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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. <u>7269</u>	Press Mis.
Dated <u>2-10-43</u>	18 <u>62</u>

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
3rd October 1862.*

No. 47. Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. OUCHTERLONY, R. E., Deputy Chief Engineer, Southern Circle, to Colonel W. I. BIRDWOOD, R. E., Secretary to Government, Department Public Works, dated Yercaud, Salem, 13th September 1862, No. 49:—

SIR,

1. Upon the subject of the new Ahtoor Ghát in Salem, it will be satisfactory to Government to learn that although it has during the past ten days been tried by some as severe and tempestuous bursts of rain as can be remembered in this part of the District (so severe indeed as to have rendered the long established and annually maintained Salem Ghát in some places all but impassable), not a single slip has taken place along the entire Abtoor line; the track, both on the old and on the new portions, being as safe and practicable as it was when I last visited it; and for a considerable distance much more so.

1 Sketch map.

2. The two first miles of the Ghát, from the base of the ascent, are, with the exception of some shaping and levelling, and 30 yards or so of error in the trace at the foot to be rectified, completed; and the work, which has been executed in little more than a fortnight of actual labor, presents a very satisfactory instance of what can be accomplished by means of contractors under judicious and liberal management.

3. The deviation which Major Hunter considered it necessary to summon me to approve of before perpetuating, is represented on the accompanying plan by a yellow line, commencing at the foot of the "Corkscrew" and rejoining the old track near the junction of the Putchapady and Nagalore cross road. Its advantages are that it takes the route entirely clear of the bluff, which is now ascended by the series of sharp zig-zags called the "Corkscrew;" it opens out a deal of valuable and promising land around "Putchapady;" it brings wearied, laden cattle and coolies to the brink of a brook the water of which never fails; and it affords such an easy series of gradients thence to the summit of the pass that at any future time when increased resort to the Shevaroy sanitarium should warrant such a measure, it might be rendered practicable for wheeled conveyances with light loads. The disadvantages of the deviation are that from A to B the road would be cut into the face of a steep and dangerous "Khud" or declivity, necessitating, for safety's sake, a greater width than was contemplated in Major Hunter's contract, and probably in one or two places the protection of posts and chains; and a further disadvantage consists in the circumstance that by increasing the length of the Ghát increased cost of maintenance would be entailed for the future.

4. After careful scrutiny (greatly impeded by the unseasonable weather which has of late prevailed on the Shevaroy) I have come to the conclusion that the advantages which I have enumerated greatly counterbalance the disadvantages; and I have therefore authorized Major Hunter to pursue his proposed line A B C with all possible expedition; and accordingly his native sub-contractor, released from the lower part of the Ghát by its completion, hopes to put 150 men on the upper portion on the 15th instant, and work steadily onwards to Taylor's Saddle. I have requested Major Hunter to excavate at least one recess in the face of the "Khud," twelve feet wide, between A and B, to admit of mounted travellers passing laden cattle, or being passed by them, in safety: and at other points along the line from A downwards, where nervous activities present themselves, Major Hunter has consented to form similar halting, or passing places.

5. To cover the extra expense which the cutting of the return A B will entail I have arranged that less money is to be outlaid on the lower portion of the Ghát than was originally contemplated; even, if absolutely necessary, to the extent of abandoning an improved line (D E) which Major Hunter had proposed. But so anxious is that gentleman to neglect no means by which the Ghát can be rendered an easy, safe and creditable work, and to prove himself worthy of the confidence which Government have reposed in his management, that I do not anticipate he will take advantage of the concession I have made, even though to his own loss.

6. The portion D E is a difficult piece of Ghát work, but I have every confidence in Major Hunter's resources and ingenuity enabling him to overcome the obstacles which here oppose him, chiefly in the form of crags and abrupt bluffs of rock.

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7. I have been concerned to find that no progress, in fact no commencement, has been made on the low country portion of the line which belongs to the Railway Company, viz., between the Ahtoor station and the point G where the Ghát may be said to commence. It seemed to me for many reasons expedient that this portion also should be entrusted to Major Hunter to complete, and I made some time ago a suggestion to that effect to the Railway authorities, but I was informed that a contract for the execution of the work had been already entered into.

8. As the Ghát, when completed, will be all but useless for travellers while its foot is cut off from communication with the Railway station (the present village path through "Kombay" crossing the river, which when swollen is not fordable in some places, four times, whereas the proposed new line will not cross it once) I would beg leave to suggest that the Railway authorities be requested to establish as soon as possible a mere bridle path, six feet wide, in the first instance;* after which their contractor or superintendent can widen it out at pleasure. At "Kombay" native contractors have expressed to me their readiness, or I should say their eagerness, to undertake the work at once. Looking to the way in which Major Hunter by judicious liberality and encouragement appears to have gained the confidence of the natives of the adjacent villages, and to the skill and energy which he has exhibited in carrying on the Ghát work under recent very discouraging circumstances as to weather, I must repeat that I think it is to be regretted that he has not been entrusted with the execution of the line from end to end.

9. I may add for the information of Government that applications for the land lying contiguous to the new Ghát (the soil of which is turning out to be even more rich than I ventured to anticipate) are already fast coming in: and the resort of Madras residents to the sanitarium to which it gives access has become so extensive, that every habitation and quarter of whatever description are crowded; and I am assured so numerous are the applications, that, were there double the number of houses in existence which the station at present boasts, they would all be tenanted. This want will I am informed be speedily supplied when final measures can be decided on for the disposal of waste land on the Shevaroy's to applicants for building sites: and it would seem desirable both for the interests of Government and for the well-being of the community, that as little further delay as can be avoided should be sufficient to intervene in carrying out definite arrangements with this view.

No. 48.

ORDER THEREON, 3rd October 1862, No. 2,369.

1. As Colonel Ouchterlony and Major Hunter are both in favor of the deviation in the line of the Ahtoor Ghát, referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the foregoing letter, and as the disadvantages of such deviation are said to be greatly counterbalanced by the advantages which will be secured, the Government approve of the Deputy Chief Engineer's proceeding authorizing the same.

2. Paragraphs 7 to 9 of Colonel Ouchterlony's letter will be referred to the Financial Railway Department for early consideration.

(Signed) W. I. BIRDWOOD, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

No. 49

Southern Circle Office
in Circuit,
Agreeed, Salem, 13th Sept/62

From Lt Colonel Ouchterlony R.E.
Dy. Chief Engr. Southern Circle
to Colonel W.I. Birdwood R.E.
Secretary to Govt. S.O.W.

Public

Sir,
Upon the subject of the new Ahtoor Ghát, in Salem, it will be satisfactory to Govt. to learn that altho' it has during the past ten days been tried by some as severe tempestuous bursts of rain as can be remembered in this part of the District, (so severe indeed as to have rendered the long established annually maintained Salem Ghat in some places all but impassable), not a single slip has taken place along the entire Ahtoor line: the track, both on the old and the new portions, being as safe & practicable as it was when I last visited it; for a considerable distance much more so.

2. The two first miles of the Ghát, from the base of the ascent, are, with the exception of some shaping & leveling, & 30 yards or so of error in the trace at the foot to be rectified, completed; the work, which has been executed in little more than a fortnight of actual labor, presents a very satisfactory instance of what can be accomplished by means of contractors under judicious liberal management.

3. The deviation which Major Hunter considered it necessary to hummer me to approve of before perpetrating, is represented on the accompanying Plan by a yellow line, commencing at the foot of the "Corkscrew", & rejoining the old track near the junction of the Putechady Magelone cross road. Its advantages are that it takes the route entirely clear of the bluff which is now ascended by the series of sharp zig-zags called the "Corkscrew"; it opens out a deal of valuable spursing land around "Putechady"; it brings weired laden cattle & coolies to the brink of a brook the water of which never fails; it affords such an easy series of gradients thence to the summit of the Pass that at any future time when increased resort to the Thevany Sanitarium should warrant such a measure, it might be rendered practicable for wheel'd conveyances with light loads.

The disadvantages of the deviation are that from A to B the road ^{would} be cut into the face of a steep dangerous "Khud" or declivity, necessitating, for safety's sake, a greater width than was contemplated in Major Hunter's contract, & probably in one or two places the protection of posts & chains; a further disadvantage consists in the circumstance that by increasing the length of the ghāt increased cost of maintenance would be entailed for the future.

5. After careful scrutiny (greatly impeded by the unseasonable weather which has of late prevailed on the Shevarups) I have come to the conclusion that the advantages which I have enumerated greatly counterbalance the disadvantages; I have therefore authorized Major Hunter to pursue his proposed line A, B, C, with all possible expedition; accordingly by his order the Sub Contractor, released from the lower part of the ghāt by its completion, has put 150 men on the upper portion in the 15th inst., & work steadily onwards to Taylor's Saddle. I have re-

quested Major Hunter to excavate at least one recess in the face of the "Khud", 12 feet wide, between A & B, to admit of mounted travellers passing laden cattle, or being passed by them, in safety. I at other points along the line from A downwards where nervous acclivities present themselves, Major Hunter has consented to form similar halting, or passing places.

5. To cover the extra expense which the cutting of the return A B will entail I have arranged that less money is to be allotted in the lower portion of the ghāt than was originally contemplated even, if absolutely necessary, to the extent of abandoning an improved line (DE) which Major Hunter had proposed. But so anxious is that gentleman to neglect no means by which the ghāt can be rendered an easy, safe & creditable

work, to prove himself worthy of the confidence which Gov. have reposed in his management, that I do not anticipate he will take advantage of the concession I have made, even though to his own loss.

6. The portion DE is a difficult piece of flat work, but I have every confidence in Major Hunter's resources & ingenuity enabling him to overcome the obstacles which here oppose him - chiefly in the form of crags & abrupt bluffs of rock.

7. I have been concerned to find that no progress - in fact no commencement has been made in the low-country portion of the line which belongs to the Railway Company, viz. between the Ashton Station & the point G where the flat may be said to commence. It seemed to me for many reasons expedient that this portion also should be entrusted to Major Hunter to complete, & I made some time ago a suggestion to that effect to the Railway authorities: but I was informed that a contract for the execution of the work had been already entered into.

8. As the flat, when completed, will be all but useless for travellers while its foot is cut off from communication with the Railway Station, (the present village path thro' 'Kombay' crossing the river, which when swollen is not fordable in some places, four times, whereas the proposed new line will not cross it once) I would beg leave

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* before the R. E. Museum, which is near at hand, breaks upon us.

7

to suggest that the Railway authorities be requested to establish as soon as possible a mere bridle path, 6 feet wide, in the first instance; after which their Contractor or Superintendent can widen it out at pleasure. At 'Kombay' native Contractors have expressed to me their readiness, & I should say their eagerness, to undertake the work at once. Looking to the way in which Major Hunter by judicious liberality & encouragement appears to have gained the confidence of the natives of the adjacent villages, & the skill & energy which he has exhibited in carrying out the flat work under recent very discouraging circumstances as to weather, I must repeat that I trust it is to be expected that he has not been entrusted with the execution of the line from end to end.

I may add for the information of Govt. that applications for the land lying contiguous to the new flat (the soil of which is turning out to be even more rich than I ventured to anticipate) are already fast coming in: & the resort of traders & residents to the Sanitarium to which it gives access has become so extensive, that every habitation and quarter of whatever description are crowded; & I am assured so numerous are the applications, that, were there double the number of houses in existence which the station at present boasts, they would all be wanted. This want will I am informed

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Govt for the well being of the community, that
a little further delay as can be avoided should be
suffered to intervene in carrying out definite ar-
rangements with the view.

I have the honor

Respectfully Yrs. M. S.

Col. M. J. B. & Co. Secy. & Co.
Secy. Col. M. J. B. & Co.

Wm. B. L. Charles

2009. 1847. Deborah
Wm. W. W. W. W.
1848. 1849. 1850.

To
 Col. H. J. Burdett
 Reg. 6th Ind. Inf.
 Ft. Mifflin, Pa.

St. James and Burr of New York
28th March 1859

Oct 13
Nov 19. 5
Dec 14. 1866

Curry

13

It seems better that

in Salem and Auburn,
a little to the south of

the same

As Addressed by Major

1890

No 2309-3rd October

With an Order

Amical

1000

No 2369
Ad Colon

and Major Hunter are both in favor of the deviation in the line of the section that, referred to in para's and 4 of the foregoing letter, and as the disadvantage of such

advantages are said to be greatly counterbalanced by the advantages which will be secured, the Govt

affairs of the very chief we need
and work in the same
pace or to of Col. Duckworth

Letter will be referred to the Finance and
Military Departments for early consideration.

3^d October 1862
Chester

Die 1. und 3.

13th Edition

To the Hon. Chas. Sumner Esq. U.S. Sen. Mass.

1887. "Find: Pencilbox with 100 : -