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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

23rd April 17, No. 1324.

Famine Relief.

Read the following paper:—

No. 199. *From Surgeon-General G. S.M.T., M.D., Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department, to the Officiating Ch. Secretary to Government, dated Fort St. George, 7th April 1877, No. 217.*

With reference to G.O., No. 757, dated 1st March 1877, I have the honor to submit to His Grace the Governor in Council a report by Surgeon O'Hara on the physical condition of the coolies employed on the East Coast Canal Relief Works.

2. With reference to paragraph 7 of the report, Surgeon O'Hara has been directed to continue to submit the usual Medical and Sanitary report, and to insert in it any remarks he may have to make regarding the coolies on subsistence allowance, as often as he may find it convenient to inspect them. Owing to the great range under his supervision he cannot of course be expected to inspect gangs on subsistence allowance weekly.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

From Surgeon W. O'HARA, in Medical charge of the Relief Works, East Coast Canal, to the Deputy Surgeon-General, Presidency of Madras and Northern Districts, dated Kottapattam, 24th March 1877, No. A.

In reference to your endorsement, No. 174, dated March 6th, 1877, on G.O., No. 757, dated 1st March 1877, I have the honor to submit, for information of Government, the following remarks.

2. In the northern half of the canal (the portion in which I am at present) the coolies, as a general rule, are worked on the task-labor system. I believe the same method obtains in the southern division also. Their earnings average at 3 Annas a man and 2 Annas a woman per diem. The indolent, or inexperienced in digging, gain about a fourth less, while the hard working or professional classes (e.g., Wudders) get or even a half more. It is believed that even this amount can be exceeded in some few cases, and that even the worst laborer turns out work valued at a fraction above 2 Annas per day.

3. The only section on which it was found necessary to issue "subsistence batta" is Kanaparty. During my recent inspection I saw the people on this rate was allowed. They were all Cumbum coolies and had lately joined the canal, and were all, from some one cause or the other, incapacitated for hard (or task) labor. To heavy earth or general work was apportioned. In my opinion a certain number was unfitted for labor whatever, and at my suggestion they were exempted; indeed, it was evident that they rested rather than helped the completion of the work on which they were engaged. Amongst some were women extremely advanced in years, some convalescent from acute diseases and too weak for exertion, and the remainder orphan children of tender years, or weakly women, inordinately large families. I deemed it expedient to frame some general rules for the guidance of the supervising officers in such cases, leaving of course the responsibility and the judgment of the merits of individual cases with themselves.

Res.

I. Coolies (class of) to be placed on "Subsistence allowance" and exempted from all work—

(a.) All those incapacitated by extreme old age, disease, and bodily deformity.

(b.) * Children without parents, or those able to be supported by their parents; women far advanced in pregnancy; lying-in women in need of food assistance; and women entrusted with the charge of parentless children.

II. "Subsistence allowance" with light coolery labor—

(a.) Women who have lost their husbands, women with large families of children, men and women incapable of earning even subsistence allowance from any cause, e.g., debility.

(b.) Relatives of sick in hospital, working in the capacity of attendants, are provided with subsistence allowance from Hospital Contingent funds.

4. Along the entire length of canal, these coolies are in good general health. In the northern provinces they are tall, well developed and capable of earning very fairly lucrative wages.

5. At Kanaparty there were two batches of Cumbum coolies that especially attracted my attention. The one, on account of the robust healthy condition of its members; and the other its weakly and impoverished state. The children of the latter were wretched objects, being emaciated and fretful, and suffering more are from ague. In a short space of time a marked improvement is observable both in general health and in the amount of work rendered by the new comers from Cumbum. The medium condition of the other gangs of this class supports this observation.

6. Taking the above two batches of Cumbum coolies as representing the best and worst working gangs of the immigrants, it was found on computation, that the relative money value of the work executed daily by each individual was as follows:—

a. Best Gang (comprising forty-two men, thirty-five women, and twenty-nine children) earned as wages for thirteen days Rupees 21-0, or nearly—

	R.	A.	P.
For a man per diem	0	3	0
" a woman per diem	0	2	6
" a boy or girl per diem	0	1	6
Total	208	13	0.

These results are arrived at by maintaining the calculations the proportions determined in the Government subsistence rate,* i.e., for a man 1 Anna 6 Pies, woman 1 Anna 3 Pies, and child 9 Pies.

b. Worst Working Gang (comprising twenty-seven men, twenty-four women, and twenty-two children) earned as wages for thirteen days Rupees 109. According to the above calculation—

	R.	A.	P.
Each man receives nearly	0	2	2
" woman	0	1	9
" boy or girl receives nearly	0	1	1
Total	101	0	4.

In both instances the difference is accounted for by the fraction not being shown.

7. Inasmuch as the provisions of Government Order quoted above are not directly applicable to the working of the East Coast (at least for the present), and as the nature of my work requires me to be constantly travelling, I have the honor to request that you will kindly inform me if it is necessary for me to send the reports as directed in your endorsement. Brief notices of the general, medical, and sanitary working of the East Coast Canal Famine Relief Works are submitted weekly to the Secretary, the Surgeon-General.

* Children to include below eight years of age.

No. 36.

For information. The report is interesting should it be repeated weekly or monthly?

MADRAS,
4th April 1877.

(Sd) W. J. VANSOMEREN, M.D.,
Dy. Surg-Genl, I.M.S., Presidency
Division and Northern Districts.

No. 200. ORDER THEREON, 23rd April 1877, No. 1324.

Communicated to the Revenue (Famine) and to the Public Works Departments.
(True fact.)

[Signature]
Offg. Chief Secretary.

To the Revenue (Famine) Department.
" Public Works Department.
" Revenue Board.
" Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Department.
" Sanitary Commissioner.

Exd. J. Wright.
[Signature]

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To THE REVENUE (FAMINE)

DEPARTMENT

COY. AC. GO.

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APRIL

No. 189-200.

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East Coast Canal Helms West

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