

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Buildings and Roads.
Civil Works.

READ—the following papers :—

From F. N. THOROWGOOD, Esq., M. INST., C.E., Superintendent, Madras Harbour Works, to the Examiner of Public Works Accounts, dated Madras, 8th December 1885, No. 17 C.

With reference to G.O., No. 2738 W., dated 16th November 1885, sanctioning the estimate of expenditure up to 31st December 1885, I have the honor to request that you will be good enough to inform me what procedure I am to adopt in obtaining funds for January next, as no information on the subject has been received.

2. On the receipt of your reply the estimate of funds will be prepared for submission to your office.

Endersement on the above.

No. 480 X.

Forwarded to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, for early orders.

(Signed) D. C. GORDON,
Examiner, Public Works Accounts.
9th December 1885.

From F. N. THOROWGOOD, Esq., M. INST., C.E., Superintendent, Madras Harbour Works, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 12th December 1885, No. 45 W.

	rs.	
Works	1,43,778	In returning herewith your endorse-
Establishment	13,594	ment, No. 2117 C., dated 11th December
Tools and Plant	20,000	1885, I have the honor to submit an
Suspense	42,922	estimate of expenditure on these works
Total	2,20,294	from 1st January 1886 to 31st March
		1886, as marginally noted.

ORDER—dated 15th December 1885, No. 3013 W., Public Works.

Ordered that the following telegram be sent to the Government of India :—

“ Your 299 A. G., 5th November.

“ Please sanction further estimate Rs. 2,20,294 for Harbour Works from 1st January to 31st March 1886. Details will follow.

“ Including Rs. 85,000 asked in my 2880 W., of 3rd instant, total estimate for 1885-86 will be Rs. 8,35,840.

“ Further delay probable in passing Harbour Trust Act into law.”

2. A copy of these Proceedings will be forwarded to the Government of India, in continuation of endorsement No. 2881 W., dated 3rd December 1886.

(Here enter No. 3014 W., dated 15th December 1885.)

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. SHAW-STEWART, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

To the Superintendent, Madras Harbour Works.
„ Examiner, Public Works Accounts.
„ Marine Department.

ENDORSEMENT—dated 15th December 1885, No. 3014 W., Public Works.

Forwarded.

(Signed) J. SHAW-STEWART, Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Govt., P.W.D.

BUILDINGS AND ROADS.
CIVIL WORKS.

Govt. of (1885) Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

Dated December, 15th.

Recd.

Encl.

G.O., 15th Dec. 1885, No. 3014 W.

DECEMBER.

Madras Harbour Works

Forwarding copy of orders on estimate
of expenditure on — from January to
March 1886.

25TH JANUARY 1886, No. 17, LEGISLATIVE.

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

LETTER—from

THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVT. OF
FORT ST. GEORGE,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter, No. 721, dated 22nd ultimo, transmitting a communication addressed by the Madras Chamber of Commerce to the Government of India in which certain amendments to the Madras Harbour Trust Act, which was passed by the Legislative Council on the 5th October 1885, are urged, and also a letter from the Madras Trades Association praying for more adequate representation on the Harbour Board.

2. In your letter under reply, the Government of Madras are called upon to state fully the reasons for negating the wishes of the Chamber of Commerce, and to give an opinion as to the expediency of making over to the Trust the administration of the Port of Madras in addition to that of the Harbour.

3. In advertence to the first requisition, I am to say that the amendments which find expression in the letter which the Honorable Mr. Boyson, as Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, has addressed to the Government of India, were proposed by him in his capacity as Member of the Legislative Council of Fort St. George, and were rejected by a majority of that assembly after full discussion—a decision which, when the Act was sent to the Right Honorable the Governor for his assent, there were no valid grounds for dissenting from. The amendments, had they been carried, would have necessitated the re-drafting of the whole Bill, and would have gone far beyond the intended scope of the measure as indicated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, which has been long before the Government of India.

4. Turning now to the letter from the Chamber of Commerce to which your communication under reply gave cover, I am directed to say that this Government have read with astonishment the statement which finds expression in the third paragraph in these words—

“At the eleventh hour the Chamber has learnt with unqualified surprise that it is not a Port Trust but only a Harbour Trust which is to be formed. It has all along been led to believe that the Port of Madras was to be placed under a control identical with that which has been found to work well in Calcutta and Bombay.”

5. In connection with this statement signed by Mr. Boyson, himself a Member of the Legislative Council, Madras, I am to invite the attention of the Government of

* Abstract Proceedings of the Madras Legislative Council, dated 22nd August 1881, 10th February and 29th June 1882, 22nd October 1884, 3rd February, 12th August, and 5th October 1885.

India to the proceedings of that body noted in the margin,* from which it will be seen that from the time the Bill was first introduced in July 1881, the avowed object of the measure was to “provide for the regulation, conservancy, and

improvement of the *Harbour* ;” it has all along been designated “ a Bill to provide

* See also section 4 of the Act.

† “ Harbour means the artificial harbour at Madras consisting of the enclosing groynes and the enclosed space and the corresponding foreshore east of the beach road and all buildings, structures or appliances provided by the Governor in Council or the Trust Board for the purposes of the Harbour and of the vessels using it, together with the moorings therein laid down by the Government or the Trustees.”

quoted above, that the Chamber has been throughout misled as to the scope of the measure, is obviously based on a misapprehension of facts which have been patent to the public for upwards of four years.

6. I am now to explain the circumstances in which His Excellency in Council considers it not only expedient but necessary for the public interest that the administration of the Port of Madras, as distinguished from the Harbour, should continue under the control of the Government in the Marine department.

7. In Bombay and Calcutta the terms Port and Harbour are synonymous, but at Madras the anchorage is in a dangerous roadstead, and at present, owing to the half-ruined condition of the harbour walls, more dangerous than it was before the first stone of the structure was laid. This being the case, and having regard to the tempestuous weather so prevalent in the Bay of Bengal, the utmost vigilance, combined with nautical skill of a high order, has constantly to be exercised in the control of the shipping, without which grave disaster to life and property would inevitably result. The Port Officer at Madras has even a more anxious and responsible post than the Commander of a vessel, and, like him, he must be perfectly free to act according to his discretion without possibility of his action being questioned or interfered with. This would certainly not be the case if, as desired by the Chamber, he became the servant of the Trust and had to attend to the orders of half-a-dozen masters and to satisfy as many conflicting interests. Even if the assertion that the officers of the Indian Marine who fill the post at Bombay and Calcutta stand in that relation to the Port Trustees at those places be correct—on which point this Government is without information—there is no analogy between the conditions of those ports and of Madras. In the former localities, when a vessel is once in the river or in the land-locked harbour, she ceases to be an object of nautical anxiety, whatever the state of the weather may be; moored alongside the quay, she takes in or discharges her cargo as easily as a bale of goods is hoisted from the street into a warehouse, and in the case of embarking troops or animals, they have simply to walk on board. But at Madras, when bad weather comes on, the first duty of the Marine Department is to order every ship out of the harbour, and even in moderate weather, all communication has to be carried on by a boat service, the operation being often one of considerable risk, and it is mainly due to the boatmen being amenable to the control of the Marine department, that accidents so rarely occur. It was owing to the excellent organization of this service that the troops for Burmah, including transport cattle and cavalry horses, were so successfully and expeditiously embarked two months ago in the middle of the north-east monsoon, and I am directed to state, as the opinion of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, that the difficulties of the operation would have been very greatly enhanced, and much regrettable delay have occurred, had the administration of the port been in other hands than those of the Government in the Marine department.

8. For the above reasons, His Excellency in Council considers that at any rate until the condition of the Madras Harbour offers the same security to vessels and the same facilities for transferring passengers and cargo that are met with at Bombay and Calcutta, it would not be expedient in the public interest for this Government to

Trustees* for the *Harbour* of Madras,” which in section 3 of the Bill is defined as shown in the margin,† and the property to be placed in trust is as clearly defined in the schedule appended. The Bill has been published over and over again since it was first introduced and has three times been considered and reported on by a Select Committee, of which the representative of the mercantile community in the Legislative Council has always been a Member. In these circumstances, the statement of the Hon. Mr. Boyson

divest itself of the administrative control of the port, in view to transferring it to a more or less irresponsible body, on which the Chamber of Commerce will be very influentially represented. It must be borne in mind that, after all, the Chamber are the representatives of but a very limited section of the community using the port, and that their views, which in this connection have been rejected by the Legislative Council, are widely divergent from those of other classes as much interested in the matter as the half-dozen firms who constitute nearly the whole European mercantile element in Madras. Native commerce is represented in the Chamber by only one member, and it is understood that he takes little or no part in its proceedings. On the other hand, it will be seen from the memorial of the Madras Trades Association, to which your letter under reply gave cover, that that body holds views not at all in accordance with those of the Chamber and resents the aspirations of the merchants to obtain a preponderating influence in the management of even the Harbour Trust. This fresh attempt to get into their hands the control of the port administration as well has been made since the Trades’ memorial was written, and will doubtless call forth a more vehement remonstrance, on the ground that the Chamber, as representing the shipping interest, would naturally be disposed to relieve ship-owners by reducing tonnage dues levied under the Indian Ports Act, thereby throwing an additional burden on Harbour dues, more than half of which are even now, as shown in the memorial, contributed by traders whose interests cannot be identified with those of the Chamber.

9. In paragraph 11 of your letter, dated 23rd May 1885, No. 869, Legislative, the following words occur, which were understood by this Government, before they received the letter under reply, to be absolutely final:—

Para. 11.—“ I am, in conclusion, to state that if the present Act is amended in the sense of the foregoing remarks, His Excellency will be prepared to give his assent to it.”

In consideration of this declaration and in view of the circumstances above stated, I am to express the hope that the action of this Government may receive the support of the Government of India, and to add that it has always been intended that the Harbour revenue should be liberally supplemented from tonnage dues levied on shipping at the port under the Indian Ports Act. In pursuance of this intention, I am to say that His Excellency in Council is prepared to transfer to the credit of the Harbour Trust the balance of all receipts from the source indicated after administrative charges have been provided for. The question of reducing the amount of these dues was submitted for the consideration of the Government of India with my letter, dated 21st November 1883, No. 563, Marine, but the matter was ordered to lie over, pending the constitution of the Harbour Trust.

10. In regard to the next proposal of the Chamber, that a less number than three members of the native community should, as provided in section 5 of the Act, be appointed to serve as Trustees, I am to observe that it is quite possible there may be a difficulty in finding so many persons sufficiently interested in the administration of the Harbour to make them useful members of the Board. But this, like the other amendment, was considered by the Legislative Council, and, having been negatived, the decision of the majority naturally prevailed.

11. Adverting further to the memorial of the Trades Association alluded to above, His Excellency in Council is of opinion that the members have a good deal to say for their view, but here again it has been decided by a majority of the Legislative Council that their representation on the Harbour Trust should be restricted to one member. It seems to have escaped the attention of the Trades Association that the Government have in their power, if they think the ends of justice will be furthered thereby, to have special regard in their appointment of Trustees to the claims of the Trades Association or of any other interest which may not from time to time be as strongly represented as is desirable. I am desired, however, to say that if, in the light of the explanation afforded above, the Act, as it stands, receives the assent of His Excellency the Viceroy, and if either the fears of the Chamber of Commerce with regard to the presence of too many natives, or that of the Trades Association with regard to their being under-represented, appear to be justified by events, a Bill to remedy these defects will be

immediately brought in. This arrangement commends itself to His Excellency in Council as calculated to meet all requirements without fear of consequences arising to which, I am to say, he would look forward with the gravest possible anxiety as fraught with far-reaching mischief unredeemed by the slightest advantage to the public.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

FORT ST. GEORGE,
25th January 1886.

(Signed) W. Wilson.
Ag. Chief Secretary.

*Copy forwarded to the Public
Works Dept for information.*

By Command.

*Ag. Asst. Secy to Govt.
Legislative Dept.*

To,

The Public Works Dept.

5 l. copies.

Edw. A. Raitt.

1886.

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

From the Government of
Fort St. George.



Issued 26/1/86.

Recd. 28/1/86.

Encl.

5. C. P. S.

Letter, 25th January 1886, No. 17.

JANUARY.

Madras Harbour Trust Act.

Submitting remarks on letters from the Madras
Chamber of Commerce and the Madras Trades
Association addressed to the Government of India
objecting to the — as passed by the local Council.

Vide Gazette Supplement of
1885

With order

No 276 Wd/ Jan. 1st 1886.

Recorded,
in continuation
of G.O. No 2201 Wd
d/ 19th Sept 1885

1/2/86

1-2-86

Jan 1886

1886