

Public Works (1898) Department.

G.O., No.

1049 25

DATED

26 April 1898

Committed into
107
2260
26 4/98

[Despatch Abstract.]

Conmemora Library Tower: Despatch from
the Secretary of State enclosing letter from Col. J. Penny-
creek R.E. C.S.I. affording explanation on the subject
of defects in the design of the —, recorded.

26 4/98

27/4

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

T. Ho

Date.

[43 / 50]

C. No. 2766

P. W. DEPARTMENT.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

THE HON'BLE SIR HENRY BLISS, K.C.I.E.

THE HON'BLE MR. GROSE, C.I.E.

SUBJECT.

Commemorative Library in
Lower.

FOR ORDERS.

I agree that there will be no advantage in
pursuing the argument with Mr. Pausy.
- cease.

But, I remind I would wish that a
complete note be now drawn up, while the
memory of the tower and its history are
fresh, setting forth the facts of the case, and
all the grounds which went to prove that
the tower was dangerous and that its
demolition was urgently necessary. Such
a record will serve to justify, in case of
any future question, the action taken
by the Dept. and by the Govt. on the
advice of the Dept.

With reference to the Hon. Member's
note on the letter from the Deputy
of State forwarding Col. Deemych's
explanations of his neglect of
Duty in regard to the Commemorative
Tower I respectfully submit that
no benefit is likely to accrue
from pursuing this matter
further.

2. Col. Deemych is not prepared
to accept the figures of the
height of the tower given by
the Committee, but those figures
are matters of fact, & do not
admit of dispute.

3. He also makes a good deal
of capital out of my statement
quoted in Para 4, but he
knows perfectly well that, however
good the workmanship, the

28/11/98
28.3.98

lower portions of the Tower
 should never have been given
 such a height. There should
 always be a wide margin
 between actual strength
 and the strength of just
 sufficient to resist failure.
 4. I inspected the Tower
 yesterday in company with
 Mr Harris, to view the progress
 of demolition. In the zone
 of greatest weakness, i.e. under
 the arch springings, and the
 narrow stair case walls,
 every other brick has shattered,
 the mortar ground to powder
 by excessive pressure,
 showing incontrovertibly the urgent
 need for demolition, & entirely
 justifying Mr Harris' action in
 the matter. I beg to invite
 the Hon. Mr Grose's attention to
 this fact, as I understand that
 he has expressed doubts about it.
 5. Col. Cunningham also takes a strong
 view in Parks & Co of the com-
 petence of his Under Secretaries.
 No man can direct himself of
 responsibility in the proper per-
 formance of all work passing through his hands

I don't understand what
 his opinion is. I never ex-
 pressed doubts about it

29

25.12.50

P. W. DEPARTMENT.

C. No. 2766

SUBJECT.

Commemorative Library Tower

- (1) HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.
- (2) THE HON'BLE SIR HENRY BLISS, K.C.M.E.
- (3) THE HON'BLE MR. GROSE, C.I.E.

FOR ORDERS.

It is true that the state of the
 Tower before demolition has been
 described in No. 3527 W. 16th
 Dec. 1897. But, I think it
 advisable that the conditions found
 to exist during the demolition
 should also be put on record;
 & only to support the conditions
 described in No. 3527 W. 16th
 Dec. 1897, & 9. The loose
 bricks, the crumbling mortar,
 evidence of crushing &c. All
 these are more or less imagined
 in No. 3527. They have been
 proved in the demolition. The
 fact should be placed on record,
 so as to place the entire of
 fact, in pulling the Tower
 down

With reference to His Excellency's
 remarks in Note for orders
 dated 25.3.50, I beg to point
 out that a note has already
 been written & printed with
 G.O. No 3527 W. dated 16.12.51
 giving in detail a history of the
 construction of the tower, & of
 the causes of its failure. I
 do not think that anything can
 now be added to this beyond
 the fact that the conditions of the
 bricks & mortar disclosed
 during demolition has proved
 incontrovertibly the urgent need
 there was for demolition. I
 can, if desired, call upon the
 Chief Architect to write a
 further note on the subject.

but I doubt if he can add much to what has already been said.

The explanation of Colonel Broddy & Baddely here still to come in, and in disposing of these it will be well to place on record the further evidence above referred to in justification of the actions taken by Govt. More than this seems unnecessary.

H.B. ch
9.4.98

Some beyond reach of credit.

As the Winton may choose his own time for doing this, but it certainly should be done.

4.9.98
14.4.98
19/4/98
29
21/4/98

ask C.A. to draw up the note
reference to the note
him there in our office
at Madras
Paper submitted
C.A. ch
W/O 15.4.98
16.4.98

me
C.A. ch

will you please
submit these papers
(S. no 10494 of
26.4.98) to C.A.
for perusal - see
his instructions inside.

C.A.
26/4/98

S.A.W

Papers perused by C.A.
are herewith returned

Sub
in
C.A. ch
6/5/98

8) Department.

CURRENT No. 2766

From

The Secretary of State
India Office.

No. 1 O.W.

Dated 3.3.98

Received } 25.3.98
Registered }

Enclosures 1

Spare copies .

SUBJECT.

Tower of the Commemorative
Library, Madras.

Forwarding Copy of Colonel
Pennington's explanation of
his neglect of duty in regard
to the _____.

Done beyond reach of cards.

Mr. De Winter may choose his
own time for doing this, but it
certainly should be done.

14.4.98
19/4/98
21/4/98

ask C. to draw up the note
reference to Mr. & send
him there into in Mr. office
at Madras
Paper submitted
C.A. 15/4/98

Public Works (1898) Department.

CURRENT No. 2766

From

The Secretary of State
India Office.

No. 1 P.W.

Dated 3.3.98

Received 25.3.98

Registered

Enclosures 1

Spare copies.

SUBJECT.

Tower of the Commemorative
Library, Madras.
Forwarding Copy of Colonel
Pennington's explanation of
his neglect of duty in regard
to the ———.

o.s.l.

3527W, d/16.12.97 ✓
 8 papers noted in it

1482C d/9.3.98.
 3527W d/16-12-97.
 3446C d/6-8-97
 2528C d/18-5-97
 1592C d/19-2-97
 805W d/18-3-97
 762W d/15-3-97
 1484C d/15-3-97
 1454C d/13-3-97
 1275C d/6-3-97
 1265W d/11-4-96
 354W d/29-1-96
 413C d/23-1-96
 371C d/21-1-96
 2770W d/2-11-95
 1210W d/20-5-95
 47W d/23-4-95
 1474C d/6-4-95
 257W d/2-2-95
 305W d/6-1-91
 3239W d/6-2-90
 1264W d/2-5-90
 818W d/28-3-94 S.C.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

248

India Office,
 London, 3rd March 1898.

Public Works,
 No. 1.

To His Excellency The Right Honourable The Governor
 in Council, Fort St. George.

SIR,

I have received your Excellency's Public Works Letter, No. 32/3527 W., dated 16th December 1897, bringing to my notice the failure of the tower of the Connemara Free Library at Madras, and inviting my attention to the neglect of Colonel Pennycuik, R.E., C.S.I., when Chief Engineer to your Government, to notice the defects in the design of the structure.

2. Colonel Pennycuik's explanations on this subject are contained in the letter* copy of which is herewith forwarded for your Excellency's information.

Presumably the C.E. will write upon this
 23/3/98

* Dated 9th February 1898.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

George Hamilton

ENCLOSURE.

President, Cooper's Hill College, to India Office.

Cooper's Hill,
9th February, 1898.

Sir,

With reference to Sir Horace Walpole's letter of the 1st instant. P. W., No. 42, I have the honour to state that I did not consider, and do not now consider, that there was any defect in the design of the tower in question as submitted to me by Mr. Irwin.

2. To the best of my recollection the "Note" submitted to me, with the design and estimate, in accordance with the usual practice by the technical branch of my Office, did not allude to the question of the pressure on the piers, but I worked this out for my own satisfaction. No record would, of course, be found of the calculations as they did not form part of the official papers, and were probably torn up or thrown aside when done with.

3. It is, of course, impossible for me to give correct figures from memory after the lapse of more than seven years, and I am certainly not prepared to accept those given by the Committee, and quoted in paragraph 19 of the Chief Engineer's Note of the 17th November last. My recollection is that the pressure worked out to an amount (I think it was about 10 or 11 tons per square foot) which, though above what was ordinarily allowed, and above what I should care to allow in a structure designed by myself, was not dangerously excessive for work of the class contemplated. It did not exceed that which was known to occur in existing structures, and did not appear to justify me in returning for revision a design prepared by a specialist of Mr. Irwin's standing and experience.

4. This view I still hold, and it is evidently shared by the present Chief Engineer, an officer whom I know well, and for whose opinion I have the highest respect. He states his opinion (paragraph 21 of his Note) that "if the tower had been built as originally designed . . . , and with as good workmanship as is now being shown by the same contractor on another building, it would probably have never been necessary to demolish it."

5. This view I fully share. It is abundantly clear that the true cause of failure was not any defect in the original design (the addition made in 1893 only added very slightly to the original weight), but the inferior nature of the material and workmanship employed, and the large addition made to the weight, of which no information was even given to the Secretariat (*vide* paragraph 11 (2) of the Chief Engineer's Note), the former being, of course, by far the most important element.

6. I think it right to add that I never concealed my dislike of this tower both on æsthetic grounds and financial ones, the latter because I considered its construction an unjustifiable waste of money which might have been more usefully employed in other ways, but I did not think it necessary to make any official record of my views, because on the former ground I had no claim to special authority, and, as regards the financial question, the matter was practically taken out of the hands of the Chief Engineer. (*See* paragraph 2 of the Chief Engineer's Note of the 17th November 1897.) This, of course, has nothing to do with the engineering aspect of the question.

7. I observe that, in paragraph 39 of the Orders of the Government of Madras, No. 3527, W., of 16th December last, Lieutenant-Colonel Boddy and Major Baddeley have been "called upon to explain their share in the matter."

8. I think it only right to point out to the Secretary of State that these officers can have no possible responsibility in the matter; they were only concerned with it as my personal assistants, and any responsibility they might have was a purely personal matter between them and myself.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

I have, &c.,
JNO. PENNYCUICK.

CHIEF SECRETARY
22-MAR-1898
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Public Works.

3rd March 1898.

The Letter to Mr. St. George
No. 1, and enclosure.

Chv. 2766

Chv. 4016

Memorandum to the C.A.
has been drafted as
directed, but the circu-
lation of the papers is
not yet complete. The
Hon. Mr. Henry Bliss
has not yet seen the
notes.

R.S.
18 Apr 98.

Mr. 10496
26.4.98

Send them to him
first

W. H. S.
H. H. S.

Circ. C

Please send to the
H. H. S. - Note mark the memo
May 18/4/8

Prepare for
signature
22 Apr 98

C. No. 2766

off
1

R. K.

Circ. Clerk

Please put this
up with the file ~~about~~
~~the~~ re: Col. Pennington's
explanation ~~in~~ connection
with the Museum Tower
when it returns from

circ.

Rm

25. 2-54.

OW

Proposed to send
this file to W to
obtainment with
reference to his
note of 27.3.97.

a complete note
on the history of
the tower & its
demolition, has
already been
written & has
been printed with
Sp. no. 3527 W 17
16.12.97 - his copy.
perhaps or where
this -

OW

2/4/98

W.
At Ootacamund

Ch. M.
2-4-98.

with reference to your
 pencil note on the
 draft of this memo,
 it is submitted that
 Lt. Col. Babb's letter,
 after visiting and
 collection of files,
 was sent to me from
 the New York Bureau
 for disposal just
 after you had left
 instructions for it.

It should have been sent
 to me ^{at the} ^{time} ^{it}
 was filed then
 stood over your order
 pending your return,
 & draft was submitted
 as quickly as possible
 after your order had
 been given.

C
 7-3-28

Same copy of memo -
 Submitted for signature

With

Case 1109

ow

~~for review.~~

Sp. no. 818 W 57

28.3.94 based on

on the revised estimate

which came up when

St. Col. Proby was out.

This was the only paper

out on the subject

with which he had

anything to do - the

revised estimate itself

then sanctioned is

now with the C.A.,

and it seems hardly

warrantable to obtain it

for St. Col. Proby -

If he uses the material

note & his own notes

on the estimate (which

are all in the file)

it will perhaps be

sufficient.

The original file

of Sp. no. 818 W 57

28.3.94 (p. 2 & 3)

with all notes complete

19.2.24

22

h. s. s.