M.R.O. 14-5,450—22-10-25.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 1028 — Press Mis.

94-95

Dated 7—5—1867.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 7th May 1867.

No. 94. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 29th April 1867, No. 2,606.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Camp at Ramandroog, Hospett Talook, 26th March 1867, No. 55 :—

1. I have the honour to acknowledge Official Memorandum, No. 285, dated 21st instant, calling on me to report on the expediency of making advances to ryots for the purchase of agricultural stock, as requested in Board's Proceedings, dated 29th October 1866, No. 7,813.

2. It was not my original intention to have proposed the measure of making advances to ryots for the replacement of their stock.—See paragraph 2 of my letter, dated 5th January 1867, No. 3.

3. The impossibility in a limited time of obtaining a detailed account of the numbers and value of cattle, which each ryot might aver himself to have lost, and of an inquiry into the circumstances of each applicant, were most serious objections to this course of relief. I consequently proposed a simpler scheme to be carried out, if necessary, which is adverted to in my letter, No. 228, of 10th November 1866.

4. The Board of Revenue in their Proceedings of 27th November 1866, No. 8,542, stated their objections to the scheme of replacement of cattle, and to the advance of further loans than had been sanctioned, and Government coincided.

5. Looking at the subject from a later period of the year, and after the local observation gained during a very extensive tour of the district, I am not inclined to reiterate the proposal of a scheme of advances for the replacement of cattle.

6. Had there been any great falling off in the breadth of land, cultivated even after the later season, at which rain was received last year, and this falling off have been attributable to the want of cattle, I admit that there might have been grounds for coming to the assistance of the ryots.

7. On the contrary, the ordinary cultivation has been reached without any difficulty. To such as applied for it, early and timely assistance was given at the end of last year before the cultivation season ended, by means of a sanction, which Government accorded for the expenditure of Rupees 1,20,000.

8. I made inquiries of the people during my tour, if they wanted further advances from Government, but there was no general inclination to accept them.

9. I think it is to be regretted, that the state of the distress in the district should have been represented in the Sanitary Commissioner's Report, as having commenced so early as November 1865, and endured for nine months, without any measures of relief having been afforded, up to August 1866. In reference to this subject, I enclose copies of my letters, Nos. 4 and 6, dated 23rd and 28th January 1867, to Government.

10. My connection with the district commenced in the last week of June 1866, and it was my impression then, as it is my belief now, that had rain fallen, as was expected *in July*, there would have been no distress calling for measures of extraordinary relief.

11. I shall give two illustrations in support of this view. First as to the limited nature of the distress up to the beginning of June 1866, at which time the

early rain of the south-west monsoon is expected to fit the land for cultivation. The Abkarry or liquor monopoly was sold by Mr. Foster on the 21st day of May 1866. The Board of Revenue are well aware, who are the consumers of liquor, chiefly the labouring class. Had distress extensively prevailed from 16th November to the 21st of May, or for nearly seven months, great losses must have been experienced by the Abkarry Contractors. It would have been consistent with reason to suppose, that under such circumstances, there would have been defaulters, and that the falling off in the consumption of liquor, which could not have been consumed by a starving people, would have paralyzed competition, and that the upset price of the two previous years, in one of which there was a good harvest, would have had to be reduced. So far from this being the result, the competition before Mr. Foster was most spirited, and talook contracts were knocked down at an advance, even in talooks where some distress had been reported, at 200 or 300 per cent. advance on the previous years. Alur is an instance. There had been a slight emigration from that talook early in the year from the want of fodder for the cattle. Instead of Rupees 17,700, Rupees 52,600 were bid. Raidrug, where some of the lowest castes were reduced to distress, fetched Rupees 46,000 instead of 25,900. Kudlighi Rupees 35,000 instead of 15,100.

The only contract which was sold for less than the upset price was the Cantonment contract of Bellary, which was probably owing to an overbidding at the last occasion of sale.

12. The next illustration, that, if rain had fallen in July, no special measures would have been required, is quoted from my own experience. I was Sub-Collector in temporary charge of the district of Cuddapah in August 1854, when the adjoining district of Bellary was visited by famine. The rain of July had failed also in Cuddapah, in the talooks adjoining Bellary, and similar distress was reported. I immediately applied to Government for a grant of Rupees 10,000, to be employed in opening out a road between Cudree and Poolvendla, but before the work could be put in hand in the beginning of September, copious rain fell, immediate demand for agricultural labour arose, and it would have been difficult to have got a labourer for the proposed famine work, which was consequently not undertaken. I was censured for precipitancy on that occasion, owing, as I believed, to my explanation of the altered circumstances of the case not having been forwarded to Government by the then Collector, after my delivering over charge.

13. I am of opinion that the replacement of the cattle will be effected by the people without Government assistance; I have seen large droves imported from the east, Nellore. There is sufficient capital to purchase them.

14. The large cultivation of cotton is alluded to in the Sanitary Commissioner's report, as having tended to produce distress, in limiting the cultivation of food-grains, but irrespective of the impossibility of preventing the ryot from cultivating the crop which pays best, the money received for cotton enhanced the price of grain, and so enriched its cultivators. The non-agricultural poor might suffer; but the class which suffers most is that in receipt of fixed money wages; agricultural labourers being paid chiefly in grain.

15. I believe that the state of distress in the adjoining talooks of Mysore was worse than that experienced in Bellary. There was an equal, if not greater, loss

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 7th May 1867.

of cattle there. The people of Moolcalmooroo talook came to buy grain in Raidrug, shewing that the scarcity must have been greater, and the price higher in Mysore.

16. On making local inquiries in Madacsera, which is interlapped by Mysore, I learned that a partial emigration was due to the outbreak of cholera, and not to any other cause. With this partial exception, and of some ryots having left Alur, there was no "general exodus" from Bellary. In the one talook some people crossed the frontier owing to cholera, in the other talooks they moved for water and pasture. Any large emigration of the agricultural population would have caused a diminution of cultivation, which has not taken place.

Enclosure No. 1.

Abstract.—Letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 23rd January 1867, No. 4.

Enclosure No. 2.

Abstract.—Letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated 28th January 1867, No. 6.

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1. Submitted to Government, in continuation of the Board's Proceedings, dated 27th February 1867, No. 1,207. The altered circumstances of the Bellary District render unnecessary any special measures to replace the loss of agricultural stock.

2. As Mr. Wedderburn's defence of his administration of the district after June has been submitted direct to Government under their orders, the Board content themselves with drawing attention to his marked confirmation of the views expressed in their Proceedings, dated 12th March 1867, No. 1,517.

No. 95. Order thereon, 7th May 1867, No. 1,028.

Miscellaneous.

The Government are glad to receive so satisfactory an account of the condition of the district.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T Augustin.

8p. 1028

The foll. in place
of Lt Ewing's resignation
on account of the condition
wd of the Dist.

V.

V. B.

ye. May/67.

11 Copies Lithod'g Rec'd Dispd

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1867. Department.

Rev. Pro. Govt. for Navy

No. 1130.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE,

Dated 29th April 1867.

Genl 30th
Rec'd 1st May

No. 2,606.

Submitting letter from Collector of Bellary reporting that the altered circumstances of the district render unnecessary any special measure to replace the loss of agricultural Stock.

No 1028. 1st May

Nil

No 94-95

2 May 1867