

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

118

Press

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Dated

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1859

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Fort Saint George, Marine Consultation, 1st April 1859.

No. 8. From EDWARD FANE, Esq., Officiating Post Master General, Madras; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Marine Department, Fort Saint George, dated 19th March 1859, No. 5770.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Extract from the Minutes of Consultation, under date the 12th Instant, No. 90, and in reply to append, for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, transcript of a letter addressed by me to the Officiating Director General of the Post Office in India, on the subject of Messrs. McKinnon, McKenzie and Co.'s scheme.

From EDWARD FANE, Esq., Officiating Post Master General, Madras; to the Officiating Director General of the Post Office in India, dated 11th March 1859, No. 170.

SIR,

1. I have the honor to acknowledge your letters respectively, dated 9th and 12th Ultimo, Nos. 2552 and 2583, accompanied by a Prospectus for regular Steam Communication between Calcutta, Madras and the Ports on the Bay of Bengal.

2. I regret to say that, from the information I have obtained from the Merchants of Madras, the project is not likely to be remunerating; the passengers that would go in a line, that had fixed dates of departure and arrival, would no doubt be more numerous than they are at present; but in the two Steamers that belong to Government, and go five or six times a year with Troops up to the Coast, they are very few. A similar project to that of Messrs. Mackinnon was once before attempted, but failed after the first voyage; the Steamer that was provided was, however, not a good one, and was wrecked, under rather suspicious circumstances, off Masulipatam.

3. I perceive that the Ports the Steamers are to touch at are Masulipatam, Coringa and Vizagapatam, and from the former you propose to receive the Calcutta letters, forward them to Bombay and *vice versa*.

4. I know the Port of Masulipatam very well, and should advise the Steamers never to call there. No Vessel of any size can, in the first place, anchor within 5 miles of the Bar of the river. Having crossed the Bar, you have to go two miles further before you get to the Fort, and as at all times there are very adverse currents, boats from a Steamer are unable to reach the shore under five or six hours—Coringa, or the Roadstead of Coringa, called Cocanada, would be a most capital place of call. A 700-ton Steamer could anchor and be in safety all seasons of the year there within half a mile of the shore, and as the trade is vastly increasing, no doubt hereafter, with a certain line of Steam communication, both the passenger traffic to and from it, and the Postal traffic would increase.

5. I feel convinced that, with a little management, the heavy Mails to and from Bombay to Calcutta *via* Hyderabad, could be brought to Cocanada and there embarked for Calcutta at a more speedy rate than by Masulipatam. There is a complete Canal communication between Cocanada and Beijwarah on the Hyderabad and Masulipatam road, and from Beijwarah, the road is sufficiently good to run a Horse or Bullock Transit to and from Hyderabad.

6. I send herewith a Memo. showing the amount of daily correspondence between Madras and the Northern Ports, from which you will see that a subsidy of 4,000 Rupees a trip is vastly too high for the present amount of correspondence. The chief advantage to be gained would be in Overland Mail Posts, and in the Banghies. The Steamer could wait at Cocanada for the former, and the latter could be detained till the Steamers sailed.

7. Between Madras and the Northern Ports, there is but very little trade, and that even cannot be shown as will appear from Mr. Underwood's letter. Vessels generally go from Madras direct to Cocanada, Vizagapatam, Bimlipatam and Calingapatam, take in their Cargoes and sail at once for England. I have been told, however, that much gold is shipped at Calcutta for Vizagapatam and Cocanada, and the Merchants would no doubt always send it in the Steamers.

8. Your own accounts will, of course, show you the correspondence from Calcutta; but I fear, that if Government encourage the scheme for Postal purposes, it will be at first at a great sacrifice. If, as I suggested before, the Overland Mails from Bombay to Calcutta and the inter-

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mediate Ports were alone considered, the plan would be to bring to or take from Cocanada all the Mails. From Cocanada to Beijwarah on the Kistna the route would be by Canal boat, *via* Dowlaishwarum on the Godavery, Ellore and the Colair lake, distance about 100 miles, which I should think might be accomplished at 5 miles an hour. From Beijwarah a Bullock Transit is already established for passengers to Hyderabad. I imagine that the Transit Company would contract to carry Mails from thence either in Bullock Carts or Horse Carts at 6 miles an hour, and from Hyderabad to Bombay the communication by Horse Dawk and Railway is almost complete. The whole might be accomplished in 7 days.

9. The present time occupied by the Post between Masulipatam and Bombay is eight days, which might be reduced to five if Mail Carts were established as far as Beijwarah, and from thence the Mails were conveyed in a canal which is finished to within 12 miles of Masulipatam and will eventually be completed. The chief difficulty with Masulipatam is the distant anchorage and difficult approach to it.

10. I regret to say that the "Governor Higginson"—the Steamer you say is to be the first to take up the new line—is long overdue in India; but, as it will be some time probably before another Steamer is started on the line, I will before then collect information regarding the speed expected on the Canals from Cocanada, &c.

No. 9. To THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, dated Fort St. George, the 1st April 1859, No. 118.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter, No. 262, dated 5th February last, requesting the opinion of Government on a communication from Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co., who propose, under the grant of a subsidy, to carry the Mails between Calcutta, Madras, and Colombo, and certain intermediate Ports, by means of the Steamers of the "Bay of Bengal Steam Navigation Company."

2. The Superintendent of Marine, who was required to report on the scheme, states that had not arrangements been made for running Government Steamers between Madras and Burmah, *via* the Northern Ports, he would strongly recommend the offer of Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co. As the Government line, however, is about to be formed, he considers it unnecessary to subsidize a private line.

3. But it appears to be doubtful whether the Burmah Line will be kept up with the few Steamers at command. Under this apprehension, the Superintendent suggests, that if the Calcutta Firm would adopt the scheme about to be brought into operation, and run their Steamers across the Bay, it would be advisable to accept their offer, and adds that, in that case, before entering into any Contract, Government should be in possession of their Tariff for Cabin and Deck Passages and Freight.

4. With reference to the amount of subsidy expected by the Company, as given in para. 3 of your letter under acknowledgment, the Superintendent of Marine observes that a larger subsidy will be demanded for proceeding across the Bay, while, as a remuneration for the duty as defined by them, the amount is excessive, as the distance to be steamed between Calcutta and Madras is rather less than that between Calcutta and Moulmein, including the interjacent Ports in both lines.

5. Attention is called to the last clause but one of the Contract forwarded with your letter. It would appear that the two lines—the Government Line between Madras and Burmah, and that proposed by Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co.—could not be in operation at one and the same time as far as regards Passengers and Cargo.

6. The above remarks have no bearing on the project in a Postal point of view. The Post Master General, whose opinion was also requested, states that he has already communicated it to the Chief of the Postal Department, and submits copy of his report. This will no doubt be laid before the Supreme Government by the Director General of Post Offices in India. It may

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however be mentioned that Mr. Fane is under a mistake when he says (p. 5) "there is a complete Canal communication between Cocanada and Beijwarah" there being at present about 20 miles of the Canal to excavate.

7. The suggestion of the Superintendent of Marine, as above given in para. 3, seems to this Government deserving of consideration. Looking to the state of three out of the five Vessels by which it is proposed to keep up the Burmah line of communication, they cannot but have much misgivings as to the ultimate success of the arrangement. They would cordially approve the scheme of any private Company which would undertake the service on reasonable terms.

Note.—The Vessels named by the Government of India for the purpose are the "Dalhousie," "Australian" and "Coromandel" with the "Sydney" and "Tenasserim" in reserve. The "Dalhousie" and "Australian" are out of order and have gone to Calcutta. The "Sydney" is in a very indifferent state. The "Tenasserim" has not yet made her appearance. These Vessels, moreover, would not only have to be employed in keeping up the communication with Burmah, but also on other duty connected with the relief of Troops, and transport of Stores and Treasure.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Ed. J. Wright.

Sept. 1st 1878

Marine Department.

N^o. 118.

The Secretary to the Govt. of India.

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Jp

Fort George }
1st April 1859.

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To the Secy. to the Govt. of
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