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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2483	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	1.5.1877	197

Not to be folded or roughly handled.

Archives I—10,006—19-4-79.

812

Read the following papers:—

No. 303. From Colonel F. J. MOBERLY, R.E., Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated St. Thomas' Mount, 14th March 1877, No. 4,338.

I HAVE the honor respectfully to request reconsideration of part of (Miscellaneous) G.O., No. 520-A, of 5th February, sent to me with your No. 55 of 6th instant, regarding the employment of Contractors on relief works. I have selected for these latter tanks, channels, &c., in circles, so that the people employed need not go far from their houses, at least for the present; but they are, for this very reason, scattered over the district.

2. They have been entrusted to the villagers of means and position in each circle, who contract with us to furnish the work at certain rates.

3. I would explain that, from my inquiries, it appears certain that the greater number of village laborers are serfs of the ryots, who feed them and their families in return for the field labor which they procure from them. Many have continued to feed the coolies precisely as they would their plough cattle, because they are valuable for employment when rain will allow.

4. They cannot go on feeding them much longer; in fact but for relief works they probably would have ceased long ago, and they now seek for our assistance to enable them to maintain their people. I have not seen anything which would support the idea that they would reject anybody, who, under ordinary circumstances, would do any work, and they relieve us of a large establishment of men to measure and pay periodically for work done.

5. I have called on my Range Officers to report what number of maistries they would require to carry out the order of Government. I fear it will be very large, and I know not where to find them; their pay will add considerably to the charges for work.

6. Further, I would observe that they must in most cases be persons not interested in the welfare of the laboring classes; they cannot all be provided for on the cessation of the present distress; having no future prospect they are far more likely to peculate, and either submit false measurements or to defraud the laborers.

7. I would, with all deference, point out that such a system, which would succeed on a single large work under an officer, is not suited for the principle of employing people near their own houses.

8. I enclose copy of a Circular which I sent to my Range Officers, and would suggest that if the Government wish it, a large work here and there in each taluq might be reserved or consigned to the Revenue Department for the employment of the less capable, and of persons who may prefer task to piece works; but for the numerous petty works I would ask that they may be left as now to the ryots of villages for the employment of their coolies and those of the adjacent circles. Range Officers and subordinates have been warned to watch all the proceedings of these men as closely as they would those of the maistries, &c.

9. I would lay stress on the fact that the Contractors are not the class of men who come from Madras ordinarily to build a bridge or to turn out any large work, they are all ryots locally interested in the work and the laborers.

10. I trust that the matter may receive early consideration, and meanwhile have availed myself of Government Order of 12th February, (quoted by the Revenue Board,) that "existing arrangements for piece-work need not be disturbed."

CIRCULAR.

From the Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, to the Range Officers, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Ranges, Chingleput District, dated St. Thomas' Mount, 2nd March 1877, No. 4,161.

HAVING in view the possibility that as the distress continues many persons will come on our works less able to work than the regular laboring classes, I have the honor to request that you will arrange in each case of repairs of irrigation work to reserve a portion of lighter work on which such people may be employed; the extra charge will of course be debited to Famine Relief Funds.

2. Similarly, where any increase of rate is rendered necessary by the hardness of the soil, difficulty of procuring grain, water, &c., such increase should be separately entered, so that there need be no trouble in carrying out G.O., No. 3,410, of 14th December 1876, regarding the division of charges.

No. 303-A. From Colonel F. J. MOBERLY, R.E., Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Camp, Red Hills, 16th March 1877, No. 4,413.

In continuation of my No. 4,338 of 14th instant, I have the honor to bring to your notice that I particularly reserved some miles of the Naranaveram river embankment for task-work, in case of any persons presenting themselves for employment, who from infirmity or other causes might need work which contractors or middlemen could not afford to give.

2. Mr. Scott informs me that he has not received a single application for such work, and that the Contractors have taken up every man or woman that came to the river, the people clearly prefer this system to that of task-work, and, as I have said before, the return to the State is very much better; we actually get our money's worth, and the people are fairly and sufficiently provided for by their employers.

3. Since I wrote my No. 4,338, I have received G.O., No. 681, of 15th February, and find that Mr. Whiteside, Major Prendergast and the Board of Revenue hold the same views as I do. I would earnestly solicit a reconsideration of the G.O., No. 520-A, of 5th ultimo.

4. There is very great distress among the agricultural laborers, the better classes cannot continue the maintenance of their servants, and if Government do not afford assistance the latter will become more and more infirm, and we shall have incapable, starving people who now only want employment. The repair of irrigation works is a most useful means of employing them. If grants are made as an addition to our regular allotments they will be also most profitable.

No. 151 W.

No. 303-B. *Note by the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.*

In the former of these letters the Superintending Engineer recommends a modification of the arrangements prescribed in G.O., Revenue Department, No. 520-A, of

the 5th February 1877, so far as to admit of the arrangements which have been made in Chingleput for giving out irrigation repair work to villagers on a sort of contract system, being continued, the ground on which an exception is advocated being that—

1st.—The works are numerous and scattered, and effective supervision of coolies employed on the basis of daily work would be difficult if not impracticable.

2nd.—That the labor employed is ordinary field labor, and under this system this labor is usefully employed near the villages which furnish it.

3rd.—That the system is liked, works well, and secures an adequate return for expenditure.

The only valid reason perhaps for the exemption of such work from the general rule is that the work, though carried out for the relief of those who require employment, is really work which would have to be done sooner or later for the maintenance of irrigation works, and will obviate future expenditure on the same works.

2. It is to be noticed that paragraph 2 of the Superintending Engineer's Circular of the 2nd instant, No. 4,161, is not in accordance with the rules. The Superintending Engineer has no authority to raise rates in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining grain and water, and it is thought that where such difficulty is experienced the works should be dealt with strictly under G.O., Revenue Department, No. 520-A. Again, hardness of soil should be provided for in the sanctioned estimate, and if this be incorrectly framed a revised estimate would be necessary. The Order of the 14th December 1876, No. 3,410, does not contemplate any separate accounting in the first instance under different heads or against different funds for works carried out from Famine Relief Funds. The whole expenditure should be charged to the latter, and afterwards the value of work done will be a debit to irrigation works.

3. The second letter refers to the Naranaveram river embankments, on which it appears that Contractors are employed. It will be noticed that this letter is not quite consistent with paragraph 7 of the earlier letter, for the embankment is a single large work under an officer, and consequently, according to the Superintending Engineer's opinion, not unsuited to the system prescribed by Government after full consideration of arguments, among which those advanced by the Superintending Engineer were not unconsidered.

The question then really is should the Naranaveram embankment be specially exempted, and if so on what grounds. There is nothing in the Superintending Engineer's letter which appears to the undersigned to support the proposal for exemption. From the Superintending Engineer's point of view the wish to carry on work systematically is natural, but G.O., Revenue Department, No. 520-A, was based on other considerations, which were deemed of sufficient importance to require the issue of the ruling therein contained.

FORT ST. GEORGE, (Signed) JOHN MULLINS, Lieut.-Col., R.E.,
21st March 1877. Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

To the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department.

No. 304. ORDER THEREON, 12th April 1877, No. 1,261.

IRRIGATION, No. 19.

THE Superintending Engineer, Chingleput, will be informed that His Grace the Governor in Council is unable to find in

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
12th April 1877. No. 1,261.*

Colonel F. Moberly's letters any sufficient reason for exempting the works referred from the operation of G.O., Revenue Department, No. 520-A, of the 5th Feb 1877, and the carrying out of the Famine Relief Works mentioned by con should therefore be at once discontinued, and labor which cannot be effect supervised on scattered works should be transferred to works for which requisite supervision is available.

2. Engagements with Contractors will of course be fulfilled so far as there be any obligation to continue them.

(True Extract)

W. H. Moberly

Lieut.-Col., R.E.
Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,
Irrigation Br.

To the Superintending Engineer, Chingleput.
,, Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
,, Revenue Department. ✓

Exd. S. T. Austin.

70 Spare Copies

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Govt. of (1877) Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
CHINGLEPUT,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated April 12th.

Issued

Recd. — 28

Encl.

G. O., 12th April 1877, No. 1,261.

APRIL

Nos. 303-304

No 2483

1 May/77.

Famine Relief Works, Chingleput Dis-
trict.—The carrying out by contract of
certain — ordered to be discontinued at
once.

To the B. of M. 9/2 May