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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Revenue DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

18th August 1877, No. 328 R.

Railway.

Read the following paper:—

No. 105. Docket of the Government of India in the Public Works Department, (Railway,) dated 6th August 1877, No. 2,636—8 R.

Despatch from the Government of India, Public Works Department, (Railway,) to the Most Honorable the Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, dated Simla, 6th August 1877, No. 99 R.

We have the honor to forward copy of telegrams which we sent to you on the 2nd and 3rd instant, recommending that permanent-way and other materials should be sent out immediately for the Dhond and Munmar Railway.

2. We have resolved on this course in view not only of the existing very serious, but of the still more threatening, aspect of affairs in Southern India, especially in Madras and Mysore; and on the representation of the Government of Bombay that, if materials be made available without loss of time, a temporary line may be laid through between the North-Eastern and South-Eastern lines of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway by December next. Our Consulting Engineer, Mr. Molesworth, also assures us that this result is attainable.

3. The advantage of such a line, did it exist, at the present moment, would be enormous in increasing the capacity of the railway with its present rolling stock, by saving the detour by the Ghats with the descent of one and the ascent of the other, and diminishing the lead for traffic to and from the southern Bombay and Madras districts, by at least 120 miles.

4. Should the afflicted districts continue next year to be dependent for their food supply on outside sources, and there is every probability that they will be so till the spring at least, the assistance which this chord would render, even during a few months only, would amply justify the course we have urged on Her Majesty's Government.

5. Your Lordship is doubtless aware that the trunk railways throughout India have had to meet a very heavy strain, for many months past, caused not by the famine traffic only, but by the traffic resulting from the unusually active export trade in wheat. Each of these traffics has interfered with the other, for the two combined have been far beyond the powers either of the East Indian, or Great Indian Peninsula, Railway.

6. It is of lasting importance to the interests of India that this export trade should be facilitated in every possible way. Yet we are not without apprehension that we may have to check it, for a time at least, by diverting rolling stock from some of the northern lines to the Madras Railway, on which the lives of millions now depend for the distribution of their food.

7. With such a course of action almost imminent, it is incumbent upon us to take every precaution in our power to terminate, at the earliest possible moment, any such interference with trade, should it be forced upon us; and to obviate recourse to it hereafter, should we be enabled to postpone any such action, till our resources can be supplemented effectually.

8. One measure, which notwithstanding its magnitude—for we do not shut our eyes to what is involved in the proposal now submitted to Her Majesty's Government—will, perhaps, bear fruit more quickly than any other, is the laying down of rails on this chord line.

9. But we should hesitate to recommend this measure, were we not fully satisfied that this line of railway, notwithstanding the reports in former years of its poor paying prospects, should be one of the first to be completed as a permanent line of communication. The Western Rajputana Railway has been commenced at its upper end, but the other two sanctioned uncommenced lines, viz., Nasirabad to Neemuch and Nagpur to Chatisgarh should, we think, give place, if necessary for financial reasons, to the completion of this chord line.

10. The circumstances of the present famine traffic alone have demonstrated that this line ought to be made at once. The inconvenience, delay and loss which were suffered when the Bhore Ghat was interrupted some years ago were very great and were widely felt, but it is impossible to estimate the effect of such a break at either ghat in the only railway communication between Northern and Southern India during the present crisis. Since October last the Great Indian Peninsula Railway has carried 28,000 tons of food grain to the districts served by its North-Eastern line and 185,000 tons to those dependent on its South-Eastern line, and the greater portion of the latter has passed down the Thull and up the Bhore Ghat.

11. It is years since a chord line above the ghats was first suggested. Surveys appear to have been made in 1861, and the line was recommended by a committee on railway communications in Central India which sat in 1864, and of which Mr. Anderson, Bombay Civil Service, and Colonels Durand and Strachey of the Royal Engineers, were Members.

12. In 1866 special attention was drawn to the project by our late Secretary in the Public Works Department, Colonel Dickens, who concluded an able note on the subject with the following sentence:—

"Whether considered in view to its advantages as a military communication between Northern and Southern India, in regard to commerce and to travelling, or as a matter of convenience and economy in railway management, I think there are few lines of railway that claim so much consideration as the short line now proposed."

The note was forwarded to Her Majesty's Government with our Railway despatch No. 104, dated 31st October 1866: and if further arguments in favor of the line advocated were wanting, they will be found in the despatch of the Bombay Government to Her Majesty's Government, No. 52, dated the 13th November 1866.

13. Her Majesty's Government took a favorable view of the project, *vide* despatch to Government of Bombay, No. 7, dated 15th February 1867; but though the line found a prominent place in Lord Lawrence's minute on railway extension, dated 9th January 1869, and in our Railway despatch No. 25 of the 11th March following, it is as yet an unsanctioned work. Until now, it has lacked the practical illustration of the arguments in its favor, the cogency of which can no longer be ignored. It has been included, however, in our more recent forecasts of railway extension.

14. A description of the line surveyed in 1867-68 will be found at pages 74 to 84 of the 3rd volume of reprint No. XIV entitled "Further papers relating to the extension of railway communication in India," copies of which were forwarded to Her Majesty's Government in 1869. It is a difficult line crossing two ghats. Its length is 132 miles, and the estimated cost was Rupees 164 lakhs or Rupees 1,24,280 per mile. The estimated traffic returns for this large outlay are very small.

15. In 1875 the Government of Bombay re-opened the question of the construction of this line, on the ground of its "very great importance, if not for traffic, at all events for political, military and postal purposes." It was added—

"It is a weak point in both branches of the Great Indian Peninsula that at present they both involve the ascent and descent of difficult ghat inclines, over which the traffic must always be worked at a greatly enhanced cost, and at slow rates of

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ed; and it is a specially unfavorable fact that all railway communication between rthern and Southern India must now pass down one incline and up the other *viâ* point of junction at Callian. Added to this there is always the chance of obstruca on the ghat inclines; and the certainty that it will often be difficult to work m safely at night in heavy monsoon weather."

16. An estimate was put forward in support of the resuscitation of the scheme d upon prevailing rates of construction. This estimate amounted only to Rupees 68,000, but it made no provision for rolling-stock, or for fencing except at and near ions, and the bridges and under-works were limited to a single line only, instead being for a double line as in the first estimate. The estimated net receipts on this lay are at the rate of nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum.

17. Surveys were thereupon made which satisfied us that a chord of shorter gth would prove far more expensive than that between Dhond and Munmar owing ts encountering the spurs thrown off from the crest of the Western Ghats. The cut off would also be much reduced in length, though still of much importance mbracing both ghat inclines.

In the report of the result of these surveys the cost of the Dhond-Munmar Chord put at a still smaller sum, *viz.*, Rupees 90 lakhs, but there were obvious omissions his estimate besides rolling stock.

18. Upon this, detailed estimates were called for.

This was in January 1876, and an estimate for the preparation of a complete ect was sanctioned by us in March following.

19. Since then the earthworks have been carried on for famine relief purposes, eported in our despatch in the Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department, 10, dated 9th February 1877. In paragraphs 15, 16 and 17 of the letter of the bay Government, No. 49E—126, dated 23rd January 1877, enclosed in that atch, the advantages presented by such a line of railway are again summarized.

20. In sanctioning this work we deemed it expedient to depute our Consulting ineer for State Railways to go over the country. The result, as will be learnt on rusal of enclosure No. 3, is most satisfactory. The surveys already in progress r the direction of the Government of Bombay had led to a great improvement in passage of the southern of the two ghats, and Mr. Molesworth has by some radical ges of alignments in other parts reduced the works so much as to lead him to ipate a saving of 14 or 15 lakhs of rupees compared with the cost of the original ment. This anticipation has been entirely confirmed by the sections, so far as have been taken.

21. In the programme or forecast of railway operations we had set down the of this line at £1,200,000 and, so far as a judgment can at present be formed, we der that the result of the further surveys and of Mr. Molesworth's deputation ies the conclusion that the cost of the line including rolling-stock will not exceed sum.

22. It will be observed that Mr. Molesworth takes a favorable view of the g prospects of this line, and especially if a branch be carried through Toka to ngabad. This branch will be investigated at a more convenient season.

23. The previously estimated receipts would yield a return of about $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. nnum on a capital outlay of £1,200,000. This may be improved upon, if Mr. sworth's anticipations be realized. But apart from this point of view, we would t that it has been demonstrated by the present calamity in Southern India that ne ought to be made at once and as a permanent railway. We now hope to the assent of Her Majesty's Government to this conclusion.

24. The circumstances of the case, and the not unreasonable unwillingness of reat Indian Peninsula Company in former years to undertake this work, determ the agency by which it should now be constructed. Unfavorably as it is ed for any other ownership than that of the Company whose lines it connects, it

must be a State Railway. It should probably be leased to, and worked by, the Company when made. In order to realize the full value of the line under every contingency, its gauge must be determined by that of the lines it would link.

25. In conclusion, we would observe that the demand we have made upon Your Lordship implies the employment of probably 40,000 tons of freight (dead weight), between this time and the middle of November, if the rails are to be laid throughout in all December, and the immediate outlay of about £400,000 including freight. Anticipating that the line will be sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government as a permanent railway, we would point out that this outlay may be recouped by reductions of the railway grant in subsequent years. In other words, this famine (so to speak) outlay is of a temporary nature only as such, and is, in fact, an anticipation of the outlay on railway construction of future years.

COPY forwarded for information to the Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department; also to the Governments of Madras and Bombay.

(Signed) E. C. S. WILLIAMS, Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Offg. Dy. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 106.

ORDER THEREON, 18th August 1877, No. 328 R.

ORDERED to be recorded.

(True Extract.)

Lt.-Col., R.E.,
Joint Secy. to Govt., P.W.D.,
Railway Branch.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways.
20 " Revenue Department (Famine).

Exd. E. C. Shunker.
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File 7326

RAILWAY.

Govt. of {1877} Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS;

To

THE CONSULTING ENGINEER
FOR RAILWAYS,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated August 18th.

Issued

Rcvd. 3/9/77 *Encl.*

G. O., 18th August 1877, No. 328 R.

AUGUST.

Nos. 105-106.

Mis Let 7 September 1877 N 5284

Dhond and Manmar Railway.