

Public Works (1899) Department.

RAILWAY BRANCH.

G.O., No. 649. Ry

DATED 10th June 1899.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Railway Conference of 1899.

Recording letter from the Govt of India
stating that the recommendations contained
in this Govt's No. 549. Ry of 9/5/88, will be placed
before the _____.

P. W. R.
CURRENT No. 748.

RAILWAY PROJECTS.

Nil.

 $R\bar{R}$

RAILWAY.

Government {1899} of Madras.
PUBLIC WORKS.

Recd.

} 1899.

Enclosures

Regd.

Spare copies

G.O., No. 548 Ry., 9th May 1899.

MAY.

Railway Conference of 1899

Ordered that the note by the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras, for the —, be forwarded to the Government of India.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Railway.

Read the following papers:—

Letter from the Government of India, dated 1st March 1899, No. 018 R.P.
Note by the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras, for the Railway Conference of 1899,
dated 26th April 1899.

ORDER—No. 548 Ry., dated 9th May 1899.

The Government of India will be addressed.

[Here enter No. 549 Ry., dated 9th May 1899.]

(True Extract.)

FRANCIS J. E. SPRING,
Joint Secretary.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Railway.

LETTER—from

FRANCIS J. E. SPRING, Esq., C.I.E.,
Joint Secretary to the Government of Madras,
Public Works Department,
Railway Branch,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

In your Circular letter, No. 018 R.P., dated the 1st March 1899, this Government was directed to submit proposals, before the 15th of May, for new lines not yet considered, as well as any further proposals, or fresh information, in connection with projects which have already been submitted for consideration at past conferences.

2. In reply I am directed to enclose a note by this Government's Consulting Engineer for Railways, reviewing the several projects which are of interest to this Presidency, and placing in an order of preference—an order approved by His Excellency the Governor in Council—those projects of whose inception within a reasonable period there would appear to be some prospect.

3. Although not in a position on the present occasion, in accordance with the request contained in your letter under reply, either to submit proposals for new lines, or to put forward further proposals or fresh information in connection with projects already considered at past conferences, His Excellency the Governor in Council considers this to be a suitable opportunity for addressing a general letter to the Government of India on the subject of Railways yet to be built, in which this Presidency is interested.

4. This Government has just received, with much satisfaction, the intimation conveyed in your telegram No. 740 R.C., dated the 24th April 1899, that funds to the extent of 10 lakhs have been allotted for the Madura-Pamban line and that work may go on. The survey is reported to be finished and it is expected that sufficient information may soon be laid before the Government of India to enable orders to be passed on the question of alignment. There is reason to believe that work on this line can be pushed at a faster rate than will be practicable if grants for the successive years are fixed as shown in the Hon'ble Sir A. Trevor's memorandum attached to the financial statement for 1899-1900, viz., 10, 10, and 22 lakhs; and it is hoped that, should this prove to be the case, the Government of India may see their way to enabling this important extension of the South Indian Railway to be opened at as early a date as possible.

5. The telegram above referred to contained also an intimation that work might be started on the Tinnevely-Quilon line, and that 7 lakhs had been allotted for the purpose. An inspection of the Hon'ble Sir A. Trevor's memorandum just referred to would seem to show that inasmuch as the three successive years' grants therein entered, viz., 7, 8, and 10 lakhs, amount approximately to the estimated cost of the British section of the line, the Government of India's intention is to directly provide the capital for that section and to enable the South Indian Railway Company to raise for the Travancore section State Guaranteed debentures to be underwritten by the Durbar. For the cheap and speedy construction of the middle, or ghât, section it is most desirable that the British section and also the plains portion of the Travancore section should be pushed as rapidly as the provision of funds will allow of. There is reason to think that the three successive annual grants for the British section might with great advantage be differently proportioned, and this shall be reported on later on. As regards the plains portion of the Travancore section, I am to express the hope that the South Indian Railway Company may very soon be enabled to raise sufficient capital to allow of work being pushed with vigour.

6. As regards the Mutupet-Avadaiyarkovil line which is to be made by the Tanjore District Board from their own resources, and which admittedly will involve the Imperial Treasury in no responsibility, I am instructed to suggest for the consideration of the Government of India that it would greatly facilitate progress if in such cases as this the Government of India could see their way to delegate to this Government full responsibility for minor details of alignment and for design, and full power to sanction all expenditure once the scheme and its alignment shall have been approved by the Government of India. Should the Government of India not accept this suggestion, it may be that they would not object to a proposal that the line in question, and others which like it involve no imperial responsibility, should be constructed under the Tramways Act, the promoters, viz., the District Board, arranging with the neighbouring railway company to build it under this Government's supreme control. In the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council such decentralization would be most advantageous and would get rid of much of the delay and friction which are involved in a system admittedly necessary in the case of those larger schemes which involve imperial responsibility. The Indian Tramways Act was specially devised to relieve the Supreme Government from the obligation of exercising detailed engineering and financial control over what in many cases are railways in all but the name; His Excellency in Council therefore thinks it not unlikely that once such a line as this had been sanctioned by the Government of India, even though it might not be proposed to make it under the Tramways Act, they would consent to entrust its entire control to this Government to whom the local authority looks for control and direction.

7. I am instructed again to invite very special attention to all that this Government has already written about the necessity, for reasons of famine policy, that the Bezvada-Masulipatam and the Kurnool branches, which have been pressed for now for many years, should be put in hand without further delay on the metre gauge as part of the Southern Mahratta system. I am instructed respectfully to represent that very great weight is due to the deliberately expressed views of a Local Government in such a matter as the gauge of the former of the two branches. The question is of too serious a nature not to have been most carefully thought out with a view to the smooth and automatic movement of food-supplies during recurring famine years.

8. Of the remaining five lines in the list of railways arranged by the Consulting Engineer in preferential order but little can be said, because this Government is quite in the dark as to what is being done about the suggested Berhampur-Russelkonda branch of the East Coast Railway and about the Vizianagram-Raipur line. It is hoped that the former and smaller line may soon be constructed with the aid of an Imperial grant, and it is presumed that the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company will sooner or later make the Vizianagram-Raipur line on terms similar to those with them for their other extensions. This Government's Consulting Engineer advises that there is reason to think that proposals may show that the Madras Railway Company for the construction on the metre gauge line made by the Podanur-Dindigul line which serves tracts of country in the neighbourhood of that part of the coast trade with west coast ports.

The Nanjangod-Erode survey has been completed, and the project and estimate may soon be expected from the South Indian Railway Company. This Government will be very pleased to learn that arrangements have been made with the Mysore Darbar for the construction of the Arsikeri-Mangalore line, on a gauge and at a cost commensurate with the work which it is likely to have to do.

9. His Excellency in Council desires to take this opportunity of reminding the Government of India that no reply has been received to this Government's Revenue Department letter No. 169 A, dated the 22nd March 1898, in which were put forward, after mature deliberation, six short lines of railway, on the 2-ft. gauge, which had been selected not only as being those which are considered to be most urgently needed for the purpose of admitting food into the centres of famine tracts, but also as being unlikely to be constructed by other agency than that of the State. It was recommended that part of this Presidency's reasonable share of the "Famine Insurance" grant, say 10 lakhs per annum for five or six years, should be allotted for the construction of these lines. A reference to them will be found in the first paragraph of the Hon'ble Sir A. Trevor's memorandum on the conclusions of the Railway conference of 1898, where it is given as a reason for the absence from that year's Committee of a representative of the Revenue and Agricultural Department, that no new famine lines had been brought forward "with the exception of a group of light lines in the Madras Presidency, which are not urgent and the projects for which are incomplete;" were it not for this reference this Government would have no reason to believe that the matter has attracted the Government of India's attention in the Public Works Department. The absence of any intimation that the Government of India would be disposed to view with favour the construction of this group of light famine lines, and to allot an annual grant for their construction, is all that has hitherto prevented this Government from proposing to prepare regular projects for them. As this letter goes to press, however, your letter No. 630 R.C. of the 13th April 1899, has come to hand, allotting a grant for the survey of one of the lines, and simultaneously an application has come in from the Madras Railway Company to survey another. Of the remaining four, three will form feeders to the Southern Mahratta Railway; so this Government's Consulting Engineer has addressed the Consulting Engineer, Bombay, to suggest that the Agent for that Railway should apply for leave to survey them, and one will be a feeder to the South Indian Railway whose Agent has been asked to survey it. In view of the great importance of this group of light railways from a famine administration point of view, and of the probability that they will considerably more than pay working expenses in ordinary years, and that owing to their extreme cheapness there is a good chance of the outlay on them being directly productive, and of the fact that in the tracts to be served by more than one of the lines more money has already on more than one occasion been spent in the form of famine relief than would have sufficed to build them, I am instructed to express the hope that the Government of India may see their way to meeting this Government's wishes to the extent of a promise of a small immediate grant for their survey, and of recurring annual grants for their construction when the projects shall have been matured and approved.

10. This Government learns from its Consulting Engineer that the Board of Directors of the Madras Railway Company, in their letter to the Secretary of State, No. 9234, dated 10th March 1899, have recently submitted an application to be allowed to take over and work, on suitable terms, the Raichur-Wadi section of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, on the conclusion of that Company's contract period a few months hence. This proposal has the strong support of this Government who will view with much satisfaction the substitution of one important junction station for two, and who foresee in the proposed arrangement the removal of many difficulties connected with rates disputes between the Madras, Great Indian Peninsula, South Indian and Southern Mahratta Railways. The proposal, if agreed to, ought to lead to an important development of the Singareni coal trade, and to a cheapening of that coal to nascent industries in certain tracts of country, by rendering it possible for the managements of the Madras, and His Highness the Nizam's, Railway Companies to agree upon suitable rates without the interference of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company. His Excellency

the Governor in Council ventures to hope that this important proposal will not be rejected by the Government of India on the grounds that, if agreed to, it may possibly affect the price of Madras Railway Company's shares eight years hence. If the Madras Railway is to pay sufficient surplus profits before 1907 to affect the price of its shares, it will have done so by good management, and not by the adoption of such a measure as that now referred to.

11. In conclusion I am directed to explain that, because it has become customary to do so in the annual conference letter, many matters have been touched on in this letter which do not come strictly within the terms of the instructions contained in your circular letter No. 018 R.P., dated the 1st March 1899; yet it has been deemed expedient to deal with those matters in a general letter, even though they may not come within the scope of the business of the conference, in order that the Government of India may have before them, in one view, the general lines of this Government's railway policy. That policy may be briefly described as follows:—

- I. The evolution, so far as existing conditions may permit, of a great and uniform meter gauge network of railways for Southern India with the following exceptions: (a) the Calcutta-Madras standard gauge road, (b) the Madras-Bombay standard gauge road, (c) the Arkonam-Jalarpet-Bangalore and Jalarpet-Podanur standard gauge roads (with the possibility of the Erode-Podanur section being converted to metre gauge).
- II. The furnishing of this network of trunk lines with cheap feeders, with the aid of private enterprise or of District Boards or of State funds, until all important trading centres and food distribution centres in the Presidency shall have been brought within 25 miles carting, or its equivalent in water carriage, of a railway station.

Such being the design which he has in view and towards the furtherance of which he desires steadily to aim, His Excellency the Governor in Council ventures to hope that his recommendations towards the attainment of it may obtain the support of the Government of India.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

FRANCIS J. E. SPRING,
Joint Secretary.

Ootacamund,
9th May 1899.

RAILWAY.

Government {1899} of Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Recd.

Regd.

} 1899.

Enclosures

Spare copies

Letter, No. 549 Ry., 9th May 1899.

MAY.

Railway Conference of 1899

Forwarding a note by the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras, for consideration at the —.

THE RAILWAY CONFERENCE OF 1899.

Note by the Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras.

1. I am unable to report that very good progress has been made in railway matters in this Presidency during the year ending 31st March 1899. The southern 250-mile section of the East Coast Railway has been opened for traffic, and when the arrangements now being matured on paper for bringing that railway into the Madras Railway Company's Central station, and into touch with the South Indian Railway on the Madras Beach, shall have been brought to a practical issue, there will have been secured to the public a very distinct gain in facility of communication and transport. I do not think that development has been appreciably impeded by our failure—for I take it that we have failed—to gain the Government of India's acceptance, within the next few years, of our metre gauge conversion and extension policy for the Madras Railway. The only line whose progress might have been affected by these negotiations is the Calicut-Cannanore; but judging from the state of progress of the work on its first 26 miles, and taking into account the immense improvements affected by more careful survey on its remaining 34 miles, I do not consider that progress has been in any way less active than if the gauge controversy had not arisen. Negotiations for the remaining lines of the group concerned with this Government's metre gauge proposals are not in so forward a state as to have been affected one way or the other.

2. It is true that if we had permitted ourselves to drift on with the serious mistake of allowing the North Vaigai route to be accepted for IX, the Madura-Pamban line, we might possibly before now have been placed in funds for its construction; but a permanent and baleful error in location would have been a heavy price to pay for securing the opening of the branch a few months sooner than we shall now secure its opening on the proper alignment. It is not easy to understand how it came to pass that the fact of our having suggested certain alterations in the Madura-Pamban route should have had the indirect result of the Secretary of State not being addressed until, apparently, January 1899 in regard to X, the Tinnevely-Quilon project; for it was early in June 1898 that we told the Government of India that all difficulties about the latter project had been removed, route settled, and terms accepted by all concerned. As this goes to press I learn that sanction has been accorded to the commencement of work on both these important extensions, and that grants have been allotted to them.

3. To five more of the railways dealt with in the following notes it will be unnecessary for me again to refer, when I shall have explained that No. I, the Calicut-Cannanore is in full swing of construction; that II, the Arcot-Ranipet is open for traffic; that III, the Madras Harbour siding, and XIII the Negapatam-Nagore extension, are under construction; and that in anticipation of an issue of an order for its equipment with rails under the Tramways Act the Rajah of Parlakimedi has made good progress with the road which is to become the Parlakimedi Tramway, scheme No. XXI.

4. We have heard nothing lately about VIII, the Coonoor-Ootacamund extension of the Nilgiri Railway: the little Salem branch, VII, of the Madras Railway is to be surveyed very soon: it is believed, although no information in regard to their progress has been furnished to us by the Government of India, that the surveys of XIX, the Berhampore-Russelkonda branch, and of XX, the Vizianagram-Raipur line, are in progress: XV, the Mutupet-Avadyarcoil line is also in the survey stage, and when sanctioned the Tanjore District Board can raise capital and arrange to build it without responsibility to the Government of India. A member of the Firm of Promoters has gone to England to endeavour to launch XIV, the section of the Madura District Tramway Company's lines called the Ammayanayakkanur-Kuruvaruth Tramway. Little remains now to set IV, the Shoranur-Cochin, going except the general sanction of the Government of India, for the necessary funds will be provided by the Cochin State.

5. Of the remaining seven lines, XI, the Trichinopoly-Tondi, is temporarily shelved; XII, the Trichinopoly-Tirukoilur is not ready to go forward; and XVIII, the Baliapatam-Mangalore, has not been surveyed, though an application has been made that it be surveyed.

6. The five remaining schemes are V, the *Podanur-Dindigul*; VI, the *Nanjangod-Erode*; XVI, the *Kurnool branch*, XVII, the *Bezwada-Masulipatam extension*, and XXII, the *Arsikeri-Mangalore*.

7. Were I asked to place the various schemes in order of relative importance to the Presidency, with a view to arrangements being made for starting work on them, I should advise as follows. First omit from consideration the following seven schemes for the reasons given with each. IX, the *Madura-Pamban*, and X, the *Tinnevelly-Quilon*, which have just been arranged for; IV, the *Shoranur-Cochin*, because it is in a fair way of being started, without aid from the Government of India, whose general approval only is needed: VII, the short *Salem branch*, because it is yet unsurveyed: VIII, the *Ootacamund extension of the Nilgiri Railway*, because I understand that the Government of India have made a firm offer of terms and the Company are only watching for a favourable opportunity to go on the market: XI, the *Trichinopoly-Tondi*, because there is no urgency about it: XII, the *Trichinopoly-Tirukoilur*, because its project is not ready: XIV, the *Ammayanayakkanur-Kuruwanuth*, because all that can be done by us has now been done and we must await the promoters appeal to the public for money: XVIII, the *Baliapatam-Mangalore* because it is not yet been surveyed. The Mysore Darbar are believed to be again moving in regard to No. XXII, *Arsikeri-Mangalore*, which would be a most useful line. The five schemes referred to in paragraph 3 may also be omitted from consideration because they are all well in hand or have been completed.

8. There now remain eight schemes which I would arrange in the following order:—

Order of preference.	No. in Note by Consulting Engineer.	Name of scheme.	Remarks.
1	XV	Mutapet-Avadyarcoil	Permission only wanted to begin work with the funds available. No responsibility falls on Government, and this Government can control details.
2	XVII	Bezwada-Masulipatam	Long pressed for, on account of this Government's Famine policy.
3	XVI	Kurnool road-Kurnool	Long pressed for, on account of this Government's Famine policy.
4	XIX	Berhampore-Russelkonda	It will open up a fine fertile district, and be a valuable feeder of the East Coast Railway.
5	V	Podanur-Dindigul	Badly wanted, at least the western three-fourths of it, as a feeder to the Madras Railway.
6	XX	Vizianagram-Raipur	This is so large a project that there is not much use in urgently pressing for it. Moreover it is bound to come in due course.
7	VI	Nanjangod-Erode	This would be a most valuable feeder, and secondarily a useful link.
8	XXII	Arsikeri-Mangalore	A most useful line which ought to pay if made on the two-foot gauge.

9. I next proceed to describe the several projects in very much the same order as that in which I described them in the note for last year's conference, briefly narrating the progress of the negotiations for each of them which have been made during the year.

10. I.—*Calicut-Cannanore Railway, standard gauge, 60 miles.*—In last year's memorandum I recorded that just at the close of 1897 permission was received from the Government of India for work to begin on the first 26 miles of this extension. Work was therefore put in hand and has made fair progress, about 80 per cent. of earth-work and 35 per cent. of culvert masonry having been finished and one major bridge started by the end of March 1899. Meanwhile improvements in the survey of the remainder of the line were being made. Plans and sections of miles 26 to 44 were sent up to the Government of India in August 1898, and of miles 44 to 60 in November 1898, and permission was asked for work to be allowed to go on. On February 3rd, 1899, the Government of India ordered that the acquisition of land might go on, and also the collection of materials, and so much of construction as would not prejudice the gauge question. On March 23rd, they telegraphed that construction might proceed throughout from Calicut to Baliapatam, mile 60, on the 5' 6" standard gauge, but economically, second-hand materials being used, with a view to conversion hereafter to the metre-gauge. In compliance with these orders, the line is being built with a formation width of 16' 6", the bed plates of culverts and bridges being made fit to carry broad gauge girders. The question of permanent way is now occupying

the attention of the Madras Railway Company's Engineers, who report that there is no second-hand material available. A report of my latest inspection of this extension will be found in Government Proceedings, No. 459 Ry., dated the 23rd April 1899.

11. II. *Arcot-Ranipet Railway, standard gauge, 4½ miles.*—This little branch of the Madras Railway has been completed, and was opened for traffic on the 17th April 1899. Its prospects of traffic are not as good as was expected, because the Ranipet Sugar Works have recently been partially shut down.

12. III. *Madras Harbour sidings, standard gauge, 1 mile.*—This temporary scheme for bringing passengers of the Madras and South Indian Railways to a joint platform opposite the City and Harbour of Madras was satisfactorily matured during the year, and is now in a fair way to completion. It seems not unlikely too that the great convenience of a transshipment of goods, notably coal and paddy, may also be arranged for.

13. IV. *Shoranur-Cochin Railway, metre gauge, 64 miles.*—Negotiations for starting work upon this important feeder to the Madras Railway seem now at last to be very close to maturity. His Highness the Rajah of Cochin has decided to provide the whole of the capital necessary to construct the 64 miles of line on the metre gauge at a cost roughly estimated at Rs. 50 lakhs. Improvements in the alignment are still going on, and it is intended that they should continue to go on even after construction is sanctioned. Permission has been received from the Government of India for the commencement of work on the first 30 miles. At a conference recently held at Cochin at which were present the Resident, the Diwan, and the Consulting Engineer, various matters were agreed to, and the Durbar will soon address Government with definite proposals. The question of payment of compensation on account of land to be acquired for the Cochin State Railway in the State of Travancore is under settlement in the Political Department. A report of my recent inspection of this line will be found with G.O., No. 496 Ry., dated the 28th April 1899.

14. V. *Podanur-Dindigul Railway, metre gauge, 118 miles.*—Since the date of my memorandum for the 1898 conference, nothing has occurred in the history of this project. It forms an integral part of the metre gauge network of railways which this Government has strongly pressed on the Government of India as being necessary for the proper development of the trade of the parts of the Indian Peninsula lying south and west of the Mysore plateau. This Government holds the opinion that railway development in the tract in question is seriously hindered by the existence of a comparatively short piece of broad gauge railway between Podanur and Calicut, and that if this piece were converted to the metre gauge—a step to which its owners, the Madras Railway Company, have consented on certain conditions—railway development in several directions might receive an important impetus. A branch running south-eastwards from Podanur station of the Madras Railway through a large tract of fertile and prosperous trading country, past several large towns, towards Dindigul on the South Indian Railway, formed one of the metre gauge branches which this Government proposed to entrust to the Madras Railway Company during the last few years of its contract in return for its agreeing to immediately convert the Podanur-Calicut section. It is understood that proposals for constructing at least the Podanur end of this important feeder of the western section of the Madras Railway Company's South-West line, on the metre gauge (just as the Cochin feeder is to be on the metre gauge), may shortly be expected from the Company's Agent.

15. VI. *Erode-Nanjangod, metre gauge, 115 miles.*—The survey of this line has been completed, and plans and sections, with preliminary estimates, may soon be expected from the South Indian Railway Company who have been making them. This, with the short extension from Nanjangod to Mysore, was one of the branches forming part of the West Podanur metre gauge network, which this Government was anxious to see made over to the Madras Railway Company. It was considered that unless given this and the Podanur-Dindigul line the Company would be unlikely to consent to the conversion of the short section of their main line, between Podanur and Calicut, which stands so seriously in the way of the development of railways in the tracts south and west of the Mysore plateau on a gauge and at a cost commensurate with traffic requirements. I understand that the Mysore Darbar have determined that the Southern Mahratta Railway Company is not to be allowed, as a permanency, to work south of Mysore City, but that whatever Company comes up from Erode shall have access direct to the city of Mysore. A most wise policy.

16. VII. *Salem-Shevaroy, 2' 6" gauge, 8 miles.*—In November 1898 the Government of India sanctioned a survey being made by the Madras Railway Company for a narrow 2' 6" or 2' 0" gauge branch line from Salem station to the foot of the Yercaud ghât, a distance of 8 miles. I have recently proposed that to complete the project it might be as well to enquire into the prospects of an airway, from bottom of ghât to Yercaud, to be worked by the Madras Railway Company in connection with their branch line.

17. VIII. *Coonoor-Ootacamund (Nilgiri) Railway, metre gauge, 11½ miles.*—The opening for public traffic of the Mettupalaiyam-Coonoor section, which it was hoped might be effected in November 1898, has not yet taken place, because the line was very much knocked to pieces by the north-west monsoon of 1898. It is now hoped that it will be ready for opening some time before the south-west monsoon of 1899, viz., early in June next. Arrangements have been made for its being worked by the Madras Railway Company. Nothing is known here about the progress of negotiations with the Company for extending their railway from Coonoor to Ootacamund since the Secretary of State was addressed by the Government of India on the subject in July 1898. The latest estimate of the cost of the 11½-mile extension from Coonoor to Ootacamund is Rs. 19,19,000 including interest during construction. Government will not be concerned in the cost of any part of the Nilgiri Railway if the guarantee of the extension is to be of the same nature as that for the Mettupalaiyam-Coonoor section, viz., a guarantee of gross receipts.

18. IX. *Madura-Pamban, metre gauge, 100 miles.*—My note for last year's conference, on the subject of this important extension of the South Indian Railway, ended with the Board's acceptance of the condition that the Travancore branch and the Pamban branch must both, and not the better paying one only, be undertaken by the company. Between May and July 1898 much careful consideration was devoted to the question whether the route taken by the preliminary surveyors at the desire of this Government of a few years ago was the right route. Further inquiries were made and after a most careful weighing of all the evidence the conclusion was come to, a conclusion fully concurred in by the Member of His Excellency's Council who was responsible for the route previously taken, that it would be right to branch off from the south end of Madura station instead of forming a separate junction a mile or two north of it, and to follow what is known as the South Vaigai route, serving the Sivaganga Zamindari by a short branch line. The conclusion thus arrived at was conveyed to the Government of India in this Government's letter, No. 969 Ry., dated 28th July 1898, with a summary of the chief reasons which influenced this Government in its change of policy; but naturally, in such a letter, it was not possible to give a tithe of the evidence on which the conclusion had been based. In the same letter the Government of India were pressed to allow the projected extension to be financed as an integral part of the South Indian Railway. They were also begged to, if possible, allot a grant so as to allow of a commencement of work in the cold weather of 1898-99. It seemed not unreasonable to hope that a grant might be made, because not only had it been practically decided that Pamban must be connected with Madura, but also a considerable mileage of the original line remained unaltered, and the alteration proposed might well be looked on merely as a diversion scarcely necessitating the project being treated as an entirely new one.

This view of the matter, however, did not commend itself to the Government of India, who in their letter, No. 1356 R.C., dated the 17th September 1898, replied that, inasmuch as this Government had altered its views as to the proper route to be adopted, they would wait for new plans and estimates. They at the same time conveyed to us the welcome decision that the extension of the South Indian Railway to Pamban would be treated as an integral part of that system instead of so important a section of the through line of the future between India and Ceylon being made over to a branch line Company, thus accepting the strong recommendation made to them from time to time by this Government. Since that date a survey party has been organized, and the work of surveying and staking out the new alternative and the branch, and re-staking out the unaltered part of the alignment has been very nearly completed. The Government of India wired on December 19th to the effect that it is believed to be impossible to sanction work owing to the action of the Madras Government in suggesting an alternative route which has prevented the passing of orders and the sending of the project forward to the Secretary of State.

They wired again on January 31st, 1899, to say that a despatch about the Madura-Pamban line had gone home.

Meanwhile, the Company's Agent reported that he could spend Rs. 40 lakhs in 1899-1900 if allowed to go ahead and to send home indents now, and in our letter to the Government of India, No. 293 Ry., dated 15th March 1899, we strongly urged that at least Rs. 20 lakhs should be allotted pending the receipt of formal sanction to the entire line after submission of complete plans and estimates on the new alignment. As regards the question of change of alignment this Government is in a position to weigh, and has weighed, the evidence in the most careful manner, and the matter is one of which they are in the best position to judge, especially as in the perfectly open level plain it is scarcely to be expected that comparative estimates will show much difference in cost of construction, even if the balance of traffic advantages were not, as they undoubtedly are, in favour of the alignment now proposed. As this goes to press I learn that a grant of ten lakhs has been allotted and that work may proceed.

19. X. *Travancore Branch of the South Indian Railway, metre gauge, 103 miles.*—When my note for last year's conference was written, the position of affairs in regard to this important extension of the South Indian Railway Company's system was that the terms proposed by the Government of India for the guarantee, construction and working of the line had not yet been accepted by the South Indian Railway Company or by the Travancore Darbar. We were able, however, to inform the Government of India, in our letter No. 782 Ry., dated the 6th June 1898, that all difficulties had been cleared away. The following is a summary of the agreed terms:—

(a) That the South Indian Railway Company should be enabled to raise the whole of the money required for the construction of the entire line, at 2½ per cent. in sterling, under the guarantee of the Government of India.

(b) That the Travancore Darbar should underwrite that guarantee to the extent of the cost of the line in their own territory.

(c) That the South Indian Railway Company should work the line on completion as a portion of its existing system, at the same rate of working expenses to gross earnings as obtains on their whole line including this and all future branches; the cost of maintenance for two years after opening being debited to capital.

(d) That surplus profit should be divided, after deducting the share payable to the South Indian Railway Company, quoted at about one-sixth, between Government and the Darbar in proportion to the mileage in their respective territories.

In that letter this Government urged on the Government of India that such arrangements should be made as would allow the South Indian Railway Company to raise sufficient funds to allow of a vigorous start being made with the work of construction, and with the completion of the survey of the hill section, during the working season 1898-99.

Simultaneously with our informing the Government of India of the acceptance by the Darbar and by the Company of the terms proposed, we also informed them that this Government had accepted the Darbar's decision to adhere to the northern route which formed the basis of the preliminary survey and estimate of 1895. On our wiring to the Government of India on December 19th 1898 to suggest that a small grant might be spent with advantage before the close of the year on the Pamban and Travancore branches, they replied on the same date expressing the belief that it would be "impossible to sanction work owing to action of Madras Government in suggesting alternative routes which has prevented passing orders and sending project to Secretary of State." However they again wired on January 31st to say that a despatch about the two lines had gone home. I can only suppose that they considered the two schemes to be so linked together that they could not deal with that for the Travancore branch so long as there was any question about the best route for the Pamban branch. Meanwhile, though none of the grant of Rs. 15,000 which was allotted for the survey in 1898-99 was spent, preliminary arrangements have been made and an estimate for a complete new survey of the entire line has been sent up to the Government of India for sanction, amounting to Rs. 1,68,000, of which all except Rs. 36,000 is for the central 24 miles of heavy ghât section.

As this note goes to press I learn that a grant of 7 lakhs has been allotted and that work may proceed. Meanwhile, matters of alignment and grading are being carefully attended to on the lines of a note forwarded with the Government of India's letter No. 036 R.C., dated the 14th February 1899.

31. XXII. *Arsikeri-Mangalore, two-foot gauge.*—I learn that the Mysore Darbar are again moving in the matter of securing a connection for their coffee tracts with the port of Mangalore. My own idea of this line is that it ought to be designed very much as the Darjeeling-Himalayan has been, with such curves and gradients as are imposed by considerations of the nature of the ground and of such cheapness as is compatible with effectiveness for the work to be done. Such a line ought to pay directly, if properly designed. It would I imagine pay the Mysore Darbar indirectly even if it cost a considerable price to build it.

THE LIGHT FEEDER FAMINE RAILWAY GROUP.

32. The Government of India have never replied to a letter addressed to them by this Government in the Revenue Department, in which, after much weighing of evidence, a very deliberate selection was made of six short lines, varying from 16 to 45 miles in length, from railway stations to certain chief centres of distribution in famine districts. These six schemes were put forward for consideration with a request that so much of the Famine Insurance grant as might be considered to be this Presidency's due might be allotted at the rate of, perhaps, 10 lakhs per annum for five or six years, for expenditure on the construction of the chosen lines. The gauge selected was 2' 0", a gauge amply sufficing for all purposes for which the lines are required. It may be as well to take the present opportunity to again address the Government of India on the subject. As this goes to press however, I learn that they have sanctioned the survey of one of the lines, and simultaneously the Madras Railway Company's Agent has asked to be allowed to survey another. I have addressed the Consulting Engineer, Bombay, about inducing the Southern Mahratta Railway Company to survey three of them and the Agent, South Indian Railway Company, has been asked to survey the remaining one.

FIGURES IN THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1899-1900.

33. In paragraphs 28 and 30 of the Financial statement for 1899-1900, under the heading *Railway Construction*, I find that the Hon. the Financial Member contemplated allotting the following capital grants to railways in which this Presidency is directly interested, for expenditure during the current financial year:—

	Budget, 1899-1900.	Item.
<i>Expenditure by State Agency—</i>		
Open lines—	Rx.	
East Coast	40,000	(a)
Lines under construction—		
Bezwada-Madras	30,000	(b)
Godavari bridge	200,000	(c)
<i>Expenditure by Agency of Companies—</i>		
Open lines—		
South Indian	50,000	(d)
Lines under construction—		
Madura-Pamban	100,000	(e)
Tinnevely-Quilon	70,000	(f)
<i>Expenditure by old Guaranteed Companies—</i>		
* Open lines—		
Madras	60,000	(g)
Extensions—		
Calicut-Cannanore	200,400	(h)

With the administration of items (a), (b) and (c) this Government is not directly concerned. Items (d) and (g) represent merely the usual minor capital extensions of open lines of railway. The only items representing actual forward progress of construction of lines under our administration are those marked (e), (f) and (h), which show that it is intended to allot for expenditure during the current year 10 lakhs for the Madura-Pamban, 7 lakhs for the Tinnevely-Quilon, and about 20 lakhs for the Calicut-Cannanore.

34. In his memorandum appended to the budget statement the Hon. the Public Works Member gave the following forecast of expenditure on railways in which we are interested, and which we administer.

STATEMENT showing expenditure to be incurred on Railways to the end of 1901-1902.

Railway.	No.	Length miles.	Approximate cost, accord- ing to latest information. Rs.	Budget estimate for 1899-1900. Rs.	Forecast for	
					1900-1901 Rs.	1901-1902. Rs.
I. FROM IMPERIAL FUNDS.						
(ii) BY AGENCY OF MAIN LINE COMPANIES.						
<i>Lines under construction.</i>						
South Indian, Negapatam-Nagore Branch ..	27	5	23,900	17,500		
Do. Madura-Pamban	28	102	4,69,000	1,00,000	1,00,000	2,20,000
Do. Tinnevely-Quilon (British section)	29	45	2,50,000	70,000	80,000	1,00,000
III. OLD GUARANTEED COMPANIES' CAPITAL ACCOUNTS.						
<i>Lines under construction.</i>						
Madras Railway, Calicut-Cannanore branch ..	36	59	7,37,500	2,00,400	1,00,000	1,21,400
Coonoor-Ootacamund (Nilgiris)*	37	12	1,92,000	..	1,00,000	..

* I do not know why this item is so classified.

STATEMENT showing Railways recommended since 1895-96, for early construction, outside the programme.

Railway.	Length miles.	Approximate cost Rx.	Remarks.
II.—THROUGH THE AGENCY OF NATIVE STATES.			
(e) <i>New project put forward since 1897-98, and commenced or arranged for.</i>			
Tinnevely-Quilon (Native State section) ..	58	7,66,200	Accepted for construction without a Government guarantee.
III.—BY RAILWAY COMPANIES TO WHICH FREE LAND AND MINOR CONCESSIONS ARE GIVEN.			
Coonoor-Metupollium (Nilgiris)	17	3,55,000	Completed but damaged as it was about to be opened.

STATEMENT showing Railways recommended since 1895-96, for construction, outside the programme.

Railway.	Length miles.	Approximate cost. Rx.	Remarks.
I. BY BRANCH LINE COMPANIES.			
(a) <i>Lines included in the list of 1897-98 as under consideration.</i>			
Kurnool Road branch	36	1,20,000	Under consideration.
Coonoor-Ootacamund (Nilgiris)	12	1,92,000	Do.
Mutpet-Avadyareoil	45	1,50,000	Construction by Tanjore District Board agreed to.
(b) <i>New projects since put forward or recommended.</i>			
Ammayanayakanur-Kuruvanuth	75	5,00,000	Negotiations in progress (1).
Bezwada-Masulipatam	44	5,30,000	Under consideration.
II. BY NATIVE STATES.			
(b) <i>New project put forward or recommended.</i>			
Shoranur-Cochin	64	9,17,700	Under consideration by Travancore Darbar (2).
III. BY RAILWAY COMPANIES TO WHICH FREE LAND AND MINOR CONCESSIONS ARE GIVEN.			
<i>Lines included in the list of 1897-98 as under consideration.</i>			
Vizianagram-Bimlipatam	15	93,900	Negotiations in progress (3).

- (1) Negotiations have now culminated in an order under the Tramways Act.
- (2) Ought to be "Cochin Darbar." Negotiations now practically completed to build a metre line costing 50 lakhs.
- (3) Concession ceases to be valid on 30th April 1899 unless by that time the scheme should have been floated.

OOTACAMUND,
1st May 1899.

FRANCIS J. E. SPRING,
Consulting Engineer for Railways, Madras.