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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
19th February 1874.*

No. 358. Read the following Circular letter from Colonel W. A. CROMMELIN, R.E., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, (Buildings and Roads—Military,) to the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, North-Western Provinces, and the Punjab; the Chief Commissioners of Oudh, the Central Provinces, and the Punjab; and Mysore and Coorg; the Resident at Hyderabad; the Agents to the Governor-General for Central India and Rajpootana; the Superintendent of Port Blair; the Inspector-General of Military Works, dated Fort William, 14th January 1874, No. 4:—

In forwarding, for information and guidance, the papers marginally noted, regarding the necessity of improving the punkah-pulling arrangements in barracks and hospitals, I am directed to invite the earnest co-operation of all the Officers of the Department (who may be concerned in the matter), in aiding the labours of the Committees to be convened at the several stations under orders of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

2. I am at the same time to request that the attention of the Officers of the Department may be especially directed to Public Works Department Circular No. 47 of 19th August 1870, which contains the practical remarks on punkahs suggested by the Barrack Ventilation Committee.

Office Memorandum from Colonel H. K. BURNE, Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, dated 3rd October 1873, No. 48.

Establishments.
Regimental.

THE undersigned is directed to forward herewith the annexed copy of a letter* from the Quarter Master General with enclosures† in original, regarding the punkah-pulling arrangements in barracks and hospitals, and to invite

* No. 5,589, dated 26th September 1873.
† To be returned.

the earnest attention of the Public Works Department to the remarks of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief as to the economy that will result from improvements in hanging and pulling punkahs. It seems hardly too much to say that the reports show that in many cases one-third of the present expenditure on account of coolies might be saved by fresh arrangements, and by the supply of pulleys, friction-rollers, and other appliances.

2. It is requested that the serious attention of all concerned may be drawn to this subject, and their earnest co-operation invited in the labours of the Committee about to be assembled under the orders of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief as detailed in the enclosed Circular.

3. The Military Department will be glad to see any reports that may be received of the action taken in this direction.

From Major-General E. B. JOHNSON, Quarter Master General, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, dated 26th September 1873, No. 5,589.

Establishments—Punkah.

WITH reference to Military Department letter, No. 1,366 (^{Establishments}_{General}), dated 20th March 1873, I am now desired to report, for the information of the Government of India, that the heavy charges incurred on account of punkah-pulling in barracks and hospitals have received the most careful consideration of the Right Honourable the Commander-in-Chief, with the special view of effecting some decrease in this serious item of Military expenditure.

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2. From the annexed copy of this Office Circular No. 32, dated 31st May last, it will be observed that the entire question of punkahs and their establishments, in all their bearings, was ordered to be carefully considered at each station; and in the instructions to the local authorities prominence was given to the expedient suggested by Government, viz., that the object in view might best be effected by a return to the system of a fixed allowance for barracks, leaving hospitals to be provided under existing arrangements.

3. From the replies received on this head (which are herewith forwarded in original, accompanied by a compiled abstract), it will be remarked that there is a great majority of opinion against the adoption of such a method; and looking to the dissimilarity of barracks, the varying rates of labour and other local considerations, His Excellency thinks the objections generally are sound, and that recourse to a specified sum for this service is inexpedient, and would operate unequally at different stations.

4. In regard to the suggestion that under a system of fixed allowance, savings effected by Regiments might be placed to the credit of the Canteen Fund, His Excellency concurs with Brigadier-General Ingall, C. B., Commanding the Allahabad Division, in considering that the measure is not likely to be appreciated by the Soldiers, and is liable to misconstruction, under the idea that their comfort was being sacrificed by Commanding Officers in order to accumulate a fund, the benefits derived from which are but of a very general nature, and not so highly valued as these which directly and personally affect the individual.

5. It is so far satisfactory, however, to be able to state that the investigation alluded to has already been the means of effecting, under the Commander-in-Chief's orders in this Department, a very considerable saving in the punkah expenditure of the present season, whilst His Excellency is convinced that there is still scope for further economy at many stations.

6. The earnest co-operation of the Public Works Department is, however, absolutely essential, and the Commander-in-Chief would urge upon Government the desirability of drawing the attention of that Department to the subject in the sense of these remarks.

7. His Excellency has no hesitation in asserting that the faulty manner in which the punkahs generally are suspended, the want of pulleys and proper connections for sets and trains of punkahs at many stations, may at present be classed among the direct causes of much unnecessary expenditure; in fact, in the barracks of the 63rd Foot at Hazareebaugh, the large sum of Rupees 1,800 has been saved this season by a careful revision of the punkah connections and arrangements generally.

8. The Commander-in-Chief is further of opinion that it would be advantageous in many respects, and tend to economy, were the whole of the punkah coolies required for a station contracted and arranged for by the Commissariat Department, rather than by Regimental arrangement.

9. Without entering into further details, the Commander-in-Chief desires to annex, for the consideration and approval of Government, the draft of a Circular Memorandum which His Excellency purposes to address to General Officers Commanding Divisions and Districts, conveying special instructions for the guidance of local authorities in determining the punkah-pulling requirements for the season of 1874.

10. His Excellency will be glad to learn that these instructions coincide with the views of Government in this matter; but should any modifications be considered desirable, they can be embodied in the Circular previous to issue.

11. In conclusion, as the Committees have to decide the requirements for the ensuing year before the expiry of the present hot season, and while the punkahs are still in working order, I am to solicit the favour of the very early orders of Government on this letter.

*Circular Memorandum addressed to General Officers Commanding Divisions and Districts.
Establishments—Punkah.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE the Commander-in-Chief having had under consideration the replies received from Commands to this Office Circular No. 32 of 31st May last, the Quarter Master General is desired to communicate the following observations and instructions of His Excellency on the subject of the great and increasing charge on account of punkah-pulling in barracks.

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19th February 1874.*

2. Looking to the dissimilarity of barrack buildings, the varying rates of labour and other local considerations, it appears impossible to deduce from these reports any precise rules which could satisfactorily be made applicable throughout the Bengal Presidency.

3. It is observed that there is a large majority of opinion against the suggestion to return to the system of a fixed allowance for punkah-pulling. His Excellency thinks the objections generally are sound, and that recourse to a specified sum for this service is inexpedient, and would operate unequally at different stations.

4. It is regretted that the reports do not enter more fully into the question of economizing labour by the introduction of mechanical appliances, etc., but it is apparent that the punkahs are susceptible of being more scientifically suspended and connected, and more economically worked than they are at present at many stations.

5. It would also appear advantageous that contracts should be entered into by the Commissariat Department for the supply of all the punkah coolies required for a station; such a system has at least this to recommend it, that Regiments and Batteries would no longer compete with each other for coolies, and thus increase the market value of labour.

6. It is quite evident that, although considerable reductions in punkah expenditure have already been effected under the orders of His Excellency recently communicated in this Department, there is still scope for economy at many stations; and with this view, the Commander-in-Chief desires that the following special instructions which have been approved of by the Government of India, may receive early and careful attention in determining the approximate requirements for punkah-pulling in barracks and hospitals for the season of 1874.

7. As soon as convenient after the receipt of this Circular, and while the punkahs are still in working order, the Standing Barrack Committee of each station will assemble, and, with the professional aid of the local officer of the Public Works Department, report on the following points, the proceedings of the Committee being submitted to this office with the other report required by paragraph 9 of this Circular:—

1stly.—Whether all the arrangements, fittings and gearing of the punkahs are prepared in the most efficient and economical manner to suit the special circumstances of each barrack, hospital or quarter.

Note.—Either the ordinary framed punkah, or the bar and flap punkah may be adopted with perfect efficiency, and according as circumstances render either of them convenient or economical. The ordinary punkah should have

its frame 18 inches deep, suspended with its lower edge 6½ feet from the ground with a substantial fringe from 12 to 18 inches deep, made in pleats and of two or three thicknesses of cloth. The bar and flap punkah should consist of a substantial wood or iron bar from 3 to 6 inches deep, with a stiff and heavy flap of canvas in pleats 18 inches in depth, suspended with its lower edge at the same height from the ground, viz., 6½ feet, and with a similar fringe attached to it.

2ndly.—Whether every opportunity has been taken in connecting the punkahs to save labour.

Note.—Whenever practicable, the punkahs should be pulled in convenient sets or trains, the whole set or train being rigidly connected: the punkahs in Sergeants' end-rooms should, where feasible, be joined to those in the nearest barrack ward; and in blocks of Staff Sergeants and married quarters, the punkahs of several quarters should be connected and worked together.

When punkahs in different rooms are connected and pulled by one man, it is specially important to see that the connections are satisfactory; in the case of cross-walls, when friction rollers are necessary, they should be provided.

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19th February 1874.*

3rdly.—Whether sufficient pulleys have been provided, and whether they move in their bearings easily and without noise.

4thly.—Whether there are any unnecessary punkahs suspended in any ward or room, the number in the case of single men's barracks being ordinarily restricted to one punkah for every two beds.

8. If the arrangements above adverted to are not found satisfactory by the Committee, and the Officer of the Public Works Department concurs in their opinion, the latter Officer should at once remedy the defects; where, however, the Executive Engineer differs from the Committee, an immediate reference on the point at issue should be made to the Superintending Engineer of the Circle, and failing settlement by him, the case should be submitted to this Office for the consideration of the Commander-in-Chief.

9. When the suspension, connection and arrangements generally of the punkahs have been pronounced satisfactory, or susceptible of modification before the ensuing hot season, the next duty of the Committee will be to determine the number of coolies absolutely necessary to pull them; the prescribed report, in duplicate, for each set of lines being furnished to this Office for the sanction of Government, in accordance with paragraph 2, Section VIII., Chapter XXI., of the Public Works Department Code.

10. On sanction being conveyed, the Commissariat Department will be furnished with information as to the coolies required, in view of entering into a contract for such number as cannot be provided from the moveable column establishment, the entertainment and payment of these men being entirely effected by the local Commissariat Officer.

11. If it be found hereafter that any increase to the sanctioned establishment is required, a supplementary Committee report showing clearly the necessity for the same must be submitted for sanction, in accordance with existing procedure; on the other hand, it should be impressed on Commanding Officers of Regiments and Batteries that where, owing to reductions in the strength of the troops, they can dispense with any of the punkah coolies, they should employ only the actual number required, intimating the reduction thus made to the Commissariat Department through the Staff Officer of the Station.

12. Sufficient care is, it is feared, not always taken in the entertainment and discharge of the punkah establishment, and His Excellency thinks it desirable to rule that in future the Officer Commanding the Station will be responsible that punkahs are not commenced before they are absolutely required, and also that they are dispensed with so soon as practicable with reference to the state of the weather; the dates being as usual notified in Station Orders.

13. It has been remarked that, under the existing system, no less than four agencies are employed in connection with punkahs and their establishments, leading to ill-defined responsibility whether as regards efficiency or economy.

I.—The suspension and connection of punkahs.	By the Public Works Department.
II.—The allotment of punkah-pullers.	By Standing Barrack Committees.
III.—The entertainment and payment of punkah coolies.	By the Commissariat Department and Regimental Authorities, the system differing at various stations.
IV.—	

14. It appears desirable, therefore, to the Commander-in-Chief to impress on General Officers and Officers Commanding Stations that, having due regard to the health and comfort of the troops under their command, they are directly responsible to His Excellency and to Government for economy in matters relating to barracks and barrack arrangements generally, and that it is incumbent on them to make themselves acquainted with all details, and to bring to notice such defects as may be beyond their competency to remedy.

15. In conclusion, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief desires that General Officers and Officers Commanding Stations will give immediate attention to these instructions, and enjoin on all concerned within their command the necessity for adopting every expedient for reducing to such extent as may be consistent with efficiency, this very serious item of Military expenditure.

QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,

ARMY HEAD QUARTERS,
Simla,

1873.

(Signed) E. B. JOHNSON, Major-General.
Quarter Master General.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
19th February 1874.*

No. 359.

ORDER THEREON, 19th February 1874, No. 405.

MILITARY WORKS, No. 8.

COMMUNICATED to the Inspecting Engineer for Buildings and to District Engineers, who will co-operate with the

Military Authorities so far as may lay in their power for the attainment of the object in view.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Inspecting Engineer for Buildings
To District Engineers.
To the Executive Engineer, Wynnad.
„ Military Department.

Exd. S. T. Austin.
Spare Copies

No 44.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

BUILDINGS & ROADS.
Military.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF MADRAS, BOMBAY, BEN-
GAL, NORTH WESTERN PROVINCES, AND
THE PUNJAB.

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONERS OF OUDH, THE
CENTRAL PROVINCES, BRITISH BURMAH,
AND MYSORE AND COORG.

THE RESIDENT AT HYDERABAD.

THE AGENTS TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL FOR
CENTRAL INDIA AND RAJPOOTANA.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PORT BLAIR.

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF MILITARY WORKS.

CIRCULAR No. 4 PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated January 14, 1874.

Received — 24 —

Ex: 1

Improvement of punkah-pulling arrangements in barracks and hospitals.

P. W. D. Press--15.1.74--527.

Communicated to the Prefecting Eng: for
Building and to District Engineers who will cooperate
with the Building Authorities so far as may lay
in their power for the attainment of the object
in view.

Yours

St. Louis, 17th Nov 1890
 The Empress Cancer Institute
 St. Louis, Missouri

Rec'd with 8-c 23/2/74

Living

1248
GOVT. OF INDIA
PUBLIC WORKS.

The Inspecting Commr
for Buildings

Dated

Recd.

Encl. 1

G. O 19th Feb 1905 No 405.

Nos. 355 & 354

Barracks & Hospitals.

Comd. to the Inspecting Commr
for Buildings & Hospitals.

Circular from the Govt.
India forwarding papers
regarding the necessity of
improving the barracks
putting away cements in
barracks & hospitals &
~~Commission~~ requesting the
cooperation of all the Offi-
cers of the Dept. in aiding
the labours of the Committees
to be formed at certain Stations.