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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.*Cas 29.3.860*

G.O. No.	<i>659.</i>	Press Mis.
<i>123-124</i>		
Dated	<i>29.3.</i>	<i>18.60.</i>

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
for the month of March 1860.*

No. 123. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Military Department, dated 22nd March 1860, No. 1,129:—

Ordering the within mentioned work connected with the Sanitary improvement of Saint Thomas' Mount to be proceeded with without further delay, and calling on the District Engineer to report whether the pit in the Horse field Battery Lines still remains unclosed. (Vide Military Proceedings from 21st to 31st March 1860, Nos. 46-47.)

No. 124. ORDER THEREON, 29th March 1860, No. 659.

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer for his information and guidance. He will call for the early submission of the report required.

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Dy. Secretary to Government.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from Major J. F. TENNANT, Bengal Engineers, Government Astronomer, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 13th March 1860.

It is with regret that I feel myself obliged to submit for the Orders of His Excellency the Governor in Council a request that I may be absolved from all responsibility connected with the works in progress at the Observatory.

By a resolution of Government dated the 5th January 1859, the Department of Public Works was instructed to undertake the mounting of the new Transit Circle from England, the former mounting having failed. The estimate for this work was sanctioned at a sum of Rupees 750 on the 23rd of June last; at which time the work was reported as begun (see the Proceedings of Government.) On the 14th July Major Worster represented to the Civil Architect the propriety of setting up the Transit piers before the setting in of the monsoon and in reply was informed that till the roof was completed it was not advisable to do any work for the Circle. On the 15th October (when little remained to be done to the roof) I again addressed the Civil Architect on the subject of the delay of work, and pointed out that no saving of cost would compensate for the establishment being kept without their usual employment. In reply Captain Hitchins expressed his opinion that there had been no extraordinary delay.

The work has been in hand ever since, and the labor employed in cutting and facing the stones for the piers has been from 2 or 3 to 8 men daily.

A few days ago the stones were said to be finished and were brought close to the Observatory door, two being laid on the old brick foundation. On coming into the Observatory on the 2nd instant, I found that one of these last was being set resting on granite chips and that preparations were being made to insert more fragments under it. As this would have compromised the stability of the piers I had the stone removed and reported it. The Civil Architect replied that his Supervisor told him that the chips were to be removed, and that their presence was temporary.

I then referred the question to the Chief Engineer (who in February 1859 had ordered the work to be done under the direction of the Astronomer) pointing out, that it was quite impossible I could assist in superintendence of the works where I was exposed to have the statements of Captain Hitchins' subordinates quoted as a sufficient answer to mine, and requested that arrangements might be made for supervision.

In consequence of my letter, Colonel Lawford called at the Observatory and proposed, that I should have a Superintendent placed at my orders, and manage my own work, to which I consented willingly. Some difficulty however arose and on the 7th instant, Colonel Lawford addressed me, suggesting two arrangements—1st, that I should entirely manage my own work procuring my own Superintendents, and 2nd, that I should leave it entirely to the Civil Architect. The first of these propositions I have repeatedly declined. It is impossible, that, where the Public Works Department has long standing advertisements for subordinates in every Gazette, I should get competent Supervisors for a short period. It is true that the Superintendent of the Gun Carriage Manufactory and the Mint Master adopt this plan; but both establishments have embodied in them many Artificers, and the supervision of work, and expenditure, are part of their regular duty. In my office are no Accountants or Artificers, and I can expect but little aid in consequence. As regards the second proposition, I stated that I could not in that manner be relieved from my responsibility to Government for checking what I see wrong, and, as the arrangement verbally proposed by Colonel Lawford seems impracticable, I have no alternative but to request that I may be held free from this responsibility.

Colonel Lawford indeed assures me that Captain Hitchins is anxious for the completion of the work, and that his established character vindicates him from any suspicion of neglect. I have the highest respect for Colonel Lawford's opinion, but I have seen the slow progress of the

works since my arrival, and it does not appear to me that there is any real check on the representations of the Native subordinates. In 11 months which have elapsed since the order was issued for granite piers, and 9 since their commencement was reported, no means have been provided for lifting the heavy stones of which they were to be built or for adjusting them into their places. It is now nearly 5 months since the piers for the Collimators were ordered to be rebuilt in Proceedings of Government dated 22nd October 1859, and they are not even begun though I early sent the drawings. Perhaps this delay may rest with me in the Civil Architect's opinion, as I have objected to the bricks brought, they being perfectly unfit for giving the necessary stability. I have been assured that better bricks could not be got, and that the Railway authorities would not assist, by the Superintendent of works, nevertheless on applying to them I was immediately promised what were required of excellent quality.

Such being the value of the assertions which the Civil Architect prefers to my information, I hope that His Excellency the Governor in Council will approve of my declining to interfere at all with the works, and, as the soundness and strength of the masonry are of great importance in the buildings now sanctioned, I trust that the Chief Engineer may be instructed to impress on the Civil Architect the necessity of the utmost care, both in the selection of the materials, and the preparation of the mortar. The failure of the former piers for the Transit Circle will probably be sufficient evidence of the necessity for extraordinary caution. Brick work stands even more delicate tests elsewhere, than any which could have been applied in that case and the inferior quality is the only reason for its failure here. The result seems a not unnatural consequence of a procedure, which, while it enables the Civil Architect to throw all real supervision on me, entirely exempts him from the necessity of attending to my opinion.

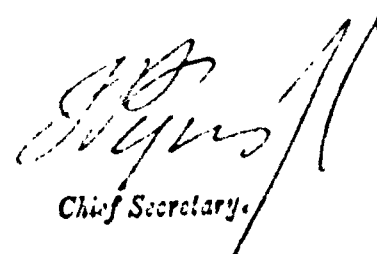
When it is considered that on the goodness of the workmanship in such cases as the present depends the whole value of the observations to be taken for years, it will be evident that the nominal cost of the work at the Observatory is no real test of its importance, and this circumstance will I trust be an apology for this reference.

I have transmitted a copy of this letter to the Chief Engineer.

ORDER THEREON, 20th March 1860, No. 401.

Ordered to be referred to the Public Works Department, in view to measures being there taken for the early and effectual execution of the work.

(True Extract.)


Chief Secretary.

To the Department Public Works.
„ Government Astronomer.

Pt. Can. 10: Aug 1859 &
9-8-

Q. W. K. 1860 (M. J. 1860)
S. of Govt. 1860.

1860.

Proceedings of the
Judicial Court in the
Military Department

October 22? } March
Revised 282 } 1860.

1860.

During the winter
mentioned last some
measures with the same
improvement of the
summit to be proceeded
with without further delay
and calling on the Court
to report whether the
work in the same field
could be done with the
main interest.

1860. 1860. 1860.
With an order.

1860

ordered to be done

immediately to the chief
engineer for his information
and guidance - the work
to be done in the early autumn
of the report required.

1860. 1860. 1860.
1860. 1860. 1860.

Copy to the Chief Engineer
1860. 1860. 1860.