

Public Works (1898) Department.

G.O., No. 324 W

DATED 9 February 1898

insert
with no 1550/98

[Despatch Abstract.]

Relief works. Insr., Sec. Dept., passing orders on
the opening of — on the task-work system in the
Nellore Dh. by the Collector, could do to S.E. in circle

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9.2.98

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

CURRENT No. 1179

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to the Suplt Engineer - 11 Circles

Press No. 72

Dated 7th February 1898

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Registered

Enclosures

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Telephone

From

The Head Clerk

P. W. Secretariat

To

The Head Clerk

Revenue Secretariat

Kindly say when the
spare copies of S.O. No
72 Press dated 7th
February 1898 may
be expected.

Deposited
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16.2.98
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GOVERNMENT {1898} OF MADRAS.
REVENUE.

From
The Head Clerk
Revenue Secretariat

To
The Head Clerk
Public Works Department

The spare copies of
G. O. No. 72 P.W. dated 7th
February 98 may be
expected by 18th instant.

16.2.98
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1898.

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G.O., No. 72, 7th February 1898.

B No 324 W 9.2.98
Communicated to the Suptg
Engineer II circle

FEBRUARY.

(sd) W. B. L. W.
W

SE II circle
Other S.E.S.

Relief Works.

Passing orders on Board's Proceedings submitting to Government letter from the Collector of Nellore requesting allotments for certain — and sanction to continue them on the task-work system.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), Mis. No. 132, dated 11th January 1898 :—

Read—the following letter from the Collector of Nellore, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 6th January 1898, Ref. No. 74-Ver. :—

In this office letter, No. 953-Ver. G.B., dated 17th December 1897, I reported to the Board that I sanctioned the following allotments for works started as test-relief works. I have since sanctioned the amounts shown in column 3, to which I request the Board's sanction—

	Original sanction.	Subsequent sanction.
	RS.	RS.
1. Udayagiri prickly-pear work	200	850
2. Kitchen at Udayagiri	200	...
3. Metal-breaking at Pamur	200	500
4. Kitchen at Pamur	200	...
5. Metal-breaking at Narravada	200	1,000
6. Kitchen at Erravada	200	100
7. Metal-breaking at Pedarikatla	200	...
8. Kitchen at Pedarikatla	200	...
9. Nandanavanam tank	200	...
10. Kitchen at Nandanavanam tank	200	...

As the numbers on the works are daily on the increase, I have the honour to request that the following additional allotments may once for all be sanctioned for the works now under execution and those proposed to be started immediately :—

1. Udayagiri prickly-pear work	RS. 950
2. Metal-breaking on Duttalur-Pamur road (<i>vide</i> No. 2 under roads in Udayagiri of list enclosed in this office No. 2680-Ver., dated 22nd December 1897)	5,000
3. Metal-breaking at Narravada (<i>vide</i> No. 2 under roads in Udayagiri of list enclosed in this office, No. 2680-Ver., dated 22nd December 1897)	5,000
4. Metal-breaking at Pedarikatla on Kanigiri-Podili road (<i>vide</i> No. 2 under Podili in the list enclosed in this office, No. 2680-Ver., dated 22nd December 1897)	3,000
5. Nandanavanam tank (<i>vide</i> No. 1 of Kanigiri in the same list)	4,700
6. Udayagiri-Sitampuram road at Nellatur (<i>vide</i> No. 3 under Local Fund roads in Udayagiri in the same list)	4,000
7. Udayagiri-Sitampuram road at Sitampuram (<i>vide</i> No. 3 under Local Fund roads in Udayagiri in the same list)	4,000

I have not as yet moved the test work from Udayagiri, but propose doing so almost immediately. A site has been selected near Nellatur for the work and kitchen and the allotment of Rs. 4,000 applied for for work No. 6 above refers to this. In

the meantime, the test work at Udayagiri is being continued, and I expect that a total sum of Rs. 2,000 will be spent on it. Hence the additional application for allotment of Rs. 950.

2. I propose starting at once a work near Sitampuram, as I learn that there is very considerable distress there, and immediate relief is called for. The work at Nellatur will be too far off for residents of Sitampuram and their neighbouring villagers.

3. I also request that a lump sum of Rs. 2,000 may be allotted for gratuitous relief in kitchens attached to the above works as noted in the margin.

Udayagiri	...	...	...	...	100
Narramarella	...	...	...	...	400
Narravada	...	...	...	...	400
Peddarikatla	...	...	...	...	300
Nandanavanam	...	...	...	...	100
Nellatur	...	...	...	...	400
Sitampuram	...	...	...	...	300

4. With reference to the Board's remarks regarding the introduction of the intermediate system of relief, I would remark that works such as those at Nellatur and Sitampuram are hardly suitable for execution under that system, while I consider that the distress in the Udayagiri taluk has already reached the stage when task works are necessary. The same remarks apply to all the other test works which have been commenced and to the Kanigiri taluk as well as to the Udayagiri taluk.

Resolution—Mis. No. 132, dated 11th January 1898.

Submitted to Government for sanction.

2. The Collector will be requested to reconsider his opinion that certain works are unsuitable for the employment of labourers on the gang piece-works system. The cause of the unsuitability is not apparent. The system will obviate the introduction of gratuitous relief for a time, and does not necessitate the entertainment of so large an establishment on the test-works system.

(True Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) R. V. SRINIVASIAH,
for Famine Secretary.

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
,, Collector of Nellore.

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture), Mis. No. 461, dated 21st January 1898 :—

Read—the following letter from the Collector of Nellore, to the Secretary to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, dated 11th January 1898, Ref. No. 11—G.B.-Ver. :—

With reference to Board's Proceedings, Mis. No. 52, dated 6th January 1898, communicating G.O., No. 2, Press, dated 4th January 1898, and the Board's telegram, dated 6th January 1898, I have the honour to state that I consider, as already reported in my letter Ref. No. 74-Ver., dated 6th January 1898, the taluks of Udayagiri and Kanigiri have passed the stage at which the intermediate system can be successfully worked. In accordance, however, with the order of Government, I have issued instructions that the works at Nellatur and Sitampuram, in the Udayagiri taluk, and Nandanavanam, in the Kanigiri taluk, should be conducted on that system; but I request that the sanction of Government may be obtained for the continuance of the other works at Narravada, Narramarella and Pedarikatla under the task system. The following table shows the numbers on these works on the dates given opposite to their names.

Village.	Nature of work.	Date.	Number of labourers.				Number of kitchens.
			Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.	
Narravada, Udayagiri taluk.	Metal-breaking on Duttalur-Pamur road.	8th Jan. 1898 ..	251	360	277	888	89
Narramarella, Kanigiri taluk.	Metal-breaking on Kanigiri - Pamur road.	31st Dec. 1897 ..	132	205	193	530	30
		6th Jan. 1898 ..	144	226	245	615	..
Pedarikatla, Podili division.	Metal-breaking on Kanigiri-Podili road.	6th „ 1898 ..	380	695	364	1,439	7

A large number of the men and women represent inefficient labour, and the considerable attendance at the kitchens, which only great want brings into use, testifies to a state of distress which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by works under the intermediate system. Kitchens have already been constructed at these places and are in working order and it will be a pity to close them now.

Resolution—Mis. No. 461, dated 21st January 1898.

Submitted to Government.

2. The Collector may retain the kitchens already opened for such as will come to them. The Board, however, considers that the piece-work system should not be discarded yet, unless it is found absolutely insufficient to meet the needs of the people. Work may be paid for at rates not exceeding the ordinary Public Works Department rates, and should be supervised by the Public Works Department. So much has been said and written about this system that it should get a fair trial and on all works opened hereafter it should be adopted.

(True Copy and Extract.)

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

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
„ Collector of Nellore.

ORDER—No. 72, Revenue, dated 7th February 1898.

Miscellaneous.

With the first of the Proceedings read above, the Board of Revenue submits to Government an application for allotments from the Collector of Nellore for the test works now in progress or proposed to be opened in the district and for the kitchens attached. The Collector considers that the intermediate system of carrying out works ordered in G.O., No. 2, dated 4th January 1898, is not suitable for the works proposed and that the distress in the taluks of Udayagiri and Kanigiri has already reached the stage when task work becomes necessary; and in his communication embodied in the second of the Proceedings read above, while reporting that he has issued instructions for the introduction of the system on some of the works, he requests the sanction of Government for continuing the task-work system on others.

2. The following test works were in progress at the time of the Collector's report:—

(1) Udayagiri	...	...	...	...	Prickly-pear removal.
(2) Nandanavanam	...	...	...	...	Tank repairs.
(3) Narravada	...	...	...	...	Metal-breaking.
(4) Pamur	...	...	...	...	
(5) Pedarikatla	...	...	...	...	

In regard to (1) above, the Collector stated in a letter, dated 17th December last, that he intended to remove the work to a place five miles to the north of Udayagiri if the number on the work should increase considerably; and it appears from the latest season and other reports received from the district that the work at Udayagiri has now been transferred to Nellatur on the Udayagiri-Sitarampuram road. The Collector also proposes to start work on this same road at Sitarampuram, distant about ten miles from Nellatur, as he considers that the work at Nellatur is too far off for the residents of Sitarampuram and the neighbouring villages. The allotments applied for for the Udayagiri work (now closed) and the others named above aggregate Rs. 27,700 and an additional allotment of Rs. 2,000 is required for kitchens.

3. The above proposals for an extension of works are based on the assumption that there is now in the district undoubted distress requiring the interference of Government under the Famine Code; but since the Collector has as yet furnished little information regarding the tasks exacted from the workers, the Government is not satisfied that the works now in progress have proved the existence of such distress. The numbers on the works are no doubt on the increase, but this is no proof of distress unless the works are being carried on, as they should be, under deterrent conditions. The Commissioner of Revenue Settlement has been recently touring in the tracts reported to be affected, and he will be requested to submit a detailed report as to the tasks enforced and the wages paid at the various works, and generally as to whether the works are being carried out under stringent Code conditions so as to enable Government to decide whether famine conditions really exist and, if so, to what extent relief works are required.

4. The Collector's programme consists of a number of scattered isolated works and if he is under the idea that it is in every case necessary to provide labour near the villages of the persons to be relieved, he is under a misapprehension. The Collector should be directed to take immediate steps to replace numerous scattered works by a few carefully chosen works of large size, providing suitable hutting accommodation for the workers who are unable to attend from their own homes. The Government is of opinion that, where labourers are provided with resident accommodation on the works, no distance within the limits of the same taluk, at all events, should be regarded as too great.

5. The Government observes from the weekly season reports that persons who are not dependants of workers are being fed at the kitchens attached to the test works; the Collector will be instructed to discontinue this at once. In regard to the relief of dependants the Government has more than once expressed the opinion that it is inexpedient to supplement the wages at test works by the grant of gratuitous relief to dependants, but will not disturb the arrangements made by the Collector pending receipt of the detailed report on the condition of the district which the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement has been called upon to submit. The Commissioner will, however, be informed that no kitchens should be opened for the future in connexion with test works, and generally that no gratuitous relief of any kind should be given without the previous sanction of Government except in connexion with regular relief works carried on on the task-work system.

6. The works in progress at Narravada and Narramarella are road works, and if the intermediate system is suitable for any works at all in Udayagiri or Kanigiri, it must be suitable for these works. At the same time the preponderance of women and children in the numbers reported as on relief seems to show that any distress that there may be in these taluks cannot be severe. It is, therefore, not clear why the Collector should object to the system as unsuitable. The Government, of course, does not intend that the system should be adopted irrespective of local conditions which may render its introduction undesirable, but as the Collector's objection appears to be largely due to a misapprehension of the nature and scope of the system, it is necessary to explain in some detail what the system is, how its adoption is desirable in the early stages of distress, and how it can be worked with advantage and economy at almost any stage of distress.

7. As its name implies, the system is intermediate between the contract piece-work system of ordinary works and the task-work system of the Famine Code, and was originally intended for adoption in the early stages of distress on the score of its

economy. In relief works carried out under the conditions laid down in the Code, employment has to be provided for the inefficient who, under the ordinary contract system, would never be taken on at all, and such works give in consequence a very poor result for a very large expenditure in money and trouble. When, therefore, distress, though present, is not so acute, as to drive on to the works a large proportion of inefficient labourers or of persons unaccustomed to labour, payment by results is more economical than task work; in other words, so long as an able-bodied labourer can earn enough by piece-work to enable those of his family who do not work to live at home, he will support them and himself more cheaply than Government can do. The piece-work rates should, however, be so fixed as to form a real test of distress and so as not to attract labour, for which there is existing employment elsewhere. The system, as originally framed in the North-Western Provinces, required the interposition of petty contractors or middlemen between Government and the actual labourers, but it was soon found that this arrangement, though suitable for less considerable works when distress was not general, was not adapted for large undertakings designed to afford relief to considerable numbers of unskilled labourers, and in the North-Western Provinces a modified form of it was consequently adopted, in which the State dealt directly with the labourers; the work was laid out, supervised and measured by Government officials, and tools, where necessary, were supplied by Government; but payments were made by results as in the original scheme and no dependants were recognized. The original scheme and this modified form correspond, respectively, to the works of classes (ii) and (iii) mentioned in paragraph 6 of G.O., No. 430, dated 3rd June 1897. The former of these is the same as the modified contract system described in section 16 of the Madras Famine Code as suitable at the commencement of distress.

8. When directing the introduction of these two classes of works, the Government intended (*vide* paragraph 6 of G.O., No. 430, dated 3rd June 1897), that they should be adopted only in the earlier stages of distress and should be replaced by regular relief works when the demand for employment by inefficient labour became considerable. But later correspondence received by Government since the above order was passed on the working of the system in the North-Western Provinces, shows that the modified form of the system latterly adopted in those provinces has been found suitable for even advanced stages of distress and that, with suitable modifications and subject to certain limitations, it may be adopted with advantage in almost all stages. These modifications which will be found fully described in the papers printed in G.Os., No. 663, dated 2nd August 1897, and No. 705, dated 20th August 1897, are—

- (1) the distribution of cooked food to young children and the addition of 3 pies to supplement the diet of nursing mothers;
- (2) the formation of weakly persons into separate gangs in exceptional cases.

These modifications rendered a larger supervising staff necessary than on Code works, but the system was reported to be notwithstanding more economical. It was also found to be deterrent than Code works, but it was not suited to localities where distress was *very* severe and in these localities it had to be supplemented by Code works on subsistence wages.

9. It will be seen that the essence of the scheme is piece-work at rates which are somewhat less than the ordinary rates, or rather less than the ordinary rates raised with due regard to the prevalent high prices, but still sufficient to leave some margin for the support of dependants. It is of course not intended that the wage of each worker should vary with the number of his dependants; but only that the rates, while below full current rates, should be so fixed as to give a sufficient wage to an able-bodied labourer with an average family.

10. The system can, it is believed, be adopted on large as well as on small and petty works. It is to be distinctly understood that the adoption of the system does not mean the opening of petty village works, which the Collector has been directed to avoid, concentrating his operations on large works. In the event of distress becoming really severe, it may become necessary to open village works to supplement these central works; and where such village works are opened and assigned to village headmen or other middlemen on contract, the contract should be coupled with a condition that all applicants for employment shall be admitted and that the work shall be paid for at rates to be specified beforehand. When the system is adopted on large works,

middlemen may be employed in the early stages or where the official staff necessary for supervision is not readily available, but the Government hopes that it will always be found possible to adopt the modified form of the system. It is unnecessary to issue any instructions at present with reference to the later modifications found necessary in the North-Western Provinces and referred to in paragraph 8 above. With these remarks the Government remits the subject to the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement and the local authorities who will determine where the intermediate system and the task system of the Code may most advantageously be adopted. The former should be thoroughly tried wherever it appears suitable.

11. Subject to the remarks made and the instructions issued in the preceding paragraphs, the Collector is authorized to incur expenditure within the limits of the allotments of Rs. 27,700 applied for by him for relief works. Much of the expenditure that is now incurred from Provincial Funds will be ultimately recoverable from the Local Fund Boards; the necessary orders for a remodelling of the Nellore Local Board's budget will issue in the Financial Department.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. S. FORBES,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement,
Land Records and Agriculture).
„ the Public Works Department.
„ the Financial Department.
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Accountant-General.

Erd, Shaik Karim.

Proceedings of the Madras Government.

Read Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement, &c, No: 132, Dns, dt 11th Jan: 1898.

Submitting to Govt, for Sanction, Nellore Collector's letter requesting allotments for test-works started, and requesting the collector to reconsider his opinion regarding the unsuitability of the gang piece-works system.

Read also Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement, &c, No 461 Dns, dated 21st January 1898, Submitting to Government, with remarks, letter from the Collector of Nellore, requesting Sanction to continue certain relief works on the Task System.

Order thereon, No: 72, Press, dated 7th February 1898.

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| (4) Pamur | |
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(1) the distribution of cooked food to young children and the addition of three pies to supplement the diet of nursing mothers.

(2) the formation of weakly persons into separate gangs in exceptional cases.

These modifications rendered a larger supervising staff necessary than on code works but the system was reported to be notwithstanding more economical. It was also found to be better than code works but it was not suited to localities where distress was very severe and in these localities it had to be supplemented by code works on subsistence wages.

9. It will be seen that the essence of the Scheme is piece work at rates which are somewhat less than the ordinary rates — ^{or less than} the ordinary rates raised with due regard to the prevalent high prices — but still sufficient to leave some margin for the support of dependants. It is of course not intended that the wage of each worker should vary with the number of his dependants but only that the rates while below full current rates should be so fixed as to give a sufficient wage to an able-bodied labourer with an average family.

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(True Extract).

W. R. Marjoribanks

To
ag: Asst. Secretary to Government.
The Board of Revenue, Revenue Settlement, &
" Public Works Department.
" Financial Dept.
" Local and Municipal Dept.
" Accountant-General.

NS
7 Feb 98