

Marine (1898) Department.

G.O., No. 776 Marine

DATED 9th Sep 1898.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Coast line of Madras

Letter from the Chairman,
Horticultural Ins^{rs}, Submitting Copy of letter from
the Board's Engineer, with Copies of Extracts from
the Indian Journals of Major Charles Giberne,
regarding the ———— Vindicated with reference to
p. 775 March 9. Feb 1881.

indexed.

209/98

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

CURRENT No. 1103

From

*The Chairman,
Harbour Trust Board,
Madras.*

No. 2025

Dated 20/7-8-'98

Despatched 29 — — —

Received 3-8-98

Enclosures # 22

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Liability of the foreshore
north of the Harbour.

Submitting for further information of Government copy of a letter from the Harbour Board's Engineer with copies of extracts from the Indian journals of Major Charles Giberne when in India in 1833.

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FURTHER PAPERS.

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To,
The Chairman,
Harbour Trust Board,
M A D R A S.

Madras 25th August 1898.

Sir,

Sir,

With reference to the changes in the Madras Coast line, and the information I laid before the Board, in my letter No. 68 A dated 25th April 1896, I have the honour to forward further reliable evidence, showing that the coast line does change its position from time to time, and therefore the depth of the Roadstead must also vary with it.

2. When in England last, and talking about Madras with Major Giberne of East-bourne, he remarked that when in India in 1833, he had made some notes on the coast line of Madras, and these, he very kindly copied from his original books for me, as they supported my theory; but as I had not them with me in India, he has kindly sent me a "2nd copy" by the last mail.

3. I also forward some other information of interest about the coast line opposite St Thome copied from the records in the Fort St George, which would show that with so much foreshore in front of St Thome which is only 5 miles South of the Harbour, that at some time, the coast line must have run in a direction about North-west and South-east, or probably nearer East, which would give rise to Madras being referred to in some of the old records, as the Bay of Madras.

4. That the coast line was once in that direction is quite possible, as there is a depth of 5 fathoms shown about 30 miles East of Covelong, with deeper water between it and the shore.

I have 20,
Signed A. Lee Pogson,
Engineer,
Harbour Trust Board.

Extracts

Tranquebar March 30th 1833.

Karical is a village belonging to the French Government, there are I believe but few European inhabitants besides the Governor and other official people, but the place is well laid out, numerous roads and avenues of trees on all sides. It is situated about a mile from the sea, between which and the town, and within a 100 yards of the former, are paddy fields.

Tranqubar is situated near one of the mouths of the Cauvery and about 50 yards from the sea. It is about a mile in circumference, and is surrounded by a plain wall, without any fortification. The castle to the west-ward has strong walls, on which some guns are mounted.

Sheeally April 4th 1833.

Tranqubar was built in the year 1646, as certified by an inscription on the castle of Danesboy. I paid a visit to the castle a few days ago. It is adjoining the Fort and is situated at the South Eastern corner. Tranqubar when built two centuries ago, was situated at a distance of two or three miles from the sea and there are some old Danish Gentlemen present who remember when it was two or three hundred yards from that element, but now the sea, after destroying the greater part of the Eastern wall, washes completely into the town. Part of the wall near the castle, built of chunam and brick in the most solid manner, is now fast giving way, as the sea in some places washes under it, and has thus caused large masses to vary very materially from their original perpendicular position. It is to be feared that as nothing is done to stop the encroachment of the sea, that ere another century elapse a great part of this pretty little town will be engulfed in the waters of the deep. There was formerly a great deal of trade here, and several rich merchants, some of whom have left some splendid houses as monuments of their magnificence, but now only two or three wretched Dhonies are to be seen occasionally in the roads, come probably to export soap and rice, the only two commodities in which Tranqubar seems to trade.

Pondicherry April 16th 1833.

Government House is a fine building but there are infinitely

near Cuvil
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There are more houses here than in Tranquabar, though I do not think there are so many first rate buildings. The streets are clean and well built, and round the town are excellent roads sheltered by fine avenues of young trees. About 20 years ago the sea was at the distance of about 300 yards from the town, but it approached until about four years ago, since which time it has commenced slowly to retire and is now about 30 yards from the walls of the gardens in the town.

The fortifications at Pondicherry were formerly about three miles in circumference, but now have entirely disappeared except a small portion close to the sea at the south eastern corner, the fosse however is plainly to be traced all round and is in general cultivated with rice.

When the town was built the sea is said to have been nearly a mile distant, but it is now almost close to the remains of the old wall and about 30 yards from the garden walls of the houses nearest the sea. Many inhabitants recollect the time when there was a road sheltered by an avenue running from the town to the sea.

Madras November 29th 1833.

On my arrival here I went to live with Captain Rowlandson with whom I stayed a few days. . . . Rowlandson was living about three miles from the sea near St Georges Church, and in the evening I took a ride to the Esplanade when there was a band. . . . the ordinary drive is an excellent road of about a quarter of a mile in length on the sea beach, running to the South from the Fort. Every evening this road is covered with conveyances and Equestrians of every description. . . . The sea has been encroaching on the Black Town and Fort for several years past, and it now nearly washes the walls of the latter, while a road runs between it and the former. Forty years ago, it appears there was a distance of at least three hundred yards, between the two, and from what information I have been able to obtain, it appears that seventy years ago, but the same distance intervened as at present. It would appear therefore that the sea here, as on many other coasts alternately advances and retires at periods of about thirty or forty years- fears having been entertained for the safety of the Fort and Black Town, a stone bulwark has been erected along the beach, and sunk to some depth in the sand, which appears effectually to have resisted encroachments of the sea. . . .

Sadras

Sadras. (Sudringputtam) December 17th 1833.

The Fort is not, I should think above 150 yards in length by 100. There is a slight sinking of the earth without the walls, but not enough to prove whether it was ever defended by a ditch or not, the glacis if ever there was one, having been washed into it, long ago, by the rain. It is situated 150 yards from the sea, though it is said to have been formerly, much farther from it.

Extracts from page 12 of Manual of Geology of Madras by Medlicott and Blandford revised by Oldham 1893.

Besides the changes produced by rise and fall of the sea-level as compared with that of the land, there have been minor modifications of the shore line due to erosion and accretion of land. St Thome, a short distance south of Madras, is said to have formerly been situated 12 leagues inland and 40 miles further south, the town of Mahabalipur is said to have been overwhelmed by the sea. Still further south, erosion of the sea beach at Tranqubar is well attested by old records, as well as the destruction of a large portion of an old pagoda, whose eastern gate tower had been partially destroyed in 1859 and has probably now been completely removed.

S. T. T. Newbold, Jour. Roy. As. Soc., VIII. 250. (1846) 4. W. King. Memoirs, IV, 362, (1864)

(True Copy)

C. Pintent
Secretary,

Harbour Trust Board.

HARBOUR TRUST

MADRAS 29 AUG 18

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

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Harbour Trust Office,
MADRAS, 27th August 1898.

No. 2025

FROM

J.N. Atkinson Esq I.C.S.,

CHAIRMAN, HARBOUR TRUST BOARD,
MADRAS.

TO

W.B. deWinton Esq.,

SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
Marine Department.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter No. 714 dated 13th May '98

I have now the honour to submit for the further information of Government, copy of a letter from the Board's Engineer No. 589 dated 25th August with copies of Extracts from the Indian journals of Major Charles Giberne when in India in 1833 recording, amongst other matters, the position then and previously as regards the sea of Karical, Tranquebar, Pondicherry, Fort St George and Black Town, and Sadras.

2. I also forward an Extract from page 12 of manual of Geology of Madras by Medlicott, and Blanford, revised by Oldham 1893, referring to St Thome as having been formerly situated 12 leagues inland; and that the town of Mahabilipur 40 miles south is said to have been overwhelmed by the sea. This Extract also refers to the erosion at Tranquebar.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

J.N. Atkinson
Chairman,

Harbour Trust Board.

Secy.

W. No 450 Marine
73rd June 1898
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