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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Rev. DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2402-A	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	30.7.1877	197 :

Not to be folded or roughly handled

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

30th July 1877, No. 2,402-A.

Famine Relief.

Read the following paper:—

No. 555-A. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 12th July 1877.

Read the following letter from W. B. OLDHAM, Esq., B.C.S., Taluq Officer, Adoni, to J. H. MASTER, Esq., Collector of Bellary, dated 19th June 1877, No. 125:—

I HAVE received by yesterday's post copies of a number of your reports to the Board of Revenue, from which it appears that the administration on relief-works in this taluq differs in many important points from that in the rest of the district, and I have now the honor to report upon them.

2. In your No. —, dated — (reference mislaid), in commenting upon Mr. Gienny's objection to pay ~~about 1000~~ through representative gangsmen, you add that you have not met with one officer in the district who found the plan practicable (or words to that effect; the letter has been unfortunately mislaid).

3. I must have omitted to report that since the introduction of daily payments in Adoni in March last the laborers have been paid by representative gangsmen only, and both past and present experience convinces me of the excellence of this plan.

4. The principle is the same as that adopted by travellers by palanquin, who do not pay the individual bearers, by sportsmen when paying their 300 or 400 beaters, and by petty contractors who pay the sirdars of their gangs. In practice we have found here that, while between forty or fifty maistries have been convicted of making short payments to the laborers, only one such case has been proved against a gangman. In the cases of the maistries they had invariably usurped the gangsmen's functions, while the solitary gangman convicted had been instigated by his maistry.

5. The reasons appear to be that the gangsmen form a part of the gang, they have relations in it, they return with the laborers from their work, they have to mingle with them at non-working hours, and they could not stand against the pressure which even the most helpless women in their gangs could bring against them were the latter defrauded. None of these relations hold with respect to the maistry, who, moreover, has virtually the power of ejecting people from his gangs by fraudulently erasing their names from his rolls, or, at all events, of causing them so much inconvenience, that they are afraid to complain against him.

6. The unit of administration on relief-works is the gangman, and he is the real medium for dealing with the laborers. The maistry, by virtue of his caste and scholarship, can tyrannize over them once they are collected, but in such operations as the despatch of emigrants for Nellore I found the maistries powerless, and the gangsmen were my only agents.

7. The gangsmen should be a working member of his gang, standing to them in much the same position as a sirdar of coolies under a petty contractor. The practice which still in a great measure prevails of his being a well-clothed official, who stands by his gang armed with a cane and does nothing, is decidedly mischievous.

8. Gangsmen do not understand accounts, and so I have absolutely prohibited individual accounts or payment for absentees from whatever cause. This brings me to the subject of daily payments, which I find are made in this taluq alone.

9. In the report of the Deputy Collector, Harpunhally Division, No. 283, forwarded to the Board of Revenue with your No. 346, of 7th May 1877, it is stated that, owing to the inadequacy of the wages, ninety-two laborers had died, presumably from starvation. Notwithstanding the great mass of laborers in Adoni, no such catastrophe has ever occurred here, and I am necessarily struck by its occurrence in another part of this district, with the same rates prevailing, and at a time when the relief laborers here could be reported on as being in good condition. But on the remoter works here were wages to be withheld for three or four days, I would assuredly anticipate such a catastrophe.

10. Before the introduction of daily payments there were many instances in which the laborers had not been paid for nine or ten days, and I found that here, as elsewhere, native officers of standing considered they performed their whole duty by writing pitiful reports on the miserable condition of the people and the inadequacy of the wages, while persistently neglecting the observance of simple systematic duty which would obviate such evil effects. I refer to the regularity of remittances and the keeping of paymasters in funds. Even after being relieved of all out-door administrative relief functions, the native officers require the utmost vigilance in this respect.

11. Further, on trying the experiment of making short payments to laborers whose wages were so in arrears, both men and women were quite content as long as they received the same. As in Northern India, women of the laboring class are not expected to know the points of the compass, the hours of the day, and much less anything of simple accounts. A paymaster had apparently the opportunity of deducting for himself almost as much as he pleased.

12. The system now in force here is as follows:—

The laborers are paid in the morning for the day before, and on Saturdays for Friday and Saturday. Every evening the paymasters walk down the line, collect the pay abstracts (goshwaras) from the maistries and compare them with the gangs either one by one, or here and there, according to their individual energy. By the following morning they have the amount for each gang counted out, and again traverse the line and hand it over to the gangsmen. The distribution is over in a few minutes, and the work is scarcely interrupted. As the paymasters are anxious to finish this work while the morning is still cool, this plan has the further advantage of bringing the laborers early on the ground.

To each paymaster are allotted eight maistries' gangs representing 2,000 laborers. This number is a minimum easily within their power and allows of redistribution, and their temporarily assuring for larger charges when any sudden vacancy from death, sickness, or misconduct occurs in the establishment. As the relief laborers in Adoni appear now to represent nearly one-third of the whole number employed in the district, I have thought it desirable to bring these points, in which the administration is different from elsewhere, to your notice.

FORWARDED to the Board of Revenue for information.

HONSUR,
1st July 1877.

(Signed) J. H. MASTER,
Collector.

SUBMITTED for the information of Government.

2. Mr. Oldham's system of daily payments seems to have been very successful.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Secretary.

N. 555 B

ORDER THEREON, 30th July 1877, No. 2,402-A.

Miscellaneous.

MR. OLDHAM's report tends to show that the principle of paying gangs by means of representative gangsmen is practicable and attended by considerable advantages.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. H. GARSTIN,
Additional Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Financial Department.
„ all Collectors.

Exd. A. F. Goodall.

Rev. Department.

N^o 3269

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue
Dated 12th July 1877.

Recd the following

From. N^o 125
W. B. Oldham Esq^r B. C. S.
Taluk Officer
Adoni.

To
The Collector
Bellary.

Sir,
I have received by yesterday's post copies of a number of your reports to the Board of Revenue, from which it appears that the Administration on Relief works in this Taluk, differs in many important points from that in the rest of the District and I have now the honor to report upon them.

2. In your R^o dated (reference mislaid) in commenting upon Mr. Glenney's objection to pay the labourers through

Cott. of 1877) 89 Adoni.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Secy, Asst, &c.

Adoni July 30th.

Adoni August 7th.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 30th July 1877, No. 2,402-A.

JULY.

Nos. 555-A-555-B.

FAMINE RELIEF, No. 1,503-G.

Principle of putting goods by means of representative (Gangabai).—Observing that Mr. Oldham's report on the — shows that it is practicable and attended by considerable advantages.

through representative gangmen you add that you have not met with one officer in the District who found the plan practicable (or ~~more~~ to that effect the letter has been unfortunately mislaid).

I must have omitted to report that since the introduction of daily payments in Adoni in March last the labourers have been paid by representative gangmen only, and both past and present experience convinces me of the excellence of this plan.

One principle is the same as that adopted by travellers by palamkeen who do not pay the individual bearers, by sportsmen when paying their 300 or 400 hunters, and by petty contractors who pay the Sirdars of their gangs. In practice we have found here that whilst between 40 or 50 maistrics have been convicted of making short payments to the labourers, only one such case has been proved against a gangman. In the cases of the maistrics they had

had invariably usurped the gangmen's functions while the solitary gangman convicted had been instigated by his maistry.

5 The reasons appear to be that the gangmen form a part of the gang, they have relations in it, they return with the labourers from their work, they come to mingle with them at non working hours and they could not stand against the pressure which even the most helpless women in their gangs could bring against them. Some of these relations hold with respect to the maistry who, moreover has virtually the power of ejecting people from his gangs by fraudulently erasing their names from his rolls or at all events of causing them so much inconvenience that they are afraid to complain against him. 6. The unit of administration or relief works is the gangman and he

he is the real medium for dealing with the labourers. The maistry, by virtue of his caste and Scholarship can tyrannize over them once they are collected. but in such operations as the despatches of emigrants for et al more I found the maistries powerless & the gangsmen were my only agents.

7. The gangsmen should be a working member of his gang, standing to them in much the same position as a Sirdar does under a party of soldiers.

The practice, which still in a great measure prevails of his being a well-clothed official who stands by his gang armed with a cane and does nothing, is decidedly mischievous.

8. Gangsmen do not understand accounts and so I have absolutely prohibited individual accounts or payment for absences from whatever cause

cause. This brings me to the subject of daily payments, which I find, are made in this Taluk, alone.

9. In the report of the District Collector Barpangkally Division N^o 283 forwarded to the Board of Revenue with your N^o 346 of 7 May 1877 it is stated that, owing to the inadequacy of the wages of labourers he died, presumably from starvation. Notwithstanding the great mass of labourers in Adoni no such catastrophe has ever occurred here and I am necessarily struck by its occurrence in a part of this District; with the same rates prevailing, and at a time when the relief labourers here, could be reported on as being in good condition. But on the remoter works here, where wages to be withheld for three or four days I would assuredly anticipate such a catastrophe.

10. Before the introduction of daily payments there were many instances in which the labourers had not been paid for 9 or 10 days; and I found that here

here, as elsewhere, native officers of standing considered they performed their whole duty by writing pitiful reports on the miserable condition of the people and the inadequacy of the wages while persistently neglecting the observance of simple systematic duty which would obviate such evil effects. I refer to the regularity of remittances and the keeping of paymasters in funds. Even after being relieved of all out-door administrative relief ~~institutions~~ the native officers require the utmost vigilance in this respect.

11. Further on trying the experiment of making short payments to labourers whose wages were so in arrears, both men and women were quite content as long as they all received the same. As in Northern India, women of the labouring class are not expected to know the points of the compass the hours of the day, and much less

any thing of simple accounts. A Paymaster had apparently the opportunity of deducting for himself almost as much as he pleased.

12. The system now in force here is as follows:

The labourers are paid in the morning for the day before, and on Saturdays for Friday and Saturday. Every evening the Paymasters walk down the line, collect the Pay Abstracts (Goshwaras) from the Maestros and compare them with the ~~ingo~~ ~~sums~~ and there, according to their individual energy. By the following morning, they have the amount for each gang counted out and again traverse the line and hand it over to the gangmen. The distribution is over in a few minutes and the work is scarcely interrupted. As the Paymasters are anxious to finish this work while the morning is still cool this plan has the further advantage of

of bringing the labourers early on the ground.

To each Paymaster are allotted 8 Industries' gangs representing 2000 labourers. This number is a minimum easily within their power and allows of redistribution, and their temporarily assuming for larger charges when any sudden vacancy from death, sickness, or misconduct occurs in the establishment. As the Relief labourers in Adoni appear now to represent nearly one third of the whole employed in the District.

I have thought it desirable to bring these points in which the administration is different from elsewhere to your notice.

Adoni Famine Office } I have &c.
19 June 1877 - } (Sd/ W. B. Oldham
 } Deputy Officer
 } (True copy)

Forwarded to the Board of Revenue for information.

Camp Hobson Raiding } (Sd/ J. H. Master
Taking 1 July/77 } Collector

Submitted

Submitted for the information of Government.

2. Mr Oldham's System of daily payments seems to have been very successful.

(True copy & Extract)

W. B. Oldham
Asst Secretary

To The Asst Secretary to Govt R.D.

B. O. 29 May 1877 at 564.548

Rev. 1877 Aug 5

784 52485

Proceedings of the

Board of Revenue

Dated 12th July 1877.
Rev. 12th July 1877.

Report with account
of the Board of Revenue
for the year 1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

1876-77

After - 12th July
N. B. and is not intended

Submitting to Govt

Letter from Mr. W. B. O'Sullivan

N. B. S. taking up the case

Belonging to the Government

information on certain

points in connection with

Administration in the

note.

300
30

7 B. O. 29 May 1877
Tail Department
all Collectors
10th July 1877