

Govt. of {1891} Madras.
MILITARY.

To
THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated May, .

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., May 1891, No. ,

MAY.
Nos. ,

Commissariat Department—
Rations.

British Troops.—Observations and orders of the Government of India on the subject of the supply of food to small parties of—travelling by rail in India and Burma, communicated to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and departments concerned for information and guidance,

With orders

No 1284 W. of 9 May 1891

Recorded

Ad. A.C.S.

Consig. Engr for Rys

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

Commissariat Department—Rations.

Read the following paper:—

No. *From Major-General E. H. H. COLLEN, C.I.E., Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, to the Adjutant-General in India; dated Fort William, the 26th March 1891, No. 1103-D.*

Commissariat Department—Rations.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 384-Camp, dated 8th February 1890, on the subject of the supply of food to British troops travelling by rail in India and Burma. It is said that for troops travelling by troop-trains, or in large parties by ordinary trains, who halt by day and travel by night, the Commander-in-Chief thinks the present system of supply and issue of rations at the several camps to be adequate; but that some arrangements are necessary with respect to small parties on escort or other urgent duty, who may be under orders to travel continuously by day and night. His Excellency suggests the introduction of a system of coupons payable at Government treasuries, upon which soldiers can obtain meals at railway refreshment bars without any money transactions taking place. Each meal to consist of a plate of cold meat, half pound loaf of bread, and a pint of tea or coffee, valued at six annas.

2. This proposal has been carefully considered in communication with the managers of the principal railways in India; and I am now, in reply, to say, for the information of His Excellency, that although the Government of India recognise the desirability of arranging that a sufficient supply of wholesome food should be ensured to men in small parties travelling night and day, they regret that the difficulties which are involved in the proposal, more especially in connection with the redemption of the coupons and audit of the accounts connected therewith, preclude them from accepting it.

3. The only practicable plan appears to be to provide the soldier with sufficient money for his food on such journeys.

From Colonel P. H. F. HARRIS, C.B., Deputy Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department; dated Fort William, 8th February 1890, No. 384-Camp (Commissariat Department—Rations).

With reference to the correspondence noted in the margin,* I have the honor, by direction of the Commander-in-Chief, to forward the accompanying letter† from the Surgeon-General, Her Majesty's Forces, on the subject of the supply of food to British troops when travelling by rail, and to state that, in

* Military Department letters, Nos. 4218-D and 4540-D, dated 9th October 1888 and 23rd October 1889, respectively.

† No. 2723, dated 10th July 1889.

His Excellency's opinion, the proposal to attach a refreshment car to each train is unworkable both on account of the expense and the difficulty of cooking and distributing the food.

2. For troops travelling by troop-trains, or in large parties by ordinary trains, who halt by day and travel by night, the Commander-in-Chief thinks the present system of supply and issue of rations at the several camps to be quite adequate, the men being only on the road from about 5 P.M. to 8 A.M.; but with respect to small parties on escort or other urgent duty, who are ordered to travel continuously both by day and night, some arrangements appear necessary to ensure the men getting a sufficient supply of wholesome food.

3. It is often impossible, either on account of the great heat, or the distance, of the cantonments from the railway stations, to supply these small parties with cooked rations to take with them which would keep good, or for their being messes at the military stations *en route*, and in this case ration-money at the rate of 4 annas 6 pies per diem is allowed (Army Regulations, India, Vol. V, Para. 337). This amount, however, is notoriously insufficient when it is remembered that the lowest rate at which the refreshment contractors will supply a soldier with a plate of meat, half a pound of bread, and a pint of tea or coffee is 6 annas, and the consequence is that these men, owing to their want of means, at present frequently go without food for long periods, or resort to that sold by Native dealers on the railway platforms, thereby often laying the seeds of disease.

4. His Excellency considers it imperatively necessary that it should be ensured that each man, when travelling by rail, has at least two good meals a day, and this is arranged for in the case of those troops who proceed to the several rest-camps; and to do the same for those men who perform the journey by rail without a break, the Commander-in-Chief proposes, for the favorable consideration of Government, the following scheme, the slight extra expense of which he feels confident would be well laid out, as it is apparently of the greatest consequence as regards the health of the men.

5. The Commander-in-Chief suggests that a system of coupons be introduced upon which soldiers can obtain meals at any railway refreshment bar without any money transactions taking place, each meal to consist of the following:—

One plate of cold meat,

|

One half-pound loaf of bread,

One pint of tea or coffee,

valued at 6 annas. These coupons, it is thought, might be made payable on Government treasuries, when the proprietors of refreshment rooms could have no objection to receive them.

6. A certain number of these coupons numbered would be kept in District Staff offices, and on the requisition for the warrants for the parties detached on *urgent* duty, the number of coupons required, at the rate of two per man per diem (with the exception of the day on which the journey is commenced, for which cooked rations will be issued, if the weather will admit of their keeping good), should be demanded.

7. The number of men who travel in small parties is large, and in the Bengal Presidency last year between the 1st July 1888 and the 30th June 1889 no less than 10,667 men were at times on the move (*vide* statement "A" attached). Of these, however, only a small proportion travelled under urgent instructions and consequently drew the money allowance in lieu of rations. Every effort has been made to ascertain what the extra cost would be, but the Commissariat Department is unable to give the exact amount passed under the provision of Para. 337, Army Regulations, India, Vol. V, as claims to compensation in lieu of rations are in most cases merely supported by the certificate prescribed by para. 343 of the instructions for the payment of British troops, and these show nothing beyond the fact that the men were in a situation in which the Commissariat Department could not supply them with rations in kind; but in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief the extra cost of the proposed measure would not exceed Rs. 1,200 annually, and His Excellency trusts the Government of India will be pleased to sanction the necessary steps being taken to carry out the proposal.

8. I am to add that the Commander-in-Chief intends addressing Commanding Officers and impressing upon them the desirability of arrangements being made on the move of the regiment from camp, or of individuals departing on detached duty, for each man's water-bottle being filled with tea and biscuits supplied him to be placed in his haversack. In barracks the regimental (institute) coffee shop, and in camp the khansamahs could supply this, the expense being met from regimental funds.

A.
STATEMENT showing the number of men who travelled in detached parties by rail in Bengal between 1st July 1888 and 30th January 1889, as furnished by General Officers Commanding Districts.

[Districts.]	Escorts or small parties of British soldiers who travelled solely within the command.			Those which left the command and did not return.			Those which left the command and did return.			Total number of			Remarks.
	Number.	Strength.	Number of days.	Number.	Strength.	Number of days.	Number.	Strength.	Number of days.	Parties.	Strength.	Days.	
Allahabad	107	252	(a) 22	116	386	(a) 594	80	207	332	303	845	...	(a) Cannot be furnished.
Bundelkhand	18	40	296	81	244	248	44	100	366	143	384	938	
Meerut	111	563	114½	106	285	116	86	173	42½	303	1,021	910	
Narbinda	74	129	198	65	77	520	23	38	546	162	244	273	
Oudh	87	331	137	97	360	216	69	216	132	253	907	1,264	
Peshawar	131	651	440	80	187	2120	31	65	132	242	903	485	(b) Portions of a day reckoned as one day.
Presidency	220	713	32	265	785	342	24	75	136	509	1,573	2,752	
Quetta	6	18	231½	35	118	676½	10	46	189½	51	182	570	
Rawalpindi	263	672	190	285	667	408	63	128	318	611	1,467	1,097½	Of these, say 1,200 travelled urgent and received allowance for two days each = Rs. 675.
Rohilkhand	124	506	Nil	225	691	275	73	170	215	422	1,367	916	At 12 annas each for each day instead of 4 annas 6 pies, this would be = Rs. 1,800, or an extra expense of Rs. 1,125.
Sirhind	Nil	Nil	189	171	313	825½	8	47	201	179	360	490	Say 12,000, including Allahabad District.
Lahore	209	624		285	666		72	224		566	1,414	1,215½	
Total	1,350	4,399	1,850	1,811	4,779	6,340½	583	1,489	2,720	3,744	10,667	10,910½	

No. 1103-D.

Copy, with copy of that to which it is a reply, forwarded to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Military Department, for the information of the Governor in Council.

* * * * *

(By Order.)

FORT WILLIAM,
26th March 1891.

(Signed) A. C. TOKER, Col.,
Dy. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. . ORDER THEREON, 2nd May 1891, No. 2504

Communicated, for information, to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and departments concerned, and for guidance.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. KENNEY-HERBERT, Brigdr.-Genl.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Adjutant-General.

- „ Commissary-General.
- „ Principal Medical Officer, Her Majesty's Forces, Madras.
- „ Controller of Military Accounts.
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26th March 1891.

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No. . ORDER THEREON, 2nd May 1891, No. 2506.

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Secretary to Government.

To the Adjutant-General.

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Exd. J. Henricus.