

Revenue (1897) Department.

PRESS SERIES.

G.O., No. 527

Dated 3rd July 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

Famine Relief Estimates, Famine Tools &c.

Recording, with remarks, report from the Secy to Govt., P. W. Dept., and the Third Member of the Board of Revenue on — in the N. More dt.; stating that the collector and the Secy to the collector must devote special attention to the relief of the people in the Darsi and Podili divisions of the Venkatagiri Zemina and that steps for the improvement of the Maldini drain will be taken in the Public Works Department.

Revenue (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 5038

From

The Secretary to Govt.,
P. M. D.

& the Third Member,
Board of Rev.
No. 8.

Dated 14th June 1887

Received 17.6.87

Registered

Enclosures

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SUBJECT.

Reporting on Famine
Relief Estimates, Famine
Tools &c in the Nellore
Dt.

WHAT CURRENT.		To whom given.	When taken out.
No.	Year.		
5334	1898	3-1-	2/5/98
211	1897	2-11-97	1/10/97
1903	1892	11/5	13/5/12

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

When taken	To whom given.	For what Current.	
		Year.	No.

Rice. Rice is cheaper than the warren
 rate over most of the
 Letter to.
 From the Chief Engineer and Secy. to the
 to Government P.
 and
 The Third member, Board
 of Revenue
 To
 The Secretary to Government,
 Revenue Department.

dated June 14th 1897, Camp Bezwa.

Subject
 Reporting on Famine Relief Estimate
 Famine Food &c in Nellore
 reference to G.O. No. 382, dated
 May 25, 1897 -

Rice. Rice is cheaper than the war
rate over 1

Camp Beva
June 14th 1891, and
Letter C.

From The Hon. Col. D.M. Campbell
Chief Engineer and Secretary
to Government, P.W.
and

W. M. Winterbotham Esquire,
Third Member, Board of Revenue

To The Secretary to Government
Revenue Department

Sir,
In continuation of our letter
dated June 10th 1897, we have
honor to submit the following
report regarding the District of
Kollon.

1. General condition of the District
Mr. Scott has been officiating
1st 1897

year ending December 1896,
off and on has had three
service in it.

Rainfall. The North-East Mon-
soon in 1896 was late and ill-dis-
tributed. Rain did not set in till
middle of November and a
great part of the wet and dry
crops were cultivated after that
date. The District rainfall in
1896 for both Monsoons was
75.3 inches (average of 22 stations)
against a twenty years' average
of 35.60 inches. In the South-West
monsoon 15.74 inches fell against
an average of 12.67 inches.

But although the total rainfall
was not deficient, the lateness
of the North-East Monsoon, and

Rice. Rice is cheaper than the warren,
rate over the land. The
were unfavorable to cultivation, though
and it is believed that the, and
of both wet and dry crops.
on the whole decidedly below
average. The following is the
from April 1st to May 31st 1897.

Stations	Rainfall from April 1st to May 31st	Average	Remarks
Addanki	2.16	2.12	+ 0.04
Darsi	2.91	2.85	+ 0.06
Podili	4.54	1.75	+ 2.79
Kanigiri	0.79	2.23	- 1.44
Udayagiri	1.00	Not available	
Kanuparthi	1.85	1.91	- 0.06
Angole	1.04	1.38	- 0.34
Pakala	0.78	1.60	- 0.82
Kandankur	2.24	1.51	+ 0.73
Kavali	2.87	1.10	+ 1.77
Iskapalli	1.07	1.98	- 0.91
Nellore	1.67	1.66	+ 0.01
Krishnapatnam	0.57	Not available	
Koti	0.71		
Dugazipatnam	0.78		
Silurpet	1.02	2.27	- 1.25
Tada	0.68	1.58	- 0.90
Monapokem	0.23	2.06	- 1.83
Atmakur		1.30	- 1.30

will be seen that on an average
years the pre-monsoon showers
give a distinct average of
8.3 inches, and that this has
been largely exceeded in the northern
parts of the District, where alone
early crops are extensively cultivated.

Sowings in Kollur are
usually very late - up to about
the middle of August three-fourths
the dry cultivated area, and
more than four-fifths of the 'wet'
remain unseason (vide Statistical
Tables, page, 189)

So far there is nothing
that serves to indicate that the
incoming South-west Monsoon
will be deficient, and in
case this misfortune should

Rice. Rice is cheaper than the warms,
not
that it will not cause immediate, though
wide-spread distress. If the, and
South-East Monsoon rains prove
favourable the population as
whole can subsist on its own
resources till those rains bring
their crop. Possibly relief may be
needed in certain parts in the North-
west of the District, regarding which
more will be said further on.

2. We are informed that there
at present is evidence of distress
in any part of the District. The
Construction of the Madras-Bengal
State Railway can furnish relief
- means for large numbers; and the
officers in charge of the line inform
us that they cannot obtain coolies
in sufficient numbers for the work.

local rates which are being

Prices. The following statement shows the average prices ruling in the District for the week ending June 5th 1897, as compared to the normal, warning and scarcity rates:-

Stations	Prices in Curr of 80 tolas of											
	Rice 2 ^d Sort				Ragi				Cholam			
	For week ending June 5	Normal	Warning rate	Scarcity rate	For week ending June 5	Normal	Warning rate	Scarcity rate	For week ending June 5	Normal	Warning rate	Scarcity rate
re	10.6				15.4				14.4			12.2
er	12.7				17.3				"			"
ur	12.7				"				"			"
ta	10.6				17.3				"			"
Katagiri	11.1				17.3				15.5			13.2
er	11.7				"				"			"
ur	11.3				20.4				14.4			"
Wakur	12.2				17.9				18.0			"
vali	11.3	14.0	11.2	8.4	17.0	28.0	21.0	14.0	15.4	26.0	19.1	13.0
yagiri	"				17.4				14.5			24.0
Wakur	10.3				"				18.1			18.0
ili	8.5				17.0				12.7			11.5
isi	7.5				15.3				14.5			13.1
ngole	9.4				18.7				15.3			13.2
ldanki	8.9				16.6				16.2			13.2
ingiri	9.4				17.0				14.5			13.2
Average	10.6				17.3				15.3			12.8

Rice. Rice is cheaper than the warning rate over most of the area dependent on wet cultivation. It is dearer than the scarcity rate in Darvi, and touches the scarcity rate in Podili and Addanki.

These three stations are in the extreme north of the District. Ragi. Ragi is dearer than the warning rate every where, and in Darvi, where it is the staple food, is only 1.30 pears per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate.

Cholam Cholam is dearer than the scarcity rate in Podili, and on an average of the District is only 2 1/4 pears per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate.

Cumbar. Cumbar is dearer than the scarcity rate in Podili, and is only 50 slightly below that rate in other places where its price is quoted.

Reports

Exports and Imports. We have been unable to gather any useful information under this head. There have been no exports by Sea. By the South Indian Railway 18,515

maunds of grain have been exported since the middle of March, against 2031 maunds imported.

We have no record of the grain exports, if any, by the Buckingham Canal, nor by the Rezwada-Guntakel line, nor by road. At the end of

1896 large quantities of grain are said to have left the District by road into Cuddapah, through the passes in the Eastern Ghats.

5. The portions of the District which appear to us to furnish most ground for immediate anxiety are the Darsi and Podili Divisions in the extreme North

North. These Divisions form part of the Venkatagiri Zemindari. Each has a Deputy Tahsildar in charge. The area and population is as follows:

Divisions	Area	Population
Darsi	Sq. miles	
Podili	616	84,310
	564	68,390

This tract is described as consisting of low rocky hills, and stony plains, much covered with scrub jungle.

The villages are small, poor and more or less buried in prickly pear. Water is scarce and bad. There are but a few rain-fed tanks and none of these belong to Govt.

In this tract the prices of all food grains have been approaching scarcity rates since March last: 127 the last North-East Monsoon was 784

Seriously in

seriously deficient; and we know of old that this is a region in which the scarcity is wont to cause distress in an acute form.

The Southern Mahatta Railway

passes through both divisions, and we surmise that the railway may

have tended to raise prices towards the same level as in the adjoining famine-stricken District of Kurnool.

Prices are, however, still below the rates of 1892, when relief works were last opened in this tract, and the Acting

Collector believes that the outside number likely to come upon relief-works before November

next is 5,000.

In 1892 the maximum number was nearly 9,000 for a short period.

10. The provision of any rental and useful relief-works in proprietary tracts, such as these, is a matter of extreme difficulty; and it is easier to find fault with the want of provision than to suggest how the programme should be amplified.

In 1894 the Famine Programme included the construction of 1,232 miles of new roads; but these were struck out in subsequent years, as the District Board reported that it would be beyond its resources to maintain any part of these roads from local funds.

The roads would remain impassable from the first for want of masonry culverts, and would impede instead of facilitating traffic.

Office -

Large expenditure is proposed in clearing prickly pear from the village sites, but the groups of huts are so small and poor that the outlay is out of all proportion to the improvement, and the work is of a sort for which the rules of the Famine Code are not adapted.

It would seem not unreasonable to declare that, in times of want, the scanty population of such tracts as these should migrate to the nearest point where some suitable relief-work can be provided; but if this is held impolitic or impracticable we can see no alternative but to

employ

7P
employ relief-workers on breaking and stacking stores of wheat which are not required, and which will almost certainly never be used.

7. With these general remarks we proceed to give the result of our examination of the Famine Programme.

Famine Programme - The works entered in the Famine Programme are estimated to cost Rs. 23,93,761 which is sufficient to give employment to 31,91,68 persons or 21.7 per cent of the population of $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions for 3 months.

The estimates may be divided as follows:-

Sanctioned	Rs. 3,73,250
stated to be ready	" 5,86,727
Proposed	" 14,33,784

Since

Since the submission of the Programme to the Board of Revenue more estimates have been sanctioned and the amount of estimates laid before us was Rs. 390,960. These are ready for immediate execution and would give employment to 52,128 persons or 3.4 per cent of the population for three months. Deducting the amount of the estimates since sanctioned, the amount of the estimates stated to be ready is Rs. 569,017. Of these, estimates to the amount of Rs. 237,288 only were available for inspection, the remainder being in the Division or Taluk Offices. All the estimates stated to be ready should be submitted to the proper sanctioning authorities at once, so as to be available for

for immediate execution should necessity arise. This would bring the total work available to Rs. 390,960 + Rs. 569,017 or Rs. 959,977 sufficient for 8.5 per cent of the population for 3 months. This, we believe to be ample till November next. We do not think it necessary that estimates should be prepared for the proposed works amounting to Rs. 14,33,784 till the result of the South-West Monsoon is known. Should it fail they should at once be got ready and sanctioned in view of a possible failure of the North-East Monsoon.

8. The sanctioned estimates amounting to Rs. 390,960 are divided as follows:-

Irrigation, D.P.W.	Rs. 150,320
Irrigation, Revenue	14,410
Local Fund Road Works	212,250
Municipal Works	13,980

Total 390,960

Most of the estimates under Local
Fund Roads were prepared in 1892
and will probably have to be
revised, though they are accurate
enough to start work with. ^{9.} ~~As already~~ ^{9.}
states the parts of the District most
likely to be affected in the event
of a failure of the South-west
monsoon are the Podili and Darsi
Divisions. In the former Division
the amount of sanctioned estimates
is Rs. 42,000 which would give
employment to 8.18 per cent of
the population of 68,390 persons,
for three months. There are however
in addition works to the amount of
Rs. 53,528 mostly for removing bricky
near from village sites, and for im-
proving the drinking-water supply.
Each village ought to be visited
by a trustworthy official, and for such
of the works as are found to be useful,

and suitable for the employment
of the relief-workers, estimates
should be prepared and sanctioned
as soon as possible. There will
then be sufficient work for 18.4
per cent of the population for 3 months.
10. In the Darsi Division the amount
of sanctioned estimates is Rs. 12,000 which
only sufficient to give employment
to ~~2.29~~ ^{2.05} per cent of the population of
84,310 for three months. This is not
nearly sufficient and steps should
be at once taken to examine all
the proposed works entered in the
Programme (amounting to Rs. 63,300)
and to bring under sanction all
such as may be deemed suitable
for relief purposes. This would
perhaps make work available for
12 per cent of the population
which is still insufficient.

The Collector expresses the difficulty of finding useful work in these divisions and if such persons as require relief cannot be made to migrate to works in other parts of the District, and it becomes necessary to find more work than that already proposed, the only course open seems to be to employ relief labour on preparing road material at the quarries.

11. Of large works costing over 1 lakh of rupees on which labour could be massed, there is only one sanctioned viz supply channel from the Punair river above Sangam Atikat to Nkhon, Rs. 1,26,000. This would be a most useful relief work: there is also another work of considerable magnitude estimated to cost Rs. 70,000 viz "Improvements to the

1000
Maldevi drain;" the estimate for this work has been returned for the purpose of having the levels checked but the Executive Engineer is unable to do so at present owing to want of establishment, and we consider that in the event of the work being required for famine relief it might be sanctioned at once.

12. We are able to suggest only one other large work which in case of emergency might give employment to a large number of coolies, viz. clearing silt from the bed of the Nkhon Tank and connecting it, by a channel, with the ^{small} Sangam Atikat. If a special establishment were sanctioned, an estimate could be prepared in a very short time; and we incline

I think that expenditure on this
a famine work would be
at least as useful as on the
collection of road material in
excess of requirements.

Tools. The tools in store were
personally counted by the Executive
Engineer on the 7th instant and
were examined by us on 9th; the
numbers agree with those in the
printed list prepared in reference
to G.O. No. 3116 W dated 2^d December
1893, with the exception of 1067.
Crowbars, 1,000 of which have
been issued to Ganjam District
and 67 to Cuddapah. The number

Axes Pick	21	of each descrip- tion is shown in the margin.
Crowbars	3012	
Stone breaking hammers	4960	
Mamooties	3033	

The tools are all

serviceable, though 20 per cent

of the stone breaking hammers and
crowbars are old ^{and} good deal worn.

The number of tools in stock is far
below what can be regarded as a
safe provision.

Taking the population of the District
at $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions in round numbers we
are of opinion that the stock should
be brought up to three-fourths of that
which we recommended for Salem.

14. Establishment. Out of a sanctioned
strength of 14, 6 men have been transferred
on famine duty and 2 men are
warned to hold themselves in readiness.

In the event of an extension
of the existing famine area to
Kollon, the establishment difficulty
will arise in full force; but, as we
write, reports of heavy showers are
coming in from many parts of the
District, and there seems every

reason

reason to hope for a favourable
South-West Monsoon.

We have the honor to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants

J. W. Campbell Col., R.E.

Chief Engineer and Secretary
to Government, P.W.D.

H. M. Lintsbach

Third Member, Board of
Revenue.

C No. 5038/97.

From Report by Messrs Campbell & Winterbottom
on famine estimates, famine tools &c

Nellore District

Dated 14 June 1897.

The Hon. Mr. Collector
The Hon. Mr. B. L. N.
The Hon. Mr. Governor

FOR ORDERS.

Rainfall. The district rainfall
in 1896 was ^{only} slightly less than the
average of twenty years; but the
lateness of the N.E. monsoon and
the unevenness of its distribution
were unfavourable to cultivation
and the result was that the
yield of both wet & dry crops
was on the whole decidedly below
the average. It is reported that
there is at present no sign of
distress in any part of the district
and that should the ~~rain~~ S.W.
monsoon prove a failure, it will
not cause any wide-spread distress
and that the population as a whole
can subsist on its own resources
till the N.E. monsoon rains bring
in their crop. Messrs C. & W. ~~say~~
however ^{state} report that as they write
reports of heavy showers are coming
in from many parts of the district.

Done: 7.
11/5/97.

C23/6/97.

and there is every reason to hope that there will be an favorable S.W. monsoon.

2. Prices. (i) Rice is cheaper than the warning rate over most of the area depending on wet cultivation. It is dearer than scarcity rate in Darsi and touches it in Podili & Addanthi, three stations in the north of the district.

(ii) Ragi is dearer than warning rate everywhere & in Darsi, where it is the staple food, is only 1-30 seers per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate.

(iii) ^{& Cumbu are} Cholam is dearer than warning rate everywhere and in Podili than even the scarcity rate.

3. Exports & Imports - No special remarks. ~~18575~~ 18575 maunds of grain were exported by Railway since the beginning of March against 2031 maunds imported during the period. Particulars of traffic by Road & Canal are not on record.

4. Tracts likely to be affected by failure of the S.W. monsoon.

This is the northernmost part of the district, comprising

FOR ORDERS.

The "outside" number

25

the Darsi & Podili divisions of the Venkatagiri Zemin-dari. The extent involved is Sq. M. 1180 and population 1,52,700. The tract is a barren one, where water is scarce & bad & tanks are few, and where food-grains have been ~~approaching~~ approaching the scarcity rate since March last. The S. M. Ry passes this & Messrs C. & W. surmise that it may have tended to raise prices towards the same level as in the adjoining famine-stricken district of Karnool. Prices are however still below the rates of 1892 and the Colly believes that the number likely to come upon relief-works before November is 5000. Messrs C. & W. state that there is considerable difficulty in proposing ^{in this tract} ~~useful~~ measures for relief; roads would remain impassable from want of masonry culverts and would be a hindrance to traffic instead of facilitating it; but large expenditure in clearing ~~practically~~

North-west corner.

25

from Village-ribs can be ~~monies~~
incurred, but the groups of huts
are so small & poor that the out-
lay is out of all proportion to the
improvement, and the work is
of a sort for which the rules
of the Famine Code are not adap-
ed. The amount of sanctioned
estimates in ~~the reports~~ ^{Sodhi}, according
to DC famine programme is Rs 42,000
and is calculated to give em-
ployment to 8.18 p.c. of the
population for 3 months. Works
to the extent of an additional
Rs 53,528 in the shape of clearing
brick kiln-poor & improving the
drinking water supply may also
be given. In Darsi, the sanction-
ed estimate is only 13,000 Rs, or
^{barely} sufficient to give employ-
ment to 2.05 p.c. of the popu-
lation & Messrs C & W. suggest
that steps should at once be
taken to examine all the pro-
posed works (amounting to Rs 63,300)
and to bring under sanction
all such as may be deemed
suitable for relief purposes.
If these works are found insuf-
ficient to meet the migration of
the district, etc.

Darsi & Podile are very difficult to deal with from the points of view suggested by the Famine Code. The locality is remote & there is little in it to attract the attention of officials. Most of the people are the poorer of the poor, live from hand to mouth & have no resources whatever. It will be impossible to find work here to meet any long continued famine, & it will be absolutely necessary, in such a case, to make a large proportion of the people go elsewhere to find subsistence, but, of course, some work must be available near at hand. The Collector & Sub Collector must devote attention to the known difficulties of dealing with these tracts & give special attention to them. As Messrs W & C suggest the estimates for all works that are feasible should be got ready immediately & purchased so that they may be commenced at any moment.

Nature of estimate	Amount of estimate	P. in lacs.
Sanctioned	3.90	
(Included in the estimate of estimate sanctioned)		
* Ready	5.89	
Proposed	14.34	
	<u>24.93</u>	

the population to the nearest point where some suitable relief work can be provided, be deemed impolitic or impracticable, the only course open, in the opinion of Messrs. C. & W., is to employ Relief Labour in breaking and stacking material for road work, which are not required & which will almost certainly never be used.

5. Famine Programme.

The works entered in the programme are estimated to cost ~~25~~^{22.93} lakhs and comprises:—

Details.		P ₂ in lakhs.
{	Irrigation, D.P. &c.	1.50
	Irrigation (Rw)	-14
	Local Fund Road works.	2.12
	Municipal works.	~~15.12~~
		3.90

The sanctioned estimates will suffice to give work to 3.4 p.c of the population for 3 months and if the estimates stated to be

ready are sanctioned, then the total ^{sanctioned} estimate of Rs. 9.60 lakhs will give employment to 8.5 p.c. of the population for 3 months. The items in the proposed estimates need not be considered till the result of the S.W. monsoon is known, after which steps should be taken to get them ready in view of the failure of the N.E. monsoon.

6. Large works on which relief-workers may be engaged.

Of the sanctioned works ^{costing more than Rs. 1 lakh} there is only one, viz, the supply channel from the Permain river above the Sangam Anikhal to Nellore - estimate Rs. 1.26 lakhs. This it is stated would be a most useful relief work. The improvements to the Maldin drain is another large work costing Rs. 70 lakhs ^{for which} the estimates for which has been returned for the purpose of having the levels effected; and Messrs C & W. suggest that in the event of the work being required for famine relief of the

I know nothing about the work
The C.E. for Irrigation might
be asked about it

25
244

* I do not understand, how the work differs from the one previously described about constructing a supply channel for the Permain above the Sangam Anikhal

And there is always a great deal of work to be done in connection with the Buckingham canal

The recommendation about increasing the stock of tools is very important.

* Stone-Hammers	32,000	25
Manicottis	3,000	25
Pick-axes	2,500	25
Rammers	750	25
Crow-bars	6,750	25
Sledge Hammers	375	25
Hand-axes	375	25
Bill-hooks	375	25
Total 45,000		

relief, it might be sanctioned at once. ^A ~~the~~ ^{third large work} ~~other large works suggested~~, which in case of emergency might give employment to a large number of coolies is the clearing of silt from the Nellore tank and connecting it by a channel with the Sangam Anikhal. A small establishment will, it is stated be able to prepare the estimate in a very short time. The P.C.B. may also employ a large number.

7. Tools. The tools in ^{store} ~~store~~ correspond to the scale laid down in 1893, with the exception of crowbars of which a supply has been sent to Sangam & Cuddalore. All the tools are serviceable though some are old and a good deal worn. The scale of the tools recommended to be kept in stock for the district is three-fourths of that recommended for Salem (also for Coimbatore & N. Arcot) and are as ~~before~~ ^{in the margin} note on the margin.

Order (Press) N^o 527/3rd July 1897.

Recorded.

2. The Darsi and Podili divisions of the Venkatagiri zemindari are the portions of the district which furnish ground for immediate anxiety. These ^{backward tracts} are very ~~difficult to deal with~~ ^{under the system prescribed in the famine code} and as it is im-possible to find work there to meet any long continued famine it will be absolute-ly necessary, ^{in the event of a famine,} to induce, ~~by every means~~, a large proportion of the population go elsewhere to find sub-sistence; some work must, ^{however}, be ^{provided} ~~available~~ near at hand, and the Collector and the Sub-Collector must devote special attention to the known difficulty of deal-ing with these tracts and get estimates ready immediately for all possible ex-works.

3. The Chief Engineer for Irrigation will be requested to give his opinion re-garding the suitability of the proposed improvements to the Maldivi drain as a re-lief work, and to report what establishment would be necessary for preparing estimates for clearing silt from the Nellore tank. It is presumed that the project of connecting this tank with the Sangam anicut referred to in para 12 is the same as the first of the two works mentioned in para 11.

4. With reference to the recommend-ation in para 13 about tools, the Govt ex-pects the report called for in G.O. 2655 dated 25th May 1897.

*Printed & underlined only
first 20 1, 3 & 5.
RS
3-7-97*

The improvement of the Maldivi drain is in every way a most desirable work for famine relief in the dry season and to a limited extent at other times.

No estimate is required for clearing silt from the Nellore tank. It is impossible to find place for putting all the silt that could be cleared. ^{I do not see any work of this kind (being) undertaken as long as more useful work can be found.} It would cost Rs 200 to increase in this way the capacity of the tank by the amount of water for the irrigation of one acre.

29.6.97 W.H.

To the Famine Commr
to the Board of Rev. (Cott) 1
P.W. Dept. (W.S.) 2, 3
L & M. Dept. 4
The Collector Nellore 5

*W.H.
57/97
28/6/97
29/6/97*

7. Establishment. The P.W. staff of the district, has, as is the case with other non-affected districts been considerably weak-ened by the transfer of hands to the affected districts.

RS
19-6-97

19/6/97

Para. 3

The improvement of the Maldivi drain is the most suitable ~~for~~ ^{for} relief and steps will be taken in the P.W. & Co. have the necessary estimates for it prepared and sanctioned at a very early date. The clearing of silt from the Nellore Bank may also be undertaken as a relief work in case of extreme necessity. The Govt. ^{however} understands that the capacity of the Bank cannot be increased in this manner at a less cost than Rs 200 per acre of extra irrigation and that further there is no place wherein to deposit the silt accumulated; the work should not therefore be put in hand as long as more useful work ^{is} available.

27-97

137/187

Government (1897) of Madras. REVENUE.

Recd.

Regd.

1897.

Enclosures

Spare copies

G.O., No. 527, 3rd July 1897.

JULY.

Famine Relief Estimates, Famine Tools, &c.

Recording, with remarks, report from the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, and the Third Member of the Board of Revenue on — in the Nellore district; stating that the Collector and the Sub-Collector must devote special attention to the relief of the people in the Darsi and Podili divisions of the Venkatagiri zemindari; and that steps for the improvement of the Maldivi drain will be taken in the Public Works Department.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following letter from the Hon'ble Colonel D. McNEIL CAMPBELL, R.E., Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, and H. M. WINTERBOTHAM, Esq., Third Member, Board of Revenue, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Camp, Bezwada, 14th June 1897, letter E. :—

In continuation of our letter D, dated 10th June 1897, we have the honour to submit the following report regarding the district of Nellore:

1. *General condition of the district.*—Mr. Scott has been officiating as Collector since May 1, 1897. He was in the district for about a year ending December 1896, and off and on, has had three years' service in it.

Rainfall.—The north-east monsoon in 1896 was late and ill-distributed. Rain did not set in till the middle of November and a great part of the wet and dry lands were cultivated after that date. The district rainfall in 1896 for both monsoons was 35.53 inches (average of 22 stations) against a twenty years' average of 35.60 inches. In the south-west monsoon 15.74 inches fell against an average of 12.67 inches. But although the total rainfall was not deficient, the lateness of the north-east monsoon and the unevenness of distribution were unfavourable to cultivation, and it is believed that the yield of both wet and dry crops was, on the whole, decidedly below the average. The following is the rainfall from April 1 to May 31, 1897:—

Stations.	Rainfall from April 1 to May 31.	Average.	Remarks.
Addanki	2.16	Not available.	
Darsi	2.91	2.12 + 0.79	
Podili	2.85	Not available.	
Kanigiri	4.54	1.75 + 2.79	
Udayagiri	0.79	2.23 - 1.44	
Kanuparti	1.00	Not available.	
Ongole	1.85	1.91 - 0.06	
Pakala	1.04	1.38 - 0.34	
Kandukur	0.78	1.60 - 0.82	
Kavali	2.24	1.51 + 0.72	
Iskapalle	2.87	1.10 + 1.77	
Nellore	1.07	1.93 - 0.91	
Kristnapatam	1.87	1.66 + 0.01	
Kota	0.57		
Dugarazpatam	0.71	Not available.	
Sulurpet	0.78		
Toda	1.02	2.27 - 1.25	
Monapollem	0.68	1.58 - 0.90	
Atmakur	0.23	2.06 - 1.83	
Rapur	0.72	2.30 - 1.58	
Gudur	0.88	1.49 - 0.61	
Venkatagiri	0.08	2.35 - 2.27	
District average	1.43	1.83 - 0.40	

It will be seen that, on an average of 20 years, the pre-monsoon showers only give a district average of 1.83 inches, and that this has been largely exceeded in the northern parts of the district, where alone early crops are extensively cultivated.

Sowings in Nellore are usually very late. Up to about the middle of August, three-fourths of the "dry" cultivated area, and more than four-fifths of the "wet" remain unsown (*vide* Statistical Atlas, page 189).

So far there is nothing whatever to indicate that the ensuing south-west monsoon rains will be deficient, and in case this misfortune should occur, the local opinion is that it will not cause immediate widespread distress. If the next north-east monsoon rains prove favourable the population as a whole can subsist on its own resources till those rains bring in their crop. Possibly relief may be needed in certain parts in the north-west of the district, regarding which more will be said further on.

2. We are informed that there is at present no evidence of distress in any part of the district. The construction of the Madras-Bezwada State Railway can furnish employments for large numbers; and the officers in charge of the line inform us that they cannot obtain coolies in sufficient numbers for the earth-work in hand, even for the very liberal rates which are being offered.

3. *Prices.*—The following statement shows the average prices ruling in the district for the week ending June 5, 1897, as compared with the normal, warning and scarcity rates:—

Stations.	Prices in seers of 80 tolas of											
	Rice, second sort.				Ragi.				Cholam.			
	For week ending June 5.	Normal.	Warning rates.	Scarcity rates.	For week ending June 5.	Normal.	Warning rates.	Scarcity rates.	For week ending June 5.	Normal.	Warning rates.	Scarcity rates.
Nellore	10.6				15.4				14.4			
Allur	12.7				17.3							
Gudur	12.7											
Kota	10.6				17.3							
Venkatagiri	11.1				17.3				15.6			
Polur	11.7											
Rapur	11.3				20.4				14.4			
Atmakur	12.2				17.9				18.0			
Kavali	11.3	14.0	11.2	5.4	17.0	28.0	21.0	14.0	15.4	20.0	19.1	13.0
Udayagiri					17.4				14.6			
Kandukur	10.3								18.1			
Podili	8.5				17.0				12.7			
Darsi	7.5				15.3				14.5			
Ongole	9.4				18.7				15.3			
Addanki	8.9				16.6				16.2			
Kanigiri	9.4				17.0				14.5			
District average	10.6				17.3				15.3			

Rice.—Rice is cheaper than the warning rate over most of the area depending on wet cultivation. It is dearer than the scarcity rate in Darsi, and touches the scarcity rate in Podili and Addanki.

These three stations are in the extreme north of the district.

Ragi.—Ragi is dearer than the warning rate everywhere, and in Darsi, where it is the staple food, is only 1.30 seers per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate.

Cholam.—Cholam is dearer than the scarcity rate in Podili, and on an average of the district is only $2\frac{1}{4}$ seers per rupee cheaper than the scarcity rate.

Cumbu.—Cumbu is dearer than the scarcity rate in Podili, and is only slightly below that rate in other places where its price is quoted.

4. *Exports and Imports.*—We have been unable to gather any useful information under this head. There have been no exports by sea. By the South Indian Railway 18,515 maunds of grain have been exported since the middle of March, against 2,031 maunds imported. We have no record of the grain exports, if any, by the Buckingham Canal, nor by the Bezwada-Guntakal Line, nor by road. At the end of 1896, large quantities of grain are said to have left the district by road into Cuddapah, through the passes in the Eastern Ghauts.

5. The portions of the district which appear to us to furnish most ground for immediate anxiety are the Darsi and Podili divisions in the extreme north. These divisions form part of the Venkatagiri zemindari. Each has a Deputy Tahsildar in charge. The area and population is as follows:—

Divisions.	Area.	Population.
	SQ. MLS.	
Darsi	616	84,310
Podili	564	68,390

This tract is described as consisting of low rocky hills, and stony plains, much covered with scrub jungle.

The villages are small, poor and more or less buried in prickly-pear. Water is scarce and bad. There are but a few rain-fed tanks and none of these belong to Government.

In this tract the prices of all food-grains have been approaching scarcity rates since March last; the last north-east monsoon was seriously deficient; and we know of old that this is a region in which the scarcity is wont to cause distress in an acute form.

The Southern Mahratta Railway passes through both divisions, and we surmise that the railway may have tended to raise prices towards the same level as in the adjoining famine-stricken district of Kurnool.

Prices are, however, still below the rates of 1892, when relief-works were last opened in this tract, and the Acting Collector believes that the outside number likely to come upon relief-works before November next is 5,000.

In 1892 the maximum number was nearly 9,000 for a short period.

6. The provision of any suitable and useful relief-works in proprietary tracts, such as these, is a matter of extreme difficulty; and it is easier to find fault with the want of provision than to suggest how the programme should be amplified.

In 1894 the famine programme included the construction of 1,232 miles of new roads; but these were struck out in subsequent years, as the District Board reported that it would be beyond its resources to maintain any part of these roads from local funds.

The road would remain impassable from the first for want of masonry culverts and would impede instead of facilitating traffic.

Large expenditure is proposed in clearing prickly-pear from the village sites, but the groups of huts are so small and poor that the outlay is out of all proportion to the improvement, and the work is of a sort for which the rules of the Famine Code are not adapted.

It would seem not unreasonable to declare that, in times of want, the scanty population of such tracts as these should migrate to the nearest point where some suitable relief-work can be provided; but if this is held impolitic or impracticable, we can see no alternative but to employ relief-workers on breaking and stacking stores of metal which are not required, and which will almost certainly never be used.

7. With these general remarks we proceed to give the result of our examination of the famine programme.

Famine Programme.—The works entered in the famine programme are estimated to cost Rs. 23,93,761, which is sufficient to give employment to 319,168 persons or 21.7 per cent. of the population of 1½ millions for three months.

The estimates may be divided as follows:—

	Rs.
Sanctioned	3,73,250
Stated to be ready	5,86,727
Proposed	14,33,784

Since the submission of the programme to the Board of Revenue more estimates have been sanctioned and the amount of estimates laid before us was Rs. 3,90,960. These are ready for immediate execution and would give employment to 52,128 persons or 3.4 per cent. of the population for three months. Deducting the amount

of the estimates since sanctioned, the amount of the estimates stated to be ready is Rs. 5,69,017. Of these, estimates to the amount of Rs. 2,37,288 only were available for inspection, the remainder being in the division or taluk offices. All the estimates stated to be ready should be submitted to the proper sanctioning authorities at once, so as to be available for immediate execution should necessity arise: this would bring the total work available to Rs. 3,90,960 + Rs. 5,69,017 or Rs. 9,59,977 sufficient for 8.5 per cent. of the population for three months. This, we believe, to be ample till November next. We do not think it necessary that estimates should be prepared for the proposed works amounting to Rs. 14,33,784 till the result of the south-west monsoon is known. Should it fail, they should at once be got ready and sanctioned in view of a possible failure of the north-east monsoon.

8. The sanctioned estimates amounting to Rs. 3,90,960 are divided as follows:—

	Rs.
Irrigation, Public Works Department	1,50,320
Irrigation, Revenue	14,410
Local Fund Road works	2,12,250
Municipal works	13,980
Total	3,90,960

Most of the estimates under Local Fund roads were prepared in 1892 and will probably have to be revised, though they are accurate enough to start work with.

9. As already stated the parts of the district most likely to be affected in the event of a failure of the south-west monsoon are the Podili and Darsi divisions. In the former division, the amount of sanctioned estimates is Rs. 42,000 which would give employment to 8.18 per cent. of the population of 68,390 persons for three months. There are, however, in addition works to the amount of Rs. 53,528 mostly for removing prickly-pear from village-sites, and for improving the drinking-water supply.

Each village ought to be visited by a trustworthy officer, and for such of the works as are found to be useful, and suitable for the employment of relief-workers, estimates should be prepared and sanctioned as soon as possible. There will then be sufficient work for 18.6 per cent. of the population for three months.

10. In the Darsi division, the amount of sanctioned estimates is Rs. 13,000 or only sufficient to give employment to 2.05 per cent. of the population of 84,310 for three months. This is not nearly sufficient and steps should be at once taken to examine all the proposed works entered in the programme (amounting to Rs. 63,300) and to bring under sanction all such as may be deemed suitable for relief purposes. This would perhaps make work available for 12 per cent. of the population which is still insufficient.

The Collector represents the difficulty of finding useful work in these divisions, and if such persons as require relief cannot be made to migrate to works in other parts of the district, and it becomes necessary to find more work than that already proposed, the only course open seems to be to employ relief labour on preparing road material at the quarries.

11. Of large works costing over one lakh of rupees on which labour could be raised, there is only one sanctioned, viz., supply channel from the Pennair river above Sangam anikat to Nellore, Rs. 1,26,000. This would be a most useful relief work. There is also another work of considerable magnitude estimated to cost Rs. 70,000, viz., "improvements to the Maldivi drain"; the estimate for this work has been returned for the purpose of having the levels checked, but the Executive Engineer is unable to do so at present owing to want of establishment, and we consider that in the event of the work being required for famine relief it might be sanctioned at once.

12. We are able to suggest only one other large work which in case of emergency might give employment to a large number of coolies, viz., clearing silt from the bed of the Nellore tank and connecting it, by a channel, with the Sangam anikat. If a small special establishment were sanctioned, an estimate could be prepared in

a very short time; and we incline to think that expenditure on this as a famine work would be at least as useful as on the collection of road material in excess of requirements.

13. *Tools.*—The tools in store were personally counted by the Executive Engineer on the 7th instant and were examined by us on 9th; the numbers agree with those in the printed list prepared in reference to G.O., No. 3116-W., dated 2nd December 1893, with the exception of 1,067 crowbars, 1,000 of which have been issued to Ganjam district and 67 to Cuddapah. The number of each description is shown in the margin. The tools are all serviceable, though 20 per cent. of the stone-breaking hammers and crowbars are old and a good deal worn.

The number of tools in stock is far below what can be regarded as a safe provision.

Taking the population of the district at $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions in round numbers we are of opinion that the stock should be brought up to three-fourths of that which we recommended for Salem.

14. *Establishment.*—Out of a sanctioned strength of fourteen, six men have been transferred on famine duty and two men are warned to hold themselves in readiness. In the event of an extension of the existing famine area to Nellore, the establishment difficulty will arise in full force; but, as we write, reports of heavy showers are coming in from many parts of the district, and there seems every reason to hope for a favourable south-west monsoon.

ORDER—No. 527, Revenue, dated 3rd July 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Recorded.

2. The Darsi and Podili divisions of the Venkatagiri zemindari are the portions of the district which furnish ground for immediate anxiety. These backward tracts are very difficult to deal with under the system prescribed in the Famine Code, and as it is impossible to find work there to meet any long continued famine it will be absolutely necessary, in the event of a famine, to induce a large proportion of the population to go elsewhere to find subsistence; some work must, however, be provided near at hand, and the Collector and the Sub-Collector must devote special attention to the known difficulty of dealing with these tracts and get estimates ready immediately for all possible works.

3. The improvement of the Maldivi drain is a most suitable relief work and steps will be taken in the Public Works Department to have the necessary estimates for it prepared and sanctioned at a very early date. The clearing of silt from the Nellore tank may also be undertaken as a relief work in case of extreme necessity. The Government however understands that the capacity of the tank cannot be increased in this manner at a less cost than Rs. 200 per every acre of extra irrigation, and that further there is no place wherein to deposit the silt excavated; the work should not therefore be put in hand as long as more useful work is available.

4. With reference to the recommendation in paragraph 13 about tools, the Government awaits the report called for in G.O., No. 2655, dated 25th May 1897.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner.
„ the Public Works Department (W.).
„ the Public Works Department (I.).
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Collector of Nellore.

Ed. A. F. Eccleston.

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