

Public Works (1898) Department.

Robert

G.O., No.

64 25

DATED

9th March 1898.

[Despatch Abstract.]

*Affected Tracts of the Nellore & Co. Pros.
Revenue Dept passing orders on Board's
Pros. Submitting a report on the — Comd
to I.R. II (rule with remark)*

*Dr
9.358*

FURTHER PAPERS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

1898.

Board of Rebenue

(Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture),

MADRAS.

Recd.

Enclosures

1898.

Regd.

Spare copies

Printed February 11th.

Proceedings, No. 65, 8th February 1898.

FEBRUARY.

Inspection of distressed tracts in Nellore.—Submitting to Government report on the results of the — by the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture.

x C N. 1611 Sent to us 7 23.2.98

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF REVENUE
(REVENUE SETTLEMENT, LAND RECORDS AND AGRICULTURE).

Read—the following G.O., Mis. No. 360, Revenue, dated 24th January 1898 :—

Read—the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (R.S., L.R. and Agri.),
Mis. No. 157, dated 14th January 1898 :—

Read—the following letter from E. SCOTT, Esq., Acting Collector of Nellore, to the
Famine Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 6th January 1898, Ref.
No. 73-Ver. :—

I have the honour to request that the Board will obtain the sanction of Government for the immediate entertainment of two special Deputy Tahsildars on Rs. 100 each with the sanctioned establishment, one for Udayagiri and the other for Kanigiri. There are two relief works and attached kitchens in each of these taluks and it is likely that as the distress deepens, other works will have to be started. A third test work has already been started in Udayagiri. The Tahsildars there will therefore be employed exclusively on famine duties and Deputy Tahsildars to relieve them of their ordinary duties are urgently needed. Provision has been made for this additional establishment in the proposals contained in this office letter, Ref. No. 2680-Ver., dated 22nd December 1897. It may be observed in this connection that, in these two taluks, there are no Stationary Sub-Magistrates to relieve Tahsildars of their magisterial duties.

Resolution—Mis. No. 157, dated 14th January 1898.

Submitted to Government for orders.

2. The Collector has been ordered to carry out works on the gang piece-work system, but he reports in his C. No. 120 that the system is not suitable for introduction in all places. The cause of the unsuitability is not apparent, and the Collector should reconsider the matter. The introduction of the system will render the grant of gratuitous relief unnecessary for the present, and as works, other than repairs to minor irrigation works, will be under the charge of the Public Works Department, the Tahsildars will not have much to do with the administration of relief. They will however be required to conduct a careful and detailed inspection of the tracts affected, under section 18 of the Famine Code, and for this purpose it seems necessary to relieve them of their routine duties at head-quarters, especially as they have no Stationary Sub-Magistrates to assist them. The Deputy Tahsildars proposed, should be those who may be invested with 2nd-class Magisterial powers.

3. The Collector will be requested to submit the necessary proposition statements.

(True Copy and Extract.)

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

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

Order—Mis. No. 360, Revenue, dated 24th January 1898.

The Government understands that the Commissioner of Revenue Settlement is now touring in the tracts of the districts which are reported to be affected and will defer passing orders on these proposals till he reports the results of his personal inspection.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) N. E. MARJORIBANKS,
Ag. Under Secy. to Government.

To the Board of Revenue (Revenue Settlement, Land Records and Agriculture).

RESOLUTION—No. 65, dated 8th February 1898.

The Board has received the above paper (which was despatched to camp) only on this date—7th February. The Acting Commissioner proceeded to Nellore on the 18th ultimo and thence to Atmakúr, which is on the fringe of the distressed area of Nellore. The latter may be roughly described as about one-third of the district reaching on the west from Atmakúr in the south, through Udayagiri, Kanigiri and Podili, to Darsi. The parts visited were Atmakúr, Udayagiri (Naraváda), Nárimarella and Kanigiri, Pedárikatla and Tadivaripalle, and so on to Cumbum.

2. Three works were inspected, at Naraváda, Nárimarella and Pedárikatla. The last two were on the task-work system, numbers present being about 1,100 and 2,400. The coolies were in good or fair condition, except the old people, and all the babies were in good condition. The people are earning, generally, the task-work Code wages, and were fined when work was short. At the first named work, which was on the intermediate piece-work system, the coolies were generally in poor condition, and there were about a dozen “famine babies,” not perhaps far advanced in that stage, but distinctly emaciated. The people here were not as a rule able to earn as much as the Code wage. On the day of inspection the men earned about 7 pies, the women 5, and the children 2 and 3; but, owing to a strike for task work, they had not begun to work until 10–30 A.M.

3. The Commissioner, accompanied by the Collector or the Tahsildar, examined the Panchama hamlets at the different halting places. In most houses there was no food. In some there was found the following :—

A tea-cup full of rice in one house.
About one-third of a measure of ragi in another.
Some chillies and a little coriander in a third.
A saucer full of broken dried leaves in a fourth.
A little dried tamarind leaves in a fifth.
A few unripe small tamarind pods in a sixth.
Some green leaves from a sort of spinach in a seventh.
Some rice tavudu (husks) in the eighth and ninth. This is literally “the husks that the swine did eat.” Such stuff is not even given to horses, and it was mostly brown dust, the sweepings of the thrashing-floor.
In two houses some horse-gram boiling into conjee.
In two houses some ragi conjee.
In two houses some clean boiled rice spread out to cool on a tray. This was for two cholera convalescents, and was the remains of a collection made from the Komatis by the Tahsildar. The ragi above mentioned had been obtained in the same way.
In one house there were some sour berries—believed to be *Solanum nigrum*—like gooseberries in size, only harder and of a reddish yellow. The coolies on the works also were eating them. Such berries are very likely to cause bowel-complaints.
In one house at Kanigiri a large pot full of eholam was found. This had been earned by six members of the family who had been lucky enough to obtain employment.

4. There is no doubt that there has been a general failure of the dry crops in this tract, that the whole crop under the big Atmakur tank, some 1,200 acres, is lost, and that in places the crops under wells will be poor, for the latter are drying up. If the acreage cultivated had been restricted to half or one third the usual area the crops would have thriven, but the wells are not equal to maturing their usual ayakats. The cooly classes require employment and there will be mortality if they do not get it. The works have now been going on for more than a month, and have passed beyond the test-work stage. The Collector should submit the fortnightly reports required by the Code in future.

5. The Collector was desired to hand over the works to the Public Works officers, to be conducted under the piece-work system. He will close all kitchens, and give no gratuitous relief of any kind until further orders, in order that the piece-work system may have a fair trial. He should watch the district and report results.

6. Relief of a kind has been going on for some months, as the Revd. Mr. Broch of Kanigiri, has expended Rs. 3,000 since August last in employing coolies. It is to be hoped that he will hold his hand now, as such charity obscures results, and the piece-work system should have an opportunity of showing what it can do. The Board requests instructions as to whether a distance test should also be introduced, as proposed by Mr. Higham. In this case no one should be admitted to any work who lives nearer than, say, 40 miles to the site. Putting for about one-third of the present number on each work should be prepared at once. The Revenue officers should then shroff out all coolies who live within 40 miles of the work and refer them to some other work at that distance. Thus, the Udayagiri coolies could be sent to Pedarikatla, and the Pedarikatla coolies to Naravada. Distinct orders of Government are requested on this point, as the Code does not provide for any distance test.

7. A conference was held by the Second Member of Council, at which the Acting Chief Engineer, the Acting Collector of Nellore and the Acting Commissioner of Revenue Settlement were present, and the Chief Engineer was directed to have some large projects investigated on which the distance test and piece-work could be properly worked out. The results will be very interesting. Government is also requested to say what the piece-work rates should be; the present Public Works Department rates, or, something higher, say 20 per cent. higher.

8. The attention of Government is requested to paragraphs 53, 54 and 71 of the "Narrative of the Famine in India in 1896-97" recently issued by T. W. Holderness, Esq., C.S.I. The Board has no belief in the distance test or piece-work, but it is well, as they have been so strongly recommended, that there should be an object lesson; as, apparently, nothing short of this will kill the cry which has been raised against the task-work system of the Code. The results of the new system cannot, unfortunately, be gauged at once, unless the Collector's supervision is close, for slow starvation takes about two months to tell on the rates of mortality, and these, again, are not available for reference until after a further delay of about a month.

(True Copy and Extract.)

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

To the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.

„ Collector of Nellore.

Copy to the Chief Engineer.

Exd. A. F. Eccleston.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Rev. Sett.

No. 65 Press, dated 8th February 1898.

Order thereon. Press No. 119 dated 1st March 1898.

The Board of Revenue is referred to the instructions contained in G.O. No. 72 dated 7th February 1898 in which the principles which should guide the selection of relief works and the rates for piece-work to be allowed, are fully explained. The remarks in para. 6 of the Board's Proceedings about a distance test are apparently based upon a misapprehension of paras 29, 30, 31, and 41(b) of Mr. Higham's final ~~report~~ note dated 1st October 1897. In those paragraphs Mr. Higham (who was however not writing authoritatively) recommends that large works likely to be remunerative or of considerable public utility should, at the commencement of distress, be chosen for the purposes of famine relief and that in selecting such works a distance from the distressed locality within a limit of 40 or 50 miles should not be regarded as too great. He thinks that petty works near the distressed villages should not be opened in the earlier stages of distress. (vide para. 41(1)). The Board apparently construes Mr. Higham to recommend that works not less than 40 or 50 miles away should necessarily be selected even if suitable works are available nearer at hand. The Government considers that the Board should not have made such a mistake.

(True Extract.)

Ag. Under Secy to Govt.

To the Board of Revenue, Rev. Sett.

„ P. W. Department.

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Govt. of {189 } Madras.

REVENUE.

To

Dated

Recd.

Encl.

Mis. G.O.,
R.

189 , No.

SUBJECT.