

Revenue (1897) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

G.O., No. 1245

DATED 5th March

[Despatch Abstract.]

Coming to the Board of Rev. Letter
from the Govt. of India, forwarding
copy of memorandum in which
the leading principles regulating
the expenditure upon Public
Works in time of famine are
succinctly stated.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Revenue (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 1540

From Govt of India
Dept of Rev & Agrs

Cir No. 16/7.
104-1

for Orders

The system adopted is sufficiently described ~~at~~ in the marked portion at page 3 of the enclosures. It is to be adopted only after ~~the~~ best works have ~~established~~ shown the necessity for some employment though not on the extensive or extensive system prescribed in the famine code.

Dated 13th
Received 25th
Registered 28th } Feb 1897
Enclosures 2
Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Forwarding, for information and guidance, copy of a memorandum in which are succinctly stated the leading principles regulating expenditure upon Public Works in time of famine are succinctly stated.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

Principles for regulating expenditure upon Public Works in time of Famine.

1. In districts where no distress exists, it is the general rule that expenditure upon public works, even within the limits of budget provision, should be contracted with a view to setting funds and establishments at liberty for employment when they are more needed. To this rule, however, exceptions may be made:

- (1) where the works could not be contracted without risk of creating distress by reducing the local employment of labour;
- (2) where the contraction of the works would result in returning to districts where distress exists or is threatened, the labourers employed on them.

2. Where distress exists, it will be necessary to provide additional employment upon works. All such additional expenditure must be subjected to the relief conditions described below.

3. The essence of relief conditions is, that the remuneration for work done must be so fixed as not to attract labour for which there is existing employment elsewhere. This condition must invariably be enforced. The method of enforcing it will vary with the degree of distress which prevails.

4. Where acute distress or famine prevails, so that the general population is affected, and it is necessary to provide employment not only for able-bodied labourers, but also for a large proportion of inefficient labour, task-work must be rigorously enforced, nobody being allowed either to do more than the fixed task or to earn more than the fixed maximum wage. The former condition is necessary in order to economise the supply of useful work upon which labour can be employed: the second, in order to limit expenditure, since, when the dependants of a skilled labourer are paid separately, it is not necessary for purposes of relief to pay him more than a subsistence wage.

5. But when distress, though present, is not so acute as to drive on to the works a large proportion of inefficient labour or of persons unaccustomed to work, payment by results is more economical than task-work; for so long as an able-bodied labourer can earn enough, under the conditions laid down in paragraph 3, to enable those of his family who do not work to live at home, he will support himself and them more cheaply than Government can do.

6. Payment by results may take the form, either of an expansion of ordinary works under the usual system of petty-contracts, or of the intermediate or gang-piece-work system of the North-Western Provinces. The former is sufficient when distress is slight; but as the scarcity becomes more acute and threatens to deepen into famine, the latter should be substituted, since it secures proper remuneration to the individual workman, which, under the urgency of distress, the former fails to do.

7. If the rates offered are regulated by the principle laid down in paragraph 3, gang-piece-work will effectively gauge the intensity of distress, since it will afford to inefficient labour only a bare subsistence.

8. As soon, therefore, as the demand by inefficient labour for employment on these terms begins to be appreciable, additional test-works on the task-work system may usefully be opened; though at a sufficient distance from the piece-work works to ensure that if the man works at piece-work and his women and children at task-work, they shall at least be compelled to live apart. These will provide for the women and children during the intermediate stage, while distress is becoming acute. As soon, however, as the demand by inefficient labour for employment upon either system becomes considerable, acute distress is present, and payment by results must then be discontinued and task-work substituted for it.

9. It is conceivable that in any district there may be cases in which the rapid and efficient prosecution of a particular public work is of such importance as to justify a relaxation of the above conditions. Such instances will be rare, the works will be of magnitude, and each case will be decided upon its individual merits.

10. It is for Local Governments to judge of the local conditions in each case, and to justify to themselves or to the Government of India, as the case may be, the action to be taken under the principles thus laid down.

No. 417—S., dated Allahabad, the 14th December 1896.

From—The Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India.

IN his demi-official letter of the 29th November Mr. H. F. Evans enclosed, for the information of the Government of India, copy of a letter addressed to officers, asking them to report what effect had been produced by the late rainfall on the prospects of their respective districts. The Government is still awaiting these replies, but provisional information has been received from Commissioners of Divisions, from which it appears that they are of the opinion that prospects have been so far improved as to justify the expectation that with fair winter rains the numbers who may come on relief will be less by about 25 per cent. than the number of 100,000,000 units for one day, stated in the third column of Statement B, paragraph 10 of this office letter No. 196, dated the 23rd November 1896. In this opinion the Lieutenant-Governor generally concurs, and he now sees reason to hope that it will not be necessary in several districts to undertake relief operations to the extent which seemed probable before the late rain had fallen. In view of the altered condition of things, and with the object of avoiding unnecessary expenditure, the Lieutenant-Governor has re-considered the programme of public works referred to in paragraphs 19 and 20 of the letter mentioned above, and has consulted Commissioners of Divisions on the following point: whether it would be desirable to pursue the policy indicated in paragraph 20 of the letter noticed above, and postpone village works till the hot weather had set in; or whether, in view of the probability that in certain districts the necessity for extensive relief would disappear when the *rabi* had been harvested, it would be better to meet the demand for employment which may arise between now and the harvesting of the *rabi* by a more general use of village works now than had been intended. The Commissioners' official replies are awaited, but from the communications unofficially made by them to His Honour, it seems certain that they will ask for permission to begin some village works at once, and also to maintain a backbone of some large works managed by the Department of Public Works in the various districts. These works are now in operation in many districts.

2. The question also presented itself whether, in districts in which prospects have improved, it was desirable, where village works were not found to afford suitable employment, to open relief works under strict Code rules. Under the Code three classes of work are recognized:—

- (1) Ordinary works (article 69) debitable to Provincial or District Funds.
- (2) Test relief works debitable to Famine Relief, and carried out in the general spirit of the Famine Code Rules.
- (3) Regular relief works under Chapter VI of the Code, on which the "gang" and "task" work system is rigidly enforced.

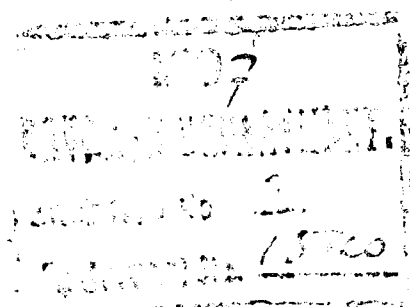
In almost all districts funds, either provincial or district, for ordinary works have been exhausted; while, at the same time, test works have shown the necessity for some employment, though not on the expensive or extensive system prescribed by the Famine Code. The problem, then, was to provide such employment as would be suitable for districts under observation, but in which distress had not fully declared itself. Such employment is offered, for example, in the Cawnpore district by the Lower Ganges Extension canal project, and in the Azamgarh district, to some extent, by the extensions of the Bengal and North-Western Railway.

3. These facts have suggested to His Honour the adoption in such localities of a modified system of famine relief works which would be intermediate between works carried out on the ordinary and on the Famine Code systems. Such works, while conducted on principles involving much less expenditure than would be incurred were the system of the Code followed, will serve as test works on a large scale. Their existence, with the establishment thereon, will also enable the Government to at once convert them into Famine Code works without a day's delay should famine supervene. It need hardly be observed that no advantage will be taken of this arrangement to carry through works in the interest of district or provincial funds; and that no work will be begun which is not absolutely essential with the object of preventing suffering from want of food.

I am to add that this plan has been forced on His Honour for two reasons: first, economy, and second, the extreme difficulty of obtaining the large number of subordinate officers necessary for Famine Code works.

4. I am to forward a copy of the instructions* which have issued on the subject, which will explain more fully the action which the Lieutenant-Governor has decided to take.

G. O. No. 3573.—73, dated 5th December 1896.



out under a system of piece-work by gangs, the members of which will be entitled to certain payments, and which will occupy a position intermediate between works carried out on the ordinary system of petty contract and those conducted under the strict conditions of the Famine Code.

2. His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been led to introduce this intermediate system by the difficulty of obtaining the large establishments that are necessary for work under the strict provisions of the Famine Code and by the great cost of such works. The Government of India understand that the economy of this new system depends upon the fact that, in tracts where the distress, though real, has not deepened into famine, if the able-bodied workers are employed on piece-work, the women and children will in the main be supported at home by the earnings of the workers, supplemented by such additions to them as they can obtain in their own villages; whereas if the task-work system is strictly enforced, the women and children must at once come on to the works, since the famine wage is sufficient only to support the workers themselves. If this be so, piece-work appears to be advisable so long as the mass of inefficient labour can find support without relief from Government.

3. It is, however, very necessary, as already explained in my Circular No. 3-77-1 F., dated the 24th December 1896, that the rates given should be so regulated as to act as an efficient test of the intensity of distress. They should be such as to constitute a somewhat hard bargain even with the skilled labourer; and should be distinctly below what it would be necessary to give in order to attract labour in the absence of distress. When this is the case, inefficient labour paid by the piece will earn but a bare subsistence, so that the extent of the demand by inefficient labour for employment on these terms will sufficiently gauge the intensity of the distress.

4. The Government of India understand these to be the principles on which His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has introduced his intermediate system of piece-work, and that as soon as the demand for employment by inefficient labour indicates that distress has reached an acute stage, the ordinary task-work system of the Famine Code will be substituted.

5. The Governor General in Council gives his hearty approval to the proposals.

FILE No. 104 of 1897.

SERIAL No. 1.

1897.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE.

FAMINE.

To

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS.

Circular No. ¹⁶/₁₀₄₋₁ F.

Dated Calcutta, the 13th February 1897.

G. G. M. No. 124 58 / 5th Mar. 1897

Communicated to
the Secy of Rev.

(True & Extract)

(D) G. Stokes

By Secy. to Govt.

SUBJECT.

To the Secy of Rev. (ms & rda)

PRINCIPLES for regulating expenditure upon Public Works in time of Famine

16
Circular No. 101-1 F.

FROM T. W. HOLDERNESS, Esq., I.C.S.,
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,

TO *The Secretary to the Govt of Madras.*
Dept. of Rev. and Agri.
Famine.

Dated CALCUTTA, the 13th February 1897.

SIR,

I AM directed to forward, for information and guidance, copy of a memorandum in which are succinctly stated the leading principles regulating expenditure upon Public Works in time of Famine.

2. Paragraphs 5 to 8 of the memorandum should be regarded, as supplementing the provisions contained in the Provincial Famine Codes with regard to the expansion of "ordinary" public works and the opening of "test" works when distress is imminent or its extent and acuteness have to be ascertained. It is not proposed at present that the Famine Codes should be amended with a view to bring them into formal agreement (where this is necessary) with the memorandum as to the manner in which such works should be conducted. The statement of principles contained in the memorandum leaves in this respect a large discretion to Local Governments and Administrations, and any amendment of the Codes which may be required in this and other points will be more usefully undertaken when the experience of the present year can be brought under review.

3. As paragraph 6 of the memorandum refers to the "intermediate or gang piece work" system which has been experimentally adopted in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the papers marked on the margin, which explain this system, are also forwarded for reference.

Letter from North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government, No. 4178, dated 14th December 1896.
Letter from North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government, No. 500, dated 21st December 1896, and enclosure.
Letter to North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government, No. 255 F., dated 16th January 1897.

I have the honour to be,

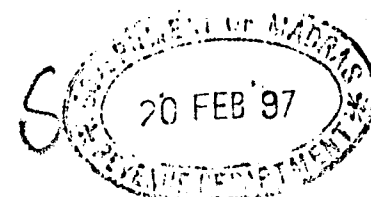
SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

T. W. HOLDERNESS,

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

To—The Government of Madras.
Bombay.
Bengal.
North-Western Provinces and Oudh.
Punjab.
Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces.
Burma.
Assam.
Coorg.
Ajmere-Merwara.
Resident at Hyderabad.



FILE No. 104 of 1897.

SERIAL No. 1.

1897.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE.

FAMINE.

To

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS.

Circular No. $\frac{16}{104-1}$ F.

Dated Calcutta, the 13th February 1897.

SUBJECT.

PRINCIPLES for regulating expenditure upon Public Works in time of Famine.

G. I. C. P. O.—No. 1311 R. & A.—15-2-97.—923.—J. N. D.

FROM

T. W. HOLDERNESS, Esq., I.C.S.,

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

The Secretary to the Government of Madras.

Dept. of Rev. and Agri.
Famine.

Dated CALCUTTA, the 13th February 1897.

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Letter to North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government, No. 255 F., dated 16th January 1897.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

T. W. Holderness

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

C. No. 1540

From

Rev. Mr. Secy. C.I.C.
Rev. Mr. Secy. C.I.C.

W.L. The Secy?

2/13

Dated

189 .

FOR ORDERS.

In this paper the Govt of India sends on a system for regulating expenditure on Public works in time of Famine. The principles are really those which should regulate the expansion of ordinary works provided in sec. 16 of our Famine code. They govern a time anterior to test works. To understand what the principles are the paper itself must be read. ~~If but it is a very large if the system~~ has the effect of keeping inefficient labour off the works it may be economical. At any rate we are far beyond the stage here when it can have any practical interest for us & I think the paper may be simply communicated to the Board & no action to incorporate it in the code need now be taken.

I now respect they are in conflict with our Famine Code
W.S.

Drop to 11/4/97

12/4/54/15 Mar. 1897
28
27/2/97

G.O. mis 12/4/54/15 Mar. 1897

Comd to the Secy of Rev. 1/3/97

15/3/97

10/2/97 Some record (left) 25.9-3-97

5-3-97

11/2/97

FOR ORDERS.

When given for copying _____
When copied _____ } 189
When examined _____
When signed _____

READ AGAIN G.O., No.
189

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO O. No.

ORDER OF GOVERNMENT

A A A A A A A

LETTER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO

PAPERS NOT FILED UP, BEING MEANT FOR DESPATCH
IN ORIGINAL.

N.B.—

A = Copy in full.
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P = Copy abstract only.
Q = Copy heading only