

Revenue (1897) Department.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.

G.O., No. 1931

DATED 8th April 97

[Despatch Abstract.]

*Forw. to the R. W. Departt (Railway Branch) B. P.
(Settlement) forw. with remarks, to Govt., R. D.
six copies of the Collector's note on the proposed
Bazwada Masulipatam Railway.*

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.
Curr.	3141/87						

Revenue (1897) Department.

CURRENT No. 2980

From *The Board of Revenue
Revenue Settlement,
Land Records & Agric.)*

*Est. Dis. no 1931
Order*

*Forwarded to the Public
Works Dept. (Railway Branch)
with reference to Proj. S. no
514 R of 12th June 1896.
Post stamp
8th April '97.*

*sd/ G. Stokes.
Ag. Secy to Govt.*

No. 2549 Dis.

*Dated 5th April 1897
Received 6th
Registered 6th
Enclosures 6
Spare copies*

Lo

*The Ry. Deptt (Ry Br.) with
copies of note.
Board of Rev. L. R.*

Despatch 12-4-97

SUBJECT.

*Bozwada Masulipatam Ry.
Forwarding, with remarks,
to Govt. Rev. Deptt. six copies
of the Collector's note on the
proposed —*

9/11/97

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date

Note on the proposed Bezwada-Masulipatam Railway.

1 The Government of India whilst holding the opinion that the Bezwada-Masulipatam line should probably be made eventually, has decided "to defer the consideration of the proposed extension until the effect of the opening of the East Coast State Railway on the course of trade is more apparent."

With all deference to the Government of India I am unable to see how the construction of the Bezwada-Masulipatam Railway can affect the course of trade on the East Coast Railway. The former cannot possibly compete with the latter; it can never be any thing other than a feeder line. It is required not to take stuff from the East Coast Railway; but to tap the 1800 square miles constituting the Kistna Eastern Delta, and to carry its produce on to the great trunk lines, whether East Coast Railway; Nizam's Gauranteed State Railway; or Southern Maharatta Railway. Reference will be made hereafter to the fears that have been so constantly expressed, that the Bezwada-Masulipatam line might be used as a means of reviving the waning prosperity of the port of Masulipatam, at the expense of Cocanada. For the present it is sufficient to say that whether on the completion of the B. M. Railway the trend of trade will be towards Madras, Cocanada or elsewhere, the construction of the Bezwada-Masulipatam Railway can have no possible influence on the course of trade on the main line. The Bezwada-Masulipatam traffic will follow not guide the course of trade.

2 It has been said that since the Kistna Eastern Delta is already supplied with roads and canals, and since its produce is even now finding its way to outside markets either by rail or sea, there is no necessity for a Railway line through the delta. The argument scarcely needs discussion. It might have been used as appropriately to damn the whole E. C. Ry. and not that line only, but every Railway that has ever any where in a civilised and inhabited country been constructed. The inhabitants of the Kistna Eastern Delta, one of the richest and most populous tracts in India, say that they are not being given equal facilities with their brethren elsewhere; that in providing them only with canals and roads, they are condemned to an antiquated means of transit and are handicapped in their competition with more favoured Districts. I need not dilate on the many imperfections of the roads and canals in the delta. They have often been pointed out before. But it is clear that canals which are closed for the very months during which exportation of produce is most active, can hardly be considered ideal means of transit.

3. The argument stated in the first sentence of the last preceding paragraph proceeds on the assumption, that the roads and canals at present existing or that may hereafter be constructed, suffice for the distribution not only of the actually existing quantum of produce of the delta, but of any possible increase thereof that may be hoped for. This is not the case, and on the contrary it is certain that the construction of a line of Railway through the heart of the delta would give an immense stimulus to production especially of rice and food grains. The delta (I speak only of that portion of the Kistna delta lying to the east of the river), is provided with 3 navigable canals, aggregating 109 miles in length; 4 metalled roads aggregating 78 miles; and a few mud and sand tracks, quite unfitted to carry heavy traffic. The first of these canals, and the first of the roads are each great highways of commerce. That road is the only one of the four that is kept always in fair order. In the immediate neighbourhood of this road and canal the land is very highly cultivated, two crops are almost invariably raised, and generally speaking the utmost possible return is obtained from the soil. Things are different away from these highways, and more particularly so the further one goes East. There the cultivators are almost without exception content with a single crop of paddy, sown in June or July and reaped in December or January. For the remaining six months of the year the land lies fallow and unproductive. In the eastern portions of the delta moreover the system of cultivation is

*Canals.	Miles	†Roads.	Miles.
1 Bezwada to Masulipatam ..	49	1 Bezwada to Masulipatam ..	43
2 Pulluru & Polrazu canal ..	34	2 Masulipatam to Tsallapalli ..	12
3 Bantumalli canal... ..	26	3 Pamarru to Gudivada ...	8
		4 Gudivada to Perikid... ..	15
	109		78

bad, manuring, weeding and cleaning of the soil and all the necessary operations of high class cultivation are left undone, the ryot being contented with whatever return the Government irrigation will yield to his ploughings and sowings.

4. I have had seven years' experience of the Kistna District and it has been a constant subject for wonder, that tracts comparatively speaking so near together should exhibit such diverse degrees of productiveness. The explanation seems to me to be as follows. The land toward the east of the District is on the average less fertile than that near the canal and road first mentioned above. Partly no doubt this is due to natural causes; but in no small degree also to the much greater care devoted to the management of the soil in the latter than in the former case. Another factor, or perhaps another way of stating the same fact is that the ryots in the east are lazier than their neighbours in the west, more apt to trust to nature and the irrigation channels, than to their own exertions. But the third factor, and that one which in itself accounts for the other two, the laziness of the cultivator and the inferiority of his soil, is the lack of satisfactory means of communication whereby he can export his produce. In the eastern half of this area of 1800 sq. miles there are no roads, and since the canals close at the end of February, the ryot would be unable to export the produce of a second crop if he were to grow one. The first crop is reaped in December or January a second crop could not be garnered before March: and it would be impossible then to send off the produce by cart over the many miles of rough cross country tracks to Masulipatam or Bezwada, for it is already time to commence ploughing for the crops that will be sown at the end of May and in June and July. So the ryot in these less fortunate eastern villages contents himself with the one crop a year, which he knows will enable him to pay his land assessment, and live in sufficiency till the next harvest. But give him an easy means of exporting his grain, a Railway through the heart of the Delta, and the ryot at once has an incentive to greater activity; to both intensive and extensive cultivation; the soil yields more; and the food supply of the country is increased.

5. Recently I had a striking proof of the necessity for better means of communication in the Gudivada Taluq. I had to sell by auction 1500 acres of Government waste land in the Bapatla Taluq. This is on the west of the Kistna river, within 2 miles of a navigable canal and within 4 or 5 miles of the Bezwada-Madras Railway. The average price realised was Rs. 27 per acre, the whole extent being sold except 90 acres, the absence of bids for which was due to a mistake. Within a week of that sale I had to sell 10,000 acres of Government waste land in the Gudivada Taluq of very similar quality to that in the Bapatla Taluq. Bids were offered for only 744 acres, and the average price obtained for the small extent sold was Rs. 15.8-0 per acre. This land has navigable canals on both sides of it within 3 or 4 miles. The explanation assigned for the absence of bids, and it was undoubtedly the true one, was that the tract being comparatively speaking inaccessible the population was scanty, and therefore labour to bring it under the plough would be insufficient. Given a Railway within reach of this tract and it would have been snapped up as quickly as the other.

6. Fears have at times been expressed lest the Southern Maharatta Railway Company should endeavour to develop the port of Masulipatam as a rival to that of Cocanada, a course of action which it is urged would be detrimental to trade. It seems to me that this fear is baseless. What is the maximum possible amount of traffic which the Southern Maharatta Railway could, if it were continued from Bezwada to Masulipatam, divert from Cocanada to be shipped at Masulipatam? Obviously no goods that had ever been on the broad gauge line that runs to Cocanada, would ever be transferred to a narrow gauge branch for carriage to Masulipatam. Presumably whatever stuff is now carried by the Southern Maharatta Railway to Bezwada, consigned to Cocanada, might be diverted to Masulipatam. But this is I believe no very alarming amount, and after all it is problematical, whether if the port of Cocanada be really so superior to Masulipatam as is alleged, merchants would not continue to prefer shipping from thence, notwithstanding the transshipment at Bezwada.

The only other stuff that the Bezwada-Masulipatam line might possibly take from the broad gauge line are such goods as are entrained locally at Bezwada. But this Traffic is much less considerable than that brought by the Southern Maharatta Railway to Bezwada, and there

is not the nuisance of transshipment to weigh the scale down in favor of Masulipatam as against the superior port of Cocanada.

7. The greater part of the local goods despatched from Bezwada comes down the Kistna River. But the whole amount carried by the East Coast Railway forms only a small fraction of the actual trade, the greater portion going by canal boat to Cocanada. The construction of the Godavari Bridge will give Cocanada a much more commanding position to draw to itself produce from the west i. e. further side of the Godavari River, and Masulipatam will suffer proportionately. Would a Railway line to Masulipatam be likely to attract to itself any large part of the Bezwada local traffic that is now or may hereafter be carried to Cocanada? It is certain that the Bezwada-Masulipatam Railway cannot carry cheaper than the canal from Bezwada to Masulipatam, and yet the Masulipatam canal does not withdraw traffic from the Cocanada line. On the contrary what channel of trade there has hitherto been from Bezwada to Masulipatam by canal is gradually but surely being dried up. If there were any fear of the port of Masulipatam rivalling that of Cocanada, then the canals would have assisted that rivalry. But the contrary is the case. Whether by rail or canal the Masulipatam trade is being diverted to Cocanada. Even the castor trade which comes to Bezwada by river is not carried on to Masulipatam but to Cocanada part by rail, but most by the canal. If then the Masulipatam canal has had no ill effect on the Cocanada trade, how can the Bezwada-Masulipatam Railway which can carry stuff only at rates higher than the canal?

8. The principal reason why dealers prefer to consign to Cocanada rather than Masulipatam, lies, it is said, in the great superiority of the former port. Masulipatam has always been most unpopular with shippers. Some of the Guntur cotton merchants have once or twice tried shipping from Masulipatam, but always with unsatisfactory results; and for many years no cotton at all has been consigned from Guntur for shipment at Masulipatam. With canals as the cheapest means of carriage, these merchants have always preferred the 100 and odd miles to Cocanada to the 50 miles to Masulipatam. A Railway from Bezwada to Masulipatam will not be cheaper but a dearer means of transit than the existing canal. There is no conceivable reason why these cotton merchants, having for years declined to use a cheaper means of transit should employ one that is dearer.

9. It is not only that the mercantile traditions of Masulipatam are bad, causing the place to be looked at askance by all European shippers, but the physical conformation of the place makes it impossible as a place of export. The wharves are situated on a narrow, shallow, tortuous creek, with but a few inches of water at low tides. This creek is 1½ mile long passing throughout its length through a mangrove swamp of deep tenacious mud, awash at high tides. The creek is impeded at its mouth by a constantly shifting bar which for most of the year has not more than a few inches of water on it at low tides; and from this bar the depth increases by almost imperceptible degrees, till the 5 fathom line is reached at about 6 miles from the coast. The roadstead is an open one slightly protected from Southwest, but completely exposed to winds between North East and S. S. W. The only means of shipping and discharging cargo is by sailing boats of about 30 to 50 tons burthen. It has been proposed more than once to have steam launches to tow these boats, but the proposal has been consistently negatived, one very sufficient reason being the unmanageable bar of hard sand, which would probably bump a launch to pieces. So that there is not the slightest probability that the cargo boats will ever under any conditions be able to make more than one, or at most two trips a day to and from the shipping, as is at present found possible.

10. Proposals have similarly been made from time to time, that Government should spend money on the improvement of the port. But repeated enquiry and investigation have shown that there is nothing that Government can do, not even by the expenditure of crores. The anchorage cannot be brought nearer than its present position, according to the weather and season from 7 to 10 miles from the wharves: the wharves cannot be taken nearer to the bar on account of the intervening mangrove swamp; the bar cannot be deepened or in any way controlled, for not only the bar, but the lower one third of the creek as well, exhibit a constant tendency to shift their positions and configuration from year to year. Again proposals have

been made to deepen and in parts widen the creek; but what is the good of giving the creek a better section, when its exit is blocked by an intractable and impossible bar? And if such operations were of any use, what would be the probable cost?

No company in the world would ever be mad enough to bury its money in the mud swamps that form the port of Masulipatam.

11. It has been said that even without any expenditure on improvements to the Port of Masulipatam, the construction of a Railway to it might be able to revive its trade, and it is pointed out as a fact that there used to be a considerable trade from the port which has now been diverted to Cocanada, but which the opening of a Railway to Masulipatam might restore to its old channel. My reply to this is contained in Paras 6 and 7 above. There is already a canal from Bezwada to Masulipatam. Whatever traffic has been diverted to Cocanada from Masulipatam has been won from the canal by the E. C. Railway; a Railway from Bezwada to Masulipatam would be a more costly means of carriage than the canal; how then can such a Railway win back this traffic which the canal has failed to keep?

12. I have endeavoured to show that Cocanada has no cause to fear any loss of traffic by the opening of a line of Railway to Masulipatam. It is difficult to understand how any one should think that the S. M. Railway Co. would dream of bolstering up the trade of that place. It seems to me obvious that that company will want to carry freight not to the nearest port, but by the longest lead possible to ports on the west of India.

13. It appears to be accepted by every one that the Bezwada Masulipatam line will eventually be constructed. That being so, I cannot conceive any reason why the construction should be further delayed. All those interested in the line are clamouring for it; the development of the country is being retarded for want of it; no voice is now raised against it; the S. M. Railway Company is anxious to commence its construction at once; what need then for another day's delay?

J. N. ATKINSON,

Collector.

Proceedings of the Board of Revenue.

(Revenue Settlement, Land Revenue & Agricultural)

Dated 5th April 1897.

No. 2549 miscellaneous.

Read the following letter from the Collector of Kistna, dated 20th March 1897, No. 1038 of 1897.

I have the honour to forward herewith eight copies of a note which I have drawn upon the proposed Bezwada - Masulipatam Railway. I have seen it stated in the papers that Colonel Dundas, late agent and Manager of the Southern Mahratta Railway has presented an application to the Government of India for sanction to construct the line in question. I believe that the Board is satisfied that the commercial, administrative, and industrial interests of this district are seriously impeded for want of the line, and perhaps, the arguments that I have adduced in the note may help to overcome the Government of India's hesitation about sanctioning the line.

I beg therefore that the Board will forward a sufficient number of copies of the Note

Note to the Government of Madras with its support, and with a request to forward the same to the Government of India for favourable consideration.

Resolution.

Six Copies of the Collector's note will be forwarded to Government, Revenue Department.

2. The Board fully concurs with the Collector as regards the desirability of constructing the proposed line.

(True Copy & Extract.)

Copy to R.V. Srinivasan

Secretary

To the Secretary to Govt. (R.D.) with 6

Copies of the note.

Copy to the Collector of Krishna.

When given for copying _____
When copied _____
When examined _____
When signed _____

189.

READ AGAIN G.O., No.
189

DATED

CURRENT No.

ENCLOSURES TO G. No.

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LETTER OF GOVERNMENT

STATEMENT WITH DITTO

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