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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2071A	Press
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Dated	21-6-1877	197

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

21st June 1877, No. 2,071-A.

Famine Relief.

Read the following paper:—

No. 470-A. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 15th June 1877.

Read the following letter from W. R. ROBERTSON, Esq., M.R.A.C., Superintendent of the Government Farms, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Madras, —, No. 490:—

I HAVE the honor to direct attention to the necessity there is for some exact inquiries being instituted in the districts at once regarding the quantity and quality of agricultural seeds available for seeding the land to be cropped during the north-east monsoon.

2. The unirrigated land, watered by the north-east rains, is sown in August, September, and October with seed harvested in the previous January or February. But as, on nearly the whole of the land watered by this monsoon, *there was no harvest in the present year* or only to a very limited extent and of inferior produce, the seed available will, therefore, in most cases be either inferior fresh seed or old seed of the harvest in the early part of 1876. The bulk of the seed will thus be from 18 to 20 months old at the next sowing season, instead of only 6 or 8 months' old.

3. The time during which seed will retain its vitality varies greatly, dependent on the state of maturity when harvested, the care with which it was stored, the species of plant to which it belongs, &c. When field seeds are harvested under right conditions and when extraordinary care is taken in storing them and in treating them during storage, most kinds would be little, if at all, injured in their plant-producing capabilities after being kept for a period of, say, 20 months. But when the seed has been harvested under unsatisfactory conditions and is put aside without any regard to preservation beyond protection from insects, the probability would be that the bulk of it after 20 months would be unable to produce healthy plants.

4. In order to avoid the loss of human food that would result next cultivating season from the sowing of bad seed, it would be well I think if, after investigation, the facts are found to be as I have indicated to institute measures for placing good seed within the reach of all ryots who require it. There would, of course, be a considerable area of country in which such assistance would probably not be required from good seed being available.

5. The seed could not be supplied gratuitously, for the cost of the seed, in the area of country influenced by the drought, would exceed the entire annual revenue from the land in the shape of rent; however seed depots might be established, the working charges to be met by Government, the seed to be sold to the ryot at the cost price, payable in two instalments, in a period of two years;

ryots only to be permitted to make purchases, and no ryot to be allowed to purchase a quantity greater than would sow three-fourths of the land for which he holds a puttah.

6. As to the localities in which the seed should be obtained, it would be necessary to institute some careful inquiries. It would scarcely be safe to import seed to any extent from Bengal, but perhaps the Central Provinces might afford a supply. And there are portions of this Presidency in which the last south-west monsoon did not utterly fail, from which good seed might be procurable. It is not wise, as a general rule, to use for dry cultivation seed that has been produced under well irrigation, or an abundance of seed so raised in this Presidency might be obtained.

7. The present unfortunate condition of agriculture, as regards the supply of seed, might, if properly turned to account, result in much good. In all civilized countries the advantages that result from a change of seed are fully recognized. But in this country, unfortunately, ryots go on from generation to generation sowing seed, the produce of the previous harvest, either on the same or neighbouring land.

8. The two districts—Bellary and Cuddapah—which have been the most severely influenced by the drought, produce, as far as my experience goes, the finest samples of dry grains to be met with in this Presidency. But unfortunately the produce of these districts will not be available to any extent; however some seed may be available for purchase in parts of both districts which would otherwise be used as food.

9. I fear that now but little could be done towards making good seed available in the portions of the country watered by the south-west rains: still some effort should be made in this direction.

10. It is surprising, in going through the country, what a difference there is in the character of agricultural produce on land situated only a few miles apart. The distribution of the good seed in the localities where only inferior seed is usually sown would do much to raise the character of the produce and result in producing a somewhat greater uniformity in the character of our agricultural produce, a point of considerable importance as regards that portion which is exported.

11. The Government Grain Agency, with some slight modifications in its constitution, might take charge of the distribution of seed. There would be no interference with trade if these proposals were carried out, for at present no trade in this country has anything to do with the supply of seed to the farmer.

12. I forward a copy of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, in which at pages 325 to 352 inclusive, will be found an account of the distribution of seed to French peasant farmers after the close of the Franco-German war, which may afford some hints.

Mr. ROBERTSON is informed that inquiries have been made with the result that, in the opinion of those most competent to judge, sufficient supplies of seed-grain will be forthcoming. A great deal of it will probably be old seed, but this cannot be helped. It would be quite impracticable to obtain from other countries or to distribute at the present time a sufficiency of new seed, and it is very doubtful whether, if such were made available, it would be used by the ryots.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) H. E. STOKES,
Secretary.

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No. 470-B.

ORDER THEREON, 21st June 1877, No. 2,071-A.

Miscellaneous.

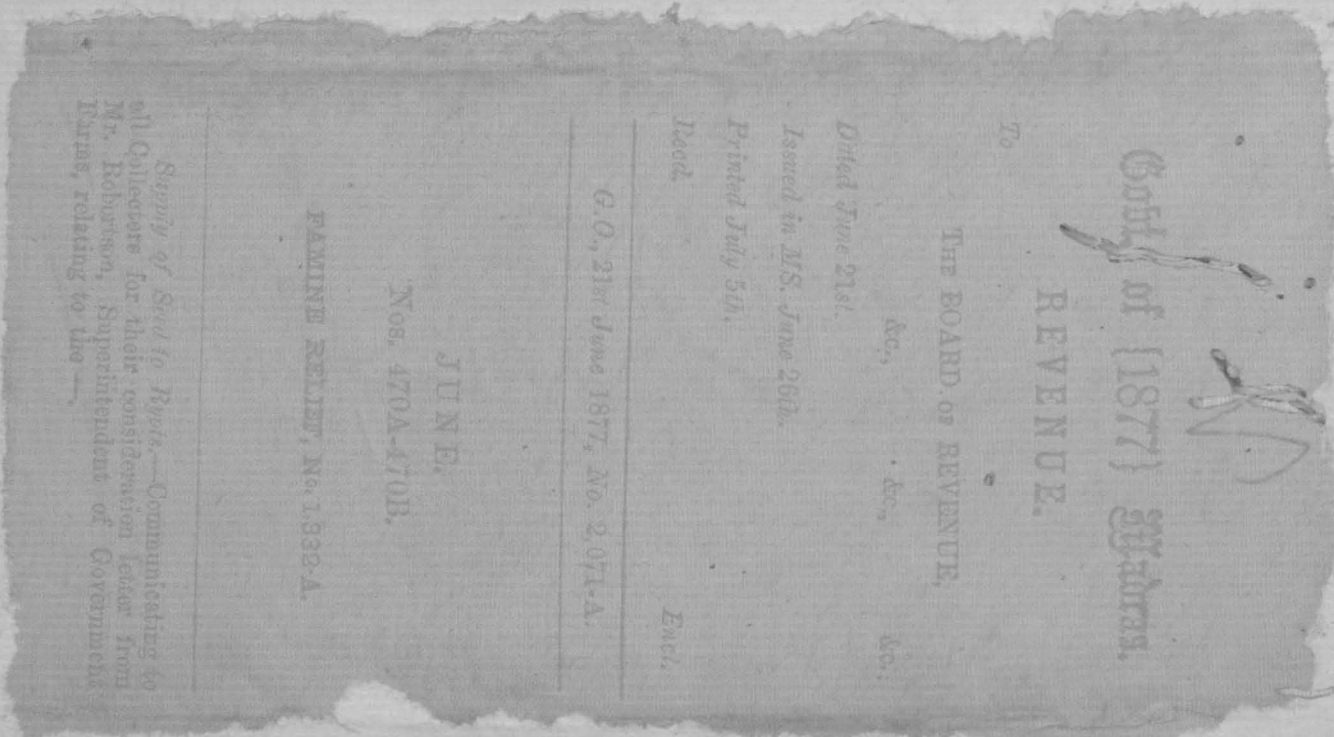
Mr. ROBERTSON's letter will be communicated to all Collectors for their consideration. The importance of the matter of seed supply is specially commended to their notice.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
" all Collectors.
" the Financial Department.

Exd. T. O'Connor.



Superintendent Revenue Department
Govt. Farms
Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
Dated 15 June 1877.
No. 470A

Brill A. No. 6303
No. 490
From W. R. Robertson Esq. M.A.
Superintendent Govt. Farms.

To J. C. Stokes Esquire
Secretary to the Board
of Revenue Madras.

Sir
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attention to the necessity there is
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of agricultural seeds available for seeding the land to be cropped during the North east monsoon.

2. The unirrigated land, watered by the north east rains is sown in August, September & October, with seed harvested in the previous January or February. But as, on nearly the whole of the land watered by this monsoon, there was no harvest in the present year or only to a very limited extent and of inferior produce the seed available, will therefore, in most cases, be either inferior fresh seeds, or, old seed of the harvest in the early part of 1876. The bulk of the seed, will thus be from 18 to 20 months old, at the

30710

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I have &c

Yours W. L. Robertson
Capt. Genl. Harms

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/ True copy & extract

signed H. E. Stokes
Secretary

To, The Sup^t. Govt. Farms

/ True copy &

W. W. Wms

Secretary

To, The Adcl. Secretary to Govt. Id.
with a book to be returned.

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The 27th Sept
 Superintendent
 Govt's Farms
 No 4665

Groundings of the
 Board of Revenue

Dated 15 June 1877.
 Recd 16/6/77

Calling orders on letters
 from Dept of Govt's Farms
 submitting proposals for
 placing goods and at the
 disposal of the agents
 at the District Office
 by the
 Collector

18/6/77

Mr. Robertson, MLC
 all to be sent to the
 Collector for the
 collection of the
 of the District Office
 21/6/77

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