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## MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

*Public Works* DEPARTMENT.

|          |         |             |
|----------|---------|-------------|
| G.O. No. | 3-175   | Pres<br>Ms. |
| Dated    | 18 7 42 |             |

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,  
5th February 1864.*

No. 106. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. M. BOILEAU, R. E.,  
Superintending Engineer, 4th Division, to Colonel C. A. ORR, R. E., Secretary  
to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 14th January 1864,  
No. 4,494:—

SIR,

1. In August last, when inspecting the books of the Vellore Range Mr. Supervisor Howard pointed out to me certain irregularities which had been allowed in the time of his acting predecessor Mr. Erskine, and he took the opportunity of stating that he had reason to fear that matters were not going on in the Arcot Taluq under Mr. Overseer Erskine's management as he could wish.

2. Acting upon the suggestions of the Public Works Committee made in paragraph 24 of their Report dated 15th May 1863, I deputed Captain Chrystie, Executive Engineer, Wallajah Range, to proceed into the Arcot Taluq with a view to looking into the working of the same and reporting his opinion to me.

3. That duty was carried out in a very laborious and pains-taking manner, and the result of his investigations will be found in the accompanying report and statement from him.

4. The Executive Engineer touches upon five points:—

(1.) Absence of the contract system.

(2.) Delay in the execution of works.

(3.) Excessive rates.

(4.) Bad workmanship.

(5.) Payments made in excess of work done.

To these I am disposed to add a 6th, outlay of money, either actual or proposed, on works really not required.

5. As regards the 1st item it must be observed that the various late District Engineers in North Arcot have found it necessary to forbid the introduction of the contract system in masonry works, the Contractors being so utterly unreliable, that it was found that to exercise a due supervision required an establishment quite as expensive as though the works were to be carried out solely through the agency of this Department.

6. As regards earthwork, the practice appears to be merely to make over an Estimate as at first framed (sometimes in the District Engineer's Office) without any endeavour being made by the Local Officer to test the rates in loco by ascertaining how far materials have to be brought. Moreover Captain Chrystie found that of the 108 works inspected by him, in only one case was there any thing like a written agreement taken.

7. To exhibit the manner in which works have been delayed, the Executive Engineer reports that out of 41 masonry works only 4 had been completed, and of the remaining 37, although the majority were sanctioned either in March 1863, or previous thereto, many had not been commenced, and none had progressed beyond the foundations.

8. As one instance in proof of excessive rates having been paid, the Executive Engineer adduces the fact that the minimum rate of 1 Rupee per cubic yard was being paid merely for collecting rough stone without any reference to the fact that that material is frequently found within half a mile of a work!

9. As regards bad workmanship, this was evinced in the ill-packing of the stonework of the rear aprons of Calingulahs and in the badness of the bricks.

10. With the 5th point, viz., payments made in excess of work done, I must deal more fully, citing one or two particular instances that came under my own observation, for after receiving Captain Chrystie's report I felt that probably the retention or otherwise in the Department of some of the parties concerned might hinge upon their conduct as connected with these works, and therefore, I proceeded to measure in person those more specially brought to my notice.

*might*

11. The result which I came to in my own mind was, that the view of the Range Officer, viz. that without any question the land belonged to the Government, was correct; and I determined to mine to what extent, and how far the two parties were entitled to the land. Mr. Ramsay, the Range Officer, and Ramsani Mudali, Acting Headman of the village, were consulted.

Paragraph 4. Overseer Mr. Erskine has been in charge of the Taluq since January last, and such a state of things as I have described above could not be about without great neglect on his part. Still I think that the Taluq can be urged on his part. In the first place, during the last year, the Taluq has been in a transition state. Since October last, many of the Taluq officers, regarding the great changes and reductions to be made, and the consequent dismissal of the Subordinate grades, felt certain that the Taluq would be dismissed. Consequently they took less interest in their work. It was some time before the order actually appeared that Taluq officers would be dismissed at the end of the current official year, and many of them were feathering their nests before the evil day came. I think that Mr. Erskine, Thirdly, since the re-organization I think that Mr. Erskine has put more of his hands than either his salary or other perquisites. The Taluq officers under him were 109 in number, their estimated aggregate salaries were Rs. 1,20,000, the monthly expenditure was from five to ten lakhs of rupees. I think that such a large number of considerable Taluq officers, and such a large Taluq, a man should not only be very careful to see that he has the means to travel constantly and consequently to be very energetic, energetic or zealous; but I submit that it would be impossible for him to receive salary and travelling allowance to maintain a family of his own. I think that he should allow him to do his duty by his works and by other means. I think that he should be. A native might do it, but a European or a half-breed would not. I am of opinion that if Mr. Erskine had not perceived that the Taluq was in a state of Ramsaut Madali, now Taluq Overseer of Wazirpur Taluq, I think that he would now, I believe, a Taluq Overseer in Sahar District. I think that he has been nearly so bad as I have been obliged to say. I think that almost all the overpayments were made by the Taluq officers and men.

Paragraph 3. I am perfectly aware that the above passage, in congratulating Mr. Eiskine, and what ever else it may contain, is a statement that he should not be allowed to remain in the Army, because he has become accustomed to higher rates than those which he is entitled to, Talons, to false and exaggerated measures, and that the Government has ever solemnly, passed; whilst an enemy with the aid of the Government has so long in arrears that they are now an almost insurmountable barrier. I think to have under him the subject Talon Districts.

13. As however Mr. Erskine is prepared to defend his position in full, and I will not

### 1st. The Kadapantāngal Change

This is the first southern branch from the Patna river channel which I have seen. I reported that there was a dividing dam at the point where it joins the main channel. It is said that the channel had been cut through the high ground to save the water of irrigation which formerly supplied the tank. What time was required to construct such a work? Estimate Rupees 300 had been sanctioned, nearly 1½ lakhs actually cost. The estimate of the measure which I venture to say was quite unnecessary.

As recorded by Mr. ...

As regards the Channel itself, in the original Estimate of 1845, 15,000,000 pounds of expenditure at a cost of Rupees 1,378, were provided, and it is now ascertained that to maintain the channel needed nothing but a little clearing and dredging, and the whole of the section was made of it by Mr. Erskine on its way.

|                                                       |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Work originally done .....                            | Cubic Yards |
| Total cubic yards of excavation in present channel... | 19,300      |
|                                                       | <hr/>       |
| Might be fairly charged ..                            | 5,834       |
| Actually charged .....                                | 13,466      |

[illegible]

"which naturally increased the depth of the channel, and as a further proof of which I had shown you my note book in which the levels are above me indicated. In fact I have now book I enclose, vide page 1. I really cannot make it wait, and leave the matter until next

it. All I know is this, that the section as given under Mr. Erskine's sign manual is an imposition throughout, the deepest part of the channel as measured by myself and Captain Chrystie being only 9 feet, fast dwindling to 1 yard and less!

To my mind his conduct on this one channel is enough to condemn Mr. Erskine; I will however take one or two more works.

*Channel from Manapakam to Permattam Tank.*—In the report of my inspection of south Palar works in 1861, I spoke of this channel as already cut. An Estimate Rupees 360 was however sanctioned in January 1863 for its improvement. Captain Chrystie, *not knowing of the existence of the old channel*, measured the *whole as new* and found 2,480 cubic yards, while Ramsami Mudali had contrived to fabricate an excavation of 2,878 cubic yards for the *mere improvement* of the channel, making out, in fact, a part as greater than the whole. He has sensibly confessed to false measurement; Mr. Estlin as Acting Range Officer relies upon the following defence: “I am really not aware of the deficiencies found in this channel. Bills connected with the work were forwarded by Ramsami Mudali, but I took no check measurements of it”!

*Channel from Pulandi Chitteri to Arambauk Tank.*—A channel already existed for a considerable way between these two tanks which might have been improved and completed at a moderate cost. Nevertheless, an Estimate Rupees 2,150 was framed for an entirely new channel, which was cut through the *highest* ground in the neighbourhood entailing 4,000 cubic yards of excavation more than were necessary! The sum provided was insufficient, and Mr. Erskine as Tálug Overseer framed a Supplemental Estimate Rupees 1,323, and gave it to the Contractor to carry out, *before submitting it to the Range Officer.* It allowed for 1,380 cubic yards removing stones and mixed hard Morumboo at 10 Annas; the highest rate on the original Estimate for very hard Morumboo being 2½ Annas; and with the channel opened up before him he allowed for rock blasting for four times the quantity of rock which I found necessary to be so treated. In explanation of this Mr. Erskine observes: "I was not long in the District to be well acquainted with the rates as prevailing in the Tálug and the District; the manner in which I was hurried to frame this, and several other Estimates, I was obliged to gather my information from subordinates as I held them responsible for the execution of the work."

*Dusi Mamandur Channel.*—The principal feature I have to notice here in connection with this Channel work is this. The Estimate allowed Rupees 568 for clearing jungle, and have no hesitation in saying after having gone along the whole length of the channel, and seen the character of the neighbouring jungle, that it was an abundantly ample allowance and one I know which the Contractor was quite satisfied with. Nevertheless Ramsami billed upwards of 2,000 Rupees for this item, and has since confessed (as I proved on the spot) that it was a false charge. Mr. Erskine has only to observe on this point, “that he as Taluq Overseer was directed “to prepare an Estimate in order to get the same sanctioned, and he accordingly prepared one to “the amount of the Bills forwarded by Ramsami,” without apparently ever testing such an important item by check measurements, his Supplemental Estimate was however much in excess of the Bills.

14. It seems to me that it would be a mere waste of time to say more. To my mind Mr. Erskine is far more guilty than Captain Chrystie at first had reason to suppose.

15. I might have dismissed Ramsami myself from Government employ; but as Mr. Erskine's case had to be considered with his, and as he was a Range Officer during part of the time when all this trickery was taking place, I am obliged to trouble Government in the matter.

16. My recommendation is that they may be both dismissed from the Government service, and that their names be publicly advertised as unfit in any capacity to serve the Government again.

17. Mr. Erskine has expressed his intention of sending in his resignation; but I intimated to him that such mode of withdrawing from the position in which he has placed himself would probably not be accepted.

18. Apart from the conduct of these men, I regretted to find money being badly frittered away in the Arcot Taluq, Calingulabs sanctioned which were wholly useless, and hundreds of Rupees having been expended on tilting and trimming channels, the spoil banks being positively thrown back into the channel for the purpose, while weightier matters, real useful works, were neglected.

19. A Circular has been sent out in the Districts of Madras and North Arcot, with a view to establish a more correct system of giving out contracts, as the practice in vogue in the Arcot Taluq should be in force elsewhere.

No. 107.

ORDER THEREON, 3th February 1864, No. 379.

1. With the foregoing letter the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division, submits for the orders of Government a report from Captain Chrystie, Executive Engineer in the North Arcot District, who had been deputed to examine into certain suspicious circumstances connected with works in progress in the Arcot Taluq.

2. In his report, and in the statement which accompanied it, Captain Chrystie shows most conclusively that the condition of the works in progress in the Taluq was highly unsatisfactory, and that gross frauds and irregularities had been repeatedly perpetrated. He charges these delinquencies chiefly to two Native Overseers, Ramasami Mudali and Parthasarathy Naidoo. Mr. Erskine, the Overseer in charge of the Taluq, he takes with want of energy and zeal, incapacity for his post, gross carelessness, and with allowing himself to become the dupes or worse of the two above named Natives.

3. The Superintending Engineer, in commenting upon Captain Chrystie's report, takes a much more serious view of Mr. Erskine's share in these transactions, and recommends that both he and Ramasami Mudali should be dismissed from the Government service, and declared unfit in any capacity to serve Government again. The other delinquent, Parthasarathy Naidoo, lost his appointment on the re-construction of the Department in June last.

4. From the papers now before them, it appears to Government beyond a doubt that Mr. Erskine was cognizant of, and implicated in, the frauds and irregularities so systematically practised by his subordinates. To judge him even by his own explanation of his conduct, Mr. Erskine stands convicted of gross carelessness and neglect of duty. The case is altogether a disgraceful one, and it reflects no credit on the Officers previously in charge of the District and Range that they should have allowed such gross irregularities to continue, unchecked, for so long.

5. As recommended by the Superintending Engineer, the Governor in Council resolves to dismiss from the Public Works Department Mr. A. Erskine and Overseer Ramasami Mudali; their dismissals to take effect from the dates on which they were respectively suspended.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,  
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 4th Division.  
" Controller and Auditor of Public Works Accounts.

Exd. T. Dunn.

## Channel from Momaparkam to Permaton Tank.

In the report of my inspection of South Arcot works in 1861. I spoke of this Channel as already cut. An Estimate Rupees 360 was however sanctioned in January 1863 for its improvement. Captain Chrystie, not knowing of the existence of the old Channel, measured the whole as new and found 2480 Cub. Yards, while Ramsami Mudali had contrived to fabricate an excavation of 2878 Cy.<sup>1</sup> for the mere improvement of the Channel, making ~~it~~ out, in fact, a part as greater than the whole. He has sensibly confessed to false measurements. Mr. Erskine as Acting Range Officer relies upon the following defence "I am really not aware of the deficiencies found in this Channel. Bills connected with the work were forwarded by Ramsami Mudali but I took no check measurements of it!"

## Channel from Pulandi Chitteri to Akambarth Tank.

A Channel already existed for a considerable way between these two tanks which might

might have been improved and completed at a moderate cost. Nevertheless, an estimate Rupees 2150 was framed for an entirely new Channel which was cut through the highest ground in the neighbourhood involving 4000 Cubic of excavation more than were necessary!

The sum provided was insufficient, and Mr. Erskine as Talook Overseer framed a Supplemental Estimate Rupees 1323, and gave it to the Contractor to carry out, before submitting it to the Range Officer. It allowed for 1380 Cys. Removing stones and mixed hard Morumbas at 10 Annas, the highest rate on the original Estimate for very hard Morumbas being  $2\frac{1}{2}$  Annas, and, with the Channel opened for before him, he allowed for Rock blasting 4 times the quantity of Rock which found necessary to be so treated. In explanation of this Mr. Erskine observes: "I was not long in the District to be well acquainted with the rates as prevailing in the Talook and District; the manner in which I was hurried to frame this, and several other Estimates, I was obliged to gather infor-

information from subordinates as I held them responsible for the execution of the work."

### Dusi Mamandur Channel.

The principal feature I have to notice here in connection with this Channel work is this. The estimate allowed Rupees 568 for clearing jungle, and I have no hesitation in saying after having gone along the whole length of the Channel, and seen the character of the neighbouring jungle, that it was an abundantly ample allowance, <sup>one I know</sup> which the Contractor was quite satisfied with. Nevertheless Ramsami <sup>Tilled</sup> ~~filled~~ upwards of 2000 Rupees for this <sup>item</sup> and has since confessed (as I proved it on the spot) that it was a false charge. Mr. Erskine has only to observe on this point, that he as Talook Overseer was directed to prepare an Estimate in order to get the same sanctioned and he accordingly prepared one to the amount of the Bills forwarded by Ramsami, "without apparently ever testing such an important item by check measurements. His supplemental Estimate was however much in excess of the Bills. It seems to me that it would be a mere waste of time to say more - In my mind Mr. Erskine is far more gently than Captain Chrystie

Chrystie at first had reason to suppose.  
I might have dismissed Rainsami myself  
from Government employ, but as Mr. Erskine's  
case had to be considered with <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~, and as he  
was a Range Officer during part of the time  
when all this <sup>very</sup> ~~trickery~~ was taking place, I am  
obliged to trouble Government in the matter.

My recommendation is that they  
may be both dismissed from the Government  
service, and that their names be publicly  
advertised as unfit in any capacity to serve  
the Government again.

Mr. Erskine has expressed his in-  
tention of sending in his resignation, but I in-  
timated to him that such mode of withdraw-  
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placed himself would probably not be ac-  
cepted.

Apart from the conduct of these  
men, I regretted to find money being sadly  
frittered away in the Arcot Taluqa, Calmi-  
gulahs sanctioned which were wholly use-  
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the spoil banks being positively thrown back  
into the Channel for the purpose while weigh-  
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A 'Circular' has been sent into  
the Districts of Madras and  
North Arcot, with a view to establish  
a more correct system of giving out  
Contracts, in case the practice in  
vogue in the Arcot Talook should  
be ~~found~~ in force elsewhere.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir

Your most obed<sup>t</sup>. servant

A. B. C. L.  
Sup<sup>r</sup> Eng. & G.  
R. E.

21st June 1864 O. L. S. B. 1864

1864.

Reports on the proceedings  
of certain subordinates  
in the West India  
South West District &  
recommend these  
dismissal from  
public employ.

1864-5

Dated 14th January 1864  
Dec. 18  
No. 4494

To  
Mr. C. L. O. B. B. B.  
Secy to Govt  
Mr. A. J. M. B. B. B.  
Secy to Govt

1864  
1864  
1864

379 Public Works Department

Proceedings of the Madras Government  
Under date the 5th

Reports on the proceedings of certain  
subordinates in the West India  
of the West India District &  
recommend their dismissal  
from public employ

Recd the following  
letter from the Secy to Govt

14th Jan 1864  
With the foregoing letter  
the Secy to Govt has  
transmitted to the  
the order of Govt  
from  
Captain Chrystie, Esq.  
Engineer in the West  
India District, who had  
been appointed to examine  
the works in progress  
in the West India  
District.

In his report, it is  
stated that the  
works in progress  
were highly unsatisfactory  
& that gross frauds &  
irregularities had been  
extensively perpetrated.  
He charges these

1864

delinquencies to two  
Native Overseers,  
Rameswar Mudelli  
& Muthaswami Naicker.

W. Erskine, the Overseer  
in charge of the Survey,  
has been with want of  
caution & neglect, incapacity  
for his post, grossly  
neglecting his duties  
allowing himself to  
become the ally of the  
two above named natives.

The Sup. Engineer,  
in commenting upon  
Captain Chappin's report,  
takes a much more  
serious view of the  
delinquencies than in these  
transactions, and  
recommends that both  
Rameswar Mudelli  
& Muthaswami Naicker  
be removed from the  
service & declared  
unfit in any capacity  
to serve Govt. again.  
The other delinquency  
pertaining to Naicker, lost  
his appointment on the  
reconstruction of the  
Dept. in June last.

From the papers  
now before them, it  
appears to Govt. beyond  
a doubt that W. Erskine  
was cognizant of, &  
implicated in, the  
frauds & irregularities  
so systematically practiced  
by his subordinates.  
To judge him even by  
his own explanation of  
his conduct, W. Erskine  
stands convicted of gross  
carelessness & neglect of  
duty. The case is  
altogether a disgraceful  
one, & it reflects no  
credit on the Officers  
previously in charge of the  
District & Range, that  
they should have  
allowed such gross  
irregularities to  
continue unchecked,  
for so long.

As recommended  
by the Sup. Engineer,  
the Governor in Council  
resolves to dismiss  
from the V. W. Dep.  
the two persons  
W. A. Erskine

11.

Yes. it is sufficient  
that the fact be known  
will help us that the  
men are not to be employed  
again by the Gov. us



To the Sup<sup>r</sup> Engr<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> Mo & Mr. 1<sup>st</sup> Letters, 1<sup>st</sup>, Book & Collection.  
To the Controller.

Dr. J. M. Hall

To W 1864 Depo  
Pres. of Gov. to Feb

No 379

Pres. of the M. Gov.  
Dep. of Feb 1864

Mr. A. Erskine  
4 Overseer Rainsbury  
Mudali of the North  
Great Des. to be  
sed.

No 106. 107