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# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Public works* DEPARTMENT.

|                     |      |               |
|---------------------|------|---------------|
| G.O. No.<br>442,443 | 1329 | Press<br>Mis. |
| Dated               | 14 5 | 1872          |

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 442. Read the following letter from the Acting Superintending Engineer, 1st Division, to the Officiating Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Dowlaishweram, 27th April 1872, No. 379:—

I HAVE the honour to forward, for submission to the Government, copy of a letter No. 31, dated 21st April 1872, from the Executive Engineer in charge of No. 3 Range, Godavery District,

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| One copy of letter.            |  |
| One Pit Book (to be returned). |  |

bringing to notice the great inconvenience found in practice in carrying out the Order of Government, No. 2,198, dated the 28th August last, and I trust, under the circumstances represented by Mr. Walch, the Government will be pleased to allow us to continue the system which always prevailed here since the construction of the anicut works.

2. I know Mr. Walch has done his utmost to carry out the orders of Government with every care and attention, and his inspection notes show that all the works in his very extensive range are carefully and systematically examined and checked; but in dealing with the peculiar class of work-people who execute earthwork here, it is simply impossible for a Range Officer to pay them promptly and regularly as required by the orders of Government, and as these people are miserably poor, and live from hand to mouth, it is impossible for them to wait for payments for any time; to follow the Range Officer about to get cheques from him puts them to considerable expense, and retards the progress of the works by which both we and they lose; they are now clamouring for batta or an increase of rates to cover their expenses, and unless the Government are pleased to modify their orders, as now solicited, I am afraid we shall be obliged to give the increase, for with the large extent of cultivation always going on in this district, if these people are not kept contented, it is easy enough for them to go away and get employment elsewhere.

3. As far as I am able to judge the system affords no better check than we had before; it creates an enormous amount of office work, wastes most valuable time, and makes the work-people as discontented as they well can be, and renders it quite impossible for the most active Range Officer to carry out the wishes of Government in regard to the payment of the poorer class of work-people being prompt and with as little inconvenience as possible to them, whilst a feeling of distrust is made to prevail amongst the subordinates of the department, which is a very bad feature in any public service; and if a Supervisor or even an Overseer can be considered as fit to have charge of a range one day when he would be entrusted with all cash payments, it is difficult to see why he is not to be so employed because he happens to be a sub-division officer in an important range where his services are retained, simply for the purpose of carrying out a large system of works for the benefit of the country and the Government.

4. As regards the complaint made by Mr. Walch to the unreasonable increase of office work in the shape of returns, etc., etc., I know not how it can be checked. I see little or no good in it, and I know it was not necessary before; in fact every endeavour used to be made to reduce the Range Officer's office work, so as to let him have plenty of time for engineering duties and field inspections, for if these are not attended to, the best designed works and most elaborately prepared

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department.*  
14th May 1872.

estimates in such a country as this are useless, and waste of time and money must result from such proceedings, but there seems to be no help for it, and I am obliged to tell all Range Officers, for the complaints are universal, they must cope with it as well as they can though the works suffer by it.

From Mr. G. T. WALCH, Executive Engineer in charge of No. 3 Range, Godavery District, to the Superintending Engineer, 1st Division, dated Narsapur, 21st April 1872, No. 31.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your consideration the subject of payments to bantadars.

2. In most districts, earthwork is carried out by "daily" labour, or by contractors who undertake the whole or considerable portions of a work. In the former case, no matter how large the work may be, the Overseer or subordinate disbursing officer can pay for it as it is done; in the latter, the contractors are few and paid at considerable intervals. In this district, as you are aware, the earthwork has generally been done, and undoubtedly can be most expeditiously done, by what is known as the "bantadar" system. Gangs of men, generally tank-diggers, combine under leaders and do work pointed out to them at stipulated rates, but without any regular contract, which indeed they do not understand and would not enter into. The gangs vary much in size, from one family up to a dozen or more; they are generally sufficiently large to do upwards of Rupees 20 worth of work before wanting payment; they however want payments frequently and want them promptly. The system of payments which I found in force when I took charge was this: the Overseer measured up the finished off pits or taks of bantadars when they wanted payment, made a fair copy of the measurements (pit book), added money columns in which the value of work done by each bantadar was entered, and at once paid him, getting a receipt in the last column of the pit book.\* The men

\* Sample enclosed.

and on or near the work. This system worked excellently, and I continued it for some time, but had to abandon it, as G. O., No. 2,198, dated 28th August 1871, limited the sum in cash for work done to be paid by Overseers to Rupees 20. Now when bantadars' work amounts to above Rupees 20 in value, bills† have to be given to them, which they have to present to me for payment.

† Form I.

The range is a very large one; I have to be constantly on the move; the canals enable me to move rapidly, and the wretched bantadars have often to walk scores of miles and spend days in catching me going to a treasury, and returning to their work. The Overseer's office work is increased beyond all reasonable limits, for to each bantadar has to be given a bill in duplicate. My own office work and that of my establishment is much increased, for I have to draw large numbers of cheques,‡ which, under the old system, were not wanted; on each bill and duplicate a lengthy note has to be written; the pass book, treasury accounts, cash abstract book, etc., become extremely voluminous; the documents to be filed and to be transmitted to Madras are multiplied manifold; in short, the office work, always too great, has been increased dishearteningly. These disadvantages are not counterbalanced by advantages. Check on the works is not facilitated, for of course on a large work on which between his visits thousands of cubic yards are done by dozens of bantadars in hundreds of pits and taks; a Range Officer cannot check the measurements of each bantadar's work, merely that of the work as a whole to see that as much has been done as is paid for. The bantadars complain bitterly of the trouble they have to go to, and time they have to waste in getting payments now; and if the Overseers be not permitted to pay them as before, or at all events the limit be not raised to (say) Rupees 100, (so that few men may have to waste time and trouble, and those only for sums which seem more to warrant such waste,) I hold out no hope of being able to get on really quickly with the large quantities of earthwork to be done on "project works," local fund roads, etc., and I have every fear that the office work will fall into great arrears.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department.*  
14th May 1872.

No. 443. ORDER THEREON, 14th May 1872, No. 1,329.

ACCOUNT, No. 42.

THE Superintending Engineer of the 1st Division, referring to the Government Order of the 28th August 1871,

represents that great practical inconvenience is felt in restricting cash payments made by Overseers and subordinates of that class to petty contractors to sums not exceeding 20 Rupees, and in requiring Range Officers to make themselves all larger payments as directed in that order; and recommends that the system which prevailed previously to the passing of the order should be reverted to.

2. Lieutenant-Colonel Fischer bases his recommendation on a letter from the Executive Engineer of No. 3 Range, Godavery District, in which a description is given of the labour system there prevailing for the execution of earthwork, consisting in the employment of small gangs or even single families under a bantadar or ganger who receives payment at a piece-work rate. The Executive Engineer shows at some length the difficulty or even impossibility of the Range Officer making frequent or prompt payment to these men, to whom it appears bills are now given, which they have to carry to him over long distances, a matter to them of considerable hardship.

3. The order in question referred to ordinary petty contracts as the term is understood in the department, and was not intended to apply to such an arrangement as that described, which approximates much more closely to what is called the system of construction under departmental agency than to that of contract; in fact, labour for earthwork departmentally executed could hardly be managed economically in any other way on a large scale, and it is to be regretted that the Superintending Engineer did not make an earlier reference to Government on the subject, since he placed a construction on the terms of the order which gave it so unpractical a character.

4. Labourers employed on the so-called bantadar system must be considered as working under departmental agency, and payments may be made to the bantadars by the Overseers in charge on the spot, and recorded on nominal rolls specifying the quantity of work done, the rate and the amount paid to each head of a gang whose receipt should be obtained on the roll.

5. His Honour the Governor in Council sees however no reason whatever to modify the terms of the order under notice in its application to payments by Overseers for ordinary petty contract work.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,

Officiating Secretary to Government.

To the Acting Superintending Engineer, 1st Division, with one Enclosure.  
„ all other Superintending Engineers.  
„ Major R. B. Kennedy.  
„ the Controller of Public Works Accounts.

Ed. E. C. Shunker.

No 31

No 3 or Western Delta Range  
Godavari District  
Office Narsapur 21st April/12

From The Executive Engineer  
in Charge No 3 Range  
Godavari District

To The Superintending Engineer  
1st Division  
Dowlaisearund

I have the honor to submit for  
your consideration the subject of payments to  
Buntadars.

In most Districts, Earthwork is carried out  
by daily labor, or by Contractors who undertake  
the whole or considerable portions of a work. In  
the former case, no matter how large the work  
may be, the overseer or subordinate disbursing  
officer can pay for it as it is done. In the latter  
the Contractors are paid at considerable  
intervals. In this District, as you are aware,  
the Earthwork has generally been done, and  
undoubtedly can be most expeditiously done  
by what is known as the "Buntadan" system.  
Gangas of men, generally tank diggers, combine  
under leaders and do work pointed out to them  
at stipulated rates, but without any regular  
Contract, which indeed they do not understand  
and would not enter into. The gangs vary much  
in

in size, from one family, up to a dozen or more, they are generally sufficiently large to do up-  
-wards of Rs. 20 worth of work before wanting payment, they however want payments frequently and want them promptly. The system of payments which I found in force, when I took charge, was this. The overseer measured up the finished off pits or stacks of bantadars, when they wanted payment. made a fair copy of the measurements, (pit book) added money columns in which the value of work done by each bantadar was entered, and at once paid him, getting a receipt in the last column of the pit book. The men I ample enclosed thus got paid almost as soon as they wanted, and in or near the work. This system worked excellently, and I continued it for some time, but had to abandon it, as G.O. No 2198. 28<sup>th</sup> August 1871, limited the sum in Cash for work done to be paid by Overseers, to Rs. 20-  
Now when bantadars' work amounts to above Rs. 20 in value, bills have to be given to them which they have to present to me for payment. x form I  
The Range is a very large one, I have to be constantly on the move, the Canals enable me to move rapidly, and the wretched bantadars have often to walk scores of miles and spend days

<sup>x</sup> already in this  
Official year  
(19 office days)  
150 cheques.

days in catching me, going to a treasury, and returning to their work. The Overseers' Office work is increased beyond all reasonable limits, for, to each Santadani has to be given a bill duplicate - My own Office work, and that of my Establishment, is much increased, for, I have to draw large numbers of cheques, which, under the old system, were not wanted, on each bill, and duplicate, a lengthy note has to be written, the pass book treasury accounts - Cash abstract book &c become extremely voluminous, the documents to be filed and to be transmitted to Madras are multiplied many folds. In short, the Office work, always too great, has been increased dishearteningly. These disadvantages are not counterbalanced by advantages. Check on the works is not facilitated, for of course in a large work, in which between his visits, thousands of Cubic Yards are done, by dozens of Santadans, in hundreds of pits and tanks, a Range Officer cannot check the measurements of each Santadan's work, merely that of the work as a whole to see that as much has been done as is paid for. The Santadans' Complain bitterly of the trouble they have to go to, & time they have to waste in getting payment, and if the Overseers be not permitted to pay them as before, or at all events the rate be not raised to (say) Rs. 100 (40

(so that few men may have to waste time and trouble, and those only for sums which seem more to be a waste than to be a gain.) I hold out no hope of being able to get on really quickly with the large quantities of earthwork to be done, on "Project Works" Local Fund Roads &c. and I have every fear that the office work will fall into great arrears.

I have, &c. &c.  
Signed J. J. Dale  
Executive Engineer  
(True Copy)

M. M. M. Capt. R. S.  
for J. J. Dale, Esq.

From the office of the

Enclosure in the  
No. 379 of the 27th May  
from the office of the  
Executive Engineer  
to the  
Secretary to Govt.  
Madras

PM 21/9/72

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER'S OFFICE, 1ST DIVISION.  
DOWLAISEWARUM, 27. 5. 1872

No. 379  
From

Superintendent of the  
Superintending Engineer  
1st Division

To  
Colonel G. D. Walker R.E.  
Secretary to Government D. P. W.  
MADRAS

SIR,  
I have the honor to forward for submission to the Government, copy of a letter No. 31 dated 21st April 1872 from the Executive Engineer in charge of No. 3 Range, Godaverry District, bringing to notice the great inconvenience found in practice in carrying out the order of Government, No. 2198 dated the 28th August last, and I trust under the circumstances represented by Mr. Dale, the Government will be pleased to allow us to continue the system which always prevailed here since the construction of the Quikut works.

2. I know Mr. Dale has done his utmost to carry out the orders of Government with every care and attention, and his inspection notes show that, all the works in his

very extensive Range are carefully and systematically examined and checked, but in dealing with the peculiar class of work - people who execute earthwork here, it is simply impossible for a Range Officer to pay them promptly and regularly as required by the orders of Government, and as these people are miserably poor, and live from hand to mouth, it is impossible for them to wait for payments for any time, to follow the Range Officer about to get cheques from him puts them to considerable expense and retards the progress of the works by which both we and they lose, they are now clamouring for better or an increase of rates to cover their expenses, and unless the Government are pleased to modify their orders, as now solicited, I am afraid we shall be obliged to give the increase for with the large extent of cultivation always going on in this District, if these people are not kept contented it is easy enough for them to go away and get employment elsewhere.

3. As far as I am able to judge  
the

the system affords no better check than we had before, it creates an enormous amount of office work, wastes most valuable time, and makes the work people as discontented as they well can be, and renders it quite impossible for the most active Range Officer to carry out the wishes of Government in regard to the payment of the poorer class of work-people being prompt and with as little inconvenience as possible to them, whilst a feeling of distrust is made to prevail amongst the Subordinates of this Department which is a very bad feature in any public service, and if a Supervisor or even an Overseer can be considered as fit to have charge of a Range one day when he would be entrusted with all cash payments, it is difficult to see why he is not to be so employed because he happens to be a Sub. Division Officer in an important Range where his services

Services are retained, simply for the purpose of carrying out a large system of works for the benefit of the country and the Government.

14. As regards the complaint made by Mr. Wale to the unreasonable increase of Office work, in the shape of returns, &c. &c., I know not how it can be checked, I see little or no good in it, and I know it was not necessary before, in fact every endeavour used to be made to reduce the Range Officer's Office work, so as to let him have plenty of time for Engineering duties and field inspections, for if these are not attended to the best designed works, and most elaborately prepared Estimates, in such a country as this, are useless, and waste of time and money must result from such proceedings, but there seems to be no help for it, and

13  
I am obliged to tell all Range Officers, for the complaints are universal, they must cope with it as well as they can though the works suffer by it.

I have the honour to be

Yours Most Obedt. Servt.

M. Hunt Captain R.E.

For the Superintendent Engrs.  
J. H. D.

P 11 Dept  
No 1329

Proceedings of the Madras Government  
Under date the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1872  
Read the following

From the Supg Engrs 1<sup>st</sup> Div / No 379 of 27<sup>th</sup> April 1872

The Superintending  
Engineer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division,  
referring to the Government  
order of the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1871,  
represents that great  
practical inconvenience  
is felt, in restricting  
cash payments made  
by Quasars and Subordi-  
nates of that class, to  
petty contractors, to sums  
not exceeding twenty  
Rupees and in requiring  
Range officers to make  
themselves all large

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

To  
The Secretary to Government  
Department Public Works  
MADRAS

Date 27<sup>th</sup> April 1872  
Received 13<sup>th</sup> May 1872

No. 379  
ENCLOSURE

Subject. *[illegible]*

Forwards copy of a letter  
from the Executive Engineer  
in charge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division  
dated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May  
in reply to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April  
in order of Government for allowing  
Quasars to make payments of  
above Rs 200 each. *[illegible]*  
No 1329 of 14 May 1872

*[illegible]*  
No 1329

payments as directed in that order, and recommends that the system which prevailed previously to the passing of the order should be reverted to.

2. Lieutenant Colonel Frasier bases his recommendation on a letter from the Executive Engineer of the 3 Range Solahery District, in which a description is given of the labour system then prevailing for the execution of earth work consisting in the employment of small gangs or even single families under a hantadar or ganger who receives payment at a piece work rate. The

Executive Engineer shows at some length the difficulty or even impossibility of the Range Officer making frequent or prompt payment to these men, to whom it appears bills are now given which they have to carry to him over long distances a matter of considerable hardship.

3. The order in question referred to ordinary petty contracts as the term is understood in the Department and was not intended to apply to such an arrangement as that described which approximates much more closely to what is called the system of construction

under departmental  
Agency than to that of  
contract: in fact, labour  
for earthwork depart-  
mentally executed could  
hardly be managed  
economically in any  
other way on a large  
scale, and it is to be  
regretted that the  
Superintendent did not  
make an earlier refer-  
ence to Government  
on the subject, since he  
placed a construction  
on the terms of the order  
which gave it so im-  
practical a character.  
4. Labourers em-  
ployed on the so called  
bantadar system must  
be considered as working  
under

19  
under departmental  
Agency and payments  
may be made to the  
bantadars by the Overseers  
in charge, on the spot,  
and recorded on nomi-  
nal rolls, specifying  
the quantity of work  
done, the rate and the  
amount paid to each  
head of a gang whose  
receipt should be  
obtained on the roll.  
5. His Honor the  
Governor in Council  
sees however no reason  
whatever to modify the  
terms of the order un-  
der notice, in its  
application to payments  
by Overseers for ordinary  
petty contract work.

To the Superd Superd  
all other Superd  
Major Revenue  
Controller  
Dec/29/97

AMW.  
4-5-92

Op 2199

Govt. of 1872 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To The Dy. Superintending Engr.  
1<sup>st</sup> Division

Dated

Recd.

Encl. /

G. O 14<sup>th</sup> May 1872, No. 1329.

Nos. 442 & 443

Cash payments. Passing  
orders in letter from the  
Engineer-in-Chief bringing  
to notice the inconvenience  
experienced in restricting  
cash payments made  
by Overseers & petty  
contractors.