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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1026 (W) Press / Mis.

Dated 26-3- 1937.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 26th March 1877. *No.* 1,026.

Read the following papers:—

No. 642. Read the following despatch from the Most Honorable the Secretary of State for India.

Public Works.
No. 38.

INDIA OFFICE, LONDON,
21*st December* 1876.

MY LORD DUKE,—Herewith is transmitted, for your Excellency's information, copy of a letter* from Mr. Dalrymple, late Master Attendant at Madras, relative to the probable effect of the Harbour Works now under construction there.

* Dated 4th December 1876.

2. I shall be glad to receive from your Government, at an early date, a report on the present state of the works, and to be informed whether there are, in your opinion, reasonable grounds for the fears entertained by Mr. Dalrymple in regard to them.

I have, &c.,
CARNARVON.

His Excellency the Right Honorable
The Governor in Council, Fort St. George.

From H. D. E. DALRYMPLE, Esq., late Master Attendant of Madras and Chief of the Marine Department, Madras Presidency, to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated Creebridge House, Newton Stewart, N.B., 4th December 1876:—

As I was for many years the Master Attendant of Madras, and during the latter years of my service the Head of the Marine Department of the Madras Presidency, I trust I may be permitted to address the Secretary of State for India in Council on a subject which is of vital importance to the prosperity of Southern India.

I have been constantly informed direct from Madras of the Harbour Works there, now in progress, and their already disastrous consequences, and I should ere now have come forward to call the serious attention of the Home Government to the subject had I not been withheld by scruples which I now think were mistaken ones.

A sense of duty now impels me to try, if possible, to avert the utter ruin of the port of Madras.

It is with much regret that I am constrained to bring in the name of one no longer living —the late lamented Governor of Madras, whose benevolence was manifest, but who on this subject, new to him, was apparently carried away by an idea.

Lord Hobart when he landed in India, new to the country, and totally unacquainted with its topography, conceived the scheme of a close harbour for Madras. As I was then the Head of the Marine Department, he mentioned his project to me, and courted my opinions, but when he found that I saw insuperable obstacles to such a scheme he dropped the subject and never recurred to it.

I had pointed out to his Lordship that from our own experience we knew that whenever a groyne or jetty had been constructed anywhere on the surf beaten coast, the immediate effects were the accumulation of sand, and the extension of the beach to the outer end of the groyne or jetty.

To the best of my recollection, I also referred His Lordship to the Report of the Breakwater Committee of 1863, of which I was a member; which Report is, I presume, on record in the India Office.

That Committee, which was composed of Engineers, nautical men, and members of the Chamber of Commerce, came to a decision adverse to any work on the principle of a *close* Harbour connected with the shore.

My letters to the Madras Government on the subject* may also be referred to as well as those from the Chief Engineer, who was also Secretary to Government, Public Works Department.

* Under dates 16th April 1873 and 20th December, Nos. 2,700 and 7,489.

Let me now call attention to the remarkable statement regarding the Harbour Works in question, reported to have been made by Mr. Parkes at a meeting of the Madras Chamber of Commerce on the 26th of last October.

It is hardly credible, but such apparently is the fact, that Mr. Parkes with wonderful frankness admits that according to his own calculations the Madras Harbour will in fifty-six years cease to exist.

Now, as a rule, and in accordance as it seems to me with the principles of eternal justice, enactments are made, and great public works constructed for the benefit, not of one generation only, but, as far as can be foreseen, for that of generations yet to come; yet here the projector of a great and costly work coolly admits that the result of it will be the annihilation within a lifetime of the chief emporium of trade in Southern India.

Even in this calculation he is at fault. He states that "it would take fifty-six years for the sand to shoal up the entrance of the harbour," but he ignores the fact that the surf is, according to the season of the year, hundreds of yards (more or less) in advance of the shoaling up, and consequently that the harbour, according to his own calculations, will be useless in half the time he assigns as the period of its existence, viz., in twenty-eight years.

What a prospect this opens to the old established mercantile interests of Madras. When the harbour, which before completed will cost a million of English money, is closed, and the abandoned works nothing but an additional peril to the shipping—the trade will go elsewhere, and universal ruin will be the result.

A short time ago I met Mr. Robertson, the eminent Harbour Engineer, who spent two years in India inspecting all the ports of the three Presidencies, and he gave it as his decided opinion that if the present works now in progress were not stopped the port would be irretrievably ruined.

I may observe that my acquaintance with the whole of the Coromandel coast, and more particularly with the locality of Madras, extended over a period of forty years; the "prospecting" periods of Mr. Parkes' visits, I apprehend, could be counted in days, and yet his unsupported theories were accepted by Lord Hobart in opposition to recorded facts and to the opinions of numbers of men of great experience.

From an article in the *Madras Times* of 4th November 1876, I quote the following:—
"A wide tract of dry land now occupies the space upon which the billows broke not twelve months ago. The surf now dashes against the landing stairs of the pier past which until quite recently the swell rolled along in a smooth volume. The Captains of steamers and coasting vessels have also noticed with apprehension the rapid shoaling of the water at their anchorages, and keep out further and further from the pier."

As the foregoing affords, I believe, a true account of the present ominous state of affairs, I earnestly recommend that Mr. Robertson, the Harbour Engineer, be consulted on the subject, and, if his services can be obtained, he be forthwith sent out to Madras to advise the authorities how to shape their course so as to save the port from annihilation.

Having had more prolonged experience of Madras and the Coromandel coast than any man now living, I am ready to place my services at the disposal of Government without requiring any remuneration whatever.

No. 642-A. From W. PARKES, Esq., M. INST. C.E., Engineer-in-Chief, Madras Harbour Works, to Major-General G. W. WALKER, R.E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 18th January 1877.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of copy of a letter, dated 4th December last, addressed to the Secretary of State by Mr. H. D. E. Dalrymple, the late Master

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
26th March 1877. *No.* 1,026.

Attendant of Madras, in which he reiterates certain opinions which he had frequently expressed while in this country, as to the supposed disastrous results of the formation of a close harbour on this coast, and supports them by a supposed admission of mine.

2. While respecting the evident sincerity and sense of public duty manifested by Mr. Dalrymple, I cannot but feel surprised that he should have taken such decided action on an unauthorised report of an unofficial proceeding.

3. When I met the Chamber of Commerce on the occasion referred to, representatives of the local press had been invited to be present, and as I supposed my remarks would be reported *verbatim*, I did not, previous to the meeting, reduce them to writing. I afterwards found however that none of the reporters wrote shorthand, and the consequence was that the reports were most imperfect. I therefore immediately prepared a correct version of my address, which the Chamber of Commerce kindly had printed and circulated in a pamphlet form.

4. In this the statement which Mr. Dalrymple had seen reported as an admission, that "the Madras Harbour will in fifty-six years cease to exist," is given as follows, and I may remark that the report in the *Madras Mail* is substantially the same as my own on this point:—

"Again, sand has accumulated to a large extent to windward of the bank. I am not surprised at the public dismay, and I confess that until I had thoroughly investigated the case I was myself surprised at the apparent extent of the accumulation, but when I came to calculate the actual quantity I found that it was quite within the limits which justified my original conclusion that any real damage to the harbour from the annual repetition of such accumulations was in such a remote future as to place the question beyond the limits of practical discussion. From certain meagre data I obtained in 1873, I suggested 180 years as a probable interval before damage to the harbour would result. The results of the late south-west monsoon offer one element for a similar calculation. It is only one element, for it is admitted by every one that the north-east monsoon now commencing will carry away a part at least of what the south-west monsoon has brought, though as yet we do not know what proportion. For the moment, however, let us neglect this, and suppose the whole of the present accumulation to remain; even on this supposition it would require fifty-six years for the 4-fathom line to advance to the bend of the pier, and for the entrance to begin to shoal. Now do not take fifty-six years as a definite conclusion. It has to be added to by so much as each member in his own judgment may allow for the counteraction of the north-east monsoon, the first steps of which are already very obvious in the recession of the beach, and you arrive at a figure which need alarm no one. Then, every extension of the works to the southward will tend to prolong the time; and, at the last, whenever the danger may become imminent our remote posterity may, with the approved appliances then at their disposal, advance the pier seaward at their discretion. So there is no fear of the Harbour of Madras being other than virtually permanent."

5. This statement was made on the 26th October when the north-east monsoon had just commenced. On the 30th November, when the greatest effect of it was over, I reported to the Madras Government as follows, paragraph 45:—

"What then are the new facts? There has been a large and formidable looking triangular accumulation of sand to the southward of the surf bank, advancing the

shore line 550 feet at the bank and reaching alongshore about three-quarters of a mile. Now, if this accumulation had all remained, and we assumed that an equal quantity was liable to be added every year, it would have required between fifty and sixty years for sufficient to accumulate for it to pass the end of the pier and *begin* to shoal the entrance. But as a matter of fact one-half of this accumulation has since been removed, so that the time required for the injury to the harbour to commence is extended beyond the century, while if we take into further account that this has been a most exceptional season in the long continuance of southerly winds, and the paucity of northerly winds, it would really seem within the scope of reasonable expectation that the north and south movements will ultimately balance one another, and a line of shore be established, permanent within certain limits, and those limits well within the line to which the harbour will project."

6. The above extracts will show how very far from my own conclusion is the definite period of fifty-six years. But the statement quoted by Mr. Dalrymple also misrepresents me as to what the state of things will be at the end of that time in saying that "the harbour will cease to exist." What I say is that the "entrance will *begin* to shoal." Now, some considerable shoaling of an entrance originally 42 feet deep may take place before the Harbour ceases to exist; and it must be an extremely slow process when it does commence. This will show that I have, if I rightly understand him, anticipated the considerations by which Mr. Dalrymple reduces my supposed fifty-six years to twenty-eight.

7. Mr. Dalrymple quotes from the *Madras Times* of 4th November 1876, a graphic description of the then "ominous state of affairs." I do not know whether the present state of affairs has been described by the same hand, but it may be well to state that so much as remains of the "wide tract of dry land" is now occupied by "mountains of rice bags," that the depths of water, at the pier stairs, from thence for the whole length of the pier seaward and for some distance from the same point landward are now restored to their normal amount, while the present position of the ten or twelve steamers now in the roads closer than they have ever anchored before, only serves to confirm what the Marine chart lately completed conclusively showed, viz, that the apprehensions of their Captains as to the shoaling of the water at their anchorages were entirely groundless. The "vast accumulation" has barely affected the 3-fathom line, and that only close to the actual work. Outside of that line there has been no change whatever.

8. I cannot pass over in silence Mr. Dalrymple's statement that my "unsupported theories were accepted by Lord Hobart in opposition to recorded facts, and to the opinions of numbers of men of great experience." Mr. Dalrymple's honest and fearless maintenance of his own conclusions in 1873-74 won the respect of every one, but it should not be forgotten that he stood at that time absolutely alone. Not a single Engineer or nautical man here or in England said a word in support of his theory, while those who a few years previously had sided with him had since either changed their views or were silent. Even now, when the late temporary turn of the popular feeling would have given a good opportunity to the less bold, though perhaps not less logical objectors to bring forward their views, not a single *name* of any authority has appeared in support of Mr. Dalrymple's particular view. Sir Arthur Cotton has recently spoken in his own name, and Mr. Robertson is quoted by Mr. Dalrymple,

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
26th March 1877. *No.* 1,026.

but both of these had formerly placed on record in a most decided manner their dissent from the view of the sand difficulty which Mr. Dalrymple supports, and these expressions of dissent have not been withdrawn. The "recorded facts" are not disputed, but even among those who would have preferred a breakwater to a close harbour not one person of any authority has since 1868 supported the conclusion which Mr. Dalrymple draws from these facts.

9. If the discussion is to be re-opened, I venture to think that it must be based on some more definite argument than any adduced by Mr. Dalrymple.

MEMORANDUM.

THE Chief Engineer has nothing to add to the opinion expressed in paragraph 2 of his memorandum recorded with G.O., No. 3,343, of 9th December 1876.

He considers that (as stated in paragraph 7 of his memorandum recorded with G.O., No. 2,925, of 4th December 1873,) Mr. Parkes had not sufficiently gone into the details of construction of his surf banks; the junction of which, with the regular piers, as well as the means of depositing the rubble foundations of the latter, are giving some trouble to work out practically, and he has already said that a mistake was committed in not commencing the southern pier a year earlier. But these matters are being attended to; and he has no doubt that they are being effectually dealt with by Mr. Parkes and the executive staff under his orders, and the Chief Engineer has no misgivings as to the final success of the work.

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Major-General, R.E.,
Chief Engineer, P.W.D.

19th January 1877.

No. 643. ORDER THEREON, 26th March 1877, No. 1,026.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 58.

MR. PARKES' report will be forwarded to the Home Government with an expression of His Grace the Governor's confidence in the ultimate success of the Harbour Works, and of his concurrence with the Engineer-in-Chief in considering Mr. Dalrymple's criticisms—which differ in nothing from those which he has often ere now expressed—too indefinite to warrant a re-opening of the discussion as to the safety of that design of harbour which the Madras Government long since adopted.

(True Extract.)

Colonel,
Acting Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,
Buildings and Roads Branch.

To the Superintendent, Madras Harbour Works.
„ Marine Department.

Exd. S. T. Austin.
Spare Copies

The Chief Engineer has nothing to add to the opinion expressed in para 2 of this Memo: recorded with S.O. No 3343 of 2nd Dec. 1876

He considers that no student in para 4 of this Memo: recorded with S.O. No 2925 of 4th Dec. 1873) Mr Santer had not sufficient data to give full details of construction of two Surf Boats; the function of which with the regular Piers, as well as the means of depositing the Rubble foundation of the Lake Base giving much trouble to work out practically, and he has already

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the work -
Upon these Minutes
- Chief Engr's D.O.

19/1/77.

Gen. Dept. 26 March/77 No. 642.

Com 19-1-77

I am not competent
to give an opinion
but I think that
it would be desirable
that the Engineer
in Chief should
be asked to
explain more fully
the grounds on
which he
considers

MP 9

From

W. Parkes Esq: M. I. C. E:
Engineer in Chief
Madras Harbour Works.

To

Major General G. W. Walker R. E.
Secretary to Government
Public Works Department
Fort St. George.

Madras 18th January 1877.

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of copy of a letter dated 1st December last addressed to the Secretary of State by Mr. H. D. E. Dalrymple, the late Master Attendant of Madras, in which he reiterates certain opinions which he had frequently expressed while in this country as to the supposed disastrous results of the formation of a close harbour on this coast, and supports them by a supposed admission of mine --

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"extent to windward of the bank. I am
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I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most Obedient Servant,
W Parkes
Engineer in chief
Madras Harbour Works

Go No 2925-9 4-12-76
Lr 3343-9 9-12-76
Lr 56-6-1-77.

From P.W.D.
19JAN77
N.B. Parkes Esq: M. Inst C.E.
Engineer in Chief
Madras Harbour Works

To The Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department.
Fort St George

Dated 18th January 1877
Rec'd

Submits remarks upon the opinions expressed by Col. Dalrymple upon the formation of a close Harbour—

G.O. 26 Harbours 77 SB No. 642

Ltr 19-1-77 R 21.3.77

Creebridge House
Newton Stewart, N.B.
4th December 1876.

Sir,

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Even in this calculation he is at fault. He states that "it would take Fifty six years for the sand to shoal up the entrance of the Harbour" - but he ignores the fact that the surf is, according to the season of

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the year hundreds of yards (more or less) in advance of the shoaling up and consequently that the Harbour according to his own calculations will be useless in half the time he assigns as the period of its existence viz — 28 years.

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As the foregoing affords, I believe a true account of the present ominous state of affairs I earnestly recommend that Mr. Robertson the Harbour Engineer be consulted on the subject and if his services can be obtained he be forthwith sent out to Madras to advise the Authorities how to shape their course so as to save the Port from annihilation.

Having had more prolonged experience of Madras and the Coromandel Coast than any man now living I am ready to place my services at the disposal of Government without requiring any remuneration whatever.

I have &c

(signed) Hew. D. Elphinstone Dalrymple

late Master Attendant of Madras &c.

Chief of the Marine Dep.t Madras Presidency

2506

P.W.D. 5.

19JAN77

No. 513

Copy Letter from Mr. Dalrymple

dated 4th Dec. 1876.

Referred to in Public Works Letter
of
Madras, No. 38, dated 21st Dec. 1876
Para: 2.

G.O. 26th March/77 S.B. No. 642

~~D.F.~~

Public Works.

No. 38.

India Office, London.
21st December, 1876.

My Lord Duke,

I. Herewith is transmitted, for your Excellency's information, copy of a letter* from Mr. Dalrymple, late Master Attendant at Madras, relative to the probable effect of the Harbour Works now under

His Excellency,
The Right Honorable,
The Governor in Council
Fort St. George.

* dated 4th December 1876.

under construction there.

2. I shall be glad to receive from your Government at an early date, a report on the present state of the works, and to be informed whether there are, in your opinion, reasonable grounds for the fears entertained by Mr. Dalrymple, in regard to them.

I have the honor to be,
My Lord Duke,
Your Grace's most obedient
humble Servant,

Canaan

No 2.

P.W.D.
19JAN77
513

Public Works
No. 21st Dec. 1876.

The
Letter to Sir H. St George
No. 38.

E 1/1

Forwarding Copy of a letter from Mr. Dalrymple, late Harbour Attendant at Madras, relative to the probable effect of the Harbour Works now under Construction in Madras.

Rt. 642

Cir 19-1-77

Pol. Dept.

To
The Most Honorable
The Marquis of Salisbury
Secretary of State
for India

My Lord Marquis,

We have the honour to acknowledge your Lordship's Despatch of the 2nd December last enclosing a letter from the late Master Attendant of Madras on which the Secretary of State regarding the Madras Harbour works are proceeded. Your Lordship has requested us to report the present condition of the Harbour works and to state whether there are in our opinion reasonable grounds for Mr Dalrymple's apprehensions

Rg. 24/3

Ed 22/3

Sec 23/3

2.

2. In reply, we have the honor to forward a copy of our Proceedings dated the 26th March 1877 in which is recorded a letter from Mr Parkes to whom we referred the subject for report. ~~In the remarks~~ contained in that letter we ~~allude~~ Mr Dalrymple was well known to be one of the most strenuous opponents of the close-harbour scheme in the discussions which preceded the selection of Mr Parkes design - that at this late time it would be very undesirable to re-open the general ~~argument~~ question as to the comparative merits of a close and an open Harbour is evident.

3. Mr Dalrymples present ~~criticisms~~ differ in no way from those ~~—~~ which he has often before ~~uttered~~ expressed.

And

No 1026

G.O. No 812 dated 9th March, 1877

~~that~~ there is no ~~foundation~~ for the statement - that there is any shoaling of the anchorages — and in fact ships of all classes have for years anchored near the usual berths.

And his assertion that they are now being formed by facts which ~~contradict~~ ~~his assertion~~. It is true that a very large accumulation of sand was during the last Monsoon formed to the South of the Northern Harbour Groyne but in January as Mr Parkes remarks in his letter ~~the~~ this accumulation had been cut away. In the last Progress Report which accompanies this letter it is observed that the sea is still removing this sand. The recent surveys of the Roadstead show conclusively that ships can with safety anchor as near the shore as formerly.

4. It will therefore be seen that Mr Dalrymples objections are too ~~unfounded~~ to

~~to forward to Newcastle Private attention.~~

4 Our late Chief Engineer before leaving for England recorded his confidence in the final success of the work. ~~He agree with him~~ and Secy Clarke that the Government is virtually committed to Mr Parkes scheme and that such large sums have been already spent on the work, ~~he~~ we would deprecate any reopening of the subject, unless far more cogent arguments for so doing than have been adduced by Mr Dalrymple can be brought forward.

W.P.
20.3.77

Forwarding Copy of Proceedings on letter from Mr Parkes remarking upon the opinions expressed by Mr Dalrymple, late Master Attendant of Madras upon the formation of a close Harbour at Madras

No. 1026

Public Works Department.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

UNDER date the 26th March 1877

Read the following:—

Despatch from the Secretary of State (P.W. No 38 dt 21st Decr 76)

from

W. Parkes Esq. Engineer-in-chief, Madras Harbour works / Chief Engineer. P.W. Dept (——— dt 18th Janry 77) (——— dt 19th ———)

Mr Parkes report will be forwarded to the Home Government with an expression of His Grace the Governor's confidence in the ultimate success of the Harbour works and of his concurrence with the Engineer-in-chief in considering Mr Dalrymple's criticisms — which differ in nothing from those which he has often ere now expressed — too indefinite to warrant a re-opening of the discussion as to the safety of that design of Harbour to

22/3

W.P.

to which the Madras Government has long ~~stood committed~~ since adopted

W.K.
20.3.77.

Cw 513/572

Pubt. of [1877] Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To the Supt. Madras Harbour

Dated

Issued

Recd. Encl.

G. O. 26th March, No. 1026

Nos. 642-643

Close Harbours at Madras

Letter from Mr Parkes remarking upon the opinions expressed by Mr Dalrymple, late Master Attendant of Madras upon the formation of a ——, forwarded to the Home Govt

G. O. 26th March [illegible]
No 1026