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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.
Can. 20/6/60

G.O. No.	<u>757</u>	Press
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Dated	<u>14-11-</u>	<u>18 60.</u>

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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

No. 59. Read the following letter from Colonel J. H. BELL, Chief Engineer, to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, dated Chepauk, 26th March 1860, No. 11,730:—

I have the honor to forward for submission to Government a Bill, amounting to Rupees 4,881, for work performed in endeavoring to close a breach in the sand bank forming the outer arm of the back-water or harbour of Negapatam.

1 Letter from the District Engineer, Tanjore, No. 172, dated 21st October 1859, with 1 Plan.

1 Letter from the District Engineer, Tanjore, No. 245, dated 12th December 1859, with 2 enclosures.

2. This breach took place during the extraordinary rains and freshes in April 1859, when the tide was probably also very high. There was some delay on the part of the Executive Officer (Mr. Lawford) in reporting the breach to the District Engineer. This was not satisfactorily explained, and Mr. Lawford was cautioned to be more careful in such matters for the future; but it does not appear that the delay was of material consequence.

3. In his Report of the 8th July 1859, Captain Oakes expressed a desire to commence the repair of the breach immediately, and submitted an Estimate of the cost amounting to Rupees 2,650 which was passed in this Office, and Telegraphic orders were sent that the work should be carried out.

4. The repairs were accordingly commenced on the 22nd July under the direction of the Assistant District Engineer and Assistant Overseer Rangaswami Nayudu, but "owing to excessive freshes," the ordinary means of executing such works were not applicable, and gunny bags filled with sand were used, but the contraction of the opening caused such a scour that the bed of the river was deepened out to 12 or 14 feet and the sand bags were carried away, though they weighed nearly half a ton. The work was in this state when inspected by Captain Oakes on the 15th and 19th August, when water was rapidly flowing in the river. Operations were then suspended and orders were given to collect a large number of sand bags, sufficient to fill the entire gap and raise the embankment of bags one yard above high water and to fill the breach with these while the mouth of the river over the Jetty was to be cut through.

5. On the 6th September the water seems to have fallen so low that the Assistant Overseer attempted to close the breach and Captain Oakes' instructions are said to have been implicitly obeyed, so that the gap at the breach was reduced to within four yards, and the water flowed through the artificial mouth in a stream 20 feet wide and four feet deep. Operations ceased at 10 P. M., and during the night the tide closed the river mouth, and the breach was again opened out to 36 yards on the morning of the 7th.

6. Fresh attempts were again made by means of mats and tatties to break the force of the current, but after working till the 14th, the breach was again opened out to 35 yards broad and two yards deep.

7. On the 16th Mr. Lawford wrote a report on the works and prepared a sketch, but owing to indisposition did not complete the latter for some days, and postponed the despatch of his report till the 1st October, so that it only reached Captain Oakes on the 4th idem, and that Officer visited the works on the 7th.

8. Captain Oakes had reported in the end of August that the work would exceed the estimated cost; but that no report of the actual increase of expenditure was made to him during the operation, and he was not aware of the excess till the 4th October. In explanation of his neglect to report this, Mr. Lawford states that he thought it unnecessary to do so as the District Engineer was aware that the Estimate would be exceeded.

9. It appears from the circumstances above stated that the work was begun at an unfavorable time, and that instead of the "vigorous operations" carried on at that period nothing should have been done beyond the requisite preparation of materials. The Overseer in charge was selected for the duty, and as he acted under instructions, the want of judgment at the outset must be attributed to the District Engineer or to Mr. Lawford, perhaps to both; but it is very difficult to decide in a case which must have required immediate action according to circumstances, upon the degree of personal responsibility attaching to different Officers or Agents.

10. The second attempt was made according to the District Engineer's instructions, and would have succeeded, but for the unfortunate cessation of the operations at the critical moment when their vigorous prosecution was of the greatest importance. Here the Assistant Overseer

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

appears to have made a great mistake; and in the subsequent and last attempt he was baffled by the exhaustion of the coolies. He is stated to have given the most constant attention to the work, and is evidently to blame only for errors of judgment. Mr. Lawford was absent from Negapatam during the operations for closing the breach; but states that he was obliged to go away for the purpose of measuring the work performed under the Assistant Overseer, who being engaged at the breach could not attend to this important duty himself.

11. Altogether I do not perceive that there was neglect of duty of any material consequence on the part of any one concerned in these failures. I think that allowance should be made for the very heavy occupations of the Department in Tanjore in other works, and for the peculiar difficulty of the work of closing the Negapatam breach, which could not in the opinion of the District Engineer be left open without risking the worst consequences to the port. There was, however, a want of control over the operations on the part both of Mr. Lawford and of the District Engineer, and I must attribute this to defective judgment in these Officers.

12. On receipt of the Bill of expenditure and the Reports, dated the 15th of December 1859, the District Engineer was instructed to revise his Estimate, Nos. 246 and 247, but to proceed again with the closure of the breach, taking the greatest care to prevent further waste of money. He reports on the 9th instant, that the work was in progress, but much delayed by the want of labor.

13. The Estimate received with the District Engineer's letter being for repairs, will be disposed of in this Office, and I now recommend that the Bill herewith forwarded amounting to Rupees 4,881, or Rupees 2,231 in excess of the Estimate, may receive sanction, at the same time expressing my great regret at the failure of the work and the waste of money.

14. I beg to remark, that materials to the extent of Rupees 559-3-6 are reported to be on hand, so that the actual excess is only Rupees 1,671-12-6.

No. 60. ORDER THEREON, 14th April 1860, No. 754.

The Bill of Rupees 4,881 submitted with this letter is sanctioned.

2. The Government agree in the Chief Engineer's observations in paragraph 11. Much activity appears to have been displayed by the Officers concerned; and if there were errors of judgment or miscalculations, some allowance may properly be made for them, as the Chief Engineer observes. A copy of the present letter should be communicated to the District Engineer for his information.

3. The Chief Engineer will state the amount of the new Estimate for closing the breach. The Government trust that all possible means will be taken to ensure success.

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

N^o 11730

*Central Office of Govt.
Chennai
26 March 1860*

*From
The Chief Engineer*

*To
The Secretary
to Government P.W.D.*

Public

Sir

I have the honor to forward for

Enclosures 5

*1 Letter from the Dist. Eng. Tanjore
No. 172 dated 21st Decr. 1859 with*

1 Plan

*1 Letter from the Dist. Eng. Tanjore
No. 245 dated 12th Decr. 1859 with*

2 Enclosures.

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*Submission to Government a Bill amounting to
Rupees 4,881 for work performed in endeavoring to
close a breach in the sand bank forming the
outer arm of the back water or harbour of
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unfavorable time, and that instead of the "vigorous operations" carried on at that period nothing should have been done beyond the requisite preparation of materials. The Overseer in charge was selected for the duty, and as he acted under instructions the want of judgment at the outset must be attributed to the District Engineer or to Mr. Crawford, perhaps to both; but it is very difficult to decide in a case which must have required immediate action according to circumstances upon the degree of personal responsibility attaching to different Officers or Agents.

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District Engineer and Assistant Overseer -
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To assist the Eng. No. 17th 1859
In assist. Eng. letter of
Dec. 12th 1859 No. 245

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Principal Office of P.W.
Chepauk
26th March 1860.
A. S. S. S.
as at the time of the

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your most obedient servant
H. L. W. Colonel
Chief Engineer

From Ruf. Aug. 22nd May 1872.

Ms. A. 60.

4 March 1941
330

Sept 1860
No. of East 20th Street
J. 769

From
the Chief Engineer

to the Secretary
to the Board of Directors

Date 26-47
 Remme 27-84
 6754-111730

March 10.
Submit for donation, with

Observations, still more worthy to be

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Regd. Jan. 1

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2 The Government agreed in

the Chief Engineer's observations

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were errors of judgment or intention.

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10/11/1891. 10/11/1891. 10/11/1891.

Abstract conscious for his information

3 The Chief Engineer will

state the amount of the new estimate

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trust that all possible means -

with the children's interest

Charge, 9

1880 3

Prices with order

Comp. no. 1