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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. ~~3327 3328~~ 1431 Press ~~Mis.~~

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Dated 9 - 8 1864.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 16th November 1863.

No. 328. Read the following Proceedings of the Right Honorable the Governor General of India, Public Works Department, dated Simla, 29th September 1863, Circular No. 52 G. G:—

Rules for the employment of the Public Works Establishments on Local Fund Works.

Read letter No. 6,230, dated 22nd December 1862, from Officiating Secretary to Government of Bengal.

Read Letter No. 3,327, dated 2nd June 1863, from Officiating Secretary to Government of Bengal.

OBSERVATIONS.—His Excellency the Governor General has had under his consideration the system to be adopted in dealing with the Establishment employed to superintend the expenditure of the Local Funds which are available for Public Works, and the position of Public Works Officers employed on this class of works. The first point is evidently one of great importance. There has been a gradually increasing tendency to strengthen the professional element in the directing Establishments employed on Local Fund Works, and to follow the improved system of the regular Public Works Department; at the same time there has been usually a complete separation between the regular Public Works agency and that employed on the Local Funds, which funds have been almost entirely under the control of the Civil Divisional and District Officers, assisted by a few Civil Engineers and Road Supervisors. The large fund given for Local Public Works by the 1 per cent. Income Tax in Bengal, which makes the amount now available for Local Fund Public Works nearly equal to the Imperial grant, has at length brought things to the condition described in the papers above referred to, submitted by the Government of Bengal, and copies of which are attached.

2. In these papers it is clearly shown that the large interests involved call for a better organization of the supervising and executive agency; and the general plan proposed by His Honor the Lieutenant Governor is to merge the Establishment for Local Fund Works into that for the Imperial Works, and to place them both under the same control. This control it is proposed to vest in a Board of Works, composed of the Commissioner and the Superintending Engineer, the former being in the position of the Local Government in respect to his Division, and the latter in that of Chief Engineer; the one being responsible for the general selection of the works and the application of funds, the other for the design and construction of the works.

3. His Excellency observes that the Local Funds of Bengal being so large, full attention is due to any proposals of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor as to their management, but His Lordship is of opinion that the arrangement proposed is open to objection, especially in this that it would be impossible for the Commissioner to avoid the tendency to fall into a subordinate position, if the practical operations of the Establishment employed in spending the money were essentially under the direct control of a central authority such as that of the Public Works Department at the head quarters of the Local Government. His Lordship doubts the policy of this. It is the duty of the Central Government, under whose authority the general taxation of the country is raised, to control rigorously all expenditure of funds thus supplied, but it has no concern with the expenditure of other monies, and its policy is to divest itself as far as possible from all responsibility on such outlay, and to foster the growth of some local system of administration, by which the requisite checks may be brought to bear without its interposition. Were the proposed system adopted, the Government of India must insist on the same forms of procedure as are now in force from the Officers employed on Imperial Works, and to make any difference in the system of work or account in the case of Local Works carried out by the same body of Officers, would plainly be very inconvenient in practice.

4. The amalgamation proposed by His Honor the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, if adopted, must in short before long lead to the complete centralization of the Local Public Works operations, both as regards the executive administration and the forms of account and procedure, and very seriously compromise their essential character as Local Works. This result His Excellency considers would be one much to be deprecated, convinced as he is that a certain amount of purely local and minor outlay is really essential to the satisfactory progress of the country. It is not disputed that the application of the Local Funds under local Officers has not always been what it should have been; but still a great deal that is most useful has been accomplished, and the aim of the Government should certainly be to improve the existing system, and not to seek to substitute for it a strongly centralized administration, which however advantageous it might be in some respects, would altogether fail in fostering that spirit which it is so important to develope in connexion with the expenditure of the local sources of revenue. The proper course to follow therefore appears to His Excellency to be to devise some means by which a purely local divisional and district system shall be worked in harmony with, and deriving all possible assistance from, the Imperial Public Works Department. The two branches of business must be kept essentially distinct, and the regular Public Works Establishment must still continue to

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 9th August 1864.

No. 147. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Public Works Department:—

Communicating correspondence regarding the employment of Public Works Establishment on Local Works. } (Here enter 23rd July 1864, No. 2,121.)

No. 148. ORDER THEREON, 9th August 1864, No. 1,431.

Local Funds.

Ordered to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. G. MASTER,
Deputy Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.