

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following paper :—

Extracts paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 9 of letter from the Master Attendant, Madras, dated 13th April 1885, No. 3078.

Para. 3. Not having received any official intelligence regarding the reconstruction of the harbour so far as the distribution of funds is concerned, I can only deal with the question from the aid of such general information as I have been able to obtain. From this source I gather that the Imperial Government has decided to give up all claim to capital and interest upon the money spent up to the time of the destruction of the walls in November 1881, and throw all future responsibility upon the trade of the port through the medium of a trust. It is impossible to deny that this reads like a very liberal arrangement, though it imposes the liability of all future mistakes and accidents upon the port, and although the method of reconstruction is not one that has found favor in the eyes, or recommended itself to the intelligence, of those chiefly interested upon the spot. The chief element of disaster, viz., the retention of an upright narrow wall on a treacherous foundation of mud and sand is still one of the chief features of the new works, and will, I fear, expose it to the same risks as its predecessor; while the eastern opening, by allowing the terrible ground-swell of cyclonic weather to enter freely, and search alternately every corner of the harbour, will render the internal arrangements of quays, wharves, docks, &c., exceedingly costly, and liable to periodic destruction. The gradual settlement of the old walls during the last three years is a significant fact that I much fear has escaped the attention of the eminent engineers who have from a distance advised the Secretary of State on this question, so important to Madras. But it is very palpable to observers here, and my renewed attention was drawn to it in a marked manner a few days ago by a distinguished engineer officer, who makes periodical visits here, and whose business is directly connected with tides and levels; he involuntarily started when he looked from my office on to the harbour, and declared he did not know the place again, almost every vestige of the well-remembered broken walls having vanished. I need hardly say that such a settlement would not interfere with the rough block construction advocated by the Madras Committee, but is almost sure to prove fatal to a perpendicular wall pressed upon by an enormous mass of concrete heavier far than water, and not allowing any recovery after any shock from sea or storm.

4. With regard to the eastern entrance, it has to be observed that the Colombo harbour, while shutting out completely the swell so obnoxious to Madras, yet admits from its northern opening so large an amount of rough water raised by north-west winds, that Sir John Coode has been compelled to admit the imperative necessity of a breakwater to keep it out, before any comfort can be given to lighters and quays; so that to me it is inexplicable why he should deny Madras the still more imperative aid of a breakwater on the sea face of its harbour. Again at Pondicherry, from which place I have just returned, the French engineers have projected a harbour, which they hope to see carried out. Its estimated cost is about a crore of rupees, and I fear the money difficulty will hardly be overcome in the present state of French finance, but however that may be, the design is complete, and consists of a dock excavated out of the backwater and bank, a short way inland, communication with which is to be maintained by two training walls, separated by about one quarter of our

harbour width, leading out to $5\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms water, and the entrance to which is to be secured by a breakwater. I append a rough sketch to illustrate the general design. With all this engineering evidence, and the published opinions of the most experienced commanders who visit the port of Madras, I respectfully trust that my persistence on this subject may be excused on the plea of my most urgent convictions.

5. However, I quite recognize the fact that the Secretary of State could not do otherwise than act on the advice of engineers of such reputation as have been consulted in London, and the concluding portion of the Secretary of State's letter of 25th September 1884, leaves a margin for further reference, if more proof becomes available.

9. In conclusion, I would ask permission to refer to a remark contained in His Excellency the Governor's most valuable minutes, viz., "That water never pardons mistakes." The sea has taught Madras one lesson, and gives many hints that it will be repeated, if the warning is not attended to. To laugh at Neptune is now proved to be a costly and unsatisfactory operation, and a careful local unprejudiced study is demanded by the unusual situation.

ORDER—dated 6th June 1885, No. 235, Marine.

Communicated to the Public Works department.

(True Extract.)

M. HAMMICK,
Ag. Under Secy. to Govt.

To the Public Works department.

Exd. T. O'Connor..

14.11.03.

P. W. D.

Govt. of (1885) Madras.

MARINE.

—

Recorded.

(Signed) H. H.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 6th June 1885, No. 235.

N^o 1542 Wd/2-7-83

JUNE.

Madras Harbour.

Communicating to the Public Works department extracts from a letter from the Master Attendant containing his views respecting the reconstruction of the —.

With order

S. M. H. Works.

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Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 6th June 1885, No. 235.

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6TH JUNE 1885, No. 235, MARINE.

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To the Public Works department.

Exd. T. O'Connor..

(11) Incl 5494
Govt. of (1885) Madras.

MARINE.

Issued

Recd. 22/6/85.

Encl.

G.O., 6th June 1885, No. 235.

JUNE.

Madras Harbour.

Communicating to the Public Works department extracts from a letter from the Master Attendant containing his views respecting the reconstruction of the —.

No 1542 Wap 2nd July/85
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Recorded
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23.6.85

US
26.6.85

S. M. H. W. V. S.
M. H. W. 27/85

Via No 1543 W-2-7-85

SS 105/6

26/6/85

27/6/85