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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

1387-A

Press
Mis.

Dated

10-4-1877

197 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Famine Relief.

No. 224A. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 28th March 1877 :—

Read the following letter from A. WEDDERBURN, Esq., Collector of Coimbatore, to H. E. STOKES, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 22nd March 1877, No. 99.

With reference to G.O., No. 1,088, of 15th March 1877, I have the honor to report that Mr. Cook reports no further deterioration in physique in Oodoomulpettah Taluq. From the taluq accounts it appears he has reverted to the former 2 Anna, &c., wage. His reduction by 25 per cent. of wage seems to have been made under a misapprehension, that work not under professional superintendence was to be paid lower than under professional. The use of the word "professional" appears to have caused the erroneous impression; a similar misapprehension appears to have been made by the Tahsildars of Suttiamangalam and Bhowany. No reduction of rate was made by Mr. McWatters (Sub-Division) or Mr. G. Mackenzie (Head Assistant's Division).

2. All famine work in the district is under "non-professional" superintendence, but the rates of work exacted are those of the district professional department.

3. The work is done in gangs: no one is pressed beyond ability.

4. Hitherto the workers have supported their families. Of 100 families of my gangs taken at random, aggregating 462 souls, it appears that the workers were 163 and the non-workers 299.

5. Villages are populated entirely by the cultivating and laboring class; the begging class go to the towns, and are there relieved.

6. From my personal inspection of gangs at work, I notice great consideration paid by the gangs to the weaker members of them. I have not noticed any physical exhaustion from work. The only case that came to my notice was that of a woman who fainted in the heat of the day, but in gangs of upwards of a thousand this was but one exceptional case, and the faintness appeared to have been temporary.

7. It was not originally understood that separate provision was to be made for the maintenance of the members of the workers' families. The village officers were under the impression that it was only those who had no other source of support that were to receive gratuitous relief.

8. Under the present reading of the order, and presuming that the wage of 1 lb. +1 Anna is only for the support of a man, &c., the maintenance of the families will form a considerable increase to the famine expense.

9. If, however, the people were to be allowed to earn the ordinary wages of labor, according to the district rates for labor, men, &c., will, by piece-work, earn more than a mere subsistence.

10. Although 1 lb. of grain as sold, which, after being cleaned, is only 14 or 15 +1 Anna will suffice for the subsistence of a man, and proportionate rates for women and working children, yet the strict adherence to such rates will, of course, not provide for the incapable members of the family.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1877.*

11. As there is no general reduction of stamina as yet in this district owing to the early institution of relief-works, the cause is to be assigned, in some measure, to the method of piece-work, which equals that of the Public Works Department; this has hitherto supported the workers and their families.

12. If this is to be entirely changed, and persons are not to be allowed to earn the full value of their work, but are to be restricted to a personal subsistence allowance, then gratuitous relief will have to be introduced to make up for the loss in wages.

13. Work is being paid weekly, as desired by the people themselves. After measurement the pay is distributed, and has hitherto been accepted with satisfaction till the reduction in some parts.

14. Of the 10,000 coolies, being those of Messrs. McWatters and G. Mackenzie and my division, whom Sir Richard Temple inspected in this district, there was scarcely an appreciable percentage whom he considered undeserving of relief or too weak for work. Those of the northern and Mr. Cook's divisions were not inspected.

15. There was, of course, some difference of physique, but the gangs were very level in this respect, so much so that Sir Richard Temple remarked that they were the best gangs he had inspected in the Madras Presidency, and complimented my Municipal Inspector, Mr. Barnett, and the Tahsildars of Erode and Pulladam on the appearance of the gangs.

16. Of 1,100 under my personal supervision, there were only 5 men whom Sir Richard Temple picked out as being too strong and 6 (weavers) as being too weak.

17. Sir Richard Temple was favorable to the plan I proposed of employing the weavers in their own trade; they are less used than others to handle agricultural implements, and consequently their tasks were less than the piece-work of other gangs.

18. Colonel Cadell, Inspector-General of Ordnance and Magazines, has kindly furnished me with a piece of tent cloth, and is ready to take a continuous supply. I hope to have this made according to pattern.

19. In this case the cost of employing the weavers, who form a large proportion (75 per cent.) of my gangs, will be nil.

20. I presume they will be allowed the full value of their work without restriction to the 1 lb. grain value and cash maximum.

21. Should the second-sort rice, which has been greatly imported into this district from the Bay of Bengal *via* Beypore, be taken as the standard, it has not gone below $7\frac{1}{2}$ seers (of 80 tolahs each) for the rupee; consequently 1 lb. is rather more than 1 Anna in value, 2 Annas will remain the maximum wage. It is not, however, the staple food, but a store of it has been apparently laid in by the merchants, in view of the possible exhaustion of the district staple grains, which, it will be noticed, are approaching the value of second-sort rice.

22. *Present Prospect.*—It is impossible to know what amount of grain is in stock, as only the dealers have an approximate idea on this point, but the ruling prices, which have been nearly stationary for three months, would indicate probable stocks or means of meeting the demand; were any check to supply anticipated, the price instantly rises.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
10th April 1877.*

23. *Future Forecast.*—There are still nearly two months, when import by the Western Coast can be conducted, but I am given to understand that there are stores of grain already landed at Beypore which will take three months to bring up by rail.

24. *Grain Traffic.*—Very little grain has come west from Madras, the distance being three to one as regards the haulage.

25. *Future Prices.*—So long as grain can be continuously and expeditiously transmitted, I do not anticipate a rise of prices. I believe that the actual import of rice and dry grains from the Bombay Coast and its further practicability have greatly affected the prices of the staple grains.

26. *Results of Experience.*—In Bellary, in 1866, the cause of the excessive prices that for a short time, until seasonable rain fell, prevailed was due to the difficulty of import.

27. There were 100 miles of a waterless and fodderless country to be traversed from the nearest railway point, and, in fact, the whole supply was drawn, not from any railway terminus, but from the Raichore Doabs through Kurnool, but it was the difficulty of this transport and a check to it that led to a panic, and grain rose to prices never equalled before or since.

SUBMITTED to Government.

2. The Collector appears to correctly interpret the orders of Government for the conduct of operations.

3. The question of the employment of weavers has been disposed of by G.O., dated 15th March 1877, No. 1,091.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed)

H. E. STOKES,

Secretary.

No. 224B.

ORDER THEREON, 10th April 1877, No. 1,387A.

Miscellaneous.

RECORDED.

(True Extract.)

(Signed)

J. H. GARSTIN,

Additional Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

„ the Financial Department.

„ the Sanitary Commissioner.

„ the Public Works Department.

Ed. A. F. Goodall.

1381-A

In Paras 11 and 12 of
his letter of the 22^d March
1899, Mr Wedderburn

I do not think any
one needs of it

limited task and individual subsistence allowance substituted, gratuitous relief must be introduced to make up for the loss of wages. This no doubt is true and the question is whether any change shall be carried out in Coimbatore, and if not, whether a change of policy and the total abandonment of the limited task and individual subsistence rate should be authorized where feasible.

Sir Richard Temple in his Minute advocating the transfer of as many coolies as possible to the D. P. W. officers to be tasked, seems

to

I am prepared to instruct the C.O. that for the present no change need be made
M

But take no notice of the task minute. We are doing well and I further change the orders system with the order

to have overlooked the fact that the fundamental principle of tasking as carried out by the D. P. W. (who, he says, alone can thoroughly exact task work) is payment at fixed rates for the quantity done - in other words - piece-work, and if the Civil Officers in Coimbatore and elsewhere can task their people on the same system, as it seems they can do, there is no reason why piece-work should not be allowed to take the place of the limited task work which is now the rule. The piecework system will relieve the Govt. of the cost

of

of providing for the families
of the workmen, and Mr.
Wedderburn points out that
in his District the proportion
of workers to non-workers
out of 100 families of 462
souls was only a little in
excess of 1 in 3, a proportion
which is not likely to be
^{larger}
~~smaller~~ in other Districts.

Supervision over piece work
must, however, be fairly good.
The work done must be care-
fully measured up, and if
only paid for once a week,
as Mr. Wedderburn says
his coolies prefer it, there
is no reason why the
payments should not
be made by European
officers

officers. ³⁷ Under the D.P.W.
daily payments are out of
the question, while the Govt.
have insisted strongly on
daily payments, under the
existing system, and indeed
this is the singular point
in connection with Mr.
Wedderburn's works in
Coimbatore, that his coolies
can go for a whole week
without wages.

There are two misconceptions
in Sir R. Temple's Minute
already alluded to. The
first consists in supposing
that the D.P.W. only can
thoroughly exact task, or
rather piece-work, and
second, that the D.P.W.
establishments

establishments can possibly undertake the control of the number of works he supplies, more especially now that the new financial year has begun and there are all the Budgeted works of the year to be put in hand.

There are many officers ^{now} employed under the Civil Dept. who are quite as competent as any D.P.W. Overseer to measure up works and the supervision of Budgeted works with more than absorb the whole attention of the D.P.W. Staff.

Attent

Write for Engr
7/6

1387A
6
Attention is requested to the enclosed G.O. No 12 in which Sir R. Temple's suggestions have been to all intents and purposes anticipated J.H.S.
4/4

Mr
In order
Dr

7th 1982

C5-47) R9-47)

No 2244. Read the following Revenue Department.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
Dated 28th March 1877.

Read the following -
No 99.

Board of R.
No 3070

From A. Wedderburn Esq.
Collector of Cambristone
To H. E. Stokes Esq.
Secretary to the
Board of Revenue
Madras.

Sir,
With reference to G. O.
No 1088 of 16th March 1877, I have
the honor to report that Mr. Cook
reports no further deterioration
in physique in Adammulpettah
Taluk. From the Taluk accounts,
it appears, he has reverted to the
former 2 annas 8 p. wages. His
reduction by 25 percent of
wages.

wage seems to have been made, under a misapprehension, that work, not under professional superintendence, was to be paid, lower, than under Professional. The use of the word "Professional" appears to have caused the erroneous impression - a similar misapprehension appears to have been made by the Tahildars of Subkiamangalam and Ohowany. The reduction of rate was made by Mr. C. P. Walters (Sub. Division) or Mr. G. McKenzie (Head & Assistant Division).

2. All famine work in the district is under ~~now~~ professional

professional superintendence but the rates of work exacted are those of the district Professional Department.

3. The work is done in gangs - no one is pressed beyond ability.

4. With respect to the workers have supported their families - Of 100 families of my gang taken at random, aggregating 462 souls, it appears that the workers were 163, and the non-workers 299.

5. Villagers are populated entirely by the cultivating and labouring class, the begging class go to the towns, and

and are there relieved.

b. From my personal inspection of gangs at work, I notice great consideration paid by the gangs, to the weaker members of them. I have not noticed any physical exhaustion from work.

The only case that came to my notice, was that of a woman who ~~was~~ fainted in the heat of the day but in gangs of upwards of a thousand - this was but one exceptional case - and the faintness appeared to have been temporary.

It was not originally understood

understood that separate provision was to be made for the maintenance of the members of the workers' families. The village officers were under the impression that it was only those who had no other source of support, that were to receive gratuitous relief.

d. Under the present reading of the order, and presuming that the wage of 1.60 + 1. anna is only for the support of a man &c. &c. - the maintenance of the families will form a considerable increase to the famine expense.

g. If however, the people were

were to be allowed to earn
the ordinary wages of labour,
according to the district rates
for labour, men to wit, by
piece work, earn more than
a mere subsistence.

10. Although 1 lb. of
grain as sold, which after being
cleaned, is only 14 of + 1 anna,
will suffice for the subsistence
of a man, and proportionate
rates for women, and work-
ing children. yet the strict
adherence to such rates will,
of course, not provide for
the incapable members of
the family.

11. As there is no
general reduction of *land*
do

as yet in this district ²⁸⁷⁻⁸₁₀ owing to
the early institution of relief
works - the cause is to be as-
signed, in some measure, to
the method of piece work,
which equals that of the S.P.W.
this has hitherto supported
the workers, and their families.

12. If this is to be
entirely changed, and persons
are not to be allowed to earn
the full value of their work,
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personal subsistence allowance,
then gratuitous relief will have
to be introduced, to make
up for the loss in wages.

13. Work is being paid
weekly, as desired by the people
themselves.

themselves. After measurement the pay is distributed, and has hitherto been accepted with satisfaction - still the reduction in some parts.

14. Of the 10000 coolies being those of Mr. Watters and G. Mackenzie, and my Division, whom Sir Richard Temple inspected in his District, there was scarcely an appreciable percentage, whom he considered unbecomingly of relief, or too weak for work. Those of the Northern and Mr. Cook's Divisions were not inspected.

15. There was of course some

some difference of physique but the gangs were very level in this respect, so much so, that Sir Richard Temple remarked that they were the best gangs he had inspected in the Madras Presidency and complimented my Municipal Inspector Mr. Barnett, and the Tahildars of Coade and Pulladum, on the appearance of the gangs.

16. Of 1100 under my personal supervision there were only 3 men whom Sir Richard Temple picked out as being too strong and 6 (or more) as being too weak.

17. Sir Richard Temple was

was favorable to the plan
I proposed, of employing
the weavers in their own trade,
they are less used than others
to handle agricultural im-
plements, and consequently
their tasks were less than the
piece work of other gangs.

18. Colonel Cassell,
Inspector General of Ordnance
and Magazines has kindly
furnished me with a piece
of tent cloth, and is ready
to take a continuous supply.
I hope to have this made
according to pattern.

19. In this case, the
cost of employing the weavers,
who form a large proportion

(45 percent) of my gangs,
will be nil.

20. I presume they
will be allowed the full
value of their work, without
restriction to the 1st grain value
and cash maximum.

21. Should the 2nd port
rice, which has been greatly
improved into this district, from
the Bay of Bengal, via Bayford
be taken as the standard, it
has not gone below 7/4 annas
(of 80 talaks each) for the rice,
consequently 1st is rather more
than 1 anna in value, 2 annas
will remain the maximum
wage - It is ^{not} however the
staple food, but a store of it
has

has been apparently laid in by the merchants, in view of the possible exhaustion of the district staple grains - which it will be noticed, are approaching the value of export rice. 22.

It is impossible to know what amount of grain is in stock, as only the dealers have an approximate idea on this point, but the ruling prices, which have been nearly stationary for 3 months, would indicate probable stocks, or means of meeting the demand - where any check to supply is anticipated, the price instantly rises. There

Future
prices

23.

There are still nearly 2 months, when import by the Western coast can be conducted, but I am given to understand that there are stocks of grain already landed at Bombay, which will take 3 months to bring up by rail.

Grain
traffic

24.

Very little grain has come west from Madras, the distance being 3 to 1, as regards the haulage.

Future
prices

25.

So long as grain can be continuously and expeditiously transmitted, I do not anticipate a rise of prices. I believe that the actual import of rice and dry grains from the Bombay Coast

Coast, and its further practical
policy, have greatly affected
the prices of the staple
grains.

26. In Bellary in 1866, ^{Results of 1866}
the cause of the excessive prices
that for a short time, until
reasonable rain fell, prevail-
ed, was due to the diffi-
culty of import.

27. There were 100 miles
of a waterless, and fodderless
country to be traversed, from
the nearest railway point, and
in fact, the whole supply was
drawn, not from any railway
terminus, but from the Rai-
chore Doab - through Kurnool,
but

1387/14
But it was the difficulty of
this transport and a check
to it, that led to a panic,
and grain rose to prices never
equalled before or since -
I have of
Collector's Office }
20th March 1877 }
A. Wedderburn
Collector

Submitted for
Government.

2. The Collector ap-
pears to correctly interpret
the orders of Government
for the conduct of opera-
tions

3. The question of
the employment of weavers
has been disposed of by G.O.

Dated

Dated 15th March 1877 Ch. 1091.

(True Copy & Extract)

W. S. S. S.

Secretary

To the Additional Secretary
of Government P.D.

1387-A
15

Ch. 1091

7.6. 1982

Proceedings of the
Board of Governors

28. November

Post 28-29

Oldsmithing

Government

Letter from the

Collected by B. Smith

Collected by Dr. Smith
and Dr. J. A. Davis

And Benjamin was
 always with me.

of wages & other matters
connected with farming

[Handwritten notes:]

Ans'd at night
30 Oct 1877
5 Dec 1877
5 Jan 1878
11 Feb 1878
Dec 1877
100
9