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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.
in 29/4/1859

G.O. No. <u>993</u>	Press Mis.
<u>128 29</u> Dated <u>29-4-1859</u>	

Not to be folded or roughly handled*28/5/58*

No. 128. Read the following letter from Colonel C. E. FABER, Chief Engineer; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, dated 25th March 1859, No. 8993.

SIR,

In the scheme of radical Departmental decentralization which the Government has been pleased to inaugurate in their orders of the 15th Instant, No. 596, and which it apparently would have been neither inexpedient nor unusual to ventilate previous to adoption by discussion amongst the District and Superintending Engineers of the Department to be so largely affected, one source of practical embarrassment has suggested itself to me, which it would be more agreeable to myself to have suppressed for many obvious reasons, but as I unfeignedly believe that the working of the new system will be obstructed in limine, unless the instructions of Government, are promptly issued for overcoming the difficulty, I trust I shall stand acquitted of the apparent presumption of criticizing a large measure of intended reform, initiated, matured, and fully authorized for immediate introduction by Government.

2. One chief endeavour of the centralized administration hitherto in vogue has been to delocalize personal claims, and to divert preferment as impartially as a wish to do so unwarpd by predilection in favor of individuals might secure, into channels conveying the stream of advancement as equally as possible amongst the several Circles and Districts, so as to diffuse the stimulus of success throughout the whole Department of Public Works.

3. But with each District Engineer empowered to nominate Sub-Overseers, and Probationary Assistant Overseers altogether in the first instance, and to promote such nominees subsequently and others to the grade of Supervisor, how is such power to have practical action in a Department, each grade of which, consists of a limited number, which in only one case corresponds with the number of Districts never with that of the Executive Ranges.

4. Take the case of Supervisors of whom there are 12, or by casualty 11, under the new rules, how is this vacancy to be filled on decentralized principles?

5. It is the natural tendency of each District Engineer, to exaggerate whether for good or evil the qualities of his own Subordinates, and at all events each incumbent creates his own standard of qualifications and merit. It is not improbable that each of the twenty District Engineers will be of opinion that one of his employes has valid claims to the appointment of Supervisor, yet it can be conferred on but one. Who is to decide on the individual, when twenty patrons claim a right to appoint their own nominees?

6. If it be replied that each District Engineer is only to make promotions within his own District, then at least eight of the twenty Districts are for ever debarred from the attainment of a rank they have hitherto had an acknowledged right to aspire to, and all Districts of whose permanent allotments under the scale of 23rd July 1857, the grade of Supervisor forms no portion, are unjustly depressed below those to whom a Supervisor has been allotted.

7. Again if a Districtwar Establishment be regarded as a distinct but complete Department in itself, within which and not in the general Gradational List, promotions shall be made, how equalize the rate of advancement? Cholera may convert a clever Assistant Overseer into a Supervisor in a single sickly season in one District; whilst his no less able contemporary in another may complete his full servitude, with only his own and the health of his fellow Subordinates to compensate them for being so much superseded by others, their juniors in many cases.

8. It may be that I am creating difficulties which the Government either do not admit or are prepared to overcome without the aid of a central intervention.

9. Yet promotion must either be general or it must be Districtwar. If the former, how is the very existence of a vacancy in Ganjam to be known in Tinnevely, and if made generally known, what becomes of a District Engineer's individual power to make individual promotions, or who is to select one from the twenty candidates or nominees. If the latter, what is to be expected as the result of such great inequalities in promotion as seem to be inseparable from vacancies belonging to the localities in which they happen to occur?

10. If I could see how these apparent difficulties could be surmounted in an unobjectionable manner, I should hail the accession of power gained by decentralizing as a substantial im-

Fort Saint George, Public Works Consultation of 29th April 1859.

Improvement so far as nominations and promotions are concerned. But my own observation and some practical experience lead me to a very different conclusion indeed as regards power of punishment. It is a painful anticipation to myself, that a single hasty word indiscreetly spoken after a moment of partial indulgence, (caused as often happens after long exposure and fatigue by a very small quantity of any fermented beverage) may imperil the welfare of an excellent public servant, and may lose to Government, the further usefulness of an experienced and skilled practical Executive.

11. Regard being had to the large admixture of the European element in the Department of Public Works, and to the comparative youth of many of our District Engineers, I cannot but regard with no inconsiderable apprehension the probable consequences of para. 9, which confers the power of dismissing or degrading all Sub-Overseers. (How degradation can be carried out when all grades are complete is not stated.) There are many Europeans, and likely to be many more in the Lower Subordinate Establishment and the Government must be prepared I fear, to forego the services of many valuable men by giving the excessive power to the Local Officers now proposed. It seems to me that the three trigrade classes of Sub-Overseers are left without the protection enjoyed by most other public servants, and that a door will be opened to much harshness and oppression which may be used; so far as all practical consequences are concerned, with perfect impunity. It seems to me dangerous that any man should be both judge and jury in his own case, and the right of Petition is almost worthless, as the appellate office must needs relegate the case to the very party complained against; whilst further, by what I presume to term with all deference the premature abolition of Confidential Report (no less valuable as it seems to me in the Department of Public Works, than in Her Majesty's Army at Home and Abroad and in Her Majesty's Indian Armies also) the Chief Engineer has been deprived of the means of ascertaining the actual antecedents of any such Petitioner or Petitioners.

12. Indeed as regards Confidential Reports (though not more frequently than once a year,) the present measures of decentralization appear to me rather to make them more, than less valuable. In fact how the Chief Engineer is to submit the respectful expression of his opinions under clause 1 of para. 6, or respecting the appointment, and promotion of Officers of the Engineers Establishment, as has been generally the great privilege of that Officer under the present Governor of Madras, I scarcely see. It is unquestionable that one important means of rectifying his own judgment by comparing it with that of others will, or rather has thus been taken away and at a time apparently when the dangers, misuse and abuse, of Confidential Reports have been so signally diminished; for it is a great mistake to suppose that the names of Members of the Upper Subordinate Establishment, are, as assumed in para. 14, commonly or often mentioned by District Engineer and the "course of ordinary duty" is far from making the Superintendent Engineers and the Chief Engineer acquainted with the qualifications of Subordinates in the Department of Public Works.

13. The suppression of Confidential Reports undoubtedly relieves the Members of the Central Office of a very irksome and troublesome duty when conscientiously performed; but it is beyond all question that they are thereby themselves left much more incompetent to discharge the duties still left to them. The information is indispensable, but it must hereafter be obtained in some less commodious manner and divested of that character of secrecy which confidence implies mutually on writers and receiver.

No. 129.

ORDER THEREON, No. 993; dated 29th April 1859.

1. In this letter Colonel Faber the late Chief Engineer stated objections to two points in the order of Government of the 15th March 1859, No. 596, in which new rules were laid down for the appointment, promotion, punishment, and dismissal of the Subordinates of the Public Works Department. A part of the plan was that the Upper Subordinates from Assistant Overseer to Supervisor inclusive, should be nominated by the District Engineer, subject to approval by the Chief Engineer. But Colonel Faber pointed out difficulties in this, inasmuch as the numbers of the several grades do not coincide with the number of Districts, except in one case. The Districts are twenty, excluding the Presidency, while the numbers of the several grades are as noted in the margin.

12 Supervisors.
20 Assistant do,
40 Overseers,
116 Assistant do, but now
only 60 under the orders
of 18th July 1857, No.
1341, for reduction of Es-
tablishment.

Fort Saint George, Public Works Consultation of 29th April 1859.

2. The difficulty thus pointed out was not foreseen when the order was passed, but the Governor in Council is of opinion that it is not of much importance. It will only be necessary that the Chief Engineer should interfere a little more actively in distributing promotion among the various Districts than was intended; and in general, it may be observed that promotion to the grade of Assistant Supervisor and even Supervisor will usually be by seniority; for if men have been carefully and fairly selected for the lower grades, there will rarely be ground for passing over any one for promotion to the higher grades.

3. The other point raised by Colonel Faber was that of the abolition of Confidential Reports, directed in para. 14 of the order in question. In modification of that order, Government will not object to the continuance of these Reports, as respects the Upper Subordinates only, if the present Chief Engineer Colonel Bell considers it desirable. They will not be at all necessary in the case of the Sub-Overseers, whose promotion is now left to the District Engineer, and they should be made only once a year.

4. Colonel Faber's observations respecting the danger of the new rules, as to punishment and dismissal, do not seem to call for remark.

Paras. 10 and 11,

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

Central Office of Public Works
Fort Saint George 25 March 1859.

N^o 8993

Read the following

From

The Chief Engineer

To

The Secretary to Government

Public Works Department

Sir,

Public

In the scheme of radical depart-
mental decentralization which the Government
has been pleased to inaugurate in their orders of
the 15th Instant, N^o 596, and which it apparent-
ly would have been neither inexpedient nor un-
usual to ventilate previous to adoption by dis-
cussion amongst the District and Superintending
Engineers of the Department to be so largely
afflicted, one source of practical embarrassment
has suggested itself to me, which it would be
more agreeable to myself to have suppressed
for many obvious reasons, but as I unfeignedly
believe that the working of the new system will
be obstructed in limine, unless the instructions
of Government are promptly issued for over-
coming the difficulty, I trust I shall stand
acquitted

acquitted of the apparent bias of an
criticizing a large measure of internal reform.
initiated, matured, and fully authorized for
immediate introduction by Government.

2. One chief endeavor of the cen-
tralized administration has
been to debilitate personal claims, and to
divert preference as impartially as a wish to
do so unworship of predilection in favor of
individuals might secure, into channels convey-
ing the stream of advancement as evenly as
possible amongst the several Circles and
Districts, so as to dispense the stimulus of
success throughout the whole Department of
Public Works.

3. But with such District En-
gineers empowered to nominate Chief Overseers, and
Probationary Assistant Overseers, and to promote such
the first instance and to promote such
nominees subsequently and elevate to the grade
of Supervisor, how is such power to have practical
action in a Department, each grade of which
consists of a limited number, which in each
one case corresponds with the number of
Districts never with of that of the Executive
Ranges.

4. Take the case of Supervisors of whom
there are 12, or by casualty 11. Under the new
rules, how is this vacancy to be filled on de-
centralized principles?

5. It is the natural tendency of each
District Engineer to exaggerate whether for
good or evil the qualities of his own subor-
dinates, and at all events each incumbent
creates his own standard of qualifications and
merit. It is not improbable that each of the
twenty District Engineers will be of opinion that
one of his employes has valid claims to the
appointment of Supervisor, yet it can be
conferred on but one. Who is to decide on
the individual, when twenty patrons claim
a right to appoint their own nominees?

6. If it be replied that each
District Engineer is only to make promotions
within his own District, then at least eight
of the twenty Districts are for ever debarred
from the attainment of a rank they have
hitherto had an acknowledged right to
aspire to, and all Districts of whose per-
manent allotments under the scale of
23rd July 1857. the grade of Supervisor forms
no

XXXIV-11-1857

Wm

Sp

no portion, are unjustly deferred before those to whom a Supervisor has been allotted.

7. Again if a Districtwar establishment be regarded as a distinct but complete department in itself, within which and not in the general gradational List, promotions shall be made. How equalize the rate of advancement? Cholera may convert a clever Assistant-Career into a Supervisor in a single sickly season in one District, whilst his no less able contemporary in another may complete his full servitude, with only his own and the health of his fellow-subordinates to compensate them for being so much superseded by others their Juniors in many cases.

8. It may be that I am creating difficulties which the Government either do not admit or are prepared to overcome without the aid of a central intervention.

9. Yet promotion must either be general or it must be Districtwar. If the former, how is the very existence of a vacancy in London to be known in Tennessee, and if made generally known, what becomes of a District Engineer's individual power to make individual promotions, or who is to select one from the twenty candidates or nominees. If the latter, what is to

to be expected as the result of such great inequalities in promotion as seem to be inseparable from vacancies belonging to the localities in which they happen to occur?

10. If I could see how these apparent difficulties could be surmounted in an unobjectionable manner, I should hail the accession of power gained by decentralizing as a substantial improvement so far as nominations and promotions are concerned. But my own observation and some practical experience lead me to a very different conclusion indeed as regards power of punishment. It is a painful anticipation to myself, that a single hasty word indiscreetly spoken after a moment of partial indulgence, (caused as often happens after long exposure and fatigue by a very small quantity of any fermented beverage) may imperil the welfare of an excellent public servant, and may lose to Government, the further usefulness of an experienced and skilled practical Executive.

11. Regard being had to the large admixture of the European element in the Department of Public Works, and to the comparative youth of many of our District Engineers, I cannot but regard with no inconsiderable apprehension

no apprehension the probable consequences of Para
a 9 which confers the power of discharging &
7. degrading all Sub Officers. (How degradation can
be carried out when all grades are complete is
not stated) There are many Europeans, and
likely to be many more in the Lower Subordinate
Establishment and the Government must be pre-
pared to fear the services of many
valuable men by giving the exception power to the
Local Officers now proposed. It seems to me that
the three brigade regiments of Sub Officers
are left without the protection enjoyed by
most other public servants and that a door
will be opened to much harassment & oppression
& which may be used, so far as all practical con-
sequences are concerned, with perfect impunity.
It seems to me dangerous that any man should
be both judge and jury in his own case, and
the right of Petition is almost worthless, as the
or appellate office must needs delegate the case
to the very party complained against, which
to further, by what of pressure is then with
the all defence the promotion of the
Confidential Reports are left valuable as it
seems to me in the Department of Public Works
more than in Her Majesty's Army at home and abroad,

and in Her Majesty's Indian Armies also) the
Chief Engineer has been deprived of the means
of ascertaining the actual antecedents of any
such Petitioner or Petitioners.

12. Indeed as regards Confidential
Reports, (though not more frequently than once
a year,) the present measures of decentralization
appear to me rather to make them more,
than less valuable. In fact how the Chief
Engineer is to submit the respectful expression
of his opinions under Clause 1 of para 6 or
respecting the appointment and promotion
of Officers of the Engineers Establishment,
as has been generally the great privilege of
that Officer under the present Governor
of Madras, I scarcely see. It is unquestion-
able that one important means of rectifying
his own judgment by comparing it
with that of others will, or rather has thus
been taken away and at a time apparently
when the dangers, misuse and abuse, of
Confidential Reports have been so signally
diminished; for it is a great mistake to sup-
pose that the names of members of the Upper
Subordinate Establishment, are, as assumed
in para 14, commonly or often mentioned
by

by District Engineer and the course of ordinary duty is far from making the Superintending Engineers and the Chief Engineer acquainted with the qualifications of Subordinates in the Department of Public Works.

13. The suppression of Confidential Reports undoubtedly relieves the members of the Central Office of a very irksome and troublesome duty when conscientiously performed; but it is beyond all question that they are thereby in themselves left much more incompetent to discharge the duties still left to them. The information is indispensable, but it must hereafter be obtained in some less commodious manner and divested of that character of secrecy which confidence implies mutually on writers & receiver.

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

Central Office of P.W.
Fort Saint George
25th March 1859

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Memorandum.

It has lately been
 thought necessary, in order to
 correct serious practical defects
 in the working of the Public
 Works Department to give
 much more power to the District
 Engineers than they had before
 proposed, over their subordinates.
 The accompanying
 order of March 15th 1859, No.
 596, was the first in this
 direction, laying down new

undisputed rules for the appointment
 to all in all respects and promotion, as well as
 grade in fact they the punishment and dismissal
 as essential things
 in the department of the subordinates of the
 Public Works Department. And it was
 followed by that of March 28th
 which will

I quite concur
 and propose that
 an answer
 should be returned
 to Colonel Baker
 accordingly

Y
 M
 7 miles

Con: 15 March 1859

98 March 1859

No 706

The Chief Engineer

The Secretary to Government

Dated 25 March 1859

No 8993

Ref: 993. 29 April 1859

Ref: 993. 29 April 1859.
 I have for information
 as to the working of the
 Public Works Department
 No 1859 of
 15th March 1859 in certain
 instances, especially the
 to power of punishment
 conferred on District Engin
 by law 9, and respect
 to the abolition
 of Confidential Reports

No 128

66 April 1859

No. 730, which gave District Engineers the power of distributing their expenditures as they might think best. It was the unanimous and decided opinion of all the members of Government that both these changes were necessary.

3 To make the series of orders complete I must cite also that of 8th February, No. 330, which created a great evil in the Department, and which also (Para 12) withdrew from the Chief Engineer the power which he had previously possessed of moving Officers from one District to another.

The reasons of this change are given in the order itself; in the latter particular it was supplemented by Para 5 of the order of March 28th No. 730

12 Supervisors
20 Asst. = 66
40 Overseers
116 Asst. = 66
but now only 50
under the orders
of 18th July 57 No. 1381
for reduction of
Establishments

110
4 In his present letter the Chief Engineer objects to two points in the order of the 15th March. A part of the plan was that the upper subordinates from Asst. Over-
-seer to Supervisor inclusive, should be nominated by the District Engineer, subject to approval by the Chief Engineer. But Colonel Sabin points out difficulties in this, inasmuch as the ~~number~~^{number} of the several grades do not coincide with the No. of Districts except in one case. The Districts are 20, (excluding the Presidency) while the Nos. of the several grades are as in the margin.

5 I confess that when drafting the order I did not think of examining
the

the members of the several grades.

But I think the Chief Engineer's objections are more ingenious than real; and that it will only be necessary that the

Chief Engineer should inter-^{the ability of the}
fere a little more actively ^{list of merit to be}
in distributing promotions, ^{given by the merit}
than the order contemplated. ^{of the service - does}
I think there is no difficulty ^{in D-E - & all}
that need prevent the
working of the order.

6. The other point ^{Paras 12 & 13}
raised by Colonel Faxon
is that of the abolition of
confidential Reports. If
they are allowed to be
continued it need only
be for the upper labor-
ers, not for the sub-
overseers, whose promotion
is now left to the District
Engineer

Colonel

Paras 10 & 11

7.

Colonel Faxon observes
-ations respecting the dan-
-ger of the new rules as
to punishment, and dis-
-missed do not seem to
call for remark.

J. M.
A. D.

No 993.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation
Under date the 29th April 1859.

Read the following
letter from the Chief
Engineer

(Here entered 25 March/59. 1859)

1. In this letter ~~from~~
Col. Fother
~~was stated by the~~ Chief Engineer stated ~~the~~
objections to two points in
the order of Govt of the 15th
March 1859, & 596, in
which new rules were
laid down for the ap-
pointment, promotion,
punishment, and dis-
missal of the Subordi-
nates of the Pub. Works Dept.
A part of the plan was
that the ~~dismissed~~ Subordinates
from

LG

W

W

from Assistant Overseer
to Supervisor inclusive,
should be nominated
by the District Engineer,
subject to approval by the
Chief Engineer. But Col.
Faber pointed out diffi-
culties in this, inasmuch
as the numbers of the
several grades do not
coincide with the ^{number} of
Districts, except in one case.
The Districts are ^{twenty} ~~25~~,
including the Presidency,
while the ^{numbers} of the
several grades are as
noted in the margin.

Altho' the numbers of
the several grades may
not however ~~thus~~ accord
with the number of
the Districts, the late
Chief Engineer's objections
to the successful working
of the reforms, were made
ingenious

* 12 Supervisors
20 — Asst. — do
40 Overseers,
116 — Asst. — do,
but now only 50 under the
orders of 15th July 1878-1881,
for reduction of Establishment.

2. The difficulty thus pointed
out was not foreseen when
the order was passed, but
the Governor in Council
is of opinion that it is
not of much importance.

Sh

among the various dis-
tricts than was intended;
and in general, it may be
observed that promotion to
the grade of ^{Assistant} Supervisor
and even Supervisor will
usually be by seniority;
for if men have been care-
fully and fairly selected
for the lower grades, there
will rarely be ground
for passing over any one
for promotion to the
higher grades.

230
ingenious than real; and
in order to remove what
little difficulty there may
be, it will ^{only be} necessary
that the Chief Engineer
should interfere a little
more actively in distribu-
ting promotion. A mode
that suggests itself of meet-
ing such difficulty would
be, to promote to a Supervi-
ship the senior of the no-
minees, provided such
senior is reported by his
District Engineer to be
in every way fitted for
promotion.

3. The other point
raised by Colonel Faber
was that of the abolition
of Confidential Reports,
directed in para 14 of
the order in question.
In modification of
that order, Government
will

will have ^{not} objections to

the continuance of these

Reports, ~~but they~~ ^{may}

~~only be necessary for the~~

~~Upper Subordinates, and~~

~~for the sub Overseers, whose~~

promotion is now left

to the District Engineer, and

they should be made only once a year.

3. Colonel Sater's

observations respecting the

changes of the rules,

as to punishment and

dismissal, do not seem

to call for remark.

JAS

10 Copies to Chief Eng: Dist: 30th

as respects the Upper sub-ordinates only, if the present Chief Eng: Col Bell consider it desirable. They will not be at all necessary in the case of

Jan 10 11

Pauline Porter 1859 Dec 1st
Cane 29th April.

1893.

Abstracts of Cases:
J 29: 2 April 59.

John

On being observations
on late Miss Higgins
Chelms to the former
for her promotion and friend
in view of the extraordinary
T. P. H. confirmed on
distinct Enquirer and the
abolition of the English
Reports.

Ms. A. 9.2.12.8 v. 129.

21 April