(1) பக்கங்களின் எண்ணிக்கை 44

(2) புதுக்கித் திருப்பிய நாள் Sep - 89

(3) ஆதாரங்குறிப்பவர் சுருக்கொப்பம்

தமிழ்நாடு ஆவணக் காப்பகம்.

(28)

தமிழ்நாடு அரசு

P.W.D. துறை

அரசாணை எண்.
மு. கோப்புத் தாள் எண். 2454

அச்சகம்
பலவகை

நாள் : 4-9-1889 ~~198~~ .

மடிக்கவோ கண்டபடி கையாளவோ கூடாது

22 Sheets

ஆவண. கா-1—18,006—15-6-87.

(22)

2454
1

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

General.
Account.

Read—the following papers :—

From Colonel R. C. B. PEMBERTON, R.E., Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department (Account—General), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Public Works Department, dated Simla, 10th May 1887, No. 121 A.G.

* * * * *

5. *Paragraph* 23, *Practice of rushing expenditure in March.*—The procedure referred to by the Deputy Auditor-General is described in the accompanying extract from his report on the Rangoon Public Works Office of Account. It is left to the discretion of the Madras Government to take any action it thinks proper in this matter. The suggestion of Mr. Byrne will cause the cash book to be closed at the proper date.

* * * * *

Office note from the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, dated Madras, 17th June 1887, No. 221.

In G.O., No. 597 W., dated 8th March 1882, Government passed orders on a report from this office regarding the large number of cheques drawn at the close of the financial year 1880-81. Since then this matter has apparently received no special attention, and, as shown in the margin, the cheques drawn *in the last few days of the year*, remaining uncashed at the end of the year, have risen from 732 cheques aggregating Rs. 2,53,358 in 1880-81, to 1,428 cheques aggregating Rs. 7,05,684 in 1886-87.

Year.	Number of cheque.	Amount.
		Rs.
1880-81	732	2,53,358
1881-82	753	2,37,265
1882-83	1,205	5,09,003
1883-84	1,121	4,38,226
1884-85	1,115	5,13,935
1885-86	1,043	3,53,298
1886-87	1,428	7,05,684

2. When the cash balance statements for March 1887 began to arrive, it became apparent that it would be well to bring the matter again to the notice of Government, and desiring, when doing so, to be in a position to say definitely whether these transactions involved any serious irregularity, over and above the exceptional rate of expenditure at the end of the year, I requested the Executive Engineers of the divisions noted in the margin—divisions in which the balance of uncashed cheques at the end of the year was most exceptionally heavy—to state, with reference to cheques drawn on the 30th and 31st March, whether such cheques were made over to the payees on the same dates, and, if not, on what dates they were so paid over.

Kistna, Eastern.	North Arcot.
Do. Western.	Nellore.
Presidency.	Godávari, Central.
South Arcot.	Do. Eastern.
Tinnevelly.	West Coast.
Madura.	Coimbatore.
Nilgiri.	Ganjam.

2

3. The replies received from the marginally-noted * divisions are to the effect that the cheques in question were made over to the payees, or despatched by post to their several addresses on the dates on which they were drawn.

* Kistna, Eastern.	Godávari, Central.
Do. Western.	Do. Eastern.
South Arcot.	Ganjam.
Tinnevelly.	

4. The replies received from other divisions as noted in the margin † are not equally satisfactory. I give below, in parallel columns, either the substance of the replies, or extracts therefrom, and my comments thereon.

† Presidency.	Nellore.
Madura.	West Coast.
Nilgiri.	Coimbatore.
North Arcot.	

5. *Presidency division.*—Cheques were all made over to payees on the 2nd and 4th April—Saturday and Monday.

In the course of a separate but related correspondence, the Executive Engineer states that the cash book for March was not closed until the 13th April, owing to pressure of work, about 250 bills having been received in the forenoon of the 31st March. Cheques were being drawn until a late hour at night, all other work being set aside.

In this case it would seem that the Executive Engineer must have known that many of the cheques thus hurriedly drawn at the end of the year would not be paid away; and if the 250 bills received in the morning were all to be examined before the cheques were drawn in the evening—or late at night—I doubt whether the examination could have been quite what the code contemplates.

6. *Ramnad division.*—The Executive Engineer reports that in the Ramnad sub-division 16 (out of 26) cheques were sent for delivery *through an upper subordinate*, and that (of the 16) thirteen were delivered *somewhere between the 13th and 27th April*, whilst the remaining three apparently had not been delivered at the date of writing, *i.e.*, 13*th May* 1887.

In contravention of Code Form Book, No. M. 3, Note 5.

7. *Nilgiri division.*—The Executive Engineer gives details, of which the following is a summary:—

Date of issue.	Number of cheque.	Amounts.
		Rs.
1st April	4	9,749
2nd „	1	1,000
3rd „	1	1,000
4th „	7	18,957
13th „	1	2,063
20th „	1	74
27th „	2	2,000
2nd May	2	2,000
Not paid away at date of writing, *i.e.*, 6th May ...	4	3,253

Seven cheques for Rs. 1,000 each were *reserved* at the request of the payee, Messrs. Richardson and Cruddas. Three of these had not been paid away on the 6th May.

The statement that cheques were *reserved* at the request of payee seems to imply that they were drawn with the express intention of keeping them. Such a proceeding is distinctly irregular. The cheques paid away on the 2nd and 3rd April were two of the *reserved* cheques. As to the remaining cheques, it would seem probable that they were drawn either with the intention of keeping them, or without a sufficient assurance of the attendance of contractors to receive them. If arrangements were made and fell through, any entries based on the cheques should have been cancelled.

8. *Nellore division.*—The Executive Engineer reports that the cheques were made over to contractors up to the 3rd April 1887 as the contractors presented themselves.

The irregularity in this division is comparatively trifling.

9. *West Coast division.*—Cheques were made over to payees on dates of drawing, except in case of absent contractors when cheques were sent by post:—

"The delay, however, in sending cheques by post continued up to 9th April, as there was hardly time before the close of the official year to make fair copies of bills and extracts from measurement books for the signature of the contractors."

The cheques should not have been drawn until the necessary preliminaries were completed.

10. *Coimbatore division.*—There was no irregularity in the Divisional office or in the Coimbatore sub-division. In the Erode sub-division one cheque was delivered on the 1st and one on the 6th April.

The irregularity is small.

In the Salem sub-division 18 cheques were kept in the office for periods ranging up to the 19th April.

Most of these cheques should probably not have been drawn until April.

11. *North Arcot.*—The Executive Engineer reports that cheques were being sent by post up to the 4th April.

The irregularity is small.

12. It would perhaps have been better if I had, in the first instance, put the same inquiries to all divisions; but Government will see that, judging by the divisions as to which information has been obtained, apart from the rush to spend money at the very end of the year, and the consequent hurried drawing of cheques, involving, it is to be feared, in some cases at any rate, insufficient compliance with the code rule as to preliminary formalities, there has been no very noticeable irregularity except in the Nilgiri and West Coast divisions; and in the Salem sub-division of Coimbatore and even in this division, I have no doubt that the officers concerned acted upon a *bonâ fide*, though mistaken, view of the rules.

13. In the Ramnad division the sending of cheque through an upper subordinate, who was not a sub-divisional officer, was of course an irregularity (*vide* Code paragraph 1371); but it is not an irregularity which need be specially noticed in this connection.

14. In other divisions the retention of cheques does not seem to have extended beyond a few days.

15. The code rule on the subject, as laid down in note 5 on Form No. M 3 is, in my opinion, very clear. It is that "a cheque should not be drawn until it is intended to be paid away, and no cheque should be entered in the cash book until it has actually been paid away," and if a cheque is drawn and cannot be paid away, any account entries inadvertently and irregularly made in connection with such a cheque should in strictness be cancelled at once, and should certainly be cancelled if the cheque is not paid away before the end of the month, and especially before the end of the last month of the financial year.

16. I am bound however to add that, however clear the rule may be, it does not cover the whole of the ground, and, in my opinion, it is not altogether a practicable rule. I had intended, in connection with this report, to suggest modifications which seem to me desirable; but the reference made to me under your endorsement, No. 1770 C., dated 23rd May 1887, on Government of India letter forwarding for consideration a suggestion of the Deputy Auditor-General, has independently raised the question of measures for checking the rushing of expenditure at the end of the year, and I now propose to deal with the whole question in connection with that reference. It will probably be well to defer action on this note until receipt of my reply to the above-mentioned reference.

Office note from the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, dated Madras, 2nd July 1887, No. 291.

[Your office note, No. 1770 C., dated 23rd May 1887.]

In my office note, No. 222, dated 17th June 1887, I dealt with paragraphs 4 and 6 of Government of India letter, No. 121 A.G., dated 10th May 1887, and stated that the subject of paragraph 5 would be taken up separately. I also referred to the matter in my office note, No. 221, dated 17th June 1887, calling attention to the large number and amount of cheques drawn in the last few days of the year, and to certain connected irregularities.

2. The irregularities which do or may occur in connection with the rushing of expenditure, at the end of the financial year, may be considered under three heads, viz.:—

(*a*) Ante-dated cheques, *i.e.*, cheques drawn in April, or even May or June and dated 31st March.

(*b*) Dummy cheques, *i.e.*, cheques drawn on or before 31st March but retained in the Executive Engineer's possession after that date.

(*c*) Insufficient attention to preliminary formalities, due to hurry and pressure.

3. The suggestion made in paragraph 14 of the Deputy Auditor-General's report on the office of the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, Burma,* referred to in paragraph 5 of Government of India letter above quoted, is aimed solely at the first kind of irregularity (*a*), *i.e.*, at the practice—or the supposed practice—of drawing cheques after the close of the year, and dating them as on the last day of the year, in order to evade the rule as to lapsing of grants. Government has to consider whether it is necessary to provide at all for this description of irregularity, and, if so, how to deal with it.

* "That each Executive Engineer be required to telegraph to the Examiner on the 31st March his total expenditure for that month, with the number of last cheque drawn. And when there are sub-divisions similar information should be furnished by the sub-divisional officer."

4. My first impression was, that it was not necessary to make any provision at all; and even now I do not think there is reason to suppose that the practice is adopted by any officer of the Madras Public Works Department; but information given to me confidentially by an officer of the Executive Branch has convinced me that such things have been done before, not perhaps by an officer actually employed at the time in the Public Works Department, but at any rate by one who might any day be so employed, and therefore it may be as well to guard against any repetition of the practice.

5. I do not, however, recommend the adoption of the suggestion made by the Deputy Auditor-General. It is as well to bear in mind what the transaction in question really amounts to. In plain English it is the utterance of a series of deliberate falsehoods—as to which however see also paragraph 8 below—and an officer who is prepared to do this, is not likely to be very particular as to the means of defeating any check introduced in order to prevent it. A check that is easily defeated is worse than useless.

6. The check proposed by the Deputy Auditor-General would I think be defeated by a very simple expedient. At the time when the officer is required to telegraph his total expenditure he knows, to a rupee, what he wants his expenditure to be; he also knows fairly well what payments in the aggregate he will be able to make during the month—or whatever the time may be—during which he wants to draw and ante-date cheques, even if he cannot, at the time, foresee his payments in sufficient detail to enable him to draw dummy cheques, and so avoid ante-dating. There is nothing whatever to prevent him from telegraphing any sum he chooses, and afterwards making his expenditure up to that amount by ante-dated cheques. The rules of the department require him to keep his cheque book under lock and key (Code paragraph 1612); and if he chooses to draw his cheques himself, nobody will know when he drew them. It is a question of cooking the accounts somehow; and if he is prepared to cook them at all, he will cook them in a new way when the old way is closed.

7. I think therefore that, whilst the proposed check would certainly be considered as casting an unmerited slur on ninety-nine, or more, officers of a hundred, it would be laughed at by the individuals at whom it was aimed, who indeed would probably find a new pleasure in defeating the check invented for their especial benefit.

8. In my opinion the remedy—if any is required—should be looked for in another direction. However irregular may be the practices occasionally adopted in this connection, they are not adopted with any view to personal benefit. To some slight extent the desire of obtaining credit for spending the grant may perhaps operate; but I am inclined to believe that, as a general rule, an officer who does this sort of thing does it under the mistaken notion that he is helping Government in spite of itself, that is in spite of the rules it has laid down; and that he is really doing the best for the interests committed to his charge; and I believe that a little plain speaking is all that is really necessary to prevent such practices. At present there is not a word about the matter in the code. If it is necessary to do any thing, I would introduce into the code a distinct prohibition of such practices, with a statement in plain English of what they amount to, and of the light in which they are really regarded by Government. I believe that would be quite sufficient.

9. If, however, Government thinks that some positive check is necessary, then I would suggest that every Executive Engineer and every sub-divisional officer having a drawing account, be required to post to the Examiner's address, on the 1st April in each year, under registered cover, an exact transcript of the last two pages of his cash book, the accountant or sub-divisional officer's clerk being responsible for the despatch of the transcript, if the Executive Engineer or the sub-divisional officer should be absent. I am not recommending the adoption of this check: I am only pointing out that, if some positive check is considered necessary, this, in my opinion, is the only one that would be really effectual.

10. Then as to dummy cheques, that is cheques drawn and brought to account, but not paid away. The dummy cheque may be deliberately fabricated, or it may be the result of accident. In the first case the cheque is drawn at a time when, or under circumstances in which, the officer drawing it knows that he would not be justified in paying it away; and he has no intention of paying it away: he only wants to bring the charge to account. This is distinctly prohibited in Code paragraph 1627. In the second case the cheque is drawn with every intention of paying it away, and in circumstances which would fully justify such payment; but some accident prevents it being issued, and it remains in the officer's cash chest. The code is silent as to what should be done in such cases; but in note 5 on Form M-3 the officers of the department are instructed that "a cheque should not be drawn until it is intended to be paid away, and no cheque should be entered in the cash book until it has actually been paid away."

11. Judging from the facts reported in my office note, No. 221, dated 17th June 1887, I see no reason to suppose that in Madras dummy cheques are deliberately fabricated in contravention of Code paragraph 1627. The only case which suggests any thing of this sort is that of certain cheques drawn by the Executive Engineer, Nilgiri division, and "reserved" by him; but from the Executive Engineer's explanation I am satisfied that the cheques were properly drawn and might have been paid away to the contractor as soon as drawn, but that they were held by the Executive Engineer as the agent of the contractor at the request of the latter. I think the proceeding was irregular and objectionable, but there was no contravention of Code paragraph 1627. But though there may be no disregard of Code paragraph 1627, it appears that the latter part of the rule quoted at the end of paragraph 10 is habitually disregarded, and that many cheques are drawn, and improperly brought to account, although actually remaining for days and weeks in the possession of the Executive Engineer, with the result of falsifying the accounts and unduly swelling the expenditure against grants; and it seems not improbable that a considerable number of these

cheques are drawn without any reasonable assurance that there will be an early opportunity of paying them away; and in order to prevent this, the rules on the subject should, I think, be revised and amplified, and should, above all, be introduced into the body of the code, instead of being relegated to the notes on the back of some form.

12. The question is one that is continually arising. It was raised in connection with the inspection of the Nilgiri division last year, *vide* G.O., No. 1340 W., dated 29th May 1886, but without definite result; and again only a few months ago by the Superintending Engineer, III Circle, in his endorsement on a letter from the Executive Engineer, Cuddapah division, *vide* G.O., No. 2898 W., dated 3rd November 1886, but such result as was arrived at in the office note correspondence which ensued was probably communicated to nobody except the Executive Engineer, Cuddapah division. Apparently the view then taken was that the difficulties referred to by the Superintending Engineer were of very rare and exceptional occurrence, and that it was unnecessary to legislate for them. I think this was a mistake. Cases are, I believe, continually occurring in which cheques drawn in accordance with a *bond fide*, though possibly mistaken, interpretation of the code rules, do remain for a long time in the possession of the Executive Engineer or of some subordinate officer; and I think it is very desirable to have a clear understanding as to what is to be done in such cases, and I should be very glad if the matter could be settled before the approaching inspections.

13. Supposing a revision of the rules to be expedient, the first question to be settled is, when may a cheque be drawn? I entirely agree with the Superintending Engineer, III Circle, that the present rule * is impracticable if it is to be strictly interpreted. You cannot insist that an officer shall never draw a cheque until the payee is there, at his side, waiting to receive it. No doubt cheques should not be drawn unless there is a reasonable assurance that an opportunity of handing them to the payees will very shortly occur, or unless there is an intention of at once sending them by post to the address of the payees; but an absolute rule on this point is impracticable. If a contractor has arranged to be present in the afternoon, it surely cannot be considered improper to draw his cheque in the morning, if convenient to the Executive Engineer. For my own part I am not prepared to say that it would necessarily be irregular to draw it the day before, or possibly the day before that—every thing must depend upon circumstances which cannot be provided for by a hard-and-fast rule—and after all the contractor may not turn up at all. The essential thing appears to be that that no cheque shall be drawn until all prescribed preliminaries, in respect of measurements, &c., have been completed in such wise that the officer drawing the cheque is satisfied that the cheque may, with propriety, be paid away, *i.e.*, be allowed to pass out of his possession and beyond his control, as soon as he has signed it: an absolute rule on this point is quite practicable. I would therefore introduce into the code two rules, viz., (1) an absolute rule, that no cheque is to be drawn until the officer is satisfied that he *may*, with propriety, pay it away, as soon as it is drawn, and (2) a caution, that no cheque should be drawn without a reasonable assurance that it *will* be paid away very shortly.

* No cheque should be drawn until it is to be paid away.

14. The next question is: when is an entry to be made in the accounts? There are two possible courses, viz.:—

(1) To make the entry only when the cheque is actually paid away; and

(2) To make the entry when the cheque is drawn, with an understanding that the entry will be cancelled, if the cheque is not actually paid away in a certain time.

I am decidedly of opinion that the first course is the proper one: it is certainly that now prescribed by the code, if the notes on the backs of the code forms may be considered code rules; it is the only plan strictly consistent with the general rule that the public accounts are based on cash and not on liabilities; and I am not aware of any difficulty in carrying it out. Moreover, the alternative plan could not be adopted without the approval of the Government of India.

15. It will, however, be necessary to answer the question put by the Superintending Engineer, III Circle, in his letter to you, No. 1641 of 17th November 1886, viz., "in what form of memorandum or account should the transaction be recorded" during the interval between the drawing of the cheque and the paying of it away. I think this is a matter that should be provided for, and I would require a register to be kept, in each Divisional office, of all cheques drawn, but not actually paid away, and consequently not brought to account; that is to say (1) all cheques retained in the possession of the Executive Engineer and (2) all cheques sent to a sub-divisional officer and not advised by him as actually paid away. The register would be a very simple matter, the only particulars required being the book and cheque numbering, the date of drawing, whether in possession of Executive Engineer or sent to sub-divisional officer, and the amount and date of payment and entry in accounts, with a reference, in case of cheques sent to sub-divisional officer, to the letter or memorandum reporting payment and forwarding voucher. Moreover, if the rules of the code—paragraph 1371 and others—are attended to, the entries in the register should be very few, and incidentally the register would afford a ready means of ascertaining, on the occasion of inspections of Superintending Engineer, and Examiner, whether the rules are observed.

16. I have assumed that a cheque is only *paid away* when it is handed to the payee, or to his authorised agent, or sent by post directly to the address of the payee; and that it is not paid away as long as it remains in the possession, or under the control, of any officer of the department, or is in transit from one officer to another. If Government accept this interpretation, it might be introduced into the code.

17. I must however point out that this interpretation differs from that given by my predecessor in his office note to you, No. 593 of 25th November 1886. He considered that a cheque was paid away when dealt with under paragraph 1912 of the old code — note to paragraph 1371 of the present edition — meaning apparently that it was paid away as soon as despatched to the sub-divisional officer. It would be waste of time to argue as to which of these two interpretations is, in law or in logic, the more accurate; the question is which is the best with reference to the object in view, and if the object is to prevent the fabrication of dummy cheques, the only effectual plan is to refuse to consider a cheque paid away, and so to prevent its being brought to account, as long as it remains in any way under the control of the drawer.

18. If the above proposals are accepted, nothing more will be necessary, from a strictly accounts point of view; but I ought to point out the risk that is run when cheques drawn and signed are unnecessarily retained in the possession of the Executive Engineer or of a subordinate officer. The risk is the same whether the cheque is brought to account or not, and I think that, in the interests of the drawing officers themselves, it would be well to lay down some rule as to the cancelling of cheques retained for more than a certain number of days, as to which also see the above-mentioned correspondence with the Superintending Engineer, III Circle.

19. The third class of irregularity, that resulting from the hurry and pressure consequent on having to pay an abnormally large number of bills in a very short time, is one as to which I have very little to say. It is a thing that can hardly be proved, though there can be very little doubt that it must occur—occasionally at any rate. It is, for instance, almost impossible that 250 bills received in the morning can be properly examined and checked before being paid the same evening, *vide* paragraph 5 of my office note, No. 221, dated 17th June 1887. The only remedy is to distribute over a month or six weeks the work now done in a few days. It is a matter for the Executive, not for the Accounts, Branch to deal with.

Office note from the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, dated Madras, 24th February 1888, No. 1107.

I beg to invite your attention to the remarks made in my office note, No. 291, dated 2nd July 1887, on the subject of rushing expenditure at the end of the year,

and with reference thereto to suggest that, if Government wish to prevent a recurrence of the same this year, it would be well to issue orders at once calling the attention of Superintending Engineers to the necessity of seeing that payment of bills is not deferred until the very end of the year, and that no payments are recorded in the accounts which are not *bonâ fide* made and completed within the year, i.e., no entries should be made in cash books except of cash paid or of cheques actually handed over to the contractors or other creditors before the close of the month of March, on account of work actually measured, and for which bills have been received, examined, and passed by the disbursing officer.

Order—dated 3rd March 1888, No. 732 W., Public Works.

The Government do not consider it necessary to issue any special orders as regards ante-dating cheques. Every officer must be well aware that under no circumstances can there be any justification for a proceeding which is tantamount to misrepresentation.

2. In the matter of cheques drawn on or before 31st March, but retained in the possession of the Executive Engineer after that date, it is desirable that there should be a definite ruling in the code as to when a cheque *may* be drawn, coupled with a caution that no cheque should be drawn unless there is a reasonable probability that the cheque *will* be paid away very shortly.

3. It should also be understood that a cheque is not to be entered in the accounts until it has actually been paid away; but as delay between drawing and paying is sometimes unavoidable, a register should be kept of all cheques drawn but not paid away and consequently not brought to account.

4. In order that the expression *paid away* may be clearly understood, its interpretation as given by the Examiner of Public Works Accounts will be entered in the code.

"A cheque is only paid away when it is handed to the payee, or to his authorised agent, or sent by post directly to the address of the payee; it is not paid away as long it remains in the possession, or under the control, of any officer of the department, or is in transit from one officer to another."

5. With regard to the general question of rushing expenditure at the end of each official year, while fully aware of the difficulties with which officers have to contend in order to avoid the lapse of grants, the Government must impress upon Superintending Engineers and all concerned, the necessity of using every effort to distribute expenditure equally throughout the working season, and they have no doubt that a great improvement in this direction can be effected.

6. The Secretary to the Code Committee will draw up the draft rules embodying the spirit of these orders, for introduction into the Public Works Code.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) H. R. MEAD, Colonel, R.E.,
Joint Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

To Superintending Engineers.
To the Examiner, Public Works Accounts.
" Consulting Architect to Government.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation

Exd. A. Aubert,
Spare Copies

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GENERAL.
ACCOUNT.

Govt. of {1888} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated March, 3rd.

Recd. *Encl.*

G.O., 3rd March 1888, No. 732 W.

MARCH.

Rushing expenditure at the close of a year

Passing orders on the subject of —

24154/5

13TH SEPTEMBER 1888, No. 2855 W., PUBLIC WORKS.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

General.
Account.

READ—the following papers :—

From the Superintending Engineer,	IV	Circle,	dated	2nd	Dec.	1887,	No.	478 E.W.
" " "	III	"	"	21st	"	"	"	1941.
" " "	VI	"	"	28th	"	"	"	1739 T.J.
" " "	II	"	"	29th	Jan.	1888,	"	407 G.D.
" " "	V	"	"	20th	Feb.	"	"	4912.
" " "	I	"	"	14th	April	"	"	38 G.L.

Office Note from the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, dated 20th July 1888, No. 1924.

Before going in detail into the causes of the delays in question and the possible remedies, I wish to say a few words regarding the object in view and the importance of the matter, both of which appear to be misapprehended by several officers. For instance, the Executive Engineer, Buckingham Canal division (Mr. Vincent), writes "as the cases in which delay *need* occur are but rare, and as the Examiner's office cannot be put to much inconvenience by occasional delays, the matter is apparently one of no great importance."

2. It is not on the ground of the inconvenience, great or small, to the Examiner's office that I have thought it desirable to take the matter up seriously. As I pointed out in my note of the 28th October 1887, No. 706, and as the replies now received show, the number of vouchers received late in the Examiner's office is nothing to the number received late in the Divisional offices; and it is in the latter that the real inconvenience is felt. Not only is the number of missing vouchers much greater in Divisional offices, but the absence of each individual voucher is then of much greater importance. Whatever may be said and ordered, the narrations of transactions in imprest and sub-divisional cash accounts never will be so complete, if indeed it is desirable that they should in all cases be so complete, as to afford all information necessary to the divisional accountant for posting the divisional accounts. To a great extent he is obliged, and always will be obliged, to depend on information to be obtained from the vouchers, and if the vouchers are not submitted with the sub-divisional accounts, his compilation of the divisional accounts will be imperfect, and difficult and unpunctual. To a certain extent, but in a much less degree, the want of information to be obtained from vouchers is felt in the Examiner's office.

3. Again, the correspondence, the inevitable correspondence, which takes place between the Divisional offices and Sub-Divisional offices on the one hand and the Examiner on the other regarding, or in connection with, these delays and omissions, to say nothing of references from Sub-Divisional officers to subordinates, is a great annoyance to every one concerned. This correspondence is in the aggregate enormous, and much of it, probably most of it, might, I feel sure, be obviated.

4. Moreover, the long chain of references which is necessary in all these cases, a great part of the references from the Examiner to the Executive Engineer having to be referred by the latter to the Sub-Divisional officer, and by him to some subordinate, the replies returning in the same way, causes very great delay (sometimes a

delay of months) in the final settlement of any month's accounts. Some idea of the aggregate amount of trouble and correspondence caused by mistakes in vouchers, may be gathered from the following figures, remembering that, as often as not, a voucher returned by the Executive Engineer to the Sub-Divisional officer, has to be returned by the latter to a section officer; and possibly by him to some other subordinate, or that the contractor must be got to initial some correction. From a bundle of objections to sub-divisional accounts, obtained from the Executive Engineer, Godavári Western division, I find that in September 1886 as many as 149 vouchers were returned to Sub-Divisional officers; in October 99; and in 1887, in October 56, in January 75, in March 59; whilst in some months *all vouchers* were returned; and from a recent inspection report of the Godávari Central division, it appears that of the vouchers of the Nagaram sub-division, 56 out of 128 were returned in December 1887, 57 out of 160 in January 1888, and 32 out of 172 in February. Besides these there are all the vouchers not received with the sub-divisional accounts.

5. Altogether I feel sure that directly and indirectly very great relief might be given to Divisional offices and to subordinate offices by a little attention to the causes which lead to difficulties and delays in obtaining and submitting satisfactory vouchers, and it is on this account, and not because of a little inconvenience to the Examiner's office, that I have taken the matter up. I do not share the opinion expressed by so many officers as to their impossibility of applying any satisfactory remedies.

6. The delays occur principally in connection with vouchers for payments to contractors, piece-workers (so-called), and suppliers of materials, and, as far as these are concerned, it appears, from the replies of the officers consulted, that the causes of delay may be stated as follows:—

(*a*) Delivery through Sub-Divisional officers of cheques drawn by the Executive Engineer, because the cheque may remain undelivered, and therefore unacknowledged, long after it has been brought to account.

(*b*) Transmission of cheques through the post, because the post office often has a difficulty in finding the payees who are continually on the move, and when the letter containing the cheque is delivered, the payee is in no hurry to acknowledge it, even if, as often happens, he does not actually refuse to give a receipt owing to his not admitting the correctness of the payment.

(*c*) The necessity of sending vouchers after the Executive Engineer, if he is away from head-quarters when they arrive.

(*d*) The necessity of sending bills to subordinates for the purpose of obtaining their signature to the certificates of work done.

(*e*) The fact of Sub-Divisional officers requiring subordinates to submit bills in triplicate and deferring submission of vouchers to the Divisional office when less than the required number (3) of copies is received.

(*f*) Returning of vouchers to Sub-Divisional officer, or by him to subordinates, for explanation of high rates and unauthorised charges.

(*g*) Similar returning of vouchers for the purpose of obtaining the initials of the payee to corrections made by the Executive Engineer, or Sub-Divisional officer, &c., the delays in such cases being frequently increased by difficulty in finding the payee.

(*h*) Similar returning of vouchers on account of some informality in the signature of the payee, or in the attestation of the witnesses, or (in case of final payments) because of the omission of the payee to enter *in his own handwriting* the words "in full settlement" of all demands.

(*i*) Multiplicity of forms, which leads to the use of wrong forms and so to the return of the voucher for preparation in the proper form.

(*j*) Complexity of forms and consequent frequency of mistakes of various kinds, any one of which may necessitate the return of the voucher for correction.

7. The first cause of delay (*a*) has already been disposed of by G.O. No. 732 W., dated 3rd March 1888, which prohibits the practice of bringing cheques to account before delivery; it is therefore unnecessary to say any more than that, as this practice

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was responsible for a considerable proportion of the delays experienced, so the prohibition of the practice may be expected to effect an appreciable reduction of the cases of delay.

8. The next cause (*b*) transmission of cheques through the post is responsible for a good many instances of delay in some divisions. In other divisions the practice appears to be avoided as much as possible on account of the difficulty of obtaining vouchers when cheques are sent in this way. I am disposed to think that it would be well to restrict by code rule the sending of cheques (or transfer receipts) through the post. Considering the disfavor with which many Executive Engineers regard the practice, I do not think any practical inconvenience would be caused by limiting the transmission of cheques through the post to cases in which the payees are firms or parties having established places of business and fixed postal addresses, and in which cheques (or transfer receipts or what not) are sent in payment of the full amounts claimed in bills drawn by the payees themselves. This would exclude almost all payments to the general run of contractors; but any slight inconvenience thus caused might be much more than counterbalanced by the removal of the present restrictions on the delivery of cheques through subordinates.

9. At present the code (para. 1371) prohibits delivery of cheques to contractors through subordinates not in charge of sub-divisions. The number of sub-divisions, exclusive of head-quarters sub-divisions in charge of the Executive Engineer of the division, is at present 63, and the number of upper subordinates not in charge of divisions or sub-divisions is 133; the removal of the restriction in question as regards *upper* subordinates only would therefore more than treble the agency for the delivery of cheques, and would considerably expedite payments. It might perhaps be a very good thing if it were never necessary to deliver cheques at all through subordinates, but if the practice is allowed at all, it is difficult to see why a cheque may not be delivered through a Sub-Engineer or a supervisor who is not in charge of a sub-division when it can be delivered through a sub-overseer if he happens to hold such a charge, or why the same man should be trusted one day and not the next; or why he should be trusted in more important matters and not in this.

10. Then with regard to such payments as might be permitted through the post, I am disposed to think that it would be a convenience to both payers and payees if officers of the department were allowed to freely take advantage of the postal money order system. At present the code (para. 1890) requires that, whenever payments have to be made outside the division, the amount involved shall be remitted direct to the payee by means of remittance transfer receipts obtained from the civil treasury. As letters containing remittances have to be registered, there is no economy whatever in the present system for remittances not exceeding ten rupees—rather the reverse, as the postage has to be paid also—and even when the amount of commission would exceed the registration fees, it seems probable that, as the commission is paid from one Government pocket into another, it might in a great many cases be well to allow payments to be made by postal money order, and so ensure the prompt return of an acknowledgment of payment which would constitute at any rate an *ad interim* voucher.

11. It seems possible moreover that, if the matter were taken up, the Postal department might be willing to undertake service payments for reduced commissions just as they now carry service letters for reduced rates of postage. The charge for a private letter is one anna per tola; that for service letters one anna for every ten totals; similarly the commission on private money order being approximately at the rate of two annas for every ten rupees; the Postal department might be willing to reduce the commission for service money order to two annas for, say, every fifty rupees. The actual cost of the postal agency is probably very small; the real justification for the charges made to the public is the expense and risk of moving cash; and as the Currency department makes no charge for this when it issues service transfer remittance receipts, the Postal department might perhaps in cases of service remittances, forego so much of their charges as represent expense and risk of movements of cash.

12. Since the issue of G.O. No. 2027 W., dated 13th August 1886, I have succeeded in inducing the Postmaster-General to allow Postmasters to receive cheques

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in payment of sums due by officers of the department in their official capacities; and I think it might very possibly be a considerable convenience to Executive Engineers in certain divisions to be able to dispose of a number of payments by a single cheque in favor of the District Postmaster, which being sent to him with a number of money order applications, would ensure the early return of an acknowledgment without the necessity for any more formal correspondence than that on the coupon of the money order; but, as stated above, payments made in this way should, I think, be confined to cases in which the payee has an established place of a business and a fixed postal address.

13. The next cause of delay (*c*), the sending of vouchers after the Executive Engineer if he is away on tour, is more correctly a cause of aggravation of some delay already otherwise occasioned. The additional delay thus caused ought never to be serious, and it is not at all desirable to do or say anything that would tend to diminish the personal interference of the Executive Engineer in such matters. The absence of the Executive Engineer from head-quarters must of course delay all business; but this is unavoidable.

14. The next two causes (*d*) and (*e*) of para. 6 must to some extent be considered together: (*d*) is an instance of a not uncommon cause of inconvenience in connection with other matters also. A form is drawn up in accordance with some theory as to the procedure to be followed in connection with it; and then, either the theory proves to be wrong, or it is not reduced to rule, or it is reduced to rule, but the rule is not observed.

15. In order to understand the difficulty in this case it is necessary to turn to form No. M 14 (*white or yellow*) and to observe the sequence of the signature near the bottom of the third page of the form. First of all the overseer or other subordinate in charge of the work is supposed to sign the bill with the detail of the quantities and value of work done, and then the Sub-Divisional officer is supposed to certify to the effect that the claim is correct, and that the necessary measurements have been made by him (the Sub-Divisional officer), &c., &c. Now the natural presumption from this would, I think, be that the subordinate in charge of the work draws up the bill on the basis of measurements taken by himself, and that the Sub-Divisional officer then passes it on the basis of check measurements taken by himself. This is presumably the theory on which the form is based; but it is very doubtful whether this theory is correct, and it certainly has not been reduced to rule; and if anything, code para. 1820 implies that it is wrong.

16. Turn now to cause (*e*). The Executive Engineer, Madura division, apparently says that Sub-Divisional officers expect bills in triplicate from subordinates, and when the full number is not received, they wait for them before sending the voucher on to the Executive Engineer, and on this the Superintending Engineer (Colonel Pennycuick) says "No. 6 appears to be due to the bills being prepared by subordinates instead of by Sub-Divisional officers, *and should not be allowed to exist.*" The italics are mine.

17. In connection then with (*d*) and (*e*) the first thing is to settle the procedure to be followed, and when that is done the form can be modified accordingly. At present the procedure varies; in some divisions, it is the subordinate and not the Sub-Divisional officer, who prepares the bills; in other divisions they are prepared by the Sub-Divisional officer, and, as a rule, on measurements taken not by the Sub-Divisional officer, but by the subordinate, and after the bill is prepared the signature of the subordinate has to be obtained in the place provided; and it would seem that, when the latter procedure is followed, the bill is paid first, and the signature of the subordinate obtained afterwards, and then of course the voucher cannot be sent to the Divisional office with the cash account.

18. I am decidedly disposed to agree with Colonel Pennycuick that the bills should be prepared in the Sub-Divisional office (if they are not prepared in the Divisional office), and that preparation of bills, whether singly or in triplicate, by subordinates should not be allowed at all. This change alone would, no doubt, prevent very many mistakes with the consequent returning of vouchers and resulting delays; but the question will have to be decided on other grounds than this. Assuming moreover that the bills,

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if prepared in the Sub-Divisional office, will ordinarily be based on measurements taken by the subordinate (and not by the Sub-Divisional officer), I consider that the certificate should be modified accordingly.

19. Taking the procedure to be as supposed in the last paragraph, I do not see why the subordinate should be required to sign anywhere. He is presumably responsible only for his detailed measurements which do not appear in the certificate at all; and it is not very clear why he should be made to sign the quantities deduced from his measurements and the money amounts arrived at by applying schedule rates to those quantities. If he is to do all this he might almost as well prepare the bill.

20. With reference to para. 18 above, there should not, I think, be any difficulty in wording the certificate so as to make it readily applicable whether the measurements are taken by the subordinate (and checked or not by the Sub-Divisional officer), or whether they are taken by the Sub-Divisional officer; but the first thing is to settle who is to prepare the bill, always supposing that a hard and fast rule can be laid down on this point, as to which Colonel Pennycuick at any rate, who is not generally in favor of hard and fast rules, does not seem to have any doubt. Perhaps it may be necessary to take the opinions of Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers regarding the procedure to be followed.

21. If it should be settled that the subordinate is the proper person to prepare the bill, I certainly think he should not be required to prepare much more than one copy. This is with reference to (*e*).

22. As regards (*f*) it appears to me that the practice of returning vouchers for explanation of high rates and unauthorised charges should be prohibited. Inquiry and action in such matters is quite right, but it does not seem necessary to return the voucher, or delay its submission in any way. Right or wrong the payment has been made and must be brought to account and vouched for. The correction of the over-payment (if any) is a separate matter.

23. Delays arising from the next cause (*g*), the returning of vouchers for the purpose of obtaining the initials of the payee to corrections might, I think, be practically done away with. The corrections made are almost invariably such as reduce the amount of the payment. No payee is at all likely to dispute a correction in his own favor; and it might very well, I think, be ruled that the initials of the payee are only necessary where the correction increases the amount of the payment acknowledged. Perhaps, however, it might be better to rule that when the amount is reduced, instead of making any actual correction, a note should be added to the effect that the actual payment was so much for such and such reasons.

24. With regard to the next point (*h*) I can only suggest, in the first place that great caution should be exercised in laying down arbitrary requirements not absolutely essential and often difficult of fulfilment; and secondly that, as regards mistakes and omissions which, once made, cannot be rectified, the check exercised should take the form of recording the number of mistakes and omissions and bringing to notice cases of individuals who are found to be habitually negligent. If the rules require two witnesses to a payment, and the payment is made in the presence of one witness only, you cannot alter the fact even if you delay the submission of the voucher for a year; or if a contractor does not enter *in his own handwriting* the words "in full settlement of all demands" at the time of payment, you cannot make him do it afterwards if he is not inclined to.

25. The question of the number of witnesses to be required in different classes of cases is at present under consideration (*vide* G.O. No. 1291 W., dated 2nd May 1888), and it is to be hoped that the result will be a rule less difficult of observance than the present one is in certain classes of cases.

26. The other requirement was introduced by the Government of India (*vide* Government of India Circular No. 9 P.W., dated 16th June 1882), who apparently attached some importance to it at the time: but I think it is very doubtful whether it gives any greater security; and it is responsible for a good deal of trouble. If a man can read and write, then his signature to a receipt which shows plainly in print in his own language that it is in full of all demands, ought surely to be sufficient.

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The man in respect of whom additional precaution may really be necessary is the man who cannot read and write, and in his case the requirement in question is of no assistance. I am moreover disposed to think that it is best to act generally on the principle that a man must be held to understand and accept that which he signs; and that if you act on the contrary principle of taking unnecessary precautions to protect him, you unnecessarily run the risk of prejudicing your own cause in any case in which the precautions may be omitted. For the same reason, I do not think a voucher need be objected to because when the payee signs in the vernacular the amount is not entered in the vernacular—see note 3 on the form 14, and note 2 on form 14-A. It might be worth while to take the opinions of the executive officers as to the usefulness of requiring contractors to add these words in their own writing. When it is remembered that every contract agreement is in English, it seems very like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel to insist on these precautions for the protection of the contractor in the matter of individual payments.

27. In any case I think that, when such requirements as these are not fulfilled, the best plan is to pass over specific omissions and to take suitable notice of habitual, or too frequent, neglect of the rules by any individual.

28. The next (and last) two causes (*i*) and (*j*) multiplicity and complexity of the forms are probably, between them, responsible for a good half of the delays, either by themselves or in combination with other causes.

29. With regard to the complaint as to the multiplicity of forms, it will be seen that there are five forms (Nos. 14 white, 14 yellow 14-A, 15 and 17) for use in connection with claims and payments for works done or materials supplied. Three of the varieties (14 white, 15 and 17) correspond to differences (real or supposed) in the nature of the service rendered; the other two varieties are due to differences in the occasion on which the payment is made.

30. Bearing in mind the sort of establishment by which the forms are used, there can, I think, be no doubt that this multiplicity of forms is likely to lead to frequent mistakes. It is not only that the clerk concerned is likely to use a wrong form, but the differences between such forms as, say, 14 and 14-A, as regards the arrangement of the matter, and the inclusion of certain things in one form, and their omission in another, are confusing and cause mistakes; and every mistake leads to the return of the voucher for revision. Multiplicity therefore, so far as it is not absolutely necessary, is clearly objectionable.

31. I believe that for all occasions on which bills of contractors and suppliers have to be prepared by Sub-Divisional officers or by subordinates (if subordinates are allowed to prepare them at all), a single form ought to suffice. The difference between forms 14, 14-A and 17 is that 14 is for contract work, 14-A for piece-work (so-called), and 17 for materials supplied. Between contract work and piece-work, as hitherto understood, there is no real difference; and there is no reason that I can see why one and the same form should not be made suitable for bills for works and bills for materials. In both cases the particulars required are the same, viz., description, quantity, unit, rate and amount. It is just possible that it might be necessary to provide two alternative forms of certificates; but as the certificates would have to be signed by the Sub-Divisional officer himself, it may be reasonably assumed that this should not give rise to any mistakes; and I think that probably one form of certificate could be drawn up to suit both cases.

32. The only possible difficulty that I can see in the way of abolishing the separate form (M 17) for suppliers' bills is that the contract certificate form could not conveniently be made to provide for showing the several works chargeable, in cases in which materials are obtained from one man for a number of works as is done in form M 17; but this is very much a question of practice, and I find, from a scrutiny of bills for materials, that, as a matter of fact, there is only one single division (Nilgiri) in which advantage is taken of these provisions of form M 17. It appears that, in all other divisions, separate bills are made out for separate works; and even in the Nilgiri division the materials chargeable to each work are collected together, and probably the bill in its ultimate form is really an abstract *by works* of a general bill

or list in which no distinction of works is made. In any case the additional trouble (if any) entailed by making out separate bills for each work must be very trifling indeed; if there were any substantial advantage in having a single bill for a number of works, it is improbable that the practice would be confined to a single division.

33. Separate bills will of course occasionally put the suppliers to extra expense of an anna or two for receipt stamps, but this extra expense must be very trifling, and the code (para. 1642) already lays down that, as far as practicable, separate vouchers shall be taken for payments for separate works.

34. Note 7 on form M 14 (see book of forms) distinctly contemplates the possibility of the forms being used for large supplies; and if it is not unsuitable in the case of large supplies, it must, I think, be even less unsuitable in the case of small supplies, for the larger the supply, the greater the probability of the materials being intended for a number of different works.

35. I will only add, with regard to this point, that it will be desirable, and indeed necessary, to provide clearly for a form of receipt to be given to the contractor or supplier by the subordinate actually receiving the materials supplied, which receipts should form the basis of the certificates in form M 14, no payment being made on a certificate not supported by such receipts, and no receipt for payment being considered a proper voucher unless supported by the necessary receipts for delivery of the stores. Such receipts are evidently contemplated at present—*vide* the heading of column 9 of form M 17, viz., "by whom received and number of receipt attached if not receipted below;" but they are nowhere definitely provided for. I think, however, that it is a mistake to dispense with these receipts when the materials happen to have been received by the officer signing the certificate (as in form M 17), because, if the receipts exist, they may easily be made the basis of a second claim in respect of the same supplies. I think, therefore, that the receipts should be required in all cases.

36. Form 15 might with advantage, I think, be done away with altogether. It is supposed to be used on occasions of payments made without any work having been done since last previous payment. This would seldom happen except in cases of final payments, and as regards final payments it is expressly provided on form 15 itself that in such cases the receipt should be taken on form 14 yellow. In my opinion it would be very much better (always supposing that the receipt is not to be taken on a form quite apart from the certificate) to take all receipts on form 14, whether work has or has not been done since the date of last payment, providing that, when no work has been done, the circumstances under which the payment is made should be clearly stated in that part of the form (paras. 2 and 3) in which the particulars of work done would ordinarily be entered. There is an apparent trifling economy of paper in the use of the present form 15, but this is probably more than counterbalanced by the trouble and waste of time and paper occasioned by unnecessary variety of forms. Apart from this doubtful economy, there is apparently no advantage whatever in using form 15.

37. I am disposed to think that form 14, the yellow contract certificate, might also be done away with as far as Sub-Divisional officers are concerned, that is to say, its use might very well be confined to Divisional offices. This would probably prevent a good many mistakes, whether arising from the use of the yellow form where the white should be used, or from the use of the white where the yellow should be used, because even a Sub-Divisional officer himself is not in a position to say with certainty whether final payment will or will not be made on a certificate which is final as far as he is concerned; and the Sub-Divisional officer's clerk, who really prepares the certificate (when it is not prepared by the subordinate in immediate charge of the work) knows even less about the matter.

38. From previous inquiries I understand that in some divisions it is already the practice to confine the use of the yellow form to Divisional offices, but this involves the recopying of the certificate on to the yellow form in the Divisional office whenever final payment is to be made. As the prescribed procedure now stands, this additional copying is so much additional work, and to that extent objectionable; but the

procedure would, I think, with advantage be modified, so that the recopying should not mean any additional work.

39. Under Code para. 1818 (as it now stands) the Sub-Divisional officer (or possibly a subordinate) is supposed to prepare contract certificates in duplicate, giving the original to the contractor for presentation to the Executive Engineer, and sending a certified copy to the Divisional office. As a matter of fact, the rule about giving the original to the contractor is a dead letter, because as a rule contractors do not want to go to the Divisional office, and several officers have at various times suggested that this rule should be altered. I am disposed to think that this rule should be altered, and that the Sub-Divisional officer should only be required to prepare one copy for the Executive Engineer. Whether he should keep a certified copy for himself is a separate matter to be considered in connection with the question of the number of certified copies required; but he need prepare only one copy for the Executive Engineer, and the certified copy which, I take it, in all cases of contract certificates, will certainly be required in the Divisional office, would be made in the Divisional office; and in cases of final payments the white certificate received from the Sub-Divisional officer would, by the addition of a few words, be made to answer for the certified copy of the yellow certificate (to be drawn up also in the Divisional office) on which the contractor's signature would be taken. The occasions for mistakes owing to the use of two different forms in the Sub-Divisional office would thus be obviated, without any additional work anywhere, but with a transfer—in itself, probably desirable—of a certain amount of copying from the Sub-Divisional to the Divisional office.

40. In this way a single form would be substituted for five forms for use in Sub-Divisional offices (or possibly by subordinates) in connection with claims of contractors and suppliers; and a great many mistakes, and much consequent trouble would, I think, be prevented. It is necessary to remember that it is generally the Sub-Divisional officer's clerk, not the Sub-Divisional officer himself, who draws up the certificates, and that he probably makes a good many mistakes which are detected by, and corrected under, the instructions of the Sub-Divisional officer, so that the trouble caused by the multiplicity of forms is by no means confined to mistakes detected in the Divisional office or in audit.

41. A separate form would of course be required for payments to *bonâ fide* piece-workers, as defined in G.O., No. 94 W., dated 11th January 1888, but this will really be a muster roll of laborers paid in a particular way. The form is under consideration in connection with your office-note No. 1805 C., dated 7th May 1888, forwarding letter No. 325 G.D., dated 25th April 1888, from the Superintending Engineer, I Circle. There is no probability of any confusion between this form and the contract certificate form.

42. The next, and last, point is the complexity of the forms. In connection with this point it will perhaps be sufficient at present to consider only this one form 14 (contract certificate) which, as explained above, might probably be made the only form to be used by Sub-Divisional officers or subordinates.

43. The first point to be noticed in connection with form 14 is, that it is not simply a receipt for a sum paid. A complete certificate in form 14, after payment is made, consists of six distinct parts, namely—

(*a*) the docket with a variety of information more or less necessary or useful in the Divisional office or in the Examiner's office;
(*b*) a statement of the contractor's claim—or what purports to be such—giving quantities and value of work done up to date, and since last certificate;
(*c*) a certificate of measurements by a departmental officer;
(*d*) a memorandum of payments made, including that acknowledged on the document itself;
(*e*) a receipt for the payment made; and;
(*f*) remarks by the Executive Engineer.

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44. In each of these six parts, except the last, provision is made for the entry of a number of specific items of information, and a mistake or omission in respect of any one of these items may necessitate the return of the whole document for correction, even though the receipt itself is a perfectly correct, valid and sufficient voucher. The question therefore suggests itself whether it might not be well to take the receipt as a separate document altogether. There is perhaps a good deal to be said in favor of such a change, but I am disposed to think that the balance of advantage is with the present practice; and, as regards the particular object now in view, I do not think any advantage whatever would be secured by the change; because, though the voucher would no longer be involved with mistakes in other documents, yet a new occasion for mistakes and correspondence would be created, namely, the possible total absence of the connected documents.

45. I do think, however, that the frequency of the occasions for returning the voucher, on account of mistakes and omissions in other parts of the document, might be considerably reduced by limiting the matter which the contractor is required to accept and assent to; because, as long as the contractor's assent and signature is required to any part of the document, any correction in that part may require confirmation by his initials or signatures.

46. As the form now stands, the contractor is required to sign the statement of claim (*b*), but the theory that the so-called bill is his (the contractor's) statement of claim is, I believe, a pure fiction. The so-called bill is, in fact, merely a departmental valuation of work done, on which the contractor might very well be paid and accept a sum on account, without prejudice to him, whether he does or does not admit the accuracy of the valuation; and the fiction which requires that this departmental valuation shall be endorsed by the contractor as his claim, not only makes it necessary to obtain his signature to all corrections, but it is no doubt a frequent cause of delay in payments.

47. I am not prepared to say whether, in point of fact, the contractor's signature to the receipt for the payment made (*e*) commits him to acceptance of the statement of account given under the heading "Memorandum of payments made" (*d*). The words "as above" in the receipt form apply, and can only apply, to the details bracketed against "Payments now made" in the "Memorandum of payments," and I should think the contractor must certainly be held to admit the correctness of these details. Whether his signature really commits him to acceptances of the statement of these items, value of work done, amount of previous payments, and balance due, is another question; but if a contractor is at all careful he will probably refuse to append his signature to anything that can possibly commit him to what he considers an inaccurate statement of his account; and if an Executive Engineer is careful he will probably require the contractor's confirmation of any correction made over his signature.

48. In my opinion it would be a decided advantage to let it be clearly understood, and to make it quite clear on the form, that the contractor's signature to a payment on account (final payment is another matter) is simply an acknowledgment of the payment, and does not imply acceptance on his part of any of the details, whether valuation of work, or statement of previous payments, on which the payment is based. The details of the "Payment now made" should then be brought into the receipt form, as the contractor's acceptance of these details is absolutely necessary. The contractor would of course be furnished with the details of the valuation, and with a statement of the account, if he desired it, if indeed he would not receive it regularly as a matter of course, to enable him to take action in respect of any difference.

49. If the contractor must sign the valuation and the account, it seems to me that both of them should be in the vernacular as well as in English. I fail to see why it is necessary that the form of receipt should be in the vernacular and not the other parts. If the contractor really must sign them all, they should all be made equally intelligible to him.

50. There is another way by which the occasion for mistakes, and the consequent necessity of returning the voucher, or calling for information, might be considerably reduced. As the form is drawn at present, the information to be given—the blanks to

57. I have only to add, with reference to the remarks of the Superintending Engineer, VI Circle, regarding certain "orders" alleged to have been given by the inspecting officer, that the Executive Engineer must have misunderstood the Deputy Examiner. It is very probable that the latter may have said that this or that thing "should be" or "ought to be" done in such and such a way, meaning that that is the correct way, or the way prescribed in the code, but this is a very different thing from ordering it to be done, and this Mr. Rainier assures me he never has done. Nevertheless, to make certain of the matter in future, I have given definite instructions that inspecting officers shall avoid the use of any expression which is at all likely to be construed as an order or positive direction to the Executive Engineer. Any directions that it may be necessary to give to Executive Engineers on matters of procedure in accounting—the matter in question was not one of accounting—will be given by myself.

58. Copies of the several forms referred to are forwarded herewith.

ORDER—dated 13th September 1888, No. 2855 W., Public Works.

The letters from Superintending Engineers above recorded are replies to G.O., No. 2930 W., dated 4th November 1887, calling for reports as to the various circumstances which prevent the submission of vouchers with the accounts to which they relate.

2. The reports are analysed at length by the Examiner, and the causes which militate against the punctual submission of vouchers are summarised in paragraph 6 of his note.

(a) Delivery through Sub-Divisional officers of cheques drawn by the Executive Engineer; because the cheque may remain undelivered and therefore unacknowledged, long after it has been brought to account.

3. With regard to cause (*a*), the Government trust that the orders passed in G.O., No. 732 W., dated 3rd March 1888, will effect an appreciable improvement in the number of vouchers accompanying the monthly accounts.

(b) Transmission of cheques through the post; because the Post office often has a difficulty in finding the payees who are continually on the move, and when the letter containing the cheque is delivered, the payee is in no hurry to acknowledge it, even if, as often happens, he does not actually refuse to give a receipt owing to his not admitting the correctness of the payment.

4. With respect to (*b*), the Government agree with the Examiner that the transmission of cheques through the post should be limited to cases in which the payees are firms or parties having established places of business or fixed postal addresses, and that the rule which prohibits the delivery of cheques through subordinates not in charge of sub-divisions, should be modified so as to permit their delivery through any upper subordinate at the Executive Engineer's discretion. The necessary standing orders will be framed accordingly. The Government consider that it would be an advantage if the postal money order system was freely used in making remittances; but before further orders are passed on this point, the Examiner's suggestions in paras. 11 and 12 will be referred to the Director-General of the Post office for consideration and remarks.

(c) The necessity of sending vouchers after the Executive Engineer if he is away from head-quarters when they arrive.

(d) The necessity of sending bills to subordinates for the purpose of obtaining their signature to the certificates of work done.

(e) The fact of Sub-Divisional officers requiring subordinates to submit bills in triplicate, and deferring submission of vouchers to the Divisional officer when less than the required number (3) of copies is received.

5. No special orders appear to be required with regard to item (*c*).

6. With reference to the remarks in paras. 17 to 21 of the Examiner's note, Superintending Engineers are requested to submit their views as to whether any inconvenience would result from prohibiting the preparation of bills or contract certificates by subordinates below Sub-Divisional officers.

7. The Government agree with the Examiner that vouchers should not be returned for explanation of high rates or unauthorised charges, or of such matters as are described in para. 54 of the note. The payments having been made should be brought to account, and the vouchers should be attached to the accounts. Explanation should of course be called for whenever considered necessary by a superior officer, but such explanation should be dealt with separately.

(f) Returning of vouchers to Sub-Divisional officer or by him to subordinates for explanation of high rates and unauthorised charges.

8. With regard to (*g*), the Government have no objection to allow the Examiner discretion to accept vouchers without the payee's initials to corrections. Such initials need only be obtained when the correction increases the amount of the payment.

(g) Similar returning of vouchers for the purpose of obtaining the initials of the payee to corrections made by the Executive Engineer or Sub-Divisional officer, &c.; the delays in such cases being frequently increased by difficulty in finding the payee.

9. The question as to the number of witnesses required to attest payments was referred to Superintending Engineers in G.O., No. 1291 W., dated 2nd May 1888, and their replies will be considered separately. Superintending Engineers are now requested to express their views as to whether any practical security is derived by requiring contractors in the case of final payments to add in their own handwriting the words "as a final payment in settlement of all demands."

(h) Similar returning of vouchers on account of some informality in the signature of the payee, or in the attestation of the witnesses or (in case of final payments) because of the omission of the payee to enter *in his own handwriting* the words "in full settlement" of all demands.

10. The Government entirely concur with the Examiner in his remarks as to the delays and mistakes which arise from the number and complexity of the forms now prescribed for use by officers of the department, and are aware of the urgent necessity for simplifying and condensing the forms as far as practicable. The suggestions of the Examiner under these heads are generally approved, and he is requested to submit, for consideration, the revised forms proposed by him, together with the requisite draft standing orders introducing them into the code. These, if necessary, will be referred to Superintending Engineers for opinion before final adoption.

(i) Multiplicity of forms which leads to the use of wrong forms and so to the return of the voucher for preparation in the proper form.

(j) Complexity of forms, and consequently frequency of mistakes of various kinds, any one of which may necessitate the return of the voucher for correction.

(Here enter No. 2856 W., dated 13th September 1888.)

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. O. HASTED, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

To Superintending Engineers.
To the Consulting Architect to Government.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Examiner, Public Works Accounts.

Exd. J. Henricus.
Spare Copies

be filled up in the form—by any individual are scattered about the form. It would be very easy to bring them all on the docket, including the blanks in the certificate, and the references to Executive Engineers' or Sub-Divisional officers' measurement book in case of check-measurements, and to bring together all details to be filled up by one and the same individual, so that every individual concerned, the Executive Engineer, the Sub-Divisional officer, the subordinate in charge of the work, the accountant, and the head clerk, should be able to see at a glance whether he has or has not entered all the details required from him. Also in the case of details which do not require to be stated more than once—if at all—*e.g.*, the amount, description, and position of the security lodged—the fact should be clearly shown on the form.

51. Another improvement, in the same direction, would be to arrange the notes so as to bring clearly under the notice of each individual concerned, such as the clerk or accountant checking the bill or certificate, the responsible officer authorising the disbursement, the cashier or other actual disbursers, and so on, all the separate points which he individually should look to before or when doing his share of the business. I do not suppose that this would altogether put a stop to mistakes; but I think it would prevent a great many. If we cannot prevent a careless man from making mistakes, we can at any rate make it less difficult for a careful man to avoid them.

52. The following alterations of details of the contract certificate form are also desirable, and would all tend to prevent occasion for return of vouchers:—

(*a*) The form should provide (as form M 14 A does at present) for an order to pay, by the responsible disbursing officer.

(*b*) Also for showing clearly by whom the payment is actually made.

(*c*) The parts and points to be prepared or checked by the accountant should be clearly indicated, and provision should be made for his initialling each such part; his signature or initials under "Remarks by the Executive Engineer" as at present provided for, seems quite out of place.

(*d*) The provision for entering details of "payments now made" under the head "Memorandum of payments" requires to be carefully considered, and adapted to the actual circumstances of the cases contemplated: as a matter of fact the payments in the shape of stores or materials, &c., are very seldom really "*now* made;" they generally represent some previous transactions which is in consequence not infrequently omitted.

(*e*) Space might perhaps be left under the certificate for "Remarks by the Sub-Divisional officer."

53. Many mistakes in vouchers taken in the miscellaneous receipt form M 17 might probably be prevented, by providing printed sample receipts showing, for all ordinary cases (not many) for which this form is used, the particulars that should be given, and the manner of entering them. These forms are issued in books, and it would be easy to bind the sample receipts with each book of forms.

54. In para. 22 I have suggested that the practice of returning vouchers on account of high rates and unauthorized charges should be prohibited; but I find that there are several other faults, not included in the causes enumerated by Superintending Engineers, which lead to the unnecessary return of vouchers by Executive Engineers to Sub-Divisional officers and by the latter to subordinates; for instance—

(*a*) Want of explanation in case of cash payments over Rs. 10 each: explanation, if required, can be obtained without returning the voucher.

(*b*) Vouchers in manuscript instead of in printed form: a manuscript voucher is at any rate better than none.

(*c*) Omission to enter the payee's name in English: it can be entered in the Divisional office.

(*d*) Want of explanation of delay in payment: explanations if required should be obtained separately.

(*e*) Want of disburser's signature to explanations: seems hardly necessary.

(*f*) Account for which purchased not correctly entered in materials bills: if known to be wrong, the correct entry is probably known and might be made in the Divisional office; in any case explanation should be got without returning the voucher.

(*g*) Total of acquittance rolls not entered: should be corrected in Divisional offices.

Vouchers should not be returned for such reasons as these, or in any case in which the information required can be obtained, or the omission supplied, without returning them.

55. The proposals set forth at length in the preceding paragraphs may be summed up as follows:—

(1) Restrict the transmission of cheques and transfer receipts through the post to cases of creditors having established places of business, and fixed postal addresses, and to cases in which full payment is made of a claim submitted by the creditor himself, and as to which there is no dispute (para. 8).

(2) On the other hand facilitate payments by allowing delivery of cheques through any upper subordinate (para. 9).

(3) By allowing free use of the postal money order system (paras. 10—12).

(4) Settle definitely who is to prepare bills or contract certificates, if possible, prohibiting their preparation by subordinates below Sub-Divisional officer and relieving them from signing the bill or certificate, and arrange the form accordingly (paras. 14—21).

(5) Prohibit the return of vouchers by Executive Engineers to Sub-Divisional officers, or by the latter to subordinates, for such reasons as high rates and unauthorised charges (para. 22), or for want of any explanation or information which can be obtained without returning vouchers, or even supplied in the Divisional office (para. 54).

(6) Allow the Examiner discretion to accept vouchers without the payee's initials to corrections to the payee's advantage (para. 23).

(7) Do away, as far as possible, with non-essential requirements, such as insisting on an impracticable number of witnesses (paras. 24 and 25), insisting on the payee's entering in his own handwriting the words "in full settlement of all demands," or insisting on entry of the amount in the vernacular whenever the payee signs in the vernacular (para. 26).

(8) If these requirements cannot be dispensed with altogether, deal with neglect of them rather by noticing habitual neglect, than by requiring explanation and remedy (often impossible) in each case (paras. 24 and 27); and allow the Examiner discretion as regards non-essential errors and omissions which cannot be rectified at all, without much trouble and delay.

(9) Reduce to one single form the present five forms of vouchers for payments to contractors and suppliers for works and materials (paras. 29—40).

(10) Make this single form as plain and intelligible as possible (*a*) by collecting as far as possible in a single place the items of information to be furnished by each individual concerned (para. 50), and (*b*) by separately directing the attention of each individual to the several points which should receive his attention when, or before, doing his share of the business (para. 51).

(11) Remove occasions for the return of the voucher to the payee by limiting his complicity in it to the receipt alone, at the same time making the form of receipt complete in itself (paras. 42—48).

(12) Modify and complete the details of the form in the manner suggested in para. 52.

56. I believe that, by working on the lines suggested above, almost all the trouble now experienced in connection with vouchers could be done away with. I make out that, of some five and forty separate kinds of possible errors and omissions leading to the return of vouchers, either from this office or from Divisional offices, about two-thirds—and these not the least frequent—would be effectually removed by the adoption of the above proposals, whilst the probability of the occurrences of the remainder would be greatly reduced.

57. I have only to add, with reference to the remarks of the Superintending Engineer, VI Circle, regarding certain "orders" alleged to have been given by the inspecting officer, that the Executive Engineer must have misunderstood the Deputy Examiner. It is very probable that the latter may have said that this or that thing "should be" or "ought to be" done in such and such a way, meaning that that is the correct way, or the way prescribed in the code, but this is a very different thing from ordering it to be done, and this Mr. Rainier assures me he never has done. Nevertheless, to make certain of the matter in future, I have given definite instructions that inspecting officers shall avoid the use of any expression which is at all likely to be construed as an order or positive direction to the Executive Engineer. Any directions that it may be necessary to give to Executive Engineers on matters of procedure in accounting—the matter in question was not one of accounting—will be given by myself.

58. Copies of the several forms referred to are forwarded herewith.

ORDER—dated 13th September 1888, No. 2855 W., Public Works.

The letters from Superintending Engineers above recorded are replies to G.O., No. 2930 W., dated 4th November 1887, calling for reports as to the various circumstances which prevent the submission of vouchers with the accounts to which they relate.

2. The reports are analysed at length by the Examiner, and the causes which militate against the punctual submission of vouchers are summarised in paragraph 6 of his note.

(a) Delivery through Sub-Divisional officers of cheques drawn by the Executive Engineer, because the cheque may remain undelivered and therefore unacknowledged, long after it has been brought to account.

3. With regard to cause (*a*), the Government trust that the orders passed in G.O., No. 732 W., dated 3rd March 1888, will effect an appreciable improvement in the number of vouchers accompanying the monthly accounts.

4. With respect to (*b*), the Government agree with the Examiner that the transmission of cheques through the post should be limited to cases in which the payees are firms or parties having established places of business or fixed postal addresses, and that the rule which prohibits the delivery of cheques through subordinates not in charge of sub-divisions, should be modified so as to permit their delivery through any upper subordinate at the Executive Engineer's discretion. The necessary standing orders will be framed accordingly. The Government consider that it would be an advantage if the postal money order system was freely used in making remittances; but before further orders are passed on this point, the Examiner's suggestions in paras. 11 and 12 will be referred to the Director-General of the Post office for consideration and remarks.

(b) Transmission of cheques through the post; because the Post office often has a difficulty in finding the payees who are continually on the move, and when the letter containing the cheque is delivered, the payee is in no hurry to acknowledge it, even if, as often happens, he does not actually refuse to give a receipt owing to his not admitting the correctness of the payment.

(c) The necessity of sending vouchers after the Executive Engineer if he is away from head-quarters when they arrive.

(d) The necessity of sending bills to subordinates for the purpose of obtaining their signature to the certificates of work done.

(e) The fact of Sub-Divisional officers requiring subordinates to submit bills in triplicate, and deferring submission of vouchers to the Divisional officer when less than the required number (3) of copies is received.

5. No special orders appear to be required with regard to item (*c*).

6. With reference to the remarks in paras. 17 to 21 of the Examiner's note, Superintending Engineers are requested to submit their views as to whether any inconvenience would result from prohibiting the preparation of bills or contract certificates by subordinates below Sub-Divisional officers.

7. The Government agree with the Examiner that vouchers should not be returned for explanation of high rates or unauthorised charges, or of such matters as are described in para. 54 of the note. The payments having been made should be brought to account, and the vouchers should be attached to the accounts. Explanation should of course be called for whenever considered necessary by a superior officer, but such explanation should be dealt with separately.

(f) Returning of vouchers to Sub-Divisional officer or by him to subordinates for explanation of high rates and unauthorised charges.

8. With regard to (*g*), the Government have no objection to allow the Examiner discretion to accept vouchers without the payee's initials to corrections. Such initials need only be obtained when the correction increases the amount of the payment.

(g) Similar returning of vouchers for the purpose of obtaining the initials of the payee to corrections made by the Executive Engineer or Sub-Divisional officer, &c.; the delays in such cases being frequently increased by difficulty in finding the payee.

9. The question as to the number of witnesses required to attest payments was referred to Superintending Engineers in G.O., No. 1291 W., dated 2nd May 1888, and their replies will be considered separately. Superintending Engineers are now requested to express their views as to whether any practical security is derived by requiring contractors in the case of final payments to add in their own handwriting the words "as a final payment in settlement of all demands."

(h) Similar returning of vouchers on account of some informality in the signature of the payee, or in the attestation of the witnesses or (in case of final payments) because of the omission of the payee to enter *in his own handwriting* the words "in full settlement" of all demands.

10. The Government entirely concur with the Examiner in his remarks as to the delays and mistakes which arise from the number and complexity of the forms now prescribed for use by officers of the department, and are aware of the urgent necessity for simplifying and condensing the forms as far as practicable. The suggestions of the Examiner under these heads are generally approved, and he is requested to submit, for consideration, the revised forms proposed by him, together with the requisite draft standing orders introducing them into the code. These, if necessary, will be referred to Superintending Engineers for opinion before final adoption.

(i) Multiplicity of forms which leads to the use of wrong forms and so to the return of the voucher for preparation in the proper form.

(j) Complexity of forms, and consequently frequency of mistakes of various kinds, any one of which may necessitate the return of the voucher for correction.

(Here enter No. 2856 W., dated 13th September 1888.)

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. O. HASTED, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

To Superintending Engineers.
To the Consulting Architect to Government.
" Chief Engineer for Irrigation.
" Examiner, Public Works Accounts.

Exd. J. Henricus.
Spare Copies

GENERAL.
ACCOUNT.

Govt. of {1888} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated September, 13th.

Recd.

G.O., 13th Sept. 1888, No. 2855 W.

SEPTEMBER.

Vouchers

Orders on reports of the Superintending Engineers as to submission of — with the accounts to which they relate.

2454
13

4TH NOVEMBER 1887, No. 2930 W., PUBLIC WORKS.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

General.
Account.

READ—the following paper:—

Office note from the Examiner of Public Works Accounts, dated Madras, 28th October 1887, No. 706.

With reference to paragraph 3 of my office note, No. 617, dated 5th October 1887, submitting notes of inspection of the Kurnool division, I beg to suggest that Superintending Engineers be asked to report, after communication with Executive Engineers, and, through them, with sub-divisional officers, as to the various circumstances which prevent the submission of vouchers at the proper time, *i.e.*, with the account to which they relate.

2. The failure of sub-divisional officers to submit vouchers with their accounts has been frequently noticed in inspection reports, but these reports do not give any information as to the number of cases in which vouchers are wanting. I find, however, from an examination of the audit notes for twelve months past that, on an average, there have been in each month about 400 cases of vouchers not received in the Central office at the time of completing the audit of the divisional accounts, that is to say, generally about six weeks after the close of the month to which the accounts relate; and when I point out that a large number of vouchers are invariably received in the interval between the receipt of the accounts and the completion of the audit, and that a very large number of those received by me with the accounts are probably, in the same way, received in the divisional office in the interval between receipt of the sub-divisional accounts and the completion of the divisional accounts, it will be seen that the number of cases in which sub-divisional officers fail to submit vouchers with the accounts to which they relate must be very large indeed.

3. The code (paragraph 1642) lays down that no disbursement shall be made without a receipt being taken, and though it is probable that there may, now and then, be cases in which the failure to obtain a receipt at the time of payment may be unavoidable, I cannot believe that, with due attention to the rule quoted above, the number of cases could be anything like what it is.

4. Should Government approve of the suggestion made in the first paragraph, I would further suggest that Executive Engineers should be reminded that what is wanted is a real and intelligible reason or reasons. I say this because I find that in very many cases the replies made to this office, when similar explanations are asked for in individual cases, are no explanations at all; as, for instance, "non-receipt from the sub-divisional office," without any explanation of why the sub-divisional officer did not submit the voucher, or "returned to sub-divisional officer for revision," without any intimation of the grounds on which it was so returned, and so on.

ORDER—dated 4th November 1887, No. 2930 W., Public Works.

Communicated to Superintending Engineers for report, as suggested by the Examiner, Public Works Accounts.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. O. HASTED, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

To Superintending Engineers.
„ the Examiner, Public Works Accounts.

Exd. E. Eernandez.

Spare Copies

GENERAL.
ACCOUNT.

Govt. of (1887) Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated November, 4th.

Recd. *Encl.*

G.O., 4th Nov. 1887, No. 2930 W.

NOVEMBER.

Accounts

Vouchers.—Superintending Engineers directed to report as to the circumstances which prevent the submission of — with the accounts to which they relate.

2459/17 6827

Dw.

This paper might perhaps be referred to the present Ex. Engr. for report whether he can undertake to prevent a recurrence of the matters complained of by the Examiner – If he replies in the affirmative, the matter might perhaps be allowed to drop tentatively, the Engr. being requested to report on both the Presy. & Nilgiri Divns at the close of the present official year.

C.
27.7.89

Yes – these proposals may be carried out

[illegible]
27.7.89

2454

[illegible] Ex. Eng. Presy. Dn.
2

2454/15

No. 56C

MADRAS,
Public Works Department,
Bangalore, 28th May 1889.

From

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PRESIDENCY,

To

THE Examiner of
P. W. Accounts
Madras.

SIR,

IN reply to your No. Sec. 313, dated 18th May 1889
I have the honor to inform you that the delay was due to the Easter Holidays intervening and to the large number of vouchers appertaining to the month.

Enclosures.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

Wm. Thompson
~~Lt.~~ Col., R.E.

23 MAY 89

17

Ex. Eng. Pres. D.
2

From

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,

PRESIDENCY.

No.

Dated
Recd. } 1884.

ENCLOSURES.

Subject.

EXAMINER
No. 335
2 JUL 1889
ENCLOSURES
W. ACCOUNTS

No. 1010

MADRAS, D., P. W.,

Bangalore, 1st July 1889.

From

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,

Presidency Division,

To

THE Examiner,
P.W. accounts,
Madras.

SIR,

With reference to your No. 372 S.C. V 4 10th June 1889, I have the honor to inform you as follows:-

As the transactions in March were very heavy the Accounts Section of the Office was fully occupied in the compilation of the Accounts proper and had little time to devote to the examination and completion of the vouchers for the month till after the despatch of the Accounts on the 26 April, owing (1) to the large No of vouchers and (2) to the large No. of payments on the last working day of the month, this examination occupied some time. Several vouchers had to be returned for completion, and this also involved time.

From your remarks that all the

19

vouchers

4/817 S.C./89

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vouchers for March 1889 should have been in my hands or the hands of my Sub Divisional Officers by the 31st March, is it to be understood that payments are not to be made on the last day of the month or even the second last day? If not, how can receipts for cheques sent direct to Contractors at Madras on those days be received till after the close of the month, unless the old rule hitherto in vogue in this Division of obtaining receipts in advance be still continued.

E2 / 14.6.84 / 7.8.12/80

I have &c.

27 JUN 89

Wm Thompson
Col R.E.
Ex. Eng. Presy Dn

[signature]

2454 / 17

Copy of letter from the Examiner of P. W. Accounts, Madras, to the Executive Engineer, Presidency Division, No. 372 S.E. 5 dated 10th June 1889.

With reference to your letter No. 56 C dated 28th May 1889, I have the honor to observe that the point requiring explanation is, why the vouchers for March 1889, all of which should have been received by you or your Sub Divisional Officer, by the 31st March 1889, were not forwarded to me until the 12th or 13th May 1889.

2. Neither the large number of the vouchers, nor the few days holidays at Easter, appears to afford any justification for such delay and I therefore request further explanation of the delay in submission of the vouchers.

(True Copy)

G. E. Hatton
Supdt. Correspondence Branch.

18

[initials] 24/7
[initials] 24/7

3/8178.C./89

2/5300 L / 14.8.89

E.C. / 11684 / 22/89

2454 / P8

Copy of letter from the Examiner of P. W. Accounts, Madras to the Executive Engineer, Presidency Division, No. 313 S.C.5 dated 18th May 1889.

As the vouchers connected with the accounts of your division for March 1889 which were due in my Office on the 21st April, came to hand only on the 14th Instant, I have the honor to request a full explanation of the delay in their submission.

(True Copy)

G. Hatton
Supdt. Correspondence Branch.

PS 24/7
JH 24/7

16

1/817 Sec/89

1/5300 S.
14. 8. 89

[C. No. 8.]

2454
19

GOVT. OF MADRAS. 1889. P. W. DEPT.

EXAMINER, P. W. ACCOUNTS.

Madras, 23rd July 1889.

OFFICE NOTE No. 1036.

Secn H

To

W.

I submit for such notice as Government may consider necessary the — marginally noted correspondence with the Executive Engineer Presidency Division regarding the delay in submission of the vouchers — that is the whole of the — vouchers — in support of his accounts for March 1889, which the Executive Engineer was apparently unable to send in until almost a month and a half after the date (31st. March 1889) on which — almost all the vouchers should have been in his possession.

2. With regard to the larger number of vouchers, 455 in March as against an average of about 250, I would observe, first, that several divisions habitually send in more than 455 vouchers a month without any delays at all, and secondly that the large number of vouchers seem to be entirely due to the very large — number of payments hurriedly made on — the last working day of the year under circumstances which preclude the —

KEEP-WITH Genl. No.

dated 188 .

(1) Copy of Examiner's letter No. 313 S.E.5 dated 18th. May 1889 to the Executive Engineer Presidency Divn.
(2) Letter No. 56 C. dated 28th. May 1889 from the Executive Engineer Presidency Division (in original to be returned)
(3) Copy of Examiner's letter No. 372 S.E.5 dated 10th. June 1889 to the Executive Engineer Presidency Division.
(4) Letter No. 101 C dated 1st. July 1889 from the Executive Engineer Presi - dency Division (in original to be returned).

2,000 — 6-10-88.

20

possibility of any proper examination either of claims or of vouchers for payments made, supposing that the vouchers are obtained, as they should be, at the time of payment.

3. On a previous occasion, two years ago, I drew attention (vide para 19 of my office note No. 201 dated 2nd. July 1887) to the fact that in this division over 250 bills were said to have been received on the last working day of the month and paid on the same day, and I pointed out the apparent impossibility, in such circumstances, of exercising any proper check over claims or of making any proper examination of vouchers at the proper time. It will be seen therefore that this rushing of expenditure on the last day of the year is apparently habitual in this division.

4. The Executive Engineer himself in his second letter admits that the examination of the vouchers was left over until after the despatch of the accounts on the 26th. April. This examination should in almost all cases precede payment, and should in any case be made immediately on receipt of the voucher. The completion of the vouchers by the entry of the cash book number and a few other details of the same sort is a very simple matter which should take very little time.

5. In a few cases delay is

2454

inevitably caused by the necessity of returning vouchers to the sub-divisional officer for correction or completion, but the Executive Engineer himself says that only "several" vouchers had to be so returned, and "several" is hardly a significant number out of 455.

6. With regard to the remark and question in the last paragraph of the Executive Engineer's second letter, I may point out that, if the Executive Engineer observes the rule, recently approved by Government, of sending cheques through the post only to persons and firms having established places of business and fixed postal addresses it is very unlikely that there will be more than a week's delay in getting vouchers. If this rule is observed, the great majority of such payments could be made, that is the cheques could be sent, through the sub divisional officer, and the vouchers could be obtained at the time of actual payment.

7. I have myself no doubt whatever that all the payments in question were bonâ fide made before the close of the year, so far as the despatching of a cheque through the post constitutes payment, but I may point out that it is delays such as these that give rise, and not altogether unnaturally, to suspicions such as have been expressed by inspecting officers of the Auditor General's department, that cheques drawn by officers

of the P.W.D after the close of the year are antedated to 3Ist.March.

8. As it is a little doubtful how far the practices referred to in his note are due to the traditions of the division, and how far to the personal action of the Executive Engineer, it seems desirable to point out that there has recently been a change of Executive Engineers, and that, if Government think it necessary to take notice of the matter, it might be advisable to communicate this order to the Executive Engineers of both the Presidency and Nilgiri Divisions.

C.

P. W. Dept.
To be returned with reply.

No. 3458C of 31st July 1889 Enc.

Referred to the Suptg. Engr. V circle for report whether the present Ex: Engineer can undertake to prevent a recurrence of the matters complained of by the Examiner.

Col. R.E.
Ag. Ch: Engr. P.W.D. Bd. & Rds Br.

P.W.C. No. 6847

R 25-7-89

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2454/21

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No. 2855W d/ 13-9-88
" 732W " 3-3-88

1889

P. W. DEPARTMENT.

Current No. 6847

From The Examiner

P.W. Accts.

Enclos.—14

No. 1036

Dated 23rd July 1889

Received 25 — do

SUBJECT.

Submitting for such notice as Govt. may consider necessary certain correspondence with the Executive Engineer Presidency Divn. regarding the delay in submission of the vouchers in support of his accounts for March 1889.

DISPOSAL.

No. 3458C Dated 31st July 1889

Referred to the Supdg. Engr. V circle for report whether the present Ex. Engr. can undertake to prevent a recurrence of the matters complained of by the Examiner.

(Sd) R. R. E. Drake-Brockman, Lt. Col. R.E.
Ag. Ch: Engr. P.W.D. Bldgs & Roads

W.8

No 3413 2254/22

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER'S OFFICE,
V CIRCLE. MADRAS,
Chepâk, 22nd August 1889.

From Colonel W H Burton R.E.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
V CIRCLE,

To

THE Chief Engineer
P.W. Department.

SIR,

Enclosures

In returning your endorsement No 3458C of 31st July 1889, I have the honor to state that the present Executive Engineer Presidency, considers the circumstances which caused the delay in the submission of the Vouchers for March 1889 to have been abnormal, and not likely to recur. In any case, he will do his best to prevent such recurrence.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your Most Obedt Servt
W H Burton
Col R.E.
Supg Engineer V circle

22

3458C of 31-7-89
So 2855W 13-9-88
" 732W 3-3-88

Omit para 1. The explanation is perfectly [illegible]. There is no excuse, considering the enormous establishment in the division & having regard to §2 of the Examiner's note.

B

~~The present Exi: Engineer Presidency Division considers that the circumstances which led to the delay in the sub=mission of vouchers for March 1889 were ab=normal, and not likely to recur.~~

No. 2454 1/4/[illegible] Mis 31 July 1889

B: The Examiner is requested to report specially after the close of the year 1889-90, whether a similar delay has occurred in the case of this divisions.

MER
28.8.89

Rec'd
29.8.89

S.E. V Circle
Ex. P.D.R.

[illegible] 141/8. - HM 30/8..
O. 28-8-89

From

THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

V CIRCLE,

PWC No 7942

To

THE Chief Engineer
P. W. Deptt.

2

Dated 22 August 1889.
Recd. 26

ENCLOSURES.

No. 3413.

Vouchers for March 1889 from Presidency Division

Returning the Endorsement about the delay in submission of — with an explanation

22

With Orders

(3)