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 (2) Date of repair _____
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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.	572	Press.
B.P. No.		Mis.
Dated	31-1-1877	197 .

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 397. Read the following endorsement of the Chief Secretary to Government.

From C. BERNARD, Esq., C.S.I., on Special Duty with Sir RICHARD TEMPLE, to the Hon. W. HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Bellary, 17th January 1877, No. 6.

I AM directed to submit copy of a Minute recorded by Sir Richard Temple regarding the apparent block of grain traffic on the railway line. The Government of India has been pleased to despatch Captain Bipet, R.E., of the Railway Department, to make inquiry regarding the block. Sir Richard Temple would hope that, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the Government Railway Department, as well as the Agent and Traffic Manager of the Madras Railway, may be permitted to furnish such information and help as Captain Bipet may require.

Minute by SIR RICHARD TEMPLE.

THERE is one matter connected with the supply of grain to the districts of Southern India, where the crop has failed, to which I wish to draw immediate attention, in order that a remedy may be if possible applied.

2. The affected districts are traversed by guaranteed railway lines, and private trade has been so active in sending grain into the country, that there has not, and I hope there may never be any question of Government buying grain and carrying it into the affected districts of the Bombay Presidency. But there seems to be a serious block in the railway traffic; and I fear that this block may act very injuriously upon the active private trade which has hitherto flourished. I am aware that this great grain traffic has come suddenly on the railways, and that the Railway Agents and Traffic Managers have, especially on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, made great and not unsuccessful efforts to meet the sudden demand. But I hope the difficulties in the way of still greater success in this respect may be overcome.

3. I have as yet visited the Bombay Presidency only, but I have ascertained that in its districts there has been a failure of the food crops over areas inhabited by five millions of people. The markets from which these people draw their daily food are now supplied almost entirely with grain imported by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Again, it is well known that the food crops of a still larger population in the Madras Presidency have failed, and that some millions of people in Madras would consume railway-borne grain if only they could get it.

4. Thus we have at the south a very large and a very urgent demand. And we have also in the north a very large, practically an unlimited supply. In the Berars, in the Central Provinces, in the Punjab, in the North-Western Provinces and in Behar there has been a good autumn harvest and there is every prospect of a good spring harvest. All these provinces, moreover, produce in good years more than they can consume. They have, therefore, a large surplus. The importance of rapidly conveying this surplus food to the scarcity-stricken districts is too manifest to need exposition. But, while much is being conveyed, there is a portion unfortunately lagging behind. Now I learn that, at the beginning of this month, 12,000 tons of

grain were said to be waiting for wagons at Cawnpore; 5,000 tons were waiting at Nagpore; and large quantities (as I saw myself) at several of other stations on the East India Railway, on the Jubbulpore Extension, on the Nerbudda Valley Line, and at the Berar Stations. Even to-day at a station in the Nizam's country, east of Goolburga, I saw several hundreds of bags of grain ready for transport to Bellary, one of the Madras distressed districts. In all these cases the dealers complained of delays; in some cases the delays were said to be excessive.

5. During my journey upon the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, I found that not only was grain waiting at many stations to be put into wagons, but below the Bhore Ghaut I found 900 loaded wagons stretching over 4 miles of line which had been turned into a siding below the Kurjut Station. I was told to-day that 400 more loaded grain wagons, consigned to the Madras Districts, are standing on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway line between Goolburga and Raichore. I have been informed that general instructions have been issued to all the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Stations not to consign any grain, until further orders, for stations above the Thull Ghaut, that is to say for stations in the famine country. And it has been explained that the cause of the block at Kurjut and at Raichore is that the Madras Railway are unable to take any more grain at present, although nearly all the grain now standing on the line (that is to say about 1,300 wagons or 9,100 tons at Kurjut and Raichore) is consigned to stations on the Madras line.

6. The evil effects of this block and of the stoppage of consignments to the distressed tracts is manifold. The price of food in the distressed tracts is kept higher than it ought to be. Up-country dealers who, if they could get their grain into the Madras districts moderately quickly, would certainly continue to send more and more, are becoming wearied by delays and consequent losses, and they may give up the business. I am informed that dealers at Nagpore have actually sold their grain at the Nagpore station and given up their venture, because they could not get their bags away. And further there is always a doubt whether, now that fodder is so very scarce, grain carts will ply in sufficient numbers from the railway stations into the interior of the affected districts. If a good and continual supply arrives at the stations, the cartmen will get constant work and good prices, and so a sufficient quantity of carriage may be maintained. If the supply of grain falls off, the cattle will be driven away to the hills; and there will be a dearth of carts in the spring and summer months to distribute grain from the stations into the interior.

7. All I can do at this moment is to report the actual block without undertaking to specify the causes or the remedies required. It may be that additional engine-power is required, that more crossing stations or sidings are necessary, that rolling stock ought to be borrowed, that some change in the working of trains is required, or that the working staff should be strengthened. I cannot at present say what the causes of the block may be. But I think immediate steps should be taken to ascertain what (if any thing) is wrong, and to apply such remedies as may be possible. I suggest that a very active officer of the Government of India Railway Department be at once deputed to visit the Great Indian Peninsula and Madras Railways and to confer with the traffic authorities upon the matter. The officer selected should have authority to sanction on behalf of Government such outlay on

temporary sidings, on borrowing engines and rolling stock, on setting up at once such

* NOTE.—I believe reserved stocks of unconstructed portions of engines may be in store at Jamalpore on the East India Railway, at Byculla on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and perhaps at other places.

new engines as may be in stock* on the different guaranteed railways. And the officer deputed should be directed to stay on the Madras (or other blocked) railway until all that he recommends shall have

been done, and until the grain traffic is working as well as circumstances permit. With such officer there should, I think, be associated a selected civil officer of special experience in traffic matters.

HYDERABAD,
12th January 1877.

(Signed) RICHARD TEMPLE.

TRANSFERRED to the Public Works Department, (Railway,) with the request that the desired instructions may be issued for immediate attention.

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Chief Secretary.

No. 398. ORDER THEREON, 22nd January 1877, No. 205.

RAILWAY, No. 31.

COMMUNICATED to the Consulting Engineer for Railways for immediate attention to the subject to which these papers relate.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) G. W. WALKER, Major-General, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Consulting Engineer for Railways.
,, Financial Department.

Order in the Financial Department 29 January 1877. No. 301

Communicated to Revenue Department,
and Revenue Board, and to the Collectors of Bellary, Chudhapur and
Kurnool.

Exd. E. C. Shanker.

Spare Copies

To
The Revenue Department.
W.C.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary

Govt. of 1877 Madras

PUBLIC WORKS.

To

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

Dated January 22nd.

Issued

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 22nd January 1877, No. 205.

JANUARY.

Nos. 397-398.

Grain Traffic on the Madras Railway Line
—Minute by Sir Richard Temple regarding
the apparent block of —, communicated to
the Consulting Engineer for Railways for
immediate attention.

572

2/7

Rev. 1177: Dept
F. N. 72

Jan: Phil Dept.
N. 301

Dated & }
Recd 29th } Aug 1877

Per
N. 171

Comd. P. W. Tins.
on minute by Sir R. Temple
reporting the apparent
block of train traffic on
the Indian Railway line

N. 572

Lodged

JH

31 Jan 1877