

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	2577	Press Mis.
	9-10	
Dated	1-11-	1867.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 9. Read the following letter from the Honorary Secretary to the Famine Relief Committee, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 21st October 1867 :—

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Proceedings of Government, under date 16th October 1867, No. 2,424, communicating to the Famine Relief Committee a letter from the Collector of Bellary, dated 23rd September 1867, No. 51, in which he takes exception to a remark made in my Memorandum to Government, under date 1st August 1867, to the effect that "the Collector had altogether failed to keep the Committee acquainted with the condition of his district, and had never informed them of the probable wants of the district in the way of relief until the scarcity was over."

2. Mr. Wedderburn draws attention to a statement made by him in a letter addressed to the Relief Committee on the 2nd August 1866, "that the probable number of destitute persons was 50,000, and that the relief would be required for four months," which he observes I omitted to record, and he submits that with this before me I was not justified in making the remarks above noted. He also states that his reports to Government and the Board of Revenue were communicated to the Relief Committee, and that in these papers the state of the district was duly and periodically reported, and he adds that the small amount of the first grant made by the Committee led him to suppose that the funds at their disposal were not large.

3. In reply to these observations, I have the honor, in the first place, to remind the Government that in paragraphs 19 and 20 of his letter, dated 20th July 1867, Mr. Wedderburn implied that had more funds been at his disposal, his measures of relief would have been more effectual. As the Government were aware from my reports on the subject that ample funds were at the Committee's disposal, it therefore devolved upon me to explain why larger sums were not forwarded to Bellary during August and the first fortnight of September. This I did at length in Memorandum of the 1st August 1867, and if the Government will be pleased to turn to it, they will observe that I did specially allude to the letter to which Mr. Wedderburn now refers, and it was precisely because he failed to forward the information promised in that letter, and in his letter written two days later, until it was too late to be of any service, that I made the remark to which he now objects.

10. "As regards the number of the destitute persons who have nothing but their labor to subsist upon, and whom the adversity of the season prevents earning wages in the field, there cannot be less than 50,000 in the district. When cultivation takes place, a great proportion of these will obtain employment, but, as I said before, prices cannot be expected to fall in any very great degree under the most favorable circumstances for several months, and will still remain, as I have pointed out, as being their present condition, to the Board of Revenue, higher than in any other district in the Madras Presidency. The remoteness of the district from the seaboard and railway, and its chief dependence on local rain-fall for dry crops, are the causes of this.

11. "I would hope that increased employment will considerably abate the distress of the poor, but if the season continues adverse, and prices do not fall, an application will be made for further relief after a careful estimate has been prepared of the numbers for whom it is required.

12. "Speaking generally, and subject to future correction, I would say that the period for which relief will be required, under any circumstances until the crop now to be sown is reaped, will be for the next four months."

4. For convenience of reference, I have transcribed in the margin those paragraphs of Mr. Wedderburn's letter of 2nd August 1866, on which he apparently relies. The Government will observe that in paragraph 10 he speaks of the number of persons in the district who subsisted by labor, a matter with which

the Committee had no concern, as labor for such persons was provided by Govern-

ment on famine works; but he makes no allusion to the number of those who were unable to labor, and who were, therefore, likely to require subsistence from the funds placed in the hands of the Committee, beyond stating in paragraph 11 that application for further relief for them would be made if found necessary.

5. Mr. Wedderburn must have overlooked this when he speaks in paragraph 5 of his present letter of having given an approximate estimate of the wants of his district, and of a *portion* of these 50,000 persons being supported by relief works, for, clearly he had given the Committee no estimate for the number of persons likely to require support at their hands, and if the 50,000 people to whom he did refer were what he described them, and if he effectually carried out the liberal intentions of the order of Government in regard to the employment of the able-bodied, the *whole number* would have been supported by employment on famine works.

6. I submit, too, that in the very meagre official reports forwarded by the Collector to the Board of Revenue and the Government, there was no information which would enable the Committee to form any idea of the amount of funds necessary to be forwarded to the district for expenditure at the relief-houses.

7. In explanation of the small amount which formed the original grant to Bellary, I must explain that though by the middle of August 1866 the Committee had collected nearly Rupees 50,000 on July 31st, when the grant was made they had only Rupees 30,000 in hand, and, moreover, they were quite unacquainted with the condition of Bellary as compared with other districts. But whatever may have been Mr. Wedderburn's impressions as to the funds at the Committee's disposal, it is hardly possible to understand how with a large population around him in a starving condition, he should have failed to represent *fully and frequently* the claims of his district to participate largely in funds which had been subscribed for the special purpose of relieving the distress, the less so as he had promised a detailed application in his two letters written at the beginning of August, and had thus in a measure prevented spontaneous action on the part of the Committee. It is hardly necessary for me to explain again that had he at any time during August submitted the detailed application promised by him, at least Rupees 20,000 could immediately have been granted, and a large amount of human suffering might doubtless have been alleviated.

8. With these observations, and with a request that my Memorandum of the 1st August 1867 may be consulted as detailing the whole facts of the case, I have the honor to solicit that the Government will now be pleased to decide whether the Famine Committee were in any way accountable for the inadequate relief which was afforded to the starving poor of the Bellary District in the month of August 1866, and whether I was not fully justified in making the remarks to which Mr. Wedderburn objects.

No. 10. ORDER THEREON, 1st November 1867, No. 2,577.

Miscellaneous.

Ordered to be recorded.
(True Extract.)

(Signed) F. H. WILKINSON,
Acting Under Secretary to Government.

To the Honorary Secretary to the Famine Relief Committee.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

✓
The Famine Committee - are not - as -
possible for them act - better -
who do not appear to be
called on to determine the point
as Mr Dalgell reports them to
decide. Such correspondence as
has passed might just as well
have passed between Mr Macoskey
and Mr Dalgell as have come to
the Government Secretariat.
24 Oct WJ

I would record in file &
let the matter be on the committee
- and or may be on addition for
em - I thought it better of

striking to Mr W's letter giving to
the Committee and am sorry
that I did not.

I believe that both Mr W
and the Committee are at
least in the end and no fool
can come of from the cross
firing J.P.

I agree with Sir Thomas Pycroft
the controversy must be extinguished
at once or it may go on for an
indefinite period. N.

2577.

Admiral Sir

Recorded L.B.

1st. Nov. 1867.

J.P.
1867

N.

1 Copy to the Famine Relief Committee Dec 10 5/60

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Pro 11/2/67 to 303 + 314
" 21 August 1867 " 408-4609

Revenue 1867. Defeat
Pro of Court for Nov.
77-2838.

From

The Secy. to the
Hamine Relief Committee
Madras.

Dated 21st of Oct.
Received 21st of 1867.

21/10/67

For 2577-1st Nov.

Submitting observations with
ref. to the exception taken by
Mr. Wedderburn to certain
remarks made in his Memoirs
vol. 1 of 1st Aug 1867. & soliciting
Govt. to decide whether the Ha-
mine Comtee were accountable
for the inadequate relief af-
forded to the starving poor
of Bellary in Aug. 1867
whether he was not justified
in making the remarks all
Wedderburn objects.

N. 9410

20/10/67 2879