

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
12th June 1872.*

No. 143. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 29th May 1872, No. 853 :—

Read the following letter from R. K. PUCKLE, Esq., Collector of Tinnevely, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Sankaranainarkovil, 27th March 1872, No. 103:—

In reply to the Board's Circular Memorandum, No. 301, dated 28th February 1872, I have the honour to inform you, that it is impossible to utilize the whole of the allotments for petty construction and repair (in the Salt Department especially) within any certain period owing to the stringency of the rules relating to such expenditure.

2. As examples, the wells at certain abandoned Salt pans required partial filling this year to prevent the growth of spontaneous salt, the Deputy-Collector prepared two rough estimates in December last, amounting to 150 and 200 Rupees respectively, for filling in these wells to the extent required, but as the rules necessitate the countersignature of the Superintending Engineer, who again cannot countersign till the estimates have been revised by one of his Executive officers, it was a long time before I received back even one of these estimates, and I then found that it had been raised to about 1,700 Rupees: this led to correspondence, and now at the end of the year, I receive back both the original estimates, duly countersigned by the Superintending Engineer, but almost too late for the work to be fairly performed.

3. Again the Superintending Engineer was requested to carry out certain masonry works in September last, but owing to the want of certain departmental arrangements in the matter of credits, or otherwise, though the money is here, and the Engineers are ready to assist to the uttermost, the works have not yet been commenced.

4. As an illustration of the difficulty experienced in clearing up the accounts even after the money is spent, I may mention here that some Cutcheries and Shedding were constructed in 1869-70 by the Salt charge Deputy-Collector on various estimates, prepared on independent data by different Range Officers; the Deputy-Collector built all these Cutcheries alike, according to the best of the plans received, and considerably improved on that, but after a correspondence extending over some months, I have failed to this day to get a completion certificate from the Executive Engineer, as "the estimate has been departed from," though the Executive Engineer has himself assured me that the execution of these Cutcheries is very superior to the provisions of the estimate.

5. No one regrets the delay in carrying out minor improvements more than the Superintending Engineer of this Division, while the two Executive Officers under his orders are most energetic and painstaking, but it is the systematic delay in budgeting, indenting, estimating, inspecting and accounting for petty works that shackles us, and unless a larger margin of discretion is given to local officers, I fear that delay and inconvenience similar to that mentioned above, must be of yearly recurrence.

6. I anticipate an unspent balance of 3,700 Rupees this year under the head of Petty Construction and Repair (masonry works) in the Salt Department

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alone, though the money might have been spent some months ago had we been less subject to check.

7. The following are the dates on which estimates for the larger works were applied for, received and sanctioned:—

Locality.	Number in the list of the Board.	Description of works.	Date of application to the Superintending Engineer for Estimates.	Date of receipt of estimates from the Superintending Engineer.	Date of the Board's sanction received.
Vypar	51	Constructing a bridge on Salt road.	27th December 1870.	26th September 1871.	16th December 1871.
Do.	52	Cutting a channel for Salt pans.	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...
Kayalpatnam...	55	Constructing a bridge on Salt road.	Do. ...	7th November 1871.	10th February 1872.
Do.	56	Do. on Arumuganeri road.	Do. ...	29th do. ...	Do. ...
Do.	162	Repairing the embankment of Salt pans.	Do. ...	8th January 1872.	5th do. ...
Kuttanguli ...	57	Making a portion of Salt road.	Do. ...	26th September 1871.	16th December 1871.
Do.	163	Repairing the embankment of Salt pans.	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...
Do.	164	Constructing a bridge on Salt road.	Do. ...	7th November 1871.	10th February 1872.
Viziapattinam...	165	Repairing a bridge on do.	Do. ...	26th September 1871.	16th December 1871.
Vypar	157	Do. Tunnels, etc., on do.	26th June 1871.	Do. ...	Do. ...
Arasadi	53	Constructing a dam on do.	Do. ...	Not yet received.	
Koyalpatnam...	160	Repairing the Salt road ...	Do. ...	29th November 1871.	10th February 1872.
Tuticorin	54	Raising a platform	29th do. ...	25th January 1872.	17th do. ...

8. There is no provision for works of petty construction and repair this year under the head of Customs, and the unspent balance under the head of Land Revenue will be 56 Rupees.

This letter will be submitted for the information of Government.

2. Mr. Puckle's complaints about the inelastic stringency of the Rules of the Department of Public Works and the consequent obstruction to progress are endorsed by every Executive Officer in the country, and the Board are of opinion that the excessive formalities and restrictions now insisted upon are producing really serious evils.

3. Money is sanctioned for works urgently required and (to save delay) in Government Order, No. 2,146, dated 20th December 1871, the power of Collectors to spend without reference to the Board was extended to works estimated to cost not more than 500 Rupees; but, though all the officers concerned are equally ready and anxious to spend it, such is the obstructive character of the Rules that half the grants remain unspent at the end of the year and the time of all concerned is frittered away in vain.

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4. In some few of the cases cited by the Collector in paragraph 7 some of the delay would have been avoided under the new rule alluded to above; but in consideration of the grave evils that are being produced the Board resolve now to endorse the suggestion of the Collector of Ganjam and recommend that Collectors should be authorized to sanction all repairs and improvements to salt works when the estimated cost does not exceed 1,000 Rupees and when there is provision made for the expenditure in the Budget. They would further advise that Collectors should be formally directed to proceed with repairs and improvements to any amount within the budget grant without the prior sanction of the Board or Government, merely submitting the estimate at the same time for formal approval.

5. This course would have saved between two and three months in each of the works specified by Mr. Puckle.

No. 144.

ORDER THEREON, 12th June 1872, No. 929.

Separate Revenue, No. 12.

Salt.

THE Government extend the authority given to Collectors by G. O., 20th December 1871, No. 2,146, to sanction salt-works provided for in the budget,

so as to include works estimated to cost not more than Rs. 1,000.

2. Works estimated to cost more will be at once proceeded with, provided that the budget grant is not exceeded; the estimates being at the same time forwarded for sanction.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.
.. the Accountant-General.
.. the Public Works Department.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

