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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Cons. 19-5-57

G.O. No. 947 Press / Mis.

54-55

Dated 11—5— 1857.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

5/7/37

/B

Fort Saint George, Public Works Consultation of 19th May 1857.

No. 54. Read the following letter from Colonel C. E. FABER, Chief Engineer; to H. FORBES, Esq., Acting Secretary to Government, dated 1st May 1857, No. 4.

SIR,

Having been directed in para. 5, of Extract Minutes of Consultation No. 787, of the 25th Ultimo "to specially report to Government the measures I may have adopted to enquire into "the unsatisfactory state of the work connected with the improvement of the Tadapully and "Arakenkottah channels and the remedies that may be necessary." I do myself the honor to observe that in the Extract Proceeding 11,309 of the 25th March 1857, it is particularly pointed out in para. 2, that the several instructions called for by the Superintending Engineer's observations would be duly transmitted upon the return of Major Lawford's letter from the Government office, to which in accordance with usage, it had been forwarded in original for the prompt information of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, and for His Lordship's orders, the very day of its receipt in the Central office.

2. According to para. 5 Section 2 of the Code of Regulations published with Extract Minutes of Consultation 989, of the 17th June 1856, the Superintending Engineer Southern Circle was himself in possession of every power belonging to the Head of the Department, and though it may be true that the latter as stated by Major Lawford is less than that exercised by Superintending Engineers in the other Presidencies, it would seem nevertheless that the District Engineer would receive more complete instructions from Major Lawford than could easily be prepared in the Central office. I delegated to the Superintending Engineer on his departure all the authority inherent in my own office, and as a transcript of his letter No. 94 of the 18th March was sent direct to Captain Francis, there seemed no urgent call for any particular additional injunctions from myself; as I had and have every confidence in the District Engineer turning the valuable observations of his professional superior to immediate account.

3. Brief as the hasty notice necessarily was in my Proceedings of the 25th March (No. 11,309,) I much regret now that I have perused para. 4 of the orders of Government under acknowledgement, that I did not record my most unreserved and unqualified dissent from the Superintending Engineer's recommendations of every Officer in the Coimbatore District being made to take what Major Lawford terms "his tour of duty in the low country."

4. This counsel is diametrically opposed to what I have always considered should be one of the fundamental practical rules of the Department of Public Works; and to my judgment after continual reflexion on the subject, it carries its condemnation on its face.

5. According to my humble notion of administering the Department of Public Works, there is no principle more obvious or that more commends itself to deliberate approval than the avoidance of *all change*, from the highest to even the subordinate members of the Department, Irrespective of general qualifications and professional ability, the services of Officers acquire an additional value from their thorough acquaintance with their own peculiar duties, from their familiar knowledge of localities and capabilities, and their intimate acquaintance both with individual works, and with the fiscal authorities and people of their ranges.

6. I have regarded such *special*, apart from general and departmental, efficiency, as a kind of Government capital to be used with thrift and economy, because it represents in point of fact acquirements only to be obtained at the cost of much labor and time, which are public money. Hence I am of opinion that, there are no possessions which practically should be husbanded with greater frugality than an Officer's close acquaintance with the works, the population, the wants, circumstances and language of his District. Thus as a general rule all changes are to be avoided because something, whether much or little, must always be sacrificed which the status in quo would have preserved. Commonly also, the loss is two-fold, the departing Officer takes with him a specialty of qualification useless elsewhere, and the new arrival has similarly to pass weeks or months in his calling before he is relatively to his new charge what he was to his old. I may adduce as an exemplification of the value of local experience the case of Major Horsely whose long service of 13 years in the 8th Division had made him so intimately acquainted with every nook and corner of his two Collectorates that his time was economized to the utmost as knowing exactly what was wanted, and where, so as to go only where benefit would result from his going.

7. But if because a District comprizes a sanatarium, a rule or pratice is to be laid down of a periodical rotation of Officers, not only is this vicious element of change introduced, but all those feelings of direct personal interest in progress, and of watching improvements from their conception to fulfilment which are so auxiliary to industry and zeal, are destroyed. Each officer is by the Superintending Engineer's system to be periodically transferred from one charge to another.

8. I trust that the Right Honorable the Governor in Council will discourage any such observance, and this the more, that the duties belonging to the Neilgherry Range of the Coimbatore District demand peculiar and also unusual qualifications even to rarity, and which when found, instead of being laid aside that their possessor should "prove his general fitness for the Department, as well as give that support to the District Engineer which is absolutely necessary, and which only an officer in good health can afford" should be fostered and developed for the benefit of the public service and of Government.

9. Now that Lieutenant Shaw Stewart has been preferred to a more elevated position, it cannot be improper to consider his case, and whilst admitting the ability with which he worked out with signal success the trace from Ootacamund to the Beypore river in Malabar on the general instructions of the District Engineer, to enquire what would have been the wisdom, or what the fate of the project, if by the time he had reached Pykum or Neddiwuttum, Captain Francis had been obliged to order his intelligent executive to Coimbatore, in order that Captain Shand might proceed with the alignment of the new road.

10. I am of opinion that if Lieutenant S. Stewart had remained on the Hills for ten years instead of two, and that if all the executives in the Coimbatore District had fallen sick, it would have clearly been Captain Francis's duty to have kept Lieutenant Stewart to a post for which he was eminently fitted, and to have desired the various invalids to apply in the usual manner (as Lieutenant Chrystie had done) for medical permission to proceed to a cooler climate.

11. Finally, if the principle enunciated by Major Lawford be affirmed, then just as each member of the Department in the low country of Coimbatore is to claim periodical employment on the Hills, so each member in other District might claim removal to Coimbatore, that he also in time might obtain an assignment of the sanatarium. I do myself the honor to recommend that no restriction whatever be placed on the District Engineer of Coimbatore, but that he be left unfettered to employ his executives as he may consider best for the efficiency of his Department and for the interests of the public service.

No. 55. ORDER THEREON, No. 917; dated 16th May 1857.

With reference to the remarks made by the Chief Engineer in paras. 3 to 11 in the letter above recorded, the Government would observe that they have passed no order on Major Lawford's recommendation that the officers of the Public Works Department in Coimbatore should each take their tour of duty in the low country.

2. The Government have called for a report from the District Engineer of the time spent on the Hills by each officer in the past year, and the necessity for his stay, and on its receipt they will take the Chief Engineer's present remarks into consideration.

(Signed) H. FORBES,
Acting Secretary to Government.

Central Office of Public Works.
Fort Saint George, 1st May, 1857.

Letter No. 14.

From, Colonel [illegible]
The Chief Engineer,
To, [illegible]
The Secretary to Government.
Public Works Department.
Dated [illegible] 14.

Sir,

Having been directed in para 5 of Extract Minutes of Consultation No. 787 of the 25th Ultimo "to specially report to Government "the measures I may have adopted to enquire into "the unsatisfactory state of the work connected "with the improvement of the Tadapully and "Arakentottah channels and the remedies that "may be necessary." I do myself the honor to observe that in the Extract Proceedings 1309 of the 25th March 1857, it is particularly pointed out in para 2, that the several instructions called for by the Superintending Engineer's observations would be duly transmitted upon the return of Major Lawford's letter from the Government Office, to which in accordance with usage, it had been forwarded in original for the prompt information of the Right Honorable

× Returned to the Chief Engineer's Office with G.O. No. 787 of 25th Ultimo.

Honorable the Governor in Council, and for His Lordship's orders, the very day of its receipt in the Central Office.

2. According to para 5 Section 2 of the Code of Regulations published with Extract Minutes of Consultation 989 of the 17th June 1856, the Superintending Engineer Southern Circle was himself in possession of every power belonging to the Head of the Department, and though it may be true that the latter as stated by Major Lawford is less than that exercised by Superintending Engineers in the other Presidencies, it would seem nevertheless that the District Engineer would receive more complete instructions from Major Lawford than could easily be prepared in the Central Office - I delegated to the Superintending Engineer on his departure all the authority inherent in my own office, and as a transcript of his letter No. 94 of the 18th March was sent direct to Captain Francis, there seemed no urgent call for any particular additional injunctions from myself; as I had and have every confidence in the District Engineer turning the valuable observations of his professional superior to immediate account.

Brief

3. Brief as the hasty notice necessarily was in my Proceedings of the 25th March (No. 1,309) I much regret now that I have perused para 4 of the orders of Government under acknowledgement, that I did not record my most unreserved and unqualified dissent from the Superintending Engineer's recommendations of every Officer in the Coimbatore District being made to take what Major Lawford terms "his tour of duty in the low country."

4. This counsel is diametrically opposed to what I have always considered should be one of the fundamental practical rules of the Department of Public Works, and to my judgment after continual reflexion on the subject, it carries its condemnation on its face.

5. According to my humble notion of administering the Department of Public Works, there is no principle more obvious or that more commends itself to deliberate approval than the avoidance of all change, from the highest to even the subordinate members of the Department. Irrespective of general qualifications and professional ability, the services of officers acquire an additional value from their thorough acquaintance with their own peculiar duties, from their familiar

Knowledge

knowledge of localities and capabilities, and their intimate acquaintance both with individual works, and with the fiscal authorities and people of their ranges.

6. I have regarded such special, apart from general and departmental, efficiency as a kind of Government capital to be used with thrift and economy, because it represents in point of fact acquirements only to be obtained at the cost of much labor and time, which are public money. Hence I am of opinion, that there are no possessions which practically should be husbanded with greater frugality than an Officer's close acquaintance with the works, the population, the wants, circumstances and language of his District. Thus as a general rule all changes are to be avoided because something, whether much or little, must always be sacrificed which the status in quo would have preserved. Commonly also, the loss is two-fold, the departing officer takes with him a specialty of qualification useless elsewhere, and the new arrival has similarly to pass weeks or months in his calling before he is relatively to his new charge what he was to his old. I may adduce

adduce as an exemplification of the value of local experience the case of Major Horsley whose long service of 13 years in the 8th Division had made him so intimately acquainted with every nook and corner of his two collectorates that his time was economized to the utmost as knowing exactly what was wanted, and where, so as to go only where benefit would result from his going.

7. But if because a District comprizes a sanatarium, a rule or a practise is to be laid down of a periodical rotation of officers, not only is this vicious element of change introduced, but all those feelings of direct personal interest in progress, and of watching improvements from their conception to fulfilment which are so auxiliary to industry and zeal, are destroyed. Each officer is by the Superintending Engineer's system to be periodically transferred from one charge to another.

8. I trust that the Right Honorable the Governor in Council will discourage any such observance, and this the more, that the duties belonging to the Neilgherry Range of the Coimbatore District demand peculiar and also unusual qualifications even to rarity,

and

and which when found, instead of being laid aside that their possessor should "prove his general fitness for the Department, as well as "give that support to the District Engineer which "is absolutely necessary, and which only an "officer in good health can afford" should be fostered and developed for the benefit of the public service and of Government.

9. Now that Lieutenant Shaw Stewart has been preferred to a more elevated position, it cannot be improper to consider his case, and whilst admitting the ability with which he worked out with signal success the trace from Cotacamund to the Beypore river in Malabar on the general instructions of the District Engineer, to enquire what would have been the wisdom, or what the fate of the Project, if by the time he had reached Pykara or Neddiwuttum, Captain Francis had been obliged to order his intelligent Executive to Coimbatore, in order that Captain Shand might proceed with the alignment of the new road.

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I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your Most Obedient Servant
A. Cotton Colonel
Chief Engineer

Central Office of P.W.
Fort Saint George
1st May — 1857.

Comp.d Shaw.

Pub: Works Dep.t

118

№ 947.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation

Under date the 16th May 1857.

Read the following

letter from the Chief Engineer.

(Here enter 1st May 1857 № 54.)

With reference to the

remarks made by the

Chief Engineer in passing to

11 in the letter above recorded,

the Government would ob=

=serve that they have passed

no order on Major Lawford's

recommendation that the

officers of the Public Works

Department in Coimbatore

should exact take their tours

of duty in the low country.

2 The Government

have

Comm.r 25th May 1857 85

12th June 1857

Letter from Lt. Col. Phillpotts Dy Chief Engr 19th May 1857 № 888

To The Chief Engineer & Secretary to Government Public Works Depart.t

Dated Fort St. George the 21st May 1857

Rec.d 23rd } № 947

№ 54.

12th June 1857.

Sir,

I have the honor to submit the reply called for in para 5 of the Govt. Comm. № 1704 of the 25th April 1857 and avail himself of the occasion to assure the Government of the favorable consideration of the Govt of that proposition of the Chief Engr. Southern Circle which is brought forward in para 4 of the same letter.

have called for a report
from the District Engineer
of the time spent on the
Hills by each officer in the
each year and the ne:
cessity for his stay, and
on its receipt they will
take the Chief Engineer's
present remarks into
consideration

[signature]

[illegible] Copies to the Chief Engr.
Dec. 18.

Public Works 1857 Dept.
Do to Coms 19th May.

No 947.

Extract Mins of Coms:
Dd 16th May 57.

Observing that they have passed no order on Major Lawford's recommendation that the Officers of the Public Works Dept. in Coimbatore should each take their tour of duty in the low Country - but the Govt. have called for a Report as to the time spent on the Hills by each Officer in the past year, and on its receipt they will take the Chief Engr's remarks into consideration.

No 54 + 55.

C12: Army 215