

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Department,

16th July 1866.

No. 97. Read the following letter from the Officiating Director General of Telegraphs in India, to the Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George; dated Calcutta, 29th June 1866, No. 1302.

My attention has lately been drawn to the very large number of Telegraph Offices in India, which, from being in such close proximity to one another, appear capable of abolition, and that without any inconvenience to the public, if their utility may be judged of by the amount of their receipts. As these Offices are now retained at a steady loss to Government, I cannot but think you will agree with me that it is advisable to abolish them as far as possible. On referring to the Government of India on this point, they agreed that the subject was one worthy of serious attention, but as it involved matters of detail, connected with the different Governments, they desired me, before submitting specific propositions, to obtain the views of those Governments. In accordance with these instructions, I have the honor to submit the following list of Offices for the consideration of His Excellency the Right Honorable the Governor, with such remarks against each as occur to me, and I should feel obliged by an expression of his opinion on the different recommendations.

Calingapatam.—This Office is only 15 miles distant from that of Chicacole, so that it would appear that one might be dispensed with advantageously. Their respective monthly collections are Rupees 69 and 82, and the expenses 134 and 330 Rupees, so that they give an aggregate loss to Government of 313 Rupees monthly. Commercially, Calingapatam is, I believe, the more important; but its importance must not be very great, or, at least, the trade does not appear to require the use of the Telegraph to any great extent. Chicacole is more useful to the Government for political reasons; the Office was of great use during the late Khond disturbance. It, therefore, appears that Calingapatam might the more advantageously be abandoned as an Office.

Vizianagram.—Is but 15 miles distant from Bimlipatam; its monthly receipts and expenses are Rupees 127 and 240 respectively. I believe this is a place of no importance, with the exception of its being the residence of the Maharajah, who would probably not be put to inconvenience by the abolition of the office, especially as there are such facilities of sending any messages by Bimlipatam. The line is now erected on wooden posts, which are much decayed, and the wire itself is not of good quality, so that, in the event of the retention of the office, it will be necessary to incur considerable expense in re-constructing the line. The question therefore assumes a greater magnitude than the simple saving to be effected by the closing of the office; and it becomes a question whether it is worth while to incur this expense merely to ensure a certain monthly loss of revenue.

Neelapilly.—This is a misnomer, as the office is really at Georgepett, only 10 miles from Coconada. It is true the office pays its expenses—its expenditure being only 181 Rupees against an income of Rupees 198; but as the office is so close to Coconada, would not one suffice? In this case there would be no loss to Government, as the same number of messages would probably be sent, but the cost would be confined to the establishment of one office only, so that there would be a gain in the abolition proposed.

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Ongole.—The receipts and expenditure of this office amount to Rupees 70 and 168 monthly, respectively; so that the closure of the office would appear to be of little moment to the public; and as regards the Government, the only official stationed there is, apparently, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, who is generally absent in the District on inspection duty. This Station is distant from Bezwarah, on the one hand, and Nellore, on the other, 86 and 78 miles only, respectively, so that it is within the reach of the daily Dawk; and messages posted for transmission from these stations, or received by post for them, would reach with a delay whose maximum would not exceed 24 hours. From the small amount of use made of this office, as evidenced by its receipts, is it worth while retaining it at a steady loss to the Government?

Cuddalore.—Is only 12 miles from Pondicherry; the receipts of this office are only 96 Rupees monthly, while its expenses amount to Rupees 202. Is an office required in such close proximity to Pondicherry? In cases of emergency a message might be sent by coolie at a delay of not more than a few hours.

Karikal.—This office is within 13 miles of Negapatam. Its receipts amount to Rupees 96, and its monthly cost to Rupees 138. Is an office necessary so close to Negapatam? The remarks of delay in this case equally apply with those of the Cuddalore office. The station appears to be small and unimportant, as far as I am able to ascertain, and its importance as a Telegraph station is certainly of no consequence, if judged of by the amount of receipts.

Pudocottah.—The receipts of this office are but 14 Rupees, while its expenses are Rupees 182 per mensem. It is distant only 54 miles from Negapatam, and falls within the range of the daily post. It is, I believe, a place of very little importance, and its receipts do not appear to show that the Telegraph Office is made much use of by the inhabitants.

While making these suggestions, I would beg to state that I in no way wish to carry out savings at the expense of convenience to the Government; but it appears to me that so many of these offices are retained at a loss of revenue, and the amount of work they perform is so small, that no great importance can attach to their retention; and it becomes a question whether it is not advisable to abolish them. In doing so in certain places it might be worth while to entertain an extra set of Dawk Runners, so as to ensure a second daily postal delivery, and to admit of Telegraph messages being sent for transmission to, or received from, the nearest office. The expense of this would be very small, in comparison with the present loss, and the inconvenience would not be great, as the amount of trade, requiring the use of the Telegraph, must be inconsiderable, judging by the returns of revenue.

I would also beg to point out that, departmentally, there are objections to an unnecessary number of offices along a line, as they impair the efficiency of our working, and for this reason, as well as for a saving of expense, I am inclined to make the propositions.

The annexed table will show the present loss to Government, which amounts to Rupees 7104 per annum, on these Offices, and the saving of expenses that will result, amounting to Rupees 14,940 annually, if the abolition of the offices is carried out.

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	Monthly cost of offices.	Monthly Receipts.	Monthly loss to Government.	Monthly saving that will be effected by abolition of the offices.
	RS.	RS.	RS.	RS.
Calingapatam	134	69	65	134
Vizianagrum	240	127	113	240
Neelapilly	181	198	...	181
Ongole	168	70	98	168
Cuddalore	202	96	106	202
Karikal	138	96	42	138
Pudocottah	182	14	168	182
Total			592 × 12 = 7,104	1,245 × 12 = 14,940

Before receiving the orders of Government to consult your Government in the first instance, I had addressed them with regard to the offices at Tellicherry, Beypore, Quilon, and Nagercoil, and I enclose an extract of my letter, No. 1190, dated 25th instant, to the address of the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, which will show you what I have suggested.

Extract from letter, No. 1190, dated 25th June 1866, from the Director General of Telegraphs in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

Cannanore and Tellicherry.—The distance between these two places is only 13 miles. Are two offices required in such close proximity? They both, it is true, pay pretty well, their expenses being Rupees 520 and 329, and their collections Rupees 313 and 535 monthly; still, if one office could do the work, the savings of the expenses of the other would be a gain, while the collection might remain almost the same. For the convenience of the public, a couple of runners, so as to give an immediate postal delivery for messages, might be arranged for; this would not cost more than 8 or 10 Rupees monthly, and if a low paid Telegraph Master were kept at the station where the office was abolished, to receive and charge for messages and to deliver those received, the cost would be very small, and a large saving might be effected. I mention this merely as a proposal, but would submit a detailed scheme if my suggestion is entertained by the Government. Cannanore is a large Military Station, garrisoned by an European Infantry Regiment, 2 Regiments N. I., and a Detail of Artillery; but if the office were abolished, there is seldom such important communication that the delay in sending from Tellicherry need cause inconvenience. Tellicherry, I believe, was established about three years ago as a Telegraph Station, at the request of the Government of Madras; it is a place of considerable mercantile importance and is situate on the coast.

Beypore.—Is only distant six miles from Calicut, where there is a Telegraph office. The monthly expenditure of these offices is Rupees 168 and 448, and their collections Rupees 58 and 982 respectively. I cannot but think that Beypore, as the least important, might be dispensed with.

Quilon.—Is distant only 42 miles from the office at Trevandrum. The monthly cost of this office is Rupees 192 and its income Rupees 53 only. It is not required departmentally, and I would recommend its abolition. Its importance to the public may be seen from the amount of work it receives.

4. *Nagercoil.*—Is about 47 miles from Pallamcottah; its monthly cost is Rupees 189, and its collections amount to Rupees 39 only. I believe it was established at the request of the Travancore State, who guaranteed to pay any loss that might arise to the Government in its maintenance. It is, of course, an object to this Department to reduce the number of offices as much as possible, so as to render our establishment, already very weak, available for other places; and I, therefore, mention

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this office, but do not press its abolition, if the Government, for political reasons, see fit to retain it. It is of no use departmentally, and I should be glad to see it suppressed.

The following table will show the financial result of the measures now recommended, which shows a total annual loss of Rupees 4800 in the present arrangement, and an annual saving of Rupees 10,536, which will be effected by that proposed in the abolition of the offices. I have estimated the saving on the actual cost of the offices, as I do not think we should have any loss in the income, the offices being so close together that the messages would still be sent for transmission as heretofore. With regard to Cannanore and Tellicherry, I have estimated the saving at the cost of the lesser expenditure, as, in case of reduction of one of the offices, the establishment of the other would be required on the larger scale.

Name of Offices.	Monthly cost to Government.	Monthly Income.	Present monthly loss to Government.	Monthly saving that will be effected by sanction of measures proposed.
	RS.	RS.	RS.	RS.
Cannanore.....	520	313	} 1	329
Tellicherry.....	329	535		
Bey pore.....	168	58		168
Quilon.....	192	53		192
Nagercoil.....	189	39	150	189
Total...	1,398	998	400 × 12 = 4,800	878 × 12 = 10,536

No. 98.

ORDER THEREON, 16th July 1866, No. 721.

Forwarded to the Collectors of the Districts concerned, for their remarks.

(True Extract).

J. D. SIM,
Acting Chief Secretary.

To the

Rxd. J. H. Burns.

True Extract,

U. G. R. Major R.E.

Offg Dir: Genl. of Tel. in India

16 July 1866. No. 721.
Forwarded to the [?] of the
District concerned for their
records. L.R.

+ *Guinea* } *1 over*
Sing. } *San Jose*
Verde } *Immortal*
Roller } *Malabar.* } *desp 20/*