M.R.O. 1—20,002—12-8-61

(1) Number of Pages 6

(2) Date of repair 29.9.1965

(3) Initials of the Referencer

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No. / B.P. No.	109	Press / Mis.
Dated 19.8.1872		196 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Read the follo ng letters :—

No. 168. From Major R. B. KENNEDY, Special Executive Engineer, Wynaad, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Vythery, 25th June 1872, No. 285.

UNDER the scheme for the re-organ tion of the Public Works Department (so far as I know its details) there does not appear to be any mention made as to whether Wynaad is to remain as now an independent charge. The accompanying original demi-official letter from the late Colonel Carpendale, dated 24th November 1871, to me, was in reply to a query of mine on the subject. By it, it appears that, in the opinion of the writer, not only would there be no objection or difficulty in maintaining the existing arrangement as a matter of administration, but that, in a financial point, provision had actually been made in the scheme for such continuance; I understand indeed, even so far as providing for the salaries of my present temporary office establishment on the same scale as now.

2. Having, however, since heard that a different arrangement is contemplate l, I have the honour to request that, before anything is finally settled, consideration may be given to what I have to represent.

3. It is now 12½ years since I first came to Wynaad, originally in command of a detachment of Sappers employed on the Tambercherry Ghaut, and at first under the District Engineer of Malabar. Although there was then an Assistant District Engineer stationed in Wynaad, it was found that the works on the ghaut under his charge were not carried out satisfactorily, and, I presume, from favourable opinion formed by the District Engineer, I was put in sole charge of the works, in which position I remained until the close of 1864, when, at the recommendation of the Superintending Engineer, being then no longer in command of the Sapper detachment, I was placed in charge of the Vythery Range, which was expressly created for me; I remained in this position until the end of 1866, and until after a tour made by His Excellency Lord Napier through Wynaad. It will be in the recollection of Government what vehement and continual complaints had been up to that time made by the various Planters' Associations in Wynaad; it was then determined to place the taluq under an officer holding it as an independent charge, the reasons and object of which measure are so fully set forth in G. O. No. 3,927, dated 13th December 1866, that I need do no more than quote the latter. I do not mean to say that these complaints of the planters' ceased forthwith, though there was a lull for some months; for, unfortunately with the charge of the district, I also had the control over contracts undertaken by two firms connected with and largely interested in it—contracts which I myself very unwillingly acquiesced in, but which circumstances almost forced me into; for, among other cries, there had been none louder than that there were many competent private individuals who were willing to undertake contracts, but that the Public Works Officers refused to entertain such offers, although confessedly they were unable to command sufficient labour to carry on the works as rapidly as the wants of the district demanded. There was much truth in the last of those allegations, though none at all in the first. It was not only that, from experience and acquaintance with the planters, I was convinced that they had not sufficient

technical knowledge to be competent to undertake the construction of bridges and works of that nature, which, in fact, alone constituted our difficulty, for as to earthwork there was no lack of labour at our command; but no offer to undertake such work had been made prior to 1866 with one exception; and that, after having been accepted by the Superintending Engineer, fell through owing to an attempt on the part of the tendering contractors to carry out a purpose which, while it would have suited their own particular interest, was one that he considered highly objectionable for the general interests of the district, an opinion which has proved correct in every point of view, both economical and convenient as well as engineering; in this opinion I also most thoroughly agreed with him, and I fear thereby earned myself the hostility of those whose private interests were thwarted.

4. In the case of the contractors whose tenders were accepted just before I received independent charge of the district, the result proved, as I had feared it would, a dead failure. From the indulgence with which Government had listened to the not always very gently-worded remonstrances of the planters, an erroneous idea had become prevalent that in their case it was to be simply *sic volo sic jubeo*, and the authority of the officers of Government, whether in the Public Works or any other department, was a thing to be immediately brusked aside when in conflict with the opinions of the planters; while I make use of this expression, I would beg to explain that though these latter constituted a large body, yet at that time there were very few independent proprietors; and some two or three individuals possessed sufficient power and influence to carry all votes as they pleased. Unfortunately the two contracting firms were those possessed of the greatest influence, and immediately a controversy arose between them and myself as to the manner in which their work was being carried on; my control over their contracts was defied, and I was attacked with the greatest possible vehemence and acrimony, personal insults even not being spared. Many a letter and some orders of Government remain in record as a history of those transactions and to attest the unpleasant and disagreeable position in which I was myself placed. However, not only did those contracts collapse, but the utter failure and incompetence of the contractors was so patent to the rest of their brother planters, that from that date commenced a gradual stilting of the disturbed waters until now it has come to almost as undesirable a contrary extreme, and Planters' Associations are all defunct, partly from a want of public spirit and unanimity, and partly, I venture to think, because either there is nothing to grumble at, or, if so, nothing of such consequence as to appear worth any combined action.

5. I have gone into this matter, not with the view of trying to make out that prior to 1867 and even for some little time after there were not good grounds for discontent, for most undoubtedly there were, but I have recapitulated them to meet any observation that might be made as to the continued fierceness of complaint for some time after the district came under my charge; and I am quite certain that, although progress was not quite as rapid as might under other circumstances have been, yet that the present condition of the district is an argument in favour of the prudence of not having hurried work, and fallen into mistakes which I now see would have occurred had first intentions been always carried out, and in many cases not been re-considered. Though much yet remains to be done, yet making

109/2

109/2

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
10th August 1872.

allowances for the inevitable condition of unmettaled roads in such a trying climate, a defect that each year is decreasing, I feel satisfied the public has got value for its money, and I have no cause to feel ashamed of what I have been the instrument of carrying out.

6. I do not think that it would have been possible for me to have stood out against the attacks that were made on me, or the suffering from the deleterious climate that I have not escaped, unless I had taken so keen an interest in my work as to make its completion and good execution paramount to every other consideration, an interest which naturally would not have been so great had I been merely carrying out orders and views of a superior; but responsibility and independence were doubtless great encouragement.

7. It is this same feeling of interest that makes me look with bitter disappointment to the prospect of no longer preserving the same independence; many works are now in an advanced condition, and it has been solely with the hope of carrying them to completion that I have braved the telling effects of so long a residence in Wynaad. By the time the re-organization takes place, I shall have been 5¾ years in independent charge; in May 1874, one year and a half later, I shall have completed the period for my Lieutenant-Colonel's pension, and I have always looked forward to that time as the date when I could, with satisfaction, hand over charge to a successor of a district where I have spent so large a portion of my life, with which I have been thoroughly identified, and for which I have been able to do some good service. It is for that period I would ask for a continuance of my present charge undisturbed, so far as its being kept as a whole and separate from the control of the District Engineer. I am now sufficiently high up in the department not to be very much below those who will under the new *regime* be District Engineers, and hold independent executive posts; but I am quite willing to forego any promotion in prospect in favour of being allowed to remain in my present position; indeed, I may say that removal to a low-country appointment would now be tantamount to a forced resignation of the department, as I am quite unequal to work in a hot climate, and my entire ignorance of irrigation matters would make me incompetent for any position in which they would enter. I do not desire that the present establishment of Wynaad should continue unaltered; for instance, I do not think there is any necessity for keeping South-east Wynaad any longer as a separate range, and I consider that a good Overseer can now look after all that is there required. Had no re-organization been contemplated, I would have recommended the absorption of that range at the end of the present official year. As I ask that the existing arrangement of Wynaad, with the above exception, may be kept up merely temporarily, I think it would perhaps be as well not to do away with North Wynaad as a range, the fact of its belonging to the Tellicherry Circle makes it undesirable that it should be altogether absorbed, especially as the alternative scheme (namely, that proposed by the Superintending Engineer, 7th Division, in 1866) contemplated an arrangement that would preserve five ranges in Malabar; and, if there is any idea of reverting to that scheme, I presume provision is made for that number. To absorb North Wynaad would reduce them to four, and perhaps after 1873-74 entail the necessity of re-creating

one range; the saving by absorbing t range would, therefore, from its temporary nature, be so very trifling that it wo l hardly be worthwhile to throw people out of employment for it. But, on t other hand, I am prepared, if a contrary view is entertained, to take the charg f all Wynaad as one range, provided an officer (and none better than the on who now has charge of that part of the district, Mr. Hasler) be left as an A sistant. There would be very little extra work entailed by keeping the accoun s separate between the two circles, it would merely be that it would be done in o e office instead of in two; but yet I confess I think that North Wynaad as one r ge and Vythery with south-east as another is a better arrangement. All I ask i that I may be continued in independent charge of the whole, it being expressly stipulated that such arrangement ceases at the close of the next official year—1873-74. Another argument which, though it may not appear serious, is really much more so than many that might be used. The District Engineer of Malabar will, I fancy, have quite enough of opportunities of getting fever in other parts of his charge to make him by no means unwilling to be spared those he would experience in Wynaad, risks which he must encounter so long as any new works are going on in the district if his supervision is to be substantial, and not merely superficial. It is possible that the future District Engineer may have a constitution like my own, which does not readily yield to such influences, but I have met very few Europeans who are so fortunate; and, if each visit to Wynaad were to be attended by an attack of illness, I think the District Engineer's general efficiency would be better ensured by saving him the risk when it can be done without injury to the public service.

8. The opinion given by the late Colonel Carpendale, as also one expressed to me by his predecessor, Colonel Orr, that the existing arrangement had worked well, the various approbatory orders of Government, the testimony of all the Collectors of Malabar with whom I have worked, the recognition by the planters in their vote of thanks tendered to me through Government, and the special approbation both of the arrangement itself, and afterwards of my own service by the Secretary of State, embolden me to conclude that my continuance in my present position would not be injurious; that for the time that I have held the charge I have given satisfaction, and that so small a boon as a short continuance of the position I have been so long considered worthy of being trusted in will not be refused, accompanied as it will be with no real inconvenience to the new organization and not even a temporary increase of cost to the public.

9. I beg to add a list of the various Proceedings of Government in which my efforts and their results have been favourably noticed, more especially paragraph 5 of the Secretary of State's Despatch of 27th September 1869, embodied in Proceedings of Government, No. 197, of 9th November 1869:—

No. 1,543, dated 27th May 1864.
„ 3,939, „ 20th December 1867.
„ 472, „ 12th February 1869.
„ 2,161, „ 3rd July „
„ 3,590, „ 9th November „
„ 532, „ 15th February 1870.

109/2

No. 168 A. From the same Officer, d ed Vythery, 27th June 1872, No. 290.

In continuation of my letter No. 85 of 25th instant, I beg to add that I made an omission that perhaps may in fuse an element of difficulty. I do not propose that I should be permitted to ke p my present exceptional office establishment, nor to have two range officers under myself. The establishment I propose is as follows:—

Major Kennedy in charge of South and South-east Wynaad as one range, with the ordinary office establishment of a Range Officer, including a Draughtsman.

Mr. R. Hasler in charge of North Wynaad Range, with ordinary Range Establishment.

2. Major Kennedy to have supervision over both the above ranges *not* under control of District Engineer of Malabar.

No. 169. Order thereon, 10th August 1872, No. 1,895.

ESTABLISHMENT, No. 11.

Recognizing the fact that successful administration of public works in Wynaad has been owing to the concentration of executive authority over all three ranges in Major Kennedy's hands, the Government resolve to postpone action on their Order No. 3,918 of 12th December 1866, repeated in No. 1,586 of 1st July 1872. As proposed by Major Kennedy, South-east Wynaad will cease to be worked as a separate range, and its establishment be made available for the West Coast Canal Range from the date that Mr. Supervisor Potter hands over charge to his Overseer; and Mr. Sub-Engineer Hasler's Range will be confined to North Wynaad, and held under Major Kennedy precisely as before.

2. The Government are likewise willing to gratify Major Kennedy's wish to be allowed to retain independent charge until the end of the official year 1873-74 in recognition of the zeal and ability which he has hitherto shown in such a position.

3. This opportunity is taken of rectifying an erratum in the second G. O. above quoted relating to the new Malabar Ranges, the last two of which should have been entered as follows, namely,—

Ranges.	*Taluqs.*
Palghaut...	As at present, excluding West Coast Canal and Cochin.
West Coast Canal	Cochin and West Coast Canal.

(True Exact.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

Major R. B. Kennedy.
To the Controller of Public Works Accounts.
„ Superintendting Engineer, 7th Division.
„ Revenue Department.
Exd. S. T. Austin.

Revenue 1872 Sept
No. 2739.

Govt. of {1872} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

MAJOR R. B. KENNEDY.

&c., &c., &c.

Dated August 10th.

Recd. 16 19th Encl.

G. O., 10th August 1872, No. 1,805.

AUGUST

Nos. 168 169

Wynaad.—Passing orders on the letter from the Special Executive Engineer, Wynaad requesting that, when the re-organization of the Public Works Department takes place he may as at present, be allowed to remain in independent charge of Wynaad.

No. 109

19 August 72