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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public works - DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	1881	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
242-243		
Dated	13. 9. 1874	195.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th July 1874.*

No. 242. Read the following Proceedings of the Government of India in the Public Works Department, (Establishment—Railway,) dated Fort William, 4th June 1874, Nos. 538—42 E—R. :—

Training of Natives for employment as Engine-drivers, Mechanics, and Platlayers on State Railways.

Read—

Letters from the Engineer-in-Chief, Holkar State Railway—

No. 582 of the 9th February 1874.

No. 936 of the 25th do.

OBSERVATIONS.—In these letters the Engineer-in-Chief has brought under consideration the desirability of taking special steps to obtain for the State Railways a supply of native skilled labour and supervision, more particularly as Inspectors of Masonry, Platlayers, Engine-drivers, and Fitters, etc. It is suggested that a few good Sub-Overseers from the Thomason College at Roorkee might be attached to open lines of railway and to lines on which platelaying is in progress, and placed under an Inspector to learn the work; that others should be put to learn practical stone-cutting and setting, and others be apprenticed in the locomotive shops of the existing railways. If efficient men can be trained, the advantages, it is represented, will be found in lower salaries, and the power of more constant attention to duty irrespective of climate, than is generally possible with Europeans.

2. The Government of India has long had this object in view. It is impossible that the extension of railways can be carried out so that they may become completely an institution of the country, unless the working in all departments can be conducted by native agency with a moderate amount of European supervision. This end has therefore to be arrived at gradually as railways extend.

3. Again, there is an additional reason in the consideration that, taking a wider view of the progress of education in a country, such education is not complete unless a proportion of the population is trained to practical mechanics, and especially the branches of mechanics now so largely cultivated in Europe and America in the service of railways.

4. No doubt the mere introduction of European skill and European appliances in various manufactures and public works, especially railways, which has taken place to a large extent of late years, does produce an unpremeditated education in mechanics. In this way, with occasional efforts at systematic training, much progress has been made. Natives who can manage a steam-engine have, for many years, been found in the Presidency towns. There are even now a few natives capable of driving a locomotive engine; though many Engineers of experience express doubts whether the nerve and readiness of mechanical resource required to make a good driver are likely to be found largely amongst the natives of India.

5. The Government of India is of opinion that the time has now come to make a systematic attempt to train native engine-drivers and mechanics of all

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th July 1874.*

kinds, as well as platelayers, for the service of the State Railways to assist the European agency in this department.

6. In this way a large field of employment will be opened to natives possessed of the necessary qualifications, and the opening of a new source of supply of mechanics for the railways will enable the Government to enlarge the number of these employes at less cost than if the supply were to continue to be restricted to men imported at a heavy cost from England.

7. In regard to platelaying, the Government of India considers that the object may be attained by allowing to the Inspectors on the various State Railways an apprentice fee for every native they instruct and turn out as a really qualified foreman platelayer, capable of superintending the maintenance of 20 to 30 miles of railway. The Governor-General in Council desires that the experiment may be tried without loss of time. For such men as may qualify, employment on a monthly rate of pay of Rupees 20 and upwards will readily be found. The Director of State Railways should take action at an early date and decide as to the amount of fee that should be offered.

8. As respects the instruction of natives as engine-drivers, it is of course essential that a driver should have served in workshops, and be qualified not merely to keep his engine in good order and drive it, when all goes well, but to find out and rectify anything that goes wrong. Few natives have, as yet, passed from the shops to be drivers, or been employed as such. The Government of India is not disposed to accept the conclusion that this state of things cannot be remedied. With a proper selection of intelligent men, physically fitted for such work, and with careful training both in and out of the shops, a better result may be looked for, more especially with the lighter engines and slower speed of the metre gauge lines. It will, no doubt, be very necessary to place the shops-training under men who will take an interest in the results, and to select very carefully the Shed Foremen in view to the introduction of native drivers so as to ensure a close control over the men and especially as regards the proper care of their engines. The Director of State Railways should take up this matter also at an early date.

9. In connection with this subject generally, it has been suggested that an attempt should be made to train some of the native Sappers and Miners to the duties connected with the construction and working of railways. Suitable occupation could readily be found for them, in times of peace, and in times of war they might prove of great use. The matter should be referred for consideration in the Military Department. Should the idea commend itself to the Military Authorities, it would be easy to arrange on the State Railways for the training of a company or of a selected portion of each company in all the special details of railway construction and maintenance, and it is probable that from amongst such a number of men individuals would be found willing to go through a course of training in workshops and as engine-drivers.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of these Observations be forwarded to the Director of State Railways.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
13th July 1874.*

Also, that a copy be forwarded to the Military Department for consideration with reference to paragraph 9.

Also that copies be forwarded to the Consulting Engineers to the Government of India for Guaranteed Railways for information.

(Signed) C. H. DICKENS, Colonel, R.A.,
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 567 E—R.

Copy forwarded to the Government of Madras, Public Works Department, for information.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT., (Signed) G. T. SKIPWITH, Captain, R.E.,
Fort William, 15th June 1874. *Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.*

No. 243. ORDER THEREON, 13th July 1874, No. 1,881.

RAILWAY, No. 36.

COMMUNICATED to the Consulting
Engineer for Railways.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

Spare Copies

W. 1874 Department
Highway for July No 3789.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

ESTABLISHMENT.

Railway.

To

Nos. 538—42 E—R.

Dated June 4, 1874.

Received—u—22^o

To
Cons Engineer
of the Public Works
Department
18/7/74.

1881
Cons to the Cong. Engineer for Railways.
By

G.O. No: 1881. 13-7-74.

Training of Natives for employment as
Engine-drivers, Mechanics and Platelayers on
State Railways.

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Govt. of 1874 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The Comptroller
for Ry.

Dated

Recd.

Encl.

G. O. 13 July 1874, No. 1881

Nos. 242-243.

Training of Natives for em-
ployment as Engine-drivers,
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State Railways - Proceedings
of the Government of India
forwarding for information
~~of the~~ ^{submitting a copy}
of observations regarding
the — Comd^g to the Cong:
Engineer for Railways -