

Financial (1896) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 424

Dated 27-5-97

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[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording Proceedings of the Revenue Department considering it necessary to draw prominent attention to the provisions of the Famine Code relating to the duties and responsibilities of the officers that are being deputed to Famine duty, and to lay down some principles for the guidance of the Famine Commissioner and the Collectors in their selection, in view of a possible failure of the next south-west monsoon and the deepening of distress.

Sent 31/5/97.

BACK PAPERS.

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FURTHER PAPERS.

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Financial 1610 Government {1897} of Madras. REVENUE.

Recd. 25th May } 1897.
 Regd. 25th May }

Enclosures -
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G.O., No. 316, 11th May 1897.

MAY.

CS
 Order W. 4248 27th May 97
 Record

Ans 25/5/97. 18 27/5/97
 Be Rd S. C. to Famine file

Famine.

Considering it necessary to draw prominent attention to the provisions of the Famine Code relating to the duties and responsibilities of the officers that are being deputed to — duty, and to lay down some principles for the guidance of the Famine Commissioner and the Collectors in their selection, in view of a possible failure of the next south-west monsoon and the deepening of distress.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

ORDER—No. 316, Revenue, dated 11th May 1897.

Miscellaneous.

In view of a possible failure of the next south-west monsoon rains and the deepening of distress which will ensue thereon, His Excellency the Governor in Council considers it necessary to draw prominent attention to the provisions of the Famine Code relating to the duties and responsibilities of the officers that are being deputed to famine duty, and to lay down some principles which should guide the famine Commissioner and the Collectors in their selection.

2. The Famine Code lays down the framework of what may be called the ordinary famine organization of the district. The principle is briefly to place a famine officer at the back of each regular officer; thus the Collector gets a Special Assistant (section 25), the Divisional officer a Special Divisional officer (section 26), the Tahsildar, a Special Tahsildar or a Deputy Tahsildar and so on. The territorial limits of the additional officers should correspond as much as possible in sphere and jurisdiction with those of the permanent officers whom they are to assist, in order that as distress deepens or decreases, the new men may be added or taken away without disturbance or confusion. The Code contemplates that the new officer should take up the routine work of the office, setting free the presumably more experienced permanent officer to take up the more arduous work of famine relief. As, however, a hard and fast rule of this kind is likely to cause inconvenience in cases in which the permanent officer is less fit for famine duty than the officer deputed to relieve him, Collectors are empowered to assign at their discretion either routine work or famine duty to the new officers.

3. The extraordinary officers of the Code are the Taluk Relief officer (section 53) and the Special Civil officer (section 55). They are to be appointed only in special cases: the Taluk Relief officer when the distress is severe and the ordinary famine organization is found insufficient, and the Special Civil officer when there is some large work on hand requiring the services of such officer, or when there are groups of works situated in such close proximity that they can be dealt with conveniently as a single large work.

4. The officers primarily responsible for famine relief under the Collectors are the Divisional officers. These must be able to control all subordinate officers in their division whether of the Revenue or the Public Works Department and it is of the greatest importance therefore that they should be carefully selected and that any, about whose powers of control, endurance, discretion or activity any doubt exists, should be relegated to divisions in regard to which no anxiety is felt. In every division where any grave cause for anxiety is present, the Divisional officer should be relieved of his ordinary work. The amount of relief to be given will, however, depend upon the degree of distress in the division. Sometimes it may be found sufficient to relieve the Divisional officers of two or more affected divisions of only a portion of their ordinary work by the appointment of a single additional officer as has recently been done in Anantapur, while in other cases it may be necessary that the Divisional officer should devote his whole time to the work of famine relief.

5. When, however, distress becomes acute in any division comprising a large area, Taluk Relief officers will be necessary in one or more taluks. The position of these

officers is subordinate to that of the Divisional officer but above that of the Tahsildar as regards all relief operations, and their duties are clearly defined in section 53 of the Code. The chief qualifications required are great activity and endurance, earnestness, perseverance and sympathy with the people, and should the supply of officers of this type run short, it will be necessary to indent on other departments of Government to meet the demand. Where Taluk Relief officers are appointed, it will generally be unnecessary to entertain Special Civil officers to look after individual works as, except in very special cases, the former would be able to do all the relief work required within their charges.

6. Where distress is not acute, it should suffice to relieve the Tahsildar of his ordinary duties by the appointment of an extra Deputy Tahsildar, or Sub-Magistrate and make him discharge the duties of Taluk Relief officer as contemplated by the Code. Such relief may temporarily be necessary even in cases where Taluk Relief officers may be appointed, as the jamabandi is certain to be exceptionally heavy and the Tahsildar must be continually on the move to help the Taluk Relief officer to get village relief organized and the work of Circle Inspectors checked. The speedy disposal of loan applications is one of the primary duties of the Tahsildars in times of famine and the above relief may have to be continued, even after the jamabandi, in taluks where the loan operations are considerable, but not such as to necessitate the appointment of a special officer for the work.

7. For administering village relief it will be necessary to appoint Circle Relief Inspectors in varying numbers according to the acuteness of distress, and the areas and population to be dealt with. The appointment of such officers, wherever necessary, has already been sanctioned, but if distress should become severe, great difficulty will be experienced, especially in the Deccan districts, in finding a sufficient number of suitable men for the posts. Difficulty too will be experienced even at an earlier stage in regard to the provision of trustworthy paymasters and of Kitchen Superintendents. If poor houses become necessary, a higher class of men will be required for their superintendence. In regard to all these classes of officers the Board of Revenue will be empowered to draft in suitable men from the non-affected districts.

8. The Government has recently sanctioned the appointment of certain special officers for the supervision of weavers' relief and for loan operations; and more aid will be given to the Collectors of affected districts, as necessity arises, for administering these two branches of relief. The duties of these special officers have been defined in the orders sanctioning their appointment; their territorial jurisdiction will be determined from time to time by Collectors.

(True Extract.)

M. S. Napp.

for Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement,
Land Records and Agriculture). X
" the Public Works Department.
" the Financial Department.
" the Local and Municipal Department.
" the Accountant-General.

Exd. Shaik Karim..

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