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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

Am 3/5/38

G.O. No.

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government Public Works Department,
from 30th April to 3rd May 1859.*

No. 60. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. BELL, Chief Engineer; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, dated 29th April 1859, No. 9918.

Agreeably to the orders of Government conveyed in Extract Minutes Consultation under date 5th April 1859,* directing that Lieutenant-Colonel Lawford be called upon to enquire and report, as to the causes of diminution in the number of Carpenters, as well as the small number of Sawyers and Coolies employed on the works at Jackatalla, I have the honor to submit copy of that Officer's reply, under date 18th April 1859 on the subject.

2. After a strict enquiry Colonel Lawford reports the principal causes of the diminution of the labourers to be 1st, the high prices of food that prevail on the Hills, viz., three-fold higher than those of the low country; and 2ndly, the field for labour opened by the Railway in Malabar and in Mysore, the ready employment to be found on the Public Works at Bangalore.

3. It will be therefore clear to Government that labourers cannot be expected to prefer work at a distance from their families, in so expensive a locality when work and good pay are ready to their hands without their going to look for them.

4. Colonel Lawford has enquired personally of the workmen if they have any cause of complaint in ill treatment, or want of consideration, and they all without exception deny having any grounds of complaint; he has made some concessions by increasing their pay to the highest rates given on the Hills, also by making small advances to the families at a distance, and hopes that good effect will ensue from these steps; he has also sent persons in every direction to secure fresh labourers if possible.

5. Colonel Lawford further reports that the payments are strictly overlooked by a Commissioned Officer, and that no reduction that it is possible to detect or obviate takes place.

6. Colonel Lawford's measures and active superintendence appear most satisfactory, and it is to be hoped will produce beneficial results.

7. Lieutenant-Colonel Lawford will report upon the working of the Moodoomullay Forest hereafter.

8. The Saw Mill is nearly ready and will be despatched about the 10th Proximo. It can be set up at Goondlepett, should the measure on further enquiry prove desirable.

Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel E. LAWFORD, Superintending Engineer, Central Circle; to the Chief Engineer, dated Jackatalla, 18th April 1859.

With reference to Extract Minutes Consultation No. 808, dated 5th April 1859, I have the honor to state that I have made the most careful investigation into the causes of deficiency in the number of Carpenters, Sawyers, and Coolies employed at the Jackatalla Barracks. I have also attended at the monthly payments of the work people and endeavoured to ascertain both at that time and by casual enquiries from themselves, whether any and what cause of complaints existed among them.

2. When I was deputed to visit these works in 1857, I found the same difficulty regarding the available number of Carpenters, and I then authorized an increase of wages under the name of Batta at the rate of 1½ anna per day; but this was to be paid only if the men worked steadily for 21 days in the month, and was expressly intended as an inducement to continued employment at the Barracks. I also sanctioned an addition to the number of houses built for the Carpenters to live near the works.

3. At that time the above concessions appeared to be sufficient, and I had every reason to believe that the number of workmen would increase, nor did any report since reach me to shew that my arrangements had failed, but from the representations now made it seems that the men de-

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sire the Batta to form a component part of the daily wages and not to be liable to reduction for any number of days' absence, that is to say, that they should receive a permanently increased rate for every days' actual work whatever the number might be.

4. As all the Carpenters agreed on this point and distinctly denied having any grounds of complaint whether on the score of ill treatment or other cause, and as I found that a great demand for their labour existed at Ootacamund and Paulghat, I assented to the change of system and agreed to fix the rates at the highest amount paid on the Hills, but as yet no material increase in the number of workmen has taken place. I have even gone so far as to sanction advances of money for the families of distant workmen, and have sent persons in all directions to procure more labour and I hope the result may be satisfactory, but when the Government are aware that the price of food at Jackatalla is about three-fold that prevailing in Tanjore and Trichinopoly, they will easily conceive the difficulty of inducing men to leave those Districts for these works. The Malabar Carpenters find ample employment in the Railway and those of Mysore at Bangalore.

5. The list of Carpenters employed at Jackatalla contains many of very inferior skill and some Burghers or Hill workmen, who have only lately learnt to work at all and can do little to help forward the difficult operations required in these constructions, and yet these men also demand wages payable only to good Artificers in the low country.

6. With respect to the Sawyers the case is somewhat different, as they are paid by task work and have hitherto received one Rupee per 56 square feet of wood sawn. I have now agreed to give the same price for 50 square feet, and the Statement of the actual payments to these men for the last month shews that they are well remunerated. No complaint of any kind has been made by the Sawyers.

7. The Coolies belong to two classes, the Canarese or Mysore people and the Burghers or Hill Coolies, but the former are far superior in physical capacity and intelligence to the latter and are paid a somewhat higher rate. I have advanced the wages of these people to the highest sum they can obtain either at Ootacamund or in the Coffee Plantations on the Hills, but the Burghers invariably desert the works at this season in great numbers, to attend to their cultivation and no rate of wages, Government could afford would induce them to leave their fields untilld, nor can we expect it to be otherwise. Last year I find that in June nearly 500 Burghers were employed, whereas at present, there are under 100 and no complaint of ill-treatment has been made by any of these people, who I have no doubt will again flock to the works when it suits them.

8. The payment of all work people at Jackatalla has from the beginning been monthly and every work-man receives his wages in the presence of a Commissioned Officer, until lately this duty was performed by Lieutenant Darling, but on his departure on Sick Certificate, the payment has been superintended by Lieutenant F. G. Hankin and no reduction or extortion takes place which can by any precaution be prevented. If what is called custom is afterwards levied by the Maistries or Head Artificers, it must be a voluntary cess, which escapes the cognizance by the Officers in charge of the works, and is certainly not complained of. In fact, the Burgher labourers are, I believe, bound by immemorial usage to contribute something to the Todwars as Lords of the Hills, though the latter never perform any work.

9. I do not think the introduction of a system of weekly payment is now required or would be advantageous, as it would occasion much loss of time, and the number of hours of weekly labour is already shortened, partly by the Tuesday markets, and partly by the lateness at which the labourers assemble for work owing to the climate, by which six hours are lost in as many days.

10. On the whole it appears to me that the labourers on the works at Jackatalla are, and have been fairly and considerately treated, and that their paucity has been generally due to other causes than those which would seem to have been supposed.

11. The Government have somewhat misunderstood my application, for their assistance in the way of procuring labour from other Districts, as I did not mean such labour to be pressed, but merely that the aid of the local authorities in making known the circumstances and issuing

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advances of money should be afforded. Neither the Executive Officer at Jackatalla nor the District Engineers have any authority to make such payments, and if I have now taken on myself to do so it is only on a very limited scale, but it is well known that Native Artificers absolutely require some provision to be made for their families before leaving their homes, and this has been recently ordered in the case of Artificers sent to Ceylon, and is a common practice with the Coffee Planters.

12. Sickness frequently prevail, among the labourers on the Hills and while the repugnance to European treatment is general, the illness of one man will usually cause the non attendance at the works of all his relations.

13. I anticipate some improvement in the rate of progress from the employment of European Carpenters and Sawyers, a few of whom have been taken from the 60th Rifles, and this advantage might probably be extended by sending Soldier Artificers from other Regiments, as was done at the commencement of the works.

14. I shall also instruct the Executive Officer to send to Mysore for wrought timber in plank, &c., and the resources of the Moodemully Forest will be rendered available to the utmost possible extent, but on this subject I shall report hereafter.

15. I think that the information now afforded will satisfy the Government that I have done my utmost both to arrive at a correct knowledge of the causes of a paucity of labour and to remove those which lie within my power, and as I am now concentrating as much as possible all that is available, I hope that the future progress of the Jackatalla works may be more satisfactory.

16. I may in conclusion advert to the efforts of Captain Campbell to accelerate the work by means of a Saw Mill for which however the present supply of water is insufficient, and this cannot be immediately increased for want of labour to improve the Channel. The Government may also recollect that I did all in my power to obtain the aid of a Steam Saw Machine which would prove of the highest value, but I am of opinion that it should be set up at Goondelpett instead of at Jackatalla, and thus the carriage of waste timber up the Seegoor Ghaut would be avoided.

No. 61.

ORDER THEREON, 3rd May 1859, No. 1029.

Colonel Lawford appears to have fully investigated and correctly ascertained the causes of the want of labour at Jackatalla. The Governor in Council is gratified to find that the arrangements for paying the men seem to be good, and the treatment of them considerate and humane.

2. The increase of wages made by Colonel Lawford to all classes, Carpenters, Sawyers, and Coolies, is approved, as well as his arrangements for making advances to workmen engaged in the low country.

3. With reference to the circumstances noticed in para. 12, Government authorize the Executive Engineer to engage the services of any competent Native Medical Practitioner who may be obtainable, provided that his qualifications for the duty shall be approved by the Surgeon of the Station, as well as the rate of pay to be given him. Such person if engaged, will perform his duties under the superintendence of the Surgeon.

4. There is one cause, of those assigned for the limited supply of Native labour, for which Colonel Lawford does not appear to have thought of applying a remedy, viz. the high price of food. The price seems to be higher than it ought naturally to be, viz. three times as high as in Tanjore and Trichinopoly. It is deserving of attention whether means might not be taken to increase the supply and lower the price; but the Government are averse to any direct interference, the effect of which must, in the end, be injurious.

5. It is observed (para. 13) that Colonel Lawford has obtained some Carpenters from the Rifles; and the question will be referred to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief whether it is practicable and expedient to send up such workmen from other European Regiments.

6. The plan of procuring wrought timber from Mysore is approved; and the Government are gratified to see* that a steam Saw Mill is about to be sent up to be used in the Moodamally Forest. The Chief Engineer will not fail to give the Executive Engineer due notice, in order that he may make the necessary arrangements for putting up the Mill, so that there may be no loss of time after its arrival.

7. But the Governor in Council would wish the Chief Engineer to consider whether the necessity of labour on the spot may not be further diminished by the use of Machinery. The Jackatalla Barracks, where a large quantity of work has to be done rapidly, in a locality where labour is scarce and dear, form pre-eminently a case for the employment of Machinery. Modern ingenuity has invented Machines for working mortice and tenon joints as well as mouldings, &c.; and a vast quantity of such work must be required in these Barracks. Machines of the nature referred to are in use in the Railway Workshops, but it remains to be ascertained whether they are among the large quantities of Machinery received from England within the last two or three years for the Public Works Department. If there are none, it appears to Government well worth Colonel Bell's attention whether any can be procured in Madras or Calcutta; and some ought certainly to be obtained as early as possible from England, even though they may be too late for use at Jackatalla.

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

Central Office of M.C.
Fort St. George
29 April 1859.

St. 9918
From the Chief Engineer
The Chief Engineer

To the Secretary to Government P.W.D.
Sir.

Agreeably to the order of Government conveyed in Sd. Memo. Dated 29 April 1859, directing that Lieut. Colonel Lawford be called upon to enquire and report as to the causes of diminution in the number of Carpenters as well as the small number of Sawyers and Coolies employed on the works at Jackatalla, I have the honor to submit copy of that Officer's Reply under date 18 April 1859 on the subject.

2. After a strict enquiry, Colonel Lawford reports the principal causes of the diminution of the labourers to be the high prices of food that prevail on the hills, viz. threefold higher than those of the low country and 2nd the field for labour opened by the Railway.

in Malabar, and in Mysore the ready employment to be found on the Public Works at Bangalore.

3. It will be therefore clear to Government that labourers cannot be expected to prefer work at a distance from their families, in so expensive a locality when work and good pay are ready to their hands without going to look for them.

4. Colonel Lawford has enquired personally of the workmen if they have any cause of complaint in ill treatment or want of consideration and they all without exception deny having any grounds of complaint - he has made some concessions by increasing their pay to the highest rates given on the Pello also by making small advances to the families at a distance and hopes that good effect will ensue from these steps; he has also sent persons in every direction to secure fresh labourers if possible.

5. Colonel Lawford further reports that the payments are strictly overseen by a Commissioned Officer and that no reduction that it is possible to detect or obviate takes place.

Colonel

6. Colonel Lawford's measures and active superintendence appear most satisfactory, and it is to be hoped will produce beneficial results.

7. Sir, Colonel Lawford will report upon the working of the Mossomulloy Forest hereafter.

8. The Saw Mill is nearly ready and will be despatched about the 10th proximo; It can be set up at Bunglepeth, should the measure on further enquiry prove desirable.

Port St. George
29 April 1869

W.B.
S.P.A.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Yours most obedt Servant
H. Bell
Lieut Colonel
Chief Engineer

To The Secretary to
Government P.W.D.

Proceedings of the Madras Government.
 Under date the 3^d May 1859.

(Harcourt 29. April 1859
N^o 9918)

The increase of
wages

200 March 1859 2 of 4
Confidential - A21038
d/mon

The Chief Surveyor is
 at the day. A good thing.

Sept. 12 1859. 29. 1/2
Oct. 20. 1. 1/2
Nov. 30. 1. 1/2

Received of Mr. J. J. 99/18
but 99/18 11/18

Delivered with the same
copy of the Old Testament

up on the policy of
workmen "sacrificed on the

every one at Sacramento. And
that that opinion will be for

on the morning of the 30th
making for old New York

that the hand is more
heavy for deeper and

in West of all our subjects in
Florida, the insurance for

wages made by Colonel
Lawford to all clajee,
Carpenters, Sawyers,
and Coolies, as approved,
as well as his arrange-
ments for making ad-
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With reference to
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in Para 12, Govt. autho-
rizes the Executive Engineer
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cations for the duty shall
be approved by the Sur-
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well as the rate of pay
to be given him. Such
person if engaged, will
perform his duties un-
der the Superintendence
of

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* Chief Eng^r letter
p. 8.

152
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referred to are in use
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found

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though they may be too
late for use at Fort St. John.

JA

10 Refers to the Chief Eng'g Dept. & the
Military Department

Cons. 5th April/59 No 4647.

OR

Copy in a Letter to E.
24th 5th April 1859 No 48.

Public Works 1859 Department.
Cons 3rd May

No 1029.

Pro: of the Madras Govt.

23rd May 1859.

From the Chief Eng: Of 30th

May/59 Ck-1408 sub.

From S^o Of 11 June 1859 Ck-1530
Cons 8th May

No 60 + 61.


Passing orders on the
workmen employed at the
Jackatallah Barracks as
well as on the working of the
Moodamully Forest.

es: apul