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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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Not to be folded or roughly handled.

82

No. 188.

From

C. BERNARD, Esq., C.S.I.,
Secretary to Sir Richard Temple,

To

J. H. GARSTIN, Esq.,
*Additional Secretary to the
Government of Madras,*

Dated RANEEPETT, 17th April, 1877.

Sir,

By direction of Sir Richard Temple, I have the honour to forward copy of a Minute recorded by him, after inspection of the relief camp at Raneepett,—regarding the need for improved relief arrangements in the Kalastree Zemindaree.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

C. BERNARD,
Secretary to Sir Richard Temple.

8 May 1877

has.

*Minute by Sir Richard Temple, dated
Raneepeett, 17th April, 1877.*

I have again inspected the relief camp at Arcot (Raneepeett) and have enquired further into the circumstances of the inmates. The number is now just about 800. Fresh admissions are constantly being made: or rather fresh persons are daily being sent in, having been picked up or found on the roads or in the villages of the interior. But then there are desertions going on just as constantly, and so the numbers are not progressive. Indeed they are rather retrogressive for recently there were, I understand 1,200 inmates. If this be so, it would seem to follow that some hundreds of persons, sent in by the local authorities in consequence of destitution, must have deserted the camp and reverted to a most precarious existence. This necessarily causes grave apprehension, and suggests the necessity of redoubled precautions for village inspection and relief. It might have been expected that many of the most wretched of them come from the Zemindarees of Kalastree and Carvetnuggur, and this has led me to enquire further into the system of village inspection specially recommended for these tracts in my Minute of the 5th March. It is the more necessary to pursue the subject, inasmuch as the distress is becoming more and more severe as the season advances.

2. The local authorities appear to have given the requisite orders in these very distressed tracts, that is to say, Government officials are sent round to inspect the villages, to cause those who cannot move to be relieved in their homes and those who can move to be sent to the relief centres; and some relief centres are in working order, though my impression is that the number of these centres might be increased with advantage. Taking the cases which I have just seen together with what I hear, I am under the impression that, however excellent the local arrangements may be in these two

Zemindarees, especially in Kalastree, they require to be further strengthened by European supervision of a superior kind. There ought to be the means of knowing, whether the Native officials are really and faithfully performing that which must be a toilsome and irksome duty, on the due performance of which very many human lives may depend. Otherwise, I fear that many deaths from starvation may occur in Kalastree before the season of distress is over. I bear in mind that many destitute persons from the Madhoo Pauk portion of Kalastree resort to the camps at or near Madras, which are nearer than Kalastree, the headquarters of the Zemindaree. Still I should apprehend that even this part needs more of trained and competent inspection than it now receives. And this remark is still more applicable to the more distant parts of the Zemindaree. I know that the Collector has not at his disposal any European officer for the work of such inspection. But the Government might be able to send an officer for this purpose.

3. I would, therefore, most earnestly and urgently recommend, for the consideration of the Madras Government, that a selected European officer of smartness and ability be deputed to Kalastree to reside there, and, under the direction of the Collector, to see that the village inspection and relief is thoroughly carried out, for the general carrying out of which he would feel himself responsible. He would understand that no destitute person is to be permitted to perish of hunger; that every destitute person who can move must be sent to a relief centre, where relief can be dispensed without compulsory residence in camp, and that every destitute person who cannot move (of whom there may be one or more in every village) must be fed at home. He might reside at Kalastree where there is good accommodation. And Carvetnuggur might be included in his jurisdiction.

RICHARD TEMPLE.

8 May 1877

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RICHARD TEMPLE

8 May 1877

*Minute by Sir Richard Temple, dated Raneepeet,
17th April, 1877.*

In forwarding the accompanying Memorandum regarding the most distressed parts of the Salem district, I have a few remarks to record.

2. The taluqs above the ghaut range, adjoining the Mysore plateau, are among the most distressed tracts in the whole of the Madras Presidency. Some parts of these taluqs have not had crops for two years. The endurance of the inhabitants and the relieving zeal of the officers are being tasked to the utmost.

3. On further examination, the system of relief works in this district is found to merit all the praise bestowed upon it in my Minute of the 12th March. As regards strict tasking by the civil officers, utilizing of the Public Works establishments, discharging relief labourers wherever showers enable the people to plough, preserving the relief labourers in sufficiently good condition without offering any undue temptation, selecting useful and beneficial works for the employment of relief labour—there is little left to be desired. And the management of the whole affair by the Collector, Mr. Longley, is entirely worthy of confidence.

4. The relief camp at Dharampooree, in the midst of the scene of the greatest distress, is comparatively popular. The camp at Salem is not unpopular, or at least is fairly well attended. There is some light suitable work afforded, or about to be afforded, to the weavers of the finer fabrics in that city.

5. The system of village relief and visitation is being carried out all over the district, and nowhere is it more needed than here. In some of the worst tracts it was probably not commenced soon enough in full force. I trust that it is now going on rightly. At first there was some difference of opinion between the Collector and the Board of Revenue. The

Board seem to have rightly deemed the Collector's proposals too large for the commencement, as indeed they were. But although the Collector could not carry out his own proposals in their integrity: he could fall back upon the general orders of Government to collect in large camps all those destitute persons who could be collected and to sustain in the villages those who could not be so collected; and he doubtless did so. This plan is being carried out fully, as I understand, in the worst tracts.

6. There is one tract however where the system was not being carried out at the time of my visit, the 7th and 8th April, and where it is much wanted, namely the low hills and valleys and jungly places in and about the Shervaroy hills inhabited by various Malayalee tribes. Many wretched persons were met with going up to Yercaud (the settlement on the Shervaroy hills) and some equally miserable were on a relief work at Yercaud. Information reached me to the effect that others, in equally bad case, might be lingering in the huts and hamlets among these hills. I was glad to see that the subject was attracting the attention of the authorities on the spot. It certainly seemed to me that some special official ought to be deputed to examine immediately all the inhabitants of that group of the hills. And I have been glad to hear that the Collector has since taken steps to effect such examination.

RICHARD TEMPLE.

Relief affairs in the worst part of the Salem district during the middle of April, 1877.

The total population of the district is in round numbers two millions. On the 9th April the district had—

On relief works—	
Under civil officers.....	24,527
Under P. W. D officers.....	26,861
Total.....	51,388
On gratuitous relief.....	17,249

8 May 1877

During the last fortnight there have been partial showers, nowhere exceeding $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and in most places much less. The people have ploughed a good deal of land where the rain has exceeded half an inch. As yet the rain has not sufficed to raise fodder for the cattle.

2. The relief labourers are for the most part paid by piece-work, and the rates are from 50 to 100 per cent. dearer (that is more favourable to the workman) than in ordinary years. Some weeks ago the rates were harder; but they were lightened by the Collector who considered that the people were becoming reduced in condition. An adult male labourer earns at piece-work from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 annas a day; women and children make proportionate earnings. Some few light labour gangs in every taluq are on a daily wage of $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna a day for men, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ anna for women. Infants who cannot work get 3 pie a day, whether their parents belong to piece-work or light labour gangs.

3. Though the whole district is distressed yet some parts are much worse than others. The Dharampooree taluq (population 186,000) is the worst of all; next comes the Ootengiri taluq (population 170,000), and there is some severe distress in and around the town of Salem and in the taluq of Trichengode.

4. It is ascertained from Mr. Dawes, Deputy Collector, that in his two taluqs, Ootengiri and Tripatore, there were—

8,100	on relief works under P. W. D. officers
2,800	„ „ civil officers
1,000	on gratuitous relief in three relief camps and at villages.

The village relief system established by the Collector in January, but stopped by the Board's orders after a few weeks trial, is now being revived. Under this system a list of the helpless poor in every village is made out and checked; and then a cash allowance, 12 to 15 pie a day, is made to each one of these destitute people through the village headman; children get only 10 pie. The success of this system depends entirely on the supervising

staff; and the Collector has 8 to 14 circles in each taluq with a sufficiently paid Inspector over each. These Inspectors acting under the Tahsildar and the relief officer, see that the gratuitous allowance really reaches the needy people.

5. Nearly all the relief labourers in these two taluqs are employed on piece-work, at rates which are double (that is twice dear as) the rates of ordinary years. All the work done is useful work and most of it is on tanks. No public works undertakings are going on, or ever have gone on in the Salem district, side by side with and in competition with the relief works. Both Mr. Dawes and the Tahsildar of Ootangiri were confident that deaths do not now occur in these two taluqs from starvation, unless in the case of some of the wanderers, whom it is so difficult to control. Cholera keeps constantly appearing here and there among the villages. Cattle are dying in great numbers; to this fact the enormous number of hides constantly brought to market, testifies. People have driven their cattle down off the Sherwaroy and other hills, because of the want of water there. In the low-lands there is no absolute dearth of water either for man or beast.

6. At Dharampooree 2,300 labourers were inspected, of whom about 200 were on daily wages at the $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna rate; and the rest were on piece-work, earning about 2 annas for each male adult. Most of these people had been employed for 3 or 4 months. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of them belonged to Pariah and $\frac{1}{3}$ to other castes. Among them were some 400 men and women, who were remarkably stout and strong; these sturdy gangs have to do 20 per cent. more work for the rupee than the other gangs, and they are going to be draughted on to tank-work elsewhere. The rest of these work-people were in fair (but not first rate) physical condition; some few were below par. There was only one really emaciated person, and he had been at work for 3 months, but he had been supporting two sick relations at home out of his wages. The children were, as a rule, in very fair condition. The Tahsildar and a pensioned Rajpoot Subadar, who lives in Dharampooree, considered that the people in

these gangs were decidedly below the physical condition of such people in ordinary years. But, if we could, by our relief operations, keep the suffering poor up to the standard of these gangs till the end of the famine, we should be very successful.

7. Some 400 applicants for work were inspected. Most of these people have, till very lately, been on other relief works; and their condition was on the whole fair.

8. On enquiry into the causes of the depressed condition of the labourers, as reported by the Relief Officer and Collector several weeks ago, it appeared that the relief wage had been kept at 1 anna 6 pie for adults, even when food was selling at 11 and 12 lbs. per rupee. Under the Madras Government Orders of the 30th January, the man's wage ought to have been about 1 anna 10 pie, or 1 anna 11 pie, when the price of food was so dear. Prices in Dharampooree are now much cheaper, ranging at 16 or 17 lbs. per rupee for rice in the Dharampooree bazaar, and 15 or 15½ lbs. in the outlying villages.

9. The aspect of the relief camp made it clear that we have not succeeded in keeping the condition of all the suffering poor of this taluq nearly up to the standard of the labour gangs of the Dharampooree Fort. There were 930 inmates; and among the children there were many, nearly 10 per cent., very emaciated little creatures. Most of these little things had been 2 or 3 months in the relief camp; and they had not picked up at all. Side by side with them were fat, happy little creatures, who got no larger allowance than the thin ones. The explanation given by the Relief officer and the Native Doctor is, that some of the children came into the camp in very bad condition, and they cannot assimilate the rice and rice-broth. The Native Doctor said that these poor little things passed their food in an undigested state, they had been tried with ragi, with rice and with cholum; and some of them had been treated in hospital with sago; but nothing would bring them round. Among the adults too were some people who had been in the camp for months, and yet were still very emaciated. The death-rate was for weeks six per diem in this camp.

10. The ration of rice in the camp has recently been raised from 16 ounces to 20 ounces per diem for adults. And the results of this change remain to be seen. But when the greater number of inmates, adults and children, flourished on the ration, the circumstance that a percentage fail to recover condition does not by itself prove the ration to be insufficient. Probably the only way of getting these poor creatures into good condition will be to send them back gradually to their homes, with sufficient care for their maintenance on the road, and then to bring them upon the village relief now organized by the Collector. The change home, with assured hope of food while the trouble lasts, would give these poor people a chance of recovering. There seems to be something in the air or circumstances of the camp that prevents some of the people from picking up strength. Not that the camp is badly organized; much otherwise, the sheds are well ventilated and clean; and the camp is locally more popular than any other of the relief camps yet visited in the interior of the Presidency.

11. It may not be possible to send some of the famine babies and their mothers home just yet; and for them the relief officer is, under the Collector's instructions, arranging some kind of nursery, apart from the camp for the children which do not recover under present circumstances.

12. On some of the roads round Dhurmpooree and in the town were to be seen a certain number of emaciated people, women and young men, whose physical condition showed them to be in real need of relief. The village relief now being organized will, it is to be hoped, suffice to save such people from the risk in which they are now. In and round Dhurmpooree indeed are now to be seen more pronounced signs of famine, than have been noticed anywhere outside the Madras camps.

C. BERNARD,

Secretary to Sir Richard Temple.

MOMPORE,

16th April, 1877.

8 May 1877

has.

F. No. 2,618.

Revenue {1877} Department.

From

C. E. BERNARD, Esq., C. S. I.,
Secretary to Sir Richard Temple.

Dated 17th } April, 1877.
Recd. 18th }

No. 187.

Forwarding copy of a Minute by Sir Richard Temple together with a Memorandum regarding relief operations in the most distressed parts of the Salem District.

Lawrence Asylum Press—1877.

Min Cpl 8 May/77 No. 2644

File.

JH

Memo

I circulate 2 letters from Mr. Bernard Nos 187 & 188 giving cover to 2 Minutes and a Memo by Sir R. Temple.

The Memo relates to the state of relief affairs in the worst part of Salem during the middle of April and the Minute which accompanies it contains a suggestion which was apparently anticipated by the collector and related to the sending a Special Officer to examine the low jungle and villages in and about the Shevaroy.

The other Minute is about the Kalastri Zemindari and the necessity of sending a Special officer there. This has.

N 2644 -

From JH

To C. C. D. M. S.
P. S. to Sir R. T.
Per L.

Sir I am directed to acknowledge receipt of Sir R. T.'s Minute of the 17th inst. forwarded with Mr. Bernard's letter No. 187 & to state that the suggestion regarding the dispatch of an officer to Kalastri has been anticipated.

JH

JH

8 May/77

has been done.

Orders are requested how
these Minutes shall be dis-
posed of.

MS

MS

MS

MS

2 Minutes by S.
R. Temple.

Am

Am 6 Feb 1877

at 11/4

Copy for 1877

Min G. A. 8th May 1877

N 2644