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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

P.W.D DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	2572	Press.
B.P. No.	W	Mis.
Dated	20.10.1881	197.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

B.S. 94

2572
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

20th October 1881, No. 2572 W.

Buildings and Roads.
Civil Works.

Read the following paper:—

No. 107. Despatch from the Most Honorable the Secretary of State for India.

Public Works.
No. 31.

INDIA OFFICE, LONDON,
22nd Sept. 1881.

SIR,—I transmit, for information, copies of letters* which I have received from

* Dated 1st and 7th September 1881.

Mr. W. Parkes, the Consulting Engineer
for the Madras Harbour Works, regarding

the stability of some of those works, which are stated in a newspaper telegraphic
summary to have been impugned at a meeting of the Legislative Council of your
Excellency's Government.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) HARTINGTON.

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

From W. PARKES, Esq., C.E., to the Under Secretary of State for India, dated 23, Abingdon
Street, 1st September 1881.

Madras Harbour.

THE following, which appeared in the telegraphic summary of Indian news in the "Times"
of the 29th ultimo, and dated from Calcutta, 28th August, has probably attracted the attention
of the authorities of the India Office:—

"At the meeting of the Madras Legislative Council at Ootacamund on Monday, the Governor
expressed fear of the stability of the Madras Harbour Works, and deprecated the passing of the
Port Trust Bill until the work had been tested by the cyclone. He stated that lately there had
been a subsidence of a portion of the southern pier and erosion of the beach, and the collection
of silt within the harbour had caused anxiety. The Secretary of State was requested to instruct
Mr. B. Parkes to come out immediately and remain until May. The opinion in Madras seems
to be that the fears of the Government are exaggerated, and that the sea has done nothing more
than was anticipated."

2. My own intelligence by post is quite as recent as anything that could have been made
the basis of the Governor's remarks, and I am able to state positively that on neither of the three
points mentioned by His Excellency has there been cause for the slightest apprehension. Two
of the three points are alluded to in the appended Government Order.

3. With regard to the settlement of the south pier the facts of the case are these. The
level of the top of the blocks is intended to be five feet above mean sea level, but they are
originally set at from 7 to 8 feet above that level to allow for sinking. The amount of sinking
varies in different parts according to the state of the rubble base. If the stone is deposited from
the boats rather high and requires excavation, there is less settlement than if it is low and has
to be made up. Hence there is a little irregularity (of from 12 to 18 inches) in the ultimate
level, and the part in question happens to be that of maximum settlement, mainly owing to this
cause. It is possible, however, that it may have been increased by the fact that, during a very
heavy sea in last November, the "Titan" was standing on this spot, and the weight of that
machine, about 120 tons, and the obstruction which it offered to the passage of the waves, would
cause an additional pressure, and a greater degree of vibration, to the structure. The result

would be even greater solidity than in the neighbouring parts. The use of laterite is suggested in the Government Order as the cause of the settlement, but I am informed that there was less laterite than usual in that part of the base. I may mention, however, that the laterite makes a most excellent foundation when once consolidated. The whole settlement takes place within the first few weeks, especially if a heavy sea occurs within that time, and its effect is to consolidate not only the foundation, but the superstructure also.

4. With regard to the erosion of the shore north of the harbour, it would be premature to add anything to the recommendations contained in my report of 25th January last, until the result of the complete south-west monsoon is seen. But although the question is a difficult, and even a delicate one, it is a comparatively small one, and certainly does not justify the prominence given to it in the telegraphic report of the proceedings.

5. A reference is made to me in the Government Order upon these two points, but I think it would be better to defer my reply to the Government of Madras till the despatch alluded to in the telegram reaches the India Office.

6. The third point alluded to by His Excellency is "the collection of silt within the harbour." This, I say unhesitatingly, is based on an entire mistake, either on the part of the Governor himself or of the reporter. There is no such collection. Not a grain of sand has got into the harbour since 1878, when the south pier advanced into deep water. It is probable that the mistake has arisen from the fact that the little surf which still breaks upon the beach within the harbour moves the sand alongshore one way or the other according to the monsoon, but this in itself is no evil. It is of importance only as evidence that the water is not as perfectly stilled as was hoped, but it is simply a question of degree, and can only affect in a subordinate way the arrangements for the cargo boats.

7. Whether the lingering fears of some few persons that the effects of a cyclone may be such as to revolutionize the whole future arrangements for carrying on the traffic of the port within the harbour is a sufficient reason for delaying the creation of a port trust, is not a question within my province, but I am quite certain that the three points on which I have offered explanations afford no additional support whatever to such fears.

From the same Officer, dated 23, Abingdon Street, 7th September 1881.

I SHALL be obliged by your noting and correcting an error in my letter of 1st September, paragraph 3. I find, on further examination, that the portion of the south pier alluded to as having subsided is not that on which the "Titan" was standing during the storm of last November, but a portion which was built in April last. My explanation, however, is equally applicable, except where the date is specially mentioned, and would be correct if, for the words "during a heavy sea in last November," there were substituted "during the rough weather of last May." The case appears to be very similar to the previous one, and the general conclusion is in no way affected.

Apologizing for my inadvertence.

No. 108. ORDER THEREON, 20th October 1881, No. 2572 W.

RECORDED with reference to the despatch to the Secretary of State No. 51/2012, dated 17th August 1881.

(True Extract.)

Major, R.E.,
Under Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

Exd. S. T. Austin.
Spare Copies

BUILDINGS AND ROADS.
CIVIL WORKS.

Govt. of 1881 Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

Date October, 1914.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 20th October 1881, No. 2672 W.

OCTOBER.
Nos. 107-108.

Madras Harbour Works.—Letter from the
Secretary of State transmitting letters from
Mr. Parkes on the stability of the works,
recorded.

In Hand to [unclear]
For order 2/3

The attention came to
hand immediately
after the disposal of
the last reference
columns of which with
my note were then
forwarded to the
Sd/- 15724

Mr. Parkes it will
be observed has written
in receipt of the
"telegraphic summary"
report in the "Times"
and will no doubt
again and probably
more fully deal with
the matter in receipt
of the dispatch dated
to him in para
5 of his present
communication —
Till then [unclear]

Recd
in [unclear]
18-10-14
14
10
10-11
11-10-14

the present com-
-munication might
be "recorded"

I confess I am unable
in the face of the state-
-ments made by Mr.
Thompson to under-
-stand how as now
stated by Mr. Parker
there is "less laterite
than usual in that
"part of the base" where
the subsidence has
occurred -

His observation that
the effect of the forcing
over of the bottom of the
heavy seas "is to con-
-solidate not only the
"foundation but the
"superstructure also"
is not I think borne
out by the facts, and
even if it were is
not apposite
My contention is (1)
that only the upper

part of the rubble
base has been consolidated
by crushing of the
laterite & that the heaviest
must be much in the
condition in which it
was originally laid down
and what is of more
importance - (2) that
the portion of the base
immediately outside
of the concrete blocks
and where most ex-
posed to the action of
heavy seas is precisely
in the same condition
as when first laid down

No portion of this
has or can have been
consolidated even in
the sense of the term
as employed by Mr.
Parker

The erosion north
of the Harbour has
already shown itself
to be much more
serious than would

appear in para 4
of Mr Parkes' statement
and I have no reason
to modify the opinion
which I have all along
expressed on this subject

Atte

16.10.81

25/9/81

India Office,

London, 22nd September 1881.

Public Works,
No. 31.

To His Excellency The Honourable The Governor in
Council, Fort St. George.

SIR,

* Dated 1st and 7th September 1881.

I transmit, for information, copies of
letters* which I have received from Mr. W. Parkes,
the Consulting Engineer for the Madras Harbour
Works, regarding the stability of some of those
works, which are stated in a newspaper telegraphic
summary to have been impugned at a meeting of
the Legislative Council of your Excellency's Go-
vernment.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Northington

2573
6
2

ENCLOSURES

No. 1.

Madras Harbour.

23, Abingdon Street,
1st September 1881.

Sir,

The following, which appeared in the telegraphic summary of Indian news in the "Times" of the 29th ultimo, and dated from Calcutta, 28th August, has probably attracted the attention of the authorities of the India Office:—

"At the meeting of the Madras Legislative Council at Ootacamund on Monday, the Governor expressed fear of the stability of the Madras Harbour works, and deprecated the passing of the Port Trust Bill until the work had been tested by the cyclone. He stated that lately there had been a subsidence of a portion of the southern pier and erosion of the beach, and the collection of silt within the harbour had caused anxiety. The Secretary of State was requested to instruct Mr. B. Parkes to come out immediately and remain until May. The opinion in Madras seems to be that the fears of the Government are exaggerated, and that the sea has done nothing more than was anticipated."

2. My own intelligence by post is quite as recent as anything that could have been made the basis of the Governor's remarks, and I am able to state positively that on neither of the three points mentioned by His Excellency has there been cause for the slightest apprehension. Two of the three points are alluded to in the appended Government Order.

3. With regard to the settlement of the south pier the facts of the case are these. The level of the top of the blocks is intended to be five feet above mean sea level, but they are originally set at from 7 to 8 feet above that level to allow for sinking. The amount of sinking varies in different parts according to the state of the rubble base. If the stone is deposited from the boats rather high and requires excavation, there is less settlement than if it is low and has to be made up. Hence there is a little irregularity (of from 12 to 18 inches) in the ultimate level, and the part in question happens to be that of maximum settlement, mainly owing to this cause. It is possible, however, that it may have been increased by the fact that during a very heavy sea in last November, the "Titan" was standing on this spot, and the weight of that machine, about 120 tons, and the construction which it offered to the passage of the waves, would cause additional pressure, and a greater degree of vibration, to the structure. The result would be even greater solidity than in the neighbouring parts. The use of laterite is suggested in the Government Order as the cause of the settlement, but I am informed that there was less laterite than usual in that part of the base. I may mention, however, that the laterite makes a most excellent foundation when once consolidated. The whole settlement takes place within the first few weeks, especially if a heavy sea occurs within that time, and its effect is to consolidate not only the foundation, but the superstructure also.

4. With regard to the erosion of the shore north of the harbour, it would be premature to add anything to the recommendations contained in my report of 25th January last, until the result of the complete south-

4
west monsoon is seen. But although the question is a difficult, and even a delicate one, it is a comparatively small one, and certainly does not justify the prominence given to it in the telegraphic report of the proceedings.

5. A reference is made to me in the Government Order upon these two points, but I think it would be better to defer my reply to the Government of Madras till the Despatch alluded to in the telegram reaches the India Office.

6. The third point alluded to by His Excellency is "the collection of silt within the harbour." This, I say unhesitatingly, is based on an entire mistake, either on the part of the Governor himself or of the reporter. There is no such collection. Not a grain of sand has got into the harbour since 1878, when the south pier was advanced into deep water. It is probable that the mistake has arisen from the fact that the little surf which still breaks upon the beach within the harbour moves the sand alongshore one way or the other according to the monsoon, but this is itself is no evil. It is of importance only as evidence that the water is not as perfectly stilled as was hoped, but it is simply a question of degree, and can only affect, in a subordinate way the arrangements for the cargo boats.

7. Whether the lingering fears of some few persons that the effects of a cyclone may be such as to revolutionize the whole future arrangements for carrying on the traffic of the port within the harbour is a sufficient reason for delaying the creation of a port trust, is not a question within my province, but I am quite certain that the three points on which I have offered explanations afford no additional support whatever to such fears.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. PARKES.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

No. 2.

23, Abingdon Street,
7th September 1881.

Sir,

I shall be obliged by your noting and correcting an error in my letter of 1st September, paragraph 3. I find on further examination, that the portion of the south pier alluded to is having subsided is not that on which the "Titan" was standing during the storm of last November, but a portion which was built in April last. My explanation, however, is equally applicable, except where the date is specially mentioned, and would be correct if, for the words "during a heavy sea in last November," there were substituted "during the rough weather of last May." The case appears to be very similar to the previous one, and the general conclusion is in no way affected.

Apologizing for my inadvertence,

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. PARKES.

The Under Secretary of State
for India.

P. W. C. 5055
No. 2

Despatch No. 2
2012
GO. No. 106 W. 26/28
2011 W. 26/28

Public Works
22nd Sep. 1881

The
Letter to Port St. George
No. 31. & Enclosures

Recd. 20 Oct. '81
The Hon. the Governor

For
No. 2572 W. 20th Oct. '81
Recorded with

reference to the De-
patch to the Secretary
of State No. 2012 of
17th August 1881.

Attest

16/10/81

Red Seal

Attest

16/10/81 Attest
16/10/81

2 C.P. 6055.

Govt. of (1881) Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

Dated

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O. 20th Oct. 1881, No. 2592 W

Nos. 167 to 168.

Madras Harbour Works

Letter from the Secy. of
State transmitting letters
from Mr. Parkes on the
stability of ~~works~~ the
works, recorded.

Subd in Receipt Regt.