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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2926	Press
323-326	Mis.
Dated 13-7-186.	

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th September 1866.*

No. 325. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the
Revenue Department:—

Issuing certain instructions to the Collector of
Bellary, relative to the procuring of Superinten-
dents for the works which have been sanctioned } (Here enter 7th September 1863, No. 2,410.)
for the employment of the people of his District.

No. 326. ORDER THEREON, 13th September 1866, No. 2,926.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 63.

Communicated to the Superintend-
ing Engineer of the 3rd Division for
information and guidance.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 3rd Division.

Ed. S. T. Augustin.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th September 1866.*

No. 325. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Revenue Department, dated 7th September 1866, No. 2,410:—

Read the following letters:—

Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Bellary, 30th August 1866, No. 64.

1. On the 23rd July 1866 I applied to Government for a grant of Rupees 50,000, which I considered would be required to find employment for the people, should the season unfortunately continue adverse. The distribution of this sum over the several Talooks of the District to prevent the movement of people seeking work, was considered in consultation with the Superintending Engineer, whose Range Officers were called on to send in propositions for the most suitable works for the occasion. The proposals having been sanctioned, the several amounts were lodged in the Talook Treasuries, and the Tahsildars desired at once to commence the works, with the aid of the village officers' superintendence; to each gang of coolies improvised Overseers, of course, had to be employed, and as the tools at the disposal of the Department Public Works were insufficient, a further stock was ordered to be bought. Periodical reports were called for as to progress, the number of persons seeking work, the amount expended, estimated work done; timely application to be made should more funds be required, and an estimate of the same in reference to the numbers to be employed.

Forwarded to Government on the 28th instant.

2. The letter* of Mr. Firth, Tahsildar of Bellary, is the first reply. I had also communicated to him the sanction for the works to be commenced for leading the channel into Bellary, so that there might be an immediate transfer of the people, without a break, from the works on which they are now employed to those sanctioned, both with reference to the completion of the expenditure sanctioned in the first instance, and with the view that the Public Works Department might be ready to undertake the supervision thereof hereafter. For, with all the willing help of the Tahsildar and his establishment, I could not but see that the superintendence of such masses of people was getting beyond his powers. So soon as the Rupees 6,000 apportioned to Bellary Talook is expended, I shall request the Assistant Engineer, Mr. W. Porter, to undertake the supervision, pending the return of the Superintending Engineer, who is now in the Raidrug Talook, and on consultation with whom, further plans will be considered for the employment of the larger numbers whom the increasing distress compels to seek work.

3. The deepening of the Bellary rock reservoir, otherwise called the fort ditch, was considered the most useful work at first; but it was found that more than a thousand persons could not be employed there without confusion and overcrowding. Consequently, another work had to be projected in the neighbourhood, and the trenching of the upper margin of the Bellary tank, and the banking up with the earth so excavated, so as both to confine the water-spread and to reclaim land for cultivation, at the same time that the confined water-spread would present a somewhat less surface for evaporation, was considered a suitable work, and had been contemplated by a former Engineer. This work was at once commenced, and the crowds, who could not get work at the fort ditch, were transferred to the

embankment. The progress of the work, however, was far below the amount required, if it were done according to the estimate; but payment by results or measurement could not, under the circumstances, be enforced, the rates paid were the minimum to obtain bare subsistence; wages were paid daily under the superintendence of the Tahsildar and the Cutcherry officials; the setting to work, and the payment of 4,000 persons each day is a great inroad on the time of the Revenue officials, who have also Magisterial duty, enhanced by the increase of crime, to attend to. Hence, although at the suggestion of the Superintending Engineer, that his staff were unable to supervise the work, I had given all the possible aid with my establishment, I consider that the supervision of further works will, in future, be best placed under the professional department, who have more experience, and considering the other duties devolving on the Revenue and Magisterial officers, comparatively more time.

4. I shall further report when I receive accounts from the other Talooks, what, if any, further funds are required to keep the able-bodied population from starvation; simple earth-work is of course the most suitable for vast bodies of unskilled workers; road-making, which involves metalling to render it permanent, is not quite so suitable, but if simple work is not available, it may be the next best; the sinking of wells when hard soil is encountered, is mostly a special avocation of the Wudder class.

5. The difficulty is of course in skilled superintendence to turn out work to the best advantage, and without an augmented and organized staff the same results cannot be looked for in proportion to the expenditure, which would naturally be required under other circumstances.

From the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Bellary, 28th August 1866.

1. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Proceedings of the Madras Government, No. 2,168, dated 21st August 1866, requesting me to send a full report on the cause of my having applied by telegram to Government for a supply of grain, I have the honor to state that the sudden rise of 12 per cent. in prices on the 18th instant, led me to doubt whether adequate provision was being made for the supply of this place, the operations of the Native grain merchants being chiefly directed to forestalling the local market, by buying up grains on its way to Bellary, and retailing it at higher prices. The state of the poor when the cheapest grain procurable sold at less than four Madras Measures for the Rupee, and when it was anticipated that the highest price had not been reached, led me to think that a supply of grain would be more valuable than money.

2. If we had a Railway to this place, coast communication, or more enterprising merchants, there would be less cause of anxiety. I marked that the garce of cholera selling at Rupees 257 at Nellore, was here Rupees 881, and this is the staple, best, and most nourishing food of the people. I thought it due to communicate as early as possible to Government the ruling prices here, and to stimulate, if in my power, early efforts on the part of capitalists to import grain, and I am glad to learn from Mr. Firth, the Tahsildar, that there has been a great despatch of carts towards the Cuddapah Railway to get grain. At our Famine

Relief Committee held on the 17th, when the General and others of his staff were present, we calculated the possibility of assistance by Government cattle in importing grain for the poor, which would have lessened the outlay for their support; but found that the want of forage would preclude this mode of importation, the fact being that forage would have had to have been stored on the line, and most probably got under some pressure. There remained then the alternative of asking Government to forward a supply, little though such could be, yet it would be an help. I do not think that the grain merchants have any objection to the poor being thus supplied, because their contributions for charitable relief being in grain, the more high-priced the grain gets, the more it costs them to give it, in the ratio promised. There is nearly one-tenth of the local population at this place employed in the work made for them, and to get a corresponding value for the outlay when so many as 5,000 persons of all ages have to be employed is not possible, with all the staff of improvised Overseers; these people are paid at wages which barely give them a full meal, but with all the care taken, the results are incommensurate with the outlay. Their wages cannot be diminished, and it would be harsh to turn them away, so that practically there is difficulty in getting fair results for the money so spent, still it is better to find some employment than to pauperise the people, and so none, who can work of any age, get gratuitous relief; as prices rise, these rates must be increased, so it becomes a question of comparative economy whether a slight assistance, in the supply of a tight market, would not produce as good effects as the greater local outlay. I admit that, with a more practical development of free trade, which implies competition, the argument is unsound, and it may also be said that such a proceeding, as assisting in the supply of grain, injures free trade, and prevents its development.

3. In considering, however, the state of the poor to be relieved, the question arose how to effect it in the most economical manner, and some Native capitalists proposed to be at the cost of carriage if they could secure themselves from loss, and this was the proposal which was submitted; it was not based on the principles of political economy, and was doubtless properly rejected.

4. I trust that the increased impetus given to the importation of grain may have the result of somewhat diminishing the pressure, which, as it increases, involves larger sections of the population.

5. I note that a work for the local supply of water at Bellary has been sanctioned, and this will be of great assistance at the present time in procuring suitable employment; simple earth-work excavation being more suited to unskilled labor than roads, which involve the breaking and carriage of metal if they are to be of any lasting use.

6. It is understood that the grain forwarded by Government is only to be given to the infirm poor, who are incapable of work.

P. S.—Since writing the above, I find that the number of people coming for employment is increasing in such a degree as to require a still greater outlay than has been provided for, and an application will have to be made for more funds, the economical supervision of the outlay for which must be undertaken

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th September 1866.*

by the Department Public Works. Copy of the Bellary Tahsildar's letter is annexed.

Miscellaneous.

1. The Collector may rely on receiving all the assistance that Government can afford him in the critical state of his District.

2. The Government quite understand the difficulty which Mr. Wedderburn experiences in procuring Superintendents for the works sanctioned for the employment of the people. They do not see, however, that the transfer of the charge of these works to the Department Public Works would remove the difficulty, as that Department would be equally pressed to find suitable Superintendents. The best plan will be for the Collector to discuss the subject with the Superintending Engineer, and arrange with him for the mutual co-operation of both Departments. In Bellary itself, the Government think it likely that the Military authorities may be able to lend the services of men competent to be employed as Overseers of labor, and the Collector should communicate with the General Commanding the Division on the subject. Men of the Company of Sappers and Miners at Bellary might also be obtained to act as Overseers.

3. The Collector will acquaint the Government more definitely with his requirements.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,
Secretary to Government.

No. 326. ORDER THEREON, 13th September 1866, No. 2,926.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 63.

Communicated to the Superintending Engineer of the 3rd Division for information and guidance.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 3rd Division.

Exd. T. O'Connor.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
7th September 1866.*

Read the following letters :—

No. 203. Read the following letter from the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Bellary, 30th August 1866, No. 64 :—

1. On the 23rd July 1866 I applied to Government for a grant of Rupees 50,000, which I considered would be required to find employment for the people, should the season unfortunately continue adverse. The distribution of this sum over the several Talooks of the District to prevent the movement of people seeking work, was considered in consultation with the Superintending Engineer, whose Range Officers were called on to send in propositions for the most suitable works for the occasion. The proposals having been sanctioned, the several amounts were lodged in the Talook Treasuries, and the Tahsildars desired at once to commence the works, with the aid of the village officers' superintendence; to each gang of coolies, improvised Overseers, of course, had to be employed, and as the tools at the disposal of the Department Public Works were insufficient, a further stock was ordered to be bought. Periodical reports were called for as to progress, the number of persons seeking work, the amount expended, estimated work done; timely application to be made should more funds be required, and an estimate of the same in reference to the numbers to be employed.

2. The letter* of Mr. Firth, Tahsildar of Bellary, is the first reply. I had also communicated to him the sanction for the works to be commenced for leading the channel into Bellary, so that there might be an immediate transfer of the people, without a break, from the works on which they are now employed to those sanctioned, both with reference to the completion of the expenditure sanctioned in the first instance, and with the view that the Public Works Department might be ready to undertake the supervision thereof hereafter. For, with all the willing help of the Tahsildar and his establishment, I could not but see that the superintendence of such masses of people was getting beyond his powers. So soon as the Rupees 6,000 apportioned to Bellary Talook is expended, I shall request the Assistant Engineer, Mr. W. Porter, to undertake the supervision, pending the return of the Superintending Engineer, who is now in the Raidrug Talook, and on consultation with whom, further plans will be considered for the employment of the larger numbers whom the increasing distress compels to seek work.

3. The deepening of the Bellary rock reservoir, otherwise called the fort ditch, was considered the most useful work at first; but it was found that more than a thousand persons could not be employed there without confusion and overcrowding. Consequently, another work had to be projected in the neighbourhood, and the trenching of the upper margin of the Bellary tank, and the banking up with the earth so excavated, so as both to confine the water-spread and to reclaim land for cultivation, at the same time that the confined water-spread would present a somewhat less surface for evaporation, was considered a suitable work, and had been contemplated by a former Engineer. This work was at once commenced, and the crowds who could not get work at the fort ditch were transferred to the embankment. The progress of the work, however, was far below the amount required, if it were done according to the estimate; but payment by results or

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4. I shall further report when I receive accounts from the other Talooks, what, if any, further funds are required to keep the able-bodied population from starvation; simple earth-work is of course the most suitable for vast bodies of unskilled workers; road-making, which involves metalling to render it permanent, is not quite so suitable, but if simple work is not available, it may be the next best; the sinking of wells when hard soil is encountered, is mostly a special avocation of the Wudder class.

5. The difficulty is of course in skilled superintendence to turn out work to the best advantage, and without an augmented and organized staff the same results cannot be looked for in proportion to the expenditure, which would naturally be required under other circumstances.

No. 204. From the Collector of Bellary, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated Bellary, 28th August 1866.

1. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Proceedings of the Madras Government, No. 2,153, dated 21st August 1866, requesting me to send a full report on the cause of my having applied by telegram to Government for a supply of grain, I have the honor to state that the sudden rise of 12 per cent. in prices on the 18th instant, led me to doubt whether adequate provision was being made for the supply of this place, the operations of the Native grain merchants being chiefly directed to forestalling the local market, by buying up grains on its way to Bellary, and retailing it at higher prices. The state of the poor when the cheapest grain procurable sold at less than four Madras Measures for the Rupee, and when it was anticipated that the highest price had not been reached, led me to think that a supply of grain would be more valuable than money.

2. If we had a railway to this place, coast communication, or more enterprising merchants, there would be less cause of anxiety. I marked that the garce of cholum selling at Rupees 257 at Nellore, was here Rupees 881, and this is the staple, best, and most nourishing food of the people. I thought it due to communicate as early as possible to Government the ruling prices here, and to stimulate, if in my power, early efforts on the part of capitalists to import grain, and I am glad to learn from Mr. Firth, the Tahsildar, that there has been a great despatch of carts towards the Cuddapah Railway to get grain. At our Famine Relief Committee held on the 17th, when the General and others of his staff were present, we calculated the possibility of assistance by Government cattle in

importing grain for the poor, which would have lessened the outlay for their support; but found that the want of forage would preclude this mode of importation, the fact being that forage would have had to have been stored on the line, and most probably got under some pressure. There remained then the alternative of asking Government to forward a supply, little though such could be, yet it would be a help. I do not think that the grain merchants have any objection to the poor being thus supplied, because their contributions for charitable relief being in grain, the more high-priced the grain gets, the more it costs them to give it, in the ratio promised. There is nearly one-tenth of the local population at this place employed in the work made for them, and to get a corresponding value for the outlay when so many as 5,000 persons of all ages have to be employed is not possible, with all the staff of improvised Overseers; these people are paid at wages which barely give them a full meal, but with all the care taken, the results are incommensurate with the outlay. Their wages cannot be diminished, and it would be harsh to turn them away, so that practically there is difficulty in getting fair results for the money so spent, still it is better to find some employment than to pauperise the people, and so none who can work of any age get gratuitous relief; as prices rise, these rates must be increased, so it becomes a question of comparative economy whether a slight assistance, in the supply of a tight market, would not produce as good effects as the greater local outlay. I admit that with a more practical development of free trade, which implies competition, the argument is unsound, and it may also be said that such a proceeding as assisting in the supply of grain injures free trade, and prevents its development.

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Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department.
7th September 1866.

No. 205. ORDER THEREON, 7th September 1866, No. 2,410.

Miscellaneous.

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3. The Collector will acquaint the Government more definitely with his requirements.

(True Extract.)

L. P. S.

Secretary to Government.

To the Collector of Bellary.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Public Works Department.
,, the Military Department.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

SENT BY RAIL
13th Sept 1866

Recd. 13th Sept 1866

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Secy of Govt for September
No 3431

Secy of the Madras Govt
in the Revenue Dept

27th 3 Sept 76
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No 2410

2410
Specifying certain in-
structions to the Col of Military
relative to the procuring of
cloths for the works which
have been sanctioned for the
employment of the people
of his District.

No 325-326

No 2926 - 12th Sept 76