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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.
Can 28/14/1889

G.O. No. <u>997</u>	Press Mis.
<u>18836</u> Dated <u>28/4/1889</u>	<u>1889</u>

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No. 997.

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

Read the following letter from the Commissioners for investigating Public Establishments.

Reporting on the Establishment of the Central Office of Public Works and suggesting the preparation of digests of the rules applicable to the divisions and grades in the Public Works Department.

(Here enter 6th April 1859.)

In this Report the Commissioners review numerous letters, referred to them, generally by Government but in one instance by the Chief Engineer, and written by the Chief Engineer, the late Officiating Chief Engineer and several Members of the Central Office of Public Works, respecting the Sub Audit Department of that office.

2. The Governor in Council considers it quite unnecessary to go into the statements and counter-statements, the charges and recriminations, which form the staple of most of these papers. He sees no reason to dissent from the conclusions of the Commissioners as set forth in this clear and compendious Report.

3. The attention of the Superintending Engineers will be specially called to their duties in respect to the Accounts and Audit, as pointed out in paras. 10 to 13; duties which hitherto they appear to have wholly neglected, but of which His Excellency in Council will expect a strict fulfilment hereafter.

4. Messrs. Grant, Home, Hart, and Johnston will be informed that the Government require of them the steady performance of their proper work; and disapprove of their time being taken up by such useless and even mischievous correspondence as that reviewed in this Report. Mr. Grant in particular will be warned, with reference to para. 21, that his whole attention during office hours is to be given to office work.

5. As respects the District Engineers the Governor in Council desires the Chief Engineer to lay before Government immediately a statement of the Periodical Returns due from each District Engineer on the March last, and another of all the Bills due on the same day. These two Statements will be called within five days of the date of this order.

6. The absolute necessity of punctuality in the keeping of Accounts and the rendering of Statements and Returns, and the ease with which this may be effected if no arrears are allowed to accrue, have been repeatedly impressed on the Members of the Department Public Works, but by no means with all the desired effect. The Governor in Council now warns all Members of the Department that laxity in this important respect will no longer be endured; and that persons of whatever grade who either exhibit it themselves or tolerate it in their Subordinates, will be dealt with as disqualified.

7. The Chief Engineer will report, immediately on receipt of this order, whether the hours of office attendance prescribed in para. 15 of the order of November 6th 1858 No. 2341, have been enforced, as well as the rules for ensuring their observance. If the rules are not in operation, he will explain the reason.

8. Adverting to para. 23 of the present Report, the Governor in Council desires that the Chief Engineer will take immediate measures for the compilation of a complete Code of Regulations for the Department.

9. The Chief Engineer will make such communication to the Members of the Department of Public Works as he may consider necessary since the determination of the Government to support his authority in enforcing a strict public duty by every person connected with the Department.

(A true Extract.)

Signed, D. ROURDON.

Secretary to Government.

To the Chief Engineer with the Commissioners' Report.

Ed. Wm. Thomas.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION FOR INVESTIGATING PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENTS.

E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 1432, 23rd July 1858. On the 23rd July 1858, Government referred to the Commission the undermentioned letters, with their enclosures, for early report.

From the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; soliciting increase to establishment of Central Office. (Here enter No. 674 of 29th May 1858.)

From the Officiating Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; requesting temporary assistance in Audit Branch of Central Office. (Here enter No. 1955 of 14th July 1858.)

2. These two letters treated of divers subjects, but, as the arrears in the Bill Branch of the Audit Sub-department had attracted the special attention of Government, and, as appeared by their Proceedings, an early report on that particular subject had been called for, the Commission at once proceeded to investigate, and reported on 10th August 1858.

E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 2241, 6th November 1858. 3. This first Report was generally adopted by Government, early in November, by which time the Audit Sub-department had increased its daily average of disposals, from Rupees 1,438, to Rupees 1,00,000 (circa) and the necessity for assistance had ceased.

Pro. of C. for I. P. E., 10th August 1858. Para. 1. 4. In their Proceedings, the Commission observed, of "the Audit Sub-department, the Superintending Engineers, (and) the District Engineers, (that) the duties of all have been distinctly laid down in the Circular and Standing Orders of the Department, and it is much to be regretted that more attention has not been paid to them;" and pointed out in what particulars the short-comings of the several departments had been manifest.

E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 2580, 1st December 1858. 5. Nothing further transpired until early in December 1858, when Government referred to the Commission, but without comment, a letter.

From the Officiating Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; complaining that the Report of the Commission was not referred to him for reply, stating that defective knowledge had evidently misled the Commission, deprecating the promulgation of their imperfect views, and insinuating that the Central Office had been hardly dealt with, and unjust charges advanced against it by the Commission. (Here enter No. 5317 of 11th November 1858.)

The remainder of the letter is taken up with observations, which admit, to the fullest extent, the truth of the statements made, and the justice of the conclusions arrived at, by the Commission.

E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 251, 27th January 1859.
E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 481, 2nd March 1859.
E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 630, 18th March 1859. 6. The subject is again treated of, in letters, which, with their enclosures, have been referred by Government to the Commission for report.

From the Officiating Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; reporting more successful working of Audit Branch, condemning the Head Auditor Mr. Home, and at the same time enclosing, with approval, a letter from the Senior Uncovenanted Assistant Mr. Grant. (Here enter No. 6323 of 15th December 1858.)

From the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; reviewing the whole of the circumstances, and enclosing exculpatory statement of two of the principal Auditors, Messrs. Hart and Johnson. (Here enter No. 6707 of 31st December 1858.)

From the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; enclosing a second letter of the Senior Uncovenanted Assistant Mr. Grant. (Here enter No. 7795 of 11th February 1859.)

From the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to Government; enclosing letters upon the subject of the actual extent of assistance afforded, in the Account and Audit Department, by the Senior, Uncovenanted Assistant Mr. Grant. (Here enter No. 8416 of 8th March 1859.)

From Mr. Home,
" Mr. Hart,
" Mr. Johnson.

And also in a Memorandum.—

Referred, by the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., to the Commission, for the information of Government—as requested by the ex-Officiating Chief Engineer P. W. D., with a marginal Memo. of the Chief Engineer, inviting inspection of the original draft of the letter of the ex-Officiating Chief Engineer, and enclosing that document. (Here enter No. 7971 of 17th Feby. 1859.)

*Originals herewith.

E. M. C., P. W. D., No. 2341, 6th November 1858.
Pro. of C. for I. P. E., 10th August 1858.
7. Such of the above mentioned letters as succeeded the publication of the order of Government of 6th November 1858, have all been filled, more or less, with the recriminations and justifications of the several Officers who considered themselves reflected on, by the Report of the Commission, as quoted by the Government, or by the letters of each other.

8. The Commission now proceed to deal with the arguments advanced by each of the departments reported on, viz.:—

The District Engineers,
The Superintending Engineers,
The Bill Branch of the Audit Sub-department.

Pro. of C. for I. P. E., 10th August 1858, Para. 8.
9. First of the District Engineers.—The extent of the short-comings of this large and important class of Officers, so far as arrears of Accounts are concerned, is shewn by the amount given by the Commission in their Proceedings, as follows, viz.:—

"There were bills yet to come in for Rupees 51,70,298." A sum which, it is not unworthy of notice, exceeds the entire disposals of the Audit Office in the year 1857-58.

10. Secondly of the Superintending Engineers.—The Commission, in their Proceedings, stated the facts, which the subsequent letters of the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., the Officiating Chief Engineer, P. W. D., the Senior Uncovenanted Assistant Mr. Grant, the Head Auditor Mr. Home, the Deputy Auditor Mr. Hart, and the Head of the Bill Branch of the Audit Mr. Johnson, abundantly prove, but this correspondence suggests the following questions, viz.:—

What are the prescribed duties of Superintending Engineers as regards the Bills of their circles? the sufficiency or otherwise of their separate establishments to cope with that duty? the authority which it was in their power to exercise to perform that duty? and the extent to which they used their authority in the performance of that and other duty?

Letters of Messrs. Hart and Johnson, 31st December 1858.
Para. 8.
Letter of Mr. Hart, 23rd February 1859. Paras. 6 and 10.
11. From the letters of Messrs. Hart and Johnson, it is clear that the Bill Branch of the Audit Office was divided into three sections, corresponding with the circles of the Superintending Engineers for the express convenience of those Officers, and that it was the duty of the Auditor of each circle, designated by these gentle-

men, "the responsible Auditor for each circle," to "receive any orders which the Superintending Engineer might give respecting the bills of his circle, and dispose of all bill work which might especially appertain to it." There is nothing in the letter of Mr. Grant inconsistent with this statement, although he deals more generally with the point, stating that the papers "were passed on to the Superintending Engineer's Department for their and the Chief's approval, previous to being fair copied and dispatched," while from the letter of the Chief Engineer, P. W. D., it appears that work, which in no degree appertained to the Bill Branch, or any Branch of the Audit Sub-department, was very frequently sent thither by the Superintending Engineers, and that in fact the greater portion of the time of Mr. Home the Head Auditor, and not a little of that of his Deputy Mr. Hart, was occupied in drafting letters unconnected with the immediate duties of their own department, whilst all attempt at supervision of the Audit business of their respective circles was entirely neglected by the Superintending Engineers.

Letter of Mr. Grant, 13th December 1858. Para. 3.

Letter of Chief Engineer, No. 6707, 31st December 1858. Para. 16.

Letter of Lt. Col. Lawford, No. 5317 of 11th November 1858. Para. 2.

Letter of Lt. Col. Lawford, No. 6323 of 15th December 1858. Para. 21.

12. The arguments therefore, of the Officiating Chief Engineer, P. W. D., touching the nominal character and irresponsible nature of the Agency of the Audit Department cannot be maintained, unless he is prepared to admit, that the duties proper of a Superintending Engineer come under that category. His view as to Superintending Engineers having no control or authority is purely a misapprehension, for as they themselves state, none of the Auditors of the circles would have refused obedience to any order given them by a Superintending Engineer. There does not appear either to be any reason why Superintending Engineers should necessarily have signed bills "as a matter of form" and thus two of the positions of Lieut. Colonel Lawford are disposed of. The other position as regards the Registers of periodical Returns and Reports, and the propriety of leaving them entirely in the hands of clerks, has already been dealt with, by the Commission in their first Report.

Para. 16.

M. of C. for I. P. E., 10th August 1858. Para. 20.

13. A better reason than any assigned for the non-performance of their duties, in respect to the Audit, by the Superintending Engineers, might have been found in the impossibility of complying with the orders of Government, by reason of the continual changes in the grade of Superintending Engineers. In the brief period that the Public Works Department has existed, the changes have been as follows, viz.:—

Southern Circle.		Southern Circle		4
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford	}	Centre Circle		7
Mr. Grant doing duty in C. C.		Northern Circle		4
Major Birdwood.				
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford.				
Major Birdwood.				
Centre Circle.				
Major Bell.	}			
Captain Collyer.				
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford				
Captain Francis.				
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford.				
Major Birdwood.				
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford.	}			
Major Orr d. d.				
Northern Circle.				
Lieutenant Colonel F. Cotton.	}			
Captain Johnston.				
Major Orr.				
Lieutenant Blagrove, d. d.				
Lieutenant Colonel Lawford, d. d.				
Major Orr.				

together 15; besides which there have been on four occasions a division of the work of the circle when the Central Office duties were taken up by Officers neither Acting nor Superintending Engineers—thus there have been virtually 19 Officers, performing the duties in the Central Office which are assigned by the Circular and Standing Orders of the P. W. D., to Superintending Engineers, which, divided into the number of Offices, gives five changes each on an average, and an incumbency of 7½ months. There is now only one left, of the three Superintending Engineers appointed less than four years ago.

11. *Thirdly, of the Bill Branch of the Audit Sub-department.*—It has already been shewn under the head of Superintending Engineers Paras. 11 and 12, herein, what their duties, means, and authority were, and what their performances have been—these while they explain in part, why the short-comings of the Bill Branch were not earlier amended, do not exonerate the establishment of the Central Office employed in that branch, and their more immediate superior the Chief Engineer. But the question arises, who was answerable to the Chief Engineer, and with whom does the blame after that Officer and the Superintending Engineers rest?

Letter of Chief Engineer, No. 6767, 31st December 1858.
Para. 5.

15. Colonel Faber states that Mr. Home was in charge from the commencement, i. e., 1st August 1855, and that afterwards in November (should be 16th October) 1855. Mr. Grant "was specially charged (by him) with the Account, Audit and Executive Departments, and instructed to take his seat in such a position as to have all the Accounts and Auditors and Examiners under his own eye;" that subsequently to this (in August 1857) Lieutenant O'Connell was put in charge, and (in

January 1858) "ordered to move from the upper rooms to the lower office in view to personally checking in the very bud, all signs of listless misapplied or clandestinely extra-official work." "Estimates, Accounts, Audit, Stores and Plant (were) now placed under Lieutenant O'Connell's control." His charge ceased on 11th June 1858.

Letter of Mr. Grant, 10th February 1859, Para. 9.

16. Mr. Grant's statements on this head are not materially different from those of Colonel Faber, except that he states that in June 1856 the Bill Department was placed again under Mr. Home by the detailed orders then issued by Colonel Faber, and which he contends rendered him no longer responsible for that department.

17. The Commission cannot therefore impute to Mr. Grant the extent of blame attributed to him by Colonel Faber, but at the same time they cannot relieve him from all blame, as they are satisfied, that from the position he held in that department of the Central Office, he should not have permitted it to get into such a discreditable state of arrears, without having suggested to the Chief Engineer, the adoption of the measures which have been so successfully carried out by him since August 1858.

18. It is quite clear that the Officers of the Audit Department did not perform their duty, and that therefore Mr. Grant is not really entitled to the eulogium passed upon him by Lieutenant Colonel Lawford.

19. The Commission cannot but express surprise that during the first examination into the state of the Audit Department in July 1858, not one word was advanced by either the Officiating Chief Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Lawford, by the Senior Uncovenanted Assistant, Mr. Grant, or by the three principal Audit Officers, Messrs. Home, Hart and Johnson, on the subject of the several arrangements made by the Chief Engineer with a view to make head against the accumulation of arrears, and which shew that the Chief Engineer had certainly made some attempts to overtake the arrears in question; and it is to be regretted that Colonel Faber permitted Lieutenant O'Connell so entirely to defeat the object he had in view when he was placed in charge of the Audit Department.

Letter of Chief Engineer, No. 6767, 31st December 1858.
Para. 13.

20. The Commission will not here remark upon the merits of the scrutiny exercised over the bills since August 1858 under the direction of Mr. Grant—that question will be dealt with when the more important consideration of how the Audit is to be conducted in future is before it.

Paras. 9 and 10.

21. With regard to the observations of the Chief Engineer, as to the mode in which Mr. Grant employed his time, and his "perfunctory if not reluctant discharge of his duty"—it appears that Mr. Grant denies that he has ever wasted even half an hour of public time in the transaction of extra-official business. Colonel Faber says, that he never found Mr.

Grant "in the obvious discharge of his own strictly professional duties," and Mr. Home describes Mr. Grant as having "ample time at his disposal, but devoted to study and other

un-official pursuits." The Commission are of opinion that when Mr. Grant was found misapplying his time, and permitting heavy arrears to exist, in a department deemed to be under his control, the Government should not have been applied to for an increase to the Establishment, but Mr. Grant should have been compelled to devote his time to the performance of his public duties. To notice this matter further, seems both useless and unnecessary.

22. After an attentive consideration of the many papers which have been compiled and referred to the Commission, they do not find, in all that has been written, one statement that would induce them to modify their previous Report. On the contrary, as has already been observed of Lieutenant Colonel Lawford's letter at Para. 5 herein, the documents, one and all, fully justify the conclusions arrived at by them on the occasion of their first investigation, viz.:—that the Audit Department of the Central Office had been marked by lax superintendence, inexcusable idleness, and general mismanagement.

23. To prevent for the future the state of ignorance which has been found to prevail in the Central Office, in regard to the orders of Government relative to the duties of the several Offices of that establishment, the Commission suggest that the Chief Engineer be instructed to prepare digests of the rules applicable to the several divisions and grades in the P. W. D., on the principle observed in the compilation of Circular and Standing Orders affecting the duties and responsibilities of the Collectors, as prepared by the Commission.

W. A. MOREHEAD, *President.*

G. L. PRENDERGAST,

G. BALFOUR, *Colonel.*

Madras, 6th April 1858.

(A true Copy.)

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,

Secretary to Government.

Exd. Wm. Thomas.

Engineers Office, Respective

W. 997

P. 11. D.

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

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Refers to the Chief Engr. Dispt. 30th
with some Report -

JWA

Public Works 1859. Df. 10.
Cons. 29th April.

1897

Extract. Min. of Cons.

Df. 29th April 1859.

From the Chief Constable Df. 2nd
May/59 C.R. 1072. Sub. 171

From - do. 7:420 May/59 C.R. 1072
1158, & 1288. Cons.
Periodical returns.

11.55
Issuing orders in the
report of the Commission for
investigating Public Establish-
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70/135 & 136.

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