1. Number 21-3-38-1
2. Date of receipt 21-3-38
3. Initials of Reference

M.R.O. 1—82 400—29-11-30

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public (Edn.) DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 67	Press Mis.
Dated 12-1-37	1937.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

S/D 21.3.38

Fort Saint George, Public Works Consultation of 18th January 1859.

No. 6. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel E. LAWFORD, Officiating Chief Engineer; to the Secretary to Government, dated 30th December 1858, No. 6701.

SIR,

On resigning the charge of the Central Office of Public Works which I have held for seven months, it has occurred to me that Government would not object to my placing before them a few remarks in explanation of the views I have been led to form of the state of the Department on which I have bestowed the most anxious attention.

2. With regard to the Central Office nothing seems so necessary as the complete separation of the functions of the Chief and Superintending Engineers, the blending together of which has I am satisfied led to much of that confusion and imperfection in the business which the Government have too frequently noticed. If the Superintending Engineers were restricted to their proper and peculiar duties, not only would their own usefulness, be increased, but the work left for the Chief Engineer would be such as that Officer could perform, with effect and advantage. At the same time I think the power and authority of the Chief Engineer might and should be more certain and distinct than at present, for it appears to me that a degree of responsibility for the efficiency of the Department is now exacted from its Head of which he is unable fully to acquit himself. Such a change would of course involve others in the internal arrangements of the Central Office, which it is needless now to dwell upon, as the views of Government on the main question may be different to those I have been led to form.

3. The positions, duties and responsibilities of the District Engineers are ill understood and those Officers do not in my opinion render to the State all the services of which they are capable. Besides feeling themselves almost independent of the Superintending Engineers they fail I think to exercise sufficient vigilance over the proceedings of the Executive Officers under them. Yet it is but just to observe that the District Engineers have had a very onerous task in carrying on their duties under such changes and difficulties as have been experienced during the last two years, and in some Districts these have been enhanced by the views taken by the Revenue Officers of the relations between the two Departments. As far as I can understand the Madras District Engineers hold nearly the same position as the first Class Executive Engineer in Bengal and should perform similar duties, but the former seem to me to discharge properly neither the functions of Inspecting nor Executive Officers, and they certainly do not as a general rule afford to the Chief Engineer that information which would enable him to judge rightly of the state of the works under their Superintendence.

4. Executive and Assistant Executive Engineers are not as I think they should be placed in situations of importance corresponding to their gradé in the Department, nor do they act sufficiently as Inspectors or Examiners of the work of the Subordinates who are in many cases left too much uncontrolled. There is no doubt that local knowledge is of great importance and so far it is desirable that Executive Officers should not be frequently removed, but it is equally clear that duties and responsibilities should be proportioned to salaries and that Executive ranges should be gradational.

5. The Subordinates require more supervision and discipline, for excellent as many of them are there are some high in position who are unfit to undertake any serious responsibilities; some have shewn their ignorance of accounts; others make no exertion, and in a great number of cases there is a sense of independence of Departmental control which is very prejudicial.

6. The Department of Accounts has been considered inefficient, and I believe that in nothing is reform more needed. There seems to be a feeling that any one can keep accounts and that regularity and punctuality are all that should be required, but such is not my view, and I believe that until we get men trained to keep *professional* accounts in a satisfactory manner there cannot be a proper knowledge of the legitimate expenditure. The Government have often observed on the great carelessness exhibited in this branch of duty and have noticed the difficulty of arriving at just conclusion as to causes of excess of expenditure over estimates, nor can this irregularity be effectually remedied until the persons immediately responsible for keeping the

accounts understand their duty properly, and though it has been authoritatively decided that common vernacular accountants are sufficiently competent, I must with all respect record my dissent from this view. In England Clerks of the works are professional Engineering accountants and the same principle should be carried out here as far as circumstances will allow. The recent orders of the Government of India communicated with Extract Minutes of Consultation No. 2806, dated 21th December 1858, render this question one of the most pressing importance.

7. The system of drawing funds and making payments and remittances is I think seriously defective and such as to lead to those losses by theft which have been sadly too frequent. To remedy this I see no other way at present than by requiring the Police Officers to render greater assistance in the custody of public money.

8. In regard to Stores and Machinery I consider the Department in a most disadvantageous position and I look forward to its complete independence of the Ordnance Department on this point as essential to its being rendered really efficient. Nor is that all that is necessary, for as I pointed out several years ago it is worse than useless for us to import Steam machinery without also providing the men to manage it, for this purpose I would secure the services of available trained Machinists now in the army and post at least one to each District while I would lose no time in establishing a practical and really working class of pupils as I have already suggested

Extract Minutes Consultation No. 2688, dated 13th December 1858.

9. The questions of Executive Establishments and their allotment locally insted of personally has been already so fully considered that it is needless for me to express my conviction of the absolute and urgent necessity of reform of existing arrangements which are utterly incompatible with the efficiency of the Department.

Vide letter No. 3191, dated 27th August 1858.

10. I have now touched on the chief points to which my attention has been given, and while I cannot expect that my views should be entirely concurred in by others I may express the hope that they will be regarded as sincerely directed to the improvement of the important Department of which I have so long been a member and the efficiency of which I earnestly desire.

No. 7. ORDER THEREON, No. 109; dated 12th January 1859.

Resolved that the above letter be recorded, in view to its being considered in connection with the subject of introducing the Bengal Public Works Code into the Madras Presidency.

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

3c

Central Office of Public Works
Fort Saint George 30th Decr. /58

No. 6701

From

The Officiating Chief Engineer

To

The Secretary to Government
Public Works Department

"Public"

Sir,

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to their proper and peculiar duties, not only would their own usefulness be increased, but the work left for the Chief Engineer would be such as that Officer could perform, with effect and advantage. At the same time I think the power and authority of the Chief Engineer might and should be more certain and distinct than at present for it appears to me that a degree of responsibility for the efficiency of the Department is now exacted from its Head of which he is unable fully to acquit himself. Such a change would of course involve others in the internal arrangements of the Central Office, which it is needless now to dwell upon, as the views of Government on the main question may be different to those I have been led to form.

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5. The Subordinates require more supervision and discipline, for excellent as many of them are, there are some high in position who are unfit to undertake any serious responsibilities; some have shewn their ignorance of accounts, others make no exertion, and in a great number of cases there is a sense of independence of Departmental control which is very prejudicial.

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7. The system of drawing funds and making payments and remittances is I think seriously defective and such as to lead to those losses by theft which have been

been sadly too frequent. To remedy this I see no other way at present than by requiring the Police Officers to render greater assistance in the custody of public money.

6. In regard to Stores and Machinery I consider the Department in a most disadvantageous position and I look forward to its complete independence of the Ordnance Department on this point as essential to its being rendered really efficient. Nor is that all that is necessary, for as I pointed out several years ago it is worse than useless for us to import Steam Machinery without also providing the men to manage it. For this purpose I would secure the services of available trained Machinists now in the Army and post at least one to each District while I would lose no time in establishing a practical and really working class of pupils as I have already suggested.

Ex. Minis. Ltr. No. 2688 dd. 18th Decr/58

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vide letter No. 3191 dd. 27th Aug. 59

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

Central Office of C.E.
Fort Saint George
30th December 1858.

Cons. 21st Dec. 58 Nos. 214-215
" 4th " " " 67-68
" 19th Oct. " " 25-26-

P. Works 1858 Dept.
Dito Cons 18th January 59.
No 3197.

From
The Offg Chief Engineer
To
The Secretary to Government
Public Works Dept.

Dated 30th December 1858.
Rect 31st

No 6701.

Submits for the information of Government remarks in explanation of the views which has been formed of the state of the Department of Curtis Works.

No 6+7.

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No 109 Dt 12th January 59.

No 109

Resolved that the above letter be recorded, in view to its being considered in connection with the subject of introducing the Bengal Public Works Code into the Presidency.

W.H.S

Fort St. George
Rect 12th January 59

To Copy to the Chief Engr
Offg 13th