Secrh. I (i)-I—10,006—7-10-70.

(1) Number of pages 18

(2) Date of repair 15.3.1972

(3) Initials of the Referencer

TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 713 Press

B.P. No. Mis.

Dated 16.2.1877 197 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No 9 73/

North Auckland
Collectors Cus: Office
Kaingaroa 2nd February 1877

From

W. S. Whitcombe Esqre
Collector of North Auckland

To

J. G. Gaustin Esqre
Additional Secretary to Govt
Native Department

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of the 28th Ultimo No 6 I have the honor to inform you that, in order there may be no delay in furnishing Government with reliable information as to the state of that portion of the District lately visited by Colonel Brown, I have instructed my Assistant Collector Mr Austin, in whose Division of the District those parts of the Country are situated, to proceed forthwith, in anticipation of my re-

visit the road places inspected by Colonel
Ogilvie and report to me at once
fully upon (a) the general condition
of the country, (b) state of the Crops
now on the ground (c) water supply
(d) stocks of grain available in the
local Markets, and I authorise him
in case the conditions of the poorest
of the people appear to him to be such
as the opening of the Relief Camp
now under construction at Ranipet,
to commence the distribution, under the
immediate supervision of a Deputy
Collector of cooked food to the really
infirm and aged who are unfit to earn
their living on Relief Work, and who
will be drafted into the Camp as soon
as it opens. I trust my action in

this matter will be approved by
Government. The Ranipet Camp
will be opened, if all is well, about
ten days' time. The Vellore Camp will
open on Monday, the 5th instant.

2 In para 17 of my letter as
quoted I observed that the Police
are now reporting, as caused by
starvation, every case of death which,
in ordinary times, would be ascribed
to fever, Bowel Complaint, etc.
These suspected very strongly that many
of these Reports were untrustworthy,
and I am now able to declare them
to be so. On the 29th Ultimo, the Assistant
Sub Magistrate wrote to me on the
subject of a case in which the Police
had Reported and entered in their
Crime Register the death of a man
from Starvation, into which the Sub

Written to the Collector before the Assistant's letter was received

Magistrate subsequently made a careful enquiry, in presence of the Police, and found that, so far from it being a case of starvation, the deceased with his wife and son, had for some time been earning Rs 7-8-0 a month on our Railway Works. He was taken ill, and died of dysentery after some weeks' treatment by his wife, who had pawned her jewels to support him. In three other cases also the Saitoni Dom in which the Police, in like manner reported deaths from starvation when subsequent enquiry showed that the individuals in question had died at home attended by their friends who had fed them up to the last. I

think it right to allude to these cases as tending to confirm my opinion that the Police Reports pointing to deaths from starvation must be received with the greatest caution.

Captain Low, to whom I have spoken on the subject, readily admits this.

3 I have pleasure in informing the Government that I found the Districts of this Division, (Puri) 15 miles from the nearest Railway Station, are amply supplied with grain, and prices have of late fallen to such an extent that Coolies are able to provide themselves easily with grain at the Village shops. This parch of the country is by far the worst of the whole District. There is an entire absence of cultivation

of any Kind. the whole country pre-
sents a very Lamentable spectable
of awful desolation, and it is of course
to be expected that, after such a pro-
longed drought as has been experienced,
we should find the population flocking
into the Relief Works in prodigious
crowds; nevertheless, as yet, the number
of people on the works is just 4700.
Bombay Hill
Rose Island, is worst part of
the whole District, and the fact that
the people there are as yet able to get
on without more extensive aid from
the State may, I consider, be accepted
as strong reason for believing that
the inhabitants of the Deccan and
Karnatic Districts and of the
Chandragherry Talook (where there
is now a surprising Extent of Cultivation

Parsees

going on, plenty of water in the tanks
and ample supplies of grain con-
stantly brought up by the Railway
which actually passes through them)
cannot be very much worse off
than those of this part of the Country.
On this point, however, I will in a
few days, furnish Government with
full information.

The Government may rely
on my not hesitating to propose
any outlay that I believe to be
necessary to save life. I cannot,
however, refrain from drawing
attention to the fact that many
of the proposals I have submitted
for providing labour in the Dis-
trict, and some of which have been
actually started, are in anticipa-
tion of sanction in places where the

for work would not yet have been disappointed by the Board of Revenue. I can assure the Government that I have not suggested a single work for execution the necessity for which has not been most carefully considered and discussed with the local Officers, and for which good cause cannot be shewn.

I am impressed upon me the necessity for encouraging local traders as to ensure the regular receipt of supplies of grain from Madras. This I have been doing incessantly for months past. In every part of the District I have visited, I have held Meetings and conversed with the local Merchants, and they, one and all, assure me of

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their readiness to get up grain for sale only and sell it freely. What they only ask of me is assistance in their Remittances to purchase grain. They have plenty of money and are quite ready to spend it, but are afraid to carry large sums and cart long distances by Road for fear of being looted on the way to the Railway Station. They point to the fact that even the Convoys of grain Carts lately going to Cuddapah, accompanied by armed escorts furnished by the Police, have been plundered with impunity, and they ask, with reason, what better chance of safety have they if they go down unprotected to Madras with money to buy grain. All

there would be an ample supply of Currency Notes for the Treasury to be issued to them on petition for the cash they are ready to pay. The Government, I am aware, have not been disposed to encourage the use of Currency Notes as means of remittance for trade purposes, but, in the face of a great crisis like the present, I venture to submit the ordinary rules that have been laid down for guidance of Treasury Officers may, with advantage, be relaxed, and I trust that the Government will now be pleased to sanction the liberal issue of Notes on return for cash to those traders who are engaged in importing grain to Distressed Districts from Madras. There is no reason at

present to fear that the Notes will be hoarded. The Deputy Collector assures me that there is such a demand here for Currency Notes to pay for grain on Madras that he could, with ease, receive Rs 50,000 a Month in cash for Notes if only he had them to issue. other Deputy Collectors have told me the same thing. I learned that there will be real and great importance in regard that the grain traders require, shall be of little inducing [illegible] on the part of Government for Currency Notes, but the power surprises me as Notes for more than half of any of the Indents stand in, and they are expended immediately on receipt. I beg respectfully to urge upon

the Government the advisability
of an officer being appointed
facilities to traders for their remittances
for grain. It is what is really wanted.
If it is still considered advisable
to extend the circulation of Currency
Notes I would beg to suggest the
issue of Credit Notes, to be in force
for the period, by reason
of the Act to prohibit
actually engaged in importing grain.

I have the honour to be
Sir
Your most obedient servant
[illegible]
Collector

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
16th February 1877.

Famine Relief.

No. 551. Read the following letter from W. S. WHITESIDE, Esq., Collector of North Arcot, to J. H. GARSTIN, Esq., Additional Secretary to Government, Famine Department, dated Dunganur, 2nd February 1877, No. 9 :—

In continuation of my letter of the 28th ultimo, No. 6, I have the honor to inform you that, in order that there may be no delay in furnishing Government with reliable information as to the state of that portion of the district lately visited by Colonel Hearn, I have instructed my Head Assistant Collector Mr. Austin, in whose division of the district those parts of the country are situated, to proceed forthwith, in anticipation of my own visit, to each place inspected by Colonel Hearn and report to me at once fully upon (*a*) the general condition of the country, (*b*) state of the crops now on the ground, (*c*) water-supply, (*d*) stocks of grain available in the local markets, and I authorized him, in case the conditions of the poorest of the people appear to him to be such as to render it inadvisable to wait for the opening of the relief camp now under construction at Ranipet, to commence the distribution, under the immediate supervision of the Deputy Tahsildar, of cooked food to the really infirm and aged who are unfit to earn their living on relief works, and who will be drafted into the camp as soon as it opens. I trust my action in this matter will be approved by Government. The Ranipet camp will be opened, if all is well, in about ten days' time. The Vellore camp will open on Monday the 5th instant.

2. In paragraph 17 of my letter above quoted I observed that the Police are now reporting, as caused by starvation, every case of death which, in ordinary times, would be ascribed to fever, bowel-complaint, &c. I then suspected very strongly that many of these reports were untrustworthy, and I am now able to declare them to be so. On the 29th ultimo the Tritani Sub-Magistrate wrote to me on the subject of a case in which the Police had reported and entered in their crime register the death of a man from starvation, into which the Sub-Magistrate subsequently made a careful inquiry in presence of the Police and found that, so far from its being a case of starvation, the deceased 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 by a native doctor, during which time his wife mortgaged her jewels to support him. Since then I have heard of two other cases also in the Tritani Division in which the Police in like manner reported deaths from starvation, when subsequent inquiry showed that the individuals in question had died at home attended by their friends who had fed them up to the last. I think it right to allude to these cases as tending to confirm my opinion that the Police reports now coming in of deaths from starvation must be received with the greatest caution. Captain Cox, to whom I have spoken on the subject, readily admits this.

3. I have pleasure in informing the Government that I find the markets of this place, which is 45 miles from the nearest Railway Station, are amply supplied with grain, and prices have of late fallen to such an extent that coolies are able to provide themselves easily with grain at the village shops. This part of the country

is by far the worst of the whole district. There is an entire absence of cultivation of any kind; the whole country presents a very lamentable spectacle of arid desolation; and it is of course to be expected that, after such a prolonged drought as has been experienced, we should find the population flocking on to the relief works in prodigious crowds; nevertheless, as yet, the number of people on the works is just 4,700. This, as I have said, is the worst part of the whole district, and the fact that the people here are as yet able to get on without more extensive aid from the State may, I submit, be accepted as strong reason for believing that the inhabitants of the Veritani and Narrainavanam Divisions and of the Chendragherry Taluq (where there is now a surprising extent of cultivation going on, plenty of water in the wells, and ample supplies of grain constantly brought up by the Railway which actually passes through them) cannot be very much worse off than those of this part of the country. On this point, however, I will in a few days furnish Government with full information.

4. The Government may rely on my not hesitating to propose any outlay that I believe to be necessary to save life. I cannot, however, refrain from drawing attention to the fact that many of the proposals I have submitted for providing labor in the district, and some of which have been actually started by me in anticipation of sanction in places where the need for work was most urgent, have been disapproved of by the Board of Revenue. I can assure the Government that I have not suggested a single work for execution the necessity for which has not been most carefully considered and discussed with the local officers, and for which good cause cannot be shown.

5. The Government have lately impressed upon me the necessity for encouraging local traders so as to ensure the regular receipt of supplies of grain from Madras. This I have been doing incessantly for months past. In every part of the district I have visited I have held meetings and conversed with the local merchants, and they one and all assure me of their readiness to get up grain regularly and sell it freely. What they only ask of me is assistance in their remittances to purchase grain. They have plenty of money, and are quite ready to spend it, but are afraid to carry large sums in cash long distances by road for fear of being looted on the way to the Railway Station. They point to the fact that even the convoys of grain carts lately going to Cuddapah, accompanied by armed escorts furnished by the Police, have been plundered with impunity, and they ask, with reason, what better chance of safety have they if they go down unprotected to Madras with money to buy grain. All they want is an ample supply of Currency Notes in the Treasury to be issued to them in return for the cash they are ready to pay. The Government, I am aware, have not been disposed to encourage the use of Currency Notes as means of remittance for trade purposes, but, in the face of a great crisis like the present, I venture to submit the ordinary rules that have been laid down for guidance of Treasury Officers may, with advantage, be relaxed, and I trust that the Government will now be pleased to sanction the liberal issue of Notes in return for cash to those traders who are engaged in importing grain to distressed districts from Madras. There is no reason at present to fear that the Notes will be hoarded. The Deputy Tahsildar assures me that there is such a demand here for Currency Notes to pay for grain in Madras that he could with ease receive Rupees 50,000 a month in cash for Notes if only he

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had them to issue. Other Deputy Tahsildars have told me the same thing. Convinced that this is the real and most important encouragement that the grain merchants require, I have been of late indenting freely on the Accountant-General for Currency Notes, but he never supplies me with Notes for more than half of any of the indents I send in, and they are expended immediately on receipt. I beg respectfully to urge upon the Government the advisability for affording more extended facilities to traders in their remittance for grain. It is what is really wanted. If it is still considered inadvisable to extend the circulation of Currency Notes, I would beg to suggest the issue of Credit Notes to be in force for stipulated periods by Treasury Officers to merchants who are actually engaged in importing grain.

No. 552. ORDER THEREON, 16th February 1877, No. 713.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government await the report of Mr. Austin mentioned in paragraph 1 of the Collector's letter, and accept the assurance of the latter officer that no unnecessary works have been recommended by him for execution.

2. Paragraph 2 will be communicated to the Inspector-General of Police for information and paragraph 5 to the Financial Department for disposal.

3. The Collector should have submitted his letter through the Revenue Board.

(True Extract.)

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

To the Board of Revenue.
,, the Collector of North Arcot.
,, the Financial Department.
,, the Inspector-General of Police.

Exd. A. F. Goodall.

Govt. of Madras. 1877.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

&c., &c., &c.

Dated February, 16th.

Recd. *Encl.*

G.O., 16th February 1877, No. 713.

FEBRUARY.

Nos. 551-552.

FAMINE RELIEF, No. 547.

Relief Works, North Arcot District.—Anent the report of Mr. Austin mentioned in paragraph of the Collector's letter; accepting the assurance of the latter officer that no unnecessary works have been recommended by him for execution; communicating paragraph 2 to the Inspector-General of Police for information and paragraph 5 to the Financial Department for disposal; and observing that the Collector should have submitted his letter through the Board.