

(1) Number of pages _____

(2) Date of repair _____

(3) Initials of the Referencer _____

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	/	Press
		Mis.
Dated		1866 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
3rd January 1866.*

Read the following papers:—

No. 1. Despatch from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for India, (Public Works), to His Excellency the Honorable the Governor in Council, Fort Saint George, dated India Office, London, 31st October 1865, No. 24.

No. 2 of 25th January 1865.
Do. 19 of 31st August „

Dated 12th October 1865.

1. With reference to my Despatches of the dates noted in the margin, I transmit herewith a copy of a further letter from the Directors of the Great

Southern of India Railway Company, forwarding extracts from official reports in evidence of the deterioration which has taken place in the condition of Negapatam Harbour, and calling attention to the necessity for the immediate adoption of remedial measures, if it be desired to preserve the harbour in anything like a useful state.

2. In my Despatch of 31st August last, No. 19, I expressed an opinion that measures should be taken to prevent, as far as possible, the further deterioration of the harbour, and I now request that you will furnish me with a report on its present condition, and inform me what measures have been adopted in consequence of the expression of opinion above referred to.

From H. NOTMAN, Esq., Secretary to the Great Southern of India Railway Company, to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated 2, Leadenhall Street, London, E. C. 12th October 1865, No. 127.

1. With reference to the previous correspondence which has passed on the subject of the harbour of Negapatam, I am now instructed to bring under the notice of the Secretary of State for India, the following extracts from a Report of Captain Oakes, Superintending Engineer, 6th Division, and from a letter of Mr. Morris, Collector of Tanjore, in evidence of the deterioration which has taken place in the condition of the harbour, and to the necessity of immediate remedial measures being taken, if it be desired to preserve the harbour in anything like a useful state.

2. Captain Oakes' Report (8th May 1865, No. 57,) states:—

“The coasting Steamer ‘India’ on the 25th ultimo, after signalling for more boats and ‘learning, that owing to the lowness of the tide’ (the depth of water on the bar at low-tide is hardly 18 inches) ‘empty boats could not pass the bar, sailed for Bombay carrying with her about 300 tons of cargo which she ought to have discharged at Negapatam. The Dredge has not been at work since the 21th December 1864, orders having been issued that the dredging operations ‘were not to be recommenced till the arrival of the new punts promised in the Proceedings of the Madras Government, No. 912, dated 4th ultimo.’”

3. From the Order of Government following on this Report, it appears that there is “no immediate prospect of freight being procured for the two iron punts alluded to in the order ‘quoted.’”

4. Mr. Morris, the Collector of Tanjore, in a letter addressed to the Board of Revenue, dated 27th May, writes as follows (paragraph 5): “The Port of Negapatam is in a deplorable condition, ‘the bar being so silted up that unloaded cargo boats cannot cross it at low water.’”

Agree all measures proposed

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
3rd January 1866.*

No. 2. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT.

1. The constant references which are made as to the state of the "Harbour!!" of Negapatam, would seem to show that the Directors of the Great Southern of India Railway have a very inaccurate idea of the point which they selected as the coast terminus of their line.

2. I can quite understand that, in the infancy of the scheme, the most was made of the little dirty puddle of a back-water at Negapatam; its area was probably magnified, or at all events was delineated at its maximum size during the north-east monsoon, no allusion was made to its depth, nor to the general depth of water on the coast; in fact it was called a Harbour!! and as such was figured on the plans, and made the prospective result of an enormous traffic, and a very proper terminus for a Great Southern line of Railway. Now, however, that all this is past, and we have to face the realities of the case, it is very desirable that the Government and the Company should both be fully aware of what these realities are, and how utterly hopeless and absurd it would be to throw away money upon works for the improvement of an Harbour, which never had any but an imaginary existence.

3. Negapatam, like Madras and dozens of other places on the east coast of the Peninsula of India, is and will ever remain a simple open roadstead; it owes its importance to its position at the sea terminus of the great valley of the Cauvery, of the produce of which it is one of the principal places of export; but it does not owe this in any way to the character of the Harbour, which is no way superior to that which is presented by the whole line of coast.

4. The anchorage for ships is from two to three miles from the coast; the depth of water decreases gradually from, say, six fathoms at that distance to nothing at the coast line, and by no process of engineering skill, could this state of things be altered. There is a steady southerly set of the wind up the coast for about nine months of the year, which makes the sand creep gradually to the north, as is proved by the extension of the land spits on the south side of the drainage outlets, while during the three months of the north-east monsoon the process is reversed.

5. There is no tide worth mentioning, the average rise and fall being twenty inches; there is no land scour except for a few days in the autumn, so in point of fact there are no means of maintaining a scour sufficient to keep depth of water at the outlet of the back-water sufficient to float a loaded boat. The cost of an attempt to maintain this by the constant use of a dredge would be enormous as compared with the benefit which the trade would derive from the access afforded to the back-water, could it be maintained by such a process; but looking to the character of the coast, and the action of the prevailing winds, I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that such an attempt would be both costly and useless.

6. In fact, the sooner the Government and the Company make up their minds to be satisfied with the normal state of things on such a coast as that of the Peninsula of India the better.

7. We have wasted large sums of money at Sedashegur, we are spending now money in an attempt to make Beypore a Harbour to suit the fancies of the Directors of the Madras Railway Company, which money will be thrown away; do not let us waste more in an attempt to fight against nature at Negapatam.

18th December 1865.

(Signed) W. T. DENISON.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
3rd January 1866.*

No. 3. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE T. PYCROFT.

I do not believe that it is possible materially to improve the Negapatam Harbour, and I concur with His Excellency the President in deprecating any outlay of money upon it.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT.

No. 4. MINUTE BY THE HONORABLE H. D. PHILLIPS.

Having been Collector of Tanjore for two years, and frequently at Negapatam prior to January 1859, I am fully sensible of the entire correctness of the President's description of this trumpery, miscalled "port" of Negapatam. It has always been liable to change, such as the Agent of the Great Southern of India Railway Company seems determined to make the most of. I have seen large empty dhonies lying in what is termed the back-water, but frequently it has been impossible for them to get out of it, and it was equally impossible for empty dhonies to get in at that time. Nothing that science and engineering skill could do would ever prevent the recurrence of these difficulties. The bar frequently is nothing more than a wide stretch of sand, with a few inches of water over it. We had a dredge there in 1858, and a skilled Engineer to work it, but he was unwilling or ashamed to put into motion the wretched thing placed at his disposal, which he told me was a "2-donkey power affair." I am not aware that it even was used, and my belief is that a much larger engine would have been of no avail against the continually recurring accumulations of sand. I have always felt that much money was being thrown away in the wrong direction to meet a pet croquet of some former District Engineer, and nothing that I have seen on the Government records has in the slightest degree altered that impression.

(Signed) H. D. PHILLIPS.

ORDER THEREON, 3rd January 1866, No. 1.

No. 5.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 1.

Ordered that copies of the Minutes which are above recorded and of the Proceedings of Government No. 3,799,

dated 19th December 1865, be forwarded to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for India, with reference to his Despatch under date the 31st October last No. 24.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Superintending Engineer, 6th Division.
Consulting Engineer for Railways, with No. 3,799 of 1865

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

James allman

Minute

(3)

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W.D.M.

Copy in a letter to England.
2/11: January 1866.

1865
40th of Nov 50th 1865

Minutes by
His Ex the President
Honble. T. Pycroft
" H. S. Phillips

Recd. 19 Decr 65

On the subject
of the negotiation
Harbour -

1865, 1866.

1865-1866 January 1866.

Proceedings of the Madras Government
Under date the 31st Decr 65
Read the following

From the Right Honorable
the Secy of State for
India - H. S. 31st Oct 1865 -

Minute by His Excellency
the President -
do by the Hon T Pycroft -
do by H. S. Phillips -

H. S. Decr 1865

Ordered that copies
of the Minutes which are
above recorded and of the
Proceedings of Government
No. 3799 dated 19 Decr 65
be forwarded to the Right
Honorable the Secy of State
for India, with reference to
his despatch under
date the 31st Oct last
no. 24.

6 to S Eng 6 Decr
3 " Cong Eng for Railways
No. 3799 1865

18 Decr 65
S. S. S. S. S.

Copies of Letters to Eng Land
of 11. June No. 2 of 1866.

1866 Depo
Proc. of Govt for Jan 9.

No 1
Proc. of the Algon?
27 January/66.

Negatawa Harbun.
Certain Minutes on the subject
of, forwarded to the Home
Government.