

(1) Number of pages—28
(2) Date of repair—11.10.1972
(3) Initials of the Referencer—

TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	1159.	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	20.3.1877	197

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Famine Relief.

No. 636. Read the following letter from Surgeon-Major W. R. CORNISH, F.R.C.S., Sanitary Commissioner for Madras, to the Chief Secretary to Government, dated Vellore, 10th March 1877, No. 1:—

I HAVE the honor to suggest, for the consideration of His Grace in Council, that, in my opinion, the time has come for the laying down of general rules (applicable to all districts in which Famine Relief Works may be in operation) regarding, first, the mode of payment of coolies for work done, and second, the diet scale where the people are fed without labor.

2. In the few places I have already visited I find a diversity of practice in regard to the mode of paying the people for work done (I am not alluding to difference in the scale of payment, but simply to the way in which the wages are issued). In the Cuddapah relief gangs, at Arcotum, and in Vellore, the laborers are paid once a week only. Mr. West, on the other hand, pays the coolies employed on the Cheyair embankment every second day, or three times a week. Mr. Boulthy, who hopes soon to have 20,000 coolies on the Arcotum and Madras double line, proposes to pay them twice a week, or three days' pay at a time.

3. The point to be borne in view is whether a weekly payment is not attended with great risk in the case of people who flock to relief works, and who may be really destitute. No bazaar-man will trust strangers without the deposit of tangible security, and those who may have neither clothes nor trinkets to pawn will, it may be inferred, fall into a dangerous condition of exhaustion for want of more prompt settlement of the wage account.

It may happen that coolies may be nine days at work before they get payment, and I apprehend there must be considerable suffering in some of the cases where the people are absolutely destitute.

4. Under the Order of Government, No. 329, of 31st January, when the weekly payments are made, it is the practice to fix the daily money wages according to the market price of grain on the last day of the week. With a steady rising market the cooly would derive an advantage, but with falling prices he would be a loser by the arrangement.

I am of opinion that this system opens the door for some abuse—that in the case of the really destitute it does not afford sufficient protection to the health of the people, and that the Government should, as far as possible, enforce payment not less frequent than every second day.

5. Where the daily wage allows a small margin above the price of half a measure of grain (1½ lbs.) at Cheyair, and on the railway at Arcotum, a bi-weekly payment may perhaps suffice, but I feel confident that a weekly payment of wages is inadequate to meet the wants of the destitute poor, who are paid on the scale recommended by Sir R. Temple.

The Relief officers with whom I have spoken on this subject are of the same opinion.

6. My recommendation, therefore, on this head is to direct the attention of District authorities to the importance of uniformity of procedure in wage payments.

7. I find that not only is there a diversity of practice in regard to the payment for labor,

* Grain per Diem per Adult.

	oz.
In Madras	24
" Palaveram	12
" Arcotum	12
" Vellore	16
" Cuddapah Relief-houses ...	10

but that, in dieting those who resort to relief camps for aid, there is considerable variation, and the differences in some cases are so considerable as to defeat the object of Government in establishing this form of relief.

8. In the arrangements for dieting the pauper population at the present time, two points need careful consideration—

(a.) The economical provision of sufficient nutriment to sustain life.

(b.) The issue of food in such quantity and quality as to enable the famine-stricken to regain their strength.

The diet scale in use in the Madras relief camps fulfils these conditions as well as any scale of food can be expected to do. Those who have not been too much reduced on admission have gained flesh and strength while on this diet, but, as might have been expected, the

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
20th March 1877.*

food has not prevented a very heavy mortality amongst the people whose health had been undermined by a long previous course of bad feeding.

9. In some of the camps, however, as at Palaveram, Poonamallee, and elsewhere, the quantity of staple food-grain was scarcely sufficient to sustain life, and quite inadequate to the restoration of strength, in those already enfeebled by low feeding.

10. The various scales of food in course of distribution have been drawn up mostly by officers practically unacquainted with the scientific bearings of the subject, and as the necessities of the people are pretty much the same in every district, it is important that the scale of rations should be as nearly uniform as possible, and that local authorities should be required to bring their arrangements for distributing cooked food into harmony with the principles laid down by Government.

11. While the scale of food used in the Madras town camps is well considered, and more liberal than any other scale I have met with, I think it is desirable to modify it so far as to bring it into harmony with the scale of feeding I propose for all relief camps outside. So long as the town camp inhabitants are better fed than these in Mofussil camps, the pauper population will continue to flock into Madras.

12. I would propose, therefore, as the standard of food in relief camps, something not very far removed from the allowance which has been found sufficient for the maintenance of non-laboring prisoners in jails.

This can be arranged by directing that the allowance of dry cereal grain per adult should not fall below (nor exceed) 20 oz. per diem, divided into two meals, and the allowance of dhol to not less than 1½ oz. per diem for an adult. The other ingredients of the dietary, as laid down in Colonel Drever's report, I do not propose to meddle with, but in respect to the quantity of grain and dhol (the two essentials of the diet) I think the food in the Madras camps should be just the same as in all other camps.

13. While advising the use of a fixed quantity of grain and dhol in the dietary scales of the relief camps, I think I am bound, in the interests of the State, to recommend the employment of the cheapest grain in the market. In certain stations I find that cholam and raggee are cheaper* than rice, weight for weight. The crop of the latter grain is not perhaps a large one, but it is now coming into the market, and in many districts will afford food for two or more months' local consumption.

*From 10 to 20 per cent. In Vellore at present rice costs 1 R. for 17 lbs. while raggee can be got for 24 lbs. the Rupee.

14. If raggee or cholam can be bought at a lower price than second-class rice, I recommend their use in relief camps. Jail experience proves the wholesomeness of these grains and their nourishing powers, which are superior to rice, while, as a matter of fact, the people who are fed in famine camps are more accustomed to those dry cereals than to rice. In the Cuddapah Relief-house the local Committee issue a mixture of cholam and raggee, and the food is much appreciated.

15. My recommendations, therefore, in regard to the diet of relief-houses and camps include—
(a.) Uniformity in regard to quantities of staple articles of food.
(b.) Use of the cheapest cereal grain for the time being. (In considering the question of cheapness, the cost of grinding and preparation, if any expenditure be necessary, must be taken into account).
(c.) The fixing of a standard weight of 20 oz. of cereal grain and 1½ oz. of dhol as the full daily ration of adults.
(d.) In relief-houses where partial feeding is given to out-door local poor, one-half of these quantities should be the standard for a single meal of cooked food.

16. In the division of rations according to age it is also desirable to follow a uniform system. Considering the necessities of the growing body I do not think that the allowance in some camps is quite equal to the wants of the young.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
20th March 1877.*

17. I would, therefore, propose the following system for sanction of Government and for general adoption:—

All children above 12 years of age to be treated as adults in the distribution of food.

Do. between 10 and 12, ¾ ration.

Do. do. 5 and 10, ½ do.

Do. above 6 months, ¼ do.

This is a rough division, but in practice will give to a family a sufficiency of wholesome food. It is quite simple, and admits of easy calculation of the quantities of food to be accounted for.

18. I beg to assure His Grace in Council that I am not making these suggestions without due consideration as to their necessity. Already, owing to diversity of practice in feeding, I have seen some camps emptying, and others filling to overflowing, and quite recently whole gangs of people from the Mofussil, who have been sent back to their districts by railway at considerable expense, have returned to Madras on foot, to live again at the public expense, because the work or the diet in their own districts did not meet with their approval. I am quite certain that unless Government lay down general principles, to be adhered to in regard to the matters noticed, that much confusion, waste, and possibly loss of life may result, and I lose no time in placing these views before His Grace in Council, so that, if the action of Government be deemed advisable, no time may be lost in requiring district officials to bring their relief operations into harmony with these views.

19. There is yet one other point in connection with the feeding of the poor in relief camps to which the attention of District authorities may be directed. It is that the caste prejudices of the people may not be roughly disturbed in the arrangements for the distribution of cooked food. The majority of the applicants for relief belong to the so-called out-caste races, but they have their own usages and prejudices regarding eating food with one another, and in the distribution of food in permanent camps I think it desirable that the several castes or sub-castes of the people should be permitted to group themselves according to their tribal habits. Attention to details of this nature may seem unimportant, but we have to bear in mind that neglect of them may cause really destitute people to stay away from the relief camps until the time may have passed when the Government bounty can be effectual in saving life.

TRANSFERRED to the Revenue Department (Famine).

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Chief Secretary.

No. 637.

ORDER THEREON, 20th March 1877, No. 1,159.

Miscellaneous.

DR. CORNISH's suggestions regarding the payment of wages at least every second day are met by the terms of G.O. of the 15th instant, No. 1,088.

2. The Government quite concur with him as to the advisability of raising the rations in force at relief camps to the minimum standard of 20 oz. of grain and 1½ oz. of dhol for each adult, to be given in two equal meals daily, where they are below that minimum; but before reducing the higher rations now given at the Madras and Red Hills Camp wish to have his reasons for thinking they are more than sufficient.

3. At relief-houses where only one meal a day is given half the above ration will suffice.

3

(True Extract.)

To the Sanitary Commissioner.
 „ the Board of Revenue.
 „ the Financial Department.
 „ the Accountant-General.

Exd. A. S. Rodges.

2. The Government quite concur with him as to the advisability of raising the rations in force at relief camps to the minimum standard of 20 ounces of grain and $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz of dholle for each adult, to be given in 2 equal meals daily, where they are below that minimum; but before reducing the higher rations now given

L.D. 20/3

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3. At relief houses where
only one meal a day is given
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suffice.

4. Children above 12 years
of age will be treated as
adults and of or below that
age will receive the following
proportions of a full ration:-

Between 10 and 12 years of age — $\frac{3}{4}$
" — 5 and 10 — " — $\frac{1}{2}$
" — $\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 — " — $\frac{1}{4}$

5. With regard to caste
prejudices the Government see
no objection to the different
castes or subdivisions of
castes in relief camps being
allowed to group themselves
together for their meals if
they

they wish to do so. 11/5

JHS

20/3/77

Ind. C. of the Secretary, Commissionary, District
350. The District Officer
5 The Financial Officer
6 The Accountant General

100
6

Uniform rate
at relief

[Faint handwritten notes and signatures]

Drop in
Leip

Cat
20 3

[Faint handwritten notes]
with the same
in morning the same
1 1/2 - 1/2

11/3/6
Read letter from the Sanitary
Commissioner for Madras
dated 10th March 1867
N-1.

The ^{suggestion} ~~recommendation~~ of the
San Com is again
payment of wages & the
suggestions have been
anticipated by the order
of 15th 1867

[Faint handwritten notes]
Shame to be
taken in
order to be
proper.

15/3

17/5/3

The Sanitary Com-
missioner's letter will be com-
municated to all collectors
who will take immediate
steps for enforcing payment
of wages on relief works, &
where such may exist,
at least every second day,
excepting in the cases of
those works specially ex-
empted from the operation
of G.O of the 31st January
1867 or on which a
higher scale of wages than
is therein prescribed is in
force, when the payments
may be made twice a
week.

the

2. The Government fully concurs with Dr. Cornish as to the advisability of fixing an uniform scale of diet at all relief houses and Camps and approve of the scale proposed by him, namely 20 ounces of grain and $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of dhol per diem for each adult. Whenever ragi or Cholam is procurable at lower prices than second sort rice either of the former grains will be used in preference to the latter.

3. The above ration which is applicable only to adults will be distributed in 2 meals of equal proportions daily; and at relief houses where partial relief is given to out-door local poor, one such meal per diem will suffice.

4. Children above 12 years of age will be treated as adults

but in whose authority was the 24th 03 - fixed for Madras Camps - we must see reason for reducing as well as for raising. *BC*

under the present circumstances, as the ration is fixed for the relief camps, it is not possible to reduce it.

adults in the distribution of food; but of or below that age they will receive the following proportions of the full ration:-

Between 10 and 12 years	$\frac{3}{4}$
" 5 and 10 "	$\frac{1}{2}$
" $\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 "	$\frac{1}{4}$

5. The diet scales at the Madras and Red Hill Camps will be reduced in accordance with the above instructions so far only as the weights of grain and dhol are concerned.

6. As to the question of Caste prejudices the Government see no objection to the different castes or sub-divisions of castes, being allowed to group themselves together for their meals at permanent camps if they wish to do so.

JP

ration as per the above instructions at 15 years old was 10 who would be that is in country.

to have Dr. Cornish for considering the now proposed as in relief camps.

90

On Sanitary Comm^y suggestions
relative to uniformity in scale
of diet; &c.

Circ

Papers

To Council

S. 1469

S.O. 20 March 1877 N. 1159

Got 15 March 1877 not 14

6 March 1877 not 14
as submitted

also 12 June 1877

presenting 12 lbs or 24oz

as weight for rationals

2 No 1

Office of Sanitary Comm^y
Vellore 10th March 1877

15/8

I am

The Sanitary Comm^y serves
for Madras.

To

The Chief Secretary
to Government

Sir

I have the honor to suggest
for the consideration of His Grace in
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time has come for the laying down
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tricts in which Famine relief works
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1st the mode of pay ment of coolies for
work done; 2nd the diet scale, where
the people are fed without labor.

2.

In the few places I have
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of practice in regard to the mode
of paying the people for work done;
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in the scale of pay ment, but simply

Some the
written paper
with the (suggested)

Is it to be
known all the
districts - I am
not prepared to say
this may not be
possible difference
between some
+ some for
part

to the way in which the wages are issued/ In the Onddapaah relief, gangs, at Arcunum, and in Bellone, the laborers are paid once a week only. Mr West, on the other hand pays the coolies employed on the Cheyair embankment every second day, or three times a week. Mr Buntby, who hopes soon to have 20,000 coolies on the Arcunum and Madras double line, proposes to pay them twice a week, or three days pay at a time.

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The relief officers with whom I have spoken on this subject, are of the same opinion.

6. My recommendation therefore on this head, is, ^{to} directing the attention of district authorities to the importance of uniformity of proceedings in wage payments.

I find that not only is there a diversity of practice in regard to the payments for labor, but that in directing those who resort to relief

Then why did they not carry out a better plan

Then how far done



* Grain per diem per adult.

Dr. Madras	24 0 0
Palaveram	12 "
Arcunum	12 "
Vellur	16 "
Suddapahy Relief House	3 10 "

114/10
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5
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15. My recommendations therefore in regard to the diet of relief houses and camps include.

/a/ Uniformity in regard to quantities of staple articles of food.

/b/ Use of the cheapest cereal grains for the time being, / In considering the question of cheapness, the cost of grinding and preparation, if any expenditure be necessary, must be taken into account.

/c/ The fixing of a standard weight of 20 ounces of cereal grain and $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz of

of dhal as the full daily ration of adults.

1d. In relief houses where partial feeding is given to out door local poor, one half of these quantities should be the standard for a single meal of cooked food.

1b. In the division of rations according to age, it is also desirable to follow a uniform system. Considering the necessities of the growing body I do not think that the allowance in some camps is quite equal to the wants of the young.

1c. I would therefore propose the following system, for sanction of Government and for general adoption.

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neglect of them, may cause ^{11 40/100} really destitute people to stay away from the relief camps, until the time may have passed when the Government bounty can be effectual in saving life.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Yours most obed^t Serv^t

M. P. Cornish J.R.C.

Secretary Commission
for Madras

Nov. 1877 24th.
Jan 7th 1879

The San Juan Comm.
for Rhodora

The Chief of the
San Juan Comm.

Dec 10 March 1879
Nov 12
PA 20 March 77 No. 1157
No. 1

Offering San Juan Comm.
for the Rhodora Comm.
during winter months
paying wages, and other
in feeding in this camp.

San Juan Comm.
to the
San Juan Comm.