

Public Works (1895) Department.

G.O., No. 571. R

DATED 12th Sept

[Despatch Abstract.]

Division of the E. C. Ry. for
working purposes.

Letter to the Govt of India for working
protest by the Chamber of Commerce
against the — at Vizianagaram
between the Madras and the
Bengal - Nagpur Railways

BACK PAPERS.

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The Chamber of Commerce,

MADRAS, 24th August, 1895.

FROM

THE HON'BLE MR. G. L. CHAMBERS,
CHAIRMAN, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
MADRAS.

TO

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
(P. W. D.) RAILWAY BRANCH,
OOTACAMUND.

SIR,

The Chamber has reason to believe that it is the intention of the Government of India, when the line of railway from Madras to Calcutta is completed, to divide it for working purposes into two sections—the northern portion, from Calcutta to Vizianagram, being placed under the control of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company, and the southern portion, from Vizianagram to Madras, under that of the Madras Railway Company.

Such a division, if finally adopted, will, in the Chamber's opinion, be most detrimental to the interests of the mercantile community of the City of Madras and of the Presidency generally. The Presidency should, the Chamber contends, be exclusively reserved for railways under the administrative control of the Madras and South Indian Railway Companies, and the Chamber strongly deprecates the reported proposal to allow the Bengal-Nagpur Railway to control any portion of the East Coast line south of Cuttack. The sphere of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway lies within the Central Provinces and Bengal; the Company has no interests in this Presidency, but, on the contrary, its interests are antagonistic to those of the south-east districts of Madras. The length of the line between Vizianagram and the northern boundary of the Madras Presidency will be—in round figures—200 miles, which is no insignificant portion of the whole line, and the Government of India, in giving the control of it to an outside Company, would be acting contrary to the wishes of merchants and traders of this Presidency and in a manner prejudicial to the success of the railway itself.

The Chamber fails to see what advantages will be derived from making Vizianagram the point of junction of the Bengal-Nagpur and Madras Railway Companies. The arrangement will have a manifest disadvantage even for the Government, as the portion proposed to be assigned to the former railway will be under the supervision of two separate Departments of Government—from Calcutta to the boundary of the Ganjam District it will be subject to the control of the Government of Bengal and from thence to Vizianagram to the control of the Govern-

ment of Madras. The inconvenience that would probably arise from this sub-division would be overcome by placing the whole of the northern portion under the control of one Government, but the disadvantages to which the mercantile community will be subject on the entry of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway into this Presidency cannot be so easily remedied.

It is scarcely necessary to point out to Government that commercially, ethnographically and geographically the Bengal Districts north of Cuttack are totally distinct from the Madras Districts south of it, and it would be only reasonable and politic that the separate sections of the East Coast Railway should correspond to these differences.

The Chamber, moreover, is of opinion that the necessity for respecting these differences gathers additional weight in the case of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, because the portion from Cuttack to Vizianagram is altogether outside the legitimate sphere and legitimate interests of that line. Its legitimate sphere is behind the Eastern Ghats and in the Lower Provinces of Bengal: its legitimate interests flow from the North-East to the South-West and *vice versa*, and may be said to be centred in Calcutta. The Northern Circars of this Presidency are from every point of view absolutely foreign to the Bengal-Nagpur system: their trade naturally enough flows southwards rather than northwards and their commercial interests can only be served effectively by a single railway administration dealing with the whole body of merchants and producers in that part of the Empire. To detach a small portion of what is a peculiarly homogeneous commercial sphere and hand over the administration of its railway communications to what is practically a foreign railway administration, whose interests are centred elsewhere and the bulk of whose dealings is with people of different language and race and with different commercial interests, would, in the Chamber's opinion, be a grave error of judgment.

From the point of view of the merchant, the producer, the shipper, and the people generally of the Northern Circars, there can be no manner of doubt that the best interests of those districts, and consequently of Government which has provided railway communication for them, would best, and indeed could only, be served by a single administration along the whole coast line that pertains to Madras: and from the point of view of the Government Consulting Engineer's Department also it is, in the Chamber's opinion, only politic and reasonable that the control of railways in Madras Districts should be exercised from Madras only, and not partly from Madras and partly from Calcutta.

In conclusion, the Chamber trusts that the Madras Government, if it has not already done so, will address the Government of India on this important subject, protesting against the acceptance of such a proposal as that referred to, which, if sanctioned, will have most damaging effects on the interests of the Madras Coast.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

P. R. Chamberlain
Chairman.

P.W. Current No 6718

Recd 3.9.95

Circulate

For forwarding the foregoing

to Mr. Blair.

Mr. W. Jones

We ought to send ^{India} a copy
of the letter of the Madras Chamber
of Commerce, and state that in
our opinion the working of the
E. C. railway should most
certainly be entrusted to the
Madras Rail. for that portion of
the line, wh. runs thro' the Madras
Presidency - but that we refrain
from stating our reasons, as we
do not know if the matter has
proceeded to Gov. as to whether
we clear our making any protest.
But that if there is still
~~nothing~~ we beg to be permitted

to make our representations on
the subject. ^{If it is impossible we must ask}
favour with the reasons wh.
have led to the present proposal
being approved. W.

I quite agree - 9 Sep 95
India has already
come to my decision in

Division of the East Coast
Railway from Madras
to Calcutta between the
Madras & Bengal Railway
Railways for working -

The Madras Chamber of
Commerce submit the
enclosed letter, the substance
of which has also
appeared in the Madras
Herald - Very cogent reasons
are urged that the line
to the South of Cuttack
should be worked by the
Madras Ry. - the principal
one being that the trade
of the Madras Presidency
in the Northern Circars
has principally flowed South-
wards and Nagapattanam &
Colomado have been the
principal ports for imports
& exports for these districts
and that the B. N. Ry. would
naturally, if they worked
the Vizianagaram Cuttack
portion of the East Coast
endeavour to divert as
much trade as possible
to Calcutta to the detriment
of the local ports -
judging from the distance
Vizianagaram is certainly
the centre of the East Coast

System thus
 Madras - Bayada
 with branches = 290
 Bayada - Vizianagaram
 with branches = 247
 537
 Vizianagaram - Cuttack = 200
 Cuttack - Calcutta = 254
 this Madras
 branch = 100
 554

and the present Madras
 & Bengal & affixing systems
 are about equal mileage
 viz 850 and 860 respec-
 tively.

But the argument, if
 there is one, of giving the 2
 working Cos. equal mileage
 is nothing compared to
 the advantage of fostering
 & developing the trade
 in the branches that it
 has hitherto glowed -
 I think the Govt. of India
 should be reminded that
 in 70 R. of 11/95 this
 Govt. urged that the policy
 of the Court should
 be made over to the
 Madras Ry. - and that if
 not considered desirable
 to give over the whole
 length to Cuttack & the

this matter, it has done
 so without allowing us
 a reasonable opportunity
 of saying our say.
 I would protest energetically
 & the S. of S.

1079/95 11/9

Madras Ry. - at least that
 portion lying in the Madras
 Presidency to Panjanga
 (about 75 miles south of
 Cuttack) should be worked
 by them - and attention
 should be invited to the
 remarks in para 2 of 71 R.
 of 12/95 in which the Madras
 Govt. laid stress on the great
 advantages for administrative,
 material advancement, education
 and business by having a
 direct line of railway from
 the district of Panjanga (among
 others) to the centre of Ma-
 dras a seat of Govt. and
 that these advantages might
 be nullified in part if
 a different Ry. ^{Company} ~~Government~~
 the Govt. who might naturally
 be out of sympathy with
 the country, were allowed to
 work half the line in that
 District.

7th 1/95

B/

12571 R.Y. 12995

Works India - 16 P

I am directed to forward a letter from the Madras Chamber of Commerce regarding the division of the East Coast Railway for working purposes between the Madras Ry and the Bengal Naffar Ry -

2. It is the opinion of the Excellency the Governor in Council that the working of that portion of the East Coast Ry which lies within the Madras Presidency should be entrusted to the Madras Ry -

3. I am to enquire ^{therefore} whether this question, referred to in para. 2 of 473 R.C. of 24 April 1895, has been decided, and if so, that the Madras Government may be favoured with the reasons which have led to the decision -

4. If however the matter is still pending I am to ask that this Govt. may be permitted to make its representations on the subject

but A. G. the Govt. in Council
refrains from stating their
as it is not known if the
matter has proceeded or not
as to render useless the
statement of this Govt.

Documents accompanying:
Letter from the Madras
Chamber of Commerce
of 24.8.95

For despatch in Office
Oct 7. 95

File 11
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B/-

N^o 571. R. dated 12.9.95