

P. H. C. No. 4802
Govt. of (1881) Madras.

REVENUE.
Prop August

To
THE HON. H. E. SULLIVAN,
&c., &c., &c.

B. No. 2119. A.W. 25th Aug^t/81

Recorded.

[Signature]

20/8/81

Dated August 13th.

Printed 17th.

Recd. 24 Aug^r/81

Encl.

G.O., 13th August 1881, Nos. 1,188-1,189.

20.5c.

AUGUST.
Nos. 184—189.

25

SUBJECT.

Draft Famine Relief Code.—Communicating to the Government of India papers from selected officers submitting remarks on the —, with an expression of general concurrence in the opinions therein set forth on the draft; agreeing with two of the officers as to the urgent necessity of putting in hand the preparation of a local Famine Code; and resolving to nominate a Special Committee, for the purpose, of certain officers to whom the papers will be referred, with instructions.

all. 22/8.

N 2119AW
W M order.

12. The rules regarding mode of payment in this paragraph could doubtless be carried out in certain cases with great benefit to the laborers; but practically it would not always be possible to ensure payments being made by cashiers who have given security, nor at such times would security prove a complete safeguard.

Paragraph 15.

13. The general instructions regarding fining are very judicious and might well be adopted. During the recent famine there is reason to fear that this power to inflict punishment was often exercised in an arbitrary manner by officers in charge of works.

Paragraph 16.

14. This paragraph should, in the Board's opinion, be modified with reference to the remarks at paragraph 8 of these Proceedings.

Paragraph 17.

15. Provision is made at the close of this paragraph for the valuation, at normal rates, of work done at the end of the famine. Approximately accurate valuation is then impossible: it is essential that such estimates, to be of use, should be made as the work proceeds, or at least on the completion of each work.

Paragraph 19.

16. It is not desirable to fix the exact amount of permanent advance to be given to every Relief Officer, nor always to encourage laborers to bring their whole families to the relief-work; there must often be members of families who, being unfit for work, would be better left at home upon village relief.

Paragraph 21.

Do. 22.

17. CHAPTER III, GRATUITOUS RELIEF.—This chapter in order to be complete requires considerable amplification. It should contain detailed instructions as to the distribution of laborers, the manner of payment, number of paymasters required, &c. Moreover, stereotyped forms for use upon works and for gratuitous relief might well be prescribed by the Code and be kept in stock ready for issue when required. Uniformity in this matter would save time and labor both on the spot and in the supervising offices.

Part I—Village Relief.

Paragraph 3.

18. In the event of relief of this kind being given in the shape of food rather than in money, it would be necessary to add to the rations a certain quantity of salt and vegetables, or the value of these.

19. The rules regarding the management of Poor Houses or Relief Camps appear to be generally suitable, but they are perhaps elaborated in too great detail, and would probably require to a certain extent to be modified in practice. For example, it would not always be possible to obtain for the post of Accountant a member of the Tahsildar's permanent establishment, nor would respectable literate inhabitants of the locality be always available to fill the post of Overseer. Moreover, the remuneration of the latter need not be fixed by the Code. It would, however, appear, by the closing sentence of paragraph 11, that rigid uniformity to these rules is not expected.

Part II—The Poor House.

Paragraph 8.

20. It may be doubted whether it will ever be necessary to establish rest-houses. The effect of any such establishments would certainly be to encourage wandering, which should by all means be discountenanced; and many would be content to

Paragraph 14.

obtain an occasional meal at such places, revisiting the same village at intervals, rather than settle down to a relief-work or find refuge in a camp. Sufficient means for assisting wanderers appear to be provided by paragraph 16.

Part III—Paragraph 16.

21. CHAPTER IV, VILLAGE INSPECTION.—As so much depends upon being prepared at an early stage of famine to cope with the calamity, the Board would recommend that a map, showing the several circles into which it is proposed, for the purpose of village relief, to divide each district, should be permanently maintained. It would be an easy matter, if necessary, at any time to revise the distribution of villages or areas of inspection, and the fact of such maps being in readiness would tend to save much valuable time.

22. While approving generally of the provisions of the draft Code, the foregoing remarks indicate points which the Board think are deserving of further consideration. They observe that the Code assumes throughout that a large staff of competent officers is at hand to administer Famine Relief, and should this assumption prove incorrect in time of need the Code will be of no value. The Board therefore take this opportunity of suggesting, in the event of this not having already been done, that a list of all officers who are known to have rendered good service during the late famine be prepared at an early date and kept on record in the Government Office. The judicious distribution of experienced Famine Officers over the afflicted area, in the event of occasion arising, would undoubtedly prove very beneficial to the Government and the people.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,
Acting Secretary.

No. 188.

ORDER THEREON, 13th August 1881, No. 1,188.

Miscellaneous.

letter of the 18th November last, No. 163, with an expression of general concurrence in the opinions therein set forth on the Draft Famine Code.

2. The Governor in Council agrees with the Hon. H. E. Sullivan and Colonel Sankey, C.B., as to the urgent necessity for putting in hand the preparation of a local Famine Code; and he resolves to nominate a Special Committee, for the purpose, of the officers whose names are given in the margin, to whom the papers will be referred.

President.

Hon. H. E. Sullivan.

Members.

Hon. R. Davidson, C.S.I.
Surgeon-General Cornish, C.I.E.
Colonel Sankey, R.E., C.B.
Colonel Hearn, C.I.E.
Mr. E. Forster Webster.
Deputy Surgeon-General Furnell, Sanitary Commissioner.
Major Baynes.

Mr. Webster will be requested to act as Secretary.

3. The Committee will be at liberty to require the attendance of any officer who was actively employed in the recent

famine and whose views they may desire to obtain on matters of detail.

4. The services of Mr. E. Forster Webster, C.S., will at once be made available specially for the duty proposed. The remaining members of the Committee will give their assistance when called on by the President, with whom will rest the power of convening meetings.

The necessary clerical aid will be obtained at the President's discretion.

5. Ordered that the following letter be despatched to the Government of India.

(True Extract.)

Secretary to Government.

No. 189. To the Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, dated Ootacamund, 13th August 1881, No. 1,189.

Miscellaneous.

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your Office letter, dated 18th November last, No. 163, giving cover to copies of a Draft Code of Famine Relief and asking for remarks or suggestions thereon.

2. The papers having been referred for the opinion of selected officers, I am now instructed to forward copies of the replies* received, and to state that the Honorable the Governor in Council concurs generally in the views therein expressed upon the draft.

3. The Governor in Council thinks it essential to constitute a Committee of experienced officers for the purpose of at once putting into shape, in the form of a Famine Code for local guidance when the necessity arises, the result of the matured experience which is now available; and to this end he has taken the action described in the accompanying Proceedings.†

† Dated 13th August 1881, No. 1,188.

4. As the Government of India are aware attention has already been directed in the Public Works Department to the subject of devising works for the employment of labor deprived of its ordinary field.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Secretary to Government.

Copy to the Hon. H. E. Sullivan.
" the Hon. R. Davidson, C.S.I.
" Surgeon-General Cornish, F.R.C.S., C.I.E.
" Colonel R. H. Sankey, R.E., C.B.
" Colonel C. S. Hearn, C.I.E.
" E. F. Webster, Esq.
" Deputy Surgeon-General Furnell, M.C., Sanitary Commissioner.
" Major C. D. Baynes.
" the Board of Revenue.
" the Public Works Department.
" the Accountant-General.

Exd. W. H. French.

90 Copies.

Copies will be sent from Madras

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To

THE HON. H. E. SULLIVAN,

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SUBJECT.

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the matter receive early attention, orders being issued in the Public Works Department for the preparation of a scheme for each district by the Superintending Engineers in communication with the Collectors and Presidents of Local Fund Boards.

6. Both these paragraphs would require some modification to render them suitable to this Presidency. Reports by the Police of road-side mortality should be

Paragraphs 14 and 18.

made to the Taluk Relief Officer or to the Divisional Officer as well as to the Collector; and the duties assigned to the Civil Surgeon could not possibly be performed by that officer if, as is usually the case, he is in charge of the District Jail, where his work at such times is necessarily rendered exceedingly laborious.

7. This clause provides for advances being made to cultivators to enable them to take advantage of irrigation afforded by canals. Opinions differ regarding the

Paragraph 19.

policy of making such advances owing to the great difficulty of insuring the application of the money to the purpose for which it is given. Practically it has been found almost impossible to prevent its diversion to the bazaars to supply immediate and pressing needs.

8. CHAPTER II, RELIEF WORKS.—Among the duties of the Civil Officer in charge of a relief work enumerated in this paragraph is that of regulating the price

Paragraph 3.

of grain sold to the laborers (g). The Board are satisfied that any such general direction would be ill-advised; the experience of 1876-78 showed conclusively that no interference of this nature was requisite or desirable. The mere fact of large bodies of people being assembled creates a demand which stimulates competition, ensures adequate supplies, and regulates prices, thus rendering official interference unnecessary or mischievous if exerted.

9. Under the heading "Preliminaries before starting the Relief Work" instructions are given regarding the preparations to be made by the Engineer for the admis-

Paragraph 5.

sion of laborers. That such preparations are very desirable is beyond question, but inasmuch as they must take some considerable time during which applicants for relief will rapidly accumulate upon the hands of the Collector and his Assistants, it is essential that rules should be laid down for their guidance as to the manner in which such applicants are to be disposed of pending their admission to work under the professional officers. During the late famine two distinct classes of works were recognized, those under professional supervision and those under Civil Officers. It may be doubted whether Engineers will ever be available in sufficient numbers to superintend the management of all works, if indeed it were considered advantageous to employ them to supervise the numerous petty works which are always carried out in famine times. But, however this may be, it must be necessary to provide employment for unskilled laborers during the time which must necessarily elapse between their enrolment by the Civil Officers and their transfer to work under the professional staff. To this end special minor works should be included in the permanent list to be prepared for each district.

10. The division of laborers into five classes appears scarcely necessary. Nos. 3 and 4 might well be combined, and probably the "old and decrepit" should

Paragraph 9.

ordinarily be provided with gratuitous relief.

11. The direction "each gang will probably consist of about fifty people * * * men, women, and children being associated in due proportion" is one which in practice can never be carried out. The number of women on a work never bears the proportion to men which is necessary for the proper execution of the tasks imposed. The rule may, however, be of service as indicating an end to be kept in view, though it may never be attained.

Paragraph 11.

be a tendency on the part of such men to under-pay or even defraud their laborers, it will be necessary to reserve in all agreements with them the fullest powers of inquiry and interference; if necessary also of resumption of the work on the part of Government. It may also be well to have either a portion of a large work on which they are engaged, or a neighbouring work, carried out wholly through departmental agency to serve as a further check.

17. The supervising powers of the department may by these and other judicious arrangements be greatly increased, leaving its members sufficiently free for the exercise of the most important of their functions, and particularly to ensure—

- (1), that the money paid by Government actually reaches the hands of the work people individually;
- (2), that the rates of work are fairly adjusted to all the existing circumstances, and amply sufficient for the proper sustenance of the recipients;
- (3), that the work is set out and measured up accurately, and that it is fully up to specification;
- (4), that the camp arrangements, discipline, and supplies of food are all on a thoroughly satisfactory footing.

18. In regard to the last named point, it will be primarily essential on commencing relief works, and especially prior to the approach of inclement weather, to erect shelter for the work people which, while being effective, shall be of the most economical description, and to arrange for such hospital sheds, contagious wards, camp privies and urinals as may, in the opinion of the medical authorities, suffice for the objects in view. Rough standard designs for all such should be issued at an early date for the guidance of both the Civil and Public Works Officers.

19. The timely and ample provision of tools for all anticipated works should receive the earliest attention on the part of the Superintending Engineer, who, on receiving intimation that relief works have to be commenced in his charge, is authorized without awaiting further sanction to make such immediate arrangements in this respect as he may consider essential. He should also make arrangements for treasure chests to hold large amounts of small coin, for guards and police, for the rough materials needed for shelter, &c.

20. The arrangements for the presence of bazaar men, grain dealers and of food supplies generally at relief works will devolve on the officers of the Civil Department, to whom all requirements in these respects should be early notified, and who should be kept fully informed as regards the condition and rates of the bazaar supplies, as also of any needful changes in quantity or quality. As a rule, the Public Works officers will abstain from any interference with the buying and selling of grain; but when the civil authorities are unable to organize a properly supplied bazaar, or other circumstances warrant, a departure from the general principle may be made with the full cognizance and sanction of the Local Government, not otherwise.

21. Strict and thoughtful attention will be devoted by the Public Works officer or subordinate in charge of a relief work to the foregoing, and to all other essential matters; and whenever he has reason to believe that the delay of a reference to the Superintending Engineer would be injurious, he is not only authorized, but enjoined to address directly any Government officer who may be in a position to fulfil his immediate requirements; at the same time he must without delay report his proceedings to his immediate departmental superior for the information or orders of the Superintending Engineer.

22. To ensure a full consideration of these and other matters, a system of periodical reports (weekly if necessary) should be introduced at the commencement of exceptional measures, and if famine press with great severity, these reports may, at the discretion of the Superintending Engineer, be sent to his office direct from all disbursing agents without passing through the hands of the Executive Engineer, who in such cases will have the original disburser's draft sent him for such notice as he may consider requisite.

23. These reports will, for each work in progress, show the numbers and character of the labor employed under suitable heads, and under "Remarks" should state clearly the ruling prices of grain in the market, and condition of the supply so far as it can be conveniently ascertained; the physical condition of the people employed on the work, of those seeking relief, and of the neighbouring population, mentioning also any refusals to work, the causes for such, and the action taken. Reasons should also be given for considering the piece-work rates sufficient or otherwise, the abstention of laborers in applying for work, general condition of the rainfall, prospects, &c.; in fact, any circumstance bearing on the condition of work under his charge that will aid the superior authorities in forming their opinion as to the rates, the necessity for extending or contracting operations, &c.

24. A digest of these reports should be submitted through the Chief Engineer to the head of the Local Government, with a brief note of the action taken, of orders passed, and conveying such suggestions as he may consider desirable. These digests, forming comprehensive narratives of the departmental operations, will be submitted as early as possible for the information of the Government of India.

C.—Accounts.

25. The primary accounts of all outlay on works will be in accordance with the ordinary procedure laid down in the Public Works Code.

26. But in all cases arrangements must be made to divide the outlay so as to make it susceptible of classification under "normal" and "famine" to allow of the latter being charged off against the proper head of account at the close of the special operations.

27. When food, &c., are required for works carried on under Public Works officers, the funds may as desired be advanced to the Civil officers entrusted with the purchase, or to the dealer, and the disbursements dealt with as though for stock under the sub-head "Miscellaneous." Food expended should, if the wages be paid partly in this form, be charged off directly to the works in which it is used, the rates being struck so as to cover the total expenditure incurred.

28. Any surplus grain remaining after the relief work has been closed should be sold and the sum realized credited to the food account; the balance will then be charged off rateably to the works for which the food has been supplied.

29. All outlay on famine relief works will be charged in the books of the local Examiner of Public Works Accounts, and will be debited in the first instance to a suspense head "Famine Relief." Afterwards, as soon as convenient, the entire outlay, if the work is complete, or the outlay of the year, if it is incomplete, shall be cleared from that suspense head and charged partly to Public Works and partly to the Civil Department under the final head "Famine Relief." All the original assignments for these works having been reduced from the Public Works grant, that grant will now have to be increased by the estimate amount of the Public Works portion of this outlay.

30. No avoidable delay should be allowed to take place in making this distribution.

31. Where no estimate has been framed and sanctioned for a work, it will rest entirely with the Public Works Department to decide what portion of the outlay is to be charged to Public Works, but with proper management no case of this kind should occur.

32. If an estimate has been framed and sanctioned, then the portion to be charged to Public Works will be the estimate value of the effective and sanctioned portion of the work done.

33. After these portions have been debited to Public Works, the infructuous balance will be charged off, as above directed, to the final head "Famine Relief."

34. The cost of the Public Works establishments employed upon relief works should be entered under the suspense head, or, if these establishments cannot be precisely distinguished, then one-fourth of the outlay upon the relief works, supervised by the Public Works Department, may be charged as establishments; but without the special sanction of the Government of India in the Financial Department, the share of the cost of the work charged to Public Works must not, in any case, be less than the cost of Public Works establishments recorded against the works.

No. 187. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 1st August 1881, No. 1,569.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, dated 9th May 1881, No. 723.

Read—the following letter from C. L. TUPPER, Esq., C.S., Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of India, Home, Revenue and Agricultural Department (Famine), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Simla, 18th November 1880, No. 163.

IN continuation of my letter, No. 111, dated the 25th September last, with which was forwarded Part I of the Report of the Famine Commission, I am desired to transmit copies of a draft Code of Famine Relief prepared by the Secretary to the Famine Commission, and to request that you will be good enough, with the permission of His Grace the Governor in Council, to favor the Government of India, at as early a date as possible, with any suggestions or remarks which the Government of Madras may have to offer on the draft.

Order thereon, _____ 9th May 1881, No. 723, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

SPARE copies of the draft Code will be referred to the Hon. Mr. Sullivan, Colonel Sankey, and the Board of Revenue for perusal and remarks.

2. The Code seems to the Right Honorable the Governor in Council to embody most of the principles which were practically adopted in the recent famine, and the definite enumeration of them will be useful as obviating hesitation at the commencement of any future season of calamity.

3. Dr. Cornish will be asked to give his opinion on the scales of grain wages proposed.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Secretary to Government.

ENCLOSURE.—Draft Code of Famine Relief.

Resolution—

WITH the Order read above the Government refer, for the remarks of the Board, a draft Code of Famine Relief prepared by the Secretary to the late Famine Commission. As stated by the Government, the draft embodies most of the principles which were practically adopted during the recent famine, and may therefore be accepted, as a whole, as being the product of mature experience. It would, however, be impossible to frame a Code in detail which could be applied without modification to all Provinces alike, and it is presumed that a Code, specially prepared for Madras, will be eventually prescribed by Government for the guidance of their officers in time of need.

2. Upon this presumption the Board deem it unnecessary to examine in minute detail the draft before them, but will content themselves with indicating certain points which seem to deserve attention.

3. CHAPTER I, ADMINISTRATION.—In the first place, it is observed that, at the commencement of the late famine, great difficulties were experienced owing to want of trustworthy information regarding the extent and intensity of the calamity and existing means for relieving it. The writer of the draft has accordingly adopted the recommendation of the Commission in regard to the appointment of a Provincial Director of Agriculture, whose duty it will be to keep the Government supplied with full information regarding the condition of the country; and to intimate, at the earliest possible date, any probability of distress. The Board consider that the appointment of such an officer is very desirable and that it should be made without delay.

4. The appointment of a Commissioner would probably take place at an early stage of famine. The draft is not explicit regarding the duties of this officer, and it is doubtless intended that he should be instructed by Government at the time of his nomination; but it would be necessary that his powers should be clearly understood by all officers concerned.

5. The Board are not aware that, up to the present time, any scheme of works suitable for relief has been prepared for any district. It is of the greatest importance that such a scheme should be matured and maintained throughout the Presidency; at the commencement of the late famine the want of such a plan of operations was severely felt, and its absence led to disorganization and waste. The Board advise that

the matter receive early attention, orders being issued in the Public Works Department for the preparation of a scheme for each district by the Superintending Engineers in communication with the Collectors and Presidents of Local Fund Boards.

6. Both these paragraphs would require some modification to render them suitable to this Presidency. Reports by the Police of road-side mortality should be made to the Taluk Relief Officer or to the Divisional Officer as well as to the Collector; and the duties assigned to the Civil Surgeon could not possibly be performed by that officer if, as is usually the case, he is in charge of the District Jail, where his work at such times is necessarily rendered exceedingly laborious.

7. This clause provides for advances being made to cultivators to enable them to take advantage of irrigation afforded by canals. Opinions differ regarding the policy of making such advances owing to the great difficulty of insuring the application of the money to the purpose for which it is given. Practically it has been found almost impossible to prevent its diversion to the bazaars to supply immediate and pressing needs.

8. CHAPTER II, RELIEF WORKS.—Among the duties of the Civil Officer in charge of a relief work enumerated in this paragraph is that of regulating the price of grain sold to the laborers (*g*). The Board are satisfied that any such general direction would be ill-advised; the experience of 1876—78 showed conclusively that no interference of this nature was requisite or desirable. The mere fact of large bodies of people being assembled creates a demand which stimulates competition, ensures adequate supplies, and regulates prices, thus rendering official interference unnecessary or mischievous if exerted.

9. Under the heading "Preliminaries before starting the Relief Work" instructions are given regarding the preparations to be made by the Engineer for the admission of laborers. That such preparations are very desirable is beyond question, but inasmuch as they must take some considerable time during which applicants for relief will rapidly accumulate upon the hands of the Collector and his Assistants, it is essential that rules should be laid down for their guidance as to the manner in which such applicants are to be disposed of pending their admission to work under the professional officers. During the late famine two distinct classes of works were recognized, those under professional supervision and those under Civil Officers. It may be doubted whether Engineers will ever be available in sufficient numbers to superintend the management of all works, if indeed it were considered advantageous to employ them to supervise the numerous petty works which are always carried out in famine times. But, however this may be, it must be necessary to provide employment for unskilled laborers during the time which must necessarily elapse between their enrolment by the Civil Officers and their transfer to work under the professional staff. To this end special minor works should be included in the permanent list to be prepared for each district.

10. The division of laborers into five classes appears scarcely necessary. Nos. 3 and 4 might well be combined, and probably the "old and decrepit" should ordinarily be provided with gratuitous relief.

11. The direction "each gang will probably consist of about fifty people * * * men, women, and children being associated in due proportion" is one which in practice can never be carried out. The number of women on a work never bears the proportion to men which is necessary for the proper execution of the tasks imposed. The rule may, however, be of service as indicating an end to be kept in view, though it may never be attained.

selection from the work in Class B (redistributing the establishment to meet the requirements) as may appear under all the circumstances to be best adapted for affording the required relief, and further may authorize the immediate commencement of such as fall within their proper powers of sanction without waiting for the sanction of the Government of India, to whom, however, a full report of the proposed operations will be submitted with the least practicable delay.

6. The amounts representing the assignments to works which may, under these instructions, have been eliminated should be at once reduced from the Public Works Department grant.

7. While thus empowered to make the needful redistribution of both the establishment and works, the Local Government will keep the Government of India early and constantly informed with regard to the changes thus deemed essential, the extra supervision that may become necessary under certain eventualities, and the financial bearings of the proposed operations.

8. It will devolve on the Chief Engineer to prepare such timely forecasts on the orders issued as may be needed for keeping the Local Government fully informed regarding the financial liabilities thus imposed, and the preparation of redistribution and other statements calling for the early sanction of the Government of India.

9. It is assumed that the budget programme has entered in it under Classes A and B all the works which may be needed to meet the contingency of famine; but should this not be the case, and it is considered indispensable by reason of this deficiency or otherwise that certain small works, not absolutely requiring professional supervision, should be opened for relief the Chief Engineer on being required to do so shall place one or more officers of his department at the disposal of the Revenue Department to aid Collectors by their advice in reference to such works. It is however distinctly to be understood that no work of this character shall individually exceed Rs. 10,000, and that any assignments made therefor shall be at once reported.

10. In carrying out relief operations, it will be borne in mind that, with all descriptions of work which may be susceptible of setting out and measurement, the system of payment by results must as far as possible be enforced, and the person in charge of the work may, after consultation with the medical or relief officer in attendance, or, if such be not available, with the Magistrate of the District, on his own authority refuse relief to any physically capable applicant who will not thus be prepared to work by the piece.

11. In fixing the rates of piece-work, the Local Government, with whom the final decision will rest, will be guided by the consideration that, while on the one hand they are not so high as to entice away the field laborers from their proper avocations (especially during the cultivating season), or unduly attract the labor of planters and other employers, they are on the other hand not so low as to interfere with the proper nourishment of the recipients, and of such members of their families as usually receive support from them.

12. Due regard must also be had to the different capacity for hard manual labor in the various classes of the poor artisans accustomed to sedentary employment who, though physically incapable of performing tasks which the out-door laborer can get through with ease, are still anxious to accept piece-work under Public Works officers. These and other laborers in a comparatively weak condition should be segregated as a rule from the able-bodied, and employed either on detached works, or, if on the same work, on operations of a simpler and different character from the rest at rates suited to their capacity for the particular work allotted to them. As a general rule however Executive Officers should decline to receive laborers who may not be physically capable of performing 75 per cent. of the normal quantity.

13. Although in opening relief works the prices of food-grains will necessarily be higher than the normal quotations, it does not follow that the departmental rates of ordinary times should therefore be unsuitable, but as with the advance of scarcity the price of grain rises, it will be necessary to adopt such timely re-adjustment of the piece-work rates under proper sanction as will meet this contingency.

14. It will under all circumstances be desirable to encourage the formation of groups of laborers either in single or combined families (or even in village or other associated communities) who will be prepared to work by the job, appointing one of their own members as paymaster.

15. Before entering however into arrangements of this character, it may be as well where necessary to allow the people to get through their tasks separately if previously unaccustomed to piece-work or to work together, give them daily pay if necessary, and otherwise afford them every facility for understanding precisely what is expected from them for the rates offered, attending to all complaints, &c., but when once the work has been fairly started and the above arrangements have been completed, the system of weekly or other suitable periodical payments should be introduced.

16. The services of middlemen or petty contractors may also at times be put in requisition with advantage, as they can with greater facility than Government grant trifling concessions which serve in a marked manner to give life and energy to the operations; but as there may

38. None of the latter should, however, be drafted for the works of this department who cannot do 75 per cent. of the normal task, and the Engineer in charge should be authorised to return men below this in physique, taking of course due precautions for their health.

39. The able-bodied laborer being the natural distributor and economiser of the wage, no question would arise as to the support of mothers, and the feeding of infants, with the thousand and one complications and distractions, which as proved in practice have followed the adoption of the system sought to be perpetuated by this Draft Code.

40. Having endeavoured to point out the main defects of the proposed plan of relief and its bearings on this department, I will conclude with a few remarks on minor points, and then submit the text of a draft chapter on famine works which I would propose for embodiment in the Madras Public Works Code.

41. In paragraph 2 (page 1) it is observed that any work should be stopped or suspended "which does not provide employment for the unskilled labor in the tract effected by famine."

42. This injunction, I consider, highly objectionable. Not only are private individuals during famine unable to employ artizans much less than at other times, making it thus more incumbent on Government to offer them work; but to compel men cunning in various crafts to dig and delve for bare livelihood is surely a most grievous mistake, compelling the racer to do cart horse duty, and spoiling his special aptitude.

43. In my replies moreover to the queries of the Famine Commission, I was enabled to show how fallacious were the ordinarily received ideas with reference to skilled labor, and to prove* that even in the construction of buildings not less than 80 per cent. of the labor employed must necessarily be *unskilled*. Works of this kind are therefore quite as well suited for famine relief as any other.

44. Indeed it seems to me that throughout this Draft Code a perfectly needless theoretical distinction has been attempted between works supposed to be fit for famine relief and others which are not so, as if all work, great or small, buildings or earthwork, if conveniently situated in a famine tract, were not perfectly suited for relief.

45. Equal objection is also to be taken to the instruction, paragraph 15 (page 20), that "Nominal registers of the laborers should be drawn up showing the name, caste and village of each, and the date he was taken on the work," and yet that "payments are not to be made through low-paid underlings."

46. The officers of this department whom I have consulted (as were certainly all in Mysore during the famine) are unanimous that not only are such nominal rolls useless and mischievous, but as adjuncts of the task-work system must of necessity entail the entertainment of the "low-paid underlings," whose presence it is essential to avoid.

47. The disastrous results of endeavouring to carry out this theory of nominal rolls and tasks on a large work by the Famine Commissioner in Mysore is shown in the foot-note.†

* From a careful analysis of the work required to be done in erecting a Taluk Cutcherry in Mysore made by Captain C. Bowen, R.E., the percentages of the different classes of laborers employed thereon stood nearly as follows:—

	Per cent.
Skilled.—Bricklayers, Carpenters, Smiths	7
Half-Skilled.—Sawyers and Brickmoulders	4
Unskilled { Men	22
Women	67
	100

† After Lord Lytton's visit to Bangalore early in September 1877, the most strenuous efforts were made by the new Famine Commissioners, Mr. C. A. Elliot and Major S. Moncrieff (who was also made Chief Engineer), to inaugurate with the help of an enormous staff of Public Works and other officers from Northern India, the new system of relief, the chief work connected with which was the earthwork of the Mysore Railway close to Bangalore.

The main features of the system consisted, as laid down in the present Draft Code, of task-work, daily payments, and nominal rolls.

After nearly two months working I find from an Official Memorandum now before me drawn up by Major Moncrieff, that the following was the result:—

- (1) There was a want of cash-chests large enough to hold enough copper coin for the large numbers employed.
- (2) Want of Cashiers obliging officers themselves to spend long hours in paying the coolies.
- (3) Mismanagement of payments.
- (4) Difficulty of getting money from the Treasury.
- (5) Insufficiency and incapability of mustering writers who would come one day and walk off the next.
- (6) Disappearance of whole gangs in the evening not again to return.
- (7) Theft of the tools.
- (8) Officers swamped by new arrivals requiring to be paid forthwith.
- (9) General want of sanitation in the Camp Hospital, &c.
- (10) Time lost by coolies waiting to be mustered for their tools, &c., &c., &c.

This is the official account. A friend writing at the time declared the confusion on this work to be simply indescribable. Writers were kept so late each forenoon in making out the nominal rolls that meal time had arrived before any work was done. After the meal little or nothing could be got out of the coolies. The writers absconded with the rolls and officers had to remain long into the night and even up till 1 and 2 a.m. trying to pay the people, and then had to give it up in despair. The sturdy coolies lay in wait for, knocked down, and robbed the women of their pay, &c. My friend saw one of our best subordinates crying like a child finding himself utterly incapable of stemming the utter confusion.

48. On the other hand, all practical Engineers are equally of opinion that the system of piece-work which can be easily adapted so as to suit laborers working together either as village communities, families, &c., and in fact to meet cases of great differences in physique, is the only one which will work smoothly, needs only that the names of headmen elected by the gangs be recorded, enables the officer to pay with his own hand for the work done at whatever intervals may be required, short or long, gets rid of all such complications as the "Sunday wage," paragraph 14 (page 19 and 20), &c.

49. In contradistinction to the delays, vexation and malversations inherent in the task system with its nominal rolls, and all other fancied safeguard, a friend writing at the time in reference to our Mysore system of piece-work during the late famine observed:—

"Our men pay their people without the slightest hitch * * * pays the people on the (name of work) himself. It took him about 10 minutes to pay 500 people, and not one cash could get anywhere near a duffadar or any other thief."

50. Tested by this simple process, I must say the ingenuity displayed in the complicated division of labor (paragraph 9, pages 15 and 16) of the Draft Code, seems quite unnecessary, and that the inevitable result of attempting to carry it into practice must be to throw an undue strain on the supervising officers, for whom the greatest consideration should be shown in such trying times.

51. The laborers here under Class I and II are clearly those who should be drafted to the Public Works, and III, IV and V, dealt with as may be decided by the Civil and Medical Officers.

52. When Madras comes to frame her Famine Code, it is to be hoped that these and other pitfalls may be avoided, but having commented freely on the shortcomings of the Draft Code, I venture now to submit the draft of a Chapter on Famine Management applicable to the Public Works Department, nearly all of which (drawn up originally by me at the suggestion of Sir Andrew Clarke) was carefully scrutinized and approved by three distinguished Engineer Officers; it embodies the views which I have ventured to express as regards the part to be assigned to the Department of Public Works during famine.

(Signed) R. H. SANKEY, Colonel, R.E.,
Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

OOTACAMUND, 25th July 1881.

ENCLOSURE No. 2.

PROPOSED FAMINE CHAPTER FOR THE MADRAS P. W. CODE.

MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN TIMES OF SCARCITY OF FAMINE.

A.—General.

1. All expenditure incurred solely for the relief of distress among the people whether due to drought or flood or other calamity is charged in the Civil Department under the final head of account "Famine Relief."

2. When Public Works are carried on in connection with famine relief, only the infructuous outlay on them will be treated as expenditure for relief, and charged to that head under arrangements described further on.

3. It is an accepted principle that, for the relief of distress arising from scarcity, Municipal and local resources should so far as legally practicable be applied to the purpose, and subsequently that district resources should be drawn upon. When the latter have been used, resort will be had to Provincial resources; and the Imperial Government should intervene only when Provincial, District and Municipal resources prove inadequate and scarcity has deepened into famine.

4. When neither Municipal, District nor Provincial resources exist, and the re-allotment of Imperial ordinary funds becomes necessary in view to starting works for the relief of local distress, such re-allotment may, with the sanction of the Government of India, be carried out, but it must be clearly understood that neither in this case nor in that adverted to in paragraph 3 shall any expenditure on work thus carried out be admitted as a Public Works charge until specifically accepted as such by the proper authority.

B.—Works.

5. At the commencement of famine, the Local Government may, with a view to husband its resources, close any works in Class A, P. W. Budgets, which are outside the famine zone, and which may without serious inconvenience be temporarily suspended, and make such a

Saw

selection from the work in Class B (redistributing the establishment to meet the requirements) as may appear under all the circumstances to be best adapted for affording the required relief, and further may authorize the immediate commencement of such as fall within their proper powers of sanction without waiting for the sanction of the Government of India, to whom, however, a full report of the proposed operations will be submitted with the least practicable delay.

6. The amounts representing the assignments to works which may, under these instructions, have been eliminated should be at once reduced from the Public Works Department grant.

7. While thus empowered to make the needful redistribution of both the establishment and works, the Local Government will keep the Government of India early and constantly informed with regard to the changes thus deemed essential, the extra supervision that may become necessary under certain eventualities, and the financial bearings of the proposed operations.

8. It will devolve on the Chief Engineer to prepare such timely forecasts on the orders issued as may be needed for keeping the Local Government fully informed regarding the financial liabilities thus imposed, and the preparation of redistribution and other statements calling for the early sanction of the Government of India.

9. It is assumed that the budget programme has entered in it under Classes A and B all the works which may be needed to meet the contingency of famine; but should this not be the case, and it is considered indispensable by reason of this deficiency or otherwise that certain small works, not absolutely requiring professional supervision, should be opened for relief the Chief Engineer on being required to do so shall place one or more officers of his department at the disposal of the Revenue Department to aid Collectors by their advice in reference to such works. It is however distinctly to be understood that no work of this character shall individually exceed Rs. 10,000, and that any assignments made therefor shall be at once reported.

10. In carrying out relief operations, it will be borne in mind that, with all descriptions of work which may be susceptible of setting out and measurement, the system of payment by results must as far as possible be enforced, and the person in charge of the work may, after consultation with the medical or relief officer in attendance, or, if such be not available, with the Magistrate of the District, on his own authority refuse relief to any physically capable applicant who will not thus be prepared to work by the piece.

11. In fixing the rates of piece-work, the Local Government, with whom the final decision will rest, will be guided by the consideration that, while on the one hand they are not so high as to entice away the field laborers from their proper avocations (especially during the cultivating season), or unduly attract the labor of planters and other employers, they are on the other hand not so low as to interfere with the proper nourishment of the recipients, and of such members of their families as usually receive support from them.

12. Due regard must also be had to the different capacity for hard manual labor in the various classes of the poor artisans accustomed to sedentary employment who, though physically incapable of performing tasks which the out-door laborer can get through with ease, are still anxious to accept piece-work under Public Works officers. These and other laborers in a comparatively weak condition should be segregated as a rule from the able-bodied, and employed either on detached works, or, if on the same work, on operations of a simpler and different character from the rest at rates suited to their capacity for the particular work allotted to them. As a general rule however Executive Officers should decline to receive laborers who may not be physically capable of performing 75 per cent. of the normal quantity.

13. Although in opening relief works the prices of food-grains will necessarily be higher than the normal quotations, it does not follow that the departmental rates of ordinary times should therefore be unsuitable, but as with the advance of scarcity the price of grain rises, it will be necessary to adopt such timely re-adjustment of the piece-work rates under proper sanction as will meet this contingency.

14. It will under all circumstances be desirable to encourage the formation of groups of laborers either in single or combined families (or even in village or other associated communities) who will be prepared to work by the job, appointing one of their own members as paymaster.

15. Before entering however into arrangements of this character, it may be as well where necessary to allow the people to get through their tasks separately if previously unaccustomed to piece-work or to work together, give them daily pay if necessary, and otherwise afford them every facility for understanding precisely what is expected from them for the rates offered, attending to all complaints, &c., but when once the work has been fairly started and the above arrangements have been completed, the system of weekly or other suitable periodical payments should be introduced.

16. The services of middlemen or petty contractors may also at times be put in requisition with advantage, as they can with greater facility than Government grant trifling concessions which serve in a marked manner to give life and energy to the operations; but as there may

14. On the Buckingham Canal, which was the largest undertaking in the last famine, the loss due alone to this cause is estimated at nearly 10 lakhs.

15. But as if to increase the difficulty, the instruction in paragraph 1 (page 11) shows that even the ordinary safeguards as to the value of a work may, under certain circumstances, be set aside.

16. Where no suitable schemes are in readiness, it here lays down that the "Famine Commissioner and the Chief Engineer shall in consultation devise some work," &c.; and again, paragraph 13 (page 18), projects are spoken of "which in the ordinary course of work will be probably left incomplete when the famine is over!"

17. It may safely be affirmed that not even a Hawkeshaw could improvise on a sudden works on which the slightest reliance could be placed, and to encourage a system of this kind is simply to reject the plainest teachings of every famine that has occurred in this or in any other country.

18. What, it may be inquired, can be the use of improvising useless roads which will never be finished, and irrigation which, not only will never pay, but remain for ever a burden to the tax-payers? As an example take the whole of the much lauded Bombay irrigation works commenced during the last calamity, the results of which are that of some 280,000 acres professedly commanded by the works only about 24,000 were irrigated in 1879-80 and even less, 21,000, in 1880-81; the deficit being over 25 lakhs already!

19. This "craze," as I may fairly term it, for creating large works of so-called "public utility" as the "*sine qua non*" of famine relief, is, I venture to think, based on the fundamental error that a native of India if helped through a famine by any other expedients than by giving him hard manual labor must become so demoralized at its conclusion as to necessitate his turning into a professional beggar, and a plague of society for the rest of his life.

20. I believe, however, I shall be borne out by all who are acquainted with the constitution of native society in saying that, on the conclusion of a famine, the obligations and restraints of caste would at once compel a man to fall back on his former connection and avocations, and that it is simply impossible in the way supposed to manufacture as it were "professional beggars" who are, as we all know, as much a distinct caste as any other.

21. It must also be submitted that the Famine Commission when they drew up their reports have for some unexplained reason failed to deal with two of probably the most vital questions connected with the subject of their inquiry, viz. :—

- (1) What course should be followed when in any famine-stricken tract there are no works of public utility available for execution on a sufficiently large scale?
- (2) What is the native view of the treatment of famine?

22. The result of proper consideration of these points would, I am convinced, lead to the conclusion, *first*, that no works of magnitude should be attempted when not previously thoroughly investigated and sanctioned in ordinary routine; and, *second*, that there are other methods of dealing with famine than those which have been proposed which would be both consonant with the constitution of native society, and prove far more effectual and economical than the system followed during the last calamity.

23. As regards the first of these conclusions with which I, as an Engineer, am alone directly concerned, it seems to me that we have our best, indeed sole safeguard in the ordinary budget system.

24. The present practice is to include in our yearly budgets under Class A all such schemes as have been duly sanctioned, and for which funds can be assigned for execution during the year; under Class B all similarly sanctioned works for which there are no funds, and under Class C works for which though highly desirable there are no complete estimates and no funds to spare.

25. The Provincial Budget for the current year in this Presidency consists of 29 Class A works, 62 of Class B, but none of Class C.

26. As a fact there are on our files a large number of the latter class suitable as "protective" works for famine, but it has not been considered necessary to enter them in the budget. A scheme for such has, however, very lately been submitted to the Government of India, the estimates for which aggregate 425 lakhs, and hopes are entertained that under the promised increase to the departmental establishment, it will be feasible to frame complete estimates for the whole within the next two years.

27. Till estimates have been properly framed and sanctioned, I should deprecate any attempt being made, if the Presidency be again unhappily visited by famine, to go beyond the

selection from the work in Class B (redistributing the establishment to meet the requirements) as may appear under all the circumstances to be best adapted for affording the required relief, and further may authorize the immediate commencement of such as fall within their proper powers of sanction without waiting for the sanction of the Government of India, to whom, however, a full report of the proposed operations will be submitted with the least practicable delay.

6. The amounts representing the assignments to works which may, under these instructions, have been eliminated should be at once reduced from the Public Works Department grant.

7. While thus empowered to make the needful redistribution of both the establishment and works, the Local Government will keep the Government of India early and constantly informed with regard to the changes thus deemed essential, the extra supervision that may become necessary under certain eventualities, and the financial bearings of the proposed operations.

8. It will devolve on the Chief Engineer to prepare such timely forecasts on the orders issued as may be needed for keeping the Local Government fully informed regarding the financial liabilities thus imposed, and the preparation of redistribution and other statements calling for the early sanction of the Government of India.

9. It is assumed that the budget programme has entered in it under Classes A and B all the works which may be needed to meet the contingency of famine; but should this not be the case, and it is considered indispensable by reason of this deficiency or otherwise that certain small works, not absolutely requiring professional supervision, should be opened for relief the Chief Engineer on being required to do so shall place one or more officers of his department at the disposal of the Revenue Department to aid Collectors by their advice in reference to such works. It is however distinctly to be understood that no work of this character shall individually exceed Rs. 10,000, and that any assignments made therefor shall be at once reported.

10. In carrying out relief operations, it will be borne in mind that, with all descriptions of work which may be susceptible of setting out and measurement, the system of payment by results must as far as possible be enforced, and the person in charge of the work may, after consultation with the medical or relief officer in attendance, or, if such be not available, with the Magistrate of the District, on his own authority refuse relief to any physically capable applicant who will not thus be prepared to work by the piece.

11. In fixing the rates of piece-work, the Local Government, with whom the final decision will rest, will be guided by the consideration that, while on the one hand they are not so high as to entice away the field laborers from their proper avocations (especially during the cultivating season), or unduly attract the labor of planters and other employers, they are on the other hand not so low as to interfere with the proper nourishment of the recipients, and of such members of their families as usually receive support from them.

12. Due regard must also be had to the different capacity for hard manual labor in the various classes of the poor artisans accustomed to sedentary employment who, though physically incapable of performing tasks which the out-door laborer can get through with ease, are still anxious to accept piece-work under Public Works officers. These and other laborers in a comparatively weak condition should be segregated as a rule from the able-bodied, and employed either on detached works, or, if on the same work, on operations of a simpler and different character from the rest at rates suited to their capacity for the particular work allotted to them. As a general rule however Executive Officers should decline to receive laborers who may not be physically capable of performing 75 per cent. of the normal quantity.

13. Although in opening relief works the prices of food-grains will necessarily be higher than the normal quotations, it does not follow that the departmental rates of ordinary times should therefore be unsuitable, but as with the advance of scarcity the price of grain rises, it will be necessary to adopt such timely re-adjustment of the piece-work rates under proper sanction as will meet this contingency.

14. It will under all circumstances be desirable to encourage the formation of groups of laborers either in single or combined families (or even in village or other associated communities) who will be prepared to work by the job, appointing one of their own members as paymaster.

15. Before entering however into arrangements of this character, it may be as well where necessary to allow the people to get through their tasks separately if previously unaccustomed to piece-work or to work together, give them daily pay if necessary, and otherwise afford them every facility for understanding precisely what is expected from them for the rates offered, attending to all complaints, &c., but when once the work has been fairly started and the above arrangements have been completed, the system of weekly or other suitable periodical payments should be introduced.

16. The services of middlemen or petty contractors may also at times be put in requisition with advantage, as they can with greater facility than Government grant trifling concessions which serve in a marked manner to give life and energy to the operations; but as there may

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

13th August 1881, Nos. 1,188-1,189.

READ THE FOLLOWING PAPERS:—

No. 184. From W. R. CORNISH, Esq., F.R.C.S., C.I.E., Surgeon-General with the Government of Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Madras, dated Ootacamund, 27th June 1881, No. O-33.

WITH reference to G.O., No. 723, of the 9th May, I have the honor to state my opinion that the scales of grain wages proposed for the several scales of laborers in the Famine Code appear to be generally sufficient, though it is very doubtful if the money rates attached to the several scales would be sufficient in famine times to purchase the pulse, condiments, salt and vegetables which would be essential to the support of the laborers. The rate of money allowance for the usual adjuncts of a grain dietary would have to be considered in reference to ruling prices in each district or locality in which famine might appear.

2. Besides the grain allowance, a working adult man in famine times would require at the least 4 ounces of pulse, $\frac{1}{2}$ of salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce of pepper or condiment, 1 ounce of ghee or oil, and a daily modicum of green herbs or vegetable, with corresponding quantities for women and children. Whether the arbitrary sums of $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of an anna would admit of the purchase of these articles, or of their nutritive equivalents, and of firewood for cooking, is a question that can only be determined by actual experience of rates and prices in different localities during periods of actual famine.

3. I should recommend, therefore, that in any Famine Code the scale of money payment to eke out the deficiencies of a fixed grain ration be left to the local authorities to decide, there being a general understanding that the quantities of subsidiary food to be bought out of the money are not less than those stated in the preceding paragraph.

4. I cannot agree with the statement in paragraph 13 of the Code that the laborers in Classes 3 and 4 would necessarily require less sustenance than those of Classes 1 and 2. Their enfeebled condition and inability to do a full day's work might be due to previous privation, the only effective remedy for which would be rest and judicious feeding. The attempt to work any classes but the able-bodied in famine times is, in my opinion, a mistake, which, if there be any truth in physiological science, is most certain to be attended by great disaster to human life. The present code is no doubt the outcome of certain experiences gained during the late famine, but it should not be forgotten that, as regards the saving of life, the various labor diets resorted to in Mysore and Madras were not in any way efficacious. I do not wish it to be inferred that I would abolish all labor tests for famine relief, but that as regards the enfeebled and wasted, whether old or young, much discretion should be exercised in the exaction of work as a condition of relief.

5. Although the subject is not specially referred to me, I would point out that under the new scheme of Medical Administration, the Civil Surgeons of Districts (in Chapter I, paragraphs 17 and 18) should make all the arrangements for medical relief of the famine-stricken under the immediate orders and direction of the Civil Surgeon-General of the Province, who, on requisition being made, would

supply the extra medical establishment considered necessary for the famine camps and relief centres. Again, in Chapter II, paragraph 18, the regulations for the management of hospitals should be drawn up by the Famine Commission and Surgeon-General of the Province instead of the Sanitary Commissioner, the regulation and control of hospitals and medical subordinates being a portion of the duties of the Surgeon-General in charge of Civil Medical Administration.

No. 185. From the Hon. H. E. SULLIVAN, First Member of the Board of Revenue, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Madras, dated Chepauk, 15th July 1881, No. A-I.

I HAVE the honor to retransmit the copy of the Draft Code of Famine Relief forwarded for my perusal and remarks with G.O., dated 9th May 1881, No. 723, with my observations thereon entered in the margin.

2. As a set of rules embodying the main principles which should govern the administration of famine relief, the Draft Code, except where I have recorded a dissent, may, I think, be accepted as on the whole representing the views arrived at by the late Famine Commission; but, in my opinion, it is rather too ponderous, goes too much into detail, and is too rigid in its requirements to serve as an exact model for the preparation of a manual for the guidance of officers who may hereafter be employed on this duty. Section 113, Part I of the Report of the Famine Commission, contemplates the framing by each Government of such a code adapted to local administrative systems and requirements, and I would venture to suggest that the time has arrived for the Madras Government to direct this to be done. Perhaps I may be pardoned the further liberty of suggesting that the work should be entrusted to a Committee of selected officers who from actual experience gained in the administration of relief during the last famine would be in a position to draw up a set of simple and practical rules for the guidance of those who may hereafter have to deal with the subject.

ENCLOSURE.

Copy of Draft Famine Relief Code with remarks entered in the margin.

No. 186. Memorandum from Colonel R. H. SANKEY, R. E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Ootacamund, 27th July 1881, No. 320.

ADVERTING to G.O., 723, dated 9th May 1881 (Revenue), and to the correspondence quoted in the margin, I have the honor to submit herewith my remarks on the Draft Famine Code of the Government of India, together with copies of the draft of the proposed Famine Chapter for the Madras Public Works Code which is referred to in the "Remarks."

2. I would suggest that the framing of a Famine Code for Madras in which the duties of the several departments of Government are to be clearly laid down should be referred to an influential Committee for early attention.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

REMARKS on the Draft Famine Code forwarded with G.O. of 9th May 1881, No. 723 (Revenue).

This draft reads more like a general disquisition on famine management than a Code, and is moreover confused in its general arrangement.

2. As an instance of these defects, see pages 7 to 9, where under the general heading *Duties of the Officers of the Public Works Department*, we have, paragraph 13, an instruction that the District Engineer is as much bound to see that the people employed on relief

works "do not starve as the Collector is;" and again—"It is essential that hearty and friendly co-operation should exist between the Civil and Public Works Departments." Paragraph 14 deals with the duties of the *Police*; paragraphs 15 and 16 with the *Sanitary Commissioner*; paragraphs 17 and 18 with the *Civil Surgeon*; and it is only in paragraph 19 we again find some allusion, and that very faint, to Public Works officers. Here it is simply an injunction hardly required to Canal officers that they should "at an early stage report to Government the extent to which the available canal water is being utilized."

3. There is nothing really in all this defining as a Code should do the duties of the officers of this department.

4. It must be borne in mind that on the declaration of famine, the officers have to undertake functions sometimes entirely foreign to their ordinary departmental avocations. They have, paragraph 19 (page 6), "to realize that for a time new duties are required from them, and that the system on which works are conducted in ordinary years must now be modified," &c.

5. A Code to be of use in meeting new conditions such as intended should, it is thought, convey in terse language precise instructions as to what is required under varying circumstances, and the subject-matter should be sectioned off and indexed in a manner to facilitate reference.

6. The main principles once decided on there should be no difficulty in framing such a Code, but I confess that it is precisely here that the present draft seems to me open to the gravest objection.

7. In regard to the work which is to be provided, it is laid down in paragraph 9 (page 5), the Secretary to Government, Public Works, is to "keep up a scheme of works suitable for relief" * * * each work being of "permanent utility" * * * "calculated to produce a profit" * * * one such work being situated in each taluk liable to famine" * * * "supplying employment for six months, &c." "As any works on this list are constructed in ordinary course, the Secretary, Public Works Department, will be responsible for supplying the vacant place by other works situated in the same locality."

8. As an Engineer nothing would please me more than to have works of "permanent utility" being investigated and worked out in a constantly succeeding series, and were such a plan practicable, even famine might be thought to carry at least one advantage in its train, but without any desire to be hypercritical, I confess myself unable to see how the system can be reconciled with the existing facts.

9. On the opinions which I have collected from the officers (Superintending and Executive Engineers) of this department to whom I made special reference, it appears that whereas a great deal of work could, with the needful increase of establishment, be provided and continually kept going in such favored districts as the Godavari, Kistna, Tanjore, Nellore and South Arcot Divisions, the tract most exposed to famine, comprising chiefly Bellary, Kurnool, Cuddapah, &c., does not hold out hopes of our being able to devise more than a very few local schemes, if indeed any, of the character contemplated.

10. Two schemes of at present somewhat doubtful value have been entered in a programme lately submitted to the Government of India for this portion of the Presidency, and may eventually be sanctioned, but even were it possible to frame schemes for works of assured "permanent utility," it surely would be unwise to keep such hanging on for years in order to carry them out during famine at double the normal cost! A scheme of light tramways may prove feasible for distribution of grain in famine, but they can hardly be expected to be profitable.

11. Of course small works connected with the repairs of tanks and roads, clearances of channels, &c., will be more or less available, but this is a class of work on which direct professional supervision would be thrown away, and which, however otherwise suited to famine relief, are in any case expressly kept out of sight in this Code.

12. Most of the officers consulted by me, and who had experience of the work done in the last famine, consider that the work so carried out was not worth more than half that at ordinary times, while others think it did not exceed three-fourths of the normal value.

13. We have thus two facts to face:

- (1), that within the famine zone in this Presidency there are very few, if any, works of the character contemplated in this Draft Code which would be undertaken in ordinary times; and,
- (2), that the work such as it is if carried out in famine must be executed at greatly enhanced outlay.

14. On the Buckingham Canal, which was the largest undertaking in the last famine, the loss due alone to this cause is estimated at nearly 10 lakhs.

15. But as if to increase the difficulty, the instruction in paragraph 1 (page 11) shows that even the ordinary safeguards as to the value of a work may, under certain circumstances, be set aside.

16. Where no suitable schemes are in readiness, it here lays down that the "Famine Commissioner and the Chief Engineer shall in consultation devise some work," &c.; and again, paragraph 13 (page 18), projects are spoken of "which in the ordinary course of work will be probably left incomplete when the famine is over!"

17. It may safely be affirmed that not even a Hawkeshaw could improvise on a sudden works on which the slightest reliance could be placed, and to encourage a system of this kind is simply to reject the plainest teachings of every famine that has occurred in this or in any other country.

18. What, it may be inquired, can be the use of improvising useless roads which will never be finished, and irrigation which, not only will never pay, but remain for ever a burden to the tax-payers? As an example take the whole of the much lauded Bombay irrigation works commenced during the last calamity, the results of which are that of some 280,000 acres professedly commanded by the works only about 24,000 were irrigated in 1879-80 and even less, 21,000, in 1880-81; the deficit being over 25 lakhs already!

19. This "craze," as I may fairly term it, for creating large works of so-called "public utility" as the "*sine qua non*" of famine relief, is, I venture to think, based on the fundamental error that a native of India if helped through a famine by any other expedients than by giving him hard manual labor must become so demoralized at its conclusion as to necessitate his turning into a professional beggar, and a plague of society for the rest of his life.

20. I believe, however, I shall be borne out by all who are acquainted with the constitution of native society in saying that, on the conclusion of a famine, the obligations and restraints of caste would at once compel a man to fall back on his former connection and avocations, and that it is simply impossible in the way supposed to manufacture as it were "professional beggars" who are, as we all know, as much a distinct caste as any other.

21. It must also be submitted that the Famine Commission when they drew up their reports have for some unexplained reason failed to deal with two of probably the most vital questions connected with the subject of their inquiry, viz. :—

- (1) What course should be followed when in any famine-stricken tract there are no works of public utility available for execution on a sufficiently large scale?
- (2) What is the native view of the treatment of famine?

22. The result of proper consideration of these points would, I am convinced, lead to the conclusion, *first*, that no works of magnitude should be attempted when not previously thoroughly investigated and sanctioned in ordinary routine; and, *second*, that there are other methods of dealing with famine than those which have been proposed which would be both consonant with the constitution of native society, and prove far more effectual and economical than the system followed during the last calamity.

23. As regards the first of these conclusions with which I, as an Engineer, am alone directly concerned, it seems to me that we have our best, indeed sole safeguard in the ordinary budget system.

24. The present practice is to include in our yearly budgets under Class A all such schemes as have been duly sanctioned, and for which funds can be assigned for execution during the year; under Class B all similarly sanctioned works for which there are no funds, and under Class C works for which though highly desirable there are no complete estimates and no funds to spare.

25. The Provincial Budget for the current year in this Presidency consists of 29 Class A works, 62 of Class B, but none of Class C.

26. As a fact there are on our files a large number of the latter class suitable as "protective" works for famine, but it has not been considered necessary to enter them in the budget. A scheme for such has, however, very lately been submitted to the Government of India, the estimates for which aggregate 425 lakhs, and hopes are entertained that under the promised increase to the departmental establishment, it will be feasible to frame complete estimates for the whole within the next two years.

27. Till estimates have been properly framed and sanctioned, I should deprecate any attempt being made, if the Presidency be again unhappily visited by famine, to go beyond the