2 JUNE

M.R.O. 1—83 wks—22-11-60

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Cat 2 12 s 8

G.O. No. 235 Press Mis.

Dated 1—12— 18 58

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 6. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel E. LAWFORD, Officiating Chief Engineer ; to W. H. BAYLEY, Esq., Acting Secretary to Government, dated 11th November 1858, No. 5317.

SIR,

Although Government have not thought proper to refer for my information and reply the charges brought by the Commissioners on Public Establishments against the Central Office of Public Works, I cannot doubt their willingness to receive from me explanations on certain points noticed in Extract Minutes Consultation No. 2341, dated the 6th November 1858, on which defective knowledge has evidently misled the Commission, whose imputations of neglect and dereliction of duty I consider undeserved.

2. With respect to the Audit Branch indeed I allow that from having been left entirely under the charge of an irresponsible because wholly Subordinate Agency it had fallen into heavy arrears, and that the true amount of work which the Establish-

Para. 3. ment were capable of performing had not been correctly represented, but I do not admit that the Superintending Engineers were in any way responsible for this as they had no control or authority whatever over that Department. So far was it otherwise that a distinct offer from myself about two years ago to take charge of this branch of duty was negatived by the Chief Engineer, and Colonel Balfour, when on the late enquiry, gave it as his opinion that the duties could not be divided but must remain under the Head of the Office.

3. No other duties prescribed by the Regulations for Superintending Engineers to perform have been in any degree neglected, except perhaps that which is involved in their digesting into Registers returns received from the Districts, but inasmuch

Grant's Circular Order, p. p. 318-319 Section II, p. I. as such Registers are general for the whole Presidency, the work cannot be done by the Superintending Engineers and its nature is such that it is better performed by a Clerk. The establishment of a Superintending Engineer consists of 3 Clerks only and they can barely get through the Current work including its proper registry, and periodical returns have been and I consider must be transferred after perusal to other hands for general compilation.

4. It is true that Bills have not been duly audited for reasons already explained, but what is meant by "an equal amount of indifference having been

Para. 4. "shewn in other quarters in the non-transmission of many of the

Extract Minutes Consultation No. 1718, dated 25th August 1858. "returns the punctual rendering of which is so stringentlyorder-"ed by Government." I do not know for the Chief Engineer's endeavours to secure punctuality in the annual administration report were met by prohibition and there is no power vested in him to enforce attention to these matters.

5. I have received no requisition from the Commission for a report of Ruturns due by the several Officers in the D. P. W., nor for an account of the mea-

Para. 5. sures adopted by me for securing the regular transmission of accounts and periodical exami nation of Cash Chests.

6. I have already informed the Government that no changes in establishments have been made but such as were absolutely necessary consequent on the reduction

Para. 6. of the Department in July 1857, and to meet the requirements of the system of fixing establishments according to the grades of Executive Officers and not on the local duties.

Para. 7. 7. The Commissioners seem to think that the audit of Bills forms the sole duty of that branch, and overlook the heavy work of account which also devolves on the same establishment.

Paras. 9, 10. 8. I do not concur in the propositions of the Commissioners regarding Bills contained in para. 9 which would lead to much irregularity nor do I see the necessity of the sweeping revolution they advocate.

9. The question mooted in para. 11 which involves an approach to the Bengal system requires further careful consideration, as I am by no means satisfied that it will answer until the servants of our lower Subordinate establishment are more to be relied on than at present in matters of account as the whole value of the Bills must then depend on their fidelity, but I shall report separately on this proposal.

Para. 11.

10. In regard to the audit of Travelling allowances, I cannot admit that the retrenchments were either "partially" or unsatisfactorily performed" consistently with the rules hitherto in force in proof of which I may remind the Government that the only rule under which retrenchment could be made at all was established by myself and annulled by their own authority. I confidently assert that I have faithfully discharged this part of my duty and I am not responsible for the laxity or inconsistency of the Rules themselves.

Para. 12.

E. M. C. No. 2215, dated October 22nd 1858. para 8.

11. I have no means of meeting the statement regarding leave of absence in the Central Office, but to assert that I have always adhered strictly to the rules in force in the Government Office.

Para. 13,

12. I have already replied* to the proposals of Commission and the Government orders thereon regarding hours of Office attendence, and need only record here my conviction that the work during the past four months has been properly performed.

Paras. 14, 15.

* No. 5242 dated 9th November 1858.

13. The positions, duties and powers of the Superintending Engineers in this Presidency have from the beginning been misplaced, but that they have duly performed the part assigned them is beyond question. Whatever change has taken place has been done to my own representations, and I shall in a separate report endeavour to meet the present views of Government for assimilation to the Bengal system, but I must record my conviction that the proper post of these Officers is that prescribed by the Honorable Court of Directors in their Despatch as per margin.

Paras. 18, 19, 20.

Despatch dated 6th May 1857 communicated in Extract Minutes Consultation No. 2072, dated November 6th 1857.

14. I think some change in the present allotment of salaries in the Central Office very desirable, and I would establish it as a fixed rule, that any Clerk who cannot be trusted to fair copy a letter to Government, should not receive more than 20 Rupees per month. A few good well paid men are of more value than a host of people requiring constant supervision such as are found in the Central Office.

Para, 21.

15. The Government may not be aware that no efforts* have been spared to draw attention to the duty of punctuality on the part of District Engineers, but authority to enforce orders is not vested in the Chief Engineer.

Para. 22.

16. The instructions contained in para. 23 are, I consider altogether unnecessary and derogatory to the Chief Engineer, as the Government have the means of knowing at once from my report of Audit the progress made in that duty, and as I have already stated that the arrears will be all cleared off within a very short period, I can see no good purpose whatever to be gained by the report to the Commissioners, but of course the order will be obeyed.

Para, 23.

17. With respect to para. 27, I trust that Government will re-consider the proposal of the Commission "to furnish a further and full report on the entire Department and its requirements," before they sanction such a proceeding on the part of Officers who have no practical knowledge of the Public Works Department.

Para. 27.

18. The Commission which sat in 1853 furnished reports voluminous enough on what the new Dapartment ought to be and it seems that information is now required of what it actually is. To expect that information not from the Head of the Department himself but from a Commission

of non-professional Officers at the Presidency is to look only for imperfect views on points which require an intimate and thorough knowledge of the actual working of the new system and the injurious effect of thus setting aside the Chief and Snperintending Engineers will more than counterbalance any theoretical advantages.

19. The Government have already proposed to follow the Bengal system so far as it can be adapted to the circumstances of Madras, and I think that if they will sanction from time to time such changes and improvements as are obviously required instead of waiting to codify a new system or depending on reports of Commissioners unversed in the duties of the Department the result will be far more permanent and satisfactory.

No. 7. ORDER THEREON, No. 2580; dated 1st December 1858.

Ordered that the above letter be referred to the Commission on Public Establishments.

(Signed) W. H. BAYLEY,
Acting Secretary to Government.

Central Office of Public Works.
Fort Saint George 11th November 1858.

No 5317

From
The Officiating Chief Engineer

To
The Secretary to Government of Madras

Sir

Although Government have not thought proper to refer for any information and reply the charges brought by the Commissioners on Public Establishments against the Central Office of Public Works, I cannot doubt their willingness to receive from me explanations on certain points, noticed in C. M. C No 2341 dated the 6th November 1858, on which defective knowledge has evidently misled the Commission, whose imputations of neglect and dereliction of duty I consider

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Para 3

Except Peer

Grant's Cir. Ord. pp 318-319 Sec II pl.

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3. No other duties prescribed by the Regulations for Superintending Engineers to perform have been in any degree neglected, except perhaps that which is involved in their digesting into Registers returns received from the districts, but inasmuch as such Registers are general for the whole Presidency, the work cannot be done by the Superintending Engineers and its nature is such that it is better performed by a Clerk. The establishment of a Superintending Engineer consists of 3 Clerks only and they can barely get through the current work including its proper registry, and periodical returns have been and I consider must be transferred after

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* № 5242 dated 9 Nov/58

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Despatch dated
6 May 1857
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G. M. C. No 2072
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instead of waiting to codify a new system or depending on reports of Commissioners unversed in the duties of the Department the result will be far more permanent & satisfactory.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most obedient Servant

Fort St. George
11th Nov. 1858

Crawford Lieut Colonel
Officiating Chief Engineer

To

The Secretary to Government
D.P.W.

Nº 7 to Comm.ʳˢ Nov.ʳ 27th R. 9.40
" " 29th October " 31.32
" " 21st Oct.ʳ " 6.46
" " 10th Novemb.ʳ 57 " 30 Jan.ʳ 58
From the Office of the Comm.ʳˢ 9th Jan.ʳ 58 R. 2.30

From
The Officiating Chief Engr
To
The Secretary to Government
Depart.ᵗ Public Works

Dated 11th
Received 12th } November 1858.

No 3317
From — Do — 21st Dec.ʳ 58.
C. No 3187 dated 6th
Submitting Explanations on certain points relating to Contract Memorandum Convention Section No 2341 of the 6th of Nov.ʳ 1858 -

Nº 647.

Wills an order
Nº 2580. 1st Dec.ʳ 1858.

C 22 Nov.ʳ R 27th

Fort St George
1st Decem.ʳ 58

2 Copies to the Comm.ʳˢ for immediate
Pub. Disb.ᵗ Dated 2d

Nº 2580

Ordered that the above letter be referred to the Commissioner for Public Establishments.

W. A. 13