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Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT. Secy 10/6/38

G.O. No. 1422 Press / Mis.

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Dated 10-6- 18 38

Not to be folded or roughly handled

16/7/38

No 189. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. BELL, Chief Engineer; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq, Secretary to Government, dated 6th May 1859, No. 161.

April 5th 1859, No. 811.

In para. 17 of the order of Government as per margin, the Chief Engineer is directed to state his opinion at an early date upon the means proposed to ensure uniformity and regularity in the preparation of Bills proposed by the Commission for investigating Public Establishments.

2. I have found it difficult to give due attention to the many new subjects which press upon me in my new office; and I cannot at present report fully and finally upon the proposition of the Commissioners, but I will, agreeably to the desire of Government, now submit my opinion as far as I have been able to form one.

3. The form of "Certificate" recommended by the Commissioners is in principle the same as that of the Bill which was in use in some Districts under the old system of Maramut many years ago, and which was introduced by myself with the sanction of the Board of Revenue throughout the Department of Public Works. But it found no favor with the Public Works Commissioners, who denounced it as not a proper Bill at all, as causing a great deal of trouble for its preparation, and as encouraging fictitious calculations and entries. I do not quote the report of the Commissioners, but write from recollection of my personal communications with them. I was not convinced by their arguments; but as their recommendations on such points were generally adopted without question, the old form of Bill was superseded and abolished.

4. It will be apparent on very little consideration that if the Public Works Commissioners' objections to the old form of Bill were in any respect valid, their validity would be encreased in the case of the piece or part Bills recommended by the Commission on Public Establishments. If work were paid for in the Department of Public Works at a certain "rate" it would be a simple process to calculate the "quantity and value;" but even contract work, of which there is very little in the Department, is not so valued; and as to all the rest, except Wodawars' work in earth and stone, its value can be computed only by reckoning together the bricks, lime, sand (or other materials), sundries and operatives combined for its performance: in other words, the whole process condemned by the Public Works Commissioners must be repeated over and over again as often as each "Certificate" is granted. Contract work again is not paid for by the "rate," but the contract is usually made for the whole work, and when a given portion of the building or other work is completed according to the Plan and Estimate, and approved, the Contractor who has received an advance for the said portion, receives another to enable him to proceed, and his account is finally settled without any valuation at all, unless that may be said to be implied in the approval of the Inspecting Officer.

5. The present form of Bill, to which the strictest adherence has been enjoined in the Department, is that which was approved by the Public Works Commissioners. It most truly was never intended to "shew" the "progress in detail of each work or to bring periodically under notice the whole working under each Estimate or Contract," for it is a mere list of materials and workmen with their cost and hire, and any Bill on inspection might be conceived as applicable to an infinite variety of works containing generally equal quantities of the usual materials. But when the Commission affirm that "there is not any regulation in this [the North Arcot] District prescribing uniformity and regularity in the preparation of the Bills," they seem to me to have mistaken the facts of the case. There is indeed no local or provincial regulation, but the departmental regulation for uniformity and regularity is as precise as possible; and Bills by scores and hundreds are prepared continually all over the Presidency on one "uniform and regular" system. Nor has the Commission produced more than one instance of irregularity even in North Arcot.

6. The "Certificate" would be of no use for the purpose of "allowing payment;" for the payments would be all made before the valuation of the work could be computed. On the other hand it would be very useful for the second purpose of "giving" a "full view of the work that has been done," and "that remains to be done;" but it is as I have shown above altogether a

mistake to suppose that "little time would be expended in preparing" it. That would be true only if the estimated or any other arbitrary "rate" were taken for the valuation of the work; but if the rate were a genuine rate derived from the actual cost, as it must be to produce a true "Bill," its computation would by no means occupy a little time, but would involve more or less time and trouble according to the experience and aptitude of the computer. I am far from objecting on this ground to the "Certificate" or "Bill" proposed by the Commission, for I have always regretted that the Public Works Commissioners altered the form of which I had for many years proved the convenience; but it is one thing to acknowledge the goodness of a form, and another to introduce it over the whole Department in supercession of a form established after long deliberation, and habitual to every Executive Agent. There have been trouble and vexation enough in enforcing the present forms, and I fear that the disagreeable process would be abundantly repeated all over the provinces in teaching new ones, especially for Bills which seem to have been the universal *bete noir* of the Department. If indeed there were some extensive or general irregularities to be corrected much might be said in favor of devising new forms of procedure; but while the writer of the report on North Arcot has certainly made the most of those few which have been discovered, the Commissioners are doubtless fully aware that in the immense majority of the Bills of the Department there is no irregularity, though mistakes may often occur in them, as they certainly would do in every possible form of Bill.

7. Upon the whole I am not at present disposed to admit the necessity or expediency of the change proposed by the Commission. The present form of Bill is certainly of little or no use as a check on the progress report; but it has the advantage of perfect simplicity and truth, and of being intelligible to every sort of person who has occasion to use it. But I reserve my final opinion till I am able to report upon the whole system of Account and Audit.

8. I will only add that as the actual form of the "Certificate" has not been communicated, I have taken my information upon it from the textual description; but I believe that I have not misapprehended its true character.

No. 190. ORDER THEREON, 10th June 1859 No. 1422.

The Chief Engineer reports his opinion in this letter as to the form of certificate or Bill proposed by the establishments Commissioners to be introduced into the Public Works Department in place of the Bill now in use. Though not approving the present form of Bill, and preferring that proposed by the Commissioners, Colonel Bell is yet adverse to the change now that the Bill in use has become established in the Department. He reserves his final opinion on the subject however, till he shall be able to report on the whole system of Account and Audit; which he has since done without expressing any further opinion on this matter.

2. The Governor in Council considers that the Chief Engineer has given good reasons for being adverse to the change, and the Government would be unwilling to make any alteration in the Rules of the Department in opposition to his judgment and wishes.

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

Central Office of P.W. 3
Fort Saint George
6th May 1859

No. 164

From
The Chief Engineer
To
The Secretary
to Government P.W.D.

Sir,

Public

April 5th 1859
No. 811

In para 17 of the order of Government as per margin the Chief Engineer is directed to state his opinion at an early date upon the means proposed to ensure uniformity and regularity in the preparation of Bills proposed by the Commission for investigating Public Establishments

2. I have found it difficult to give due attention to the many new subjects which press upon me in my new Office; and I cannot at present report fully and finally upon the propositions of the Commissioners, but I will, agreeably to the desire of Government, now submit my opinion as far as I have been able to form one —

3. The form of "Certificate" recommended by the Commissioners is in principle the same as that of

of [illegible] and preference

that

of the Bill which was in use in some Districts under the old system of Maramut many years ago, and which was introduced by myself with the sanction of the Board of Revenue throughout the Department of Public Works. But it found no favor with the Public Works Commissioners, who denounced it as not a proper Bill at all, as causing a great deal of trouble for its preparation, and as encouraging fictitious calculations and entries. I do not quote the report of the Commissioners, but write from recollection of my personal communications with them. I was not convinced by their arguments, but as their recommendations on such points were generally adopted without question, the old form of Bill was superseded and abolished. —

4 It will be apparent on very little consideration that of the Public Works Commissioners' objections to the old form of Bill were in any respect valid, their validity would be increased in the case of the Piece or Part Bills recommended by the Commission on Public Establishments. If work were paid for in the Department of Public Works at a certain "rate" it would be a simple process to

to calculate the "quantity and value;" but even contract work, of which there is very little in the Department, is not so valued; and as to all the rest, except wodaurs' work in earth and stone, its value can be computed only by reckoning together the bricks, lime, sand (or other materials) sundries and operatives combined for its performance: in other words the whole process condemned by the Public Works Commissioners must be repeated over and over again as often as each "Certificate" is granted. Contract work again is not paid for by the "rate", but the contract is usually made for the whole work, and when a given portion of the building or other work is completed according to the plan and Estimate, and approved, the Contractor who has received an advance for the said portion, receives another to enable him to proceed, and his account is finally settled without any valuation at all, unless that may be said to be implied in the approval of the Inspecting Officer. —

5 The present form of bill, to which the strictest adherence has been enjoined in the Department, is that which was approved by the

Public

that

Public Works Commissioners. It most truly was never intended to "shew" the "progress in detail of each work" or to bring periodically under notice the whole working under each Estimate or Contract," for it is a mere list of Materials and workmen with their cost and hire, and any Bill or inspection might be conceived as applicable to an infinite variety of works containing generally equal quantities of the usual materials. But when the Commission affirm that "there is not any regulation in this [the North Arcot] District, prescribing uniformity and regularity in the preparation of the bills," they seem to me to have mistaken the facts of the case. There is indeed no local or provincial regulation, but the departmental regulation for uniformity and regularity is as precise as possible; and Bills by scores and hundreds are prepared continually all over the Presidency on one "uniform and regular" system. Nor has the Commission produced more than one instance of irregularity even in North Arcot. —

6 The "Certificate" would be of no use for the purpose of "allowing payments;" for the payments would be all made before the valuation of the work could be computed. On the other hand it

it would be very useful for the second purpose of "giving" a "full view of the work that has been done" and "that remains to be done;" but it is as I have shown above altogether a mistake to suppose that "little time would be expended in preparing" it. That would be true only if the estimated or any other arbitrary "rate" were taken for the valuation of the work; but if the rate were a genuine rate derived from the actual cost, as it must be to produce a true "Bill," its computation would by no means occupy a little time, but would involve more or less time and trouble according to the experience and aptitude of the computer. I am far from objecting on this ground to the "Certificate" or "Bill" proposed by the Commission, for I have always regretted that the Public Works Commissioners altered the form of which I had for many years proved the convenience, but it is one thing to acknowledge the goodness of a form, and another to introduce it over the whole Department in supercession of a form established after long deliberation, and habitual to every Executive Agent. There have been trouble and vexation enough in enforcing the present forms

of

that

P.W. Dept.

No 1422

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Under date the 10th June 1859
Rec'd the following
Letter from the Chief
Engineer.

Comm. 6th May 1859
No 164

The Chief Engineer
reports his opinion on
the means to ensure
uniformity and regularity
in the preparation of
Bills proposed by the
Commission for investigating
Public Establishments.

Cons. 5th Feb. 59 Nos. 54-55

P.W. — 1859 Dept.
Cons. 10th June.
No 1133.

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

Dated 6th
Rec'd 6 } May 1859.
No 164.

Reports his views on
the means proposed to
ensure uniformity and
regularity in the preparation
of Bills proposed by the
Commission for investigating
Public Establishments.

No 1422. 10 June 1859.

No 189.

3 Dupl. Rq.

that proposed by the Commissioners, Colonel Bell is yet adverse to the change now that the bill in use has become established in the Department. He reserves his final opinion on the subject however, till he shall be able to report on the whole system of Account & Audit, which he has since done without expressing any further opinion on this matter.

2 The Governor in Council considers that the Chief Engineer's remarks in Paragraph 6 show that he is not thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the proposed Bill or the mode of preparing it,

~~it, but~~ he has given good reasons for being adverse to the change, and the Government would be unwilling to make any alteration in the Rules of the Department in opposition to his judgment and wishes.

10 Copies to the Chief Engr & Disbd 11th

PR- 5th Jan'y 59 No 54-55 Public Works 1859 — 24th Jan'y
Cons: 10th June

No 1422.

Pro: of the Madras Govt
D/10th June/59.

Government are unwilling to make any alteration in the rules of the P.W.D. regarding the preparation of Bills.

No 189 & 190.

c3 Dec'r 59

Pr = 5th Feb. 59 N:54-55

Public Works 1859 — 4th No.
Comm: 10th June

No. 1422.

Pro: of the Madras Govt
D/10th June/59.

Government are unwilling to make any alteration in the rules of the P.W.D. regarding the preparation of Bills-

No 189 & 190.

c3 Lmo 11th