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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. 3842
B.P. No.

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Dated 7-7-2877

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

29th June 1877, No. 125 I.

Irrigation.

Read the following paper:—

No. 138. From Major P. MONTGOMERIE, R.E., District Engineer, Salem, to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, Public Works Department, dated Salem, 21st June 1877, No. 16 S.L.

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the early orders of Government, the accompanying letter* from the Salem Range Officer regarding the very grave difficulties which exist in giving immediate effect to the orders contained in your memorandum No. 22 S.L. of the 29th May and which was circulated with this office memorandum as per margin; † that the rates on all famine relief works under the control of the Public Works Department in this district shall be reduced to the ordinary standard.

2. Similar representations have been made to me from the other Range Officers, and there can be no doubt as the Collector of the district has also explained in his letter‡ to me, copy of which I enclose, that the sudden reduction of our rates at this most critical period will be tantamount to the stoppage of all our works, and must necessitate a calamitous access to the numbers requiring gratuitous relief from the State.

3. I would therefore most respectfully suggest that, in order to prevent such an unnecessary evil as the increasing of the numbers on gratuitous relief, and out of fairness to the petty contractors who have taken up the works at the enhanced rates prevailing in the district, that the Public Works Department be allowed to complete, as far as possible during the present season of distress, the works which have been actually commenced at the enhanced rates, and that no further works be given out except at the old rates.

4. With reference to the Range Officer's remarks regarding the very great difficulty in getting stone work done even at the enhanced rates, and which is likely to continue, I am in hopes that, with proper arrangements after the present distress has abated, we shall be able to carry out all the stone work we require, or for which funds may be provided. At present we are endeavouring to carry out the stone work and extra surplus arrangements for the larger and more important Irrigation works, which is all that can be expected.

From C. T. LONGLEY, Esq., Collector of Salem, to Major P. MONTGOMERIE, R.E., District Engineer, Salem, dated Camp, Ahtcor, 14th June 1877, No. 1,861.

With reference to your foot-note on your circular memorandum to the Range Officers, No. 309, dated 8th instant, I have the honor to inform you that the reduction of the rates quite precludes the works being relief works; it is in fact going back to the normal state of matters which existed before the famine begun, and the effect will be, I think, to increase the numbers on gratuitous relief.

From R. E. NORFOR, Esq., Executive Engineer, Salem, to Major P. MONTGOMERIE, R.E., District Engineer, Salem, dated Salem, 18th June 1877, No. 1,000-B.

With reference to your memorandum No. 309 of the 8th instant, directing that arrangements be made for carrying into effect the instructions of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation to

revert at once to the ordinary Department of Public Works rates in the execution of all works under this department, I have the honor to inform you that the Overseers have been ordered to measure and settle up for all work done up to date at the enhanced rates, and that contractors be informed that all work hereafter executed will be paid for at the old rates ruling prior to the famine.

2. I regret however to inform you that the contractors decline to complete the works now in hand at other than the rates at which they undertook to do them in the first instance, and I cannot help confessing that there is much truth in the reason they advance in support of their apparent obstinacy in refusing to work just now at the old rates, though they nearly all express their willingness to come down in the rates by degrees.

3. The fact is, as you may perfectly well remember, both the Revenue Department and ourselves have been *doing our best* hitherto to make the work-people understand that they are not obliged to give the contractors more than 12 cubic yards the rupee for earthwork; in fact you are aware that this has been a sore subject with the contractors, they not being able to make as good a thing out of the contract as they otherwise would have done. The coolies understand this so thoroughly well now that they entirely refuse to work at the old rates, viz., 20 cubic yards, the contractor being paid by us at 16 cubic yards the rupee; besides this the work-people have it all their own way now, as they have (as is always done here) received *advances* for work to be done, and a strike now simply means considerable losses to the contractors, or petty contractors as they should properly be called.

4. I think it only fair that the incomplete works be completed at the rates actually sanctioned and at which rates they were given out, and that no new works be given out except at the old rates. The rains setting in now it is of the utmost importance that the works should be finished off with as little delay as possible, and I may add that more than three-fourths of my works are already finished, and I have only one-fourth left which I should like to see in the same condition; any interruption now would be a serious drawback.

5. I have no doubt that in another couple of months we shall be able to work at the old rates as far as earth-work is concerned; but I am quite certain, if we can get any stone work done at all (which is doubtful), we shall not be able to do it at the old rates; stone waddlers are plentiful, but the mortality among their cattle has been so great that even the little stone work I included in the famine estimates cannot be done, though I have allowed 50 per cent. over the old rates; this is a serious matter, as, having done all earthwork necessary to nearly all tanks in the range, it is all important that their waste weirs be attended to, and these have in nearly every case to be lengthened. I beg therefore you will do me the favor to submit this question for the early consideration and orders of Government.

No.

ORDER THEREON, 29th June 1877, No. 125 I.

THE Governor in Council is of opinion that the rates obtaining in the Salem District are too high, and that a material reduction should be forthwith made, so as to bring them more in accord with those prevailing in adjoining districts. The time also appears suitable for transferring the bulk of the works, with the establishments, from Civil Agency to the Public Works Department, leaving under Civil Agency only those works necessary for the home employment of the small number who, though capable of doing some work, may be unable to earn their subsistence on the public works.

2. The District Engineer has already been authorized by telegram to complete work, which has been already given out at enhanced rates on petty contract, at the agreed rates.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,

Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,

Irrigation Branch.

To the District Engineer, Salem.

" Collector of Salem.

" Revenue Department.

" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

" Examiner of Public Works Accounts.

Exd. E. C. Shunker.

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Rev. ^{Sept}
F 5284

Pro P. M. Dept

dated 7 June
Recd. 6 July 1877

No 125 J.

Mis 407 July 1877 N 3842

Famine Relief Works.

Issuing instructions for the
reduction of rates allowed
for location of — and
for the transfer of the bulk
of works with the established
2 ment from Civil Agency to
the P. M. Dept.

N 3842

7 July 1877

To B. M. Bureau of July 1877