

Public (1897.) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 1127

DATED 30. 8. 97

[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording papers received from  
the Govt of India regarding  
the desertion of labourers from  
the mortality on, the Gula  
Estate, Perak.

11/9/97

# BACK PAPERS.

| G.O. | No. | Department. | Date. | G.O. | No. | Department. | Date. |
|------|-----|-------------|-------|------|-----|-------------|-------|
|      |     |             |       |      |     |             |       |

# FURTHER PAPERS.

| G.O. | No. | Department. | Date. | G.O. | No. | Department. | Date. |
|------|-----|-------------|-------|------|-----|-------------|-------|
|      |     |             |       |      |     |             |       |

530 8 7-5-97  
 95 8 2-2-97  
 1359 8 26  
 1156 8 746  
 944 8 75  
 166 8 95  
 718 8 94  
 799 8 93  
 521 8 992

1897.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE.

EMIGRATION.

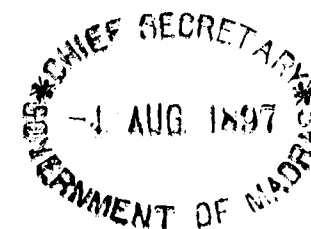
File No. 5 of 1897.

Serial No. 5.

887-7A-7B 86-79  
 544 8 12.5.97.  
 530 8 7.5.97 m  
 418 8 12.4.97 m  
 95 8 2.2.97-  
 1359 8 30.12.96.  
 1156-7 8 27.10.96  
 930-1 8 28.8.96  
 890 8 19.8.96.  
 292 8 26.2.96  
 944 8 14.11.95  
 936 8 14.11.95  
 166 8 8.3.95  
 718 8 25.9.94  
 135 8 30-12-96

To

THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,  
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS



No. 1134  
6-5

Dated Simla, 24th July 1897.

Recd 4 8 - 97  
Regd 4 8 - 97

Encls - 1

Spare copies - 15 of e to 14 of en clor.

SUBJECT.

Desertions from, and the mortality on, the Gula <sup>Es</sup> State, Perak.

No.  $\frac{1133}{6-5}$ .

FROM

DENZIL IBBETSON, ESQ., C.S., C.S.I.,  
*Secretary to the Government of India,*

TO

THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,  
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

Dept. of Rev. & Agri.  
Emigration.

*Simla, the 24th July 1897.*

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3458-97, dated the 20th May last, with which was enclosed a copy of papers regarding the desertions from, and the mortality on, the Gula Estate, Perak.

2. In reply I am to state that the Government of India are content to leave to the discretion of His Excellency the Governor the question whether a Committee of enquiry should be appointed or not. It is presumed that in the event of such a Committee not being appointed, the Indian Immigration Agent will be instructed to keep a careful watch over the Gula Estate, and to see that a proper schedule of task-work is drawn up and observed.

3. The inability of the labourers to perform the agricultural work required of them and their inaptitude for manual labour point to the necessity for greater care in the recruiting of labourers for that Estate, and this might in the opinion of this Government be pointed out to the management.

4. I am also to bring to His Excellency's notice that the papers enclosed with your letter under reply show that on the Gula Estate the practice condemned by the Straits Labour Commission of 1891, of issuing rice only for those days on which a labourer actually worked, was in force, and that the deprivation of food to which coolies failing to do their day's task were thus exposed, seems to have had much to do with the desertions and the death rate. It would appear that under Art. 72 of the Perak Order in Council, No. 9 of 1895, an employer is not permitted to make deductions from the wages of a labourer unless such deductions have been confirmed by the Immigration Agent. The Government of India would suggest for His Excellency the Governor's consideration that the practice above referred

to on the Gula Estate is, if it does not expressly contravene any express provision of the law, opposed to the spirit of Art. 72. The Government of India are in agreement with the Straits Labour Commission in condemning the practice.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

DENZIL IBBETSON,

*Secretary to the Government of India.*

No.  $\frac{1134}{6-5}$

Copy, together with a copy of the letter to which it is a reply, forwarded to the Government of Madras for information in continuation of the correspondence ending with this Department endorsement No.  $\frac{510}{6-5}$ , dated the 17th April 1897.

By order,

*Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.*

No. 3458-97, dated Colonial Secretary's Office, Singapore, the 20th May 1897.

File No. 6 of 1897.

From—C. W. S. KYNNESELEY, Esq., Acting Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Calcutta. Serial No. 4.

In continuation of my letter of 12th March with regard to a communication from the Government of Madras relative to the prevalence of desertion and mortality on Gula Estate, I am directed to inform you that His Excellency the Governor called upon the Resident General of the Federated Malay States for a report on the subject, and I now attach copy of a letter received from him dated 4th May, enclosing further correspondence with reference to Gula Estate.

2. It is satisfactory to learn that, under the new Manager, the condition of matters on that Estate has greatly improved, and, as the Indian Immigration Agent is now quartered in that district, I trust that there will be no further grounds for complaint.

3. During the first two months of the present year there were only 9 deaths on the Estate, which gives a monthly average of 2.5 against 6.58 in 1896.

Desertions too have been far less frequent, and His Excellency the Governor has therefore not deemed it necessary to appoint a Committee of Enquiry, but he is quite prepared to do so if the Government of India consider it is desirable that a further enquiry should be held.

RESIDENT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
SELANGOR, MALAY PENINSULA,  
4th May 1897.

No. C. S. 1010-97.

SIR,

With reference to correspondence 894-97 and to your letter of that number of the 7th instant on the subject of the desertions and high death rate among the Indian immigrants employed on the Gula Estate, I have now the honour to forward copies of all recent correspondence on the subject.

2. In my minute of 1st March 1897 on J.L. C. 545-97, I have already stated that I ordered the enquiry, now desired by the Government of India, to be held in November last, but as the Manager of the Estate was immediately suspended I thought it better to wait rather than take at that moment a step that must have embarrassed his successor.

3. The conclusion I come to on the papers of which copies are now enclosed is that, though the Medical Officers of the Perak Government visited the Gula Estate eighteen times last year, and the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent twice, it was clear that the Manager was so unpopular that he could not keep his coolies. The character of the evidence of the deserters examined, however, shows that they ran away to better themselves, and because they did not like hard work. That will always be a complaint from immigrants who are not agriculturists used to the changkol (mamoti).

4. There is evidently a difficulty in dealing with those who do not mean to work and yet are not ill. At present the Manager does not appear to be bound to feed them, though Mr. Boyd says they are often given written orders (surat) for rice when they have not earned them.

5. There is a great improvement in the state of matters since Mr. Boyd went to Gula, and as the Perak Indian Immigration Agent is now quartered in Krian, I trust there will be no further cause for complaint. If Your Excellency or the Government of India desires that a Committee of Enquiry be appointed, I will give the necessary directions; but as the death rate was not extraordinarily high and the desertions are now much fewer, I do not myself think there is any special need for it. Besides, as I have already pointed out, the desertions do not seem to have been caused by ill-treatment.

I have, &c.,

(Sd.) F. A. SWETTLAND,  
Resident General,  
Federated Malay States.

The Hon'ble

The Colonial Secretary, S.S.,

Singapore.

*Copies of all recent correspondence on the subject of the desertions and high death rate among the Indian Immigrants employed on the Gula Estate, Perak.*

British Resident, Perak.

For report.

(Sd.) A. B.

1st March 1897.

Resident General,

I enclose—

(1). Minute by Indian Immigration Agent, 24th March 1897, covering—

(2). Notes of evidence taken on the Gula Estate, including that of the Medical Officer.

(3). Return of desertions.

(4). Return of deaths.

(5). Copy of my telegram to the Indian Immigration Agent, 6th April 1897.

(6). His telegram in reply, 7th April 1897.

2. I do not like to detain this paper, but you may require further information, and I will return my copy of this paper to Indian Immigration Agent for additional facts.

3. I do not understand the Medical Officer's statement, which I have marked, as to non-supply of regular food, nor the Indian Immigration Agent's telegraphic explanation in answer to my enquiry by telegram. As I read part VI of the Indian Immigration Order in Council, 1895, all indentured coolies must be supplied by the Manager with proper rations.

4. Only 7 deserters were examined. Ignorance of the fact that they would have to do changkol work, and their inability to do it, sickness and the news that higher wages could be obtained elsewhere, are alleged as causes of desertion.

5. A new Manager was appointed towards the end of last year, and affairs as regards desertion appear to be improving. I have some reason to believe that the large number of desertions is, to a considerable extent, due to the unpopularity of the late Manager. See the return of desertions.

6. In the return of desertions no entries are made under September; the figures cannot be found. From the Annual Report for 1896, written by the same officer, I find that the total desertions for 1896 from Gula were 661; if that is correct, the desertions in September must have amounted to 59, and I have added that figure in the return in pencil. The desertions in 1895 amounted to 626. There were 1,305 indentured coolies on the Gula Estate on the 31st December 1896.

7. Deaths. From the same Annual Report I find that in 1896 the death rate on the Gula Estate was 4.78 per cent. in 1896, 4.24 per cent. in 1895 and 6.39 per cent. in 1894.

8. Only two visits of inspection were paid to the Gula Estate during 1896 by the Indian Immigration Agent.

9. I am not able to give the number of visits paid by the Government Medical Officer at present.

(Sd.) W. H. T.

8th April 1897.

British Resident, Perak.

I have sent you a wire, copy enclosed. Please report further when you get reply.

I think the Perak officer is Assistant Indian Immigration Agent.

How often did the Indian Immigration Agent (Penang) visit the Estate in 1896?

(Sd.) F. A. S.

12th April 1897.

Resident General.

No reply has yet been received from the Manager of Gula Estate to the letter addressed to him by the Acting Secretary to Government in accordance with your telegraphic instructions of 12th April 1897. But enclosed is a copy of a letter from him to the Indian Immigration Agent, 8th April 1897, bearing on the same subject, the supply of food to coolies. When his letter is received, it shall be forwarded to you.

2. I now enclose copy of a minute by the Indian Immigration Agent dated 14th April 1897, replying to queries I had addressed to him; copy of the Manager's letter referred to above and corrected Estate Returns (2).

3. The explanations as to food supply are still unsatisfactory. The Manager's expected letter may clear the matter up.

4. E of the Indian Immigration Agent's minute refers to my query as to coolies' food.

5. You will notice that all the requirements of Part VI of the Order in Council are not strictly carried out. You wish that they should be?

6. Visits of Indian Immigration Agent. When I was Secretary to Government, visits were paid quarterly, and the report of the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent and of the Medical Officer who accompanied him were regularly gazetted. I think quarterly visits should suffice, with occasional irregular visits. Eighteen visits were made to Gula Estate by Government Medical Officers during the year.

7. The Protector of Indian Immigrants, Penang, paid no visits to Gula Estate in 1896. This information is given by Resident Councillor, Penang.

8. The title of the Perak Officer is Indian Immigration Agent *vide* Gazette, 15th January 1897.

16th April 1897.

W. H. T.

Ask the Legal Adviser whether the Manager is obliged by law to supply food to statute immigrants.

F. A. S.

*Legal Adviser.*

Please say.

22nd April 1897.

A. B.

*Resident General.*

Section 45 of Order in Council No. 9 of 1895 says that the rations are to be supplied at "wholesale current market prices."

2. This clearly implies that the statute immigrant must pay for them.

3. Section 48 says that if a statute immigrant be received for medical treatment in a Government Hospital the expense attending his feeding shall be paid for by his employer.

4. As regards a statute immigrant who is not in hospital, and does not pay, I can find nothing in the Order in Council to compel the Manager to supply him with food.

5. In the present case the Manager issued a daily "surat" for work done, and accepted this, in place of cash, for payment for the price of food. There does not appear to me to be anything illegal in this.

23rd April 1897.

T. H. KERSHAW.

*Copy of a minute by the Indian Immigration Agent, Perak, dated the 24th March 1897.*

*Secretary to Government.*

I put up two returns giving the number of deaths and desertions from January 1896 to the end of February 1897 on the Gula Estate.

The number of desertions in September 1896 I am unable to give as I cannot find the returns in my office records.

2. From these returns it will be seen that matters have considerably improved this year.

3. I enclose in original the evidence taken by me of several of the deserters on the Estates as well as that of the Medical Officer in charge of the Estate Hospital (Mr. Lincoln) on the occasion of my visit to the Gula Estate on the 15th of this month.

Mr. Lincoln attributes the high percentage of mortality amongst the coolies to the fact that a large number of them on their arrival here are not accustomed to agricultural work, which, when they have to perform, tells considerably on their health, resulting in debility or diarrhoea.

These complaints show the largest number of deaths. Most of the coolies I examined informed me that when they were engaged in India they were not told they would be required to labour on an Estate and do changkol work, but that they would get similar work to that on which they were engaged in India such as shopkeeping and cart driving. Some of the deserters also told me that they deserted because they found the work on the Estate too trying not ever having done such work before, and on learning from people in and outside the Estate that lighter work could be obtained elsewhere and on higher wages, they were glad to run away and thus get rid of the changkol to which they so much object.

If therefore any reliance can be placed in the statements of the coolies, it seems to me that the main cause of such a high mortality and number of

desertions is that the coolies have to perform labour to which they have never been accustomed in their own country and learn for the first time on their arrival here the nature of the work for which they were engaged.

I am, however, able to report that during the first two months of this year there were only 9 deaths, which gives a monthly average of 2.5 against a monthly average of 6.58 in 1896. Desertions also show a considerable decrease on last year, as will be seen from the return enclosed.

I regret I have been unable to send in my report earlier.

I have had no assistance in my office, the only clerk having been ordered to report himself to you soon after his arrival here and before I had taken over the records of the Department, and his successor has not yet arrived.

E. B.

24th March 1897.

*Evidence taken by the Indian Immigration Agent, Perak, Gula Estate, on the 15th March 1897.*

John Henry Lincoln states:—

I am the Medical Officer in charge of the Estate Hospital. On the arrival of statute Indian immigrants on the Estate, I hold an examination of each one. As a rule they are a healthy lot, but it is not long after their arrival that many of them are admitted into hospital chiefly for debility or diarrhoea, from which a large number of the coolies have died. I am of opinion that the main cause of these complaints is due to the fact that these coolies are not accustomed to agricultural work which they have to perform on the Estate and they are therefore not able to do their work regularly. The result is they cannot obtain that regular supply of food which is very necessary for them especially when entering upon work new to them. They thus become much distressed and run down in constitution, and it ends in great debility or severe diarrhoea which carries off many of them. I give the cases my very best attention, and the Government Medical Officer often visits the hospital, and every measure and treatment is rendered. The other complaints which the coolies get are only such ones as the healthiest might get and are due to no particular causes that I know of. During the rainy seasons although the water supply on the Estates is plentiful and good, it is impossible to keep the coolies from drinking water wherever they may find it and no doubt this brings on some of their complaints. I cannot attribute the high mortality amongst the coolies in the past to any other causes. That is all I had to say.

Papu (female) states:—

I am a statute Indian immigrant coolie on the Gula Estate. I have been here about a year. I am married, but my husband has run away about two months ago. I get everything I want on the Estate. I get enough to eat and am paid my wages regularly. An old coolie on the Estate asked me and several other coolies, women, to leave the Estate some months ago and go with him. He told me he could get me wages at \$9 a month in Deli, and as it was more than I am getting here I went with him. His name is Murugan. We were brought back and he was locked up in Penang. Again, a man named Parimen told me he knew where my husband was and if I went with him I would see him. I went with him to Nebong Tebal, but I did not see my husband. I remained away from the Estate 6 days and then returned of my own accord. I am now living with my elder brother. I have no desire to leave the Estate now and will work out my time. I deserted twice only.

Tailema (female) states:—

I am a statute Indian immigration coolie on the Gula Estate. I have been here for about 6 months. My contract is for 3 years. I am married, but left my husband in India. I was put to do changkol work when I came here, and as I did not know how to do that work, I ran away. A man on the

Estate named Sadiapen asked me to go with him as his wife to Penang and I went. I was arrested there and brought back. I was never told in India I would have to do changkol work. They told me I would have to look after carts and shops, so I came; but I was not told I would have to work as a coolie on an Estate. I did no work in India as my husband supported me. I quarrelled with him and was glad to leave him.

Kupu Naikem states:—

I am a statute Indian immigrant on the Gula Estate. I have been here about two years and my contract is for three years. I was a shopkeeper in India and had carts. When I was engaged in India they told me I would have to cut grass over here and would get \$4.50 a month. I never did changkol work in India. When I came here I had to do it and I found it very hard, so I ran away. No one enticed me away. I went with my own accord. I got bridge work under the Government. I did not tell my employer I was a statute coolie. I was arrested and taken back to the Estate. I ran away again because I was put to changkol work again. I went to Parit Buntar, Krian, but before I got work there, I was arrested by the Estate watchman. I always get my food and wages on this Estate when I do my work.

Ramasamy states:—

I am a statute Indian immigrant on the Gula Estate. I have worked for 3 years but the Manager told me my contract had not yet expired. (I examined this contract and find that owing to the time the coolie has been in jail having been deducted from his contract time, as provided by the Ordinance, he has not yet served his three years.) Soon after I came here my chest hurt me and I could not work. I was sitting one day on the Estate and the watchman arrested me. After I came from jail I again got sick and ran away to Kuala Kangsar. I was treated in Estate hospital for my complaint, but I got no better, so I ran away. I got no better in Kuala Kangsar and was a fool for running away. The Manager caught me there and I was brought back and charged. This was when I was new to the place. I don't want to run away again. I am contented now.

Kolinga states:—

I am a statute Indian immigrant on the Gula Estate. I have been on the Estate for nine or ten months. After I was here a month or two I ran away. I could not do changkol work and my eye was bad. They told me in India I would get easy work over here. My eye was not bad then. I cannot see with one eye. The doctor has attended to it, but it is no better. When I used the changkol I could not manage it with one eye and was afraid I would cut my leg, so I ran away to an adjoining estate where Chinese are employed. No one called me there. I was not given food there nor work, so I came back to this Estate. I ran away once only. I ran away because I could not see well and my good eye always hurt me and water falls from it when I work. I cannot see quite well with my good eye.

Munasamy states:—

I am a statute Indian immigrant on the Gula Estate. I have been working here about ten months. I ran away after I had been here about two months. I do not know how to use the changkol and that is why I ran away. I am a wood cutter. I was told in India I would get all kinds of work over here, so I came. Everything else on the estate is all right. Only changkol work I object to. I went to the adjoining Estate, Ah Yong's, and I was arrested there. I ran away again as I listened to what other coolies told me. Ramasamy and Kopusamy told me they could get me work elsewhere so I went with them. They are also coolies on this Estate. On our way when we got to Kurau, we were arrested. Ramasamy and Kopusamy have got away altogether. They are not here now. I am not of the caste that use the changkol. I want lighter work.

Singara Vellu states:—

I am a statute Indian Immigrant on the Gula Estate. I have been here about one year. I went away four times to find my wife. On one occasion I was caned in my hands by the Manager. Mr. Stephens, the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, enquired into the matter. I was in hospital for eight days owing to that caning. Each time I ran away I was arrested and brought back to the Estate. My contract is nearly completed now and I intend going back to India to get my wife. She left me. I don't know why.

Taken before me.

E. BURNSIDE,

I. I. A., Perak.

15th March 1897.

Return showing the number of desertions from the Gula Estate during the year 1896 and January and February 1897.

| 1896.<br>Month. | Number<br>convicted. | Number<br>not<br>arrested. | Total. | 1897.                |                            |        | REMARKS.                                                                                       |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 |                      |                            |        | Number<br>convicted. | Number<br>not<br>arrested. | Total. |                                                                                                |
| January ...     | 31                   | 42                         | 73     | <i>Nil</i>           | 16                         | 16     | Monthly average on 12 months in 1896 = 55.08, monthly average for January and February = 17.5. |
| February ...    | 21                   | 31                         | 55     | 7                    | 12                         | 19     |                                                                                                |
| March ...       | 38                   | 8                          | 46     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| April ...       | 21                   | 8                          | 32     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| May ...         | 29                   | 1                          | 33     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| June ...        | 31                   | 31                         | 62     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| July ...        | 57                   | 26                         | 93     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| August ...      | 37                   | 28                         | 65     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| September ...   | ?                    | ?                          | 59     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| October ...     | 30                   | 10                         | 49     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| November ...    | <i>Nil</i>           | 31                         | 31     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| December ...    | 10                   | 63                         | 73     | ...                  | ...                        | ...    |                                                                                                |
| TOTALS ...      | 320                  | 282                        | 661    | 7                    | 28                         | 35     |                                                                                                |

Return showing the number of deaths on the Gula Estate during the year 1896 and January and February 1897.

| Months.       | Number of<br>deaths<br>1896. | Number of<br>deaths<br>1897. | REMARKS.                                                                                     |
|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January ...   | 1                            | 3                            | Monthly average in 1896 = 6.58 monthly average for two months January and February 1897 = 5. |
| February ...  | 0                            | 2                            |                                                                                              |
| March ...     | 5                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| April ...     | 2                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| May ...       | 9                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| June ...      | 9                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| July ...      | 9                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| August ...    | 6                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| September ... | 18                           | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| October ...   | 5                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| November ...  | 7                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| December ...  | 8                            | ...                          |                                                                                              |
| TOTALS ...    | 79                           | 5                            |                                                                                              |

Copy of a telegram from British Resident, to Indian Immigration Agent, Parit Buntar.

Have you copy of the evidence you took in Gula enquiry. Ask Lincoln for explanation of his statement to effect that the result is they cannot obtain that regular supply of food which is very necessary for them; all indentured coolies have proper food supplied to them. What is state of water supply in dry seasons. How many visits by Government Medical Officers during the period covered by your report. Wire to Tranchell for September returns. Is it not the case that the late Manager was very unpopular with the coolies. When was new Manager appointed? Reply to first part of message at once; it is all urgent; wire replies.

From Indian Immigration Agent to British Resident, 7th April 1897.

I have not copy of Gula evidence. Coolies get food from shop on estate on ticket supplied by Manager daily. If coolie does not work, no wages are due and he does not get ticket and has therefore to find food himself. This is, I think, meaning of Lincoln's statement. Ample water supply during dry season. Will wire information re Medical visits, unpopularity of late Manager and appointment of new Manager. No record in office of these.

Copy of a telegram from the Resident General to the British Resident, Perak.

Write Manager, Gula Estate, enquire if true that rice is not supplied to indentured coolies if they don't work. Say Indian Government has called serious attention to desertions and death rate, 1895-96, and ask his explanation. Say matter urgent and important.

Copy of minute by Indian Immigration Agent, Perak.

I telegraphed to the Manager of Gula on receipt of the Resident's telegram of the 7th and received the enclosed letter in reply.

2. I think it will now be seen that what Mr Lincoln intended was not that the Estates did not provide proper and regular supplies of food, but that the coolie was unable to purchase, by reason of his not having worked, that regular supply of food necessary for his sustenance. In further explanation of Mr. Lincoln's statement there is the surat system in vogue on the Estate. A surat, good for 6½ cents, is given every day to a coolie who has earned that sum. On presentation of this surat at the estate shop where proper and sufficient rations are always obtainable, and at Penang market rates, he gets whatever he wants to that value. At the end of the month the advances by surats are deducted from the pay due the coolie and he is paid the balance. A coolie who does not work so as to earn a surat has to find his own means of getting rations from the shop, and it is to this class of coolie that Mr. Lincoln referred in his statement.

3. In reply to the Resident's queries—

(a) I am unable to say how it was that only two visits of inspection were made of the Gula Estate in 1896. Perhaps the officers in charge of the Department in 1896 can say. I can find record of two visits only.

(b). Eighteen visits were made by the Government Medical Officers during the year. I have asked the District Surgeon to supply me with the names and dates, but have not yet received them.

(c). The legal rates of wages are those set out in section 38 of the Order in Council, viz:—In contracts for a term less than three years not less than

for a male, 16 cents a day and  
for a female, 14 cents a day.

In contracts for a term of three years, not less than for a male, 16 cents a day for the first 450 days of actual labour on tasks performed, and 18 cents a day for the remainder of the term of contract, and similarly for a female, 12 cents and 16 cents a day respectively.

The Gula Estate pays to males 18 cents a day for the first 450 days and 20 cents a day for the remainder and to females 14 and 16 cents respectively or two cents a day more in each case than the minimum fixed by law.

(d). Mr. Lincoln has qualified at the Madras Medical College as an Assistant Apothecary and the District Surgeon, Krian, considers that he is qualified for the appointment he holds.

(e). See Mr. Boyd's letter enclosed and paragraph 2 of this minute.

(f). I have, as requested by the British Resident, gone carefully through each section of part VI of the Order in Council and, with the exceptions to be noted below, all the requirements of the Order in Council are being properly observed and acted upon.

The following are the exceptions:—

(1). Mr. Lincoln does not hold a certificate from a (Perak?) Government Medical Officer that he is qualified as required by section 50 and that he is not a Government servant (section 50) and he is paid by the Estate.

(2). Medicines are not purchased from the Government (section 51) but from Penang.

(3). A list, as required by section 37 (iii), is not posted up monthly in the Estate.

(4). A schedule of task work and approved by the Indian Immigration Agent has not been drawn up, section 37 (i).

As to (1) and (2) perhaps the Government will consider the present arrangements sufficient? With regard to (3) Mr. Boyd, the Manager of the Estate, informs me that a list has never been posted on the Estate, nor would it be understood by the coolie. That he hopes it will not be insisted on, as it will entail a considerable amount of extra clerical work without any corresponding advantage to employed or employer.

I am now drawing up a schedule of task work, but I feel that it is impossible to include in it every class of task which a coolie may be called on to do, and even the same task, under different circumstances, would vary considerably in value and extent. In the past although a schedule has not been made, I am informed that the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent was aware of the tasks substituted in lieu of work by the day.

I do not know of any rules as to the number of visits that should be made by the Agent, and I shall be glad of instructions. I have made monthly visits since my appointment to the office.

I am still unable to find the September 1896 defaulters' return. It may possibly be in the Secretariat, *vide* 5276-96. I have, however, obtained a duplicate from the Gula Estate, and I find the total number of desertions for that month to be 110.

I have put up amended returns of the number of deserters and of deaths in 1896-97, as I find in the one sent in by me there were errors which I only discovered on receipt of the September return.

(Sd.) E. B.

14th April 1897

The amended returns give one month more in 1897, and show a far better improvement on the previous year.

*Amended return showing the number of desertions from the Gula Estate during the year 1896 and first quarter ending 31st March 1897.*

| Month.        | 1896.             |                      |        | 1897.             |                      |        |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------|--------|
|               | Number convicted. | Number not arrested. | Total. | Number convicted. | Number not arrested. | Total. |
| January ...   | 33                | 42                   | 75     | ...               | 16                   | 16     |
| February ...  | 19                | 30                   | 49     | 7                 | 12                   | 19     |
| March ...     | 19                | 8                    | 27     | 6                 | 16                   | 22     |
| April ...     | 23                | 8                    | 31     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| May ...       | 24                | 4                    | 28     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| June ...      | 32                | 31                   | 63     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| July ...      | 30                | 48                   | 78     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| August ...    | 36                | 28                   | 64     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| September ... | 62                | 42                   | 110    | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| October ...   | 23                | 10                   | 33     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| November ...  | ...               | 31                   | 31     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| December ...  | 9                 | 63                   | 72     | ...               | ...                  | ...    |
| Total ...     | 316               | 345                  | 661    | 13                | 44                   | 57     |

Percentage of desertions in 1896, 40.53.

” ” 1st quarter 1897, 4.53.

*Amended return showing the number of deaths on the Gula Estate during the year 1896 and first quarter ending 31st March 1897.*

| Month.        |     |     |     | Number of deaths, 1896. | Number of deaths, 1897. |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| January ...   | ... | ... | ... | 1                       | 3                       |
| February ...  | ... | ... | ... | 0                       | 2                       |
| March ...     | ... | ... | ... | 5                       | 1                       |
| April ...     | ... | ... | ... | 2                       | ...                     |
| May ...       | ... | ... | ... | 9                       | ...                     |
| June ...      | ... | ... | ... | 9                       | ...                     |
| July ...      | ... | ... | ... | 8                       | ...                     |
| August ...    | ... | ... | ... | 6                       | ...                     |
| September ... | ... | ... | ... | 18                      | ...                     |
| October ...   | ... | ... | ... | 5                       | ...                     |
| November ...  | ... | ... | ... | 7                       | ...                     |
| December ...  | ... | ... | ... | 8                       | ...                     |
| Total ...     |     |     |     | 78                      | 6                       |

Copy of letter from the Manager, Gula Estate, to Indian Immigration Agent,  
Perak.

The Perak Sugar Cultivation Co., Ltd.

Gula Estate, 8th April 1897.

DEAR SIR,

I have shown Mr. Lincoln your telegram of yesterday's date, and he states that in his evidence which had reference to the death rate of the labour in 1896, his intention was to show that in that year amongst a number of coolies imported there were many who did not belong to the agricultural class and who persistently refused to work and allowed themselves to fall into a state of dis-health by making no effort to obtain wages sufficient to purchase food for their proper sustenance. They therefore had then, as was their intention, to be taken to hospital for treatment where they received full messing and every attention.

2. You have misunderstood the surat arrangement. A coolie, whenever he has worked for the value of a surat, receives it. There are a number of weekly coolies who do light work only and yet receive their daily surat. My books will show you in many cases coolies' wages show rice due.

3. I consider that you are quite justified in saying that the late Manager was "very unpopular with coolies."

4. My appointment to the management of this estate dates from 1st December 1896. Referring to my remarks under paragraph 1, I may add that, although we still have a few habitual idlers on the estate, there are fewer cases of malingering and the coolies appear more contented.

I am, etc.,

(Sd.) THOMS BOYD,  
Manager.

*Indian Labourers in Perak*  
Hon<sup>ble</sup> S. H. W. Bliss K.C.I.E.  
Circ.

(which were still very high on this estate)

Curr. no 2891.

Public Department.

FOR THE RECORD

The Govt. of India forwards a copy of the correspondence which it has had with the Govt. of the Straits Settlements regarding the desertions from and the mortality on the Gula estate, Perak, among Indian labourers.

The attention of this Govt. was first called to this estate by a statement in the annual report on Indian Immigration in the Straits Settlements for 1896. In letter No. 712, Public, dated 20th September 1894, this Govt. expressed its opinion that the reasons for the heavy desertions from the estate should form the subject of enquiry. India forwarded this letter to the "Straits" Govt.

The annual report for 1896 purported to explain the large number of desertions attributing them to

(1) the fact that a large number of the coolies are unfit for agricultural labour and desert at once.

(2) misrepresentations <sup>by</sup> the recruiters.

(3) crimping.

(4) the fact that higher wages are paid by other employers.

On this Govt. remarked (letter No. 244, Public, dated 14th November 1896) that the desertions pointed to the necessity of improving the conditions and terms of labour. ~~Under~~ On receipt of the annual report for 1896 Govt. again called attention to the conditions on this estate and stated its opinion that the number of

desertion

desertions and the high mortality called for a searching enquiry,

India agreed and communicated the remarks of this Govt. to the Straits Settlements. (C.O. No. 98, Public, dated 2nd February 1897)

The Govt. of the Straits Settlements in answering India's letter forwarded copies of certain correspondence tending to show that the Gula estate was not worse than others. It was <sup>argued</sup> ~~stated~~ in this correspondence that Gula had imported a very large number of coolies in the years concerned and that as coolies, if they desert at all, usually do so during the first year, and a large number of desertions was to be expected. From the letter of the Colonial Secretary it appeared that a special enquiry into the condition of the labourers on this estate had been ordered.

The current shows the results of this enquiry.

The chief point of importance is that the former manager of this estate has been dismissed. It is admitted that he was very unpopular with the coolies, which is probably a delicate way of suggesting that his treatment of them caused the desertions. The mortality during the first three months of 1897 shows an average of 2 per mensem against 5.0 in 1896.

In the course of the enquiry <sup>three</sup> ~~three~~ facts were brought to light on which the Govt. of India comments in its Settlement's Govt.

Go. no 135 Pub. d 30/12/96 Q

vide Go. no 530 Pub. d 7/5/97 H

\* para 37 fly M.  
o flag N  
N.B. The Straits Settlements Ordinance will come into force in Perak also.  
vide Go. no 544 Pub d. 12-5-97.

vide Go. 418 Pub d. 12/4/97  
and Go. no 887 Pub d. 6/7/97.

copy of which is now communicated for information.

The first point is that the task schedule required by the Perak order of Council (and now by the draft bill sec. 27) has not been kept up on this estate. The Govt. of India presumes that this will be attended to in future.

The second point brought out in the enquiry is that many of the labourers are unfit for agricultural work. They are many of them (as appears from the statements taken from some deserters on pages 3, 6, 7, of the enclosure to the current) not agricultural labourers in India. The Govt. of India remarks that more care should be exercised in recruiting. The statements of the coolies, if believed, show too that there has been a considerable amount of misrepresentation by recruiters as to the work to be done in the Straits. This Govt. has now, however, agreed to free emigration to the Straits from all restrictions and nothing remains to be done but to impress on the Straits Settlements Govt. the necessity for supervision. This India has done.

point  
The remaining of importance in the correspondence has reference to the feeding of the coolies. From the statements (page 3 of the enclosure to the current) of the Medical officer of Gula estate it appears that some of the deaths <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ attributed by him to the fact that coolies not being able to work do not get regular food. It was explained that under the system in force <sup>a</sup> ~~the coolies~~ surut (chit) for

for 6½ cents) is given to each cooly who <sup>daily</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>done a full day's work.</sup> ~~earned that sum.~~ This he can exchange at the shop for rations: the balance of his pay is disbursed at the end of the month. Coolies who have not done a full day's work do not get a surat and have to provide money before they can purchase rations.

Inki regard to this the Govt of India remarks that the system of issuing rice only on three days on which the cool only works is to be

condemned. It appears however that there is nothing in the law to compel the

employer <sup>even</sup> to issue rice at all (or that is equivalent with to issue daily chits)

All that he is bound to do is to provide rations at "wholesale current market

prices" (under opinion of the Legal Adviser. para 4 of the Enclosures to the current)

The current being for information only, it is absolutely to be recorded. It is a matter for satisfaction that the action of

Order no. 1127 of 30 Aug 97

the

Recorded

1/2 m. order

30/8/97

Atk. 25/8/97

There is nothing to be done with this book record

When given for copying  
When copied  
When examined  
When signed

189

ROAD ARMY G.O., No. 189

DATED

ORDER NO.

ENCLOSURE TO C. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT.

REMARKS WITH DITTO.

NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DISPATCH IN ORIGINAL.

A = Copy in full.  
B = Not to be copied.  
P = Copy abstract only.  
Q = Copy heading only