

Maine
Public Works (189) Department.

G.O., No. *897 Maine*

DATED *23-9-99*

[Despatch Abstract.]

Administration Report of the Dyey Conservator of
the Port of Madras.

Endt of the Meteorological Reporter to the
Govt of Bengal. forwarding copy of his letter
to the Meteorological Reporter to the Govt
of India, containing criticisms of some of
the statements quoted in the — for
the year 1898-99, commd to the Chairman
A.T.Bd

[P. W. 36.]
[200-19-7-99.]

INDEXED

26-2-99

27/9/99

Endorsement of the Meteorological Reporter to the Government of Bengal forwarding copy of his letter to the Meteorological Reporter to the Government of India containing criticisms of some of the statements quoted in the -- for the year 1898-1899, communicated to the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board.

With regard to the remark made by the Deputy Conservator on the storm of 9th to 11th October, viz., "storm warning signal was hoisted on 9th, 10th, 11th October by advice from Calcutta, but no bad weather was experienced at Madras," I would point out that the impression likely to be caused by such a remark in the mind of any one not acquainted with the weather in the south-west of the bay on those days is that it would have been better if no warnings had been sent from Calcutta to Madras. The warnings were sent for the benefit of vessels proceeding to sea, as there was a dangerous cyclone of limited extent moving towards a part of the coast between Nellore and Cocanada and therefore likely to approach to within 200 miles of Madras. If the line of advance had not been correctly determined, the storm area might have passed much nearer Madras.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

Read—the following paper:—

From C. LITTLE, Esq., Meteorological Reporter to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Marine Department, dated Calcutta, 15th September 1899, No. 2707.

Copy of the following paper* forwarded for information to the Secretary to the

* Letter No. 2706, dated 15th September 1899, Government of Madras, Marine Department, to the Meteorological Reporter to the Government, with reference to G.O., No. 748, Government of India, Marine, of the 8th August 1899.

ENCLOSURE.

From C. LITTLE, Esq., Meteorological Reporter to the Government of Bengal, to the Meteorological Reporter to the Government of India and Director-General of Indian Observatories, dated Calcutta, 15th September 1899, No. 2706.

In acknowledging receipt of the extract from the Administration Report of the Deputy Conservator of the Port of Madras for the official year 1898-99, forwarded for my inspection with your endorsement No. 718/S., of date 9th September 1899, I have the honour to request permission to submit for such use as you may think desirable the following criticism of some of the statements quoted.

I have no wish to detract in any way from the credit justly due to the Deputy Port Conservator for the admirable foresight he showed in protecting the shipping in the Harbour of Madras, nor to limit his power of taking action in the future, still I have reasons for wishing not to allow the remarks to pass unchallenged.

The remarks appear to me to originate in a view of the possibilities of weather forecasting which I have observed with regret (as not being based on a scientific review of the circumstances of the case) has been on the increase in the past few years. This view which, as far as my experience goes, has become very prevalent even amongst people of intelligence is, that storm warnings and in fact weather forecasts of any kind should be correct in all details; that the storm warnings should indicate the position of a storm, its direction of movement, the depth of the depression and the strength of the winds, while the disturbance is still far from the part of the coast likely to be affected, and consequently far from the seat of observation. The special study I have made of these disturbances in the Bay of Bengal has shown me that storms are extremely variable in kind without any marked difference in the meteorological observations recorded on the coast until the central area is close to the coast line. The warnings have therefore to be issued while in more or less ignorance of the following important points: the depth of the depression, the strength of the winds, and the curvature of the path of the disturbance. The last consideration is of great importance in connection with the part of the coast likely to suffer the full force of the storm. In consequence of these difficulties I feel that what I am required to do has been done when all precautions have been taken even if in the light of after events my expectations have not been strictly fulfilled.

The impression intended to be conveyed by the remarks of the Deputy Conservator is one of failure on my part, and this opinion is expressed in the G.O., No. 748, Marine, dated 8th August 1899. In my opinion it is not altogether fair to me and I therefore desire to make the following representation.

With regard to the remark made by the Deputy Conservator on the storm of 9th to 11th October, viz., "storm warning signal was hoisted on 9th, 10th, 11th October by advice from Calcutta, but no bad weather was experienced at Madras," I would point out that the impression likely to be caused by such a remark in the mind of any one not acquainted with the weather in the south-west of the bay on those days is that it would have been better if no warnings had been sent from Calcutta to Madras. The warnings were sent for the benefit of vessels proceeding to sea, as there was a dangerous cyclone of limited extent moving towards a part of the coast between Nellore and Cocanada and therefore likely to approach to within 200 miles of Madras. If the line of advance had not been correctly determined, the storm area might have passed much nearer Madras.

With regard to the third and fourth statements in which it is stated that no advice was received from Calcutta, there is the further remark in the third that "centre of cyclonic storm passed inland few miles south of Madras," and in the fourth "small cyclonic storm which lasted for a few hours passing inland just south of Madras." In both of these cases the remarks do not agree with the meteorological information recorded at the time of the storms, and I believe the Deputy Conservator has in each case made the mistake of confusing a local disturbance with the main disturbance. I may here point out that no weather warning department can give any previous information regarding local disturbances of the thunderstorm class even when they originate over the land and not as in this case over the sea.

I am fortunate in being able to quote your own opinion on the information reported to you on the dates 29th and 30th November. Instead of the area of lowest pressure being shown a few miles south of Madras you have placed it on the chart of the Indian Daily Weather Report at least 400 miles to the south of Madras. In the Indian Daily Weather Report of the 26th December there is no reference to the cyclonic storm mentioned by the Deputy Conservator. In both these cases, therefore, my contention that the Deputy Conservator mistook local thunderstorms for cyclonic storms on the dates mentioned receives support from you.

I may here point out that the Deputy Conservator in making these remarks has omitted to refer to a code telegram which is sent by me daily to Madras. This telegram is capable of giving, if intelligently used, a large amount of information regarding the weather prevailing in the bay. It may have been that these code telegrams received due consideration at the time of their receipt, but I consider it a very unjust omission that no reference was made to them, no opinion expressed regarding them at the time when the Deputy Conservator was recording his opinion in the Administration Report.

I have not yet considered the remark regarding the storm of the 5th and 6th November, the centre of which passed close to Madras. The indication here is that the warning was eight hours late in reaching Madras, and nothing is said as to whether it was not in sufficient time for all precautions to be taken.

Again all reference to the code telegram is omitted, though, after a careful consideration of the reports received by me between the 3rd and 5th, I am even now of the opinion that I could not have given any more clear indication of the character of the disturbance than what was sent to the Deputy Port Conservator on both the morning of the 4th and the 5th by means of the code telegram.

I am dependant on information from four observatories on the south Madras coast, viz., Madras, Cuddalore, Negapatam and Pamban; and, during this period of stormy weather, I was receiving telegrams from these four stations every six hours. It was not till 2 p.m. on the 5th, that the existence of a definite depression as opposed to general squally weather was clearly indicated, and I at once sent the special telegram referred to by the Deputy Conservator, the code telegram for that day having been sent some hours earlier.

I am in a position to compare the information I received from Madras Observatory on the morning of the 5th with what was recorded by the Deputy Conservator at the time and sent to me afterwards. The wind force given by the Deputy Conservator at 9 a.m. on the 5th was 6 to 7 and until after midnight it varied from 7 to 8. These figures indicate a velocity of 30 to 40 and 40 to 50 miles an hour respectively (see Handbook of Cyclonic Storms in the Bay of Bengal, page 19). The 8 a.m. velocity, as telegraphed to me from the observatory, was 8 miles an hour at 8 a.m. on the 5th, and averaged 14 miles an hour during the forenoon. The highest velocity reported to me was 19 miles. A comparison of these figures shows that the estimate of the wind force by the Deputy Conservator was 3 to 4 times greater than what was reported to me from the observatory. Whether this was due to bad exposure of the anemometer or to exaggeration on the part of the Deputy Conservator I am not able to say, but the Deputy Conservator must have known from the Madras Daily Weather Report that the reports sent me from the observatory were less alarming than he himself would have sent, and it is understood that in such circumstances the officer who receives warnings will at once communicate with me.

In conclusion I beg to point out that the Deputy Conservator has omitted all reference to the daily code telegrams on which I relied to give him such information as was available in the early stages of the storms, that in the case of the storm of 5th to 6th November no more definite information could have been given than was sent by me up to 8 a.m. on the 5th, and that in the two last cases the Deputy Conservator has been misled by local storms for which no system of warning has yet been attempted in any Weather Bureau.

ORDER—No. 897, Marine, dated 23rd September 1899.

Communicated to the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board.

(True Extract.)

Under Secretary to Government.

To the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board.
,, Presidency Port Officer.

Exd. A. Rungasawmy Aiyangar.

Marine (1899) Department.

CURRENT No. 1293.

Order No. 897 Mar of 23-9-99. 5P

Communicated
to the Chairman Harbour
Trust Board.From The Meteorological
Reports to the Govt
of Bengal

No. 2707

Dated 15-9-99

Received 22-9-99

Enclosures { Plans nil } 2 Mats - 1
other same

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

Forwarding copy of his
letter to the Meteorological
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containing criticisms
of some of the statements
quoted in the Adminis-
trative Report of the
Hy. Conservator of the Port
of Madras for the year
1898-99.

No. 2706

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No.	Date.
748, 748 Ma of A 8-8-99 (50)	

No.	Date.

FROM

THE METEOROLOGICAL REPORTER TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

TO

THE Meteorological Reporter to the Govt. of India
& Director General of Indian Observatories
Sindia.Dated, Calcutta, the 15th September 1899.

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In acknowledging receipt of the extract from the Administration Report of the Deputy Conservator of the Port of Madras for the official year 1898-99, forwarded for my inspection with your endorsement No. 718/s of date September 9th 1899, I have the honor to request permission to submit for such use as you may think desirable the following criticism of some of the statements quoted.

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The impression intended to be conveyed by the remarks of the Deputy Conservator is one of failure on my part and this opinion is expressed in the G.O. Marine No. 748.

No. 748 Dated 3rd August 1909. In my opinion it is not altogether fair to me and I therefore desire to make the following representation.

With regard to the remark made by the Deputy Conservator on the storm of 9th to 11th October viz "storm warning signal was hoisted on 9th, 10th, 11th October by advice from Calcutta, but no bad weather was experienced at Madras," I would point out that the impression likely to be caused by such a remark in the mind of any one not acquainted with the weather in the south west of the Bay on those days is that it would have been better if no warnings had been sent from Calcutta to Madras. The warnings were sent for the benefit of vessels proceeding to sea, as there was a dangerous cyclone of limited extent moving towards a part of the coast between Mellore and Cocanada and therefore likely to approach to within 200 miles of Madras. If the line of advance had not been correctly determined the storm area might have passed much nearer Madras.

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Again.

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I have the honor to be
Sir
your most obedient servant.

Sd/ C. Little
Meteorological Reporter to the
Government of Bengal.

No. 2707

Meteorological Department,
5, RUSSELL STREET.

Calcutta, dated the 15th September 1899.

Letter No. 2706
dated 15th Sept. 1899.
from the
Meteorological Reporter to the
Govt of India

Copy of the following paper* forwarded for information to the Secretary to the Government of Madras Marine Dep^t with reference to his letter No. 748 of the 8th August 1899

C. Little

Meteorological Reporter to the
Government of Bengal