R.S.O. 1—92 4/5—12-11-46

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Political (Pens.) DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2424 Presd. Mis.

Dated 6 — 12 — 18 52.

Not to be folded or roughly handled.

No. 96. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel E. LAWFORD, Officiating Chief Engineer; to the Secretary to Government, dated 27th October 1858, No. 4890.

SIR,

Referring to Extract Minutes Consultation No. 1814, dated 6th September 1858, I have the honor to submit, for the consideration of Government a report* made by Captain Ryves, when District Engineer of Trichinopoly, regarding a great discrepancy between the cost, (as stated in the accounts) and the value of work performed, in the construction of the Ponairy under-Tunnel, under the immediate superintendence of Mr. Ricketts,† Assistant Executive Engineer.

* No. 561, dated 20th July 1858

† which the accompanying statement will explain.

Enclosure 10.

1 Original letter from District Engineer of Trichinopoly No. 561, dated 20th July 1858, with 4 Enclosures.

1 do. from Do· No. 639, dated 29th do. with 2 Enclosures.

1 do. from Captain Moberly, Offitg. District Engineer, No. 860, dated 7th September 1858.

1 do. from Captain Ryves, No. 513, dated 8th October 1858.

2. This discrepancy was discovered, by Captain Ryves on an examination on the 23rd and 24th June of the accounts of the work, and comparing them with the work done and materials supplied; and on the 3rd of July, he addressed Mr. Ricketts on the subject requesting full explanation, but not receiving any reply up to the 20th of that month, he considered it absolutely necessary to report the same to the Central Office without further delay.

3 The accounts relate to the preparation of materials, making Cubes, and constructing temporary embankments, during the months of March, April, May and June 1857 when all work was stopped agreeably to Circular of the 17th July 1857, and Bills for the two Official half-years were forwarded to Captain Ryves by Mr. Ricketts exhibiting the aggregate cost of each kind of work, as per accompanying Statement A.

4. When the work was resumed this year, the Assistant Executive Officer was unwilling to undertake it, on the grounds that the project would not succeed, when Captain Ryves relieved him, and placed Lieutenant Mead of the Engineers in charge on the 3rd of April 1858.

5. Shortly afterwards a question arose, as to the quantity and quality of material transferred, which had not it appears (as they ought) been examined and counted at the period of giving over charge, and on Mr. Ricketts' returning to Vapoor, (near the site of the Ponairy under-Tunnel) a revised list of materials was made out by Lieutenant Mead and Mr. Ricketts conjointly, as per the accompanying Statement B.

6. None of the materials provided had been used in the construction of the Under-Tunnel as the excavation of the foundation only, had been commenced when the work was stopped in July 1857; the whole therefore as charged in the two Bills referred to in para. 3, should have been transferred to Lieutenant Mead by Mr. Ricketts, but on a comparison of the quantity transferred, with that charged, in the Bills, the District Engineer found a discrepancy as per Statement D.

7. On the 26th of July Mr. Ricketts replied to the District Engineer's letter submitting but a partial information on the subject, which was justly considered by Captain Ryves "in every respect most unsatisfactory."

8. Mr. Ricketts only enters into the matter so far as the 1st Bill is concerned, and commences his explanation, by altogether repudiating all responsibility, on the grounds that he did not consider himself, in the sole charge, an excuse which cannot be well reconciled with the following detail of facts.

9. The District Engineer states that on the 23rd of February 1857 agreeably to the instructions from the Superintending Engineer then on circuit, he divided the District into 4 separate Executive Ranges, the Officers to take charge on the 1st of March following, and in his letter to Mr. Ricketts defining the limits of his range, and nominating the Subordinates to act under him, he particularized the Ponairy under-Tunnel across the Murthyaur as under his charge and Assistant Overseer Rungasawmy Naidoo as one of his Subordinates, in addition to which he received full and particular information personally and by demi-official notes, and there was not the slightest doubt of his being in charge, indeed in his Inspection list for March, Mr. Ricketts reports from the 4th to 9th "inspecting Ponairy Channels and materials in preparation for

"the construction of the Ponairy Under-Tunnel" from the 9th March to the 11th May, Mr. Ricketts neglected the Ponairy works, and although requested by the District Engineer to meet him at the Ponairy Under-Tunnel on the 18th and 20th of April, he failed to do so; on that occasion therefore the District Engineer was obliged to communicate his orders to the Assistant Overseer in immediate charge of the work, but this circumstance as alluded to by Mr. Ricketts cannot be supposed in any light to remove the responsibility from him, and there can be no question that Mr. Ricketts was the responsible Executive from the 1st of March to the end of that official year.

10. In his reply to the District Engineer Mr. Ricketts endeavours to prove his non-responsibility by referring to a report made by him on Assistant Overseer Rungasawmy Nadoo's misconduct, with reference to incorrectness, and laxity, in keeping his accounts, this report was only made on the 19th May, and cannot be considered as relieving Mr. Ricketts of his responsibility in the work and accounts connected with it, during the two preceding months.

11. The Officiating District Engineer Captain Moberly, has since been directed to institute further enquiries into the case, and in his reply of the 7th of September last, he states his regret that his enquiries have not tended to throw any light on the matter.

12. With reference to the item of bricks Captain Ryves states that in the Bills 8-74-650 are entered at a cost of Rupees 1,669-0-4 and that the quantity Lieutenant Mead received including those since rejected is 5-10-170 at the average rate of the whole Rupees 959-2-9 the difference being 3-64-480 Rupees 693-13-7.

13. After a careful examination of the quantity of Bricks made Captain Moberly reports 6-59-517 as expended from this must be deducted 31-424- used on other small tunnels and making a total of 6-28-093 expended and exhibiting a difference of 2-46-557 unaccounted for in making allowance however for wastage, and the loss in counting them 3 times, he has deducted from that amount 15-133 which Mr. Ricketts appeared to consider just, the missing quantity then amounting to 2-31-424; there are also 56,000 missing to be replaced by the Contractors, in all 2-87-424.

14. As regards the chunam Captain Ryves and Captain Moberly differ in the quantity considered necessary for 1,000 bricks. Captain Ryves allowed 5 Parahs per 1,000 whereas Captain Moberly allows 6 Parahs per cubic yard (far too much) the quantity of chunam missing must therefore stand agreeably to Captain Ryves' account viz., 1467¾ Rupees 308-8-9.

15. On Lieutenant Mead's taking charge the Assistant Overseer brought to his notice that the number of Cubes charged in the Bills did not agree with those in the foundation and on the ground. Those in the foundation then uncovered amounting to 8610, and on the ground 7070, in all 15-680, but Mr. Ricketts asserts that in October 1857 he counted 17, 219, and claims a reduction of 2 lacs on the differece of 1539 Cubes, fair enough if correct at 14 bricks per Cube, on this head Captain Moberly remarks "unfortunately we cannot find precisely the extent of work executed on the 27th April 1858, three days after a flood carried away the temporary embankments, and there is no record either of the numbers consumed in the interval, or washed away by the flood, one cannot therefore check the number used, but the Acting Assistant Overseer adheres to the correctness of his account and at the most makes only a diffierence of 22,000 Bricks, and in the concluding part of his letter he states "but there is nothing to shew "that the discrepancy occurred before the 1st May 1857;" after that date Mr. Ricketts acknowledges his responsibility and apparently there can be no question of his being responsible previously also.

16. Mr. Ricketts is evidently throughout seriously at fault, his Subordinate Assistant Overseer Rungasawmy Naidoo equally so, and the District Engineer himself cannot be wholly freed from censure, in trusting too much to his Executive Officer, especially when it must have been apparent, that Mr. Ricketts was unequal to the extent of his charge, besides having shown himself exceedingly careless.

17. It does not however appear that the whole responsibility can be clearly fixed on any one, and the enquiry has tended only to show, a general laxity, and want of circumspection, throughout, much to be regretted.

No. 97. ORDER THEREON, No. 2624; dated 6th December 1858.

With his letter of the 14th August 1858, No. 2513, the Officiating Chief Engineer submitted a letter from the District Engineer of Trichinopoly, reporting that Rupees 15,054 had been expended on the Murthayaur Under-tunnel, and that Rupees 2,500 more would be required to complete the work, making Rupees 17,500 in all, or about 70 per cent. in excess of the cost estimated by the District Engineer, viz., Rupees 10,720. The chief causes assigned for the additional expenditure were, 1st the stoppage of the work in July 1857, 2ndly the delay in sanctioning its resumption till the fine season had passed over, and the occurrence of heavy floods during the progress of the work; and 3rdly, a deficiency in the accounts which was stated to be under investigation. Upon this the Government, in Extract from the Minutes of Consultation of the 6th September 1858, No. 1814, requested to be informed what would be the actual expenditure on the work in excess of the last sanction for Rupees 7,048, in what proportions the enhanced cost of the Tunnel should be apportioned among the several causes alleged by the District Engineer, what the Chief Engineer's opinion was of those causes, and the influence that each was represented to have had in raising the expense of the work, and especially what had been the result of the enquiry in regard to the deficiency in the accounts.

2. The letter from the Officiating Chief Engineer recorded at the head of this Extract, purports tobe a reply to these enquiries; but with the exception of reporting the result of the enquiry into the alleged deficiency in the accounts, none of the other points on which information was called for, has been noticed.

3. The deficiency in the accounts has reference to the difference between the quantity and value of materials included in two bills sent up by Mr. Ricketts, Executive Engineer, and the quantity and value of materials on the work, as shewn in Statement D, submitted by Lieutenant Ryves, the District Engineer. But in para. 7 of Captain Moberly's report of the 7th September 1858, the number of bricks unaccounted for is given at 2,00,000, and of chunam 980 parahs, or according to Lieutenant Ryves, in whose calculation, the Officiating Chief Engineer, concurs, 1,467 parahs, of the value of Rupees 308. It is evident however that the value of these materials forms but a small proportion to the additional expenditure incurred on the work; and his letter and its enclosures will be returned to the Officiating Chief Engineer with a request that he will furnish the explanation called for on the several points noticed in the order of Government of the 6th September 1858, No. 1814, and state his opinion whether the causes assigned for the excess are sufficient to exonerate the Officers concerned from all responsibility in the matter.

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

No 2624 P.W.D.

5

Extract from the Mins: of Govt: Under date the 6th Decr 1858.

Read the following Letter from the Offg Chief Engr 29th Oct/58 No 1890.

With his letter of the 14th August 1858 No 2513, the officiating Chief Engineer submitted a letter from the District Engineer of Trichinopoly reporting that Rupees 15,054 had been expended on the Mur Abay anicut during G, and that Rupees 2,500 more would be required to complete the work, making Rs 17,500 in all, or exactly 10 per Cent in excess of the amount estimated by the Dist: Engineer, viz Rs 15,920. The chief causes assigned for the additional expenditure were, 1st, the stoppage of the works in July 1857, 2nd, the delay in sanctioning the resumption till the fine season had passed over, and the occurrence of heavy floods during the progress of the work; and 3rd, a deficiency in the accounts which was stated to be under investigation

Upon this the Government, in Extract from the Minutes of Consultation of the 6th September 1858 ¶ 15, resolved to be informed what amount of the actual Expenditure on the work on account of this Estimate No. 7,048, in what proportions the amount could be apportioned among the several causes alleged by the Chief Engineer, and what the Chief Engineer's opinion was of those causes, and the Engineer that each was responsible for having failed in raising the expenditure of the work, and especially in what relation these results of the enquiry in regard to the efficiency in the accounts.

2 The Secretary from the Offg Chief Engineer received at the head of this Extract, purports to be a reply to these enquiries, but ~~will be seen that~~ with the exception of reporting the result of the enquiry into the alleged deficiency in the accounts, none of the other points on which information was called for, has been noticed.

3 The deficiency in the accounts has reference to the difference between the quantity and value of materials included in two bills sent up by Mr Ricketts, Executive Engineer, and the quantity and value of materials on the work, as shewn in Statement D, submitted by Lieut Pynes the Asst Engr. But in para 7 of Capt Moberly's report of the 7th September 1858, the number of bricks unaccounted for is given at 2,00,000, and of chunam 980 parahs, or according to Lieut Pynes, in whose calculation the Offg Chief Engr concurs, 1469 parahs, of the value of Rs 308. It is evident however that the value of these materials forms but a small proportion to the additional expenditure incurred on the work; and ~~it would~~

~~As much of the Letter as relates to~~

~~the~~ Copy of the Letter to the Lords
and Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury
and Mr Secretary Stanhope's Letter
to the Commissioners of Customs,
dated the 6th of September 1838 set forth, and stated
his opinion as to the Allowances
assigned for the expences not sufficient
to exonerate the Officers concerned
from all responsibility in the
matter.)

No 2

10 Copies to the Office Auditing Depts

with Circ Letter
& 10 Encls

C26 Nov 30

Public Works 1858 Dept.
Dr to Cons: 7th Decr.

No 2624.

Extract Mins of Cons.
Dy 6th Decr 58.

From the Offg Chief Engr 21st Decr
58 No 313 in Cons 8 March
59

Calling upon the Offg.
Chief Engineer to furnish
full explanation on the several points noticed in the
order of Govt of the 6th Sept.
1858 No 1814, regarding the
Murtiazaur Under Tunnels

No 96 & 97.