M R O. 1—77,006—8-6-37.

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(3) Initials of the Referencer _____

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Publicworks **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 3699 Press ~~Mis.~~

402-03

Dated 19. 11 1869.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 402. Read the following letter from the Officer in charge of Public Works Operations in the Wynaad to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Vythery, 10th November 1869, No. 438:—

With reference to Order of Government, 2nd October 1869, No. 3,190, I have the honour to request I may be excused for the delay that has taken place in forwarding reply. It has been due, in part, to the press of work thrown upon me by the absence of assistance in carrying on the duties of the District and Vythery Range; and in part to the very great difficulty I have felt as to how I ought to answer—a point about which I feel far from easy yet.

2. Of course, as His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is of opinion that I have overstepped my province in making any remarks on the efficiency of the Officers in command of the detachment of Sappers employed on the operations under my charge, on their mode of carrying on work, and supervision of same, I have the plain duty before me of expressing my regret that I should have fallen into the error, though it was brought about entirely by my thinking that the fact of being addressed directly by the Deputy Assistant Quarter-master General of the Mysore Division, on a subject connected with my own duties and the Sappers, permitted me to take advantage of the opportunity to bring to notice what otherwise I could only have so done by making it a special occasion of formal report. Finding I was wrong in this conclusion, I beg to apologize for the liberty I took.

3. I would gladly retract all my animadversions, but as such retractation would necessarily imply that the remarks I made were without foundation, and contrary to fact, it is impossible for me to do so. It does not apear, however, that I am required to do either this, or to bring forward for substantiation any specific charge; but rather that I should be made to see that I have violated official etiquette in making any remarks, except through the channel of my own proper departmental superior.

4. Whenever I have had an opportunity, I have not failed to take advantage of it to bring to favourable notice the exertions of the Officers and men of the detachment of Sappers serving at Luckadie, and it has been the bearing in mind of those services that has made me refrain from also bringing forward, at other times, complaints for which I imagined reason existed; but above all was I deterred by the consideration that the public service would certainly suffer by any such breach between the Sapper Officers and myself, as would be the inevitable consequence of any special report and enquiry: the latter would of course have been searching, and as the Officers concerned would have naturally defended themselves, I should have had to prove any charge I might have made, by bringing forward unfavourable incidents that had come under my notice—many of which would doubtless have been unknown to me but from the constant and intimate intercourse kept up between the Sapper Officers and myself, a contingency which, it will be allowed, would have placed me in a most difficult position. However, my letter No. 314, dated 21st September 1869, with its two enclosures, will show that I did not permit my private feelings altogether to influence me to silence, and I need not therefore write more on that point.

5. With reference to the letter from the Acting Commandant of Sappers to the Deputy Assistant Quarter-master General of the Mysore Division, dated 10th

June 1869, I do not see that I made any particularly incorrect statement, inasmuch as the Hospital and Dispensary were the only buildings requiring emergent repair: repairs to the lines generally were necessary before the monsoon, but were delayed (as explained) until the departure of one of the Companies should place materials at my disposal for the purpose. Lieutenant-Colonel Prendergast seems to imply, from twice remarking the fact in a marginal note, that paddy straw is an inferior material for thatching; but it is the one that the natives here always make use of in preference to any other, when obtainable; the cost being the only deterrent; it was, however, the only material then obtainable at short notice. He is right in the conclusion that I intended to imply that the lines formerly built under my own superintendence were superior to any built afterwards, they were unquestionably so—but he is wrong in the further conclusion that such superiority was due to greater facility in obtaining materials. It was rather due to my exercising the strictest personal supervision that none but proper descriptions of wood were used, and in my being backed by such excellent Native Officers and workmen as Subadar Veragoo and Jemadar Cunnien of the G. Company, and Jemadar Mootien of the D; with such thoroughly competent and zealous assistants, it was not difficult to have my wishes carried out. If such materials were not afterwards used, it was no fault of mine, as the coolies employed in collecting them were under Sapper Superintendents; and if these latter were competent, and did not neglect their duty, nothing inferior would have been brought to site; or if brought, it was competent to the Sapper Officer to reject the same; while, if he punished his Superintendent, it was very certain that any report of the circumstance to me would have resulted in the coolies being mulcted of their pay. The greater abundance of good material, and consequent greater facility of obtaining it, in my time, has little to do with the question, as although not obtainable quite so close to site, plenty of it could be got if any trouble were taken to look for it: of course this difference of supply had an effect on the cost; but in alluding to that point, I did not intend to take into account anything but what concerned the Sappers alone, simply the amount and quality of that part of the work, including supervision, done by an equal number of Sappers, in an equal number of days, on the one occasion, and on the other. Cadjans were never used till last season for the Sapper lines, and then only because they were more easily obtainable than any other material at the time when required. From the greatly increased demand, good thatching grass has become difficult to get in sufficient quantity, the Coffee Planters taking for their own use the greater part of it; but be that as it may, cadjans cannot be looked upon as an unusual or inappropriate material for thatching; on the contrary, throughout Malabar and the Western Coast they are more commonly used than anything else; and I have not found that those made from the wild cocoanut are in any way inferior to others, except perhaps they may not last quite so long, but certainly longer than the few months those in question were in use. I certainly did recommend coolies to be employed in thatching with cadjans, as it is a work on which constant practice has given them experience, which the Sappers did not possess; and which, from their attempts, I saw they did not understand. Had it been grass thatching the case would have been reversed; nevertheless, after all, a good deal of the thatching was done (against my opinion) by the Sappers; and I have very little doubt

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 19th November 1869.

that the bad result was due mainly to that; nor can it be imputed to them as any slur that they should not have done well what they had not had any practice in. The cadjans being green at first made no difference, as that was a condition a few days altered; and their quality was not the least affected by their drying before, or after being put on the roof. I have also to add that as regards coolies not working properly, I have never found them unmanageable under Sapper superintendence in any other case, though I have had complaints of their want of strength and skill in such work as assisting to build revetments, etc.; any report of idleness or misbehaviour brought to my notice was so sure of resulting in punishment, that it was seldom they would venture to be guilty of such, without laxity on the part of Superintendents, inviting negligence.

The discrepancy remarked by Lieutenant-Colonel Prendergast in my statements regarding the proper time for thatching, and that about the natives burning the grass hills, is a mistake on his part. There is no doubt that the proper time for thatching must be as closely preceding the season when a good condition of roof is most required as possible; and it is also equally true that the natives do burn the grass hills about the time I mentioned. Formerly, however, I used to obtain thatching grass from land in possession of European Coffee Planters, who do not follow the native practice, but (as I have already mentioned) their own requirements now preclude this; and the other difficulty of reconciliation disappears under the explanation that, on this occasion, it was intended to wait for the materials that would become available on the departure of one of the Companies from the lines vacated by it. As regards the inspection by the Officers, the difference of opinion is probably due to what they and I respectively consider as constituting efficient inspection, what is not efficient being of course tantamount to none; my own idea and practice was to have constant care taken to make good petty damages as soon as discovered, and so prevent necessity for considerable repairs; in fact, carrying out the principle of the old adage that "a stitch in time saves nine," it was very easy as soon as a defective post or rafter was discovered, at once to replace it, and not to wait till half a line was in the same condition. As regards such little matters as preventing poultry from scratching up the thatch, it was scarcely to be expected that it was necessary for me to come to the aid of the Sapper Officers, and suggest such simple modes as cutting the fowl's wings, or any other equally efficacious means of rendering them innocuous, or even to point out to them that damage to thatch was incurred in the manner mentioned. To tell the truth, I did suggest the remedy to Captain Crawford, and that Officer very soon put a stop to mischief, by sentencing to immediate death every fowl detected trespassing.

The reply quoted as mine to representations regarding the lines is, I think, scarcely applied to the proper occasion; I have full recollection of making use of the expression, but it was (so far as my memory serves me) previous to the time that the ghaut was opened for cart traffic, and on occasion of remonstrating against the use of Sappers for private work when their services were so emergently required for a particular purpose; besides which, as the ghaut was opened on the 1st January, such an answer after that date would have been inapplicable.

6. I do not see that I can say anything more regarding the other correspondence included in the Proceedings of Government of the 8th September last,

but if, after the foregoing, any further explanation is required, I should beg to suggest, as a preliminary, that questions should be put to the Officer lately in command of the Sappers at Luckadie, as to whether, from the date he took command, he was in the habit of daily visiting the works on which his men were employed; or, if it did not sometimes happen that several days together passed without his so doing; whether he ever personally saw the men put to work, or was present when measurements were made; or adopted any other mode of verifying such measurements as were supplied to him by his subordinates, and from which his monthly report of work executed, in support of bill for working batta drawn, was compiled. If replies to such questions satisfy the conditions of duty required from Sapper Officers, it will then be for me not only to express regret that I should have made any animadversions upon them in excess of my competence, as I have already done, but to add that I have unjustifiably imputed neglect, and at once to withdraw all I have said as inapplicable.

7. I trust His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief will be pleased to make allowance for the difficulty in which I have been placed by being called upon for explanation; any reprimand that he might have considered necessary to pass on me I should of course have received in respectful silence; but when called upon to explain, it has proved impossible for-me so to do without, as it were, reiterating through another channel what was before thought improper, unless I retracted the latter as groundless and incorrect; any repetition therefore that I have been forced to make will, I hope, be taken simply as in my own defence, not by way of perseverance in any charge against others.

No. 403. ORDER THEREON, 19th November 1869, No. 3,699.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 44.

COMMUNICATED to the Military Department with reference to the Proceedings of Government in that Department, Nos. 1,967, 3,185, and 3,457, of the 25th May, 8th September, and 1st October 1869, respectively.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the Military Department.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Special Executive Engineer's
Office Wynaad Vythery
10th November 1869.

No. 438.—

From

The Special Executive Engineer
Wynaad

To,

The Secretary to Government
Department Public Works.
Fort Saint George

Sir,

With reference to Order of Government 2d October 1869. No. 3690, I have the honor to request I may be excused for the delay that has taken place in forwarding reply— it has been due in part to the press of work thrown upon me by the absence of assistance in carrying on the duties of the District and Vythery Range; and in part to the very great difficulty I have felt as to how I ought to answer,— a point about which I feel far from easy yet—

2. Of course as His Excellency the Commander in Chief is of opinion that I have overstepped my province in making any remarks on the efficiency of the Officers in command of

of the Detachment of Sappers employed on the operations under my charge, on their mode of carrying on work, and supervision of same. I have the plain duty before me of expressing my regret that I should have fallen into the error, though it was brought about entirely by my thinking that the fact of being addressed directly by the Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General of the Mysore Division, on a subject connected with my own duties, and the Sappers, permitted me to take advantage of the opportunity to bring to notice what otherwise I could only have so done by making it a special occasion of formal report.

Finding I was wrong in this conclusion, I beg to apologize for the liberty I took.

3 I would gladly retract all my animadversions, but as such retractation would necessarily imply that the remarks I made were without foundation, and contrary to fact, it is impossible for me to do so: it does not appear, however, that I am required to do either this, or to bring forward for substantiation, any specific charge, but rather that I should be made to see that I have violated official etiquette in making any remarks, except through the channel of my own proper departmental superior.

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advantage of it to bring to favorable notice the exertions of the Officers, and men of the Detachment of Sappers serving at Lucknadie, and it has been the bearing in mind of those services that has made me refrain from also bringing forward at other times, complaints for which I imagined reason existed: but above all was I deterred, by the consideration that the Public service would certainly suffer by any such breach between the Sapper Officers, and myself, as would be the inevitable consequence of any special report, and enquiry; the latter would of course have been searching, and as the Officers concerned would have naturally defended themselves, I should have had to prove any charge I might have made, by bringing forward unfavorable incidents that had come under my notice, many of which would, doubtless have been unknown to me but from the constant, and intimate intercourse kept up between the Sapper Officers, and myself, a contingency which, it will be allowed, would have placed me in a most difficult position; however, my letter No. 314 dated 21st September 1869 with its two enclosures, will show that I did not permit my private feelings altogether to influence me to silence, and I need not-

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I have the honor to be
Sir:
Your Most Obedient Servant
Bt. G. Kennedy Major
Special Exe: Engineer Wynaa

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No. 3699
Under date the 19 Nov. /69

Communicated to the Military Department with reference to the Proceedings of Government in that Department Nos. 1967, 3185, and 3457 of the 25th May, 8th Septr. and 1st October 1869 respectively.

To The Mily. Dept.

Mil. S. Dept. 19/11/69
P. C. [illegible]

No. 402

Recd. Sec. Dept. Govt. of Bengal Circular from Sept. 1955 The Spl. Ed. Engs. Bengal to The Secretary to Govt. D. P. Works Dated 10 Nov. 1869. Recd. 13 " 1869.

No. 438.

Report upon the employment of Capper at Lucknow and explain the cause of the lines not having been shown.

No. 3699-19-Nov-69

Circ 4755

Govt. of {1869} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To The Military Department

Dated

Recd.

G. O 19th Novr 1869. No. 3699.

Nos. 402-403

Sappers & Miners Letted from the Offr in charge of the Protection-tions in the Ingraad furnishing the Explanation called for in connection with the strictures passed by him on the conduct of the Sappers & Miners employed at Tuchadir. and Wed Depd concerned.