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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
P.W. DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

3rd August 1881, No. 378.

Santopilly Reef.

Read the following paper :—

From Colonel G. CHESNEY, Secretary to the Government of India, Military (Marine) Department, to the Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, dated Simla, 16th July 1881, No. 716-S [Current No. 463].

Lighting.

I am directed to forward, for the information of the Government of Madras, a copy of the correspondence noted in the margin, relative to a proposal made by the Committee of Lloyds for the removal by blasting of the Santopilly reef on the Orissa Coast.

2. I am to request that the Government of Madras may be moved to give effect, as soon as possible, to the suggestions of the Committee on lighthouses in regard to the preliminary boring operations and a careful examination of the reef by means of divers, and favor the Government of India with a report in view to the question being fully considered and a reply furnished to the Secretary of State. The Superintendent of Marine Surveys will at the same time be directed to take steps for a careful survey of the locality.

3. I am to add that the indent forwarded last October for a second order dioptric light to replace the present fourth order one at Santopilly has been held over for a decision on this question.

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

Despatch from the Most Honorable the Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Most Honorable the Governor-General of India in Council, dated India Office, London, 3rd February 1881 (Statistics and Commerce, No. 24).

I forward, herewith, a copy of a letter from the Committee of Lloyds, and enclosure, relative to a proposal for the removal by blasting of the Santopilly reef on the Orissa Coast.

2. It will be seen that the cost of this operation is estimated at about £10,000, against which it is supposed there may be set off the abolition of the cost of maintaining the present lighthouse on the coast, which is said to be about Rs. 2,500 per annum. If these figures are correct, the outlay required for the destruction of the reef would represent a capital invested at 2½ per cent.

3. I request to be furnished with the result of your consideration of this matter for communication to the Committee of Lloyds.

From H. M. HOZIER, Esq., Secretary, to the Assistant Secretary of State for India, India Office, dated 18th January 1881.

I am directed by the Committee of Lloyds to forward you, herewith, a copy of a communication which has been received from Lloyds' Agents at Bimlipatani, with reference to the Santopilly reef; and shall be much obliged if you will kindly allow the same to be laid before the Secretary of State for India.

2. I am instructed to request that you will be good enough to inform the Marquis of Hartington, that the Committee of Lloyds regret that they have no funds at their disposal to devote to the purpose suggested.

From Lloyds' Agents, Bimlipatam, to the Secretary, Lloyds, London, dated Bimlipatam, 16th December 1880, No. 584.

We are given to understand that a proposition is about to be made to the Association of Lloyds by Noble's Explosive Company, Glasgow, to blast away the Santopilly reef to a depth of six or seven fathoms and thus remove this serious danger to coasting navigation. The Agent of Nobel's Explosive Company recently paid a visit to Bimlipatam in pursuit of his mission for the introduction of dynamite and the other explosives which his Company manufacture into India for use in Public Works, and our attention being at the time engaged on the *Lassa* wrecked on this reef we had some conversation with Mr. Harris, the Agent referred to, as to the feasibility of removing this danger altogether by dynamite. The object we had in our inquiries was to acquaint ourselves with the practicability of the project with the view, on suitable opportunity offering, of proposing to Government that they should undertake the removal of the rock, and we had no intention of proposing the undertaking of the work by your Association, nor were we informed by Mr. Harris that he had such a proposal in contemplation, although we now learn on good authority that he had suggested the matter to his principals. We have ourselves no knowledge as to whether the proposed work is one in which the underwriters of Lloyds would be disposed to take any share, but the removal of this reef would be an undoubted gain to all interested in the coasting trade of India, and to none more than to underwriters covering vessels engaged in the coasting trade of India, and we address you on the subject as it seems to us that the matter is one in which even if the underwriters to Lloyds should not be inclined to take any personal share, the Association might feel disposed to use their powerful influence to induce the Government of India to undertake the removal of the reef as proposed.

2. The reef, as you are aware, is situated in latitude $18^{\circ} 4' 56''$ north, and longitude $83^{\circ} 37' 35''$ east, is $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from the land, and lies in 10 fathoms of water. The depth of water over the reef varies from 7 feet in parts to 15 feet, and the whole reef is believed to be about 200 yards in length with a much narrower breadth. During fine weather when the sea is ordinarily smooth the water does not break over the reef, nor does it present any discoloured appearance to indicate the locality of the danger. The reef is indicated by a white fixed light of the fourth order situated on shore distant $6\frac{1}{2}$ nautical miles from the rock, and this light (which we believe is not held in much estimation by those experienced in the navigation of the coast) although it indicates the vicinity of the danger does not serve as an indication to ships of their distance from the land and by parity of reasoning from the danger itself. The reef, therefore, lying as it does directly in the trade of all coasting vessels and also as indicated by the loss of the *Lassa* to some extent in the track of vessels making the voyage between Calcutta and Madras is an extremely serious danger which could only be efficiently marked by a lighthouse on the reef itself. Within the past four years two very fine vessels, the *S.S. Dacca* and the *Lassa*, valued at about £70,000 sterling (without taking into consideration the cargo of the *Dacca*), have been totally lost on this reef, and the coasting trade is on the increase year by year, the British India Steam Navigation Company alone have on an average three steamers passing within a few miles of the reef every week, and besides these there are the other vessels engaged in the coasting trade, and the yearly more numerous vessels arriving on or leaving this coast for or with cargo for Europe, in addition to which there are occasional vessels passing close to the reef on the voyage between Madras and Calcutta. It seems to us, therefore, that the time is not far distant when the Government of India will be called upon to provide some more effectual protection from this serious danger than the existing lighthouse affords, and Mr. Harris' expedient of blasting away the reef to a safe depth would in all probability be found more economical than the erection and subsequent maintenance of a lighthouse on the reef itself, which is the only alternative method of efficiently protecting shipping from the present danger.

3. Mr. Harris in conversation with us roughly estimated the probable cost of blasting away the reef to a depth of 6 or 7 fathoms with dynamite at about £10,000 sterling, and as against this the removal of the reef by blasting as proposed would save Government the expense of maintaining the present lighthouse, about Rs. 2,500 per annum we believe, which is equal at 4 per cent. per annum to a principal of Rs. 60,000, while the present buildings might possibly, though not very probably, be turned to account in some other way. The outlay, therefore, that would be incurred in carrying out Mr. Harris' project (if that gentleman's estimate is not very far out) would be quite insignificant as compared with the benefit which the removal of the reef would confer on the coasting trade of India, and we would respectfully submit, for the consideration of the Association, the expediency of making a strong representation to Government on the subject.

From Commander A. DUNDAS TAYLOR, late I.N., Superintendent of Marine Surveys to the Government of India, and President of Committee on Indian Lighthouse Administration, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military (Marine) Department, dated Calcutta, 2nd July 1881, No. 64 (Lights).

In continuation of my letter, No. 60, dated 16th June 1881, I have the honor to inform you that the Committee, having considered the correspondence, as per margin, regarding the proposed removal of the Santopilly rocks by blasting, would beg to report that it does not appear from these letters that the Agent of the Dynamite Company has visited the rock, or that any one has made any recent measurements or

sections to ascertain the extent of rock to be removed.

It is only stated that the whole reef is believed to be about 200 yards in length with a much narrower breadth.

2. The absence of any proof that the rock has been examined, together with the vagueness of expression as to the depth to be attained, viz., six or seven fathoms, as if an extra thickness of six feet of rock (to be removed from a depth of thirty-six feet below the surface) were of no moment, induces the Committee to accept with considerable reserve the estimate of £10,000, which, in the absence of any figures or measurements, can only be a guess.

3. It is not stated in the correspondence that Mr. Harris is prepared to undertake the job for a lump sum of £10,000, and the Committee would recommend that, before any further steps are taken, a complete plan of the rock, on a scale of not less than fifty feet to an inch, should be made, and that careful sections be taken so that the amount of cubic yards to be removed may be calculated. It should also be ascertained beyond a doubt, by sweeping, that no detached lumps exist, and, further, that a few trial borings should be made to ascertain the description of the rock that has to be removed. It would be well also if the whole reef were thoroughly examined by a diver.

4. In conclusion, the Committee would suggest, for the consideration of Government, that if the Dynamite Company would guarantee to remove the Santopilly rock, down to a level at mean tide of seven fathoms, for the sum named, it would be a desirable offer to accept.

5. The original correspondence, above marginally noted, is herewith returned.

ORDER THEREON, 3rd August 1881, No. 378.

Forwarded to the Master Attendant for early report.

(True Extract.)

John Harris
Agent
Chief Secretary.

To the Master Attendant, Madras.
" Public Works Department.

Exd. J. Wright.

S. L. C.

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P. H. C. No 4549
Govt. of (1881) Madras.
MARINE.

No 1988 Waf 13th Augth 1881.

Received

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To
THE MASTER ATTENDANT,

Madras,

&c.,

&c.,

&c.,

Dated August, 3rd.

In case

Recd. 11 Aug. 11

G.O., 3rd August 1881, No. 378.

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AUGUST.

B. No 1988 Waf 13th Augth 1881.

Santopilly Reef.—Forwarding, for early report, letter from the Government of India transmitting correspondence relative to a proposal made by the Committee of Lloyds for the removal by blasting of the Santopilly reef on the Orissa Coast.

Sadd. in Receipt Regt.

With order