GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

19th October 1881, No. 5544.

Working Parties.

Read the following paper :—

No. 239. *From Brigadier-General H. O'CONNELL, Quartermaster-General, to Colonel E. L. HANKIN, Acting Secretary to Government, Military Department, Ootacamund ; dated Bangalore, 12th October* 1881, *No.* 1430.

I have the honor, by order, to report, for the information of Government, that applications have been received by the Commandant, "Queen's Own" Sappers and Miners, for the services of parties of his corps to blow up wrecks—one at Cocanada and one near Vizagapatam—also for clearing away bars of rock and laterite in the rivers in British Burmah.

2. Lieutenant MacDonnell, R.E., of the Sappers, who is qualified in submarine mining, is expected from England in an early troop-ship. It is proposed to send him, with some men of the E Company, Sappers, to Cocanada and Vizagapatam to clear away wrecks,—Lieutenant MacDonnell going himself also to Burmah, and arranging for the work required to be done being executed by the Sappers there.

3. I am directed by the Provincial Commander-in-Chief to request the sanction of Government for these arrangements being carried out. Letter, No. 1, dated 5th October 1881, from the Commandant, "Queen's Own" Sappers and Miners, on the subject, with enclosure, is forwarded.

4. It is concluded that the cost of moving the Sappers to Cocanada and Vizagapatam will be met by the Marine Department, in addition to all expenses connected with the employment of the men and the demolition of the wrecks. Also that the authorities in British Burmah will pay all expenses for Lieutenant MacDonnell's visit to that Province and for the cost of the work executed. These are questions that can be decided by Government.

From Lieutenant-Colonel C. SIM, R.E., Commandant, "Queen's Own" Sappers and Miners, to the Quartermaster-General, Fort St. George, Madras ; dated Bangalore, 5th October 1881, No. 1. (Forwarded through the Officer Commanding Mysore Division, dated Bangalore, 8th October 1881, No. 425.)

In reference to the correspondence (of which I attach copies), I have the honor to request your orders.

2. Lieutenant MacDonnell, R.E., of the regiment under my command, is the only qualified officer in sub-marine mining, and I should very much like to hand over both these jobs to him. He is expected out from England in an early trooper, and will on arrival at Bangalore be posted to the E Company, "Queen's Own" Sappers and Miners, rendered vacant by the departure on leave of Lieutenant Conner, R.E. It will not probably be necessary to take up a whole company for the work near Vizagapatam, but I would suggest his being detached with what men he requires of his company, and in the present cold season, and reporting also on the "bars of rock" alluded to by Major Moncrieff, and which Lieutenant Baldwin, R.E. (now with the F Company in Rangoon), thinks beyond him. Most probably he will be able to leave his small detachment at Vizagapatam engaged on some preliminaries while he investigates the case of the rocks in Burmah,—handing over the latter for execution to the company at Rangoon.

3. I have thus far gone out of the general routine in detailing Lieutenant MacDonnell, R.E., as this officer has had lately superior advantages in England in perfecting himself in a "specialité" of which I am anxious to take every advantage.

Copy of a Letter, dated 13th August 1881, from Major MONCRIEFF, C.S.I., Chief Engineer, British Burmah.

* * * * * * * *

After the monsoon we want to clear away bars of rock and laterite that interfere with navigation, and block up some important creeks in different parts of Burmah. Dynamite is a safe enough explosive, but it is well to have some one to work it who understands it, and here I can find no one. It has occurred to me that possibly you might be able to help me by lending me a few Sappers trained to dynamite blasting. Can you do so? If you would send me six respectable men, say by 1st November, and let me keep them for five or six months, I should be glad to give them any pay you might decide on. There is a big laterite reef across a creek some 30 miles from here that I wanted to induce young Baldwin to take up with his company. I thought it would be good practice both for him and them. But he shied at it as dangerous—only being uncovered at low tide—and as the monsoon set in immediately after, I did not press the matter. If you could send me some men, they would be employed separately in different parts of Burmah, but I would gladly take a dozen and employ them two or three together if I could get them.

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From J. H. TAYLOR, Esq., Lieutenant, R.N.R., Master Attendant, Administrative Department, Madras, to Lieutenant-Colonel C. SIM, R.E., Commandant, "Queen's Own" Sappers and Miners, Bangalore; dated Marine Office, 26th September 1881, No. 7693.

I have the honor to inform you that there are two wrecks of vessels—one lying in the roads at Pentacottah near Vizagapatam, and another at Cocanada—which it is proposed to blow up by dynamite. Colonel R. H. Sankey, C.B., R.E., observes that the employment of Sappers on the work would probably prove effective, and I should feel obliged by your kindly informing me whether you can make arrangements for carrying it out.

No. 240. ORDER THEREON, 19th October 1881, No. 5544.

The Honorable the Governor in Council approves the arrangements proposed in the foregoing letter for the employment of a detail of Sappers and Miners under Lieutenant MacDonnell, R.E., in clearing away wrecks at Cocanada and Vizagapatam and bars of rocks and laterite in the rivers in British Burmah.

2. All charges connected with these services will be debited to the departments employing the Sappers.

(True Extract.)

C. Hankin Colonel,
Ag. Secretary to Government.

To the Quartermaster-General.
" Controller of Military Accounts.
" Marine Department.
" Public Works Department. mk 5 of 4/pw
" Adjutant-General, for information.

Exd. A. Raitt.

No. 2661 W. dated 31st Octr 1881

B

Recorded.

29.10.81

P. W. C. No. 6264

Govt. of {1881} Madras.

MILITARY.

To.

THE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated October, 19th.

Issued

Recd. 29 Oct: 81 Encl.

G.O., 19th October 1881, No. 5544.

5. S.e.

OCTOBER.
Nos. 239—241.

No 2661 W D/31st Oct/81
B.

Approving the arrangements proposed for the employment of a detail of Sappers and Miners in clearing away wrecks at Cocanada and Vizagapatam and bars of rocks and laterite in the rivers in British Burmah.

Indexed 3/11

Entd. in Receipt Regr.

with order