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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

30th May 1877, No. 1,860-A.

Famine Relief.

Read the following paper :—

No. 613-A. From R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Acting Third Member of the Board of Revenue, Madras, to J. H. GARSTIN, Esq., Additional Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Nellore, 14th May 1877, No. 24.

I HAVE the honor to report the result of my inspection of the southern portion of the Venkatagiri Zemindari.

2. As the Government are aware, the Venkatagiri Zemindari consists of four divisions, two of which lie on the extreme southern frontier and two on the extreme northern frontier of the Nellore District. Those to the south, viz., Polur and Venkatagiri, have been inspected by me and are now reported on.

3. The nearest point of the zemindari is about 35 miles from Madras, and the route that I took from that point was along the northern trunk road as far as Naidupet, 30 miles; from thence across country to Venkatagiri, 25 miles; and from Venkatagiri to Gudur on the northern trunk road, another 25 miles. After Naidupet, the route was through Sooloorpet, Nelaballi, Naidupet, Attivaram, Venkatagiri, Akkampet and Venkatareddipully, and at Gudur just over the frontier, and I had a good opportunity of judging of the state of the country.

4. The Polur Division is no doubt in a very bad state. It lies adjacent to Ponnery, the poorest taluq of the Cingoleput District, and adjoins the Madapakum Division of the Kalastri Zemindari, where it is known that there is great distress. The soil is impregnated with soda, and there is much scrub jungle, and the country altogether presents a more arid and desolate appearance than I have seen elsewhere. There is but little water, and the cattle can find no grass. No doubt they manage to eat young shoots and leaves in the jungle, but this is by no means sufficient. Many have already died, and many employed in dragging firewood down to Madras seem to be making their last march.

5. The population is 50,686 inhabiting 126 villages, but of these a large number have found their way down to Madras. 500 are employed on the relief-works and 2,700 are in the relief-houses of Sooloorpet and Naidupet. This accounts for 3,200. A large number of men are also employed under the zemindari jungle contractors in cutting firewood and carting it down to Madras, and 200 are said to be employed in quarrying iron ore for the Napier Foundry. Altogether there is no lack of employment for the male adult population, but some further employment seems needed for the women and children.

6. The stacking of more gravel and metal along the northern trunk road between Sooloorpet and Naidupet, a distance of 20 miles, would provide employment for many of these, and there is need of much material as the road has been greatly cut up. Rs. 26,500 have already been spent on roads, and 18 ponds and square tanks were being cleared out and deepened at a cost of Rs. 3,000.

7. The Venkatagiri Division lies west of Polur and extends from near the northern trunk road to the foot of the western hills. The population is 51,457 inhabiting 166 villages, and this division is better off in every way than Polur.

The jungle is denser and affords better grazing, and the beds of the tanks are all grass, and some little water is stored from recent rain. In some places there is cultivation round wells, and the water-supply is sufficient for the present at all events. The cattle are fairly well off.

8. Venkatagiri is a well-built town and shows signs of prosperity. It is traversed by a good made road from Tripaty (Renugunta) to Gudur on the northern trunk road, a distance of 50 miles, and this gives the needful communication with the railway on one side and the head quarters of the districts on the other. Along this road large quantities of metal and gravel have been stacked by the Public Works Department, and the District Engineer informs me that he has still Rs. 10,000 to lay out on this road.

9. A relief road from Naidupet to Venkatagiri is in progress under the Collector, and this has just entered the Venkatagiri Division. Altogether about 2,000 people were employed on relief-works on the 10th instant, and 1,000 more are receiving gratuitous relief in the camp. About Rs. 5,000 have been spent on relief-works.

10. I have consulted with the Collector and the District Engineer and have arrived at the conclusion that as it is manifestly impossible for these officers to compete for labor in the same locality, and as the Engineer has, under the instructions conveyed in G.O., No. 362, dated 2nd February 1877, considerable sums, viz., Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 12,000, to spend departmentally on the Gudur road and on that section of the northern trunk road that passes through the zemindari, that he should carry out these works at once; and further that Rs. 25,000 of the Rs. 73,000 allotted by the Raja for the purpose of relief in his zemindari should be placed to the Engineer's credit through the Controller of Public Works Accounts, and that the Collector should at once discontinue all his relief-work in this area, which will approximately provide for the relief of 25,000 people in 12 months, and this will ensure—

- (1). The continued sufficiency of relief works until the famine is over.
- (2). The general arrangements made to afford relief up to date are sufficient. The Polar Division is under the general charge of Deputy Collector Sudarsana Row with headquarters at Naidupet in the division. The Venkatagiri division is under the general charge of Mr. Crole, the Additional Sub-Collector, assisted by Mr. Makin, B.C.S., whose headquarters are at Venkatagiri. There are Sub-Magistrates at Sooloorpet and Venkatagiri and an Overseer of works in either division. So this tract of country is strongly officered under the system in force up to date, but under the arrangements now made the Revenue officers will close their relief-works. The Engineer, with the Overseers now on the spot and the Supervisors employed on the main roads that pass through the zemindari, will be able to do all the work, while the Collector directs his attention to other parts of the district.
- (3 & 4). I have not heard of any abuse of the liberality of Government, or of fraud, or of inefficiency on the part of officers.
- (5). Arrangements for village relief have been made by appointing two Superintendents and ten Inspectors for the 126 villages of Polar and two Superintendents and eight Inspectors for the 106 villages of Venkatagiri. The Inspectors visit the villages, muster the population, and see that the Munsifs send in the distressed to the relief-houses and camp. I have seen some of the inspection reports furnished daily and they are very complete. That some of the people who are in distress are really sent in by the Munsifs I know from my own observation, as several batches were sent in when I was inspecting the relief-houses and camp.

(6). There are relief-houses at Sooloorpet and Naidupet and a camp at Venkatagiri. In all 3,700 people are in receipt of gratuitous relief. The arrangements made are good, but are possibly capable of some slight improvement. At the Venkatagiri camp there is a Bengal Medical Officer with a Hospital Assistant under him. At the Naidupet relief-house there is a Hospital Assistant and at the Sooloorpet relief house there is a private practitioner. There are strong establishments for the control of the paupers, the distribution of food, &c. Arrangements might perhaps be made not to reject any of those sent for relief by the Inspectors of villages, and care might be taken to avoid drafting on to works any who are willing to remain. Once in the camp, always in the camp should, I think, be the rule as long as the famine lasts. It is the cheapest mode yet tried of furnishing gratuitous aid, and the able-bodied as they improve might be employed on light work only about the camp. The camp might be made more popular perhaps by avoiding the separation of families at meal times and at night, and by some modification of diet the partial withdrawal of restriction on liberty so long as it is not abused might perhaps also be tried. I think, however, that it would be a still cheaper plan to furnish approved and registered paupers with permanent tickets to entitle them to go home and draw a small money dole or batta of say one anna a day in their villages rather than to keep them in camp, but this has yet to be tried.

- (7). The works in progress are all, I consider, useful and suitable as relief works.
- (8). The state of the water-supply has been noted above.
- (9). The markets of Sooloorpet and Naidupet are well stocked by grain drawn daily from Madras. That Venkatagiri is equally well supplied by grain drawn from the railway Station, and the small villages are supplied from these centres. As far as I am able to ascertain, this part of the zemindari is entirely dependent on Madras.
- (10). The condition of agricultural stock has been noted above.
- (11). The orders of Government are being carried out carefully and well.

No. 613-B.

ORDER THEREON, 30th May 1877, No. 1,860-A.

Miscellaneous.

COMMUNICATED to the Collector of Nellore.

2. The suggestion made by Mr. Puckle towards the end of clause 6 of paragraph 10 of his report is in accordance with the views of Government as contained in G.O. of the 28th May, No. 1,830.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Collector of Nellore.
" R. K. Puckle, Esq.
" the Board of Revenue.
" the Financial Department.

Exd. J. W. Fischer.

GOVT. OF (1877) DISTRICT
REVENUE.
THE COLLECTOR & REVENUE
OFFICE,
MAY
1877.
C.O., COM. MAY 1877, No. 1307A.
MAY
1877.
C.O., COM. MAY 1877, No. 1307A.
MAY
1877.
C.O., COM. MAY 1877, No. 1307A.

30 May No 1860A
1860A

No. 24.
NELLORE,
14th May, 1877.

From
THE ACTING 3RD MEMBER OF THE
BOARD OF REVENUE, MADRAS,
To
THE ADDITIONAL SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT, MADRAS.

SIR,

I have the honor to report the result of my inspection of the southern portion of the Vencatagherry Zemindary.

2. As the Government are aware, the Vencatagherry Zemindary consists of four divisions, two of which lie on the extreme southern frontier and two on the extreme northern frontier of the Nellore district. Those to the south, viz., Polur and Vencatagherry, have been inspected by me and are now reported on.

3. The nearest point of the Zemindary is about 35 miles from Madras, and the route that I took from that point was along the northern trunk road as far as Naidupet, 30 miles; from thence across country to Vencatagherry, 25 miles; and from Vencatagherry to Gudur on the northern trunk road another 25 miles. Altogether I traversed about 80 miles of the Zemindary, camping at Sooloorpett, Nelaballi, Naidupet, Attivaram, Vencatagherry, Akkampet and Vencatareddipully and at Gudur just over the frontier, and I had a good opportunity of judging of the state of the country.

4. The Polur division is no doubt in a very bad state. It lies adjacent to Ponnery, the poorest taluq of the Chingleput district, and adjoins the Madapakum division of the Kalastri Zemindary, where it is known that there is great distress. The soil is impregnated with soda and there is much scrub jungle, and the country altogether presents a more arid and desolate appearance than I have seen elsewhere.

There is but little water and the cattle can find no grass. No doubt they manage to eat young shoots and leaves in the jungle, but this is by no means sufficient. Many have already died and many employed in dragging firewood down to Madras seem to be making their last march.

5. The population is 50,686, inhabiting 126 villages; but of these, a large number have found their way down to Madras. 500 are employed on the relief works, and 2,700 are in the relief houses of Sooloorpet and Naidupet. This accounts for 3,200. A large number of men are also employed under the Zemindary jungle contractors in cutting firewood and carting it down to Madras, and 200 are said to be employed in quarrying iron ore for the Napier Foundry. Altogether there is no lack of employment for the male adult population, but some further employment seems needed for the women and children.

6. The stacking of more gravel and metal along the northern trunk road between Sooloorpet and Naidupet, a distance of 20 miles, would provide employment for many of these, and there is need of much material as the road has been greatly cut-up. Rupees 26,500 have already been spent on roads, and 18 ponds and square tanks were being cleared out and deepened at a cost of Rupees 3,000.

7. The Vencatagherry division lies west of Polur and extends from near the northern trunk road to the foot of the western hills. The population is 51,457, inhabiting 166 villages, and this division is better off in every way than Polur. The jungle is denser and affords better grazing, and the beds of the tanks yield grass, and some little water is stored from recent rain. In some places there is cultivation round wells, and the water-supply is sufficient for the present at all events. The cattle are fairly well off.

8. Vencatagherry is a well built town and shews signs of prosperity. It is traversed by a good made road from Tripaty (Renugunta) to Gudur on the northern trunk road, a distance of 50 miles, and this gives the needful communication with the railway on one side and the Head-quarters of the district on the

other. Along this road, large quantities of metal and gravel have been stacked by the Department Public Works, and the District Engineer informs me that he has still Rupees 10,000 to lay out on this road.

9. A relief road from Naidupet to Vencatagherry is in progress under the Collector, and this has just entered the Vencatagherry division. Altogether about 2,000 people were employed on relief works on the 10th instant, and 1,000 more are receiving gratuitous relief in the camp. About Rupees 5,000 have been spent on relief works.

10. I have consulted with the Collector and the District Engineer and have arrived at the conclusion that as it is manifestly impossible for these officers to compete for labour in the same locality, and as the Engineer has under the instructions conveyed in G. O., No. 362, dated 2nd February 1877, considerable sums, viz., Rupees 10,000 and Rupees 12,000 to spend Departmentally on the Gudur road and on that section of the northern trunk road that passes through the Zemindari, that he should carry out these works at once; and further that Rupees 35,000 of the 73,000 allotted by the Rajah for the purpose of relief in his Zemindari should be placed to the Engineer's credit through the Controller of Public Works Accounts, and that the Collector should at once discontinue all his relief work in the Zemindari. Thus the Engineer will have an aggregate of Rupees 57,000 to spend in this area, which will approximately provide labour for 4,000 people for five months, and this will ensure (1) the continued sufficiency of relief works until the famine is over.

(2.) The general arrangements made to afford relief up to date are sufficient. The Polur division is under the general charge of Deputy Collector Sudarsana Row, with headquarters at Naidupet in the division. The Vencatagherry division is under the general charge of Mr. Crole, the Additional Sub-Collector, assisted by Mr. Makie, B. C. S., whose headquarters are at Vencatagherry. There are Sub-Magistrates at Sooloorpet and Vencatagherry, and an Overseer of works in either division.

4
So this tract of country is strongly officered under the system in force up to date, but under the arrangements now made, the Revenue officers will close their relief works. The Engineer with the Overseers now on the spot and the Supervisors employed on the main roads that pass through the Zemindary, will be able to do all the work while the Collector directs his attention to other parts of the district.

(3 and 4.) I have not heard of any abuse of the liberality of Government, or of fraud or of inefficiency on the part of officers.

(5.) Arrangements for village relief have been made by appointing 2 Superintendents and 10 Inspectors for the 126 villages of Polur, and 2 Superintendents and 8 Inspectors for the 166 villages of Vencatagherry. The Inspectors visit the villages, muster the population, and see that the Munsiffs send in the distressed to the relief houses and camp. I have seen some of the inspection reports furnished daily and they are very complete. That some of the people who are in distress are really sent in by the Munsiffs, I know from my own observation, as several batches were sent in when I was inspecting the relief houses and camp.

(6.) There are relief houses at Sooloorpet and Naidupet, and a camp at Vencatagherry. In all 3,700 people are in receipt of gratuitous relief. The arrangements made are good, but are possibly capable of some slight improvement. At the Vencatagherry camp there is a Bengal Medical Officer, with a hospital assistant under him. At the Naidupet relief house there is a hospital assistant, and at the Sooloorpet relief house there is a private Practitioner. There are strong establishments for the control of the paupers, the distribution of food, &c. Arrangements might perhaps be made not to reject any of those sent for relief by the Inspectors of villages, and care might be taken to avoid drafting on to works any who are willing to remain. Once in the camp, always in the camp should, I think, be the rule as long as the famine lasts. It is the cheapest mode yet tried of furnishing gratuitous aid, and the able-bodied as they improve might be employed on light

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work only about the camp. The camp might be made more popular perhaps by avoiding the separation of families at meal times and at night, and by some modification of diet the partial withdrawal of restriction on liberty so long as it is not abused might perhaps also be tried. I think, however, that it would be a still cheaper plan to furnish approved and registered paupers with permanent tickets to entitle them to go home and draw a small money dole or batta, of say one anna a day in their villages, rather than to keep them in camp, but this has yet to be tried.

(7.) The works in progress are all, I consider, useful and suitable as relief works.

(8.) The state of the water-supply has been noted above.

(9.) The markets of Sooloorpet and Naidupet are well stocked by grain drawn daily by carts along the northern trunk road from Madras. That of Vencatagherry is equally well supplied by grain drawn from the Tripaty Railway station and the small villages are supplied from these centres. As far as I am able to ascertain, this part of the Zemindary is entirely dependent on Madras.

(10.) The condition of agricultural stock has been noted above.

(11.) The orders of Government are being carried out carefully and well.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

R. K. PUCKLE,

Acting 3rd Member, Board of Revenue.

Brn, 104
F. No. 3807.

From

THE ACTING 3RD MEMBER
 of the Board of Revenue,

To

THE ADDITIONAL SECRETARY
 to Government, Madras.

Dated 14th

Received

} May, 1877.

No. 24.

Reporting the result of inspection of the South-
 ern portion of the Vencatagherry Zemindary.

For

Do not

Communicated to the Collyer of Bellare.

2. The suggestion made by Mr. Pickle
 towards the end of clause 4 of para 10
 of his report is in accordance with
 the views of Government as contained in
 G.O. of the 20 May 1877.

Lawrence & Sons Press—1877.

20 May 1877

F. No. 3807

From

Ag. 3rd Member of the B. of Rev.

Dated

14th May 1877.

FOR ORDERS.