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(3) Initials of the Referencer

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public works **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 3071-2- Press / Mis.

77-79

Dated 5-12-- 1871.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 5th December 1871.

No. 77. Read the following letter from the Acting Consulting Engineer for Railways, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 15th November 1871, No. 495 :—

I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Government, the copy furnished to this office of letter dated 8th instant, No. 975, from the Agent and Manager of the Madras Railway, regarding Mr. Edward Johnston, as regards his responsibility in the construction of the Cheyaur bridge, which failed in October last year.

From the Agent and Manager of the Madras Railway Company, to the Secretary of the Madras Railway Company, London, dated Madras, 8th November 1871, No. 975.

DURING my absence on furlough the Committee appointed by Government to examine the bridges on this Railway presented their report* which was embodied in Government Order No. 1,743, dated the 30th of June last, the prominent feature of which was the result of the examination by the Committee of the foundations of the piers of the Cheyaur bridge.

* Dated 7th June 1871.

2. In due course a copy of the Order of Government was forwarded to Mr. Edward Johnston for such remarks as he might desire to offer, and these were furnished in his letter of the 17th of August 1871.

3. I have now the honour to request that the Directors will be so good as to give their careful consideration to the report of the Committee, and to the observations thereon contained in the Order* of Government, and also to Mr. Johnston's remarks as contained in his letter† mentioned above.

* Copy sent to the Board with letter No. 956, 14th July 1871.

† Copy sent to the Board with D. O. letter from Acting Agent and Manager, dated 26th August 1871.

4. A careful perusal of these documents has satisfied me that Mr. Johnston must be held in a great measure responsible for the failure of the bridge, inasmuch as the examination of the Committee has shown that the foundations of some of the piers were not carried down to a depth of 14 feet in accordance with the instructions of the Chief Engineer, and that some of the work in the foundations was of a very inferior character, whereas Mr. Johnston has repeatedly asserted that all the foundations of the Cheyaur bridge were built in the most satisfactory manner possible.

5. In his defence, Mr. Johnston urges that he should not be held responsible for the bad work which has been discovered, because, at the time the bridge was being constructed, he was also in charge of other duties, which rendered it impossible that he should be continually watching the works at the Cheyaur, and that it was during his absence that the foundations complained of were got in under the supervision of his Inspector.

6. With reference to this I imagine that the Directors will be of opinion that an Engineer in charge of the construction of a bridge should make it his business to see the most important work of all, namely, the getting in of the foundations, done under his own immediate supervision, or at least that he should not report the work to be of a satisfactory character except upon his own personal knowledge.

7. Mr. Johnston admits, and indeed alleges, in his own defence, that he was not present when some of the foundations criticised by the Committee were sunk, and yet he did not fail to assure the Chief Engineer that the work in the foundations was of the most satisfactory character possible.

8. It is, therefore, clear to me that Mr. Johnston's conduct evinces at the least gross and culpable neglect of duty, and that so far as the bad work in the foundations of the piers contributed to the failure of the bridge, he is alone and directly responsible for the deplorable misfortune which befel the Company last year.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 5th December 1871.

9. The Directors will not fail to observe that the Committee are of opinion that the contraction of the natural water-way, by the construction of the embankment across the island, was injudicious.

10. It is due to Mr. Johnston to state that he must not be held accountable for this, the embankment being part of the design submitted by the Chief Engineer and approved by the Government.

11. This does not, however, constitute any excuse for the gross and culpable neglect of duty, which, I think, has been clearly proved, and, holding this opinion, I do not see how I can do otherwise than recommend the Board to take immediate steps for the removal of Mr. Johnston from the service.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways for information.

(Signed) R. B. ELWIN,
Agent and Manager.

14th November 1871.

No. 78. ORDER THEREON, 5th December 1871, No. 3,071.

RAILWAY, No. 15. ORDERED to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. CARPENDALE, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

No. 79. (DOCKET No. 3,072, dated 5th December 1871.)
COPY of the above forwarded to the Government of India.
(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

CONSULTING ENGINEER'S OFFICE.

Railway Department.

No. 495

From Major A. L. Pleydell R.E.
Consulting Engineer for Railways

To Colonel J. Carpendale R.E.
Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department,
Fort Saint George.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for the information of the Government, a copy of a letter furnished to this office, of date dated 8th instant, from the Agent and Manager of the Madras Railway, regarding Mr. Edward Johnston, as regards his responsibility in the construction of the Coleroon bridge, which failed in October last year.

I have the honour to be
Sir
Your most obedient
Humble servant
Major R.E.
Consulting Engineer for R.E.

Madras
15th November
1871

No. 495

No 975.

Madras Railway Company
Madras 8th November 1871.

To

Julian Byrne Esqre
Secretary
Madras Railway Company
London.

Sir

1. During my absence on Furlough the Committee appointed by Government to examine the Bridges on this Railway, presented their Report which was embodied in Government Order No 1743 dated the 30th of June last the prominent feature of which was the result of the examination by the Committee of the foundations of the Piers of the Cheyaur bridge.

2. In due course a copy of the Order of Government was forwarded to Mr. Edward Johnston for such remarks as he might desire to offer, and these were furnished in his letter of the 17th of August 1871.

3. I have now the honour to request that the Directors will be so good as to give their careful consideration to the Report of the Committee and to the observations thereon contained in the Order of Government, and also to Mr. Johnston's remarks as contained in his letter mentioned above.

4. A careful perusal of these documents has satisfied me that Mr. Johnston must be held in a great

x Dated 7th June 1871.

x Copy sent to the Board with letter No 956 - 14th July 1871.

† Copy sent to the Board with D. O. letter from Chief Agent & Manager d/ 26th Augt 1871.

measure responsible for the failure of the bridges, inasmuch as the examination of the Committee has shown that the foundations of some of the Piers were not carried down to a depth of 14 feet in accordance with the instructions of the Chief Engineer and that some of the work in the foundations was of a very inferior character whereas Mr. Johnston has repeatedly asserted that all the foundations of the Cheyair bridge were built in the most satisfactory manner possible.

5. In his defence Mr. Johnston urges that he should not be held responsible for the bad work which has been discovered, because at the time the bridges was being constructed he was also in charge of other duties which rendered it impossible that he should be continually watching the works at the Cheyair and that it was during his absence that the foundations complained of were got in under the supervision of his Inspector.

6. With reference to this I imagine that the Directors will be of opinion that an Engineer in charge of the Construction of a bridge should make it his business to see the most important works of all, viz:- the getting in of the foundations- done under his own

immediate supervision, or at least that he should not report the work to be of a satisfactory character except upon his own personal knowledge-

7. Mr. Johnston admits and indeed alleges in his own defence that he was not present when some of the foundations criticised by the Committee were sunk and yet he did not fail to assure the Chief Engineer that the work in the foundations was of the most satisfactory character possible.

8. It is therefore clear to me that Mr. Johnston's Conduct evinces at the least gross and culpable neglect of duty, and that so far as the bad work in the foundations of the Piers Contributed to the failure of the bridges, he is alone and directly responsible for the deplorable misfortune which befel the Company last year.

9. The Directors will not fail to observe that the Committee are of opinion that the contraction of the natural waterway by the construction of the embankment across the Island was injudicious.

10. It is due to Mr. Johnston to state that he must not be held accountable for this, the embankment being part of the design submitted by the Engineer and approved by the

11. This does not however constitute any excuse for the gross and culpable neglect of duty, which I think has been clearly proved and holding this opinion I do not see how I can do otherwise than recommend the Board to take immediate steps for the removal of Mr Johnston from the service -

I have &c,
/signed/ R.B. Elwin
agent and Manager

/True Copy/
Agent and Manager

To The Consulting Engineer
for Railways
for information
14th November 1871.

G.A. 30th June/71-516.
519

P. W. 1871 Despatch.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

From No. 5470.

The Consulting Engineer for Railways.

To

The Secretary to Government,
P. W. Department,
Fort St. George.

Dated 15th July 1871.

Received 18th July 1871.

Encl. No. 1795

Forwarding Copy of Gen. Strachey's letter dated 14th July 1871 regarding the Collapse of the Cheyaur Bridge by Messrs. Johnston & Co.

Within Order.

Edward Johnston

Copy forwarded to the Accountant General for information.

City of the 22nd July 1871.

Cheyaur bridge by Messrs. Johnston which failed last year.

Forwarding Copy of Proc. on letter from Chief Engr. for Rlys. submitting a letter addressed to the Board of Directors by the Agent regarding the construction of the Cheyaur Bridge by Messrs. Johnston which failed last year.

No. 547

Govt of [1871] Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To The Agent Consulting Engr for Railways

From The Secretary to the Govt of India

Dated.

Rec'd. Dec 1

G. O. 5th Dec 1871. 3071-30

Nos. 77-78479

Chengam Salt. Passes

orders in letter from Govt. Requesting for Rs. 5000 Submitting a letter addressed by the Agent to the Board of Directors S.I.R. Madras Ry Requesting Sanction to the Construction