

- (1) பக்கங்களின் எண்ணிக்கை 14
 (2) புதுக்கித் திருப்பிய நாள் 11/91
 (3) ஆதாரங்குறிப்பவர் கருக்கொப்பம் 10/91

தமிழ்நாடு ஆவணக் காப்பகம்.

தமிழ்நாடு அரசு

PWD துறை

(91)

அரசாணை எண். மு. கோப்புத் தாள் எண்.	1219	அச்சகம் பலவகை
நாள் : 12-4-1892	198	

மடிக்கலோ கண்டயடி கையாளலோ கூடாது

2 Sheets

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ஆவண. கர-1-18,008-15-8-87.

(3)

File No. 44.

Serial No. 1.

1892.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

REVENUE AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

FAMINE.

1219
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RESOLUTION.

Circular No. ⁶/₄₄.

Dated Calcutta, the 17th March 1892.

SUBJECT.

WAGES on Famine Relief Works.

CIRCULAR No. ⁶/₄₄.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of India in the Revenue and Agricultural Department,—dated the 17th March 1892.

READ—

Government of India Resolution No. 44 F., dated 9th June 1883.

” ” ” ” 25 F., dated 10th September 1891.

Read also—

Government of India Resolution No. 5 F., dated the 2nd March 1892.

RESOLUTION.

The Government of India have found indications in reports on famine relief received during recent years from various provinces that the policy of the Famine Commissioners, which was endorsed both by the Government of India and Her Majesty's Secretary of State, on the subject of wages on relief-works, has not always been fully appreciated. In view of the probability that there may be, during the next few months, a material expansion of relief-works in some parts of the country, and of the possibility that, in the event of the failure of the next monsoon, considerable demands may be made on the Government of India for funds to relieve distress, the Governor General in Council considers it advisable that the subject should be carefully considered, in view of the fact that in the case of widespread and severe famine any material departure from the principles of the Famine Commissioners' report may lead to financial embarrassment.

2. The views of the Famine Commissioners on questions relating to the employment of labour on relief-works are embodied in paragraphs 110 and 111, and again in paragraphs 126 to 136 of Part I of the Report. In the first place it should be noted that a distinction is made in these paragraphs between various classes of labourers. Although the different classes are not brought under any close definition, it is clear from the wording of paragraph 131 that labourers were to be classified according to their capabilities and that a broad line was intended to be drawn between able-bodied labourers doing accustomed work and able-bodied labourers doing unaccustomed work, and it may be noticed that in paragraph 132 the first class appear to be distinguished under the term "both able-bodied and skilful." "One or more piece-work gangs might," it is said, "be attached to each large relief work, in which all who are both able-bodied and skilful labourers should be classed and to which those who are improving in strength and skill may, if they wish it, be transferred. The rates should be so fixed (with reference to the price of food-grain) as to give a little more than the ordinary daily wage in return for the quantity of work likely to be performed."

3. The ordinary daily wage alluded to in this passage is not the daily wage which may be earned by a labourer on a public work in ordinary times, but the ordinary daily wage dealt with in the preceding paragraph (131), which is to be "adjusted from time to time so as to provide sufficient food for the labourer's support, allowing him one day's rest in the week." It is clear, therefore, that the intention of the Famine Commissioners was that skilled able-bodied labourers should not be permitted to perform an unlimited or indefinite amount of piece-work on a famine relief-work. The opposite

view has, been sometimes held. But it is obvious that any material departure from the Famine Commissioners' rule would result in unnecessary expenditure, and a rapid exhaustion of the programme of works available, for not only would greater numbers of labourers be attracted to the relief-works by a prospect of the high profits which unlimited piece-work would offer, but also the work performed by each labourer would be greater. The object of the Famine Commissioners, *viz.* to restrict the admission on relief-works to those who are compelled by necessity to come to them, would in fact be frustrated.

"Some safeguards," they urge in paragraph 110, "are essential in the interests of the destitute people no less than of the public treasury; and they are best found in laying down certain broad, self-acting tests by which necessity may be proved and which may, independently of any other rule of selection, entitle to relief the person who submits to them."

"The chief of these tests," they continue in paragraph 111, "and the only one which in our opinion it is ordinarily desirable to enforce, is the demand of labour commensurate in each case with the labourer's powers in return for a wage sufficient for the purposes of maintenance but not more;" and they point out again (in paragraph 132) that "it is not expedient to add to the outlay on relief or to the consumption of food beyond what is essential, and that no object is to be gained by the early completion of any work put in hand."

And again, in paragraph 127, it is intimated that, although State employment should be offered promptly, yet care must be taken "that the cost to which the community as a whole is put by the employment of persons in want is no more than the case strictly requires."

4. On the 9th of June 1883 the Government of India, after consulting Local Governments, circulated with an explanatory Resolution a Provisional Famine Code, based upon the recommendations of the Famine Commissioners, for the guidance of Local Governments and Administrations in the preparation of the Provincial Codes which they were invited to frame. It was explained that the scheme of the Famine Commissioners for the provision of employment of labour on relief-works was accepted by the Imperial Government, and the principles which they laid down were generally embodied in the Provisional Code.

5. Relief-works were in this Code required to be distinguished as—

(I) Civil Agency works; and

(II) Professional Agency works;

the former whether professionally managed or not being under the control of the district authority, and the latter under the control of the Public Works Department. Labourers were, reading sections 39 and 71 together, divided into four classes—

A.—Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour of the kind required at works coming under class II.

B.—Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour but not to labour of the kind required on works under class II.

C.—Able-bodied persons not accustomed to labour.

D.—Persons not able-bodied but fit for light employment of the kind required at works of class I.

Labourers of class A were (sections 71 and 72 of the Code) eligible for employment on Professional Agency works and for treatment as ordinary able-bodied labourers in public works. All others were to be dealt with under the rules for Civil Agency works.

6. Chapter X of the Provisional Code, which dealt with wages and rations on relief-works, prescribed a "full ration" sufficient to keep able-bodied labourers in health and strength, leaving it to Local Governments to suggest such modifications as might be required by the circumstances of each province. The "full wage" was defined as the amount of money which at the current prices is sufficient to purchase a "full ration." Section 132 laid down that payment for labour on Professional Agency works might be made at the rate ordinarily given under the rules in force in the Public Works Department, provided that the sum which a labourer can ordinarily be expected to earn by a fair day's labour shall in no case be less than the "full wage." This rule applied to labourers of class A only, since all other labourers were brought by section 72 of the Code under the rules for Civil Agency Works. It will be observed, however, that the wording of the rule prescribed the "full wage" as a minimum only, and placed no restriction on the amount which might be earned by a class A labourer at departmental rates for piece-work. An opening was thus left for a departure from the intention of the Famine Commissioners, that even skilful and able-bodied labourers should only receive "a little more than the ordinary wage," which would, in the terms of the Famine Commissioners, mean "a little more than the full wage." The object of the framers of the Code was, however, not to controvert the principles laid down by the Famine Commissioners and accepted by the Government of India, but to prevent undue restriction being placed on the progress of Public Works, of which, for special reasons, the early completion might be desirable. This has not been generally understood. Consequently, the result of the absence of any positive restriction on the wages of class A labourers has sometimes been that on earthwork, which is, wherever it can be provided, the most usual as it is the most appropriate relief-work, ordinary agricultural labourers have been considered to be sufficiently accustomed to the kind of labour required at the work to entitle them to be brought under class A, and to be given any amount of piece-work that the Public Works officer in charge of the work might deem to be desirable to secure the rapid and effective progress of the work itself. The principles laid down by the Famine Commissioners have thus been transgressed.

7. It has, on the other hand, occurred that the intention of the Famine Commissioners, that all skilful and able-bodied labourers should, for the reasons given in the passage quoted in paragraph 2 of this Resolution, receive a small margin above the full famine wage, has not been sufficiently appreciated; nor was this intention explained with sufficient distinctness in the Provisional Famine Code. The opportunity is now taken to give clear expression to the opinion of the Government of India that this consideration should be applied to all labourers of class A, and, subject to the remarks regarding the classification of ordinary cultivators which are made below in paragraph 10 of this Resolution, also to labourers of class B; money-wages and tasks being so adjusted from time to time as to admit of the labourers receiving "a little more than" the equivalent of the "full ration" of the Code.

8. In order, on the one hand, to secure the object which the framers of the Code had in view of preventing any undue restriction on the progress of a public work which is required as such independently of its use as a relief-work, and on the other, to prevent any transgression of the principles of the Code, which requires that no remuneration should be given to a labourer on a relief-work materially in excess of the amount sufficient to maintain health and

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Provisional
Famine Code

strength, it is desirable that, where this has not already been done, a rule to the following effect should be incorporated in the Provincial Code :

When a public work for which provision had already been made in the ordinary Public Works Budget of the year is included in the sanctioned list of Professional Agency works, the Local Government shall decide, in the event of its being utilized as a relief-work, whether any portion of it is of such a character, or requires to be executed with such urgency, as to demand the employment of ordinary public works labour at full piece-work rates. Such portion shall be separated from the portion utilized as a relief-work and shall not be opened to labourers admitted on the work simply for purposes of relief. On the portion retained as a relief-work the wages of able-bodied labourers, however skilled, shall not exceed the amount in money which is equivalent to a little more than the full famine wage.

9. Another direction in which a departure has been, in some cases, permitted from the principles laid down in the Provisional Famine Code, is in the expansion of money-wages for the purpose of providing a margin from which relief may be given to children and infirm dependents by their able-bodied parents or guardians who labour on relief-works. This was prohibited in the Provisional Code on the ground that experience had shown that starving parents cannot in times of severe famine safely be entrusted with the feeding of their children. The Government of India are not disposed to admit any modification of the principle which confines payment of a wage to those who work, and restricts its amount to a liberal money-equivalent of the subsistence ration to which the worker is in each case entitled. Any relaxation of the rule must lead to irregularity and wasteful expenditure. A margin adequate for the support of sick or infirm dependents in cases where they exist cannot, if given without discrimination to all able-bodied labourers, be otherwise than sufficiently large to prove unduly attractive to those who are free from such encumbrances. The provision, therefore, of any such margin must tend to destroy the value of the test which it was one of the main objects of the Famine Code scheme that relief-works should provide.

Recent experience in the Madras Presidency has tended to confirm the view that the system of famine kitchens and poor-houses for the support of the young and infirm is sound. In the event of serious famine the Government of India would be sorry to see it abandoned. But they are not prepared to insist absolutely on its adoption, especially in the earlier stages of distress, in those provinces where the proper relief of dependents by their guardians can be guaranteed; and if it is the wish of any Local Government or Administration that the original prohibition of relieving children and others through their parents and guardians should be modified or withdrawn, a separate communication on the subject may be submitted to the Government of India. But it must be distinctly understood that any allowance made for the support of dependents can only be permitted to those labourers who actually undertake the relief of their children or dependents; that it must be based upon a precise scale regulated in accordance with the number of dependents; and that all payments made for the purpose indicated should be shown in the accounts under the head of gratuitous relief.

10. Turning now to the subject of the division of labourers into classes, the Government of India find that much variety of practice exists in different provinces. This is partly due to a difference in the scale of famine rations

and wages assigned to each class, and partly to a difference of opinion as to the quality of the labour of those admitted to relief-works. The work most frequently given for purposes of relief is earthwork. It is argued by some of the authorities who deal with famine-relief that all agricultural labourers, including ordinary cultivators—men, women and children—are skilled and able-bodied; or, in the words of the Provisional Code, that they are able-bodied labourers accustomed to labour of the kind required at the works. The bulk of the labourers are thus brought into the highest class, *i.e.* class A of the Provisional Code. If this view be adopted and acted on, it is evident that the margin above a subsistence wage, or to use the words of the Famine Commissioners, the “little more than the ordinary daily wage,” must be kept within narrow limits, and that wages should be carefully revised with every fluctuation of prices. If, on the other hand, as is the case in some provinces, only a very small percentage of labourers, such as old public works employes or others who have had professional experience, are admitted into class A, a more liberal margin may be permissible for that class, provided that, on the other hand, the wage of the B class is kept in closer approximation to the level of the subsistence wage of the Famine Code. In order that some general uniformity may be secured in the administration of famine-relief in different provinces, it is necessary that the Government of India should be provided with precise information as to the system on which classification of labourers is based, and as to the relation between the money-wage actually given and the money equivalent of the famine ration at current prices. Rules under which such information is to be periodically submitted are prescribed in Resolution No. 5, dated 2nd March 1892, on famine reports.

11. To sum up. Following the Famine Commissioners' recommendations labourers on relief-works may be classified according to their capability for work. The classes adopted in the Provisional Code are A, skilful and able-bodied accustomed to the kind of work required; B, able-bodied accustomed to work; C, able-bodied not accustomed to work; D, Others. Classes A and B may receive a full wage, *i.e.* a wage equivalent to a ration sufficient to keep an able-bodied labourer in health and strength, together with a margin. The margin may be more liberal for class A when it contains a small percentage than when it is allowed to include a large percentage of able-bodied labourers accustomed to work. The wage of class C will not exceed the full wage, and should be determined in general accordance with the principles of sections 133 and 134 of the Provisional Code. The wage may be given wholly in cash or partly in grain and partly in cash, but cash payments must be adjusted from time to time in accordance with prices of food. So much of a relief-work as requires to be pushed on for urgent reasons at a rapid rate should be removed from the list of relief-works and treated as an ordinary public work.

Govt. of Madras.	Chief Commr., Central
Do. Bombay.	Provinces.
Do. Bengal.	Do. Burma.
Do. N.-W. P. and	Do. Assam.
Oudh.	Do. Coorg.
Do. Panjab.	Do. Ajmere.
	Merwara.
	Secretary for Berar to the Resident at Hyderabad.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy be forwarded to the Local Governments and Administrations noted in the margin for information and guidance.

Ordered also, that a copy be forwarded to the Foreign Department for information and communication to Political Officers in Native States, and to the Finance and Public Works Departments for information.

[True extract.]

E. C. BUCK,

Secretary to the Government of India.

12/19/4

File No. 44.

Serial No. 2.

1892.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

REVENUE AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

FAMINE.

1219
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To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

No. ⁴⁹⁸/₄₄

Dated Calcutta, the 17th March 1892.

SUBJECT.

WAGES on Famine Relief Works.

82
NW/3955/92

No. ⁴⁹⁸/₄₄.

FROM

SIR E. C. BUCK, Kt.,
Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

Revenue and Agricultural Department.
Famine.

CALCUTTA, the 17th March 1892.

SIR,

IN communicating Circular Resolution No. ⁶/₄₄, dated the 17th instant, relating to wages on famine relief works, I am directed to convey the following remarks on the provisions of the Madras Famine Code dealing with the same subject.

2. The classification of labourers in the Madras Code appears to be somewhat indefinite. Class I of section 19 could, if the views of many authorities are accepted, be made to include the bulk of the agricultural population who are said to be accustomed, in the prosecution of the ordinary business of their life, to manual labour of the kind required at works where digging and carrying earth is the chief employment offered. The Government of India do not wish to lay down any rule on this question, but merely to point out that section 19 of the Madras Code is open to an interpretation which would make it difficult to decide that the wage of class I could not be awarded to the majority of labourers on relief works. They are aware that this is not done in practice and believe that a large number of labourers on the relief works opened in the Madras Presidency are brought under the third class. On this point information has not yet been definitely received, but has been called for in connection with the monthly report for February.

3. Turning now to the scale of wages, I am to ask that the desirability of allowing any part of the wage to be estimated in money may be very carefully considered. The schedule of wages framed in section 185 of the Code was drawn up in anticipation of a condition of prices which does not now prevail, and which, in view of the improvement of railway communications, is not perhaps likely again to occur. The rates of wages permissible under the Madras Code for classes I, II and III of section 185 are compared below with the

No. $\frac{498}{44}$.

1219
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FROM

SIR E. C. BUCK, Kt.,
Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

Revenue and Agricultural Department.
Famine.

CALCUTTA, the 17th March 1892.

SIR,

IN communicating Circular Resolution No. $\frac{6}{44}$, dated the 17th instant, relating to wages on famine relief works, I am directed to convey the following remarks on the provisions of the Madras Famine Code dealing with the same subject.

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highest wage allowed in Bombay, when prices are respectively 12 seers a rupee (about the present rate) and 6 seers a rupee (a severe famine rate) :—

Price of grain ruling.	WAGES ESTIMATED WHOLLY IN CASH.				WAGES ESTIMATED WHOLLY IN GRAIN.			
	Madras.			Bombay.	Madras.			Bombay.
	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	All classes.	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	All classes.
	A. p.	A. p.	A. p.	A. p.	lb	lb	lb	lb
12 seers a rupee	2 6	2 0	1 7	1 6	3 3/4	3	2 3/8	2 1/4
6 seers a rupee	3 6	3 0	2 5	3 0	2 5/8	2 1/4	1 15/16	2 1/4

The above figures show that the Bombay wage becomes equivalent to the Madras second class wage when famine prices are ruling, and in view of the facts that very few labourers are in Madras placed in the first class, and that in Bombay the highest wage (*i.e.* the equivalent of 2 1/4 lb jowari) is payable to all able-bodied labourers of whatever class, it may be said generally that, under severe famine conditions which were contemplated when the Codes were framed, the actual wages given to the bulk of famine labourers in Bombay and Madras would become almost the same.

4. The explanation which in the Resolution referred to in paragraph 1 is given of the Famine Commissioners' policy indicates that, prices being the same, there should be no essential difference at any time between the famine wage of one province and the famine wage of another, or, prices being different, between the famine ration of one province and the famine ration of another. Nor, again, should there be any material difference within the same province between the famine ration of one period and that of another. Discrepancies will be completely avoided by adherence to the Famine Commissioners' principle. The full wage must never exceed by more than a small margin, the money equivalent of a full subsistence ration sufficient to keep an able-bodied labourer in health and strength. In this view the most convenient plan would appear to be that adopted in the Provisional Code, *i.e.* first to decide what is the full ration sufficient to keep an able-bodied labourer in health and strength, and then to deduce the money equivalent from it as the basis of the full wage.

5. If there is reason to believe that, as a rule, the prices of condiments vary *pari passu* with the price of grain, the Bombay system of adopting a single grain as the basis of calculation is fair enough. If, however, the price of condiments has any recognised tendency to remain more constant than that of food-grains, it would seem desirable to set out a ration in terms of grain and condiments which should be converted with every material change of prices into a new money wage.

6. I am to add that nothing in the Resolution on wages or in this letter is intended to convey any objection to the payment of the wage wholly or partly in cash.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

E. C. BUCK,

Secretary to the Government of India.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Resolutions
Read *Letter from the Govern.*

Copy attached

ment of India, Revenue & Agril. Deptt. dated 17th March 1892, N^o 6/44 + 498/44.

Read also the following telegram from the Government of India Revenue & Agricultural Department, dated 25th March 1892.

Please see letter 498/17th instant in first line Column six of statement in paragraph 3. substitute 3 3/4 for 3/4.

Order thereon 8th April 1892. N^o 1890.

Referred to the Com-missioners of Revenue Settlement Land Records & Agriculture for very early report.

/True Extract/

A. C. M. M. C.

By A. C. M. C.

To

The Comr. of R.S. & R. & Agril. Copy to the Public Works Department.

Govt. of 1892 Madras.
REVENUE.

To

The Public Works Dept.

No. 1219 Wd/12 April '92

Recorded
Recorded

Dated

Recd.

11-4-92

Encl. 2

Mis. G.O., 8th Apr 1892, No. 1890.

Sum
11-4-92

SUBJECT.

Sum

12/11/4/92

Referring to the Comm. n. p.
Rev. Secy's former report
of Indian Resolutions on the subject
of ways for famine relief
works.

(7)

With order

1/5

18/4

J.C. 13/4