

Public Works (1899) Department.

G.O., No. 2966 W

DATED 8 Nov 1899.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Public works in charge of Civil Officers.

Reos. Civil: Deptt coming letter from the Govt of India on the subject of the audit and adjustment of expenditure on —, commd to the officers concerned.

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Government {1899} of Madras.
FINANCIAL.

Recd.

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1899.

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G.O., No. 1063, 29th September 1899.

SEPTEMBER

Public Works in charge of Civil Officers.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—again the following paper:—

G.O., Nos. 729, 730, Financial, dated 28th June 1899.

ABSTRACT.—Directing that the Government of India be addressed regarding the transfer from the Civil to the Public Works Department of the control and the audit and record of expenditure on Public Works in charge of Civil officers.

READ—also the following paper:—

From J. F. FINLAY, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Finance and Commerce Department (Accounts and Finance—Audit, etc.), to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated Simla, 7th September 1899, No. 4141-A.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 730, dated the 28th June 1899, in which you explain the system in force in Madras in regard to the audit and adjustment of expenditure on Public Works in charge of Civil officers, and say that, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the change advocated by the Government of India in the letter from this department, No. 4280-A., dated the 24th September 1897, is undesirable.

2. In reply, I am directed, in the first instance, to explain that it was not the intention of the Government of India to interfere at all with the existing practice in regard to Salt (which in Madras includes Excise also) and Forest works which have, by the letter from this department, No. 3501-A., dated the 14th August 1896, been specially exempted from the operation of the Rs. 1,000 limit. I am also to point out that the Government of India do not contemplate the transfer to the Public Works Department of the execution of works now executed by Civil officers, but only the transfer of the audit of the expenditure on the more important of such works from the Accountant-General to the Examiner, Public Works Accounts, the Civil officers in such cases being treated as Public Works disbursers.

3. Excluding the Salt, Excise and Forest works to which, as above explained, the orders are not intended to apply, the most important account in Madras is that for minor irrigation works, and before dealing with the matter finally the Government of India desire to have further information as to the present practice in regard to these works. It appears from the Administration Report on Irrigation Works in the Madras Presidency for 1897-98 that the expenditure incurred by Civil officers on minor works in that year was Rs. 3,60,278; that all this expenditure was incurred on the repair of 1,229 tanks; that the whole outlay on new works, Rs. 17,258, was incurred by Public Works officers; and that repairs costing Rs. 10,527 were executed by the same agency. The actual practice cannot be very certainly inferred from the administration report, but it seems clear—

(1) that the average cost of the repairs executed by Civil officers did not exceed Rs. 293;

(2) that even in the case of minor works under the Revenue Department, new works and certain repairs, probably the more important, are carried out by Public Works officers,

4. If this is correct, it would seem that the enforcement of an order that expenditure on all works which cost more than Rs. 1,000 should be audited by the Examiner would not cause a very wide departure from the existing practice, and I am to request that, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council, it might be explained more clearly what the existing practice is and that it may again be considered whether there is any objection to accepting the Rs. 1,000 rule as a working guide in future.

5. I am directed to mention that one of the cases referred to in the first sentence of paragraph 3 of my letter, No. 4280-A. of September 24, 1897, was the construction of a cellular jail in South Arcot costing a lakh of rupees. I am to inquire whether, in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor, it is not desirable that expenditure on such a work should be subject to the audit of the Public Works Accounts officers.

ORDER—No. 1063, Financial, dated 29th September 1899.

Communicated to the Judicial, Revenue and Public Works Departments and the Accountant-General.

2. Further orders will issue in the Revenue Department on paragraphs 3 and 4 and in the Judicial Department on paragraph 5 of the letter read above.

(True Extract.)

J. Finlay
for Chief Secretary.

To the Judicial Department.

„ Revenue Department.

„ Public Works Department. ✓

„ Accountant-General.

