

(1) Number of pages 18

(2) Date of repair _____

(3) Initials of the Referencer 78 Q

TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

F.W.D. DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

1275

Press.
Mis.

Dated

21. 5. 1884 197 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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B.S.S.

21st MAY 1884, No. 1275 W., PUBLIC WORKS.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

General.
Establishment.

READ—the following letter from J. C. JOHNSTON, Esq., Assistant Engineer, to the Chief Engineer for Irrigation, dated Madras, 9th May 1884. :—

With reference to G.O., dated 1st October 1883, No. 795 I., I have the honor to explain as follows :—

To be brief, my explanation will mainly refer to paragraph 4 of your note accompanying the above Government order, where it is concluded that bad work was done through ignorance of what good work ought to be. I will, however, premise that bad work is often due to incomplete supervision.

2. My instructions to the overseer were in these words :—“The concrete apron is to be laid in layers 3 feet wide and 2 feet thick parallel to anicut.” I admit that the wording of this order is not sufficiently plain in itself, and is therefore liable to misconstruction; but the overseer ought to have known the general printed rules regarding the thickness of layers of concrete to be laid on and rammed and my verbal explanations and directions and, I think, subsequent detailed orders in writing supplemented what may have been defective in the orders in outline. My idea was to build up the apron in blocks or strips 3 feet wide, commencing from the lower end, and each strip or block to be formed in layers of concrete rammed from the bottom as each layer was laid on, till the whole was 2 feet thick.

3. This is how that part of the work was done, which, I infer from the overseer's report, has stood, and which was superintended by me personally and by the overseer to whom I gave explanations in detail. But the parts destroyed seem to have been constructed as if the word “layers” in the order was qualified by the words “2 feet thick;” an inadmissible construction, because the whole of the concrete work was but 2 feet thick. The fact that the portions supervised by me and the overseer, whom I had instructed, stood when unsupported in consequence of the destruction of the rest, would show that those portions could not have been weak. For even good work is liable to be carried away in company with bad, when the latter fails.

4. An inspection of the diagram accompanying overseer's report, No. 99, dated 29th July 1883, will show that the portions of apron washed away were those superintended by the maistry himself.

5. The matter resolves itself therefore into one of defective supervision. While the concrete work was in progress I could and did visit it but once, and I saw some of the work done as I meant it to be done, and then, if I remember aright, I asked the overseer why he was not using the iron rammers issued to his office. He promised he would use them; but as I was anxious about the work, I wrote to him shortly afterwards from head-quarters asking whether he had carried out my orders. His reply was to the effect that the iron rammers had been issued. In my demi-official to Mr. Grimes, I asked for copies of my docket to the overseer and his reply, but they have not been sent to me.

6. To support the conclusion arrived at in the preceding paragraph, I beg to state that of my three assistants—Mr. McAlister, in charge of the Madura sub-division, Mr. Littlewood, in charge of Dindigul sub-division, and Mr. Supervisor Taylor in

charge of Tirumangalam taluk or head-quarter sub-division—the first had been removed; Mr. Taylor, of Tirumangalam, from want of knowledge and experience of irrigation works and from frequent and almost continual illness, gave little or no help; while Mr. Littlewood was ill and could not work. I did not fail to report my troubles to the Superintending Engineer, but I received no reply or help. I had practically, therefore, the whole work of the division in my hands for several months, and could not possibly give each individual work the necessary attention. The estimate for the Parani was framed when I had a full staff of, as I thought, good assistants; but during the carrying out of the work I was shorthanded and with assistants who could not assist.

7. I beg to notice that the accident took place on the 9th of May, and that I left Madura on the 24th of May. I cannot understand why it was not reported to me. If it had been, I would certainly not have gone on furlough till all had been rectified or explained while the circumstances were fresh in my memory.

ORDER—dated 21st May 1884, No. 1275 W., Public Works.

In the above letter Mr. Johnston furnishes the explanation called for in G.O., No. 795 I., dated 1st October 1883, with regard to the failure of the Parani anicut, in the Madura district. After careful consideration of all that has been brought forward, the Government are willing to admit that the failure was due mainly to defective supervision, but are unable to acquit Mr. Johnston altogether of blame in the matter.

2. There is no doubt that the material used for great part of the work was inferior; and though the work done under Mr. Johnston's personal supervision is said to have stood well, the instructions left by him to the overseer in charge were so loosely worded as to be misleading. Moreover, although Mr. Johnston's assistants were incapacitated by sickness, it cannot be considered creditable to the Executive Engineer that his subordinates had been so badly trained that they used bad materials and wrong methods of construction immediately they were relieved from his actual presence. A good executive officer makes good subordinates, and cannot exculpate himself by throwing the blame on them when a work fails.

(True Extract.)

Major, R.E.,
Under Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

To the Superintending Engineer, III Circle, with copy of G.O.,
No. 795 I., dated 1st October 1883.
" " " VI " with five enclosures referred to in G.O.,
No. 795 I., dated 1st October 1883, and three
enclosures received with Superintending Engineer's
letter, No. 37 M.D., of 23rd April 1884.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

Encl. E. Fernandez
Spare Copies

1275
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GENERAL
ESTABLISHMENT.

Gobt. of (1884) Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated May, 21st.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 21st May 1884, No. 1275 W.

MAY.

Mr. J. C. Johnston

The Executive Engineer — censured in connection with the failure of the Paranai anicut, in the Madura district.

Madras

9 May 1884

To The Chief Engineer for
Irrigation

Madras.

Sir, With reference to G.O. dated 10th 1883 No 795 I, I have the honor to explain as follows: To be brief, my explanation will mainly refer to para 4 of your note accompanying the above G.O., where it is concluded that bad work has done through ignorance of what good work ought to be. I will however premise, that bad work is often due to incomplete supervision.

2. My instructions to the Officer were in these words — "The concrete apron is to be laid in layers 3 feet wide and 2 feet thick parallel to the line." I admit that the working —

wording of this order is not ~
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3. This is how that part of
the work was done, which I infer
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and which was superintended by
me personally and by the Orsen.
to whom I gave explanations in detail.
But

But the parts destroyed seem to
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the latter fails.

4. An inspection of the diagram
accompanying Orsen's report
No 94 dated 29 July 1853, will
show that the portions of apron
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tended by the master himself.

5. The matter resolves itself
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supervisions. While the concrete
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James

Some of the work done as I
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if I remember aright, I asked
the Overseer why he was not
using the iron rammers issued
to his office. He promised he
would use them; but as I was
anxious about the work, I wrote
to him shortly afterwards from
Head Quarters, asking whether
he had carried out my orders.
His reply was to the effect that
the iron rammers had been issued.
In my admin. official to Mr
Grimes, I asked for copies of
my docket to the Overseer and
his reply, but they have not
been sent to me.

6. To support the conclusion
arrived at in the preceding
para, I beg to state that of
my three assistants — Mr
McAlister in charge of the Madras
Sub Division, Mr Littlewood in
charge of Dindigul Sub Division,
and Mr Supervisor Taylor in charge
of

of Tirumangalam Taluk ^{No. 3} or
Head Quarters Sub Division — the
first had been removed; Mr
Taylor of Tirumangalam from
want of knowledge and experience
of Irrigation works and from
frequent and almost continual
illness, gave little or no help;
while Mr Littlewood was ill
and could not work. I did not
fail to report my troubles to the
Supts Engineer, but I received
no reply or help. I had practically
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months, and could not possibly
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when I had a full staff of, as I
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7. I beg to state that the
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accident took place on the
9th of May, and that I left
Madras on the 24th of May.

I cannot understand why
it has not reported to me.

If it had been, I would
certainly not have gone on
for long till all had been
rectified or explained while
the circumstances were fresh
in my memory.

I have the honour

Sir

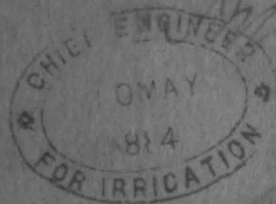
Yours most obed^t serv^t

John S. Johnston

Asst. Surg.

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21/5/84

12/5/84 21-5-84

Form No. 22

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

UNDER date the 21st May 1884

Read the following:—

Letter from Mr. J. C. Johnstone, S. E. Eng. Madras
W. 49th May 1884.

In the above letter
Mr. Johnstone furnishes
the explanation called
for in G.P. No. 795. I.,
dated 1st October 1883,
with regard to the
failure of the Parani
Aicut, in the Madras
District. After careful
consideration of all
that has been brought
forward, the Govern-
ment are willing to
admit that the failure
was due mainly to
defective supervision;

28/29/15

Supp. Inger III Circle with
copy of G.O. No 795 I. dated
Feb 22 1883.

*Supper VII Circle with fine
and perfect record from P.O.
Chas. W. Drayton Oct 1883.*

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The Hon. H. P. Lukin -

1957/58

Σ 11/23/5

See
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Oct 18. 45/5
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Govt. of (1884) Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

(9)

Dated

Placed in
proof

23/5/84

By

By

G.P. 21 May 1884. No. 1275-4

Mr J.C. Johnston

The L. Egr — Censure
in connection with
the failure of the
Parasani amment,
in the Madras District.

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Subd. Secy. Secy.

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