

- (1) Number of pages _____
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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	901	(w)	Press
B.P. No.			Mis.
Dated	5-4-	1876	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
5th April 1876.*

No. 90. Read the following letter from Captain L. CONWAY-GORDON, R.E. Examiner of Public Works Accounts, to Major-General G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Fort St. George, 18th March 1876, No. 289 W.:—

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Proceedings of Government, under date the 11th March 1876, remarking on the inordinate delay that has occurred in disposing of the papers for pension sent in by Mr. Supervisor Hamnett, and in reply to state that the orders passed by Government on this case have decided me on taking a course, which I ought, perhaps, to have taken long ago, but which for obvious reasons, I was reluctant to do, till forced by necessity.

2. I have now the honor to call the attention of Government to the state of the records of this office; and on this point I may say at once that the reliability and completeness of office records is so much a matter of opinion that I should be concerned were Government to accept a mere personal opinion of my own with regard to these books. I should be glad were Government to depute some one to inspect them. I will confine myself to saying that in the whole course of my experience, I have never seen anything like them.

3. Not to draw invidious comparisons between the various records, I will limit my observations to those books which are in daily use for the purpose of checking the service of employes as entered in their pension applications; i.e., the Leave and Service Registers, and the Registers of audited salary bills.

4. To enable Government to form some opinion as to the state of these two records, I forward two books, one a volume of the Leave and Service Registers, and the other a volume of the Salary Registers. These I have chosen, not because they are by any means the worst, but because one contains the Service Register of Supervisor Hamnett and the other is connected with the case of a Mr. DeSilva, about which I had to trouble Government in my letter, No. 266 W., dated 25th ultimo. In these two volumes, therefore, Government will be able to feel a slight amount of personal interest.

5. Both books are kept in the most slovenly way, and it will be found in this case, as in nearly every other in book-keeping, that slovenliness is associated with inaccuracy. As for the Leave and Service Register, without troubling Government with details, I will refer them to the record of the services of Mr. Supervisor Hamnett at folio 93, as a fair example of the material I have at my disposal for checking pension applications. For folios slightly worse than others, see folios 27, 43, 54, 87, 88, 89, 91, and 112. The books, however, are not without humour. At folio 16, Government will observe that a Mr. H. W. Butler, about three years after his retirement to England on pension, takes a month's privilege leave in this country. In the other volumes, I am told there may be found cases in which, apparently, men have risen from the dead.

6. With regard to the Salary Register, it will be noticed, not only that the book is kept in a slovenly way, but also that in many cases whole pages are not written up at all. Take folio No. 2 for instance, to which I had to refer in the case of Mr. DeSilva,—it is, I may say, simply impossible to tell with any certainty what salary any employé drew during any particular period.

7. The whole of the records are in much the same state. It is to such books, and to such entries, that I am forced to refer whenever a call is made upon me for past information. It is not too much to say that such books are of little, if of any, use in verifying services of applicants for pension. The whole work has to be done again by the painful and tedious process of looking up all the original authorities afresh. In some cases where the original records are forthcoming, the work can be got through without attracting attention; in others the pension application has to be bandied to and fro between the District and the Examiner's Office for months together, and delay takes place alike discreditable to the Government, and intolerable to the applicant.

8. I regret that I am unable to suggest to Government any means by which this state of things can be immediately remedied. Shortly after my arrival, I found the inconvenience of having no records to be so great that I commenced to re-write the whole of the Leave and Service Registers. This, however, for a large department is no light task to undertake, more especially when undertaken as an odd job to be taken up at spare moments. I have already sent some of my men to assist in the Divisional Offices, and at present I have no one whom I can employ continuously at the work. The consequence is that the work drags far more than I could wish.

9. The best thing I can recommend to Government is the employment of a small temporary establishment, say about Rupees 80 per mensem, for six months, to write up these Leave and Service Registers and to get all the old records in the best order that is now possible. This appears to me all that can be done, but I cannot disguise from Government that it is simply mitigating an evil which is now past cure.

10. Unsatisfactory as this will doubtless appear to Government, the worst feature of the case is behind. The worst feature of the case appears to me to be that the Accountants on whom I have to depend for introducing a higher class of work, have been brought up in this atmosphere; they have been trained in this style of book-keeping; they seem to regard such books as fair monuments of human skill and intelligence, and apparently have no ideas or experience beyond them.

No. 91.

ORDER THEREON, 5th April 1876, No. 901.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 5.

Rupees 80, for six months, to write up the Leave and Service Registers, and to get the records generally into order.

2. The Government must trust to the Examiner to correct the lax system which has unfortunately prevailed in the office.

(True Extract.)

[Signature] Colonel,
Offg. Under Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

To the Examiner of Public Works Accounts

Exl. A. Right.

Spate Office

W.C. ✓

Letter from the Examiner, Public Works,
No. 289 D, dated 18th March 1876.

Copy - Concise in words & as possible for much of the work 25/3

Submitted for
orders.

[Signature] Major Genl. Secy.

Secretary to Government
W.C.

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to sanction the temporary
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that the description
of the Examiner is
exact. W.C.

25/3/76.

No. 2897

From THE CONTROLLER,
PUBLIC WORKS ACCOUNTS.

To The Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department,
FORT SAINT GEORGE, 18 March 1876.

Order 20

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C. No. 1468.

C. No. 295. 22-

6th Nov. 1886

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Ed 11- March 76 No 638.

P.W. 1876 Departt
No 2072

From
The Examining
Controller
P.W. Accounts
To
The Secretary to Govt.
P.W. Dept.

No 289W

Dated 18th March 76.
Rec 21st

... Remarking on the
inordinate delay that
has occurred in the
disposal of pension
papers connected with
Sup^r Stannett.

No 90.

Apr 23-3-76

No 901
Public Works Department.

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

UNDER date the

5th April 1876.

READ the following:—

From,

The Exec^{ve} O.S. Auto (P.W. No 289W, dated 18th
March 1876.)

Under the circum-
stances the Examiner
is authorized to maintain
a temporary Estab-
lishment at a monthly
cost of Rupees 80, for
6 months, to write
up the Leave and
Service Registers, and
to get the Records
generally into order.
2. The Government
must trust to the

Examiner

Examiner to correct the
law system which has
unfortunately prevailed
in his office.

2092
★
Govt. of 1876 Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The Engineer of P. & C.

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O. of April 1876, No.

901

No. 901

Temporary Establishment
for the office of Examiner
of P. & C. - The entire
- maintenance of a - at a
monthly cost of Rs 80 for six
months, for writing up the
Service registers be sanctioned

But P. no 114
29/4/76

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