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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.
Con 3674/57

G.O. No. 2792 Press
Mis.

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Dated 30-11- 1857.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, for the month of November 1859.

No. 177. Read the following Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Military Department, dated 17th November 1859, No. 4078.

Read the following Proceedings in the Public Works Department.

Forwarding Captain Blagrave's narrative of his visit to the Gúli Parvatám hill and Harris valley. } (Here enter 11th November 1859, No. 2634.)

Ordered to be communicated to the Commander-in-Chief and Commissary General.

2. The Governor in Council observes, that cots for the party of Sappers have already been sanctioned. The further suggestions of the District Engineer in paragraph 9 of his letter will be considered under the orders of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

Proceedings of Government No. 2336, 1st July 1859, and No. 2910, 15th August 1859.

(Signed) R. HAMILTON Lieut.-Colonel,
Ag. Dy. Secretary to Government.

No. 178. ORDER THEREON, 30th November 1859, No. 2792.

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer for information with reference to the proceedings of the 11th instant No. 2634.

(Signed) W. C. SIM,
Actg. Dy. Secretary to Government.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Public.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. BELL, Chief Engineer; to J. D. BOURDILLON, Esq., Secretary to Government, dated 27th October 1859, No. 6591.

1 Letter from District Engineer, Vizagapatam, No. 549, dated 29th September 1859, with 2 plans.

With reference to the proceedings of Government, dated 22nd August 1859, No. 2016, I have the honor to forward an original letter from the District Engineer, Vizagapatam, giving an account of his visit to the "Gáli Parvatam" and "Harris valley," and stating the measures which he proposes taking, with the view of carrying out the intended experiment of locating a detachment of Europeans on the above range of hills.

2. These measures are as follows:—1st, to build on what he terms "Taylor's Knoll," sheds sufficient to accommodate the party of sappers and coolies employed on the proposed temporary buildings in "Harris Valley;" 2nd, to employ the villagers inhabiting "Harris Valley" to collect materials, &c. for those buildings. The District Engineer states, that he left a Sub-Overseer, whom he had taken up with him, in charge of a working party of 50 or 60 men, (to which 20 additional hands were added after he left the hill,) to erect the sheds for the sappers on "Taylor's Knoll," for whose use he had forwarded a good supply of tools, and he anticipates no difficulty in completing the preliminary work in the course of a week.

3. Captain Blagrave suggests that a temporary shed, 50 by 15 feet, divided into two compartments, to serve as a rest house for troops and shelter for Commissariat stores, should be erected at Rayavalsa, 2,500 feet above the sea level, and about three hours distance from Kotúr. He does not state what will be the cost of the proposed shed, nor has he furnished the information required by Government, as respects the cost of the temporary buildings to be erected in "Harris Valley." ~~He has accordingly been~~ requested to furnish the above information without further delay.

4. The District Engineer further proposes improving the road from Kotúr to "Harris Valley," a distance of 12 miles, and solicits a grant of Rupees 3,600, at the rate of 300 Rupees a mile, for which sum he considers that he will be able to open a path on an average two yards broad and easy for laden bullocks, &c.; and he is of opinion, that this outlay will soon be recovered by the saving in carriage by using bullocks in place of men.

5. I, therefore, beg to recommend, that a grant of the above amount may be placed at his disposal for improving the road as he proposes, to be disbursed from the funds allotted to the Vizagapatam district for the current year, should there be any available. If not, the work must be postponed till May 1860. A further report will be submitted to Government on the receipt of the information called for respecting the probable cost of the temporary buildings to be erected in "Harris Valley" and at Rayavalsa.

Letter from Captain E. R. BLAGRAVE, District Engineer, Vizagapatam; to the Deputy Chief Engineer, Northern Circle, dated Waltair, 29th September 1859, No. 549.

2 Plans dispatched by banghy.

With reference to your proceedings, No. 4265 of 26th ultimo, I have the honor to inform you, that as the weather was promising, I made arrangements to pay a visit to the Gáli Parvatám, in company with Captain Shakespear, the Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General, Northern Division, whose previous knowledge of the localities was likely to prove useful to me in selecting the site for the proposed barracks.

2. Leaving Waltair on Monday afternoon, we reached Kotúr, distant 49 miles by 19th. 8 A. M., on Tuesday, at this place as being the nearest point to the hill to which stores, &c., could be taken by bandy, I had my camp pitched, leaving Kotúr at 9 the same morning, we commenced the ascent, which for about a mile is very easy, but afterwards becomes difficult, being

Kotur is marked in the ordnance sheet 2 or 3 miles distant from Kassipuram.

covered with stones, and in places very steep: by 12 P. M., we reached Rayavalsa, about 2,500 feet above the sea. There is a fine open space here under cultivation, where one might, I fancy, encamp with perfect safety: shortly before reaching this place, the character of the jungle changed. Bamboo which grew in abundance, and to a large size, as far up as Dounkoo having disappeared, I would propose to erect a temporary shed as a rest-house for troops, &c., at this place, as men carrying heavy loads, or unaccustomed to climb hills, are obliged to rest here for a time: a shed 50 feet by 15 with wattle and dab divided into two compartments, 20 and 30 feet respectively in length, would suffice, and this would also be found useful to shelter Commissariat stores, either for the night or when overtaken by storms. The next village we came to was Annuntagherry, the road to which is tolerably easy. After leaving Annuntagherry, the last village to be met with on the way up, the ascent becomes more marked and in places difficult, even for pedestrians: the character of the jungle again changes and on the sides of the hills become open, the ravines and lower slopes only being covered with thick jungle. At 1 P. M. in the midst of a heavy fall of rain, we reached Colonel Taylor's camping ground, (in referring to this place in future, I will use the name Taylor's knoll,) finding here our tents and baggage, we halted for the night, making it afterwards our camping ground, for the time we were up in these parts. The elevation as given by the aneroid, is about 1,050 feet above the sea, there is abundance of good water procurable here, and as it is in other respects the best site near the crest of the ridge for an encampment, I determined to construct the temporary shelter for the working party of sappers, &c., in this place: the lowest part of the saddle being about 150 or 160 feet above this station; as Harris valley is distant about 2 miles further, it will be necessary to establish a permanent halting station here, with shelter for coolies and cattle; certainly, until the ghât is completed: as the ascent so far is sufficient to tire and knock up for the time both man and beast. The thermometer at sunset was 68° even at this season of the year, or upwards of 20° degrees cooler than at Waltair, and so invigorating was the air, that I found I suffered little or no fatigue after the exercise I had undergone during the previous 24 hours.

Aneroid reading at sea level 29.9.
Taylor's knoll 25 815

3. On Wednesday morning, the weather being beautifully clear, we determined to pay Harris valley a visit. First ascending the gorge about 160 feet, we reached the saddle of the main range, having the camp of the party previously, visiting these hills on the left, and Grant's hill on the right: from this point we get a beautiful view of Harris valley, and here I remarked that while the different ranges—some higher, some lower—surrounding it were enveloped in mist, Harris valley itself stood out perfectly clear, this I fancy is caused by the set of the sea-breeze, coming right clear over this spot, unobstructed in any way. The first part of the descent from the saddle (westward) is very steep, and when Commissariat stores, tents, &c. have to be taken down, a fresh track must be struck out: this can easily be done, as there is ample space: with the exception of this first ¼ mile, the road is tolerably easy, though in one or two places, however, somewhat steep and broken; the last ½ mile or so being almost level and perfectly open.

About 1 in 1

4. Harris valley, its elevation being about 3,900 or 4,000 feet above the sea, is well cultivated, the inhabitants of one or two hamlets look healthy, active, clean and limbed men, shewing no signs of fever, and when questioned if they ever suffered from such ailment, said never. The soil in lower parts is stiff clay, on the small knolls a gravel: drainage is prefect. The jungle low, not above 10 or 12 feet high; and well cleared—site chosen for barracks, small rising ground consisting of gravel perfectly clear of jungle, has having ample room for two ranges of barracks, 40 × 18—one range of Commissariat godowns 50 × 18, divided into two rooms 20 and 30 feet long, leaving a space of 150 or 200 feet clear between the barracks and Commissariat godowns for a parade, &c., a fine piece of rising ground to the north within 100 or 150 yards, affords a site on which the officers' quarters could be built: ample space for sheds for Commissariat followers, cattle, &c. close to Commissariat godowns, but at foot of knoll is to be had a fine spring of water almost immediately below barracks to the west, affords full supply for all the wants of the experimental party: the

The cultivation consists of Raggi, Cumboo, Indian Corn and Paddy.

Inhabitants.
Soil.
Drainage.
Site.

Now partly covered with low scrub.

accompanying sketch will shew the relative positions of the buildings as proposed. I did not notice any lime stone, but fancy there must be such; the fact was that thinking only of building temporary mud huts, I at the time and until too late, forgot to search for lime. This valley certainly appears to promise very favorably as a spot for a sanitarium, the present inhabitants being healthy sturdy men, there being ample space in the neighbourhood, where officers and others desiring to recruit could build houses, and from all I saw and could gather, there is an ample supply of water the whole year round.

5. The only measures I have as yet taken with the view of carrying out the intended experiment, are *to build sheds sufficient to accommodate the party of sappers and coolies*, FIRST GOING UP on Taylor's knoll, and desiring the villagers in Harris valley, (who seemed perfectly willing to assist me,) to collect materials, &c., for the barracks; as it would be useless attempting to erect any but the most temporary buildings now, as no covering (thatching), that would last above two or three months is at present procurable, the grass being young and full of juice, and this is but of little use except for very temporary shelter. I left a Sub-Overseer I had taken up with me in charge of a working party of 50 or 60 men, to erect these sheds, for the care of which, I have appointed a peon, who was with Colonel Taylor, on a pay of six Rupees a month; his pay to be dependent on the care he takes of the sheds. I have employed this man, as I am told he is thoroughly acquainted with the hills and places where to procure supplies and labor from: for the first two days or so, there was great difficulty not only in getting coolies, but in inducing them to remain, the promise of two annas a day and prompt payment, however, set all to rights, and before I left, upwards of 50 men had come in. There was also great difficulty in procuring provisions, and I made the best arrangements I could, for a continued supply being forwarded, in addition to which I sent up sufficient for about two days consumption. I have since forwarded a good supply of tools, so that I trust the Sub-Overseer will have no difficulty in completing the work now ordered in the course of a week.

Survaroydoo.

20 additional hands arrived after I had left the hill.

6. The further mearures I consider to be necessary, for successfully carrying out this experiment, in addition to the above are, erection of a rest-house at Rayavalsa and improving the road by removing obstacles or turning the principal difficult places on the present track, in many places not a foot broad; for this purpose, I would solicit a grant of 3,000 or 3,500 Rupees, at the rate of 250 or 300 Rupees a mile, for the 12 miles from Kotúr to Harris valley, with this sum, I could open a path two yards broad on an average, and perfectly easy for laden bullocks, &c., and this outlay would, without doubt, be soon recovered by the saving in carriage by using bullocks in place of men.

Improving road to the hill considered essential to the success of the experiment.

7. I may here mention, that Major Strange, in charge of the Trigonometrical Survey, on hearing my account of the place, proposed to locate himself and party on the Gàli Parvatàm, and I have no doubt, that if the difficulties of the ascent were lessened, numbers of others would be tempted to follow the example and try the effect of the bracing air of these hills; I for one, would have no hesitation and be only too happy to build myself quarters in this beautiful climate, as I derived considerable benefit from the short stay I made at this season of the year even.

As his Head Quarters.

8. As I found the soil about Taylor's knoll very rich and the elevation being sufficient, I believe for the growth of coffee, I would request that Government might procure and send me some three dozens or more young coffee plants fit for transplanting, with the view of trying the capabilities of these hills for growing that plant, and when sending them, if a paper of instructions as to culture were also forwarded, it would tend to the success of an experiment, which if successful, would conduce more than any thing else to the establishment of a sanitarium and to an influx of European settlers. I may mention, that a small clearing planted by Colonel Taylor with potatoes, (and left without any tending,) had turned out well, for I had the pleasure of indulging in what I had been for the last month or six weeks a total stranger to, viz. a dish of potatoes.

Like the finest garden mould upwards of 4,000 feet.

Pub. Works Dpt.

Proc. of Govt. No. 2624 - 25/11th Nov. 1859.

9. I have also to request that the party of sappers ordered to be placed at my disposal may be sent to Waltair not later than the *25th proximo*,* and if the whole party of 50 men cannot now be sent, I trust not less than 25 be ordered up, leaving the remainder, or a larger number even to follow in December or January, when the reliefs have taken place: with a smaller number than 25, I fear I could do but little: when Captain Hill is instructed to send these men, I would suggest the advisability of his being directed to pick out men of different trades. Two blacksmiths, four or five bricklayers, &c., same number of carpenters, two† *sawyers, two*‡ *or three* BRICK AND TILE MAKERS, the rest of the party being men handy with axe, pick and mamoty, care should be taken in selecting the non-commissioned officer, as much will have to be left to him to do during my absence.

Provided with cots, &c &c. as proposed by Lieutenant Vertue.

* *25th October.*

† Might do without these.

‡ Must have these if possible, as I propose to tile as many sheds as possible.

10. The accompanying sketch of the road is from Captain Shakespear's survey of the road on his first trip to these hills. I have not checked it in any way, and attach it to this letter merely to shew the position of the several places on the route. I also add a sketch of my own, shewing more fully, the lay of the ground about Harris valley, the last two or three miles of the road, and shewing the position of Taylor's knoll.

ORDER THEREON, 11th November 1859, No. 2631.

The Governor in Council has read with interest Captain Blagrave's narrative of his visit to the Gáli Parvatam hill and Harris valley. The situation seems to promise extremely well as a sanitarium.

2. In accordance with the Chief Engineer's recommendation, the Governor in Council grants the sum of Rupees 3,600 for improving the road from Kotúr to the Harris valley on the terms proposed; viz. to be expended in the current year, if funds can be provided by the Collector and District Engineer out of the sum already allotted to the district; if not be entered in the budget and expended in the next official year.

3. The Government will expect to receive shortly a statement of the probable cost of the temporary buildings to be erected in the Harris valley. It is to be regretted that the District Engineer omitted this important part of his report. The Government also await a recommendation from the Chief Engineer on the subject of the rest-house proposed to be built at Rayavalsa.

4. With reference to Captain Blagrave's proposal to locate the working party on Taylor's knoll, the Government observe that this spot is stated to be two miles from the Harris valley; and the reason for stationing the party so far from their work is not apparent.

5. The Government also fail, as at present informed, to see the necessity of a permanent halting place for persons ascending the ghát at so short a distance from their ultimate destination.

6. That part of Captain Blagrave's report which relates to the probable suitability of these hills for the growth of coffee will be referred to Dr. Cleghorn for his opinion.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. BOURDILLON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Chief Engineer.
" Conservator of Forests.
" Military Department with reference to Proceedings dated 15th August 1859 No. 2910.

Exd. Wm. Thomas.

Military Department

No 4078

Ordered to be Communicated to the Commander in Chief and Commissary General.

2 The Governor in Council observes, that Cols for the party of Sappers have already been sanctioned. The further suggestions of the District Engineer in para: 9 of his letter will be considered under the orders of His Excellency the Commander in Chief

Fort Saint George 7th November 1859

Allan Sec.y
Actg. Secretary to Govt.

To The Department Public Works

P. No. 1859 Dépt.
Pros: of Govt. 30th Nov.
No. 3036.

Proceedings of the Madras Govt. in the Military Dept.

Dated 17th
Received 22d } Nov. 59

No. 4078.

Observing that Cols for the party of Sappers in Harris Valley have already been sanctioned and that the District Engineer's further suggestions will be considered

No. 2792. 30th November.
With an order

Ordered to be communicated to the Chief Engineer for information in connexion to the Proceedings of the 11th Instant No. 2634.

Fort St. George 23d Novr 1859

Chief Engr. Coast Circle

Mr Evans 26th August 59
No 37-38.
Copy in a letter to Lt. 2d Lieut. Young 60th N.I.

Fort St. George 23d Novr 1859

Chief Engr. Coast Circle

No. 1774-178.