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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	<i>4532</i>	Press:
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Dated	<i>13.8.1877</i>	197 .

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

4th August 1877, No. 536 W.

Buildings and Roads.

Civil Works.

Read the following papers :—

No. 42. From Major H. R. MEAD, R.E., District Engineer, South Arcot, to the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, dated Camp at Shateatope, 26th July 1877, No. 94.

With reference to your telegram dated 26th July 1877, I have the honor to inform you that there are no works in progress which specially afford labor for distressed poor; the works in progress are the bridge at Virdacholiam (the arches of which have just been completed), the balance of allotment is about Rupees 2,600, but I have applied for further grant of Rupees 2,800, the Ordinary Agricultural Repairs, the grant of which is Rupees 1,01,110, of this Rupees 98,229 have been allotted to date, and I hope by the end of this month Rupees 55,000 will be expended, and of course much more work done but not paid for, and the road maintenance Rupees 1,17,000. There is but little work besides this, and I cannot propose any work to be done out of the present grants that would, in my opinion, assist the distressed poor, and even if the grant was increased, unless the works are specially organized and rates considerably raised, could I hope in any way to relieve them.

2. In January and February at the Collector's request I sent a large number of estimates (mostly tank repairs) to him for execution as relief works, notwithstanding that, according to the last return, Rupees 5,649 have been expended in the taluqs of Villapuram, Tindevanam, and Trinamalat, not one of these works has been undertaken by the Revenue authorities, and they after May's rains returned these estimates.

3. On the 11th July the Collector called my attention to the necessity of relief work at Trickalore, and I, in reply, pointed out that the two works he proposed would not be sufficient, but that it would be necessary to start works in other taluqs and places, and pointed out that under Government Orders, as he reported the coolies not able to do ordinary tasks, they should be employed on reduced pay and tasks under his department, and I offered to undertake to have the works laid out and inspected from time to time. Two days ago at his request I sent him a list of 112 estimates amounting to Rupees 34,689 which are ready for execution, if required, for his selection.

4. I was surprised on the 24th to receive from him a copy of a report to the Board of Revenue, dated 20th July, in which he proposed that all relief to persons incapable of doing work should be given by the Revenue Department, but that all whom they thought fit for work should be sent to do work under the Public Works Department, who should be responsible for their maintenance. I need hardly point out that this system, if adopted, must end in the coolies receiving pay for doing little or no work.

I have informed him that I consider I have not (even with extra establishment given to me) either prestige or power to carry out his proposal, and, as it appears to me to be against the Government policy in dealing with famine in other districts, I do not think it likely to be sanctioned.

5. What I believe I could do, if Government wish me to take charge of famine relief works, is the following :—

Provide at, say, two places in each taluq, work for any cooly who applies for it, the work to be earthwork and the coolies paid according to the task executed, which should be not more than half the task an ordinary cooly should do.

The work to be done to be ordinary tank or channel repairs and to be decided on by the Collector and myself.

To do this of course I must have some extra establishment and not to be tied by the ordinary rules of the department as regards payments, &c.

6. With regard to the distressed coolies, I must remark that there are but few of them of the ordinary earthwork laboring class, and therefore, even when not reduced by want of food, it is not to be expected that they should be able to do an ordinary day's work in excavation or carrying; that many of them positively refused to work; others say they are willing to work, but I doubt their doing so unless made to by hunger; as this is the case it is absolutely necessary that a task should be insisted on.

7. I regret much that I cannot recommend any large earthwork being undertaken in the district, as it would of course be much easier to superintend than small works; there is only one I know of, that is the Oeppalavady Channel. I cannot, however, recommend it, as I consider the project should be abandoned. I therefore see nothing else to be done but to take up the repair of tanks and channels, as one is finished the coolies must be moved on to another. I request that orders of Government may be given as soon as possible as regards whose charge the relief works are to be placed under, as if under mine it will be necessary for me to get tools and to make arrangements at once.

No. 42-A. Telegram from the District Engineer, South Arcot, Cuddalore, to the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, Madras, dated 27th July 1877.

No special works for distressed poor; can give employment to none except at increased rates for work and with extra establishment.

No. 43. ORDER THEREON, 4th August 1877, No. 536 W.

The District Engineer must extend his works and employ all suitable labor, sending all persons who are unfit to perform the reduced task to the nearest relief camps. In an order about to issue, full instructions in reference to a sliding scale of wages will be found.

(True Extract.)

64/11 Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government, P.W.D.

4532

To the District Engineer, South Arcot.
" Revenue Department, (Famine).
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

Ed. E. C. Shunker.

7/1 Spare Copies

13 Aug 1877

*To the Collector of South Arcot
Board of Revenue*

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PUBLIC WORKS.

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