Secrh. I (1)-1 —10,

(1) Number of pages 20.

(2) Date of repair 17. 10. 72

(3) Initials of the Referencer

# TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

## GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue — DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 986 Press
B.P. No. Mis.

Dated 8th March 1877 1972

*Not to be folded or roughly handled*

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 8th March 1877.*

**Famine Relief.**

No. 276. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 26th February 1877, No. 884:—

Read the following letter from W. LOGAN, Esq., Collector of Malabar, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Vythery, 10th February 1877, No. 28.

Having now completed an extended tour of the Wynaad coffee districts, I have the honor to submit as briefly as possible the result of my inquiries and observations as to the effect of the prevailing scarcity of food-grains on the laboring classes.

2. The Board will have gathered from my season reports that prices in Wynaad have been verging on famine rates since the month of October. The following table will show this clearly:—

*Number of Indian Seers per Rupee obtainable on the Wynaad Markets.*

| | September. | | October. | | November. | | December. | | January. | | February. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rice. | Ragi. | Rice. | Ragi. | Rice. | Ragi. | Rice. | Ragi. | Rice. | Ragi. | Rice. | Ragi. |
| Averages of 1873-74 to 1875-76 | 10½ | 20½ | 9 | 16½ | 9 | 16½ | 10 | 21 | 11½ | 24½ | 10 | 24 |
| 1876-77 | 7½ | 10½ | 7 | 11 | 7 | 13 | Cooly | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | |

3. Those high rates affect,

(1).—the scanty *local* population, Nayars, Moplahs, Chettiés, and the jungle tribes; and,

(2).—the numerous *outside* population who flock into the country from all quarters for employment on the coffee estates.

4. As regards the first class of the population, the matter is easily disposed of. In some places grain crops were small, about 8 annas in the Rupee, but so far as I could learn there is no distress nor likelihood of distress. When the crops partially failed the small surplus was still disposed of to advantage. This class also cultivate coffee, and though the season was a bad one, prices have kept high, and to some extent made up for loss of crop.

5. Before treating of the coffee estate coolies, it will be necessary to premise a few remarks on the system of cultivation pursued. Labor is required on the estates soon after the first showers fall, say from about April, and a certain amount of labor is from that time forward *continuously* employed. About the picking season (October, November, December, and January) the estates are at their busiest; but as soon as the crop is picked, the surplus labor is discharged, the final weedings and prunings are got through, and finally, during the current month the estate, except when high cultivation is carried on, is relegated to the care of a headman or two and a few coolies.

6. You will observe, therefore, that there is *regular* employment on estates for about ten months in the year, and *temporary* employment for a large number for a shorter period in the picking season.

7. I give as the result of my observation and inquiries that the regular estate coolies who have been employed continuously for six, seven, eight, nine, or ten months

on good wages (Rs. 1-8-0 per week) are well off. When these coolies are settled they will have cash in the season of scarcity some Rupees 8, 10, 12 or 14 to take home with them to their country. These amounts are of course much smaller than they ordinarily take home with them, but with those sums, and with the advances which they may receive as advances for next season's work, they will be comparatively well off, and so far as they are concerned there need be no anxiety.

3. As regards those who find only temporary employment on the estates in the busy season, they were able to lay by out of their wages much less than usual, because with the busy time this year came also the pressure of the famine prices. These temporary employés no doubt almost universally went to their homes on being paid off in December and January, but (and on this point the information received from the Planters is unanimous) these people are again, contrary to custom, flocking back into Wynaad, and not only so, but their families, and fresh people who have never before been in Wynaad are coming with them.

4. It is impossible to give any, even approximately, reliable estimate of the numbers who have already come and are coming. That will depend on a variety of circumstances—

1st, accidentally—on the action that may be taken by the Mysore Government;

2nd,—on the action which may be taken here (1) by the Government and (2) by the Planters;

3rd,—on the influence which better prices and greater abundance of water here than in Mysore may have; and,

4th,—on the exaggerated rumours of scarcity.

5. As regards the action of the Mysore Government, I have little or no information. I understood the Deputy Commissioner of Mysore to say that considerable sums had been sanctioned for relief works in his district; but as most of the employment afforded by relief works so far away from their homes would not hold out much inducement to the coffee estate coolies.

6. As to the Commissioner of the Ashtagram Division in the beginning of December addressed the Planters' Association asking how many coolies would likely be discharged shortly from the estates, and promising to send a list of relief works which had been sanctioned. A reply was sent at once giving a rough estimate of the number asked for, though no particulars as to the places they came from could be given. And the Commissioner was asked to forward a list of relief works sanctioned, specifying localities and rates of wages which the ordinary Secretary undertook to have read aloud after roll-call on every relief work in South-East Wynaad. To this no reply was received. The coolies were discharged, and as I have now said they are flocking back here accompanied by their families and by fresh people.

7. It would appear then that, unless the duty of relieving these Mysore famine refugees devolves entirely on the Madras and not on the Mysore Government, which the Board and Government have disclaimed, I ought to be furnished forthwith with full details regarding particularly the exact localities of the relief works which the Mysore Government have already sanctioned, and of the rates of wages which will



be paid thereat. On receipt of the particulars I will have them proclaimed regularly on market days at all the markets in the taluq as well as on the estates. I would have written direct for these particulars to the Ashtagram Commissioner, but I think it would be as well to have the list for the whole province as coolies come from all parts of it. Whether the information to be thus communicated to the coolies will induce them to return to their homes must remain an open question. That a considerable number will remain I have little doubt.

8. As regards the action to be taken here by Government, I solicit instructions. The Board observes on my previous letter that offering the coolies employment on relief works here would be tantamount to inviting them to return here. That is no doubt true to the extent that relief rates of pay hold out inducement to people to work. Assuming the prices of rice and raggy to be those last reported, viz., 7½ and 9 Indian seers per Rupee, respectively, the relief wages of a man would be 2 Annas and 1 Pie and a fraction, and 1 Anna 10 Pies and two-thirds, according as the one or the other grain was made the standard. Supposing that an average were taken it would as nearly as possible be 2 Annas per day per man. Now, as the ordinary wages on a coffee estate for a man is 4 Annas a day, it is clear that my proposal did not hold out any very strong inducement to the coolies to remain. And if the Planters' offer had been accepted, I feel sure that in order to have induced the coolies to remain at first, it would have been necessary for the Planters to have supplemented those subsistence rates with money out of their own pockets. I have the honor to request early instructions as to what is to be done should the coolies flock into the Taluq in increasing numbers as the season advances. Owing to circumstances already fully reported to the Board, there are absolutely no Local Funds available, and any expenditure which is incurred must come from Famine Funds. There is endless work for the coolies to do if they should be employed on relief works; for, as already reported, I am prepared to accept any number of thousands of cubic yards of broken metal at any point on any road in the taluq.

9. As to the extent to which Planters may be induced to employ the coolies. I have already informed the Board that the season has been a very bad one, and that Planters have as a rule no surplus funds to spend. In February and March Planters, even with the requisite funds and labor at command, do not require for regular work on their estates more than about ¼ of a coolie per acre. As soon as the showers fall they can profitably employ about one man per acre, and not till October do they require them at the rate of 1½ per acre. Few, if any, estates are cultivated so liberally as this. Those Planters, therefore, who can afford to keep on gangs in the next few months will not require more than they usually employ at regular work; and, as I have already observed, the *respectable* estate gangs are comparatively well off this year. The Board will therefore see that this helps us but little out of our difficulty. It has, however, occurred to me that some of the surplus labor might be employed by those Planters who are this year willing to open out fresh lands, and I am therefore seeking out instructions that those who are willing to hold the Government lands applied for on patta tenure, paying 8 annas per acre as jirayti to Government (landlord's share), may at once with the Deputy Collector's sanction, and after deposit of the necessary survey expenses, proceed to open out the lands applied for by them. No long waiting for Government, because the jirayti due in four years will cover the amount myself-

obtaining Government lands sold by auction. These never fetch more than the survey charges of Rupees 2 per acre. This measure will afford some relief. Finally on this point I have the honor to submit copy of a letter from the Planters' Association, dated 21st ultimo, offering to subscribe at the rate of one Rupee for every two Rupees given by each of the Governments of Madras and Mysore to be expended under my supervision on relief works by Superintendents of estates. I question whether this scheme will find favor in Mysore, but I submit it in order to prove clearly the liberal spirit in which the Planters have come forward to aid the Government in this emergency. And if it should please the Government to accept their offer, I shall negotiate a compact with the Association, and feel sure much useful work will be accomplished.

15. As regards the greater cheapness of provisions here at present and the more abundant supply of water, I remarked in the beginning of December, in my last letter on the subject, that while families were then coming in here from Mysore and were remaining there wherever they could find employment. This still continues and is rapidly increasing. I can, from personal observation, attest that those who are coming are in a state of distress more than half starved already, and the remainder are in want. The mortality is coming on, sporadic cases of cholera are reported from various parts of the district, and there may occur great mortality among these people almost before we have time to look round if cholera has broken out.

16. As regards the influence of exaggerated rumours on the movement of the population, I trust that the Chief Commissioner may be requested to publish through out Mysore that relief works are started here with famine rates of wages, and that all who come are sent to relief works. Many will be paid, and there are sufficient works already more than enough to employ those who are now scattering uneasily more places than they require. It is rumour like this, I consider, which has created rumours of abundance of food and water and of high wages may be without basis.

17. I would therefore on these points—

(1.) Suggest that all details of the relief works undertaken in Mysore, specifying particularly the localities and rates of wages, may be sent to me as soon as possible (paragraphs 12 to 13).

(2.) Request instructions as to whether I am to start relief works here (paragraph 14).

(3.) Report further on the proposal made by the Planters' Association at the close of my last letter (paragraph 14).

(4.) Suggest that the Chief Commissioner may be requested to notify throughout Mysore that famine rates only will be paid on relief works if started here, and that the relief works already open have more labor than they require at this season (paragraph 16).

18. As the north-west monsoon has surmounted my apprehensions during the past week, and it will not be necessary to consider seriously the question of the relief of the distress for a fortnight, I shall not be able to report further on the subject of the grain supply for Wynaad before the end of that time. Wynaad usually obtains its provisions from Mysore and from the low country to the westward; and fortunately, as it happens, the two failures that have occurred in respect of crops are, in some, the two (Heggadevancotah and Gundulpet) which adjoin Wynaad. From what I learn from the Deputy Commissioner of Mysore, I understand that in the former taluq the crops will yield an average, and in the latter somewhat less. Grain there, therefore, the



Wynaad markets ought to be fairly supplied; but then owing to the demand in an easterly and northerly direction, it is clear that Wynaad will this year have to contend in the market with places which are worse off still. I fully anticipate therefore that the greater portion of the grain for Wynaad will have to come in this next monsoon from the coast. Owing to causes of which the Board are already fully aware the ghaut roads have not this year received complete repair, and unless recent orders are somewhat modified, I expect to find the Karkur ghaut road closed altogether, because the Karimpoya bridge is rapidly becoming unfit for traffic. On this point I intend to again address the Board as soon as I have seen the District Engineer. It may therefore be that the roads will fail when the strain comes upon them and stop the traffic. It is *certain* the bazaarmen here have not capital enough nor warehouse room enough to lay in a sufficient stock. Some of the Planters have already, in anticipation, secured themselves against a failure of supply; but many of them have not the means to do so, and they have assured me that out of their necessity they must trust to the bazaar supply. One further point on which I have not as yet sufficient information is whether it will even be profitable for merchants on the coast to lay in stores of grain to last through the monsoon months. I am requesting the Associations to favor me with some calculations as to the number of coolies whose supply of food will be dependent on the bazaars in the monsoon months; and with those figures, and after consulting the coast merchants, I will be in a position to place some reliable information before the Board; but, meanwhile, I should like to know whether, if the step is considered necessary, I shall be able to depend on a supply direct from Government, or whether I must rely on the local dealers.

*P.S.*—Since this letter was signed but before its despatch, two telegrams, dated 9th from the Additional Secretary to Government have reached me. I am consulting the District Engineer and will start relief works at once.

---

Enclosure No. 1.

From H. B. WINTERBOTHAM, Esq., Honorary Secretary, Wynaad Planters' Association,
to W. LOGAN, Esq., Collector of Malabar, dated Vythiri, 21st January 1877.

I have the honor, by direction of the Committee of this Association, to bring before you the resolution annexed, which was passed at their meeting held at Manantoddy on the 18th instant, and to beg that you will, as soon as possible, inform us whether there is any hope that an arrangement of this kind may be sanctioned.

(1.) On renewed application for an answer to our letter of November 16th, praying that the Government of Madras would make relief works of some of our public works, the Assistant Collector states that the Board of Revenue have recommended that nothing should be done, to prevent the Coolies from emigrating to Mysore, but that they would be thankful if they were willing to return. Unfortunately numbers who were paid off last month are now coming back on to the estates in some cases bringing their wives and the young children.

(2.) A certain amount of work has hitherto been made or found on estates for a limited number of labourers, but this is now pretty well exhausted, and unless some steps are taken to a very certain that many of these unfortunates will leave our estates to go to Mysore.

(3.) Our proposition now is, that the Government of Madras and Mysore should each be asked to contribute 2 Rupees for each 1 Rupee subscribed by the Planters, the money to be spent under your control by the Superintendents of estates on public works in the district. The advantage of this to the Mysore Government would be that their people could be

[illegible] rate (the price of rice being lower) that if they were in their own [illegible] to the Madras Government, that the much needed work in this province would be carried on briskly and the supply of labor so necessary to wake planting and to secure which [illegible] money has been spent by the Planters, be kept together.

[illegible] Association the drive coming from north of Mysore, where famine is not so severe [illegible] to return to their villages, and the Association would propose that [illegible] grants [illegible] to individual Planters through the Association, and that [illegible] be started [illegible] the roads [illegible] in health on.

The [illegible] hopes that the scheme will meet with your approval, and that you will [illegible] the Secretaries urge its immediate adoption by the Governments of Madras and Mysore.

---

(Extract from a [illegible] of Board, 18th January 1877.—Resolved, that [illegible] the [illegible] No. 1, dated 1st January 1877, the Secretary be instructed to invite the attention of the Officer on Special Duty in Coorg, in charge of Relief to Famine, to the rules by which the Government of Madras and Mysore intend to admit to gratuitous relief during the present scarcity, and to request that he will report whether any modification is considered necessary in the case of Coorg.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) W. LOGAN,
Collector.

---

Read the letter of Government,

Read letter with enclosure from Government, dated 1st [illegible] 1877, No. 1, forwarding copy of letter from Mr. Logan, dated 1st January 1877, No. 1, and requesting to be favored with the opinion of the Board of Revenue as to the [illegible] of Mr. Logan's proposal to employ [illegible] Wynaad Public Works under the instructions and [illegible] of the Collector of Malabar in Coorg, and by which the Government of Madras and Mysore would be about to join in [illegible] for the support of certain coolies to be employed on Wynaad Public Works under the instructions and [illegible] of the Collector of Malabar in Coorg, and by which the Government of Madras and Mysore would be about to join in [illegible] for the support of certain coolies to be employed on Wynaad Public Works under the instructions and [illegible] of the Collector of Malabar in Coorg.

Read also with reference to telegram from Government, dated 1st [illegible] 1877, No. 1, forwarding copy of letter from Mr. Logan, dated 1st January 1877, No. 1, and requesting to be favored with the opinion of the Board of Revenue as to the [illegible] of Mr. Logan's proposal to employ [illegible] Wynaad Public Works under the instructions and [illegible] of the Collector of Malabar in Coorg, and by which the Government of Madras and Mysore would be about to join in [illegible] for the support of certain coolies to be employed on Wynaad Public Works under the instructions and [illegible] of the Collector of Malabar in Coorg.

It is evident from the letter from Government, dated 1st [illegible] 1877, No. 1, that Government are in communication with the Chief Commissioner on the subject.

It is [illegible] to be clearly understood in reference to the policy now adopted, that the opening of relief works in Wynaad at the present time when prices are comparatively low, will prevent a still greater influx of Mysore people, and by increasing the numbers requiring relief in Wynaad may [illegible] or at any rate [illegible] difficulty in [illegible] the [illegible] during the monsoon. It is obviously of great importance that the [illegible] referred to by Mr. Logan should be opened as soon [illegible] but there is no reason, but Government may be pleased to authorise the [illegible] work from Imperial or Provincial funds.

It [illegible] that Mr. Logan's letter be placed on the Collector's table [illegible] to the Chamber of Commerce. There are many Madras firms who [illegible] interests in Wynaad, and it might suit them to put down grain in [illegible]

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) H. E. STOKES,
Secretary.

---

Order, carried, 8th March 1877, No. 986.

Resolution.

A copy of the letter from the Wynaad Planters' Association will be communicated to the Chief Commis-



sioner of Mysore, with the request that the Madras Government may be informed whether the Government of Mysore are willing to join in the arrangement suggested in the above communication.

2. The Government consider the repair of the Karimpoya bridge should be put in hand forthwith; and if Local Funds are not available it will be considered in the Public Works Department whether a grant from Provincial Funds cannot be made for the purpose on the submission of an estimate of the probable cost.

3. As to laying in a stock of Government grain in Wynaad, the Government desire to be informed what are the capabilities of the local trade, irrespective of any importation from Mysore, before coming to a decision on the point.

(True Extract.)

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

---

To the Board of Revenue,
,, the Financial Department,
,, the Public Works Department.

---

Bd. P. R. Banderam.

Famine Relief

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.
FORT ST. GEORGE,
*8th March* 1877.

No. 273.

No. 987.

To

THE HONORARY SECRETARY TO THE WYNAAD
PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION.

Miscellaneous

SIR,—I am directed to inform you that a copy of your letter to the Collector of Malabar of the 21st January last has been communicated by the Madras Government to the Chief Commissioner of Mysore, with a request that he will state whether the Mysore Government is prepared to accept the proposals therein put forward by the Wynaad Planters' Association.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed) J. H. GARSTIN,
*Additional Secretary to Government.*

Ord. T. R. Tantiyan.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

No.

From

Dated 19

FOR ORDERS.

FOR ORDERS