

(1) Number of pages 20

(2) Date of repair 1944

(3) Initials of the Referencer

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. <u>1134</u>	Press <u>Mis.</u>
<u>327-28</u>	
Dated <u>21</u> <u>4</u>	<u>1871</u>

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
21st April 1871.*

No. 327. Read the following letter from the Acting Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madura, 1st April 1871, No. 15 :—

In their Order No. 1,374, dated 2nd May 1868, the Government granted a sum of Rupees 2,076 for the construction of a Post Office at Alleppey. This sum having been placed at the disposal of the Chief Engineer, Travancore, that officer now furnishes a bill of the actual expenditure incurred in completing the building, showing an excess of Rupees 743-8-2 above the allotment. I have, therefore, the honour to submit, for the orders of Government, the bill in question, together with a copy of the Chief Engineer's letter, No. 341, dated 10th February 1871, explaining the cause of the excess.

2. It will be seen that owing, as I presume, to some oversight, although the amount of the estimate was only British Rupees 2,039-11-10, the amount sanctioned was Rupees 2,076.

3. It would also appear that a "highly paid" subordinate, for whom sufficient work could not be found at Alleppey, was placed in charge of this work, and the result has been a charge of upwards of 25 per cent. on the estimate for superintendence, in addition to an excess of expenditure on the work, making a total excess of Rupees 779-12-6, or 35 per cent. over the estimate, and of Rupees 743-8-2 over the allotment, which latter excess is that now requiring sanction.

4. It is clear that as neither plan nor estimate for the building in question passed through this office, it is impossible for me to check the bill of quantities presented by the Chief Engineer, Travancore, nor can I attempt to offer any opinion as to the reasonableness or otherwise of the unauthorized expenditure incurred, as now brought to notice. There is an old "saw" which does not seem altogether inapplicable in this case, and that is "not to look a gift horse in the mouth."

From the Chief Engineer, Travancore, to the Acting Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, dated Camp at Poonaloor, 10th February 1871, No. 341.

I HAVE the honour to forward, herewith, completion bill of the British Post Office at Alleppey.

2. You will observe that the expenditure is British Rupees 779-12-4 in excess of the estimated cost.

3. The principal item in the excess is that of "Superintendence" on extra establishment. This is owing chiefly to the subordinate in charge of the Alleppey works, who was a highly paid one, being then on that establishment; and, as at the time, there were only two or three comparatively small works of our own in progress at Alleppey, the greater part of the subordinate's salary had to be debited to the Post Office. Thus the estimated cost of superintendence and contingencies (British Rupees 185) has been exceeded by British Rupees 324, and nearly half of the total excess on the work accounted for.

4. In regard to the difference, I beg to explain that some additional work, not provided for in the estimate, had to be executed. For instance, the old building had to be demolished and removed; the compound had to be cleared; and besides these extra works it was found that the date allowed for the masonry was insufficient, and our own estimates had subsequently to be increased in this respect.

5. Under this explanation I trust you will remit me the difference between the amount already received, and that which is shown to be the expenditure on the Post Office as per completion bill.