

No 7354

Govt. of (1883) Madras.

FINANCIAL.

305C

No 2413 Wd 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 83

Recorded

CV  
27/9

Issued

Recd. 27/9/83

Encl.

G.O., 11th August 1883, No. 1732.

No 2413 Wd 28-8-83

AUGUST.

Light Railways.

Communicating to all Collectors, Proceedings of Government, Public Works Department, appointing a Committee to report on questions connected with the scheme for the construction of — as protective works in tracts of the Madras Presidency liable to famine.

W. H. S. S. S.

Encl in Receipt Register

A5

B5

A4

B4

A3

B5

A4

11TH AUGUST 1883, No. 1732, FINANCIAL.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper :—

G.O., dated 30th July 1883, No. 2062 W., Public Works.

*Read*—again G.O., dated 18th December 1882, No. 3346-7 W., Public Works.

*Read*—also the following papers :—

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 5th January 1883, No. 10.

Read—the following letter from J. G. HORSFALL, Esq., Collector of Kistna, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Masulipatam, 6th November 1882, No. 2840 :—

In accordance with paragraph 17 of Board's Proceedings, No. 2230, dated 7th September 1882, I have the honor to bring to the recollection of the Board the project for a railway or tramway from Bezvada to Hyderabad.

2. This scheme has been discussed more than once as is known to the present Acting Third Member of the Board.

3. From Bezvada, connected by canal with Cocanada, Masulipatam and Madras, the line would pass on the left bank of the Kistna, crossing only two tributaries—the Muniru and Palár—which would not present very great difficulties, and then would traverse the Nizam's territory. A glance at the map will show that no difficulty in the construction of this line need be apprehended there. No large river need be crossed, and a comparatively level trace can doubtless be made winding among the undulating hills of the Deccan.

4. The line would pass by the important trading town of Jaggayapet. Opium and other goods from Central India would find their way to the coast, and the salt and rice of the Kistna District would take this route inland. It seems strange that the line was not made long ago.

5. The Nizam's Government are, I understand, about to construct a line from Hyderabad to Chanda. This would considerably shorten the proposed line from

\* Probably one hundred miles. Bezvada, which need only to be carried to the nearest point of the Chanda line.\*

6. The Singareni coal-fields in the vicinity of Varangal would not be far to the north of this line.

7. The Famine Commissioners when here appeared to be favorably impressed with the proposal.

8. A recent paragraph in the newspapers stated that among the projects before the Government of India was one for a railway from Kurnool to Guntúr. That would be of little use except in famine years, but the line I suggest would be profitable in favorable as well as unfavorable years.

Resolution—dated 5th January 1883, No. 10.

Submitted to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, dated 7th September 1882, No. 2230.

2. The line from Bezváda to Hyderabad, now proposed by the Collector, was, with other lines, discussed in the papers printed with G.O., dated 20th September 1871, No. 2396, Public Works Department, and it was also reported upon by the Consulting Engineer for Railways in his letter printed in G.O., dated 19th September 1868, No. 2967, Public Works Department.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,  
Acting Secretary.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 5th January 1883, No. 13.

Read—the following letter from J. LEE-WARNER, Esq., Acting Collector of Nellore, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated 15th December 1882, No. 6727 :—

With reference to the Board's reminder in memorandum, 7th December 1882, I have the honor to express regret that it had escaped my memory that a reply was expected to Board's Proceedings, dated 7th September 1882, No. 2230. Since I have joined the District my attention has been drawn to the advantages of a line of road connecting Nellore with the Madras Railway almost direct *viâ* Podalakur and Rápúr, and I would certainly propose to add this one to the lines suitable for a tramway suggested by my predecessor. It should be observed that the experience gained by this year shows that the East Coast Buckingham Canal cannot be depended upon at all in times of drought. The Canal Officers can say what they please as to water-level having been abnormally low in the Pulicat lake, and so on and so on; but the fact remains that during the most important months of this year, when the merchants wanted to export their goods to Madras, the Buckingham Canal failed. Again, as soon as heavy freshes came down the rivers in November, the canal became so silted in places that it became impassable for days together. Traffic between Kistnapatam and Kottapatam (Ongole), suspended since the 28th November, is only just re-opened. A great advantage of this route now proposed is that it encounters no cross drainage, if the Kandleru is excepted; and even where the Kandleru has to be crossed, that stream is only in its infancy, and therefore not a very formidable obstacle. The only difficulty of any magnitude is the last mile of the ghât over the Rápúr pass, and no doubt the Engineers will find an easy mode of surmounting that.

Resolution—dated 5th January 1883, No. 13.

Submitted to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, dated 7th September 1882, No. 2230.

2. The reminder was sent to the Collector by a clerical error, but the Board are glad to receive Mr. Lee-Warner's suggestions.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,  
Acting Secretary.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 5th January 1883, No. 14.

Read—the following letter from H. W. BLISS, Esq., Commissioner of Salt Revenue, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Madras, 11th December 1882, No. 13754 :—

I have the honor to furnish the report called for in the last paragraph of the Board's Proceedings, No. 2230, dated September 7, 1882, which was inadvertently overlooked until the receipt of a reminder.

2. The following, of those mentioned by the Board, are the steam tramway lines, the construction of which seems to me most likely to be beneficial to the salt trade :—

*Nellore*.—Iskapalle or Krishnapatam *viâ* Sangam and Dornal Pass into Cuddapah.

*South Arcot*.—(1) Merkanam to Sámalpati, (2) Cuddalore *viâ* Kallakurchi, Chinna Salem and Atúr to Salem.

*Madura*.—Madura to Ramnad and Pámban (with a branch to Kilakarai and possibly another branch to Devipatam).

3. To these I would add—

*Tanjore*.—Nídámangalam *viâ* Mannárgudi to Mutupet and Adirámpatnam.

*Tinnevelly*.—Tinnevelly (Railway Station) *viâ* Palamcottah, Pudugudi (Srívai-kuntham), Alvár Tinnevelly and Arumuganeri (salt-pans) to Káyalpatnam (port) and Tiruchendúr (great place of pilgrimage).

4. I think the usefulness of these two lines is obvious. They would carry grain towards the coast and salt from it, and passengers both ways. The passenger traffic between Mutupet and Káyalpatnam on this side and Cingalese ports on the other is, I believe, very considerable. On the whole, I should say that these two lines are as likely to pay as any which could be named. It is, at all events, certain that the Tanjore and Tinnevelly Local Fund Boards are at least as well able as those of any other district to guarantee interest on the cost of constructing tramway lines if that method of raising capital for their construction should find favor, as I think it should do.

5. With regard to the connection of Kurnool with the coast, which appears a most desirable preventive measure in the event of famine, I beg to point out that the Government of India has already ordered the survey of a line from that district to Guntúr. The line selected would presumably be from Kurnool by the existing pass through the Nallamallai Hills to Cumbum, and thence *viâ* Podili and Darsi; and the object would be to connect Kurnool with the deltas of the Kistna and Godávári, where food-supplies should never fail. But Guntúr is, if I mistake not, separated by some distance from the deltaic tracts and from the canals by which their produce should be brought to the railway. It also appears to me a matter of importance that lines running inland should have a terminus at the best available port on the coast. I would therefore suggest, as an alternative route for this line, that it should run *viâ* Podili to Ongole, and thence turn northward to Ipurupálem, a good anchorage and a place already of sufficient trade for it to be worth while for the British India steamers to call there pretty regularly. With a very slight detour such a line would touch Kanuparti, whence the transport of salt into Kurnool and Bellary would then be greatly cheapened; and at its crossing of the Commamur Canal (possibly over the bridge already sanctioned on the road from Inkole to Chinna Ganjam) would communicate in the easiest manner with the whole navigation system of the East Coast, delivering direct into the canal boats the timber of Kurnool and receiving from them the rice of the two deltas. It may be that Guntúr is only intended as the temporary terminus of the Kurnool line; but I do not see how such a line can possibly pay, or even fulfil its purpose as a protection against famine, unless it is at least extended so as actually to join the great system of inland communication formed by the navigable canals branching from the Kistna and Godávári rivers and by the Buckingham Canal, which traverses the whole length of the Nellore District. I may add that I believe Mr. Wilson, who is intimately acquainted with the Kistna District, has given considerable attention to the capabilities of the port of

Ipurupálem, and would be able at once to say how far my idea that it is the natural terminus of the Kurnool line is correct.

Resolution—dated 5th January 1883, No. 14.

Submitted to Government in continuation of Board's Proceedings, dated 7th September 1882, No. 2230.

2. The Board have consulted Mr. Wilson regarding the capabilities of the port of Ipurupálem, and learn that he is of opinion that since the opening of through communication by canal between Cocanada and Madras the prospect of its becoming a port of any importance has entirely disappeared; the steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company have long ceased to call there. On the other hand, three villages of the Guntúr Taluk are situated within the Kistna Western Delta, and the town of Guntúr is only nine miles distant by a good road from the through canal.

(A true Copy and Extract.)

(Signed) E. GIBSON,  
*Acting Secretary.*

Read—again G.O., dated 25th April 1883, No. 361 R., Public Works.

Read—also the following papers:—

From Colonel W. S. TREVOR, R.E., Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department (Railway Construction), to the Secretary to the Government of Madras, Public Works Department, dated Simla, 28th April 1883, No. 364 R.C.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 3347W., dated 18th December 1882, forwarding, for the favorable consideration of the Government of India, certain documents containing proposals for a scheme of light railways to be constructed as protective works in the tracts of the Madras Presidency liable to famine. That scheme is summarised in the 55th paragraph of the Chief Engineer's Note, dated 11th November, which forms one of the accompaniments to your letter.

2. From the summary it would appear that nothing more definite than the bare outline of a general policy for the gradual improvement of the means of inland communication within the so-called famine zone has yet been matured.

3. It would further appear that the intention is to carry out these improvements from funds to be provided out of the Imperial protective grant under a new sub-head of "Famine Roads." The contributions from this source are to begin with one lakh in 1883-84, and to increase thereafter by one lakh annually until a maximum outlay of five lakhs per annum is reached.

4. It is also contemplated that the improvements under the scheme shall be limited to an aggregate of 1,000 miles of reformed roadway, and that in the first instance these improvements shall be confined to widening, metalling and otherwise improving as many of the selected lines of road as possible for the reception of permanent-way of such character as may hereafter be decided on. But, except for purely experimental purposes on a small scale, and as a reserve against possible contingency of severe scarcity or famine, no expenditure is to be incurred on the provision of permanent-way or rolling stock until the complete reformation of all the roadways embraced by the scheme has been effected.

5. Finally, it is expected that these operations will extend over a period of forty years, at the close of which term it is hoped that the whole of the 1,000 miles of road under treatment will have been converted into light railways or trams on the 2 feet gauge; though the final process of conversion will not practically begin until at least ten years after the scheme has been set on foot, that time being apparently needed

to carry out the preliminary operation of putting the selected roads into proper order for the reception of the permanent-way.

6. If the above summary correctly expresses the character and scope of the proposals submitted for the approval of the Government of India, I am to say that His Excellency the Governor-General in Council regrets his inability to accept them. In the first place, His Excellency in Council is not prepared to relieve the provincial and local revenues of the obligation legitimately devolving on them to provide for the construction, improvement and maintenance of provincial and local roads at the expense of the general revenues of the empire, on which the burden of the protective grant falls.

7. Moreover, the application of funds from that grant to the construction of isolated tramways, or even light railways in short lengths for the exclusive benefit of a few restricted localities, is a measure which does not commend itself unreservedly to the Government of India. Until the main arterial protective lines, traversing trade-locked districts and connecting them with the great centres of production and consumption, have been made, it would, in the opinion of the Government of India, be a fatal mistake to expend the not too plentiful resources at its command on detached distributary or feeder lines of the lightest types, which, however much they might benefit the tracts they immediately serve, are incapable from their very character of coping with the exigencies of a severe famine affecting large areas of country and a vast population.

8. After the main arterial lines, projects for which are already under preparation, have been made through the most exposed tracts, and substantial security for an adequate supply of food being thrown into them on emergencies within reasonably accessible distances of the more populated parts has been afforded, the policy of applying the protective funds to the further development of the system by constructing minor distributaries to carry those supplies into the remoter villages may perhaps be considered. But until that desirable consummation is reached, I am to say that the Government of India cannot pledge itself to provide funds from Imperial sources for the prosecution of works which are essentially of a kind to be undertaken either directly by the Provincial Government itself or through the agency of Local Boards.

9. I am to observe, however, that though the Government of India is not prepared to take upon itself the financial responsibility of the scheme now submitted to it, it does not disapprove of the principle of adding to and improving internal communications on a systematic plan. Light railways and metalled roads are unquestionably valuable auxiliaries for the mitigation of distress in times of scarcity, as well for the general development of trade and prosperity in ordinary times. But it is the duty of the Local rather than of the Imperial Government to provide such auxiliaries.

10. To help the Local Government to carry out its object with the resources at its own command, the Government of India would be prepared to consider the propriety of any changes in the law which may be requisite in order to allow of Local Boards guaranteeing, under due control and to a limited extent, interest for works constructed by private agency in their districts. It must, however, be carefully considered in each case whether the system of guaranteeing interest to a private company is or is not preferable to a system under which the Boards would borrow direct and construct the lines without the intervention of any such agency. Under the revised rules of the Act of 1879 such local authorities are, moreover, not restricted to remunerative works in their borrowing. They already possess, therefore, the powers to raise the necessary funds for carrying on these protective works, and it seems to the Government of India that this power might with advantage be exercised for so beneficial an object, under the general controlling authority of the Local Government. I am, however, to explain that the above remarks are subject to any decision which may be arrived at on the question of railway policy in general, upon which the Government of India are in correspondence with the Secretary of State.

11. In conclusion, I am to say that His Excellency the Governor-General in Council will await any further proposals that the Government of Madras may have to make in respect to this matter.

G.O., dated 28th June 1883, No. 1335, Financial.

Order—dated 30th July 1883, No. 2062 W., Public Works.

In their letter of the 28th April 1883 recorded above, the Government of India reply to the proposals which have been laid before them for a scheme of light railways to be constructed as protective works in the tracts of the Madras Presidency liable to famine. That Government are not, it is stated, prepared to undertake the financial responsibility of a scheme of auxiliary lines such as that recommended, but would be willing to help the local Government by considering the propriety of any changes in the law requisite to allow of Local Boards guaranteeing, under due control and to a limited extent, interest for works constructed by private agency within their circles.

2. As regards main lines of communication which the Government of India consider should first be undertaken, Railway Surveys are, it is observed, in active progress, and these will provide, so far as can now be judged, all that is needed in the way of trunk lines in the famine zone.

3. The immediate subjects for consideration therefore are—

- (1) the best method of connecting the great centres of production and consumption with these main lines, and the routes to be followed;
- (2) the agency by which the work is to be done, and the source whence funds are to be drawn.

4. Under Item (1) should be considered whether it will be advisable to substitute mechanical power for animal draft, and, if so, whether it would be desirable to apply such power in the form of road-engines or steam-engines working on tram or light railways applied to existing roads improved for the purpose, or to light railways carried on independent embankments.

5. Should the preference be given to light railways, it is also for consideration whether the gauge should be the metre, or 2 feet.

6. To deal satisfactorily with these questions the Government resolve to nominate the following officers, who will form themselves into a Committee for the purpose, with power to add to their number:—

|                                         |            |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| J. H. Garstin, Esq., C.S.I., President. | } Members. |
| Colonel J. H. M. Shaw-Stewart, R.E.,    |            |
| Colonel H. L. Prendergast, R.E.,        |            |
| Major C. Bowen, R.E.,                   |            |

7. The Committee will have power to take evidence *viva voce*, if necessary, from Collectors and Superintending Engineers, and to call on those officers to furnish reports direct. The latter will probably be preferable.

8. As regards Item (2), there seems little prospect of the ordinary establishment or resources of Government or Local Fund Boards being available to the required extent, but it would appear that by revised rules issued by the Government of India under the Local Loans Act, it will in future be practicable for Local Fund Boards to raise funds for works which are not strictly remunerative. The removal of this restriction by putting it in the power of Local Boards to open out lines of communication which, though unremunerative as a commercial investment will be useful in ordinary times, will doubtless to a certain extent facilitate the distribution of food in seasons of scarcity. The Committee should endeavour to ascertain how far local bodies may be depended on to co-operate in this direction with the State for the object in view.

9. The report of the Committee should reach Government not later than the middle of October.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) C. BOWEN, Major, R.E.,  
Under Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.

To the Members of the Committee.  
„ Superintending Engineers.  
„ the Consulting Engineer for Railways.  
„ the Financial Department.

ORDER—dated 11th August 1883, No. 1732, Financial.

Communicated to all Collectors for information and guidance with reference to paragraph 7.

(True Extract.)

*Richard Rogers*  
for Acting Chief Secretary.

To all Collectors.  
„ the Public Works Department  
„ the Board of Revenue.

Exd. W. H. French.