

APPENDIX TO THE
REPORT
3
OF THE
INDIAN FAMINE COMMISSION, 1898,
BEING
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, ETC.

VOL. IV.--Central Provinces and Berar.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.



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QUESTIONS DRAWN UP BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF WITNESSES.

AS TO THE EXTENT AND SEVERITY OF THE DISTRESS.

1. In your ^{province}/_{district} what was the area affected and its population?

2. To what was the distress due? To local failure of the rains and of the harvests, or to abnormally high prices; or both?

3. (a) Describe the extent to which the rains and the harvests dependent on them failed, as compared with the normal state of things:

(b) Were prices of food-grains much higher than in other years? Were they as high as, or higher than, those experienced in past famines?

4. Up to the time of the failure of the rains, what had been the condition of the affected area? Had preceding seasons been favourable or the reverse?

5. Under normal circumstances may the population of the affected area be considered to enjoy a fair measure of material well-being? Is there any section of the population in it which from special causes is ordinarily in an unsatisfactory and precarious condition? Is it relatively large?

6. Is the agriculture of the affected area specially dependent on timely and sufficient rain, owing to any peculiarities of soil, crops, absence of facilities for irrigation, or the like?

7. To what extent has the population of the affected area reserves of money or food for its support in the event of failure of one or more consecutive harvests? What sections of the population have not such reserves, and what proportion of the total population of the affected area is so situated?

8. How does the late distress compare in respect of its extent and severity with that experienced in any other famine of recent years in the same locality?

9. Is there any reason to suppose that the extent of crop failure, or the degree of distress, or the absence of resources on the part of the people, was under-estimated or over-estimated on the present occasion at any point of time? If this was the case, did it affect the character or amount of relief provided?

AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY OF THE RELIEF MEASURES.

10. The Famine Commission of 1879 appear to have held the opinion that the number of persons on relief in the worst months of a famine ought not to exceed 15 per cent. of the population of the affected tract (paragraph 75). Does this standard coincide with your experience? Is it liable to be exceeded in particular tracts, while being a fairly correct standard of relief as applied to the whole of the affected area in a province, some portions of which would be less distressed than others?

11. How do the relief figures of your ^{province}/_{district} in the late famine compare with the standard of the Famine Commission? If there are cases in which the standard was largely departed from, can you account for them?

12. Having regard to what you consider to be a fair standard of relief under given conditions, do you think that in any part of your ^{province}/_{district} the proportion of the total population relieved was larger than was necessary to prevent loss of life or severe suffering? Were persons relieved who were not really in need of relief? And, if so, to what do you attribute this?

13. On the other hand, were there any cases in which a larger proportion of the population might have been relieved consistently with the object of saving life and preventing great suffering? If so, what was the reason? Was it due

to the attitude of the people themselves, or to defective or insufficient or ill-adapted relief arrangements?

14. If the relief arrangements were defective, insufficient or ill-adapted in any cases, was the cause of this circumstance avoidable or not?

15. Judged by the mortality of the famine period, has the relief given been successful in its object? If the mortality has been in excess of the normal, is there reason to think that this might have been prevented by more extensive or more timely relief measures?

16. Were any changes made at any point of time in the scheme of relief which was followed by a large decrease or increase in the numbers on relief? Do you consider that such increase or decrease was a direct or indirect result of such changes, and that they had the effect of excluding from relief persons really in need, or of bringing on to relief persons who did not really require relief?

17. Can any connection between such changes of system and the death-rate be traced?

18. The Famine Commission (paragraph 111) considered that the best safeguard against profusion on the one hand and insufficient assistance on the other was to be found in prescribing self-acting tests by which necessity may be proved. Do you consider that this principle has been observed to the fullest practicable extent in the late famine so far as your experience goes?

19. The chief test was held by the Commission (paragraph 111) to be the exaction of labour from all those from whom labour can reasonably be required, the labour being in each case commensurate with the labourer's powers, and the wage not being more than sufficient for the purpose of maintenance. In the late famine, were all persons who could do a reasonable amount of work required to work as a condition of receiving relief?

20. The phrase "who can do a reasonable amount of work" was intended by the Famine Commission (paragraphs 133 and 146) to include women and children, so far as they are healthy and capable of labour. Have these classes of persons been subjected to the labour test in your province?

21. The Famine Commission (paragraph 111) considered that, if this principle be observed, the numbers of destitute persons to whom the test of labour could not be applied would be "comparatively small". What has been your experience in the late famine as to the numbers of persons relieved, otherwise than through the operation of a labour test, in comparison with (1) the total population of the affected tract; (2) the numbers relieved on works. Have they been comparatively small? If not, what is the explanation?

22. With regard to the labour-test, have the conditions of the task and the wage been such as to constitute a stringent test of necessity? Has the task been a full one, considered with reference to the working capacity of each person? Has the wage been more than a bare subsistence wage, regard being had to the fact that it was open to the several members of a family to obtain separate relief.

23. The Famine Commission (paragraphs 128 and 146), while objecting to a "distance test," as a condition precedent to a person being received on a relief work, considered that one large work in each sub-division would prove sufficient and that most of the workers would find it necessary to reside on the work. Have the relief works been more numerous than this, and have the workers as a rule resided on them or not? Is residence upon a relief work disliked by the people, and does it constitute an effective and a fair test of necessity?

24. Can you give statistics showing the highest percentages on the total population of persons relieved on works

("dependants" being excluded) attained in the period or periods of maximum pressure?

25. How do these percentages compare with those attained in previous famines? If they are considerably higher, what is the explanation?

26. It has been alleged that in the present famine the people have resorted to relief works with greater eagerness and at an earlier stage of distress than in previous famines. Is this your experience, and if so, do you consider this due to the greater liberality of the terms of relief as compared with those in force in former famines, or can you assign any other reason?

27. Was "gratuitous relief" mainly given through the medium of poor-houses in which residence is a condition of relief, or in the form of cooked food in kitchens where residence was not a condition of relief, or by means of doles of grain or of money to persons in their homes?

28. The Famine Commission (paragraph 140) recognised that the "village system," or the grant of relief in the homes of the people, involved "the risk of a too free grant of relief". Do you consider that the risk was effectually prevented, and that gratuitous home relief was strictly confined to persons who were in real want and who belonged to the classes specified in your Code?

29. Has gratuitous home relief been given more largely and at an earlier date in this than in any former scarcity? If so, give the reason and say whether the change has been beneficial. Has it saved lives and kept villages and households together? On the other hand, has it in any way demoralised the people, by making them more ready to accept charity, or by weakening the moral obligation of mutual assistance?

30. State the gross cost of direct famine relief in your Province. State the number of persons relieved (in terms of units of one day's relief), and the cost of relief per unit. Compare the cost with the cost of relief in previous famines. Having regard to the comparative severity of the late distress, has relief been economically administered on the present occasion?

31. What indirect relief, in the form of loans or suspensions and remissions of land revenue, has been given? Can you say how the amount of such relief compares with similar relief given in former famines?

32. What is the net result of the famine, alleviated as it has been by relief measures, on the economic condition of the population of the ^{Province} _{district}, distinguishing between the land-owning class, the cultivating non-proprietary class the agricultural labourers, and the trading and artizan classes? Have these classes respectively been permanently injured, or will they speedily recover their former position?

33. Is there any important matter in which the scheme of relief-measures prescribed by the Code is seriously defective, or fails to meet the requirements of a particular class or particular classes of the community.

AS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS EXISTING FOR ASCERTAINING THE IMMINENCE OF SCARCITY.

34. Do you consider that the arrangements existing in your province for ascertaining and reporting failure of rainfall and crops are sufficient? Can you suggest any improvement on them?

35. If no revenue village organisation, such as patwaris, is maintained by the State in your province, how is information as to the cropped area and the condition of the crops ascertained?

36. Can the crop-returns be relied on as regards (1) the area and kinds of crops actually sown: (2) the extent to which sowings have failed: (3) the condition of the crops?

37. Are the returns obtained within a sufficiently early date after the crops have been sown to be a guide, when distress is apprehended, to the extent of the apprehended distress?

38. In the late famine were the relief arrangements of each district largely based on the agricultural information given by these returns?

AS TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF THE PROVINCIAL FAMINE CODE HAVE BEEN DEPARTED FROM OR HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE UNSUITABLE.

39. Please describe each different measure of State relief used during the late famine or scarcity in your (province, district or charge, according to the grade or status of the witness). What measures of private relief were also in operation?

40. What opportunities did you have of gaining a practical knowledge or experience of the working of these measures?

41. Which, if any, of these measures were not Code measures, *i.e.*, not authorised by the Local Famine Code as it stood before the famine began?

42. Were any of the Code measures not used in the late famine, or abandoned after trial?

43. In working Code measures of relief, what material departures were made in practice from the detailed provisions provided for such measures in the local Code? Please to answer this separately for each measure, and explain the reasons for the departures, and give your opinion as to their sufficiency.

44. State the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each measure you have seen used (A) primarily with regard to relief of distress and saving of human life, (B) secondarily, with regard to economy.

45. Can you suggest any improvement of the measures you have seen used, or any other measures which you think ought to have been used; or which ought to be tried in the case of future famines or scarcities?

46. State the particular combination of measures which you would recommend, with regard to both the considerations mentioned in the penultimate question for the tract liable to famine which you know best.

47. If you know any other tract or tracts liable to famine for which some other combination would be better, please describe those tracts, and the combinations you have in mind.

48. Which measures were most approved by the general opinion (A) of the different classes in distress; (B) of the intelligent natives not themselves in need of relief?

49. Have you any other criticisms to express on the measures of relief used in the recent famine; or any other recommendations or opinions to advance which you think may prove useful in the case of future famines?

AS TO RELIEF WORKS.

I.—Extent to which works of public utility may be available as relief works.

* 50. State the number of relief works charges under the Public Works Department and Civil officers, respectively, at the time when attendance on relief works was a maximum, under each of the following classes:—

- (a) Roads.
- (b) Village tanks.
- (c) Impounding reservoirs.
- (d) Canals.
- (e) Railways or tramroads.
- (f) Miscellaneous works.

* 51. What was the total length in miles of new roads constructed as famine relief works—

- (i) unmetalled,
- (ii) metalled.

52. What do you estimate as the average number of day units of labour that can be employed per mile of each class of road, the work in the case of (ii) including the collection and consolidation of metalling, and collection of a reserve supply for five years?

53. Do you think that all the roads constructed as relief works will be of permanent service to the community, and that they will be effectively maintained in future, or that they will probably be abandoned as soon as they fall into disrepair?

54. If the roads now constructed are all regularly maintained, do you consider that there will still be room for new

roads, should it be necessary a few years hence to open relief works; and if so, what length of new roads could be proposed in the districts principally affected in the late famine?

55. What is your opinion of the value of metal collection as a means of employment of relief labour?

56. Has metal been collected for existing or projected roads in the late famine in excess of probable requirements for the next five or ten years?

57. What is your opinion of the value of village tanks as a form of relief work—

(i) as a means of employment of relief labour;

(ii) as a means of permanently benefiting the villages in which they are constructed?

* 58. What is the total number of village tanks that have been excavated or deepened or enlarged as relief works under Public Works and Civil Agency, and the approximate number of day units employed?

59. What was the average number of workers for whom employment could daily be provided in a satisfactory way on an ordinary village tank? Can you make any suggestion for securing strict supervision over small and necessarily scattered tank works, or for preventing the whole population of the village from applying for work on the tank because it is at their doors?

60. Has the number of possible village tanks been exhausted by the recent famine works, or can we rely upon again being able to employ large numbers on such works on the recurrence of famine, say within 20 years?

61. In what districts have impounding reservoirs been constructed?

62. Can such works in these districts be regarded as in any way a protection against famine, or as increasing the powers of resistance against famine of the community for whose benefit they are constructed?

63. Is there a prospect that many impounding reservoirs could be advantageously constructed in these districts as relief works in future famines, if projects were deliberately investigated beforehand, and on the assumption that the cost of their construction must in any case be expended in some form or another, for the purpose of relieving distress?

* 64. What irrigation works, other than impounding reservoirs, have been constructed as relief works during the late famine, and what has been the approximate expenditure incurred on them as relief works?

* 65. What expenditure will be required on them, on sub-heads of construction (such as land, masonry works, etc.), that are of little use for purposes of relief works, before the works can be completed and made available for irrigation?

* 66. What is the area that these works may be expected to irrigate usually in ordinary years, and will the area that may be anticipated in years of drought be greater or less than may be expected in ordinary years?

If any such works were constructed in former famines, have the anticipations of their utility been fulfilled?

67. Do you know of any irrigation projects that can be usefully investigated with the object of providing employment for relief labour in future famines, and with the prospect that the cost of maintenance will be covered by an increase in the revenue that may be attributable, either directly or indirectly, to the works proposed?

* 68. Under what arrangements with the Railway administration interested have feeder railways or tramways been undertaken as relief works?

* 69. Generally, do you think it would be possible, after careful investigation by competent officers, to prepare a programme of large and useful public works that might be put in hand in future famines in preference to petty works, such as have been carried out during the recent famine, the conditions being—

(a) That much of the expenditure on such portions of the work as can be carried out by relief labour will have to be incurred in any case for the purpose of affording adequate relief to the distressed population, and that, if not incurred on the works proposed, will be incurred on others of a less useful character.

(b) That the cost of future maintenance of the work will either be covered by the gross revenue that may be expected from it, or, if the work will not produce revenue, will not be out of proportion to the public benefits anticipated from its construction, or beyond the means of the authority that will be responsible for such maintenance.

(c) That the completion of the work will not involve an expenditure on materials or other items out of all proportion to the expenditure to be incurred on items that can be carried out by relief works, except when the work, as a whole, is likely to prove remunerative, or when its execution sooner or later has been decided on, in the interests of the public, and without reference to the necessity for providing employment for relief labourers.

70. What are the provisions of the Provincial Famine Code regarding the maintenance of a programme in each district of famine relief works, with sanctioned plans and estimates? Has the Code been in practice observed, and were plans and estimates for the works entered in the district programmes ready prepared when distress appeared? If plans and estimates were not ready, what was the reason?

II.—As to large and small works, and the distance test.

71. What, in your opinion, is the greatest distance at which the distressed inhabitants of a village may be induced to attend relief works—

(a) when they return every night to their villages;

(b) when accommodation is provided on the relief works?

72. Do you think it would be practicable to withhold relief from all fairly able-bodied labourers who refused to attend relief works at the distances stated in reply to the last question?

73. Would you recommend conveying relief labourers long distances of over 100 miles by rail or steamer to any large public works on which there is a strong demand for labour, or in which their labour could be very usefully employed, in preference to employing them near to their own homes on petty works of little use to any one, and the construction of which would never be contemplated, except for the purpose of affording employment for distressed labourers?

74. In the late famine has residence on the works been the rule or the exception?

75. Has residence been made a definite condition of relief; or has it incidentally resulted from the small number of relief works open and the distance of them from the homes of the majority of the workers?

76. Are you in favour of making residence obligatory, or of indirectly inducing it by concentrating the works? Have you any evidence that when such a test is not enforced, the relief works attract many persons not actually requiring relief? Do you consider that a high task and low rate of wage are in themselves sufficient tests?

77. Is residence on the works so distasteful to the people that they will undergo extreme privation before they submit to it? Can you point to any instances in which this feeling has prevented relief offered under condition of residence from being effectual? Or any in which it has passed away or become less intense after a short trial?

77A. Within your own observation is the objection to go long distances for work or to reside on relief works so strong in particular localities or with particular tribes or castes as to prevent relief offered under such conditions from being effective?

78. If famine were widespread in the province, would the disposable establishments be large enough to supervise works so numerous and so arranged as to allow the majority of the workers to return daily to their homes?

79. To enable relief workers to come to a relief work daily from homes several miles distant and yet to earn the full famine wage, have reductions for "distance" been made in the task of such persons? Refer the Commission to the rules (if any) on the subject, and explain how they were

worked. Were such "reductions" allowed when hutting accommodation was provided on the works? What precautions were possible to prevent distance being overstated, especially in the case of those who did not return to their homes every night, but found shelter in adjacent villages?

80. What was the cost of hutting accommodation per worker?

81. Did the cold and discomfort attendant on residence on the works affect the health of the people?

82. Was it necessary to provide blankets and bedding for the people in consequence of residence being enforced?

83. Is the proportion of "dependants" relieved on the relief works less when works are small and numerous than when they are large and few? How do you account for this?

III.—Task-work and piece-work.

84. What was the proportion of labourers employed on task-work and piece-work, respectively, on the relief works under your charge, during the late famine?

85. Are you of opinion that piece-work is suitable for the employment of relief labourers in all cases?

86. If not in all cases, do you think that it is suitable in any? If so, specify the conditions under which you would generally recommend its introduction.

87. Do you consider the objections taken by the Famine Commission (paragraph 133) to piece-work as the predominant form of relief on works are overstated, or can be removed or lessened by administrative expedients? Or that they are on the whole less important than those which in your experience may be urged against task-work?

88. What arrangements would you recommend on works carried out under the piece-work system for labourers who might be too weak or incompetent to earn a subsistence wage at the rates offered, but are nevertheless not sufficiently helpless to be proper recipients of gratuitous relief, either on the works or in their own villages?

89. Would you propose any arrangements limiting the amounts to be earned on piece-work by expert and able-bodied labourers who might be able to execute far higher tasks than those assumed as the basis for the piece-work rates? If so, state what arrangements you would propose.

90. What is the size of the party to which you would make single payments for the work done, e.g., in the case of earthwork how many diggers, with their own complement of carriers, would you put into one gang, or what would be the average number of diggers and carriers together forming a gang, and to whom a single payment should be made?

91. Are you of opinion that if payment for work done is made to the head of such a gang, as is referred to in the previous question, the amount paid will fairly be distributed by him among the members of the gang? Have complaints of unequal or unfair distribution been common when this system has been adopted?

92. Can you give any idea of the reduction that may be made, both in numbers and cost of special establishment, by the substitution of piece-work for task-work?

93. Do you think there would generally be any difficulty in inducing the people to attend works on the piece-work system if works on the task-work system have not been previously opened?

94. What is in your opinion the most convenient system of classifying relief labourers when employed on task-work?

95. What wage would you propose for each class in terms of the grain staple in general consumption by the classes from which labourers are drawn, expressed in *chattaks*?

96. Is it necessary to maintain the alternative system given in the Famine Codes under which wages may be calculated according to the cost of the component parts of a day's ration?

96A. Would you propose a different task and wage for men and women within the same class?

97. How would you classify, task and remunerate children—

- (i) above 12 years of age,
- (ii) below - ditto.

98. What do you consider the minimum age at which children should be employed as workers?

99. What penalties would you propose for labourers who fail to perform the task set them, and how would you enforce them?

100. Are the present restrictions as to fining below the minimum wage necessary or expedient?

101. Have considerable bodies of relief workers been on the minimum or D wage for a continuous period? Has it resulted in enfeebled health?

102. Are you in favour of allowing all labourers to earn something in addition to the normal wage proposed in your reply to question 12 in the performance of a task in excess of the normal?

103. Are you in favour of paying a wage on Sundays, or one rest day in seven, and if allowed, what condition as to previous attendance would you propose as entitling to a rest day wage?

104. Do you consider it possible to introduce a standard task for all carriers as suggested in paragraphs 9 and 10 and in Appendix I of Mr. Higham's Report on the Management of Relief Works?

105. Do you think that the formula proposed in Appendix I of Mr. Higham's Report for determining a *reduced level*, in which allowance is made for the initial effort in each trip, for the vertical lift, and for the actual horizontal level is one that may be generally accepted for the purpose of a measure of the work done by carriers. If not, what modification of the formula would you propose?

106. Assuming that the reduced level is calculated as proposed in Mr. Higham's formula, or in any modified form of it that you may prefer, what is the *duty* that you would assign to an ordinary famine carrier, the *duty* being the number of cubic feet carried in a day multiplied by the reduced level in lineal feet, the value suggested by Mr. Higham being 10,000?

107. Do you think it possible to instruct the works establishment ordinarily available on relief works to arrange for the disposition of labour so as to secure, at all times, the best proportion of carriers to diggers, that may be possible under the circumstances; diggers being made to carry when the proportion of carriers is too low, and carriers being as far as possible employed in digging, even with reduced tasks, when carriers are in excess?

108. What is in your opinion the best unit for task work, that is, the size of the party to whom a given task is allotted and all the members of which should be liable to fine if the task is not performed?

109. Do you know anything of what is called the Black-wood system, and do you consider it preferable to ordinary task-work or to piece-work? If so, state your reasons?

110. Have you had any experience in what has been called (North-Western Provinces) the modified intermediate system, and if so, do you consider it preferable to task-work under the system laid down in North-Western Provinces Circular No. 18, dated 5th December 1896, or to piece-work in which payment is made to the head of a working party simply with reference to the quantity of work done, and without any reference whatever to the constitution of the party?

111. If you consider this system preferable to the others, (North-Western Provinces) would you advocate its adoption on all relief works, whatever the degree of the distress? If you consider it inapplicable in districts in which the distress is very acute, please state your reasons?

112. In what proportion have the adult male workers stood to the women and children? Has it varied greatly in different districts and in the same districts at different periods? Has the proportion differed in the same district and at the same point of time on task-work and piece-work?

113. Can you account for the great preponderance of women and children on the relief works when these exceeded two-thirds of the whole number? Did the adult males find private employment at wages in excess of the famine wage? If so, was it really necessary for the State to support their wives and children?

113A. When failure of crops has caused great rise of prices and expectation of famine in a district, but its circum-

* It is desirable that the witnesses should have read the recommendations contained in Mr. Higham's Final Note. Questions 84 to 93 are intended only for witnesses who have had experience of piece-work.

stances are such as not to justify the opening of relief works or even of test works, is it good policy to at once arrange for special employment of labour by the Public Works Department on ordinary terms? Would such action enable large numbers of labourers to retain longer their independence and their full working power, and in that way would it stave off the time when large numbers become so pinched that private charity and mutual help cease, and famine relief becomes a necessity?

113B. After a famine has been ended by good crops and a fall of prices, is it sometimes advisable to make provision for special employment of labour by the Public Works Department on ordinary terms in order to assist the very poor who have been left without resources, till a continuance of better times has completely restored them to their normal condition?

113C. Under existing rules of account would expenditure incurred in the cases and under the conditions described in the two preceding questions be met from the budget provision for ordinary public works, or would it be charged to Famine Relief?

113D. Have you any suggestions to make with a view to giving more precision to the summary of "Principles for regulating expenditure upon public works in time of famine", circulated to Local Governments by the Government of India's Famine Circular No. 16—104-1 F., dated 13th February 1897, or have you any criticisms to offer?

IV.—Relations of Civil and Public Works Officers in connection with the management of relief works.

114. Can you define the classes of relief works which may in your opinion be most conveniently carried out by Civil and Public Works officers respectively?

115. What powers of control, if any, do you think should be exercised by the Collector and Commissioner, respectively, in regard to the management of relief works which have been entrusted to the Public Works Department?

116. In the case of such works what are the matters for which, in your opinion, the Collector and the Executive Engineer, respectively, should be held responsible?

117. Do you think it desirable that any powers of control reserved to the Collector in the case of works carried out under the agency of the Public Works Department should be delegated to or exercised by his Assistants?

118. What class or classes of men do you think most suitable as officers in charge of a relief work camp, it being assumed that the services of all available Public Works officers and subordinates are required for setting out and supervising the work, conducting and checking the measurements, etc., and on the general duties of inspection and control?

119. Do you consider that the officers in charge should, in the case of works carried out by the agency of the Public Works Department, be placed under the direct orders of the officers of that Department?

120. Do you think that the officers of the Public Works Department who are responsible for the execution and inspection of relief works, can or should also undertake the control of all other matters within the relief camp, such as the payment of labour, the conservancy arrangements, the management of kitchens, bazar arrangements, etc.?

121. Do you think it necessary or desirable that either the officers in charge of relief camps, or the inspecting or controlling officers should be vested with magisterial powers for the maintenance of order in the camp, and if so, to what extent?

122. Was there any essential difference between the systems of management adopted on works under Public Works and those under Civil agency?

123. Do you consider that any of the works carried out by the Civil officers might, with advantage, have been transferred to the Public Works Department, or, *vice versa*, that any works were carried out by the Public Works Department that should have been left in the hands of the Civil authorities?

V.—Other details of management.

* 124. At what intervals do you consider that the payments of wages should be made—

- (i) to labourers on task-work,
- (ii) to those on piece-work?

* 125. In the case of task work, would you adopt the *pie* unit for payments, or pay to the nearest *pie*, as worked out by the ready reckoner?

* 126. Do you recommend that payments should be made by independent cashiers or by the gang muharrirs?

127. Has it been the practice in any works to require *chalan* from civil or village officers before admitting newcomers to the works, and if so, do you consider it a desirable practice? What was done in such cases with labourers presenting themselves without a *chalan*?

128. What is your experience in regard to members of aboriginal hill tribes?

(i) Has there been much difficulty in inducing them to attend the works?

(ii) When on the works, have they worked steadily, carried out their tasks and been amenable to discipline?

129. What are the maximum and minimum number of labourers that should form a single charge?

130. Are you in favour of kitchens in all cases in which relief is given to non-working children? If not, under what circumstances would you recommend cash doles?

* 131. What do you consider, as a result of your experience, may be considered a fair ratio to the value of the work done if performed by ordinary labour at the ordinary rates of—

(i) the payments actually made to the labourers employed, including the Sunday or rest day wage;

(ii) the total cost of the work, including relief to dependants and all incidental charges?

And support your opinion by statements showing the general results of all the operations under your charge?

* 132. Have you any suggestions to make on the question of famine accounts and returns?

VI.A.—Interference with the supply of labour to private employers.

133. Have you received any complaints from the agents of railway or other public companies, contractors, planters, or other private employers, that the opening of relief works affected the supply of labour which they were desirous of employing? If so, give particulars of the complaints.

134. Did you think there was any foundation for any of these complaints, and if so, was it possible to do anything to meet them?

135. Were the wages or the rates per unit of work done paid by such employers in excess of the normal wages and rates in ordinary seasons, or did they follow in any way the rise in the price of grain?

136. Do you think the rates paid by the employers were insufficient to enable an ordinary able-bodied family accustomed to labouring on works to earn a bare subsistence at the market rates for grain that obtained?

137. What arrangements, if any, would you propose in future famines to prevent relief works attracting labour that would otherwise go to private employers?

138. Can you say if relief operations were assisted in any way by the employment offered by private employers of all classes to able-bodied workers in their immediate neighbourhood other than professional earth-workers? Are you aware whether any works were undertaken by them with this purpose which, but for the existence of distress, would have been postponed to more later date, or whether any special efforts were made or facilities afforded with the object of assisting in the relief of distress?

139. Do you think it would be possible in future famines to utilize the agency of private employers in any way for the purpose of providing more extensive employment for the distressed?

VI.B.—Interference with the supply of labour to private employers.

140. Do you consider that the supply of labour to the works under your control was injuriously affected by the opening of relief works in the neighbourhood or at a distance?

NOTE.—Questions marked (*) may be answered by one officer specially deputed for the purpose, or, if the Local Government prefers, the information may be given in the final famine report of the Province, or in reply to the Government of India's Resolution (Revenue) No. 31, dated 25th October 1897, recorded on Mr. Higham's Report.

141. Did you find it necessary to revise your rates after relief works had been opened? If so, give particulars of the rates before and after the opening of relief works, and compare them with those that you have paid in ordinary seasons for the same class of work.

142. How far from your own works were the relief works which you consider interfered with the supply of labour?

143. Have you made any complaints on the subject to any of the officers connected with relief works, and if so, with what result?

144. Do you consider that the establishment of the relief works complained of was necessary as a means of preserving life, or that without them the people who attended them could have found sufficient employment in your own works and elsewhere to earn at least a bare subsistence for themselves and their dependants?

145. If you consider that Government relief of some kind was necessary, do you think it would have sufficed to give it in some other form than relief works, or to have opened relief works on a different principle from that actually followed? If so, state your views on these points.

146. Do you think that it would have been possible to employ local labour in distressed districts upon works under your control, and to have obviated the necessity for Government relief works in the neighbourhood, if Government could have made arrangements for the sale of grain to all labourers on your works at privileged rates considerably below the market rate?

147. Have you any other remarks on the subject of relief works that you would like to lay before the Commission?

AS TO GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

148. What percentage of the population of the affected area was placed on gratuitous relief at the period of maximum pressure?

149. Did the persons so relieved mainly belong to the agricultural classes resident in rural areas?

150. Do you consider that all the persons thus relieved were incapable of work on a relief work, and were without relatives bound, and able to support them, and had no resources of any kind?

151. In ordinary years how are such persons supported, and why should famine or scarcity throw them upon the State for support?

152. Were the persons who received gratuitous relief in their homes chiefly women and children? To what extent did the women belong to the *pardanashin* class?

153. Can any reliable estimate be formed for a given tract of the number of persons requiring gratuitous relief in their homes during an acute famine? Will the numbers vary with the severity and stage of the distress?

154. If the numbers of relief workers attending the relief works open in a district are small, may it be presumed that no great amount of gratuitous relief is required?

155. In some provinces it appears to have been the practice to require the incapable poor who had able-bodied relatives to accompany the latter to the relief works and there to remain as "dependants". Do you approve of this practice as a test of necessity?

156. Would you give gratuitous relief to an incapable person having an able-bodied relative bound to support him, who declines to go on to the relief work?

157. May it be presumed that gratuitous relief at home is very popular with the people, and that it is sought for by many who are not absolutely destitute or who are capable of labour on the relief works?

158. Was the circle and inspection organization at your disposal sufficiently strong, vigilant, and well-informed to restrict gratuitous relief to those who were incapable of work and would otherwise have starved? Describe the precautions taken.

159. Do you think that the successful administration of this form of relief requires a larger staff of supervising officers in the superior grades than any other kind of relief?

160. Does the acceptance of such relief place any social or caste stigma upon the recipient?

161. Does the knowledge that gratuitous relief is given by the State lead to the drying up of private and village

charity quicker than would otherwise be the case, and tend to make the people cast their customary obligations for the support of the poor of the locality upon the State?

162. Could some of the persons to whom gratuitous relief was given have been employed on light manual labour on relief works in or near their village?

163. Could such work have been provided by assisting the land-owners of the village to undertake the construction of tanks or roads or other village works?

164. Central kitchens, where cooked food is provided for all comers without any condition as to residence, have by some officers been preferred to gratuitous relief in the homes of the people, at least in the early stages of distress, or when distress is on the wane. What is your opinion on this point?

165. What are the social and caste feelings of the people as to receiving cooked food in State kitchens? Would the substitution of kitchens for gratuitous relief in the form of grain or money doles, practically exclude, on account of these sentiments, certain classes from relief who really need it?

166. Apart from the sentimental difficulty, would it be practicable to maintain a sufficient number of kitchens so as to be within the reach of all persons requiring gratuitous relief?

167. Was gratuitous relief given in the form of grain or of money? Which form do you prefer?

168. Was it given in the actual homes of the people, or were they required to repair periodically to a central place to receive it?

169. Within your observations was there much malversation or extortion on the part of patwaris or other subordinates employed in the distribution of gratuitous relief? Were there any instances in which persons paid money, or surrendered part of the dole, in order to be placed on the gratuitous list?

170. To what extent was the existing revenue or police organization by villages or larger groups utilized in ascertaining the persons requiring home relief and afterwards in distributing such relief, and how far had it to be superseded or supplemented?

171. To what extent was gratuitous relief administered through voluntary unofficial agency?

AS TO POOR-HOUSES.

172. Was the population of the poor-houses in your ^{Province} _{district} large at any point of time, or continuously so throughout the famine period?

173. From what classes of the community were the inmates chiefly drawn?

174. Did persons of the better castes or of respectable position object to resort to the poor-houses for relief? Would any degree of pressure have induced them to go there?

175. Compared with any experience you may have had in former famines, do you think the people generally showed decreased reluctance in the late famine to accept poor-house relief? If so, to what do you attribute this?

176. Was the mortality of the poor-house population exceptionally high throughout the period, or in any particular months? Can you account for this?

177. To what extent were the inmates of the poor-houses persons who had wandered from other districts within the province, or from other provinces, or from Native States?

178. From the physical condition of the persons entering the poor-houses and the distances they had come, what opinion did you form as to the severity of the famine, and the degree to which it had broken up households and caused wandering?

179. Were any measures taken to keep down the population of the poor-houses by drafting to works or to their homes all who could properly be thus disposed of? Was this systematically or spasmodically done?

180. Is the poor-house ration prescribed by the Famine Code sufficient? Had the dietary to be varied in the case of weak and sickly persons?

181. Are the rules and appendices of the Famine Code as to the management of poor-houses sufficiently explicit and detailed, and in all respects suitable? Can you point out any defects in them and suggest improvements?

182. Are legal powers required to enable relief officers or district authorities to send persons found begging and wanderers without any means of support and persons who, being able, refuse to work at the relief works, to poor-houses, and to detain them there? Was compulsion in this direction in practice used?

183. Were endeavours made to get work out of poor-house inmates, and with what degree of success?

184. Had any compulsion to be used to detain persons in the poor-houses? Were the inmates free to leave when they chose? Were the departures or escapes numerous?

AS TO RELIEF CENTRES.

185. Was it found necessary to open relief centres where doles of grain or money were distributed, as an alternative to giving similar relief in the homes of the people? Under what circumstances was this necessary?

186. When relief centres were thus established, was work exacted as a condition of relief from able-bodied persons? What kind of work was exacted?

187. Did the attendance at relief centres tend to become unmanageably large? Was the collection of large numbers of persons at such centres found to be productive of epidemic disease?

188. Does the expedient of relief centres as a substitute for village relief and an organized system of relief works in the early stages of distress commend itself to you?

189. In your experience would it have been better to have completed the village relief arrangements and to have opened regular relief works at an earlier date than was actually the case, in localities where relief centres were resorted to?

190. Are there any special tracts of country or any particular conditions of the population which make relief centres preferable to village inspection and village relief and to regular relief works?

191. Approximately what area was a relief centre expected to serve?

192. Was voluntary unofficial agency available and utilised to any large extent in the working of relief centres?

AS TO RELIEF KITCHENS.

193. What is your view of the functions of relief kitchens at which cooked food is supplied to destitute persons without the condition of residence?

194. Are they required chiefly in connection with relief works for the non-working children and other dependants of relief workers, or may they advantageously be established elsewhere for the relief generally of the incapable poor?

195. At the beginning or end of a famine to what extent is it expedient to substitute kitchens for gratuitous relief in the houses of the people?

196. Was cooked food given at the relief kitchens to all applicants, or only to those furnished with a kitchen ticket by an officer or village headman?

197. When such kitchens became numerous, was strict supervision over the persons in charge difficult to maintain? Was there waste or misapplication of food? What arrangements to prevent this were made? Were the kitchens ordinarily placed under the direct charge of officials, or of zamindars and other private persons?

198. Is it preferable to relieve the non-working children and other "dependants" of relief workers by means of cooked food, or by money doles to the parents? In your experience could parents to whom money was given for this object be trusted to expend it on their children?

AS TO LOANS TO CULTIVATORS AND LAND-HOLDERS.

199. To what extent have State advances been made to land-owners and cultivators for land improvements, for seed-grain and cattle, and for subsistence, in the late famine?

200. In the case of money advanced for land improvements, have the recipients, as a rule, spent it on the object for which it was lent, namely, on the employment of labour? Or have they otherwise utilised it?

201. Have the sums advanced for cattle and seed been of much benefit to the cultivating classes? Could more money have thus been advantageously spent?

202. What periods for recovery have been fixed for the different classes of advances?

203. Have advances been given to land-owners and cultivators for purchase of food, and under what restrictions as to the amount advanced and as to the time of the year in which the advance was made?

204. Do you approve of the principle of such subsistence advances, or do you think that cultivators requiring money for food should be required to submit to the self-acting test of accepting work on a relief work?

205. Is it more economical to aid by such advances cultivators who possess some property in land and cattle than to offer them work and wages?

206. Would not every cultivator want to borrow instead of going to the relief works, and would not this mean a very large outlay by the State on loans, and an increase of indebtedness among the cultivators?

AS TO SUSPENSIONS AND REMISSIONS OF LAND-REVENUE.

207. To what extent has land-revenue been suspended or remitted in the parts of your ^{province}/_{district} affected by the late famine?

208. Have measures been taken to secure that the relief thus given reached the cultivating tenant? Does the law provide for this? If not, is legal provision desirable?

209. Has this form of relief been of much advantage to the land-owning and cultivating classes? To what extent has it kept them from the relief works, or tended to prevent them from falling into debt?

210. Do you think that the land-revenue which has been suspended and not remitted will be recovered without pressing severely on the land-holders, should seasons be good?

211. Will such recovery be spread over several seasons by means of instalments? Will the corresponding rent suspended be distributed in similar instalments?

212. Does suspended rent carry interest? If so, ought it to do so?

213. Has the Government power to direct suspension of rent on estates held free of land-revenue, when it directs suspensions of rent and revenue on revenue-paying estates? Is such power necessary?

214. In regard to suspension and remission of land-revenue in temporarily-settled tracts, do you think it might with advantage be made a general rule of practice that in regard to estates held by self-cultivating as distinct from rent-receiving owners, when the crop is reported to be, say, below a 4-anna one, and only sufficient to feed and clothe the owners and their dependants and cattle, the proper treatment is immediate remission, not suspension?

215. Can you form any idea to what extent the private indebtedness of the land-owning and cultivating classes has been increased through the famine? Do the stamp or registration receipts indicate increased borrowing and more transfers of land? Has the borrowing in many cases been on a scale which must involve ultimate ruin to the borrower?

AS TO THE USE MADE OF FORESTS.

216. What measures were taken to open State and private forests to the people for grazing, or for collection of grass or leaves, or of edible fruits, roots and grass seeds; and what was the effect of such measures?

217. Do you think that the forests might have been more fully made available for these purposes than was the case?

218. Were any departmental operations undertaken for collection and despatch of compressed grass to the distressed tracts, and with what result?

219. What kind of food do the people get out of the forests?

AS TO ORPHANS.

220. How should orphans who have been maintained by the State during famine be disposed of at the end of a famine?

221. In the case of orphans who, during the famine, have been temporarily made over by the relief officers to private orphanages and payment made by the State for their support, should the Government continue its aid to the private orphanages after the famine?

AS TO PRIVATE CHARITABLE RELIEF AS AUXILIARY TO STATE BELIEF.

222. Have you any suggestions to offer regarding the statement of the objects to which private subscriptions for relief of distress caused by famine may legitimately be applied as set forth in the *Gazette of India* of 9th January 1897.

223. Do you think any of these objects trench upon the field of Government relief operations?

224. In view of the fact that during the currency of a famine the Government makes itself responsible as far as may be practicable for the saving of life by all available means in its power, do you consider the statement of the second object satisfactory; if not, how should it be modified?

225. Do you think the second object could properly be restricted (a) to the giving of clothing and other extra comforts to the orphans, and (b) to meeting the cost of their education in some useful craft befitting their station in life and of their maintenance after the end of the famine?

226. Are any special rules or measures necessary to prevent overlapping of charitable and Government relief under Object III; if so, what would you suggest?

227. Do you consider the opening of grain shops, where wholesome food-grains would be sold at rates below the prevailing market rates, a legitimate method of giving relief to respectable persons with small fixed incomes who, though suffering great privations from abnormal rise in prices, would not accept purely gratuitous relief either from Government or from the Charity Fund?

228. Is the opening of these cheap grain shops likely to interfere with private trade, provided the benefit of them be extended only to a selected number of persons? Were such shops started in your district, and did they interfere with private trade?

229. Are you aware that the opening of these shops from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund operated to steady the market and to prevent fitful raising of rates?

230. To render the help effective, do you think that the relief to broken-down agriculturists should not be confined to the period when acute distress is subsiding, but that it should be given just before the commencement of the agricultural season, even though distress might then be at its height?

231. What class of agriculturists should generally be helped under Object IV?

232. Do you think the Charity Fund could be properly applied in relieving agriculturists who are in a position to get statutory loans (*takavi*) from the Government?

233. Do you think it could be usefully spent in supplementing *takavi* advances where they are not enough to meet all the agricultural requirements of the recipient, including the subsistence of himself and his family, during the interval between the sowing and the harvest?

234. Do you consider the operations of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund as supplementary to Government relief have served a useful purpose; if so, in what way?

235. Can you describe briefly the nature and the extent of the relief granted from the Charity Fund in your province?

236. Can you give the number of persons relieved under each object in your province?

237. What form of relief under Object I was the most popular and evoked the greatest gratitude?

238. What form of relief under Object III did the greatest amount of good at the smallest cost to the fund?

239. Do you think it was right to spend the bulk of the fund in helping broken-down agriculturists?

240. Do you think the expenditure of such a large portion of the fund under this head has, besides doing substantial good to the persons helped, resulted in great economic advantage to the country generally?

241. Can you state what is the approximate area sown with aid from the Charity Fund in your province?

AS TO EMIGRANTS AND WANDERERS.

242. What arrangements were made for the relief of starving wanderers? Were the numbers of such wanderers

so large as to attract attention? If so, to what causes was their presence due?

243. Would there have been so much wandering had more works been opened or village relief or relief centres more largely extended? Is it possible by any relief methods to prevent jungle people, or people with whom it is a custom to migrate at certain seasons of the year, from wandering?

244. Was the death-rate of the ^{province}/_{district} sensibly affected by deaths among wanderers in poor-houses or on relief-works?

245. Were the wanderers persons ordinarily residing within your ^{province}/_{district}, or were they from others ^{provinces}/_{districts} or from Native States? If from other ^{provinces}/_{districts} or from Native States, why were they attracted to your ^{province}/_{district}?

246. Was any difference made in the treatment of wanderers from your own ^{province}/_{district} and those coming from other ^{provinces}/_{districts} or from Native States?

247. How do you think wanderers or emigrants from other ^{provinces}/_{districts} or from Native States should be dealt with?

AS TO THE MORTALITY DURING THE FAMINE PERIOD.

248. What was the ratio of deaths per thousand of population in the famine area of your ^{province}/_{district} for the five-year period 1891-95 preceding the famine? What was this ratio during 1896 and 1897?

249. How far has the higher ratio in the latter two years been due directly to scarcity of food or to the indirect effects of such scarcity?

250. If, in spite of the privations consequent on scarcity of food, there has been little or no increase in the ratio of mortality, do you attribute this result entirely to the success with which the distress has been met by relief measures?

251. In dry years, unaccompanied by scarcity, the health of the people, it is believed, is ordinarily very good and the mortality abnormally low? The year 1896 was an exceptionally dry year, and as a consequence the mortality would presumably, under ordinary circumstances, have been below the average; would it not seem reasonable to attribute to causes connected with scarcity not only all mortality in excess of the normal death-rate, but also the difference between the abnormally low death-rate of a year of light scanty rainfall and the normal death-rate of years of ordinary rainfall? Would not the compensating influence on the public health resulting from exceptional dryness of season tend to mask the full effects of scarcity of food?

252. On the other hand, an abnormally dry season often results in a short supply of potable water as well as to a concentration of impurities in such supply; do you attribute any part of the excessive mortality during the period of famine to this cause of unhealthiness? Do you think that cholera may have been originated or intensified by this cause?

253. Prevalence of bowel-complaints, dysentery and diarrhoea in communities leads to a suspicion that the food-supply is insufficient, or unwholesome or badly cooked. Did these diseases cause a high mortality in the famine area of your ^{province}/_{district}, and could their prevalence be ascribed to an insufficient or unwholesome dietary?

254. Do you consider the diet supplied to the different classes of relief-workers, to the poor-house inmates and to those fed at the kitchens, to have been sufficient to maintain the recipients in health? Would you, as a result of your own observations, suggest any alteration in the scale of diet laid down in the Famine Code?

255. Can you state the number of deaths which were directly due to starvation in your ^{province}/_{district} during the famine? Also the number of those who died indirectly from privation? Was the mortality greater amongst women than amongst men, and amongst children and the aged than amongst adults? Did parents frequently, under stress of want, neglect or abandon their children?

256. Of the deaths due to starvation, how many can you enumerate which could have been prevented by the timely

intervention of the State? Explain, if you can, how in these cases the relief measures adopted by the State failed in saving life?

257. Were, in your opinion, the measures of State relief defective either in principle or in their working? Do you think the mortality amongst the people in receipt of State aid was to any extent due to insanitary conditions prevailing in the relief camps, poor-houses, and food kitchens, and can you make any proposals with the object of securing improved sanitary conditions in future famines? Was every practicable precaution taken to provide and protect against contamination pure water-supplies for relief-camps and poor-houses?

258. Was the staff of Medical Officers and Hospital Subordinates sufficient during the famine, and were they provided with an adequate supply of medicines and medical comforts for the use of the sick?

AS TO THE PRESSURE OF POPULATION.

259. Has the population of your ^{province} _{district} increased since the taking of the census of 1871? If so, will you state what this increase has been from 1871 up to the end of 1896, this latter being probably the latest year for which the complete figures are available?

260. Is there any evidence of a continuous increase in the birth-rate or decrease in the death-rate?

261. What has the average increase of population been per cent. per annum for each year included in the period mentioned?

262. Do you attribute this increase solely to the natural and unrestrained fecundity of the people, or are there other, and if so what, additional causes?

263. What effect on the growth of population in India would you assign to the enduring peace maintained within our borders, to the suppression of infanticide and widow-burning, to sanitary works and improvements, to the extension of vaccination, and to the strenuous endeavour to prevent the loss of a single life in periodically recurring famines?

264. Has the area under food-grains in your ^{province} _{district} increased *pari passu* with the increase of population? Or has the food-producing capacity of the ^{province} _{district} been increased by irrigation and improved methods of cultivation at a rate sufficient to meet the wants of the increasing population?

265. What importance do you assign to this growth of population in bringing about in ordinary years an increase in the price of food, and so rendering existence more difficult and precarious?

266. Have the wages of the labouring classes increased as rapidly as the prices of their food-stuffs?

267. Are increase of population and higher prices, unaccompanied by a corresponding rise in the wages of the working classes, indications of diminished stocks of food in the country? Would scarcity be likely to intensify more rapidly into actual famine under conditions of dearer food and a greater number of people earning low wages?

268. The immediate effects of irrigation works and improved methods of cultivation being assumed to increase the production of food for man and beast, what, in your opinion, would their more remote effects be? Would they, in a population of great fecundity and exercising no restraint on such fecundity, tend to cause the people again to multiply up to the limit beyond which the soil could not further support them?

269. How would you propose to obviate this tendency of the growth of population to press close upon the amount of food available for its support?

270. In England we know that the same problem has been solved by emigration to lands in need of population. Could the same solution be applied to India?

271. In England, unrestrained fecundity is confined mainly to the lower and more ignorant classes. The educated classes, with certain exceptions, exercise control and foresight with regard to the number of children they bring into the world. Is education, within a measurable period of time, likely to pervade the millions of India to such an extent as to lead them to practise similar control and prevision?

272. Irrigation, we assume, increases the productiveness of the soil; it is also acknowledged to be concerned in the generation of malaria in many extensive tracts of the country. Malaria, we have proof, lessens the fecundity of the people. Do these facts suggest to you the involuntary establishment of an equilibrium between the population and the food production of irrigated tracts? Would such equilibrium, brought about in the way which these facts suggest, be a result to be desired?

AS TO THE ORDINARY FOOD OF THE PEOPLE.

273. In the tracts liable to famine in your ^{province} _{district}, which are the food-grains ordinarily used in their homes by well-to-do labourers and artisans? Please answer separately, if necessary, for town and country and for winter and summer.

274. How many meals do they eat in the day, and of what eatables and drinkables does each meal ordinarily consist?

275. If any of the ordinary food-grains happen to be unprocurable, what other grains do they sometimes substitute?

276. Of these occasional substitutes, which do the people consider most and which least palatable and digestible?

277. What do they say in objection to other grains which might probably be substituted, but which they practically never use?

278. What food-grains were used in poor-houses and kitchens, and at relief works under your observation during the recent famine?

279. How many meals a day did the people get in poor-houses and kitchens, and of what eatables and drinkables did each meal consist?

280. What sort of complaints were made as to the kind of food or plan of meals?

281. How does the diet given at famine relief poor houses and kitchens compare with the authorized scale of prison diet?

AS TO FOOD-STOCK AND PRICES

282. Was the great rise in prices of the common food-grains, which occurred in September to November 1896, and was more or less maintained for the next twelve months, in your opinion a reasonable rise? That is to say, was it fairly proportionate to the failure of harvests, lowness of local stocks, and cost of replenishing them? If you think the rise was more than reasonable, to what do you attribute it?

282A. In market towns which came under your observation, was it possible to identify the persons who fixed the bazaar or current rates of food-grains declared from time to time? How far were these current rates strictly followed by the local retail traders?

283. Do you think that the depreciation of the rupee in relation to gold which has been going on has any effect in the direction of making prices of food-grains jump up quicker and higher than formerly when crop failures occur? Has there been a permanent rise in the average price of food-grains in India within the last twenty years? Has the rise been greater in respect of some kinds of grain than of others?

283A. What was the difference in prices prevailing in the distressed area under your observation, and in prices in neighbouring districts where the crops had not failed to such an extent as to make relief necessary? Did the difference appear natural and reasonable in degree?

284. What material fluctuations of prices of grain occurred in the 12 months after 1st November 1896 in the distressed area under your observation? To what did they seem due, and was the trade sensitive? That is, did grain flow in quickly and freely in response to each rise of price from accessible markets where prices were lower? If not, state what in your opinion were the reasons or obstacles which impeded the activity of trade?

285. In the distressed districts under your observation, could the towns-people and villagers, who had money but no private stocks of their own, at all times buy their customary food-grains and condiments at the rates quoted in the nearest grain marts, or had they sometimes to pay much higher?

286. Were the people in receipt of relief in the shape of cash at works or in the village, always able to buy grain at the rates supposed to be current ?

287. Were food-grains of the common kinds exported from distressed tracts under your observation while the high prices prevailed ? If so, was this due to still higher prices elsewhere, or to want of capital for large purchases in distressed tracts or some other reason ?

288. Were fortunes made in the grain trade during the high prices ? If so, by what classes and by what sort of trade or speculation ? Was it genuine buying to put on the market, or of the nature of time bargain or speculation for a rise ?

289. Were the grain pits or godowns of the grain dealers for the most part opened and largely depleted at the close of the distress, or were many unopened and most but little depleted ?

290. In distressed tracts under your observation had any of the cultivators and land-owners what may be considered surplus private stocks of food-grain ? If so, did they generally sell such surplus or hold up all they had from panic or other reasons ?

291. While the high prices prevailed, did those cultivators, who had grain to sell to dealers, get prices as proportionately higher than usual as those the grain-dealers were selling at ?

292. Were the wholesale dealings between grain-dealers at prices as near to retail prices as they usually are ?

293. To what extent has the habit of storing food-grains in pits or other receptacles diminished among the grain dealers, landholders and cultivators of the tracts producing large crops of the common grains ? What are the reasons for such diminution ?

294. In such tracts have the railways and roads extended into them had the effect of stimulating the export of the annual surplus production to sea-ports and to rich districts where more valuable crops are produced ? When crops fail and prices go up in such tracts, is private trade ready to import freely into them ?

295. To what extent were proprietors of land, State raiyats and under tenants among the classes which asked for and got relief ?

296. To what classes did the mass of persons relieved belong ?

297. To what was the inability of the distressed people to buy grain at the high prices principally due ? Did non-agricultural employment of labour fall off as much as agricultural employment ?

298. Did wages of any class of labourers, artisans, or servants go up in any degree in consequence of the rise of prices ? If not, why not ?

299. Has competition of foreign goods or of goods produced by Indian Mills seriously reduced the purchasing power of any class of artisans or labourers in the tracts under your observation ?

300. Can you compare recent with former famines, and say whether the different classes of people seemed this time to have more or less power of resisting destitution ?

301. Do you observe any change in their attitude of reluctance to go to poor-houses or to relief-works ?

302. Did they sell jewelry, brass pots, and cattle, as much as formerly ? Did fall in value of silver, jewelry make them reluctant to sell it ?

303. What action, if any, was taken by officers of Government in the affected area under your observation to encourage importation of food-grains, or otherwise stimulate the activity of private trade ? What was the result for good or bad of such action ?

303A. What action was taken, if any, in any locality under your observation to supplement or stimulate activity of local grain-dealers in importing food-grain ? What was the result ?

304. Suppose that instead of relying entirely upon the action of private trade and the Indian market, the Government had resolved to import grain from abroad to a notified amount and for a strictly limited purpose, that is, for use at a large number of its poor-houses, kitchens, and relief works : suppose also that Government so imported either directly or through contractors, and adopted all possible pre-

cautions against obstructing the movements of private trade : what effect in your opinion would such action have had (1) on the cost of relief to the State ; (2) on the prices of food-grains in the bazars or open markets ; (3) on the activity of private trade ?

305. In the districts under your observation had you ever good reason to believe in the existence of local rings of grain-dealers formed to keep up prices of food-grains above the rates naturally resulting from the law of supply and demand ? If so, how far did such rings succeed in their purpose, and for how long ?

If you think such rings can be successfully formed at the present day in India, can you suggest any legitimate method of breaking them, which would in your opinion have the desired effect, and be on the whole distinctly advantageous ?

REGARDING THE GRAIN TRADE.*

306. How far and in what ways was the export by sea of the various food-grains affected by the famine and scarcity ?

307. How far and in what ways was the export by sea of other commodities affected ?

308. How far and in what ways was the import by sea—(1) of food-grains, (2) of other commodities affected ?

309. Is there any evidence that a permanent rise in the price of food-grains in India has taken place of late years ?

310. If such a rise has occurred, do you think that it is in any way connected with the fall in the Indian exchange ?

311. Is the export of food-grains from India in a series of years on such a scale as to materially affect the ability of the country to feed the population, or to materially reduce the reserve stocks held at a particular point of time in the country ?

312. In ordinary years is the import of food-grains by sea, for consumption in the port-town and for distribution into the interior, large ?

313. Is this trade in the hands of European or native firms ?

314. What grains are chiefly imported and from what foreign ports ?

315. When prices of food-grains rose rapidly at the end of 1896, were the stocks of rice and other food-grains large in the port ?

316. So far as the information went, were food stocks large in the interior of the country, or in any particular province ? What was the general impression as to the extent to which these stocks would prove sufficient for the food-requirements of the country without importation from abroad, and would be placed on the market, or held up ?

317. Did the high prices reached at the end of 1896 lead to much speculative dealings in grain ?

318. Were these high prices maintained ? Were they followed by an active import of grain from foreign ports ?

319. Did the price of rice in Burma and of wheat and maize in Europe and America rise in consequence of apprehension of diminished food exports from, or of an anticipated demand on account of, India ?

320. Were shipments of grain made from American or European ports to India ? If they were only on small scale, what was the cause ?

321. Was there a sufficient margin at the end of 1896 between the prices of wheat or maize in India and the prices of these grains in Europe and America to make import into India profitable ?

322. If such a margin existed, but grain was not imported, what were the obstacles in the way of the establishment of the trade ?

323. In ordinary years what quantity of rice does Burma export to India and other countries ? Please give figures showing the distribution.

324. From November 1896 to October 1897 what quantity of Burma rice was imported into this port ?

325. Were these imports mainly for despatch to the interior ?

326. Were the firms on whose account these Burma imports were made chiefly European or native firms ?

327. Were these imports made on the order of up-country grain-dealers for Burma rice, or by Calcutta firms at their

* NOTE.—These questions are intended for witnesses put forward by the Chambers of Commerce, and for experts specially invited by the Commission to give evidence.

own risk in anticipation of the demand of up-country dealers?

328. Was any difficulty at first experienced in getting up-country grain-dealers to take Burma rice, and did stocks in consequence tend to accumulate and the price to fall in the port.

329. Was there always a profitable margin between rice prices in Burma and here to admit of continuous import here?

330. It has been stated that in the event of India requiring large imports of grain from America or Europe, European firms at the ports would find more difficulty in engaging in such import trade than in the case of the grain-export trade; that is to say, the reversal of the ordinary process of trade would be accompanied by special risks and difficulties. Is this so?

331. The largest export houses have, it is believed, many up-country agents in the interior who place contracts for purchase of grain for export with native grain-dealers. In the event of India requiring to import grain, could not contracts for sales of grain be placed with up-country dealers by the same agency?

332. Would the ordinary course of trade be for the European importing house to deal with the native firms in the port, and for those firms to place the grain in the up-country markets? Would the European houses import at their own risk, or only in fulfilment of contracts with native firms?

333. Within how many days could 20,000 or 30,000 tons of wheat or maize be landed in India from Europe or America after a contract had been placed in this port?

334. In that interval prices in India might have so fallen as to prevent the importer from making the profit he had anticipated?

335. Is this contingency one of the causes which might prevent grain from being imported from distant countries to India, in spite of prices being so high for the time being in India as to hold out expectations of considerable profit?

336. Might there be a serious panic in the Indian grain markets, resulting in dealers refusing to sell or extremely high prices being asked, without its leading to imports from abroad being arranged for?

337. Do you think that the offer of a bounty on each ton imported, or the direct purchase by Government of grain for feeding the poor on relief works, would have eased the market? To what extent would any such measure have discouraged private trade?

338. What would have been the effect in the grain markets of foreign countries of intelligence that the Indian Government was purchasing, or encouraging the importation of grain? Was the want of activity in the grain import trade from America or Europe in any way due to the dearness of money in India in the winter of 1896-97, and to difficulty in obtaining accommodation? If so, could Government with advantage have stimulated import by loans or contracts?

339. The relief workers were paid a cash wage sufficient to enable them to buy a stated quantity of food, the wage varying week by week with the local grain-prices. If Indian food-prices throughout the famine were lower than the price at which grain could be laid down in India from Europe or America, might not importation by Government of food for some of the relief works have made those particular relief operations costlier than they have actually been?

340. Would this disadvantage have been compensated by a lowering of prices in India, owing to which other relief works would have been less costly, and the public would have been enabled to buy food at lower rates?

341. If we may suppose that prices would have fallen in consequence of the Government undertaking to import from abroad to feed the relief workers, would this have caused less rice from Burma to have been imported?

342. What reductions were made in railway rates on grain from the sea-board to the interior, and had such reductions an effect on trade?

343. Can you think of any possible combination of circumstances under which it would be advisable for the Indian Government to import foreign grain itself for its relief purposes, or to stimulate such import by the trade by loans, contracts or bounties?

344. Was there ever a time during the recent famine when Government might, in your opinion, have tried such measures with advantage?

345. Can you conceive of any case in which prohibition of exports would in your opinion be of advantage?