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# TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

*Revenue* DEPARTMENT

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1968

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

20th March 1877, No. 736.

Police.

Read the following paper :—

No. 133. From Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. HEARN, Inspector-General of Police, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Madras, 8th March 1877, No. 1106.

With reference to paragraph 2 of G.O., No. 713, dated 16th February 1877, I have the honor to forward copy of a letter from Captain Cox, the Superintendent of Police, North Arcot, which shows that, in the cases quoted by Mr. Whiteside, great care was exercised in fully investigating the cause of death (at first reported to be from starvation), and that in each case the real cause of death was correctly ascertained and reported. I think therefore that Mr. Whiteside is not justified in declaring the Police reports to be untrustworthy.

2. There is little room to doubt that when this crisis is over the number of deaths reported from famine will fall far short of the number that have actually occurred. In the majority of cases bowel disease of some kind or other exists before death, and "famine diarrhoea" is said to be frequently undistinguishable from cholera by the non-professional eye. Village Munsifs, who are held responsible to prevent deaths by starvation, are naturally loth to report them. The North Arcot Police reported only eight deaths from starvation up to 31st December 1876, and twenty cases in the month of January 1877. I believe this to be under the mark. Out of 16,060 destitute persons from other districts now in Madras, 4,738 (nearly one-third) are from North Arcot. Deaths have not hitherto been registered by districts in the Madras relief camps, but, taking the same proportion, 313 out of 954 deaths will have occurred amongst North Arcot people, most of them from the effects of famine.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Captain H. W. H. COX, Superintendent of Police, North Arcot (through the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Central Range), to the Inspector-General of Police, dated Chittoor, 3rd March 1877, No. 222.

With reference to your endorsement, No. 922, dated 27th ultimo, on G.O., dated 16th ultimo, No. 713, calling upon me to report upon paragraph 2 of the Collector's letter, No. 9, dated 2nd ultimo, in which he declares that Police reports of deaths from starvation are untrustworthy, I have the honor to inform you that I have taken the greatest possible care in checking reports of such cases. I have not returned as deaths from starvation any cases except those in which ascertained facts appeared to justify the conclusion arrived at, and I submit that the three instances cited by the Collector not only do not prove his allegation, but rather show that it is ungrounded.

2. It is quite true that the first case was at first registered by the Station-house officer as a death from starvation, but as the Police report stated distinctly that dysentery was the cause of the death it was not registered in my office as a death from starvation. The Collector states

regarding this man that he "with his wife and son had for some time been earning Rupees 7-8-0 a-month on our relief works. He was taken ill and died of dysentery after some weeks' treatment." I would only remark upon this that the words used are apt to mislead. Relief works were started in the Tirutany Division on the 2nd January, and deceased died on the 26th idem. I am unable at present to say when he went on to the works, but as he came from a village four miles north-east of Tirutany, some ten miles from the nearest part of the new road, it is improbable that he began so soon as the 2nd January. Be that as it may, the fact remains that, in a period not exceeding twenty-five days at the outside, deceased is alleged to have earned Rupees 7½ per mensem and to have suffered an illness of some weeks' duration.

3. As regards the other two cases the Inspector of Tirutany reported to me that he had received information that two men had died of starvation in the village of Rajanagram. I reported this at once to the Collector in my letter, No. 89, dated 29th January 1877, informing him that I had directed the Inspector to proceed to the spot and make a careful investigation.

4. The result of this investigation was reported to the Collector in my letter, No. 93, dated 1st February 1877, in the following words:—

"Abbi Reddy, aged 50, died on the 20th ultimo, the immediate cause of his death being diarrhoea. For some months before his death, he had been ailing and unfit for work, and was supported by the precarious earnings of his wife and eldest daughter.

"Samy Reddy (not Manisawmy Reddy as first reported), aged 60, died on the 23rd ultimo from no apparent disease. He appears to have had an attack of fever three months before his death, but his relatives say that he died of starvation. It is clear however that up to twenty-four hours before he expired he was served with food though in scanty measure and of questionably wholesome character. These men died in their own houses tended by their own immediate relatives who appear to have done their utmost to support them sharing with them whatever food they were able to procure."

5. I leave these facts for your consideration, and trust that Government will be satisfied that, although reports by subordinate officers of the police are not to be received with implicit confidence, due care has been taken by me to check them and to guard against exaggeration and misrepresentation.

No. 134.

ORDER THEREON, 20th March 1877, No. 736.

The Governor in Council sees no reason whatever to doubt the general accuracy of the Police reports relating to the widespread distress in districts, and the Government are indebted to the department for much valuable information on the subject.

(True Extract.)

*[Signature]*

Offg. Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue (Famine) Department.

" Board of Revenue.

" Inspector-General of Police.

Ed. J. Wright.

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JUDICIAL.

To  
THE REVENUE (EXAMINED)  
DEPARTMENT.  
&c., &c., &c.

Dated March, 20th.

Issued 3/4

Recd 4/4

G.O. 20th March 1877, No. 736.

MARCH.  
Nos. 133-134.

Police—Orders passed on a letter from the  
Inspector-General of Police, regarding the Police  
reports of deaths from starvation in the North  
Arcot District.

2-1948  
5-2/1877