

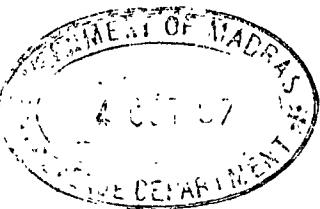
PRESS SERIES.

G.O., No. 893

Dated 26th October

[Despatch Abstract.]

Letter from the Govt. of India making certain observations in regard to grant of distance allowance to relief workers in this Presy., Communicated to the Famine Commissioner.



Recd. Dept.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE.

FAMINE.

To

THE SECY. TO THE GOVT. OF MADRAS,
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

No. 3067—203-8-F.

Dated Simla, the 24th September 1897.

Depd. in 20. 9. 87.

Recd. 4.10.87

Regd. 5.10.87

Encl.

SUBJECT.

Orders issued for the closing of famine relief operations in the Madras Presidency.

G. C. Press, Simla.—1166 R. & A. D.—25-9-97.—77.

1 am
5/10.

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FROM

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

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS,
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Dept. of Rev. & Agri.
Famine.

Simla, the 24th September 1897.

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 759, dated the 6th September 1897, replying to the inquiry as to whether any measures were being taken by the Government of Madras to bring famine relief operations in the Madras Presidency to a close at an early date.

2. The Government of India are glad to observe from the correspondence accompanying your letter that the allowance made to relief workers for "distance" has been reduced, as it is clear from the letter from the Collector of Bellary, dated the 14th June 1897, to the address of the Board of Revenue that this reduction, along with others, had so diminished the task that it did not fulfil, as it should, its special object and design of testing necessity. The allowance is not made in any other part of the country where relief operations are in progress, nor is it authorised by any Famine Code. This departure from general practice might be perfectly justified, but the Government of India are impressed by the remarks of Mr. Higham in paragraph 9 of his note on the Madras Relief Works. It is clearly his opinion that the concession is liable in practice to be laxly, if not fraudulently, worked by the subordinate officials

My letter No. 2794—206—2, dated the 18th August 1897.

immediately in charge of the relief works. Again, it is a common custom in other parts of India when shelter is not provided on the works for the workers, instead of returning home every night, to put up in villages in the vicinity of the works. But as the "distance allowance" is granted with sole reference to the distance of the workers' permanent place of residence from the works, the persons described above would become entitled to it, though they obviously do not require any such diminution of the hours of labour.

3. The Government of India observe that in the Madras Government order of the 30th March 1897, a copy of which was received with your letter No. 661, dated the 2nd August 1897, authorising the "distance allowance," it was laid down that shelter should, as a rule, be provided at or near the relief works: and that the distance

X
Famine
Higham's
note on
Madras
Relief Works

allowance should only operate when this had not been done. The Government of India think it unfortunate that this instruction to make residence on the works the rule for persons coming from a distance, and a "distance allowance" the exception, has not been observed, and that the Famine Commissioner in this matter has been influenced by the belief that persons in real need of relief will not resort to a relief work unless they can return every night to their homes. It has been conclusively proved by the experience of other provinces that though the residential test keeps off from the works persons who are not in actual distress, it does not thus operate when real distress prevails. In the Bombay Presidency, as will appear from the Inspection notes of Mr. Higham on the relief-works in Bombay, the principle of concentrating relief-labour on a few large works, of providing hutting accommodation, and of refusing a "distance" allowance, has been systematically followed throughout the present scarcity with complete success. It may not be possible in the Madras Presidency, owing to the absence of large projects, to concentrate labour to the extent to which this has been done in Bombay: but the Governor General in Council considers that the policy is the right one, that, instead of giving them a distance allowance, the people should be indirectly encouraged to reside on the works when their homes are at a distance.

4. I am to enclose a copy of the Inspection notes referred to in the preceding paragraph for the information of the Governor in Council.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

M. C. M. M.

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

LIST OF ENCLOSURES.

Copy of Mr. Higham's Bombay Note.

Notes on an inspection of Famine Relief Works in the Bombay Presidency, by Mr. T. Higham, C.I.E., on special duty in connection with famine relief operations.

1. My tour in the Bombay Presidency commenced on the 18th May, when I left Bombay for Mahabaleshwar, meeting

Details of tour.

Mr. Joyner, Superintending Engineer, Central Division, *en route* at Poona, and arranging with him the programme of a tour through that Division, which comprises five affected districts, Poona, Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Nasik, and Khandeish. Want of time prevented my contemplating a visit to the Southern Division, comprising the Bijapur, Satara, Belgaum, and Dharwar Districts, in the first two of which only were the relief operations of considerable magnitude. At Mahabaleshwar I had interviews with His Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Mr. Nugent, Member of Council, the Honourable Mr. Spence, Commissioner, the Honourable Mr. Monteath, Secretary to Government, and the Honourable Mr. Thomson, Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government, Public Works Department. I left Mahabaleshwar on the afternoon of the 21st, arriving at Poona the following morning, when I proceeded at once by rail to Kharkala, accompanied by Mr. Joyner and Mr. Davidson, Executive Engineer, Poona District, and visited two of the three relief camps in the neighbourhood, one at Kharkala, and the other about 6 miles distant at Kaneh, the work in progress at each being the collection of metalling for the Bombay-Poona Road. We returned to Poona in the evening, and on the following Monday, which was a holiday on the relief works, being the Queen's Birthday, I sailed out with Mr. Joyner to Pomalwari, proceeding thence by road to Indrapura, about 15 miles from the station. On the following morning we were joined by Mr. LeQuesne, Executive Engineer, Poona Irrigation Division, and visited the works at the Shetphul Reservoir, about 8 miles from Indrapura, and returning to Pomalwari in the evening, went on to Barsi Road station, and on the following morning inspected the relief works in the neighbourhood of the Barsi-Pandharpur Light Railway. I here met Mr. Morrison, Collector of Sholapur, Dr. Standish, the District Medical Officer, and Mr. Godboli and Mr. Clifton, Executive Engineers, Sholapur, the latter being in charge of the railway relief works. Mr. Joyner and I left in the evening for Ahmednagar, where we were met at daybreak of the 27th by Mr. Woodburn, the Collector, and Mr. Hatherley, Executive Engineer, Ahmednagar District, and drove out at once to the Kapurwadi Reservoir, which is being undertaken as a relief work for the purpose of improving the water-supply of Ahmednagar and the cantonments. On the 28th we proceeded by rail to Belapur, again accompanied by the Collector, Mr. Woodburn, and by his Assistant, Mr. Perceval, and visited a camp about 4 miles from the station where road-metalling was being collected, after which Mr. Joyner and I went on by rail to Munmar, where I met Mr. Stewart, Assistant Collector, and Mr. Strange, Executive Engineer, Nasik District, and also Mr. Partik, Executive Engineer, Khandeish District. On the following morning we inspected a large camp near Munmar, where the collection of road-metalling was in progress, and I afterwards met Dr. Clarkson, the Sanitary Commissioner, who had kindly come down from Bombay to meet me. During the night I left Munmar for Itarsi, in the Central Provinces. In the course of my tour I thus visited four road-metalling works, two large irrigation reservoirs, and one railway camp, and had the advantage of meeting all the Executive Engineers and many of the civil officers of the Division.

2. The relief works originally started in this Presidency consisted almost

Character of the relief works originally started and proposed for the future.

entirely of roads or road-metalling works. At the time that relief operations were instituted larger projects had not been prepared, and irrigation works have hitherto proved so unremunerative directly, that the construction of new works of this class had not been very seriously contemplated. The road works had moreover what was at first considered an advantage in providing small relief

works at no great distance from the affected villages. The collection of road-metalling is not, however, a very satisfactory form of relief work. The supervision of so many small and detached camps distributed over a large area is costly and difficult, the majority of the people are not accustomed to this kind of work, and above all the effective demand is soon more than covered. On the Bombay-Poona Road the metalling collected is sufficient to meet all probable requirements during the next ten years, and a stock has been collected on other lines of communication, for the metalling and subsequent maintenance of which the requisite District funds are not likely to be forthcoming for many years. The Superintending Engineer and his officers therefore lost no time in preparing estimates for more important and useful works, principally in the form of irrigation tanks or reservoirs. Although such works have not been financially successful in the Deccan, they are nevertheless indirectly very beneficial, as has been shown in the case of the Nira Canal, constructed as a famine work in 1877, which completely protected last year an area of about 30,000 acres, in which there has been in consequence no distress and no necessity for relief works. It was considered therefore that if large sums of money had to be expended on relief works, it would be better to spend it on useful works of this class than to waste it in the collection of road-metalling, much of which would probably never be required at all, while much more would lie unused for many years. Mr. Joyner informed me that altogether fifty irrigation schemes have been considered in his division, of which thirty-four have been examined more or less in detail. Of these eighteen have been submitted to the Government of Bombay and thirteen have been already sanctioned and are under execution, while orders on the remainder are shortly expected. There remain sixteen projects which are either unsuitable or of which the final detailed surveys cannot be completed in time to be of immediate use. There are besides sixteen schemes which have not been considered in any detail at all, some of which are at present under investigation, while others are of no promise or would be of little use for relief works.

The normal cost of the irrigation projects that have been submitted is about Rs. 75,00,000, of which Rs. 22,00,000 is for work that would be suitable for relief purposes. Increasing this by 75 per cent. to meet the extra charges inevitably involved in the execution of public works on relief principles, the value of the work available for relief purposes may be taken at Rs. 38,50,000, and allowing an average outlay of Rs. 3 per worker per mensem, this would suffice for the employment of 320,000 workers for a period of four months. As will be shown later on the actual cost of relief works exceeds the normal cost of the work done by much more than 75 per cent., but this seems a fair proportion to be aimed at, and an underestimate is for present purposes an error on the side of safety.

In addition to these irrigation projects there is the light railway from Barsi Road to Pandharpur (32 miles), and its extension from Pandharpur to Sangola (18 miles). These are now in active progress. There is also the length of the Tapti Valley Railway from Amalner to Dhurramgaon which has been reserved for famine relief purposes, and on which operations have commenced in the Khandeish District, though not very actively. Mr. Joyner estimates that these railways will between them give work for 324,000 labourers for four months. Altogether there appears to be plenty of work to employ relief labour on in the Central Division for about six months from the 1st of June, and it is possible that some other useful works can be proposed if necessary.

3. One great advantage of these larger works is that supervision will be more efficient and concentrated. There is however another advantage. It has already

been said that the works originally started provided employment at a reasonable distance from the affected villages, but this is now realised by Civil and Public Works Officers alike as a real disadvantage. It is thought by all that the works have been much too popular, and that the labour test alone is under the Code system of working quite insufficient as a test of the urgency for relief. People who still have considerable resources of their own are not unwilling to supplement them by what they can get from relief works when this can be done by merely attending daily with their families at works within four or five miles of

their villages. So strongly has this been realized that it is now often the practice to insist that no applicants should be received on the new relief works who have come from a distance of less than ten miles, but that they should be drafted to other and more distant works, though I am not aware that this has been authorised by a Government order. There is, however, an order that when camps have been provided residence in them should be made a condition of relief of any kind at the works where the camps are. This practice and the closure of many petty works have tended to reduce the number of applicants for admission to relief works. The total number of relief workers on the 10th April in the Central Division was 203,265, of whom 18,724 only were employed on irrigation and railway works. On the 15th May the total number had been reduced to 194,556, but the number on irrigation and railway works had risen to 77,028, employed on 23 charges. The drafting from the smaller works was still in active progress during my tour, so that the petty works may be gradually closed before the advent of the rains. These figures indicate that although the opening of the new works may have checked further increase in the number of relief labourers, there is no great difficulty in inducing all who are really in need of assistance to migrate to them.

4. One of the most striking features of the relief works in the Deccan is the complete arrangement of the camp.

Camp arrangements. Except on works like the Barsi Light Railway where the labour is being continually shifted forward as the work progresses, the huts are of very ample size and substantial character, laid out in streets with great regularity, so that the encampment has the appearance of a well ordered village. All camp arrangements are carried out in close accordance with Appendix IV, Bombay Famine Code. The cost of such encampments is considerable, hutting alone costing on an average about eight annas per head, but in cases, like irrigation reservoirs, in which all the labour will be located on the same spot for some months and has to be accommodated during the night, such expenditure must be regarded as necessary.

5. The proportion of dependants to workers stood as high as 40·3 per cent. for the whole Bombay Presidency in the week ending 3rd April 1897. These dependants are mainly children who form at least 90 per cent. of the number. All children under seven, but with not less than two teeth in each jaw received as much as two pice a day, so that the presence on the works of two or three children under seven makes a considerable addition to the earnings of a family, which are further enhanced by the wages paid to children over seven who are only nominally workers. It was said that many parents who did not come to the works at all sent their children in charge of other women. During the month of April therefore the system of cash payment was abandoned in favour of a cooked ration, consisting of a cake of jowari flour, etc., corresponding to the Code allowance of 6 ounces per diem, with a little pulse, etc. This change was very unpopular, and resulted in an immediate falling off in the number of dependants. Mr. Morrison, Collector of Sholapur, showed me a statement from which it appeared that in one case the number of dependants had actually risen to 70 per cent. of the number of workers, and that this fell sharply to 8 per cent. on the introduction of kitchens, though in the course of two or three weeks it rose again to 24 per cent., which is near the average. The percentage for the whole of the Bombay Presidency fell rapidly from 40·3 for week ending 3rd April to 26 per cent. for week ending 22nd May, and this proportion has since remained remarkably constant, the percentage for week ending 26th June 1897 being 25·7. It is found that the cooked ration costs little if anything less than the two pice formerly allowed, but under the new system the number of dependants is very largely reduced, and there is also said to be a great improvement in the condition of the children. The objection of the parents to the kitchens does not appear to be very deep-seated, though they would no doubt prefer to receive the money allowance. They are, however, very sensitive and suspicious about the children. At both Shetphul and Munmar my visit to the kitchens was followed by a general stampede of all the workers, on a rumour that we were engaged in poisoning the children. They were soon reassured, but at another camp I found 1,200 workers and no non-working children, as

they had all been removed a few days before in consequence of a hospital assistant having been sent out to the camp. It may be inferred from all this that many of the parents are not in very urgent need of relief for their children, but for those that are the kitchen is the more appropriate form of relief.

6. Whether non-working children receive an allowance or a cooked ration their presence on the works is considered very objectionable. In the case of sucklings this cannot be prevented, but those who are able to run alone get into every one's way, and prevent others working, especially their elder brothers and sisters. It is also difficult to distinguish the working from the non-working children, and so to insist on the former working. At most works therefore it is now the practice to keep the non-working children in the kitchen shed or in an enclosed playground adjoining, and to appoint a few adults to look after them. This had been done at Shetphul with great advantage to the work, but there was only one such enclosure for five separate camps. The Executive Engineer was going to erect another at the other end of the work, but probably a third will be required in an intermediate position, so that the parents may have no difficulty in visiting their children during the meal hours, and may never have them very far out of sight. On the Barsi railway works no attempt had been made to segregate the non-working children and the result was very marked in the general confusion that prevailed, as compared with works in which the separation had been effected. It may be remarked that in this camp arrangements had been made for distributing the food from the kitchens to the children on the works. This arrangement was made as the workers were being continually moved and appeared to work satisfactorily.

In connection with this question the Public Works officers represented that some discretion should be allowed them as to the age at which children should be admitted as workers. The Bombay Code fixes the age at seven years, and in many camps the Collector had objected to children over this age being placed on the list of dependants. It is urged, however, either that the age limit should be raised to ten years, as it is in Bengal, or that it should be left to the discretion of the works officer in charge to admit as workers only children who really will work, and to relegate others, even if over the age of ten, to the kitchen. As the minimum wage of a working child is one anna, or twice that of a child dependant, this would be felt as a punishment, and the children on the work would be induced or compelled by their parents to work. I have seen many children barely over seven years who were model little workers, setting a good example to all around them, but there are others much older who are incorrigible idlers, and who are merely brought on to the works so that their parents may draw on their behalf the working wage.

7. I now come to the important question of the classification and tasking of the workers, and it will be convenient to consider in the first place the works for the collection of road-metalling, partly because this was until lately the principal form of relief work in the Bombay Presidency, many charges being engaged on it even at the time of my visit, and partly because it is a class of work for which no rules or tasks have been laid down in the Bombay Famine Code, although it has been largely resorted to in this Presidency and in the Central Provinces. As already observed, the majority of the people are not used to this kind of work, and it is undoubtedly less suitable for them than ordinary earthwork, because every man, woman and child of the labouring classes is so well accustomed to the work of carrying a load either of earth or water on the head, for which they may be said to have an inherited muscular system, developed by constant exercise. But though the breaking of metalling is not popular, it is found that both women and children become fairly expert at it after a little practice, and its unpopularity is perhaps not altogether a disadvantage. In many cases it is the only useful work that can be found, it is well adapted for small camps distributed over a long line of road, and it possesses the great advantage that the tasks actually set, whether for gangs or individuals can be clearly defined and the work done accurately measured. In

all the camps that I saw in Bombay the workers were divided into gangs containing about 50 people, each gang having its own mukaddam or mate, who receives from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 annas per diem. The gangs were ranged in parallel lines, the day's work of each being exhibited in a small heap in front of the worker, and these heaps being collected so as to form a central stack, the additions to which are measured day by day, so as to show the ten day's work of the gang. For every four gangs there is a karkun or moharir who writes up the muster rolls, records the progress and the wages due, but the measurement of the stacks is conducted by work agents of the sub-overseer class who are responsible for bringing the quantities collected on to the proper returns.

8. The classification of the gangs was originally carried out as far as possible on the lines laid down in the Famine Code, but, as will be shown, the present practice is not uniform, and there is a tendency to paying all workers more or less in accordance with the work done, subject to a minimum wage. As a general rule there are no women in class A, as women can seldom be regarded as professional stone-breakers, and the few men of this class are not employed in stone-breaking but in the harder and more skilled labour of quarrying the stone by blasting and picks. They form therefore a special class, generally receiving the A wage in return for a full task, or for keeping a certain number of breakers supplied with stone. In some cases they are, I understand, paid by the piece, and in others receive, as specially trained and capable workers, something higher than the A wage, the whole work of the gangs depending on their exertions. The adult breakers, whether men or women, are usually classed as B, and have a task set them. Many of the B men are however employed in sledging the larger stones outturned from the quarries, so as to break them up into spawls for the breakers. In some cases weavers and others have been classed as C, and given a smaller task than the B workers, but the present more general practice is to class all able-bodied workers as B, and to fine them for a short outturn. The D workers consist of mothers nursing young children (though these receive an A wage until the child is five or six weeks old), very old men and women, and weak persons incapable of performing a fair task. For this class either a very light task is set or they are untasked and are simply required to do what work they can. The nursing mothers receive the wages of their class when the child is over five or six weeks old, and two pice on account of the child until it has teeth in both jaws, after which they receive food on the work until they can walk, when they are sent to the kitchen. Children over seven are set small tasks, and are often employed in carrying spawls to the breakers. In some cases the B, C and D workers are ranged in separate B, C or D gangs; in others the gangs contain workers of all classes, each individual being set his appropriate task.

9. Opinion is divided on the question whether payment should be made according to the task done by individuals or on the aggregate task of the gangs. Payment by individual tasks or the task of the gang.

Some officers prefer the former, which is called the ticket system, but the majority appear to prefer the latter. At Karkhala the ticket system was in force. Each worker's pile was gauged by the moharir at the end of the day, and he was allowed the full wage of his class, the so-called minimum, or D wage, or the penal wage (one-pice below the D wage) according as it was judged that a full task, more than half or less than half the task had been performed. The gauging at Karkhala was done by the eye, the general result being checked by the result of the measurement of the day's stock by the sub-overseer or work agent, and it was said that the agreement was sufficiently close, and that both the karkuns and workers soon became expert at this rough gauging. In other places each pile is actually measured in small baskets or pans, so many baskets being required, but this is a very long and tedious process. The system is a good one, inasmuch as it prevents a man suffering from the idleness of other members of the gang, and is readily understood, but it throws too much power into the hands of unscrupulous karkuns and makaddams. Mr. Davidson tells me, however, that he has found it to work more satisfactorily than the gang system, which he had formerly adopted, and that it was now in use throughout his district.

10. The gang system was in force at Munmar. Under this system the daily task for the gang is fixed on the aggregate of the tasks set for the component members, which in all gangs varies according to sex and age (children having smaller tasks than adults), and in mixed gangs varies with the class, sex and age. In the Central Division payments are as a rule made only once a week, a matter which will be referred to later on, and the actual progress for the week is compared with the normal aggregate task for six days. The amount due to the workers at full rates is then reduced as a rule proportionally to the deficiency, and the amount so reduced is distributed among them, either rateably or at the discretion of the works officer or subordinate in charge among the known and recognised defaulters, some discrimination being generally exercised in this respect.

11. At the road-metalling works near Belapur, in the Ahmednagar District, I found another system in force, which is, I understand, peculiar to the subdivisional charge. In this district, as indeed generally, it is complained that under the Code system it is most difficult to get higher tasks out of the people than will suffice to ensure them the D wage, and that when B or C tasks are set they are not performed, the workers preferring being fined down to the D limit. In this subdivision this position was accepted, and a scheme of tasking was drawn up accordingly, which has been fully approved by the Collector. Under it a D task is set to all breakers, as follows:—

Men, 54 baskets* per week	...	...	= 9 per diem.
Women, 36 baskets per week	...	...	= 6 "
Children, 21 " " "	...	...	= 3½ "

If these tasks were performed the adult workers receive the D wage in full, and the children the wages prescribed for them in the Code. If there was a deficiency the gang was fined at the rate of one pie for each basket short, and the amount of the fine was distributed among the adult workers. If there was a surplus the gang received a bonus of one pie for every basket in excess, which was distributable among the adult workers. The children were not liable to fine or eligible for bonus.

This system was introduced on the 17th April, and I was able to examine the figures for four weeks. As to fines, the average daily attendance in three different charges amounted to 5,361 persons, and the fines for the same period averaged Rs. 34 per week, giving an average fine of 1½ pie per head per week. The bonuses during the same period amounted to Rs. 4-4-7, or practically nil. The workers may thus be said to have just done their minimum task, but to have made no effort whatever to exceed it.

Before this system was introduced the workers were divided into A, B, C and D classes, and for five weeks preceding the 17th April, 6,737 workers were fined Rs. 292, or an average of 8 pie each. Previously to that the works had been under another subdivisional officer, and the fines appeared to have been much heavier and to have averaged as much as 1½ annas per week.

On the 24th April the subdivisional officer (Mr. Ralph) carefully observed the work done by seven men, six women and six children, who were kept steadily to work for eight hours (from 7 to 11 A.M. and 2 to 6 P.M.), with the result that the average outturn for the day was—

Per man	7·7 cubic feet	...	...	= 23·1 baskets.
" woman	5·4 "	...	...	= 16·2 "
" child	2·0 "	...	...	= 6·0 "

The minimum tasks set on the strength of this experiment were therefore very moderate, except perhaps in the case of the children.

* A basket being equal to one-third of a cubic foot.

12. The tasks required in breaking metalling vary with the quality of the stone and the size of ring prescribed, but the following were noted, the unit being the cubic foot in all cases:—

Site.	CLASS A.		CLASS B.		CLASS C.		CLASS D.		CHILDREN	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	16 to 12.	12 to 7.
Kharkhala, Poona District	10'0	...	8'0	6'0	(a)	(a)	(b)	(b)	(a)	(a)
Ahmednagar District	8'0	7'0	6'0	5'25	4'0	3'5	3'0	2'0	2'0	1'0
Khandedish District	7'5	5'0	5'62	3'75	3'75	2'5	(b)	(b)	2'0	1'0

(a) Not noted.

(b) No fixed task.

A men are now practically never employed on breaking. The stone used at Karkhala and in Ahmednagar is trap, broken to 1½ ring, but it was generally larger than this at Karkhala. In Khandedish boulders are used, and the tasks for the men employed in collecting and splitting the boulders are as follows:—

A men	...	...	...	...	16 cubic feet.
B "	...	...	...	...	12 "
C "	...	...	...	...	8 "

At Belapur the quarrymen were paid A, B or C class wages accordingly as they quarried 100, 80 or 60 cubic feet of solid stone, and hammermen accordingly as they split 150, 120, or 90 cubic feet of spawls, equivalent to 100, 80 or 60 cubic feet of solid stone. Woman carriers are required to carry 20 seers = 23 cubic feet metal, six miles daily, returning with empty baskets, i.e., for a lead of 1 furlong to make 48 trips.

13. The practice in regard to fining is not uniform, nor have any special rules been made on the subject either by Government or the Superintending Engineer.

At Karkhala and in some other subdivisions fines are limited to the amount that will reduce the wage to one pice below the D wage, or to the penal wage. In others less than the D wage is not given, but in others fines are levied in proportion to the deficiency of the work, though only under the special order of the Engineer or subordinate in charge of the work when this would reduce the amount paid below penal wage. In the muster rolls and day-books that I examined on the works I found no case of fine that would have the effect of reducing the pay below this limit or even below the D wage. Much is left to the discretion of the Engineer or upper subordinate in charge of the work, but the general tendency appeared to be to avoid fining as much as possible, and to meet repeated deficiencies in outturn by transfer to a lower class.

14. It is the practice at almost all works to make payments only once a week, though in some cases payments are made bi-weekly. Fines are therefore im-

posed with reference to the deficiency on six days' work, and not on that for a single day, which the worker has the opportunity of making up on the following day. The wage rate for each class is communicated to the officer in charge by the tahsildar from time to time, in accordance with the rise or fall of market prices, and is worked out to the nearest pie. The amount due for the week or half-week is also calculated to the nearest pie, but the amount actually fixed is to the nearest pice. This practice of making payments only once a week is at variance with article 82 of the Bombay Code, but it is urged that more frequent payments would be a very heavy tax on the slender establishment, and that the people themselves are quite contented with a single payment in the week. I reserve an opinion on this point until I have seen what is the practice in other provinces.

15. To return to the question of breaking metal. It is obvious that the system referred to in paragraph 11 *supra* of giving a minimum wage and imposing a minimum task must result on very high working rates, although if the value of the outturn be disregarded, as it may be in works of an almost useless character, it reduces the cost of relief to a minimum. The effect of a low task on the rates is well shown from some figures given me by the Executive Engineer, Khandeish Division. With jowari at 16 lbs. to the rupee, the cost of collecting and breaking 100 cubic feet of metalling would be—

	Rs.	A.	P.
With all workers in A class and doing a full task ...	5	2	10
Workers in A class, but doing only half task, and paid down to D wage ...	6	15	4
All workers in B class and doing full B task ...	5	11	6
Workers in B class, but doing only half task, and paid down to D wage ...	9	4	6
All workers in C class and doing full C task ...	6	15	2
Workers in C but doing half task, and paid down to D wage ...	12	1	8

The normal cost of 100 cubic feet metalling in this district is from Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 3-12-0 only. It is thus clearly shown how the effect of a reduction in class is to increase the working rate, and how this is further increased by short tasks, as long as prices are not proportional to the deficiency but are limited by the minimum wage.

16. The following figures show the actual cost of collecting and breaking Cost of collecting metalling, under Famine relief system. up 1,036,849 cubic feet of metalling, at eight different works in the Khandeish District:—

Numbers of workers employed ...	...	...	876,234
Workers' wages, including Sunday wage ...	...	Rs.	83,582
Average wage per unit ...	...	"	0-1-6
Wages per 100 cubic feet outturned ...	...	"	8-0-6
	Rs.	Per 100 cubic feet.	Per cent of wages.
Charges for establishment ...	4,240	0-41	5-01
Charges for tools and plant ...	1,486	0-14	1-78
Gratuitous relief ...	14,906	1-44	17-83
Water-supply ...	1,253	0-12	1-50
Hutting ...	2,962	0-29	3-56
Total incidental charges ...	24,847	2-40	29-68
Labour charges, as above ...	83,582	8-03	100-00
GRAND TOTAL ...	1,08,429	10-43	129-68

The normal cost being from Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 3-12-0, the ultimate cost may be taken at merely three times the real value of the work, though the rate would be reduced to Rs. 9 if gratuitous relief were excluded. The number of dependants was 319,557, so that the average cost per head was about eight pie. These appears to be fairly typical figures of the cost of collecting road-metalling in this Presidency.

17. As regards earthwork the Code system of classification is systematically adopted. The gangs comprise workers of all four classes, but the D class are not tasked, but employed on clod-breaking and other miscellaneous work. The task for the gang is the task set for the diggers, who are selected from the A and B male members of the gang, each being assigned a digging task in accordance with the excavation tasks in the well arranged table of standard tasks, given in Appendix III of the Bombay Code, the task for the gang being the aggregate of the tasks given to the individual diggers. The carriers for the gang are then selected from the three classes A, B and C, the carrying task of each individual

being the task of his class for the given lift and lead, as found in the same table, the number of carriers being so arranged that their aggregate task shall equal or nearly equal the tasks set for the diggers. No great difficulty has been found in this Presidency in thus equating the tasks of the diggers and carriers, as in the large tank and railway works that have now been started there is plenty of work for the carriers. I was told that the standard tasks laid down in the Code had been found appropriate, and were regularly worked to, but I was unable to test this on the works visited. At Shetphul, where the gangs appeared to have been very carefully constituted, the principal work in progress was the excavation of rock in the trench under the dam, which was of a character that could not be fairly or accurately tasked, but the workers were all working actively and energetically and were kept very fully employed. All arrangements at this work were excellent. At the two other large earthworks visited the gangs were being reconstituted, and were not in full working order. On my return from Madras however I met Mr. Joyner at Sholapur, and obtained from him a copy of the gang register for three days ending 16th July on the Kuradvadi section of the Barsi-Pandharpur Light Railway, from which I have extracted the following results:—

Excavation.

Kind of soil.	No. of gangs	No. of diggers.	Task per digger.	Full task for gang.	Task actually set.	Task done.	Remarks
				c. foot	c. foot	c. foot	
Black soil ...	5	26A 1B	120 90	2,730	2,765	2,455	1 gang on 15th and 4 on 16th.
Soft muram ...	5	30A	80	2,400	2,392	2,108	3 gangs on 14th and 2 on 15th.
Average muram ...	2	16A	60	960	964	798	1 gang on 15th and 1 on 16th.
Total ...	12	73	...	6,090	6,121	5,361	

The number of diggers are the total number employed for a day; thus for soft muram the actual number of diggers in each gang was 6. The deficiency in tasks was not followed by fine as it occurred mainly on the 15th when work was interrupted by rain, but partly on 16th, which was a pay day. On the 14th full tasks were accomplished. I understand from Mr. Joyner that the diggers' tasks are easily worked up to and are considered light and that they have been recently increased on some works by about 30 per cent., so that the Code A tasks are now taken from B workers.

Carrying.

The total number of carriers employed for the removal of the 6,090 cubic feet which formed the full task of these gangs was 590 against 73 diggers. The average lead was 45 feet, with a lift not exceeding 5 feet. Details are as follows:—

					A child units.
A { Men ...	...	...	...	87	261
Women ...	...	...	...	176	352
B { Men ...	...	...	...	72	162
Women ...	...	...	...	58	87
C { Men ...	...	...	...	58	82
Women ...	...	...	...	48	48
Small children ...	...	...	...	91	68
TOTAL				590	1,060

No D workers are shown in the register, as they are untasked. Mr. Joyner says they are very few in number, and were perhaps mustered in separate gangs. It will be seen that all other classes are represented, and the large proportion of A class among the carriers and especially of A women is remarkable. These were all given and performed an A task, but it may be doubted whether so many were really able-bodied professional labourers.

We may assume that the children employed were on the average of the B class, and that, in accordance with the notes in the last column of Appendix III of the Bombay Code, they may be regarded as equal to three-fourths of a child unit of the A class. The total number of child units of A class will then be, as shown above, 1,060, and the quantity to be carried per unit becomes $\frac{5,75}{1,060} = 5.42$ cubic feet for a lead of 450 cubic feet. The task for an A male unit will have been three times this, or 17.25 cubic feet, but according to Appendix III the standard task for this lead is 22 cubic feet. The carriers therefore appear to have been undertasked by over 20 per cent. according to the standard task table, which is probably due to the omission of fractions in the tabular tasks, and in the tasks for intermediate leads derived from the tables, and also to minimum task, assumed in the Code. I consider, however, that the standard task is itself much too light, for 22 cubic feet carried 450 feet is equivalent to 99 cubic feet with a lead of 100 feet, and at this rate 10 able-bodied professional carriers would be required per 1,000 cubic feet for every 100 feet of lead, the normal rate for which in Bombay does not, I believe, exceed 8 or 10 annas. As regards carrying therefore the standard task table certainly appears to be light.

The wages paid to the workers in this case, calculated on the basis of 20 lbs. grain to the rupee, amounted to Rs. 72.3-2 for 5,361 cubic feet of earth-work, or about Rs. 13.5 per 1,000. The normal cost at ordinary contract rates would probably not exceed Rs. 6 per 1,000.

18. The figures given in the preceding paragraph for earthwork on the Barsi-Pandharpur Light Railway indicate that out of a strength of 663 workers no less than 335, or nearly 50 per cent., were of the A class. This is, however, quite exceptional, and I have already suggested that the classification was incorrect. The following table shows the proportions of the various classes for the whole Presidency, and for the Sholapur and Ahmednagar Districts on the 29th May 1897 as reported in monthly famine statement E:—

Class.	Bombay Pre- sidency.	Sholapur District.	Ahmednagar District.	PERCENTAGES.		
				Bombay.	Sholapur.	Ahmednagar.
A ...	22,544	11,568	1,655	933	14.08	4.55
B ...	56,344	41,221	2,722	32.86	48.72	7.48
C ...	45,830	8,548	16,058	18.96	10.10	44.11
D ...	15,983	948	8,543	6.61	1.12	23.47
Children ...	60,956	21,974	7,435	25.24	85.00	20.41
Total	241,657	84,529	36,413	100.00	100.00	100.00

It will be seen that more than half of the A workers in Bombay Presidency are in the Sholapur District (in which the railway lies), but that even here the A workers are but 14 per cent. of the whole, while for whole Presidency they are but little over 9 per cent. On the other hand the bulk of the workers in the Ahmednagar District are of the C or D class. I have already stated that in the Belapur subdivision the whole of the workers were put into the D class, while the general complaint in this district was that people could not be induced to do more than

a minimum task and were quite content to do it for a minimum wage. The tendency has therefore been to avoid fining by putting the workers into the lower classes, which must be the explanation of the larger proportions of C and D classes in this district.

The table shows that over the whole Presidency 42.9 per cent. of the workers were in classes A and B, but it does not follow that this percentage received the A or B wage, as in the event of short tasks the earnings of several will have been reduced to the C or D wage. In Ahmednagar the A and B classes constituted together only 12 per cent. of the whole.

19. These figures are interesting with reference to the recent contention of the Government of Madras that the C and D wages are inadequate for the proper support of labourers who do any work at all. When at Munmar I asked the opinion of Dr. Clarkson, the Sanitary Commissioner, on this point, and showed him the representation of the Madras Government, as contained in their letter No. 296, dated 4th May 1897. I especially mentioned to him how large a proportion of the labourers in the Ahmednagar District were receiving only C or D wages, though I was not at the time aware that the proportion was as high as shown by the figures given in the preceding paragraph. Dr. Clarkson in reply said that he was quite unable to say what were the conditions in Madras, but that as far as the Bombay Presidency was concerned, he remarked emphatically that there had been nothing to indicate to him or his officers that the wages given were insufficient, or that there had been any deterioration in the physical condition of the coolies who came to the works, either in Ahmednagar District or elsewhere. A similar opinion had been previously expressed to me by Dr. Standish, Medical Officer in the Sholapur District, whom I met at the Barsi Road, and who had had frequent opportunities of examining the gangs in that district. Both officers were careful to state that they did not know to what extent the people were dependent on the works, or whether they had any supplementary resources of their own.

20. Another point connected with the remuneration of labour is the extent to which the relief works interfere with the supply of labour to private employers. The Executive Engineer of Khandeish informed me that Mr. Middleton, Agent of Messrs. Purves & Co., who have taken the contract for the Bombay and Baroda section of the Tapti Valley Railway, had offered to take as many men as would go to him, at the following rates:—

Excavation and short lead—	...	...	...	5 annas per hundred,
Earth	...	...	...	6 " " "
Soft mura.n...	...	...	...	" " "

increasing by 1 anna per hundred for every 5 feet of lift.

The labourers on the Takhri Road works were asked to go at these rates and refused. The relief works were then closed and out of 2,000 only 800 went to the railway, the remainder going to their homes. The distance to the railway works was 30 or 40 miles, but this was not further from their homes than the Takhri works had been. The Executive Engineer offered to pay expenses in transit for all the men who went.

Just as I was leaving Munmad, Mr. Stewart, Assistant Collector, Nasik, told me that the District Engineer at Munmar had complained to him that his men left the railway for the relief works, but that he had obtained no particulars from him.

Mr. Ralph, the subdivisional officer at Belawal, informed me that 1,053 men had left his works for the Godavari Valley Railway, of whom 500 returned to the works saying that they received only 3 annas per hundred cubic feet from the petty contractors who were paid 5 annas, and that women and children were not allowed to work. This was but the statement of the men who returned which has not been verified, and must be taken for what it is worth.

I do not propose to discuss this question very fully at present, but it appears almost unavoidable that relief works should be more attractive than railway work when prices are ruling very high. Railway contractors do not raise their rates with every rise in the price of grain, and are hardly disposed to raise them at all in

seasons of dearth, when the demand for employment is keen. Nor will they give half an anna a day for every non-working child that accompanies its parents to the work, or 1 anna a day to every child over seven years of age who can carry a basket, or a living wage for every infirm dependant adult. Nor will they make payments for work that has not been done, in consideration of unavoidable interruptions, such as rainfall, or for the sake of giving rest for one day in seven. If relief works were carried out by piece-work it might be possible to compare the remuneration of labourers employed on such works and of those serving under private contractors, but at present such a comparison is hardly possible.

21. All relief works in Bombay have been carried out on the Code system of task work, but shortly before my tour commenced the Local Government had called for the opinions of the Public Works officers on a proposal to introduce piece-work, in general accordance with the principles laid down in North-Western Provinces, in the Resolution No. 753, dated 16th March 1897.

These opinions had not been formulated at the time of my visit, but all the Public Works officers with whom I discussed the subject were in favour of the introduction of a system of gang piece-work, in which no intermediate contractor should be employed, but each gang should earn according to the amount of work done. The general opinion also was that there should be a maximum limit to the payments to be made to individuals, though no suggestions were made as to the most convenient practical method of imposing this limit. I understand that since I left the Bombay Presidency piece-work has been actually introduced in some works. Mr. Joyner has informed me that the local Public Works and civil officers consider it a success, but that sufficient experience has not yet been gained to justify a confident opinion, and he is himself doubtful whether many of the workers succeed in earning a living wage at the rates in force, though it is probable that after a time they may succeed in doing so.

22. The relief operations in the Central Division are almost entirely in the charge of the Public Works officers. In Sholapur District an average number of 13,080 workers attended works in charge of the Civil Department during the month of December last, while the number on Public Works was 26,145 only. But the principal civil works were transferred to the Public Works, so that in January the numbers were 848 and 42,340 for Civil and Public Works respectively, while after the month of March there were no civil works open in this district. In the Khandeish District however the average daily number on Civil Department relief works in month of June stood at 10,577 against 16,882 on Public Works, the numbers standing at 3,999 and 13,595 respectively in May, after some works had been transferred to the Public Works Department. In Nasik District no civil relief works have been opened at all, and in Ahmednagar the maximum average daily numbers have been only 57 and 1,727 in the months of March and May respectively. Except in Khandeish therefore the works under civil officers have been very few and unimportant, and have been restricted to places where it was inconvenient to place them under the charge of the Public Works Department. In this respect the practice differs greatly from that which obtained in the famine of 1876-77 as shown by the following figures for Central Division.

Department.	AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE DURING EIGHT MONTHS ENDING	
	June 30th, 1877.	June 26th, 1897.
Civil Department	42,693	6,823
Public Works Department	99,513	129,301
Total on relief works	142,206	136,124
Dependants on works	9,191	56,162
Grand Total	151,397	192,286

23. The foregoing table shows that the total numbers of workers on relief works in 1896-97 did not differ greatly from those in 1876-77, but that there was a considerable increase in the number of dependants.

Prices appear however to have been much lower in the latter than in the former year, the average for the seven months ending May 1877 and May 1897 being approximately as follows:—

District.	AVERAGE NUMBER OF lbs. SOLD FOR ONE RUPEE DURING SEVEN MONTHS ENDING	
	31st May 1877.	31st May 1897.
Poona	21.5	17.6
Sholapur	19.0	19.0
Ahmednagar	24.9	19.1
Nasik	28.4	17.4
Khandeish	29.7	17.6

24. The larger relief works in the Presidency are placed in charge of the special civil officers whose duties are defined in sections 90 and 92 of the Bombay Code. They are appointed by the Collector and are usually natives holding subordinate appointments in the Revenue Department, such as clerks, or candidates for appointments of a higher class. With reference to the direction in section 90 in only one of the works visited did I find that the special civil officer in charge was invested with summary powers as a Magistrate, and he possessed them before being posted to charge of relief works. The Collectors with whom I discussed this subject said that they did not consider that such powers were necessary, and that they had declined to recommend their being granted. As far as I could hear, these special civil officers were performing the duties required of them satisfactorily, though many of them had been very helpless in the first instance, and until they had been taught their work by the Public Works officer or subordinate attached to the work. I found however a very strong feeling among all the Public Works officers regarding the position which these men occupied on the relief works under their control. It was said that as they were appointed and dismissed by the Collector they considered themselves independent of the Public Works Department, and were not very ready to recognise the authority of the officers of that department. They were frequently inclined to be obstructive, and either on this account or from sheer timidity, would often hesitate to comply with orders from officers responsible for the works until they had communicated with the Collector. I did not consider it very necessary to enquire very closely into these complaints, though they were made in every district that I visited, but it seems very natural that difficulties of this kind should arise when works are put in the nominal charge of men of this class, who, however well fitted they may be for the special duties assigned to them in section 92 of the Bombay Code, have had no experience in the organisation and management of large bodies of labourers. Many of the works are under the immediate supervision of Assistant Engineers of the Public Works Department, or experienced upper subordinates of very good position, and the co-ordinate or independent position, and authority which is given to or assumed by the special civil officer is not unnaturally resented by them. I need not do more than note here the dissatisfaction which is felt on this point, as it is but part of the more general question of the responsibilities and authority of the Civil and Public Works officers respectively in connection with the execution of famine relief works.

25. As part of the same question may be noted the strong objection expressed by the Public Works officers to the whole of section 38 of the Code, with the exception perhaps of clause (d), especially when this is read in connection with section 39 (a) under which the Executive Engineer of the district is held jointly responsible with the Collector that relief works do not fail in their object. It was urged by all, from the Chief Engineer downwards, that when once large relief works have been started the responsibility for these being carried in accordance with the instructions and spirit of the Famine Code should rest entirely with the Public Works Department, and that the legitimate authority and influence of the Collector in respect of such works could be effectively exercised without subordinating all the officers of the Public Works staff to officers of somewhat corresponding rank in the Civil Department. Here again I will reserve my opinion for the present, and will only observe that although the anomalous and not very clearly defined position in which Public Works officers are placed by the language of the Code has undoubtedly in some cases produced a good deal of friction and unpleasantness, this has on the whole been much less than might have been anticipated—a result which is due to the good sense of the Civil and Public Works officers concerned. The Famine Code, in section 38 (c) and elsewhere ignores the existence of the Superintending Engineer, but in practice the whole work of designing relief works and controlling their management is entrusted by Government to the Superintending Engineer, and all questions in dispute between Collectors and Executive Engineers are as a rule settled by him and the Commissioner, working in harmonious co-operation. Subject to this control, the Collectors appear to have been generally willing to give the Executive Engineers a free hand in the management of relief works, and to have abstained from vexatious interference, while the Engineers on the other hand have endeavoured as far as possible in all cases to meet the views and wishes of the Collector.

In the lower ranks the friction has probably been greater, but however indefinite or unsatisfactory may be the language of the Code in defining the relations between the Civil and Public Works officer, I think that in practice each has been content to leave to the other the duties that naturally belong to him, and that both have worked together, shoulder to shoulder, in this famine campaign. In thus bearing testimony to the good spirit and feeling that has prevailed generally between the two departments, I do not mean to say that the provisions of the Code bearing on this relation are not in need of amendment. That is a question to be considered at leisure later on, but I think it may fairly be said that this cordial co-operation has been attained, not in consequence, but in spite of the instructions that are contained in section 38 and other parts of the Code, and by the mutual and creditable forbearance of the officers concerned in both departments.

26. The famine has naturally put a great strain on the Public Works Department in the matter of establishment all over India. In Bombay the stress as regards engineers has been met by restricting leave and by transferring a few officers from Sind, where expenditure has been as far as possible curtailed, to the Deccan, and the services of two Royal Engineer officers have also been placed at the disposal of the Government of Bombay. What is most wanted here as elsewhere for relief operations is an increase in the staff of reliable and experienced upper subordinates. The best of these would be employed in subdivisions, in the superintendence of the works on two or more charges, while others would be placed in subordinate charge. Five Upper and three Lower Subordinates have been transferred from the Military Works Department to the Bombay Public Works Department, but when the services of such men are required in all the famine-stricken provinces in India much assistance cannot be relied on from this source, and Bombay is the only Province to which such transfers have been made. The Chief Engineer also informed me that great difficulty had been experienced in obtaining cashiers or paymasters for the various charges. These officials are required to furnish security to the amount of Rs. 1,000, but the duration of the appointments is so uncertain and the work is so hard and unpopular that it is difficult to get men of the class that can furnish this security to come forward.

27. It has been my object in these notes to direct attention to those features in the management of relief works in this Presidency which it seems desirable to compare with the practice in other provinces, and I have abstained as far as possible from making any criticisms or recommendations. In conclusion, however, I must observe that the relief works appear to have been conducted in as close conformity with the provisions of the Famine Code as has been possible. It is true that in many matters of detail the practice varies in almost every Public Works Division, if not in every subdivision or large charge. This is partly due to the Superintending Engineer or principal controlling officer having been himself very fully employed in the preparation of new projects, and partly to his own desire to give as much freedom as possible to his divisional officers, leaving each to work out for himself what appeared to be the best method. But now that this varied experience has been gained and large works have been started at which labour will be concentrated, greater uniformity on the most approved lines will be possible. The most noticeable feature in the administration of these relief works has been the gradual substitution of large and useful for scattered and almost useless works, and the success even at this season of the year which is attending the efforts to draw the people to these larger works, and to make them reside on them. It is indeed possible that the works have been too popular, and that for nine months many attended them who were not absolutely without other resources. But there must be an intermediate stage between that in which relief works are altogether unnecessary, and that in which a large section of the population is entirely dependent on them, nor can there be any objection on principle to people whose own resources are too slender to entirely support themselves and their families supplementing them by attendance on relief works. The difficulty is to draw the line that will admit these, but exclude those who are really capable of supporting themselves. The first duty of maintaining the health and vitality of the labouring classes has been successfully accomplished in the face of the evils of cholera and plague which threatened on every side, and if the works were at first too popular, so as to attract many who might have kept away from them, the mistake has been on the right side and the Local Government has been prompt to rectify it by the various measures that have been taken, and especially by the arrangements that have been made for opening large and beneficial works which will give employment to those who really need it, but are not likely to attract those who do not. It may safely be said that if unfortunately the present distress should be prolonged the Bombay Government are, as far as relief works are concerned, in a better position to satisfactorily meet it now than they were when operations commenced, whether regard be paid to the intrinsic utility of the works to be executed, or their efficiency as a means of famine relief.

DATED SIMLA;

26th July 1897.

T. HIGHAM.

Read again 758 and 759

6-9-97

Read c. no. 8578

40

1. The Hon. Secy. Govt. of India

2. The Hon. Secy. H. C. S. & C. S.

3. Mr. The Comptroller

For O. C. Press No. 893 of 26th Oct. 1897

Comd to the Famine Comm.
2. the question ~~discussed~~ ^{dealt with} in
paras 2 & 3 of the letter from
the Govt of India should be
fully discussed in the final
famine report

JG.
7/10/97

Printed in
7/10/97

7/10/97

The Famine Comm. 28.10.97

28
6-10-97

50/20.5-11.97

Wm. H. H. H.

Printed in
in C. S.
Comm.

Government {1897} of Madras.
REVENUE.

Recd.

Enclosures

1897.

Regd.

Spare copies

G.O., No. 893, 26th October 1897.

OCTOBER.

Distance Allowance.

Letter from the Government of India making certain observations in regard to grant of —
to relief workers in this Presidency, communicated to the Famine Commissioner, and the question
referred to ordered to be fully discussed in the final famine report.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—again G.O., No. 758, Revenue, dated 6th September 1897.

ABSTRACT.—Ordering that a letter be despatched to the Government of India regarding the measures taken for closing relief operations in the Madras Presidency.

READ—again letter No. 759, dated 6th September 1897.

ABSTRACT.—Furnishing the Government of India with copies of G.Os., Nos. 473 and 519 of 1897 on the subject of the measures taken to restrict relief operations in this Presidency, and stating that further orders on the subject issued by this Government will be forwarded in due course.

READ—also the following letter from T. W. HOLDERNESS, Esq., I.C.S., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India (Department of Revenue and Agriculture—Famine), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Department, dated Simla, the 24th September 1897, No. 3067—203-8-F. :—

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 759, dated the 6th September 1897, replying to the inquiry as to whether any measures were being taken by the Government of Madras to bring famine-relief operations in the Madras Presidency to a close at an early date.

2. The Government of India are glad to observe from the correspondence accompanying your letter that the allowance made to relief workers for "distance" has been reduced, as it is clear from the letter from the Collector of Bellary, dated the 14th June 1897, to the address of the Board of Revenue that this reduction, along with others, had so diminished the task that it did not fulfil, as it should, its special object and design of testing necessity. The allowance is not made in any other part of the country where relief operations are in progress, nor is it authorised by any Famine Code. This departure from general practice might be perfectly justified, but the Government of India are impressed by the remarks of Mr. Higham in paragraph 9 of his note on the Madras relief works. It is clearly his opinion that the concession is liable in practice to be laxly, if not fraudulently, worked by the subordinate officials immediately in charge of the relief works. Again, it is a common custom in other parts of India when shelter is not provided on the works for the workers, instead of returning home every night, to put up in villages in the vicinity of the works. But, as the "distance allowance" is granted with sole reference to the distance of the workers' permanent place of residence from the works, the persons described above would become entitled to it, though they obviously do not require any such diminution of the hours of labour.

3. The Government of India observe that in the Madras Government order of the 30th March 1897, a copy of which was received with your letter, No. 661, dated the 2nd August 1897, authorising the "distance allowance," it was laid down that shelter should, as a rule, be provided at or near the relief works; and that the distance

allowance should only operate when this had not been done. The Government of India think it unfortunate that this instruction to make residence on the works the rule for persons coming from a distance, and a "distance allowance" the exception, has not been observed, and that the Famine Commissioner in this matter has been influenced by the belief that persons in real need of relief will not resort to a relief work, unless they can return every night to their homes. It has been conclusively proved by the experience of other provinces that though the residential test keeps off from the works persons who are not in actual distress, it does not thus operate when real distress prevails. In the Bombay Presidency, as will appear from the inspection notes of Mr. Higham on the relief works in Bombay, the principle of concentrating relief-labour on a few large works, of providing hutting accommodation, and of refusing a "distance" allowance, has been systematically followed throughout the present scarcity with complete success. It may not be possible in the Madras Presidency, owing to the absence of large projects, to concentrate labour to the extent to which this has been done in Bombay; but the Governor-General in Council considers that the policy is the right one, that, instead of giving them a distance allowance, the people should be indirectly encouraged to reside on the works when their homes are at a distance.

4. I am to enclose a copy of the inspection notes referred to in the preceding paragraph for the information of the Governor in Council.

ORDER—No. 893, Revenue, dated 26th October 1897.

Miscellaneous.

Communicated to the Famine Commissioner.

2. The question dealt with in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the letter from the Government of India should be fully discussed in the final famine report.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. STOKES,
Secretary to Government.

To the Famine Commissioner,
with one enclosure to be returned.

Encl. Shaik Karim.

50 Copies.