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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	662	Press
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	8 - 3 -	1875
		195

Original

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
8th March 1875.*

No. 240. Read the following Proceedings of the Government of India in the Public Works Department, (Railway,) dated Fort William, 31d February 1875, No 292 R —

Proposed Railway from Belpur to Pondicherry.

Read again—

Public Works Department Resolution No 239 G—R of 14th February 1873, to the Government of Madras

From Madras Government, No 1,498 of 5th June 1873

From Secretary of State, No 93 of 10th July 1873, and enclosure

To „ of „ „ 156 Railway of 8th August 1873, and docket to Madras Government, No 1,398 G—R of same date

Public Works Department Resolution No 2,167 G—R of 17th December 1873, to Government of Madras

Read also—

From the Secretary of State for India, to the Government of India, dated 23rd December 1874, No 188 R.

HEREWITH is transmitted for your Excellency's information a copy of a letter* from the Directors of the Pondicherry

* Dated 30th November 1874

Railway, relative to the passage through

detached portions of French territory of the proposed Railway from Belpur to Pondicherry, together with the two plans therein referred to.

2 I shall be glad to be placed in possession at an early date of your Excellency's views on the several points raised in the Board's letter. These, it will be seen, include the question of allowing to officers of the British and French Governments equal rights and immunities along the whole line, and also that of providing the whole line with a continuous electric telegraph.

From J. M. R. SCOTT, Esq., Secretary, London Board, Pondicherry Railway Company, Limited, to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated 30th November 1874

I AM instructed by the Directors of this Company to address to you the following communication for the favor of the early consideration and reply of His Lordship the Right Honorable the Secretary of State

To facilitate this, I am desired to mention that, by a letter from the Under Secretary of State to me, dated 3rd October 1873, he informed me that Her Majesty's then Secretary of State for India had resolved to sanction the proposition of the Indian Government for the construction, as part and parcel of the amalgamated undertaking of the Great Southern and Carnatic Railway Companies (now South Indian Railway Company), of the portion in British territory of a Railway from the Carnatic Main Line to Pondicherry, leaving this (the Pondicherry Railway Company) to make terms with the French Government for the portion of the line within French territory, and that by another letter, dated 31st October 1873, the Under Secretary of State informed me that the Great Southern and Carnatic Companies had assented to the above proposition, and that the Secretary of State consented to this arrangement conditionally on its being ascertained beyond doubt that the line would be extended to Pondicherry

The approval of Her Majesty's Government was officially conveyed to the Government of India by a Despatch, dated 6th November 1873, No 164 R

Since that period, the Board of Directors have put themselves in communication with the French Government to settle the terms of a convention between that Government and this Company under which the portion of the line in French territory should be constructed by this Company, and the condition of the Secretary of State's Despatch last mentioned be complied with

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The attention of the French Government was drawn to that condition, and they quite concur in it, but naturally stipulate as a reciprocal condition that the portion of the line in British territory shall also be without doubt constructed, otherwise their main object in having a Railway, viz., to have a through commercial intercourse with the system of the British Railways in India, will be frustrated.

In our discussions with the French Government conducted in Paris by Mr Kimber, a Member of this Board, on its behalf, with some Officers specially appointed for the purpose by the French Government, both parties were met, on examination of the map of the country, by the preliminary question as to what is to be considered the frontier, for the purpose of determining the limits of the French and British portions of the line respectively, and as the other terms of the convention all more or less depend upon this question, it must obviously and necessarily be settled before any contract with the French Government can be finally agreed upon.

It was mutually agreed between Mr Kimber and the French Government that this question and the facts relating to it should be laid before the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for his opinion and decision.

The question will be best understood by reference to the accompanying copies of two maps which were supplied to Mr Kimber by the French Government.

It will be seen that the frontier is of a peculiar character. Instead of one clear and well defined frontier, there are, besides the French Settlement or Port of Pondicherry, a number of blocks of French land entirely surrounded by British land.

The parts colored on the maps represent French territory, and those not colored, British. The route of the Railway as originally proposed by the French starting from the proposed terminus on the Coast at Pondicherry, at a spot near the pier, proceeded westwards entirely on French ground to the river Gingee, the mid-stream line of which river may be considered as, and is for present purposes, the first frontier, and which the Railway must cross in any event.

The length to that point is 6.43 miles, and up to that point no difficulty or doubt arises. The Railway would then cross this river Gingee, and as originally projected by the French Engineers, would have traversed British ground a short space, and then two of the above mentioned isolated blocks of French territory, each separated from one another by British ground, the ultimate frontier of the second block being at or near a French village called Madagadipett.

As subsequently modified, however, the first of these two blocks is omitted, and the route of the Railway, as the French authorities would now prefer to have it, and which, having regard to the villages and towns *en route*, would perhaps be found to be the best for the population and trade, and therefore for the traffic of both nations would be after crossing the river Gingee to traverse British ground to the extent of 4.71 miles, and then for 2.02 miles through one isolated block of French territory, only making a total length up to the ultimate frontier at "Madagadipett" of 13.16 miles, from whence it would proceed on British ground entirely to "Belpur" on the "South" Indian (late Carnatic) main line of Railway.

As regards the mere construction of these several portions of the Railway under these two Governments—the French parts under the French Concession by the Pondicherry Railway Company, and the British part by the South Indian Railway Company—very little difficulty would arise, but it is in the subsequent *working*, and maintenance, and in the question of ultimate ownership of the disjointed portions at the end of the Concession, that difficulties will be found if each Government intends to preserve its control and sovereignty over their disjointed respective sections. It therefore seemed evident that one of the three following modes must be adopted, viz. —

1 That the South Indian Railway Company shall construct, as a British Railway, the whole length from "Belpur" on its Main Line, where the Pondicherry Branch is proposed to start from right up to the Gingee river, including that section which is proposed to pass through the isolated French block,

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2 - That the French Government shall comprise the British portion between the Gingee and the isolated French block (4.71 miles) on their concession as a French line up to "Madagadipett," their ultimate frontier, and there meet the British branch from "Belpur,"

3 That the route should deviate altogether from the isolated blocks of French ground, and be constructed entirely on British territory from Belpur to the river Gingee. In the first and third cases, the portion to be constructed as British will be about 16½ miles, and as French 6.43 miles.

In the second case, the British portion would be about 9½ miles, and the French 13.16 miles.

Under these circumstances, the Directors ask the opinion, and in fact the decision, of His Lordship the Secretary of State, as to at what point the British and French portions of the Railway shall conterminate.

The French Government would, we believe, prefer that the British portion should be made entirely up to the river Gingee, as that of course would leave the Pondicherry Company less to construct, and consequently less subvention to be paid. If His Lordship accedes to that view, either No 1 or No 3 of the beforementioned alternatives must be adopted, and the Directors would be glad to know which has his approval.

If the Railway goes through the French block as a British line under alternative No 1, the French Government must either sell, or give the British Government a lease or right of way, and also, it is presumed, a quasi-sovereignty, in matters of Police, at all events, over such portions of the French ground as the line will traverse. This would involve considerable difficulties, and the French Officers were unable to say definitively whether the French Government would be prepared to give such power.

If the line is constructed as a French Line by this Company from Pondicherry to the ultimate French frontier at "Madagadipett," probably less difficulty would arise, as this Company being an English one, His Lordship and the Indian Government may probably not object to grant either to this Company direct, or to the French Government, a lease for 999 years of the necessary lands in the intermediate 4.71 miles between the French block and the river Gingee.

The concession by the French Government to this Company will only be for 99 years, but as the French Government grant a subvention for, or towards, the cost of construction, they naturally require the reversion of the Railway at the end of the 99 years. But in the present case, this would present no difficulty, as on their reversion falling in, they would, as regards this portion of the line, become lessees of the Indian Government for the rest of the longer term, whatever His Lordship may decide it shall be. In the ordinary course of things, however, at the end of the first concession of 99 years, a new concession would probably be granted to the same Company for a further term, and it might be stipulated, if His Lordship thought of it, that the Indian Government should have the right, at any time after such 99 years or extended term, of the purchase of the intermediate 4.71 miles upon re-paying the French Government whatever should be found equitable.

I am desired also to ask His Lordship's consideration of the following clause which the French Government propose to insert in their concession to this Company of the French portion of the Railway, etc., with the object of promoting mutual and friendly interchange of facilities to the officials of the two Governments over their respective territories —

Copy of Clause proposed—"Under reserve of the approbation of the British Government for the part of the line comprised in British territory, the Officers of the French Government shall enjoy for the whole length of the line the same rights and immunities reserved to the British Government on the line from Madras to Cuddalore."

"The same favors and immunities shall be reserved on French territory to British Government, its Officials and Agents."

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"Under the same reserve, the Colony may establish an electric telegraph along the line of Railway, and attach for this purpose its wires to the telegraph posts of the Company.

In conclusion, I am desirous to request the favor of His Lordship's views upon the questions raised by the foregoing circumstances, and which appear to be as follows, viz —

1 At what point shall the British and French portions of the line of Railway from Belpur to Pondicherry meet?

2 Shall the line traverse the isolated block of French land alluded to?

3 If so, will the Indian Government grant a lease to the Pondicherry Railway Company, or to the French Government, of the necessary land in the intervening British territory of 4 71 miles or thereabouts, and if so, for what term, and at what rent, or will the Government sell this land to this Company, and on what terms, or will the Indian Government take a lease or right of way, or purchase so much of the block of French land as may be necessary to make that section British?

4 Will His Lordship be so good as to state his views as to the reciprocal conditions proposed by the French Government?

Maps enclosed

ORDER — Ordered, that this Despatch and its enclosure, together with the plans* referred to therein in original, be communicated to the Government of Madras, in the Public Works Department (Railway), for consideration and report

* To be returned with reply

(Signed) H. DRUMMOND, Colonel, R E.
Deputy Secretary

No 241

ORDER THEREON, 8th March 1875, No 662.

RAILWAY, No 26.

His Excellency the Governor in Council is of opinion that the isolated block of French Territory should not be traversed if it can be avoided But remits the subject to the Collector of South Arcot and to the Consulting Engineer for Railways for report.

(True Extract)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Colonel, R E,
Secretary to Government.

To the District Engineer, South Arcot
.. Consulting Engineer for Railways
.. Revenue Department

Exd W J Lewis
Spare Copies

P. W. D.

Proceedings of the Madras Government,
Under date the 187 .

Read the following. —

Pro of the Govt of India (H.E. No 292 R 93 Feb 1875)
662

His Excellency the Governor in Council is decidedly of opinion that the isolated block of French Territory should not be traversed, — But remits the subject to the Collector of South Arcot, and to the Consulting Engineer for Railways for report.

To the D. E. South Arcot
.. Consulting Engineer for Railways
.. Revenue Department

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Govt. of Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

The Engineer
S. Anco

Dated

Recd

Encl

G O. 8 Mar 1875, No

662

Nos. 240-241

Reported Railways from
Chennai to Pondicherry

Papers on the sub-
ject of the —
submitted to the Collector
S. Anco & to the
Engineer for Rs 2 for
cost —