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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	330	Press
B.P. No.		Mis. →
Dated	11 - 2 - 195	6874

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
11th February 1874.*

No. 185. Read letter from the District Engineer, Kurnool, dated 29th July 1873,
No. 432.

From J. M. BELL, Esq., Assistant Engineer in charge of Cumbum Range, to W. FRASER, Esq.,
C E., District Engineer, Kurnool, dated Cumbum, 25th July 1873.

WITH reference to G. O., No. 1,446, dated 29th May 1873, calling for explanation of certain charges preferred against me, I beg to submit the following statement:—

Charge I.—The forcing of Overseers to make advances from their private means, instead of making public advances, and adjusting them as provided for by departmental standing orders.

I utterly deny the truth of this charge. Nothing of the kind ever took place between the Overseers and me; and I was entirely ignorant that Overseer D. Cooposawmy Moodelliar had made such advances until I was told it by Mr. Norfor, who had become acquainted with the fact by anonymous letters from Virdachellum. I did not even then believe that the statement was true, nor until the man himself confessed it. I can account for D. Cooposawmy having made these advances only in this way. He had undertaken to expend 15,000 Rupees on the works a Pelandorai Project before the end of the official year, and I had informed him and other Overseers that if they failed to expend the sum allotted to each I would report them to the District Engineer. He knew that I objected to making advances, and that I preferred another system which I had found to work well, that of giving 5 Rupees to each maistry who brought and kept up 100 coolies.— See letter A. appended.

D. Cooposawmy is a timid man and was afraid of being dismissed if he failed, and so secretly made advances from his own funds.

2. I think I have just grounds of complaint against Mr. Norfor on account of this charge.

He had learned by anonymous letters that such advances were being made. He never communicated one word to me on this subject; but sent directly for the Overseers to bring their accounts to his house, which was 40 miles away from their work, and there privately interrogated them. He prepared certain statements in writing which he made the Overseers sign, although they knew little or nothing of what they contained, as they were only partially read to them. Afterwards when the statements were read to them, they denied their accuracy, and declared that they did not know what they had signed. In not one of these statements, however, is there a word to show that I even hinted that such private advances should be made, let alone having forced the Overseers to make them.

3. *Charge II.*—“The payments of large sums to Contractors through the medium of Overseers, instead of directly by the Range Officer as is strictly enjoined.”

As regards this charge I beg to state that the payments of large sums to Contractors through the medium of Overseers was as contrary to my practice as it is to the rules enjoined by departmental orders; that I deviated from this rule I cannot deny, but the departure was made under certain exceptional circumstances, such as its being in the last month of the official year when I had to disburse large sums for work which I knew by the Overseers reports had been executed; and the distance being too great for the Contractors to come to receive payment in person before the close of the year, together with the impossibility to myself with the press of office and other work I had just then on my hands, to go and personally inspect the work and make the payment myself; under these circumstances only I did forward cheques to the Overseers for sums of (to the best of my recollection) about Rupees 200 each, to be disbursed by them to the Contractors.

4. *Charge III.*—“The issue of cheques to Overseers for large sums, thus enabling them to make much larger payments and retain much larger cash balances than are warranted by the rules of the department.”

What I have said with reference to the second charge is applicable also to this, with the exception that, in replying to this one, I have to admit having given to an Overseer a cheque amounting to so large a sum as Rupees 5,000; in doing this there was no necessity for the Overseer retaining any balance so large as that the rules of the department would not warrant, since the Overseer had informed me that work on the Pelandorai channel had been executed to an

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11th February 1874.

extent far in excess of the amount of that cheque, and the disbursement having to be made on one work only, instead of being distributed over several, I considered myself justified in including the whole amount in one cheque, rather than issuing more for smaller amounts, especially so as the whole amount was to be drawn and disbursed at once; there was therefore no necessity for the Overseer retaining any large balance such as the charge involves. As regards the amount being too large for an Overseer to disburse, I beg to submit that as it was to be distributed to large numbers (heads of Wudder gangs) for task-work; the actual payments to each gang would be comparatively small, and the case of an Overseer making large payments under such circumstances I understand to be perfectly similar to that of when he is allowed to make payments to cooly gangs departmentally employed; further, I would mention that in issuing this cheque for Rupees 5,000 a precedent had already been established by Mr. Norfor himself, when under circumstances perhaps somewhat similar to those under which I myself acted that officer had given in a previous year to the same Overseer a cheque for more than Rupees 4,000; the transaction occurred in the last month of the official year, when I had not time to visit the work and make the payment myself, and as no evil result has transpired from the transaction itself, I candidly assert that what I have done was with the best intentions, and with the view of furthering the progress of the work under my charge.

5. *Charge IV.*—"The disuse of the office set apart for transaction of public business and custody of public documents, and issue of the latter to office servants in their private houses."

With reference to this charge I beg to state that the records were never taken by the Head Accountant to his house.

When the District Engineer alleges that Ponnarungum Moodelliar, Head Accountant, admitted in my presence his having taken records to his house, he makes a slight mistake; what the Head Accountant admitted was that he conducted a portion of the current work in the house that was vacated by the dresser while the latter was on leave. Even this was done only about the end of March, when there was a great amount of business to dispose of; it was also at a time when the freshes in the river which divides the village from the office were frequent, and at such times my office people and also those of the Sub-Collector's were prevented attending their office.

No records were ever removed from my office with my cognizance; the statement made by the District Engineer to the effect that he had "grave fears that the records were tampered with by Head Accountant Ponnarungum Moodelliar and his gang," has, in my opinion, no foundation in fact; besides, it implies a conclusion seriously involving my own responsibilities and authority as a Range Officer; the insinuation being that I was cognizant of the proceeding, and did not check it. From the Controller's letter to Mr. Norfor the latter has to examine and see whether the records have actually been tampered with. The result of this examination will I am positive show Mr. Norfor that he has been rather hasty and impulsive in his report.

6. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Government Order, calling upon me to state whether to my "knowledge the Head Accountant ever had pecuniary transactions with the Overseers," I beg to state that I never knew of anything of the kind; and that I had no reason to doubt the Head Accountant's honesty and propriety of conduct; in fact his conduct while under me was highly satisfactory. His management of the office was commended by the Deputy Controller on his last inspection of the late Oolundapet Range, and I cannot believe that he ever had pecuniary transactions with the Overseers. I consider Ponnarungum Moodelliar entitled to a good character.

7. In conclusion, I beg to state that I have endeavoured honestly to meet the charges made against me.

In every case I acted in good faith and with the best intentions. My position as a Range Officer has been in many cases ignored by Mr. Norfor from the fact that my subordinates were communicated and interfered with, and sent for without my knowledge.

It cannot be stated that I at any time refused giving information or avoided a meeting, and I beg to state that I grievously felt this slight. The most trivial circumstances were magnified into grave charges. In short, my position while under the orders of Mr. Norfor, I am sorry to say, was made very uncomfortable. When I am at liberty to submit my whole case for the consideration of the Government, I have no doubt that justice will be done to me.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
11th February 1874.

A.

From J. M. BELL, Esq., Assistant Engineer, to A. COOPOOSAWMY MOODELLIAR, dated Porto Novo, 26th December 1872.

I AM in receipt of your letter of the 24th instant.

2. I have spoken to Vayloomyloo Moodelliar respecting the execution of work in the branch channels, and he says that the coolies employed are of his gathering, and that his intention is not to take any away from other Contractors on the channel but to take advantage of the best working season to get the largest quantity of work finished, so that any coolies of yours having left for his portions may be taken back. I trust therefore you will conduct the work without disputes.

3. As regards getting coolies from Trikalore I quite approve of it, and the sooner you bring them the better progress you will make; so at once despatch men for them and make such good arrangements that there may be no lack of work done. I trust you will exert yourself to the utmost and speedily spend the allotment for the current year.

4. I shall send Vayloomyloo Moodelliar to Strumustum in a day or so, and you can make any suitable settlement that every thing may proceed smoothly and vigorously.

P.S.—Making advances by Government money you ought to be aware I cannot do, but you surely can manage some other way; as an inducement give Rupees 5 to any one who brings a hundred men; this system will pay in itself.

2. Do work by departmental agency if found to be more speedy, but always check that there is not too much establishment kept up.

(Initialed) J. M. BELL.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) J. M. BELL,
Assistant Engineer.

No. 186.

ORDER THEREON, 11th February 1874, No. 330.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 11.

In this letter Mr. Bell meets the first charge of improper practices in his range, viz., that of large advances being made by his Overseers from money borrowed by them, by assuring Government that he was ignorant of it till brought to his notice in Mr. Norfor's letter and that he stopped the practice at once.

2. In reply to the second charge of paying large sums to Contractors through Overseers, Mr. Bell admits having done so in the month of March, and in cheques of about Rupees 200 each, but he does not state the aggregate amount of such small cheques paid away to Contractors through Overseers in that month; and he has not rebutted the specific accusations made in Mr. Norfor's letter to his address, that one Overseer paid away in March cheques to an aggregate amount of Rupees 15,395, and another to an amount of Rupees 6,397. His explanation is scarcely as full and frank as was to be desired.

3. The third charge of issuing cheques to Overseers for larger sums (even up to Rupees 5,000) than the rules of the department warranted, is admitted, and justified as having been done under circumstances which necessitated the same, with the best intentions, with the view of furthering the progress of the works, and without any evil results.

4. Mr. Bell distinctly denies the fourth charge of disusing his office for the transaction of public business and custody of public documents, and allowing office

District Engineer.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
11th February 1874.*

servants to make use of the latter in their own houses. Mr. Norfor will ascertain whether any public documents are missing, or have been tampered with, owing to ill-practices of the office servants without Mr. Bell's knowledge.

5. Finally, Mr. Bell disclaims all knowledge that his Head Accountant had pecuniary dealings with his Overseers.

6. It is evident from Mr. Bell's own statements that he has not complied strictly with the requirements of the Public Works Code, as regards the issue of cheques to Overseers and payment of coolies. And he will take care in future not to infringe the rules of the department without the permission of the District Engineer, or in any cases of emergency, where the delay consequent on obtaining such permission would seriously injure public interests, without immediate report to him in full detail.

7. In paragraph 3 of the order to which Mr. Bell has replied, exception has already been taken to Mr. Norfor's practice of communicating direct with Range subordinates without the knowledge and in the absence of their Range Officer. The practice is a very reprehensible one, subversive of all discipline and resulting in disputes and references to Government which would never have arisen had a more regular, open and courteous procedure been adopted.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, Kurnool.
" " South Arcot.

Exd. S. T. Austi
Spare Copies.

N: 432 District Engineer's Office
Kambam 29th July 1873

From, The District Engineer
Kurnool.

To, The Chief Engineer
P. W. Department.

Sir, I have the honor,
with reference to paragraph 5
of G. O. N: 1446 dated the
29th May 1873, to forward for
your consideration a letter of
explanation from Mr. J. M. Bell
Assistant Engineer, regarding
certain irregularities charged
against him.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your most Obedt Servt
William Keaser C.E.
District Engineer.

Draft Order.

In this letter Mr. Nell has nothing to say to the 1st charge of improper practices in his Range. That of large advances being made by his Overseers from ~~the~~ money borrowed by them, except that he was ignorant of it till brought to his notice in Mr. Horsford's letter. He owns to having persuaded them to spend money under pain of being reported ^{to having} refused to allow advances to be made from public money. He gave a present of £. 5 to each Ministry who brought 100 men. And so long as they got the men he would appear not to have taken any pains to do so.

That he ~~should~~ be ~~referred~~ at once

He was not out of order - The

2

1873-74
of good Mr. 1447
of 4313.

from the District Comptroller

General

The Chief Comptroller

J. W. D. D.

Dated 29 July 1873
Recd 4 Aug 1873

to 4322.1

to 330.11 "July 1873"
towards are

explanatory letter

from Mr. J. W. D.

in connection with

certain discrepancies

refused against him

No 185

1873-74

Recd 10 Dec 1873

certains. The means were
played. Hence it fol-
lows that he must be
held to have tacitly
sanctioned those means.
2. In reply to the 2^d charge
of paying large sums to
contractors through over-
seers, Mr. Bell admits
having done so in the
month of March, and
in cheques of about £200
each, but he does not
state the aggregate am-
ount of such small
cheques paid away to
contractors through over-
seers in that month;
and he has not rebut-
ted the specific recu-
sations made in Mr. Nor-
ris's letter. To his address,
that one overseer paid away

But
No! This
does not
follow

in March cheques to an
aggregate amount of £
15395, and another to
an amount of £6397 -
This ^{explanation is given as} defence ~~therefore is~~
~~unavailing~~ as was ~~to say the~~
least -

3. The 3^d charge of issuing
cheques to overseers for
large sums, even up to
£5000, than the rules
of the Dept. warranted,
is admitted, & justified
as having been done un-
der circumstances which
necessitated the same,
with the best intentions,
with the view of further-
ing the progress of the
works, and without any
evil results -

4. He distinctly denies the

4th charge of discharging
his Office for the Trans-
action of public busi-
ness & custody of pub-
lic documents, and
allowing Office Servants
to make use of the
latter in their own houses.
It vests then with Mr.
Norris when that any
public documents are
impaired, or have been
tampered with, owing
to ill practices of the Of-
fice Servants without
Mr. Bell's knowledge -
Mr. Bell dis-
claims all knowledge
of this Head Account.
and had pecuniary
dealings with his Down-
shire -

2.

b. It cannot but be ad-
mitted that, by Mr.
Bell's own statements,
he has not complied
strictly with some
requirements of the
Public Works Code;
and that he has not
incurred much to in-
quire how labour
was obtained without
advances or being so.
The work was done,
which appears to have
led to practices con-
sistent with his Oversee-
ment that cannot be ap-
proved. But he will
take care in future
to guard against
infringement of rules.

as regards the issue
of Public Works
Code & Regulations
as regards the issue
of Public Works
Code & Regulations

in the one hand, with-
out immediate report
of the circumstances to
the District Engineer.
And on the other hand
he will not let too scru-
pulous a regard to the
letter of the general rules
against advances, pre-
clude the collection of
labour which can only
be got together by payment
of hard money to the
gangs from a distance,
for which there must
be responsible head
men to be found, capa-
ble of giving an ade-
quate guarantee. Such
advances being reco-
vered on payment of
the first month's wages.

7. In para. 3 of the order
to which Mr. Bell has
replied, exception has
already been taken
to Mr. Purser's practice
of communicating di-
rect with Range
Subordinates without
the knowledge, or
the absence, of the
Range Officers. The
practice is a most
reprehensible one,
subversive of all
discipline, creative
of ill blood, and
resulting in dis-
putes & references
to Court, which would
never have arisen
had a more open and

contents procedure
 been adopted - Mr. Nor:
 for will understand to
 that N. S. The E. i. i. do:
 approves highly of
 the memo. re: ^{re: 1874}
 to by him for obtaining
 information, as under:
 should in their nature,
 and not consistent with
 the respect due by him
 to the position of gentle:
 men working under
 his orders -

G.M.W.

I think Mr. H. decon:
 censure for bring ^{several}
 a rise of public works
 charge - over 50 and
 a Pare & that effort
 9th

30th July 1874
 Mr.

Proceedings of the Madras Government.
 Under date the January 1874.

Read the following
 The District Engineer

Turned.
 Print Mr. Hall (For order No 132 of 27 July 1873)
 Mr. D.

But why does this order date
 6 months after receipt of
 I would say "Merrin"
 "meets"

J.O.S.

I have proposed certain
 alterations as I think
 Mr. Hall more to
 blame than the
 Dept seems to
 imply. J.O.S.

In this letter Mr.
 Bell has nothing to say
 to the 1st Charge of imper:
 per practices in his
 Range viz. that of large
 advances being made by
 his Overseers from money
 borrowed by them, except
 by assuming that he was ignorant
 of it till brought to his
 notice in Mr. Stanford's
 letter

letter that he stopped the practice at once.

2 In reply to the 2^d Charge of paying large sums to Contractors through Overseers, Mr. Bell admits having done so in the month of March, and in Cheques of about Rupees 200 each, but he does not state the aggregate amount of such small Cheques paid away to Contractors through Overseers in that month; and he has not rebutted the specific accusations made in Mr. Norford's letter to his address, that one Overseer paid away in March Cheques

This must stand as a personal by Lord Robert & Mr. Robinson's own hands & writing

I am as full and frank as was to be desired.]

17¹²
The explanation is scarcely

3 The 3^d Charge of issuing Cheques to Overseers for larger sums, (even up to Rupees 500) than the Rules of the Department warranted, is admitted, and justified as having been done under circumstances which necessitated the same, with the best intentions, with the view of furthering the progress of

of the works, and without
any evil results.

4. He distinctly
denies the 4th Charge of
disusing his Office for the
transaction of public business
and custody of public
documents, and allowing
Office Servants to make
use of the latter in their
own houses. (It rests ~~that~~
with Mr. Norfor to show ^{with} ~~ascertain~~
whether ~~any~~ public documents
are missing, or have been
tampered with, owing
to ill practices of the Office
Servants without Mr.
Bell's knowledge.

5. Finally, Mr
Bell, disclaims all
knowledge

I am not
not to infringe the rules of
the Dept. without the per-
mission of the Engineer,
or in any cases of emer-
gency, where the
Emergency - when

knowledge that his Head
Accountant had pecuniary
dealings with his Overseers.
b. It cannot but
be admitted that by
Mr. Bell's own state-
ments, he has not com-
plied strictly with ^{the} ~~some~~
requirements of the Public
Works Code; as regards
the issue of Cheques to
Overseers and payment
of Coolies. And he will
take care in future [to
guard against infrainge-
ment of rules on the
one hand, without im-
mediate report of the
circumstances to the Dis-
trict Engineer - and on
the

On the other hand he will not
be too scrupulous as regard
to the letter of the general
rules against advances,
preclude the collection of
labour which can only be
got together by payment
of head money to Gody
gangs from a distance,
for which there are always
responsible Specimens to
be found, capable of giving
an adequate guarantee.
Such advances being reco-
vered on payment of the
first month's wages.]
In paragraph
3 of the Order to which
Mr. Bell has replied,
exception has already been
taken

delay consequent on
obtaining such per-
mission would
seriously injure
public interests,
without immediate
report to him in full
detail.

Letter to Mr. Sturges
practice of communica-
ting direct with Range
Subordinates without
his knowledge, and
in the absence of the
Range Officer. The
practice is a most re-
prehensible one, sub-
versive of all disci-
pline (creative of ill
blood) and resulting
in disputes and
references to Gov.
which would never
have arisen had a
more open and courteous
procedure been adopted.

122-11
To D^r Mr. Harold
S. Frost

Recd

Mr. Sturges

Mr. Norfon will under-
stand that His Excellency
the Governor in Council
disapproves highly of
the means resorted to
by him for obtaining
information, as un-
becom- ing in their nature
and not consistent
with the respect due
by him to the position
of Gentlemen working
under his orders.

G. W.

I have read the
letter and have
found it to be
very much in
the line of
the letter which

No. 43/3



Govt. of (1874) Madras

PUBLIC WORKS.

20. *Field District Engineer*
Perinod

Dated

Recd.

Encl. 150

G. O. 11th Feb. 1878 No. 330.

Nov. 1877/86

Archd. Bell,

Mr. Paping

Order in the explanation
submitted by Mr. Bell
in connection with
certain irregularities
referred against him
by the ...