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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works

DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.

2442

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1873

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
4th October 1873.*

No. 76. Read the following endorsement of the Government of India, Public Works Department, (Guaranteed Railways,) No. 1,473 G. R. :—

Read the following despatch from the Government of India, Public Works Department, (Guaranteed Railways,) to His Grace the Right Honourable the DUKE OF ARGYLL, K.T., Secretary of State for India, dated Simla, 21st August 1873, No. 170 R.

With our despatch, No. 46 R., of 1872, we forwarded copies of the first estimates sanctioned for the southern extensions of the Great Southern of India Railway, amounting to Rupees 93,50,000, and we observed that, in our opinion, these lines would not be constructed for less than one million sterling. We have now the honour to transmit a further collection of papers, among which will be found a letter from the Madras Government, No. 1,758, dated 8th July 1873, and our reply thereto sanctioning revised estimates, amounting in all to Rupees 1,06,64,022, as former entries for permanent-way have been shown to be inadequate owing to the recent enhancement in the cost of English material.

2. When according sanction to the designs in 1872, we drew the attention of the Madras Government to the omission, on the part of the Railway Company's Engineers, to show how it was proposed to work the traffic at Trichinopoly, and a discussion has subsequently arisen regarding the junction between the new railway, which is being constructed from the south, and the existing railway at Trichinopoly. Full particulars will be found in the accompanying documents, but the general purport of this discussion is given in the following four paragraphs.

3. In our Despatch, No. 75 R. of 1871, when endeavouring to combat the arguments which had been urged against the adoption of a narrow gauge on railway extensions, in the Provinces controlled by the Madras Government, in our 8th paragraph, we observed to Your Grace—

“The objection suggested in the despatch just referred to, that it would be undesirable that two gauges should be used on one short system of railway, like that of the Great Southern of India, will doubtless be held by Your Grace to disappear, when the continuous system of the Carnatic and Great Southern of India Companies, upwards of 450 miles in length, is considered in the light in which the matter has been viewed by us; and should anything occur to delay the connection of the lines of those two Companies, the temporary inconvenience of two gauges on the same system might be at once obviated by the conversion to narrow gauge of the existing line of the Great Southern of India, which, it will be remembered, is sparingly stocked, while its length is actually less than that of the sanctioned extension. In fact we do not see any other satisfactory settlement of this matter than to make the whole region, south and east of the Madras South-West Line, a narrow gauge territory, including the Great Southern of India Line between Erode and Negapatam, the conversion of which we regard as inevitable sooner or later.”

These words committed our Government to the declaration that, if the narrow gauge was adopted on the southern extensions, the existing broad gauge railway between Erode and Negapatam would, eventually, have to be changed to

the new gauge, and, further, rather than allow the existence of the broad gauge railway to impede the introduction of the narrow gauge, we expressed our willingness to recommend the immediate conversion of 168 miles from broad to narrow gauge.

4. The Agent and Chief Engineer of the Great Southern of India Railway, and also the Madras Government, have always strenuously supported the opinion that it is highly desirable to proceed with the conversion of the gauge of the railway between Erode and Negapatam, and that it is necessary immediately to change the gauge from Trichinopoly to the Eastern Coast. In addition to the general arguments regarding the inconvenience of having two gauges on one system of railway, several special reasons have been assigned for immediate action, such as the existence of workshops for engine repairs at Negapatam, the bad condition of the sleepers on the open line, the expense of temporary expedience, and the consequent economy of an early decision as to the design of the future permanent-way. The advantage of having a narrow gauge railway, from the port of debarkation to Trichinopoly, on which to transport the narrow gauge vehicles which may be imported for the southern extensions, has been dwelt on, and the local authorities have also expressed a desire to take this opportunity to rectify an error in the original alignment of the broad gauge railway which occurred about two miles from the Trichinopoly station. At this spot there is an abrupt and unnecessary angle in the direction of the line, involving steep gradients, and the abandonment of about one and one-half miles of railway is advocated, together with the construction, in lieu thereof, of a shorter and more direct line. This would be a manifest improvement if the main narrow gauge railway is to be formed, immediately, from Madras through Chingleput to Tanjore, Trichinopoly to Madurai and Tuticorin, but the alteration is inexpedient if the broad gauge is to be maintained, as at present, on the railway between Erode and Negapatam. The suggested additions are shown as blue lines B C and C D on the accompanying map of the neighbourhood of Trichinopoly, while the broad black line shows the existing Great Southern of India Railway.

5. We have been hitherto reluctant to accept these changes as urgently required by the present circumstances of the case, although assured that they would not be costly, for it seemed that the disposal of the rolling stock on the Great Southern of India Railway, consisting of 21 engines and 390 vehicles, together with the conversion of 168 miles of broad gauge railway, the provision of new station machinery, and the substitution of at least one mile of new railway for a line already built, would involve an outlay which it would be better to postpone, if the delay did not involve serious inconvenience, or a counter-balancing expenditure in working the traffic over a railway laid partly on one gauge and partly on another.

6. We, therefore, suggested, in our letter, No. 1,809 G. R. of 1872, to the Madras Government, that instead of proceeding at once with the proposed alterations, it might be better to leave the existing line as it stands, and to make the break of gauge at Trichinopoly, at the point marked C on the plan, which they had chosen as the site of the Trichinopoly Cantonment station. By adopting this

arrangement a junction between the old and new railways could, we thought, be effected by constructing a mile of new broad gauge railway over level country, on the line B C, which had been selected by the Railway authorities as one of their new lines. We hoped that this proposal would be acceptable, as it seemed to meet present circumstances in a cheap and efficient manner, and at the same time to be compatible with the more complete and symmetrical scheme which had been designed in Madras, in case the traffic should, in future years, so expand as to justify the execution of that project. The Government of Madras, however, having again consulted the Railway Engineers, object to this compromise, and in their letter, No. 1,519, dated 7th June 1873, advocate the earliest possible conversion of the entire line between Negapatam and Erode to the narrow gauge, so as to have the break of gauge at the latter station instead of at Trichinopoly.

7. We were considering this last decided expression of local opinion, when Your Grace's Despatch, No. 84 R. of 1873, arrived, stating, in the 4th paragraph, that the question whether it would be desirable to convert the existing railway between Erode and Negapatam, from standard to metre gauge, need not yet be taken up; but suggesting, in the 2nd paragraph, that the addition of a third railway, some time hence, be necessary between Tanjore and Trichinopoly. A copy of the despatch has been forwarded to the Government of Madras.

8. We have not heard that the amalgamation of the two Railway Companies has been completed, but, if Your Grace's decision contained in the above-mentioned despatch is not absolutely final, we suggest that the arrangements to be devised at the junction between the old line and the extensions may receive early attention from the new Board of Directors. In our letter above quoted, we stated an opinion that these proposed changes might be deferred, but we are by no means hostile to the views entertained by the Agent and the Madras Government. On the contrary we acknowledge that, from an engineering point of view, the suggested alterations would possess all the advantages which have been claimed for them; and we believe, moreover, that the conversion of the gauge between Negapatam and Erode must be effected sooner or later. If, therefore, the Board of Directors considers that the proposed changes are for the best interests of their Company, and, if Your Grace agrees, we recommend that the work may be put in hand, and carried out between Negapatam and Trichinopoly, in the manner indicated by the Agent, as soon as the new rolling stock is available. No alteration should, we think, be undertaken west of Trichinopoly, until the railway is open from Madras to Tanjore. This is all the more desirable so that the Company may have time to dispose advantageously of their broad gauge stock.

Copy to the Government of Madras for information with reference to the letter from that Government, No. 1,519, of 7th June 1873, and docket No. 1,610 of 12th idem.

(Signed) C. DICKENS, Colonel, R.A.,
Secretary to the Government of India.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
4th October 1873.

No. 77.

ORDER THEREON, 4th October 1873, No. 2,442.

RAILWAY, No. 16.

COMMUNICATED to the Consulting
Engineer for Railways with reference
to the papers recorded with the under-
mentioned orders:—

G. O., No. 1,518, dated 7th June 1873.

" " 1,609, " 19th " "

" " 2,056, " 18th Aug. "

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R. E.,

Secretary to Government.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways.

Exd. E. C. Shunker.

Spare Copies.

Copy.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

GUARANTEED RAILWAYS.

To

THE RIGHT HON'BLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

No. 170 RAILWAY.

Dated SIMLA, August 21, 1873.

Received 8th Sept^r/73.

Ans: 2.

Forwards further papers sanction-
ing an estimate, amounting in all to
Rs. 1,06,61,022, for the construction of
the southern extension of the Great
Southern of India Railway, with remarks
concerning the junction at Trichinopoly, and
the expediency of converting the gauge on
the open line.

*For the Secy to Govt
of India
1873
No. 2442
Communicated to the Consulting Engineer
for Railways with reference to the papers re-
corded with the undermentioned orders.
G. O. No. 1518 of 7th June 1873.
1609 - " 19th " "
2056 - " 18th Aug. "
True*

No. 76-77

With Order

Ch 4944
Govt. of India
PUBLIC WORKS.

The Consulting Engineer
for Railways

Date

Recd.

Engd.

G. O. 4th Oct. No. 2442.

No. 76177

to Secy & Railways.

Packet from the post of
India forwarding copy
of despatch addressed to
the Home post. Regarding
the construction of the
Southern Extension of
the G. & S. Ry. Co.
The following