govt. R. D.

Secretary

Fee 1877 Sept
Feb 1879

Proceedings of the
Royal Society
Feb 27 April 1879
Feb 27

Submitting Copies of
communications to the
16th April 1879 Letter
from the Colonial Sec.
Explaining in detail the
Reasons for the Office
of Lugger to Madras
from South West Bay

Mr Parkes

Read 27th Feb 1879