

(1) Number of pages _____

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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Public Works DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2915	Press
B.P.—No.		Mis.
Dated	30-10-	1876 195

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 507. Read the following letter from the Hon. P. MACFADYEN, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, to Major-General G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 26th October 1876:—

THE Chamber, in common with all classes of the community, have learnt with profound regret of the widespread distress that has been caused in the Ceded Districts by the failure of the south-west monsoon, and the consequent ruin of the grain crops. They have been informed that relief works have been opened in various parts of the locality affected, and that in the Bellary District alone thirty-five thousand people are employed on these works. The Chamber cannot but cordially approve of the latitude the Government have been pleased to give to the district officers in the selection of relief works, and the payment of labor, and they are confident the Government will readily give consideration to their suggestion that the commencement of earthworks for the proposed Bellary to Gudduck Railway would afford employment to crowds of people in the Bellary District which would be ultimately beneficial to the country. Already nearly nine thousand men, women, and children are reported to be employed in clearing out silt from the beds of three tanks in the town of Bellary. Opinions are said to differ in the town as to the advisability of utilizing the plethora of labor in this direction, as it is contended that the first heavy rains will undo the work now being prosecuted. It is necessarily of primary importance that the people should be kept alive, whatever may be the cost of feeding them; but a secondary duty to the country is, as far as possible, to obtain some appreciable and lasting benefit, additional to that of preserving life, in return for the exceptional expenditure forced upon the Government. It seems to the Chamber that railway embankments come within the category of works best suited for execution at such a juncture as the present. They do not require the employment of skilled labor, their progress can be easily measured, and they cannot be soon destroyed. Work of this class would doubtless be done more economically by coolies in the ordinary course, in unexceptional times, than by ryots, weavers, and others who are driven by famine to unaccustomed toil as the only means of escape from a temporary calamity; but even with due allowance for the enhanced cost of famine relief as compared with that of other work, the proposed employment of the labor available must be far better worth paying for than mere work for work's sake.

It has not escaped the recollection of the Chamber that the Secretary of State has not yet sanctioned the construction of the proposed line of railway, but as he has not definitely abandoned the project, and seems to have been prompted to defer his decision by financial exigencies and the more urgent claims of other schemes, it may be assumed that, with a view to the profitable employment of the starving multitudes of Bellary, he would be well disposed to sanction the commencement of a line that would not only contribute to the well-being of the people whose present condition excites so much commiseration, but would also greatly facilitate relief operations at any future time should the district be again visited by drought. As the country across which the proposed railway would run has been surveyed for the purpose, with the result that it has been pronounced by the Consulting Engineer for Railways as "fertile, populous, highly cultivated," and (regarded from a Railway Engineer's point of view) generally "favorable," and as the line is regarded by Colonel Shaw-

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
30th October 1876. No. 2,915.

Stewart "as the most promising project for railway extension in the whole of Southern India," now that the line to Tuticorin has been completed, the Chamber entertain a confident hope that the Government will cordially approve of their request that the Supreme Government may be invited to obtain from the Secretary of State, by telegraph, sanction for employing the redundant labor now available in the manner recommended by the mercantile community.

No. 508.

ORDER THEREON, 30th October 1876, No. 2,915.

RAILWAY, No. 44.

ORDERED that the following telegram be sent to the Government of India:—

"A fortnights' time must determine whether famine is inevitable. In that case concentration of relief labor most necessary. Already upwards 50,000 employed on scattered relief works in one district out of three. If famine contingency arises we propose commencement of embankment work of Bellary Gudduck Railway which traverses worst part of suffering district as State work. Please telegraph reply."

(True Extract.)

Major-General, R.E.,

Secretary to Government.

To Chairman, Chamber of Commerce.

To the Revenue Department.

„ Consulting Engineer for Railways.

Exd. S. T. Austin.

Spare Copies

The Chamber of Commerce.

Madras 26 Oct 1876

List of papers put up with
No 7735 of 1876.

20-9-71-12395+2397

3-11-71 - 2780

2-12-71 - 3049+3060.

18-10-72 - 2457+2458+2459

14-12-72 - 2927

16-12-72 - 2980+2981.

10-6-73 - 1530.

7-10-73 - 2457+2458A

5-12-73 - 2927+2928

20-12-73 - 3066+3067+3068

24-2-74 - 457+458

13-3-74 - 623.

18-4-74 - 1078.

10-6-74 - 1577+1578.

28-7-74 - 2029+2030.

17-11-74 - 3257+3252

J. S.

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man, Chamber of Commerce.

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lic Works Department,

Fort Saint George.

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To Chairman, Chamber of Commerce.
To the Revenue Department.
„ Consulting Engineer for Railways

Exd. S. T. Austin.
Spare Copies

The Chamber of Commerce.

Madras 26 Oct 1876

From

The Honble P. Macfadyen
Chairman, Chamber of Commerce

To

Major General P. E. Walker, R. E.
Secretary to Government
Public Works Department,
Fort Saint George.

Sir,

The Chamber, in common with all classes of the community, have learnt with profound regret of the widespread distress that has been caused in the Ceded Districts by the failure of the South West Monsoon, and the consequent ruin of the grain crops. They have been informed that relief works have been opened in various parts of the locality affected, and that in the Bellary District alone thirty five thousand people are employed in these works. The Chamber cannot but cordially approve

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ment of labour, and they are confident
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try. It already nearly nine thousand men,
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Engineer for Railways as fertile, populous,
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railway engineer's point of view) generally
favorable, and as the line is regarded
by Colonel Shaw Stewart as the most
promising project for railway extension
in the whole of Southern India, now that

the line to Tuticorin has been completed,
the Chamber entertain a confident hope
that the Government will cordially approve
of their request that the Supreme Govern-
ment may be invited to obtain from the
Secretary of State, by telegraph, sanction
for employing the redundant labour now
available in the manner recommended
by the mercantile community.

I have the honor to be
Sir,

Your most obedient servant

R. Venkayya
Chairman

With order

Copy to
Mr. P. V. Desai 2/1/76

10-96

P.W.D.
27 OCT 1976
NR 7735

No 2915 & 30 Oct/76

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Madras.

Date 26th October 1976.

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in getting the commonment of outworks for the proposed Bellary to Gaddur Railway to afford employment for crowds of people in the Bellary District, suffering from the effects of famine.

G.M.W.

N^o 507/8

Chairman C of C
Resy Secy
C.E. Mr. K. J. Desai 8/11/76
Cin 27-10-76

With order

in the whole of Southern India, now that

7198

Govt. of 1876 Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To *The Chairman and Chamber of Commerce*

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O. *20th October* 1876, No. *2915*

Nos. *7071*

Famine Relief Committee
Ballary Dist
For or under inspection
to send me

Put in file
2-11-76