

Gobt. of {1891} Madras.
REVENUE.

Issued.

Recd.

Encl

G.O., 23rd July 1891, No. 662.

JULY.

Relief works.

Passing orders on the question of task work to be exacted from and the rate of wages to be paid to persons employed on — in the North Arcot and Chingleput districts.

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23RD JULY 1891, No. 662, REVENUE.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 7th July 1891, No. 391 :—

MR. CLOGSTOUN.

Read—the following letter from W. J. H. LE FANU, Esq., Collector of North Arcot, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 2nd July 1891, Ref. on Bd. No. 1508 :—

With reference to paragraph 2 of Board's Proceedings, dated 20th instant, Mis. No 3092, I have the honour to forward copy of Mr. Watson's letter No. C-48, dated 23rd instant, to the Superintending Engineer and of his foot-note to me, and to ask if any further inquiry is required. I would respectfully submit that the proper person to supply an explanation on the subject is the Executive Engineer. He appears to have given Mr. Lazarus instructions, and Mr. Lazarus appears to have been somewhat remiss. Both Mr. Buckley and I have been recently in Maderpāk and our presence is required elsewhere.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From C. J. K. WATSON, Esq., Executive Engineer, K.Z.I. works, to the Superintending Engineer, IV Circle, dated Arambakam, 23rd June 1891, No. C-48.

I regret to have to report that it is useless trying to work any longer with Mr. H. S. Lazarus, Supervisor, as apart from hopeless indolence he has not the very slightest idea of obeying any order given to him.

Up to the end of May, he was in charge of the Yerpēd section and after incessant warnings, matters culminated in my commencing a report to you on his incessant and various irregularities. I need not trouble you with the whole list of them, but will give two of the last.

(a) With the Dewan's consent I had ordered a small godown to be built in the compound of my residence at Yerpēd, a lump sum of fifty rupees (Rs. 50) being fixed for it not to be exceeded. Late one evening a bill was sent over by Mr. Lazarus for payment then and there. I said it could wait till checked in the office next day. When this was done, I returned it to Mr. Lazarus, as it was not signed by the contractor. It came back later signed, but the amount increased from Rs. 36 to about Rs. 46. The rates all round have been raised, some as much as 50 per cent. On calling for explanation, he said he thought I had to pay it out of my own pocket, so he meant to make the contractor accept Rs. 36, but when he found Government had to pay, he had put on "proper" rates. I reprimanded him, but utterly failed to make him see anything wrong in the transaction.

(b) He applied several times for leave to build an office or an inspection shed at Yerpēd. I refused to sanction any till you had disposed of the references on the general question of inspection sheds and office tents for overseers. He asked again if he could not put up "just a small one, costing about Rs. 50, and was told—'No.'" He then proceeded to build one (a very small one, costing only Rs. 20), and when it was completed, he sent in the bill, and when explanation was called for, he said he had done it, "in anticipation of sanction." Government will see (1) that this was not "in anticipation of sanction;" but in direct opposition to orders and also (2) that if it had been only "in anticipation of sanction" that that would have been inexcusable at a place close to my head-quarters during a month when, owing to various causes, I spent more than half my time there.

He seemed so thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of being reported and pledged the strictest attention to duty in future; that I gave him one more chance, transferring him as a punishment to Maderpāk for charge of works in the detached portion of the zemindari lying between Maderpāk and the Pulicat lake; and the following will show how little he has availed himself of his opportunity.

2. In May, after receipt of the Board of Revenue's orders fixing tasks, I issued a circular reiterating the old order that payments were to be made on every work at intervals not exceeding 7 days at most, but specially emphasising the principle that I alone had power to punish coolies by fine for short work and laying down the procedure to be adopted in case of short work, viz., that the Overseer should at once report the case to me, and keep back one or more days' pay of any gang doing short work sufficient to enable me to inflict, if I thought right, the maximum penalty allowed by the Famine Code, i.e., an amount equal to a reduction of pay to the next lower class. Mr. Lazarus got this circular in the Yerped section, but on arrival at Maderpāk, wrote about it and was sent my No. 286-S., dated 5th June 1891 (extract enclosure A). This he received on the 18th.

3. Up to date no works have been sanctioned in this section except the Maderpāk-Arumbakam road 8 miles long, and of which the Collector does not wish the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to be done at present, and the first mile out of Maderpāk requires no attention. Mr. Lazarus had therefore a charge of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road only. Mr. Smith, Executive Engineer, went over the proposed line with him on the 2nd instant, and on the 4th Mr. H. S. Lazarus started work with 140 coolies. These ran up to 248 on 5th and 584 on 6th. I at once inquired if full tasks were being enforced and was told "the coolies have been repeatedly informed of what is expected from them" (see enclosure B).

I relieved Mr. Smith on the 4th, and returned to head-quarters for submission of monthly accounts, arranging for the commencement of Ragi-Gunta and Kopedu road, and to arrange for the necessary redistribution of sections.

On 12th, I came out to this side and went over the Nambakam, Pendalur and Perandur groups of tanks and the proposed road from the Tiruvallūr and Uttukotai road to Pennalur and on to Maderpāk, arriving there on the 18th. I then found that Mr. Lazarus had not nearly finished the $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road (he said he would have completed it by the middle of July) notwithstanding the heavy expenditure (the coolies numbering upwards of 1,200 daily); and I called his attention to the fact that the estimate was only Rs. 2,380 for the whole 8 miles. At this he laughed and said it was "Famine" expenditure! I pointed out that famine rates gave As. 1-11 for As. 3 worth of work, so that the road should be completed within the estimate, even after feeding the children and similar extra charges.

I asked him if he was enforcing tasks, at which he quoted my words (see enclosure A) "Executive Engineer alone has power to fine for short work;" he, however, omitted the other portion about holding back some pay, pending my orders, in all cases of short work, and the words of the original circular to "report at once, keeping back, &c." Further inquiry brought out the facts.

On 4th work began.

On 7th (Sunday) there was no work, but the previous 3 days' work was measured up. The gangs had on the average turned out $\frac{1}{3}$ of the task given. Nevertheless they were paid at full rates, nothing being held back and no report being made to me.

Between that day 7th and my arrival at Maderpāk on the 18th, not a single measurement was taken, but payments were made at full rates. Although Mr. Lazarus had only $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to look after, he did not check-measure a single gang!!

Work has now been measured up and the results are (an example):—

Gang.	Quantity of work now turned out.	Task as per Board of Revenue's orders.	Percentage of task performed.
1	779-50	3,960	19
2	626-75	3,960	17
3	640-50	3,996	18
4	863-95	3,960	22
6	1,093-00	3,780	29
7	261-00	3,864	7
9	1,529-50	3,960	40
18	1,978-00	3,912	51

while no measuring should be required to detect such a gang as No. 7 in above list.

His last action is of a different nature (see enclosure C). He has "dismissed about 1,000 coolies for want of work." I do not believe he has done anything of the sort; but that the coolies have struck now, that they have found themselves fined for short work. Had he thought that they should be dismissed, he would naturally have applied to me for orders, as we are just now in constant daily communication and I would not have allowed their dismissal. I have applied to Revenue authorities for more work, and if this portion of the road in hand had been done, which it is not, I should not have hesitated to carry it on for a half mile or so to give employment till further orders were received.

4. I have this morning wired to you asking you to suspend Mr. Lazarus and to send me another man. I have ordered Mr. G. S. Kristnasami Iyer, overseer, to relieve him and to carry on the work on this section as well as his own (Chavali) till another man comes; and have taken Surveyor Dorasamy off investigation to assist overseer for the present.

5. I could give two other instances of wilful disobedience on the part of Mr. Lazarus during the current week if necessary, besides any amount of cases previous to his transfer to Yerped; but I think I have said enough to establish beyond doubt the fact that Mr. Lazarus does not obey and has no intention of obeying my orders. A copy of this has been forwarded to Mr. H. S. Lazarus for any reply he may wish to make.

Endorsement by C. J. K. WATSON, Esq., Executive Engineer, Kalahasti Zemindari works.

Forwarded to the Collector of North Arcot, with reference to Board's No. 3092, Mis., dated 20th June 1891, copy received direct, and Executive Engineer thinks Collector will agree with him (1) that all reasonable arrangements were made to enforce proper tasks, but that with such a subordinate no arrangements whatever could prove sufficient; (2) that as soon as Executive Engineer has seen the transfer properly effected there is no necessity for his remaining longer on the road as Kristnasami Iyer has never shown himself other than implicitly obedient to orders; (3) that Executive Engineer would have failed in his duty if he had inspected the road before the 18th (which by the way is two days before his programme time), it being but a little work and in charge of a supervisor of long service on regular establishment, and if he had not first inspected (a) work lately taken over from temporary overseer Gnanapragasam (who has been reported for neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, and has now been absent without leave since 28th May 1891), (b) works under temporary overseer Mr. Pereira, a thoroughly deserving, honest, hard-working man, but a man who cannot level and set out Irrigation works, apart from the fact (c) of the Board's letter, dated 29th May 1891, No. 311, wanting to know how many coolies could be still employed for a month on each block of works in the southern sections, while also Executive Engineer would not have cared to send President, Local Fund Board, his estimate for Pennalur branch road without first inspecting it.

Resolution—dated 7th July 1891, No. 391.

The Commissioner has examined the accounts of work done on the Maderpak-Arumbakam road during the week ending Saturday 4th instant and has inspected portions of the road.

The numbers employed during the week amounted to about 1,000 and the value of work turned out to Rs. 252. The cost of paying the coolies at third-class rates for the work done during the week amounts to Rs. 476 or Rs. 224 in excess of the value of the work turned out. The great majority of the coolies are able-bodied and the neglect to turn out work sufficient to have earned third-class wages is due simply and solely to idleness. They have failed to exert themselves in any way in the belief that whatever they did, or left undone, they were sure of the minimum, i.e., the third-class wage.

2. Through delay in preparing the necessary accounts, it was not possible to disburse payment for work for the week ending 4th instant until the 6th and a number of the gangs were not paid until 12 o'clock on that date, thus losing a day and-a-half of their time, for under the altered arrangements to be described below, the gangs one and all refused to work. The Commissioner, therefore, sanctioned the disbursement to them of pay for the work at third-class rates, no payment being made for the Sunday, and all men who were paid before 12 o'clock on Monday being fined one day's pay. It would have been impossible to have kept the gangs without pay until the Commissioner had consulted Mr. Watson, as he would have wished to do.

3. As there was insufficient work remaining undone on the Maderpak-Aram-bakam road to give employment to the large numbers on the rolls, and as the estimate for the road from Arur to Timmanayudupet, sanctioned in Board's Proceedings, dated 3rd June 1891, No. 321, was not ready, the Commissioner sanctioned the commencement of earthwork on the Manellur tank. Earthwork on tank repairs is easily tasked, and this gives this description of work great advantages over road-work as carried on on the Maderpak road, which consisted not in breaking metal or stacking gravel, but merely in the cutting of side drains with a little earthwork here and there. The coolies were at the time of payment informed that in future while the famine rates would be the maximum wage there would cease to be any minimum wage, and that as prescribed in section 131 of the Famine Code their pay would be proportioned to the work actually done, half pay only being given for half work. They were at the same time informed that work was obtainable on the Government works at Palavakam, Arudur and Uttukottei if they preferred to go there and work at the rates which Government villagers were receiving.

4. The result of the Commissioner's action has been that the whole of the gangs have struck work. As no member of a gang, however, has now in his possession less than five days' pay, a temporary cessation of labour is not surprising, and the Commissioner sees no reason to doubt that such as are really in need will speedily return to work.

5. It is a mistaken kindness to allow coolies to accustom themselves to accept a minimum day's wage for a bad half day's work, when a little strictness will ensure their earning a largely increased wage for what is not more than a good day's work.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To the Collector of North Arcot.

„ Mr. Watson.

„ the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

READ—also the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), dated 10th July 1891, No. 405:—

MR. CLOGSTOUN.

Read—the following letter from M.R.Ry. G. S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR, Overseer, Rénigunta, to the Executive Engineer, Kálahasti Zemindari Irrigation Works, dated Manellore, 3rd July 1891:—

In continuation of my letter, dated 1st instant, I beg to report that yesterday morning I went through the road work arranged the gangs, and marked out the portion they should turn out daily as your honour ordered. The majority of the coolies is able-bodied and only a few are famine-stricken. Both these classes wasted their time and turned out a very small portion out of which I marked out. They are fully believing that they would get the least amount of one anna daily. They strictly adhere to the famine system of 1876—78, notwithstanding my repeated explanations and warnings to the contrary. They are quite unwilling to work on task system. But still they come and waste their time on the road. I am still enforcing task work. Daily about 1,000 in number come and plainly say that they would not work on task system and they would get at least third-class wages, whether turn out proper work or not. They care very little of what I explained to them and say that these all fabulous. I await for your honour's orders.

Read—the following office-note from C. J. K. WATSON, Esq., Executive Engineer, Kálahasti Zemindari Irrigation Works, to the Overseer in charge, Rénigunta, dated 5th July 1891, No. 336-S:—

[Reference.—His letter, dated 3rd July 1891.]

With reference to the above, he is informed of the following:—

Order under latter portion of paragraph 131 of the Famine Code.

Measure up work at once and pay 2nd-class rates to all gangs that have turned out 2nd-class tasks. Pay those that have not done their tasks 25 per cent. less than the value of work done by them (*i.e.*) at the rate of 3 annas for 4 annas worth of work. This order is for this one payment only. Report again in a few days.

Endorsement by C. J. K. WATSON, Esq., Executive Engineer, Kálahasti Zemindari Irrigation Works, dated 5th July 1891, No. 547-M.

Forwarded to the Commissioner of Board of Revenue in continuation of this office No. C-78, dated 28th June 1891 (with reference to the Board's Proceedings, dated 23rd June 1891, No. 3137.

Resolution—dated 10th July 1891, No. 405.

Recorded with reference to Board's Proceedings, No. 391, dated 7th July 1891.

2. The Executive Engineer's orders directing that the gangs should be paid strictly in proportion to the work turned out was entirely justified by the state of affairs on the road, where large numbers of gangs consisting generally of the able-bodied were at the date of the Commissioner's visit idling away their time and doing hardly any work.

Punctual and frequent payments should be enforced on this work so that the labourers may realise before it is too late the deductions they are subjecting themselves to by their idleness.

3. The Executive Engineer should endeavour to visit the road or rather the tank to which the workers have been transferred at an early date. His presence for a couple of days on the spot, with a payment made in his presence for the work turned out on those two days, the payment being exactly proportioned to the amount of work, will do more than anything else to check the general idleness which has set in.

(True Copies and Extract.)

(Signed) P. RAJARATNA MUDALIAR,
Secretary.

To C. J. K. Watson, Esq.

„ the Collector of North Arcot.

Copy to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

ORDER—dated 23rd July 1891, No. 662, Revenue.

Miscellaneous.

The Government fully approves the instruction issued by the Commissioner that, in the case of all labourers, whose failure to perform the assigned tasks is due to idleness or neglect, the wages should be strictly in proportion to the work turned out without the guarantee of a minimum. It appears, however, from the Executive Engineer's letter of the 23rd June that the

famine rates of wages for the tasks assigned give only $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas for work worth 3 annas at the ordinary Department of Public Works rates; the tasks prescribed should of course be such that the wages earned are not unduly attractive, but they appear to have been excessive. Explanation on this point should be furnished. Opportunity should also be afforded for earning more than the daily wage by piece work.

2. It appears, moreover, from the district statements forwarded with the Board's season abstract for the week ending 11th July, that there is great diversity in the rates of wages allowed on the various relief works in Chingleput and North Arcot. For instance, a man's wage on Minor Irrigation works in the taluk of Ponnéri is 3 annas a day, while in the other taluks of Chingleput and in North Arcot it is only 2 annas. On the Major works under the agency of the Department of Public Works in the taluks of Madurantakam and Chingleput, the men are allowed 3 annas a day, while the daily rate in Saidápet is $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas and in North Arcot only 1 anna 5 pies. The Board will report whether the above figures represent the actual earnings of labourers or the rates allowed for a full day's task, what task has been prescribed for the first-class famine wage and how this compares with the ordinary Department of Public Works rates.

3. With reference to the second of the Proceedings read above, the Government observes that the Executive Engineer's order that labourers, who have not done the tasks assigned to them, should be paid only 75 per cent. of the value of the work turned out is not authorized by the Famine Code. Where the failure to perform the assigned tasks is due to idleness, the fining for short work may be carried to the extent of paying the labourers only the value of the work actually done by them, but not further.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture,
Copy to the Public Works Department.

Exd. G. A. Lewis.

75 Copies.

CD. 8457/91

Gobt. of {1891} Madras.
REVENUE.

N^o 2147 W 4/10 August 1891

Communicated
to the Superintending
Engineer IV Circle

(sd) J P

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G.O., 23rd July 1891, No. 662.

B. N. 2147 W 4/10.8.91

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Passing orders on the question of task work to be exacted from and the rate of wages to be paid to persons employed on — in the North Arcot and Chingleput districts.

SE IV circle
Chief Engineer for Irriga.
SE V circle