

Public Works (1897) Department.

Despatch

G.O., No. 2468 W

DATED 6. September 1897

[Despatch Abstract.]

with remarks

*Tasks, Pro: Revenue Dept recording Board's
Pro: issuing further instructions regarding
- on relief works and distance allowance,
count to 5. E. S. I and III miles.*

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[illegible]

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

CURRENT No. 8765

Order No. 2468 Wg 6.997

Communicated
to the Supply Engineers
I & III Circles

The Revenue Dept.

4470
Bris No. ~~4327~~

Dated ^{26th} ~~2th~~ Aug. 97.

Received

Registered

Enclosures

Spare copies

SUBJECT,

Recording B.T. issuing
further instructions regarding
famine tasks and dis-
tance allowances.

89

No.	Date.
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No.	Date.
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REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1897.

Board of Revenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

MADRAS.

Recd.

Enclosures

Regd.

Spare copies

Printed August th.

Proceedings, No. 555, 7th August 1897.

AUGUST.

Tasks.—Issuing further instructions regarding — and distance allowance.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE

(REVENUE SETTLEMENT, LAND RECORDS AND AGRICULTURE).

RESOLUTION—No. 555, dated 7th August 1897.

The Famine Commissioner fears, from what has come to his notice in Kurnool, that some misunderstanding has existed as to the purport of his Proceedings, No. 520-A., dated 21st July 1897, communicating G.O., No. 549, dated 9th July 1897, as to the steps to be taken regarding tasks and distance allowance.

2. As Mr. Stuart very sensibly remarks in his fortnightly report for the 15th July, the mere reduction in the distance allowance will, in most cases, be sufficient, and no further reduction in tasks is necessary. The idea seems to have gone abroad, disseminated by some mischievous persons, that tasks were generally inadequate. This was not true. The allowance for distance given under G.O., No. 216, dated 30th March 1897, made tasks on the works, for persons who came from a distance, somewhat lenient during the hot weather, wherever these concessions were given effect to. As a fact, they were not all given effect to in some places, or were introduced two months after the order sanctioning them. It is not necessary here to go into the question of when, or owing to what obstruction or omissions, this was so. These concessions, however, which were absolutely necessary to save life during the hot weather, are no longer necessary, and the mere reduction in distance allowance will, in many cases, bring up tasks to the full limit of what can reasonably be expected from coolies.

3. It was because the Famine Commissioner distinctly foresaw this, that in his proposals approved by Government—*vide* B.P., No. 470, dated 28th June 1897—after recommending that the distance allowance should be reduced, he added that tasks should be increased by 25 per cent., or by *such less amount* as would be necessary to bring them up to full tasks. These full tasks are, until the Collectors modify them, the full tasks of the district task schedules, modified by such allowance for distance as the existing orders still permit.

4. What the Famine Commissioner fears has been done, in some cases, is that the distance allowance has, on the one hand, been cut down, while, without any reference to this fact, on the other hand, tasks have been raised, and the tasks assigned may be absolutely impossible.

5. In certain cases, the Famine Commissioner has found that the Superintending Engineer, without any reference to the Collector, has taken upon himself to introduce tasks of his own, and subordinate officers of the Public Works Department have taken upon themselves similarly to enhance even these tasks. It must be distinctly understood that the Superintending Engineer has no power whatever to meddle with the question of tasks, nor has any officer of the Public Works Department the power to do so, except in communication with the Collector or the Divisional officer. Collectors will take instant steps to have all such tasks revised, if necessary. The task to be exacted in each case is such a task as an average gang can do between 8 A.M. and noon and 2 P.M. to sunset. It should be such a task as honest work can accomplish, but honest work is not synonymous with slave-driving. The hour 8 A.M. is mentioned because the roll is supposed to be called at 7-30 A.M. and the coolies are not likely to have their tools given out and settle down to work before 8 A.M.

6. In a specific case at Paniem which is being separately disposed of, the Famine Commissioner found that the metal-carriers had been fined down to a wage of 6 pies for not performing an impossible task. The Superintending Engineer had fixed a task of 0.6 cubic foot per unit for a lead of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. This was done without any reference to the size of the basket carried. The Assistant Engineer had taken upon himself to raise this task to 0.8 cubic foot for a lead of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles per unit. Neither of these officers had any power to fix a task. The man's task was therefore 3.2 cubic feet; 3.2 cubic feet weigh 275 lbs. Taking the average load of the present small baskets to be 30 lbs., a man had to make nine trips of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles to site and back, *i.e.*, he had to walk $22\frac{1}{2}$ miles to earn the B-class wage. These men who were fined down to a wage of 6 pies lived 5 miles away from the work. They were therefore expected to walk $32\frac{1}{2}$ miles to earn As. 1-11. Even if the present distance allowance is given [$10 - (3 \times 2) = 4$ miles], the distance to be covered *on the work* would be $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which + 10, the distance from village and back, makes $28\frac{1}{2}$ miles. There is no doubt that this is an unreasonable task. For the average cooly, 45 lbs. weight would be a fair load and this might be used to calculate the task. Taking the Superintending Engineer's task of 0.6 cubic foot per unit, a man would have to carry 206 lbs. per diem, or nearly two cwt. This divided by 45 gives about five trips or $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles, which is a fair day's work for a B-class cooly. The baskets on the works are so small that they will only hold about 30 lbs. and larger baskets must be supplied. Meanwhile B-class male coolies must carry two baskets each trip. They can do this easily by packing one basket flat, and putting the other on top of it.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) L. E. BUCKLEY,
Famine Secretary.

To the Collectors of affected districts.

Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read Proceedings of the Board of
Revenue, Rev. Sett. etc., Press No. 555 dated 7th August 1897.

Order thereon, Misc. No. 4470 dated 26th August 1897.

Recorded.

2. The Famine Commissioner is requested to give name and details with reference to the remark in para 5 that in some cases P.W. officers have introduced enhanced tasks without reference to Collectors.

(True Extract.)



Ag. Secy. to Govt.

To the Famine Commissioner.

.. P.W. Department.

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4/8/97