

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
9th November 1875.

No 223 Read the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. M. SHAW-STEWART, R E, Consulting Engineer for Railways, to Major-General G W. WALKER, R E, Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 3rd November 1875, No. 594 —

I HAVE the honor to forward, for such orders as may be deemed necessary, a letter* from the Acting Agent of the South Indian Railway Company, forwarding an enclosure from the Chief Engineer, in which that gentleman comments upon the Note of Inspection by the Officiating Consulting Engineer for Railways dealt with in the Order of Government, No 2,969, dated 16th October 1875. A Note by the Deputy Consulting Engineer is enclosed.

From D LOGAN, Esq, Acting Agent of the South Indian Railway, to Lieutenant-Colonel J H M SHAW-STEWART, R E, Consulting Engineer for Railways, dated Trichinopoly, 28th October 1875, No 940

In acknowledging receipt of your letter, No 716, together with a copy of G O, No 2,969, of the 16th instant, I have the honor to forward, herewith, a copy of a letter received from the Chief Engineer in answer to some of the questions in your letter

2 The Chief Engineer has referred to three (i.e., 1, 2 and 4) out of the four suggestions of the Officiating Consulting Engineer, with reference to the other (No 3) I have to state that every Guard and Driver is furnished with a set of rules, which each is bound to carry about with him, and it is also imperative on Guard and Driver alike to record in their respective returns every infringement of rule and every evidence of carelessness or damage, or any matter at all affecting the safe working of the line

3 With regard to the provision of additional brake-power, the Locomotive Superintendent is pressing forward with arrangements for putting brakes to his engines, and a steamer having just landed four passenger brake-vans at Negapatam, it is hoped that an additional van may shortly be added to each train. I suggested some temporary expedient in the meantime, but was informed that anything of the kind would take as long to get ready as the permanent brakes now being made or erected

4 I have urged meantime extra caution on the attention of the Traffic and Locomotive Departments in working over the steep inclines during wet weather

From the Chief Engineer, to the Agent of the South Indian Railway, dated Trichinopoly, 27th October 1875, No 8,934

I HAVE to acknowledge receipt of your letter, No 716, of 28th October, giving cover to copies of a letter* from the Officiating Consulting Engineer for Railways, and G O, No 2,969, of

No 716 of 19th instant. the 16th instant, and directing me to report on the measures taken in connection with the line watchmen to prevent, as far as practicable, the possibility of accident

2 I observe with regret that our arrangements are characterised as wanting in organization, because I have labored hard to make them as perfect as the means at my disposal would permit, and I trust that Government may modify their opinion when they learn what my arrangements really have been and now are

3 As far back as December last (1874), I issued instructions to the Engineers between Trichinopoly and Madura that, as the line opened up to engine traffic, the gatekeepers and permanent platelayer gangs were to be engaged and drilled into their duties, in view of the opening of the Railway to public traffic. Mile watchmen were put on from time to time as required, and in June last I ordered a watchman to be put on every mile between Trichinopoly

and Tuticorin, with a view not only to watching the fences and property of the Company but to have the men early in training for open line duties

4 Engineers, Inspectors, Gang Maistries, Watchmen and Gatekeepers were each furnished with the Book of Rules and Regulations, and we hold for the book from each man a receipt in duplicate setting forth that he has received a copy, and that he has read, or had it read to him, and that he understands the Rules. One receipt is filed on the district or division to which the men belong, and the other is sent in to me that I may satisfy myself that the books have been issued and received

5 I have from time to time both in writing and in person impressed upon Engineers the importance of taking measures to ascertain the degree of their subordinate's acquaintance with the rules and their practical application

6 On the line between Trichinopoly and Madura which is open to the public, I know that the Engineers have from time to time questioned their people on these subjects, putting hypothetical cases to see whether they know how to act, not only under ordinary circumstances, but in cases of emergency

7 I have myself from time to time inspected the line by day, and some parts of it by night, and paid special attention to the conduct of the platelayer gangs, mile watchmen, and gatekeepers, and I am of opinion that as a rule they fairly understand and act up to the rules

8 The Guards and Drivers of trains hold instructions to be well on the look out, and to remember that the road staff is yet but a comparatively young and inexperienced one, and that therefore it must be supplemented by extra caution and vigilance on the part of the locomotive and traffic staff

9 With reference to the four suggestions of the Officiating Consulting Engineer, they are simply descriptive of the measures which are always adopted on the line, and the system referred to as in force on the Madras Railway is identical with our own. It ought to be remembered, however, that on the Madras Railway the system has had the advantage of over fifteen years to drill and train the working staff, while on our new line we have not had the benefit of half as many months to organize and train our people

10 I freely admit that the duty of check and inspection is not so readily carried out from the trains in the absence of mileage boards, and although we have always hitherto put these and other marks up after the press of getting the more emergent works done, I am not going to argue that it is not a better plan to have them exhibited from the first, and we have now got all mileage boards fixed, while the numbering of the telegraph posts is being rapidly proceeded with. The mile watchmen and gatekeepers as well as the platelayer gangs will soon be each supplied with large numbers to exhibit to passing trains.

11 I have as strong a staff of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors as I can get, and I think they are quite equal to the work.

12 Regarding the so-called "breach" reported by the Officiating Consulting Engineer, Mr Dredge, the Engineer of the District, informs me that he went back by trolley from the nearest station at once and examined the spot, and he considers that the mile watchmen had no occasion to exhibit a red flag, as the place was not unsafe, the ballast having been merely washed away from around the sleepers, but not in such a way as to endanger the safety of the train which passed over the place without stopping, as Major Smith reports, at 12 miles an hour

13 It ought to be borne in mind that Major Smith passed over the line after thirty-six hours, during which 6 inches of rain fell, and since then we have had as much as 4 inches of rain in twelve hours. I was informed on my way from Madura the other day by an American Missionary who knows the country well, that he had seldom or never known rain for sixteen consecutive days falling in and around Madura as it has done during this month. Taking this into consideration, the softness of the new embankments through paddy-fields for the greater part of the way between Madura and Ammanakanoor, and the newness of the working staff, I am of opinion that the line has been most efficiently guarded, and that the working staff deserve credit, for the fact that not a single accident or interruption has occurred through any imperfection of the line.

14. With reference to the other matters remarked upon by Major Smith, I have merely to say that he saw a line under construction, and consequently in an imperfect state. All the matters remarked upon have received and are receiving attention as opportunity occurs as they would do in any case.

15 With regard to the girder bridge where some spikes were omitted, the man in fault has been cautioned, and Government may rest quite assured that so far as in me lies nothing is left undone that can be done to induce caution and avoidance of loss of life, limb or property by any rashness

16 For my own part, and I think I may say the same for the Engineers under me, that Major Smith is in error where he states that "engineering considerations have been held to outweigh all others, owing to which accidents will occur and oversights be frequent." I beg most emphatically to disclaim such a course. I have at all times personally and in writing cautioned those under my orders that the public safety is to be the very first consideration, and in no instance that I am aware of has this been deliberately sacrificed to engineering consideration

Note by the Deputy Consulting Engineer for Railways

The following facts admitted by the Chief Engineer forcibly attest the truth of my statement to Government that under great pressure engineering considerations necessarily outweigh others

(1) That trains carrying from 300 to 500 passengers are at the present time, and have been through the weather described by the Chief Engineer, running with brake-power inadequate in such weather to save them from running into a breach even if it be seen in time to apply the brakes, the reason being that the extra brakes that would have been otherwise put on are required for the material trains

(2) That a bridge has been used for engine traffic in an eminently dangerous condition owing to the omission of certain fastenings due to an oversight under pressure of work.

(3) That certain measures admittedly of ultimate importance have been and are still incomplete under pressure of more emergent work

2. The tone of the whole paragraph in which the expression complained of occurs and the tenor of the Government Order alike disclaim any such interpretation as is imputed to it by the use of such words in the Chief Engineer's last paragraph as "deliberate" and "sacrificed"

3 It was because I knew that Madras Railway experience has in a long course of years clearly demonstrated that full and general instructions from head quarters, however exhaustive, invariably fail to secure the desired object unless followed up by the "system of numbering" and "espionage by trains" that I felt convinced that without them the Chief Engineer was trusting to a broken reed, was asking more of his staff than they could, in the absence of these measures, secure. I knew that the imperfections in training which the Chief Engineer regards as inseparable from a new system would quickly vanish when the power of identification of "men" and "beats" was established, and I knew that the Chief Engineer admitting the ultimate necessity failed to recognise the immediate importance of these measures. I knew also that even if rule books were carried (the Driver I asked had none) without the numbering system, they must be comparatively useless. I saw that the watchmen, after some months employment, made small progress, it was therefore that I asked for that expression of opinion on the part of Government which it is now desired by the Chief Engineer to have modified or withdrawn

4 There has clearly been a misapprehension somewhere on the subject of the "small breach" referred to, as the Resident Engineer kindly accompanied me on the engine plate to Dindigul, 26 miles further north, it was therefore probably thence that he returned at once to see to the repairs. I have no doubt whatever that the appearance of the damage as a simple "breach in a bank" to a bystander would be very different indeed to its appearance from the buffer plank of a locomotive engine to a man in the act of crossing it. Its effect, however, on the engine leaves no doubt on my mind whatever as to the propriety of exhibiting a red flag

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
9th November 1875.*

5 I intended to convey in my paragraph* that the engine when running 12 miles an hour came upon a "small breach" and could not avoid passing over it, not that the engine went at that speed over the spot.

* No 9 (4)

6 The line for some miles after the rain described by the Chief Engineer was in a very dangerous condition, such a state of things is now and will be for some time unavoidable during and after heavy rain, and there is but one remedy "efficient watching"

(Signed) C J SMITH, Major, R E,
MADRAS,
3rd November 1875
Deputy Consulting Engineer for Railways

No. 224 ORDER THEREON, 9th November 1875, No. 3,203.

RAILWAY, No 36

HIS EXCELLENCY the Governor in Council is glad to receive the assurance contained in paragraph 10 of the letter from the Chief Engineer of the South Indian Railway of 27th October, that all mileage boards had then been fixed on the line, and that the numbering of the telegraph posts was being rapidly proceeded with, and that the mile watchmen and gatekeepers and plate-layer gangs will each soon be supplied with large numbers to exhibit to passing trains. It shows that he appreciates the practical bearing of the first and second suggestions made in the Deputy Consulting Engineer's report recorded with G O, No 2,969, of 16th October. As regards the third suggestion, it is not stated by him or the Agent that the Book of Rules is invariably carried by both Guard and Driver, and that they do keep the diary record recommended. This should be enforced on them, and the Consulting Engineer should state whether he is satisfied with the sufficiency of the rules for the purposes for which they are required. The Inspecting Staff is stated to be as strong as the Chief Engineer can get, and he considers them quite equal to their work; presumably including the work of training the watchmen, which is the point of the fourth suggestion.

2 His Excellency the Governor in Council has no doubt that all the elements of good organization existed on the South Indian Line under the able management of its Agent and Chief Engineer, but their full development was retarded by the circumstances under which the line was being temporarily opened for a special purpose, to attain which engineering considerations could not but practically outweigh others, however unintentionally. Whatever may have been the shortcomings in that respect, the Government must share a certain amount of the responsibility for them; as it was at their instance that the pressure has been put on, which has resulted in the working of heavy gradients without sufficient brake-power, and in the impossibility of securing sufficient attention from the superior staff to the training of the vast subordinate agency which a Railway brings into play.

3. His Excellency the Governor in Council is satisfied that the South Indian Railway authorities have no valid ground of objection to the remarks made by the Officiating Consulting Engineer whose report is throughout most eulogistic of the Railway Staff, but whose appreciation of his duties to the Government and the public called forth an opinion that more complete arrangements for the prevention of accidents were rendered necessary by the peculiar circumstances under which the line was being opened to traffic, an opinion in which the Government concurred and which they see no reason to change.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
9th November 1875.*

4. The opening of the Railway to Tuticorin by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be considered to be only for that special occasion and for the return trip. After the latter, it shall be closed till the Consulting Engineer shall report himself to be entirely satisfied that an efficient system of working the line has been fully organized and carried out.

(True Extract.)

Major-General, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways

Exd E C Shunker
Spare Copies

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

CONSULTING ENGINEER'S OFFICE.

Madras, *3rd November* 1875.

No. 574

From

LIEUT-COLONEL J. H. M. SHAW-STEWART, R.E.,

Consulting Engineer for Railways,

To

MAJOR-GENERAL G. W. WALKER, R.E.,

Secretary to Government,

Public Works Department,

Fort Saint George.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward, for such orders as may be deemed necessary, a letter from the Acting Agent of the South Indian Railway Company forwarding an enclosure from the Chief Engineer, in which that gentleman comments upon the note of inspection by the officiating Consulting Engineer for Railways dealt with in the Order of Government No. 2969 dated 16th October 1875. A note by the Deputy Consulting Engineer is enclosed.

*740 dated
October 1875
enclosure*

I have the honour to be

*Sir
your most obedient servant*

J. H. M. Shaw-Stewart Major, R.E.,

1st Class Engineer, R.E.

South Indian Railway.
Agents Office
Trichinopoly 28th October 1875.
No 940

The Consulting Engineer
for Railways.

Sir,

I am acknowledging receipt
of your letter No. 716 together with a
copy of G. O. No. 2969 of the 16th instant.
I have the honour to forward herewith a
copy of a letter received from the Chief
Engineer in answer to some of the
questions in your letter.

The Chief Engineer has
replied to 3 (i.e. 1, 2 and 4) out of the 4
suggestions of the Offg. Consulting
Engineer; with reference to the other
No

1875-Sept 16-306-307.

P. W. 1875-Sept.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

From
The Consulting Engineer
for Railways,

To
The Secretary to Government,
P. W. Department,
Fort Saint George.

Dated 3rd November 1875
Recd 5th

No 574

Submitting a letter
with enclosure from the
Agent S. J. G. concerning
upon the note of inspection
by the Offg. Chief Engineer
for Railways accompanied
herewith a letter
from the Deputy Town
Engineer for
Railways
G.O. No 3203- 9 11-75

No 223

1875-11-75

South Indian Railway - Letter
from the Chief Engineer to the Agent
dated Trichinopoly 27th October 1890.
N^o 8934.

N^o 716 of
19th instant

I have to acknowledge receipt of
your letter N^o 7073 of 28th October giving
cover to copies of a letter from the Consulting
Engineering Engineer for Railways and G.O.
N^o 2969 of the 16th instant, and directing me
to report on the measures taken in connection
with the line washmen to prevent as far
as practicable the possibility of accidents.
I believe with regret that our arrange-
ments are characterized as wanting in or-
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disposal would permit, and I trust that
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3. As far back as December last (1889)
I issued instructions to the Engineers between
Trichinopoly and Madurai that as the line
was to be opened

36/12/90

opened up to Engine traffic the Gatekeepers and permanent placelayer gangs were to be engaged and drilled into their duties in view of the opening of the Railway to Public traffic. Mile watchmen were put on from time to time as required, and in June last I ordered a Watchman to be put on every mile between Trichinopoly and Tuticorin, with a view not only to watching the fences and property of the Company, but to have the men ready in training for open line duties.

4. Engineers, Inspectors, Gangmasters, Watchmen and Gatekeepers were each furnished with the Book of Rules and regulations, and we held for the book from each man a receipt in duplicate, setting forth that he has received a copy, and that he has read or had it read to him, and that he understands the rules. - One receipt is filed in the District or Division to which the men belong, and the other is sent in to me that I may satisfy myself that the books have been issued and received.

5. I have from time to time been writing and in person impressed upon Engineers the importance of taking measures

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to ascertain the degree of their subordination, acquaintance with the rules and their practical application.

6. On the line between Trichinopoly and Madurai which is open to the public, I knew that the Engineers have from time to time questioned their people on these subjects, putting hypothetical cases to see whether they knew how to act, not only under ordinary circumstances but in cases of emergency.

7. I have myself from time to time inspected the line by day, and some parts of it by night, and paid special attention to the conduct of the placelayer gangs, Mile Watchmen, and Gatekeepers, and I am of opinion that as a rule they fairly understand and act up to the rules.

8. The Guards and drivers of trains hold instructions to be well on the look out, and to remember that the road staff is yet but a comparatively young and inexperienced one, and that therefore it must be supplemented by extra caution and vigilance on the part of the Locomotive and Traffic Staff.

9. With reference to the 4 suggestions of the Officiating Consulting Engineer, they are simply descriptive of the measures which are

are always adapted to the line, and the system referred to is in force on the Madras Railway is identical with our own. It ought to be remembered however that on the Madras Railway the system has had the advantage of over 15 years to drill and train the working staff while on our new line we have not had the benefit of half as many months to organise and train our people.

10. I freely admit that the duty of check and inspection is not so rigidly exercised out from the trains in the absence of mileage boards, and although we have always hitherto put these and other marks up after the piece of getting the more urgent work done, I am not going to argue that it is not a better plan to have them exhibited from the first, and we have now got all mileage boards fixed while the numbering of the telegraph posts is being rapidly proceeded with. The mile watchmen and gatekeepers as well as the platelayers gangs will soon be each supplied with large numbers to exhibit to passing trains.

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11. I have a strong staff of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors as I can get, and I think they are quite equal to the work.

12. Regarding the so called "breach" reported by the officiating Consulting Engineer, Mr. Dudge the Engineer of the District informs me that he went back by rail from the nearest station at once, and examined the spot, and he considers that the mile watchmen had no occasion to exhibit a red flag, as the place was not unsafe, the ballast having been merely washed away from around the sleepers, but not in such a way as to endanger the safety of the train which passed over the place without stopping as Major Smith reports at 12 miles an hour.

13. It ought to be borne in mind that Major Smith passed over the line after 36 hours during which brimmed of rain fell, and since then we have had as much as 4 inches of rain in 24 hours. I was informed on my way from Madras the other day by an American Missionary who knows the country well that he had seldom or never known rain for 16 consecutive days falling in

in and around Madras as it has done in
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times personally and in writing cautioned
those under my orders that the public safety
is to be the very first consideration, and in
no instance that I am aware of has there
been deliberately sacrificed to Engineering
consideration.

/ True Copy /
Agents Office. 25th October 1875. / Daniel Began
Trichinopoly. Acting Agent
To The Consulting Engineer for Railways
Madras

/ True Copy /
Attest. Major R.E.
for the Engineers for Railways

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the County of New York, for the year 1888.

10/20/25

11/1/00 That train carrying from
 300 to 500 passengers did not then
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 Engineer running with brake power
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Madras 2
3rd November 3
1845

Obt. M. J. R. B.
By Mr. Engineer for Railways

8058. A

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Govt. of 1875 Madras
PUBLIC WORKS.

To

Cong. Engineer
By L. 10/11/75

Dated

Issued

Recd

Encl

G. O. 9th Nov 1875. No 3203

Nos. 223/24

Commissioner, P. & S. Dept.
Passing orders on papers
submitted by the Cong. Engr
for P.W. containing contracts
upon the note of inspection
by the offg. Cong. Engineer
for P.W.