

Wednesday, January 16, 1878

**ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**COUNCIL OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA**

**LAWS AND REGULATIONS.**

**VOL 17**

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ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Council of the Governor General of India,

ASSEMBLED FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING

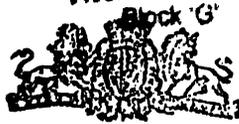
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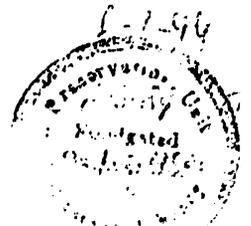


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1879.



*Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India, assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations under the provisions of the Act of Parliament 24 & 25 Vic., cap. 67.*

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The Council met at Government House on Wednesday, the 16th January 1878.

**PRESENT :**

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India, G.M.S.I.,  
*presiding.*

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, C.S.I.

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, G.C.B.

The Hon'ble Sir E. O. Bayley, K.C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Sir A. J. Arbuthnot, K.C.S.I.

Colonel the Hon'ble Sir Andrew Clarke, R.E., K.C.M.G., C.B.

The Hon'ble Sir J. Strachey, K.C.S.I.

Lieutenant-General the Hon'ble Sir E. B. Johnson, K.C.B.

The Hon'ble Whitley Stokes, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble F. R. Cockerell.

The Hon'ble B. W. Colvin.

The Hon'ble Mahárájá Jotíndrá Mohán Tagore.

The Hon'ble T. C. Hope, C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Sir Shumshareperkash, the Rájá of Sirmur, K.C.S.I.

The Hon'ble Mumtáz-ud-Daola Nawáb Sir Muhammad Faiz Alí Khán,  
Bahádur, K.C.S.I.

The Hon'ble G. C. Paul.

The Hon'ble E. O. Morgan.

**NORTHERN INDIA LICENSE BILL.**

The Hon'ble SIR JOHN STRACHEY moved that the Bill for the licensing of trades and dealings in the Panjáb, the North-Western Provinces and Oudh be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Messrs. Stokes, Cockerell and Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Hon'ble Mr. Morgan and the Mover. He said—

“MY LORD,—At the meeting of this Council last week, Your Excellency stated that I should be able to explain to the Council to-day the course which the Government proposes to follow with reference to the Taxation Bills which were introduced three weeks ago.

“ His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor expressed at the same time a strong opinion that no unnecessary delay ought to be allowed in passing the Bills into law.

“ He said that local legislation depended much on the shape which these Bills might take, and that until that shape was finally decided, doubt and unsettlement must remain in men’s minds as to the extent to which their interests would be affected by fresh taxation. He said that this doubt and unsettlement were mischievous to the public and embarrassing to the Government, and besides this he urged this important fact, to which I myself drew the attention of the Council when the Bills were introduced, that the work of assessing the license-tax ought to be carried out by the European officers personally before the cold weather now passing away was over; otherwise the work would inevitably fall into the hands of Native subordinates.

“ Similar representations have been made by several of the other Local Governments. It had originally been the wish of the Government of India that a somewhat longer period should be allowed to elapse before these Bills were proceeded with; but, on reconsidering the question, the Government fully recognises the force of the reasons given by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor for the opinion that the Bills ought to be passed without needless delay.

“ If the measures proposed by the Government had been less favourably received, the case would have been different, and it might have been right to give more time for public discussion and criticism. The Bills, however, have now been before the public for very nearly three weeks, and it was a cause of much satisfaction to me to hear from my hon’ble friend the Lieutenant-Governor that he was satisfied that our measures had been generally well received, and that the necessity for further taxation had been loyally recognised.

“ The Government therefore proposes that the Bills shall now be gone on with in the usual course. I am about to move that they be referred to a Select Committee, and when the report of the Committee has been laid before the Council, it is proposed to proceed with the Bills as speedily as may be found convenient.

“ I have only one other point to notice.

“ At the last meeting of the Council my hon’ble friend the Lieutenant-Governor expressed a hope that I would take an opportunity of explaining the scheme which the Government of India proposed to adopt in regard to the expenditure of the funds which we are now proposing to raise by fresh taxation.

“I think this wish of my hon'ble friend entirely reasonable, and, before the Council is asked to pass these Bills into law, I shall endeavour to give the fullest explanation in my power in regard to this subject.

“I feel confident that I shall be able to satisfy the Council and the public that the resolution which the Government has proclaimed will be faithfully carried out, and that the proceeds of these new taxes will be expended for the purpose of providing what I have called an insurance against famine, and for no other purpose whatever.”

The Hon'ble MAHARAJÁ JOYINDRÁ MOHÁN TAGORE said: “My Lord, I have listened with attention to what has been said by the Hon'ble Member who has just spoken, and I crave Your Excellency's permission to occupy the time of this Council with a few remarks. I feel sure that the people in general will in all loyalty willingly submit to the proposed taxation when it is shown that the exigencies of the State necessitate its imposition, and, considering all circumstances, I am inclined to think that the proposed license-tax is the best that could be suggested—next perhaps to an income-tax with a high minimum of incidence. As a non-official member of this honourable Council, I deem it my duty, however, respectfully to represent to Your Excellency the strong impression which exists among the people that there is considerable room for retrenchments in the Home Military charges as well as in the Army and Public Works expenditure here, and that no additional tax ought justly to be imposed on the people before such retrenchments have been effected. As to the practicability of the reductions, they are supported in their views by no less an authority than Your Excellency's distinguished predecessor, Lord Northbrook; and this Council will remember the correspondence which passed between the War Office and the Duke of Argyll when His Grace was the Secretary of State for India, with regard to the depôt and recruiting charges. I am glad to see that the Hon'ble Member in charge of our finances entertains similar views with regard to military expenditure, and although he said on a former occasion that Your Excellency's Government will endeavour by representation to the Home Authorities to effect necessary retrenchments, he has unfortunately for us been able to hold out little hope of success. Now, my Lord, the people of this country have no voice in the British Parliament, and they have no exponent of their views in the India Office; they naturally look up to Your Excellency's Government as the protector and guardian of their interests. I hope Your Excellency will allow that, as loyal subjects, they have a right to expect that this Government will not simply represent, but represent with all the force and earnestness which sincerity of conviction imparts, that it cannot consistently with justice impose fresh burdens upon

the mute millions mostly living from hand to mouth, until all possible reductions in expenditure have been effected. The generous instincts of the British nation and the love of fair play which distinguishes them will, I feel confident, be on the side of justice to India, though the adjustment of the financial relations of England with India on an equitable basis were to affect their own pockets and interfere with patronage in certain high quarters. But we are aware that reductions in expenditure cannot be made all at once, while the deficit in the revenue must be immediately met. Taxation, therefore, is a matter of necessity. There is a widespread apprehension however which, I confess, is not quite unfounded, that taxes once imposed are not easily or soon removed. For this reason I would take the liberty respectfully to suggest that the Select Committees to which the Taxation Bills are to be referred may be asked to give their special consideration to the question whether the Bills should not be so modified as to limit their operations to a certain period, say two or three years, so that there may be ample time for representation to the Home Government and the British public of the grievances of which we complain. This course, I submit, will be an assurance to the people that Your Excellency's Government is in earnest to do all it can to effectuate reductions, and will inspire them with a confidence that no new permanent burden will be laid upon them until all efforts of Your Excellency's Government to persuade the people of Great Britain to deal justly by the helpless millions of this their great dependency have absolutely failed.

“ One word more, my Lord, and I have done. Regarding the application of the money to be raised by taxation, with every deference to the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Bills, I am humbly of opinion that it should be formed into a separate fund with a separate account, and not be merged into the general revenue, so that it may satisfy the people that it is what in reality it is intended to be, a separate famine fund; they will also have an opportunity of knowing what portion of it, if any, is applied to the repayment of previous famine loans, and what portion is spent on the construction of famine insurance works, and how far those works answer the purpose for which they are intended; for, not to mince matters, there is a general conviction that some at least of the irrigation-works which have been executed have turned out to be, as Colonel Corbett has shown, works of experiment rather than of experience.”

The Hon'ble SIR ANDREW CLARKE said:—“ MY LORD,—The Council will, I trust, permit me to offer a few observations which, from the relations that are now recognised to exist between Famine and Public Works, may not be wholly unacceptable or without interest. And the more so, as the administration of the latter being my particular function, some declaration of our

policy may be looked for in the light of the teachings of our recent sad experience.

“It is hardly time for us to review the history of the famine that is passing away, though not yet completely gone, in the Deccan and Southern India. Scarcity and high prices of food, there as well as in other parts of the empire, still remain and render it as difficult as it is premature to come to any finite conclusion as to the exact cause of the calamity, or to dogmatize on the remedies that should be applied to meet the recurrence of famine in the land.

“Unhappily, as handed down to us, we have many and varied precedents, both administrative and economic, not all consistent however, and not all wise or good, for us to accept as standards for our guidance, or as models to imitate; some, in fact, are rather the reverse. You, my Lord, have discussed this section of enquiry in your Minute of last August. But, whether looking backward or forward, our object is to ascertain what is the policy to accept, the practice to adopt, in order to enable us, if we cannot abolish famine—an end I fear hopeless to be attained—to do at any rate what we can to limit its area, to localize its scourge, to mitigate its intensity.

“But here I may ask, though no complete or satisfactory answer, I fear, can yet be given, to what are high prices, scarcity or famine due? And why in recent years have these been so recurring, so severe, so virulent?

“Are there causes, possibly as potent but silently at work, to bring about these visitations, besides mere atmospheric phenomena?

“Is there less thrift than formerly? Is the surplus of full harvests no longer stored, but sold, and the proceeds dissipated? Has population increased and in proportion food-produce diminished? Have edible grains given place to more paying crops?

“It is possible that these causes are at work here and there, in isolated places, due to special circumstances, but I am inclined to think they are not by any means general. Their consideration, however, calls for thorough scrutiny and investigation, a duty pertaining, in its early stages at least, to the economist and statistician rather than to the engineer.

“In connection with this, I would mention one incident of grave practical moment in the late famine. It is known that more than two-thirds of the autumn and spring harvest failed over an area inhabited by thirty millions of

people, and that during the period, some ten months, of the greatest intensity of this famine, the food imported could only have helped to feed one-third of this multitude: yet at the instant the fresh harvest was assured, prices dropped and import ceased. This might lead to the assumption that Southern India held within itself, even when its harvests had failed, stores of grain nearly sufficient to feed its people for the whole time, and yet we were assured on all sides at the end of last, and beginning of this, year that there were no reserves of food, or next to none, in that country. Is it impossible to devise a means by which our knowledge on this all-important point may in the future be, if not absolutely reliable, at least not absolutely *nil*?

“Again, the facts of the grain-trade of Northern India present some features which it may be worth while to note, and which suggest that vast reserves are still in hand, notwithstanding the enormous export-trade of the last two years, and particularly of the present year.

“The export of wheat from Calcutta on an unusual scale commenced in May 1876, just after the spring or wheat-harvest had been garnered. Wheat then sold at Cawnpore for 27 seers per rupee, and the export rose from 1,50,000 maunds in April to 5,40,000 maunds in July, but checked (apparently by a rise in price in July to 22½ seers), fell in August to 2,65,000 maunds. At the end of August the price again fell to 27 seers, and the exports rose to 5,60,000 maunds (the maximum of the year) in October. It was about this time that the signs of approaching famine were unmistakable.

“From the end of August the price rose till nearly the middle of December 1876, when it was 21 seers for the rupee, and the exports in January 1877 fell to 1,20,000 maunds.

“Now it is since January 1877 that the extraordinary export has taken place,—thus anticipating by at least three months the course of trade of the previous year,—but prices remained constant from December till the beginning of April, at 20 to 21 seers.

“War was declared in Europe on the 23rd April 1877.

“By May the exports had risen to upwards of one million of maunds, and with a slight check in June (the price had risen to 16 seers in May) reached its maximum (12,70,000 maunds) in August, the price having been 19½ seers early in June and 18 seers early in July.

“From June till the early part of August there was no great variation in price, but in the latter half of that month the price rose to 15 seers,

reaching its maximum in the latter half of September, when it stood at 11 seers. The autumn crops of Northern India had failed, and the export-trade fell suddenly to 4,40,000 maunds in September, was 2,55,000 maunds in October, and 2,35,000 maunds in November.

“ Thus, so far as we can see, the enormous abstraction of grain for export from Bombay as well as from Calcutta, in addition to what was sent to the famine districts of Western India, did not cause a greater variation in the price of wheat at Cawnpore between December 1876 and August 1877 than is represented by a difference of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  seers in the quantity obtainable for one rupee.

“ But the moment one harvest had failed and the sowings for the next were in jeopardy, the law of self-preservation appears to have asserted itself, and we may, I think, deduce from the rapidity of its action that the reserves are great, and if, as I was informed, more than 100,000 tons of shipping were left without freights, we have an index of the trade which had been reckoned on, by those most fitted to estimate the power of the supply to equal the demand.

“ No doubt there are tracts of country which, formerly growing food for home-consumption, now grow produce for export, and depend for their support on supplies from without ; but accepting this, what follows will, I think, show that this is a source of satisfaction rather than a cause for regret, since in the restoration of the balance we find the very weapon with which to fight famine : for the fleecy capsules of the cotton plant, or the jewelled diapers of the poppy, feed their cultivators with no less certainty than the crops of the rice swamp, or of the wheat field, feed those who raise them.

“ The agricultural returns of India, from which much might have been gleaned, are not very complete, or rather they are not as yet in a very accessible form, but Mr. Bernard has been kind enough to give me a note which will make a review of them intelligible. He says—

“ The best return I have been able to get of the area cultivated and the area under food crops in different parts of India, incomplete it is true for some Provinces, but still sufficient for our purpose, shows that in our most thickly-peopled Provinces there are about 75 to 80 acres of land under cultivation to every 100 persons, and that out of those 75 to 80 acres 65 to 70 are under food-crops. For instance, Oudh with its dense population of 14 millions has 9 million acres of cultivated lands, of which 8,200,000 acres bear food-crops. Madras has 21 millions of acres under food-crops for its raiyatwari population (excluding zamindaris) of about 27 millions. Mysore has  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions of acres under food for its population of 6 millions. British Burma has  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions of acres under food with a population of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions. The Central Provinces, where the land is poor and cultivation is slovenly, and where there are grown much

cotton and oil-seeds, have only 13 millions of acres under food-crops out of a total 18½ millions of cultivated acres, but then its population is only 9½ millions. There are great differences in Provinces; for instance British Burma exports annually 800,000 tons of rice, that is to say, it produces from two to three times as much food as its people require. Assam, on the other hand, has also a very rich soil, a heavy and never-failing rainfall, enormous areas of virgin land, yet she does not produce food enough for her people, and has to import food from thickly-peopled Bengal. But, so far as I know, Assam is the only Province in this case, and all the other Provinces of India produce enough food for their own support and for export as well.

‘A great deal has been said of late years about the vast areas put down with opium, cotton, indigo, seeds and other crops, to the exclusion of food-crops, and to the exploitation of India for the benefit of rich traders and of distant populations. But much of this kind of talk is due to ignorance; for out of the cultivated area of British India, estimated at about 160 millions of acres, only about 580,000 acres are under opium, and little more than one million acres under indigo, 8,000,000 oil-seeds, and 10,500,000 acres under cotton, most of it for home-consumption in India, while at least 130 millions of acres are under food-crops. And an acre of food-crop land will in an ordinarily good season support two people if the produce of one Province be taken with another. In Burma and Bengal one acre supports three or four people; in the Central Provinces and Bombay it supports less than two. No doubt the area under such crops as oil-seeds, jute, and oil-bearing roots has increased greatly during the last 10 or 15 years. But then the total area under the plough has also increased vastly. In the Madras Presidency alone I find that Mr. Dalrymple, no mean authority, wrote in 1867 that the cultivated land in certain districts of Madras had from 1853 to 1866 risen from 10 millions to 16 millions of acres, so that it is quite safe to say that the area of food-crop land in India is now as high or higher compared to the population than it was in old times, notwithstanding the great extension of non-food staples like linseed and rapeseed.’

“My object in calling attention to this statement will be patent and, I trust, conclusive. It is this, that even if drought and dearth were more extensive and widespread than they have been in the most disastrous of Indian famines, the empire can still from its own soil feed itself, and I say this with the full knowledge that we have drawn rice from beyond the limits of the empire.

“The significance of this fact should go far to reconcile us to accept, not with cheerfulness certainly, but with resignation, the proposals of my Hon’ble Colleague; and this consideration recalls me to my more immediate object that, though the measures for which we now seek assent are the premium which we must pay for insurance (I fear only for a part insurance), and though it is to be hoped that sweet nature will give us a little longer time for recovery and restoration before she again withholds from us her bounteous and fruitful gifts, we must in wisdom, and with prevision and energy, use the opportunity of husbanding with knowledge, as well as of

distributing with certainty and rapidity, those gifts so that our peoples may not again suffer as they have in the past.

“Severe as the dearth and consequent distress have been from which we are now emerging, there has been no dearth of suggestions for the remedy and prevention of a similar state of things. These suggestions are as varied in their scope as they differ in the means required to give effect to them, ranging from a scheme to cost only a hundred millions sterling—but the money did not come with the scheme—to the simpler and certainly less costly introduction of a patent two-wheeled cart for horse or bullock draft—my friend forgot to tell me how the cattle were to be fed—or to a cheap and simple wind-mill for pumping water, but I was not told how the water was to be raised when there is no wind, the normal atmospheric condition of India when water is most wanted.

“And now, my Lord, in what I am about to say on the particular specific that has been so boldly proffered to us, on many sides from many irresponsible authorities, as the certain cure and remedy for all our ills, I desire most emphatically to record the fact that, though not an irrigation engineer myself (for my experience in this field of my profession has been very limited), I have approached the consideration of the subject as applicable to all India, prejudiced in favour not only of irrigation, but also of inland navigation, and that one of my dreams has been the hope that during the time I was to sit at this Council Board I would unite the waters of the Arabian Sea with those of the Bay of Bengal by an inland channel.

“The stern realities that confronted me have dispelled this illusion, but at any rate this bare statement should clear me from the charge that because I have had larger experience in railways, I am therefore biassed in favour of railway enterprises.

“The construction of irrigation and navigation-works must strike the most heedless as the most obvious way of preventing famines. Water in ample abundance, rushing and racing to the ocean only to be spread and lost in its broad bosom, has to be but bitted and curbed by dam or bund, and then so distributed as to fertilise the wide level plains of India, and to secure food and life for man and beast.

“A step further, and these running rills are deepened, extended and converted into silent highways, to bear to foreign markets the redundant harvests

of the tracts they traverse, and to bring back argosies laden with the wealth of other lands.

“This seemed simple and captivating, and in India, with its tropical sun, its certain (?) monsoons, and the prodigious rainfall along the Ghâts and in some localities, nothing should be more sure.

“Others again, having studied well our geography, have seen in the perennial supply drawn by our northern rivers from the eternal snows of the Himalayas an inexhaustible source of national wealth.

“Have these rivers been neglected? A glance at a map showing the districts of Northern India protected from drought by irrigation-works will give a graphic answer.

“These protected areas form, it is true, but a small portion of the entire surface of the Continent, and of the balance left little can unfortunately be reached by this perennial supply; for the area within its influence ceases a little south of the Jumna, and from Rajmahal on the east away to the far south and west all the immense region of Central India bounded by the Vindias falls to the Ganges, and is inaccessible to canal-irrigation.

“This area, then, and that again to the south of the range I have named, may be said to be wholly dependent upon rainfall. And we are thus brought to see that, vast as is the country we have to deal with, mere magnitude is but one element of the problem to be solved.

“Much, very much, has already been done, especially in Southern India, and much more still can be, and will be, done in storing water; but the lessons which past and recent famines have taught us are that territories dependent on reservoirs, or ‘tanks,’ as they are better known in India, offer, and at the best can offer, only an intermittent protection under the phase from which we are now emerging.

“Multiply these tanks as we may, they will stand us in but little help in such a famine as we have just passed through, due, as it has been, not to the failures of a single season, or of a single year. Deficiency of water in them originally, and ceaseless evaporation, are the influences which dry up one and dry up all when once the supply fails. And here, before I pass from this subject, I would desire to say that, although confidence in tanks cannot be assured, dependent as they are on the doubtful factor of local rains, yet in Madras, and especially in Mysore, where there is the enormous number of 37,600 tanks ranging from the size of a village reservoir to a respectable-

sized lake of 14 square miles, much has been done in recent years to place them in a condition of safety, improving, as far as practicable, their capacity. But in this direction still more has to be done, and every effort will be made to insist on the continuance of systematic action in perfecting these works.

“To replenish these reservoirs from other than their natural catchments, as has been suggested, by means of channels led off from the larger rivers, would, in nearly all cases throughout the centre of the peninsula, where the scourge of famine has been heaviest, be either wholly impossible, or relatively so if financially considered.

“The tempting idea of storing up the flood wave where the streams first issue from their birth-place in the bosom of the Western Ghâts, unless in a very few exceptional positions, appears to be as deceptive as it is luring, judging from the experience of works of this character in the Bombay Presidency. No less than 27 works more or less of this type estimated to cost over 2 millions sterling have there been either completed or commenced as famine relief works, with, it is much to be feared, little prospect of paying for many years to come.

“The greatest advocate for schemes of this character has lately stated that 10,000 such reservoirs with an unfailing supply could thus be constructed, and instanced as a case in point one capable of storing 1,600,000,000 cubic yards of water and of commanding ‘nine-tenths of the whole Peninsula of India,’ which project, however, had in vain been pressed on the attention of Government.

“The Officer whose duty it was to investigate this project, and who himself was at first most sanguine as to its success, informs me that, after several years’ gauging the river which was to supply the reservoir, the available quantity of water turned out to be only one-fourth of that calculated above; and further, that, judging from the experience of three other works of a precisely similar character which were experimentally carried out in the same chain of hills, the fact was clearly demonstrated that such works could not, at least under existing conditions, be made to pay. The land is there, the water is there, but the inducements hitherto held out to the cultivators to embark in irrigation have met with the same disheartening response as in the case of the Madras Irrigation Company’s Canal, which has hitherto disappointed in the most marked manner the expectation held out when it was projected. I have said it would not pay; but to my mind this is a matter of secondary import-

ance, if only it would not fail. But as a security against famine in times like those we have passed through, it would be a broken reed to lean on.

“In these situations, with *regur* or other unsuitable soils, rapidly sloping ground, and other drawbacks, the sparsely scattered, ignorant and indigent cultivators, who perhaps have had no previous acquaintance with irrigation, fail to realize the advantage of incurring the outlay requisite for terracing their fields (often in such localities a serious charge), and it is thus to be feared that generations must be born and die before appreciable progress can be made towards the desired goal.

“Until the general conditions with which we have to deal alter materially, or schemes hitherto tried without success solve the difficulty of bringing water to the land without thereby imposing an unbearable burden on the country, we must accept as a fact that close on 550,000 square miles of the 740,000 comprising the Great Provinces of the Empire (exclusive of the Native States, Burma, &c.) cannot receive protection in any broad sense, and the vision of the 10,000 great reservoirs conjured up by the enthusiastic projector must be allowed to fade into dreamland.

“Another distinguished writer who has been quoted as a great authority, and whose opinion I admit is deserving of every respect, has stated that the great tracts of the Panjáb might, at the cost of some 10 millions, be irrigated without the risk of pecuniary loss, and that this would be an insurance against drought.

“This may be true, but the question is not entirely connected with famine, and considered from an irrigation point of view, the scheme has been already considered and abandoned, because the tax-payers of all India would have to find the money to execute it, and when executed there would be for generations no people to enjoy it, the district containing but a handful of inhabitants.

“The same writer when criticising our past expenditure in the Tirhoot famine would also have that country irrigated. Press these principles to their logical sequence and apply them to all the area of India, and we are brought face to face with an outlay of some £700,000,000 sterling!

“For a moment however admitting the dictum that ‘there is not a district in India that could not be more or less irrigated,’ and assuming that only 100 millions of acres (say 156,000 square miles) of its whole surface could have this great blessing conferred on it, at the rate specified, namely, £2 per acre (the Bombay works give Rs. 23½ per acre for protection, exclusive of indirect

charges), a capital outlay of 200 millions would be needed, and an annual burden imposed on the people of 8 millions sterling to cover the interest charge at 4 per cent.

“ A proposition so startling might be allowed to answer itself, or still better by adopting an argument already used that the taxation of India ‘is almost without limit so high that you cannot turn the screw a bit more,’ be condemned by those who have brought it forward for grave consideration; but as the best means of bringing home the very precarious nature of the revenue derivable from these protective works, the following sentence may be quoted from the Bengal Revenue Report for the past official year :—

“ In Midnapore the rainfall was 75 inches more in the opinion of the raiyats than is good even for rice. Hence canal water was at a discount. Those cultivators who had executed leases at the commencement of the season regretted that they had done so, and the result seemed to justify their view of the case, as numerous careful experiments made by both Revenue and Engineer Departments showed that the outturn of the irrigated crops was in no degree superior to that of the unirrigated. This following upon a previous year of good rainfall has brought the Midnapore Canal into the greatest disfavour. There was a large falling off in the leased area, which has again been followed by a very much larger decrease in 1877-78.’

“ This has the greater significance when it is recollected who the author is, and his devotion and attachment to this branch of his profession, for no better Irrigation Engineer exists in India than Colonel Haig.

“ Again he observes—

‘ The previous year having been a very favourable one for the unirrigated crops, the area leased for in 1876-77 fell from 55,095 acres to 32,681, but as the season advanced and its real character developed, the lessees repented of their engagements, and endeavoured to evade them by every possible means, first clamouring for a remission of the Government demand on the ground that the water was of no value to them (which, as it has turned out, was true), and when this was refused, endeavouring to prove that water had not been properly supplied. The result has been disheartening for both Government and people. The revenue demands were enforced mostly by process of law, the people resisting them to the last. Very little of the demand for the year was recovered during the year, but the recoveries of arrears of former years were so vigorously carried on, that the actual collections exceeded those of any previous year except 1874-75.

‘ It is impossible to record this result with any satisfaction, as it seems certain that the arrears and the difficulty of enforcing payment were mainly, if not solely, due to the extreme poverty of the people. It is melancholy to read of 12,714 certificates having been issued for the recovery of the arrears after abandoning all claims for less than one rupee, and making remissions to a large extent on other grounds; and this in a district where the irrigators

have, as a rule, dealt fairly with Government, and have always been ready to pay when they had the means. One can hardly read the description of the revenue operations of the year, and it may be added, of the previous years, without a wish that, if the state of the cultivators is such as it is described by the Collector and his subordinates, irrigation, which, according to them, only enhances the difficulties of the people in ordinary years, had never been introduced at all. The Deputy Revenue Superintendent remarks—"The most potent cause about the gradual decline of the area leased is the indebtedness of the Midnapore raiyats. They are involved over head and ears; and it is a matter of infinite regret that their debts are increasing as their connection with the Government irrigation is growing older. Excepting during the year under review, the canal irrigation as compared with the unirrigated crop has always increased the yield from 3 to 5 maunds in the acre, but the Government irrigators are not in a position to benefit by it; all that they obtained from the fields go punctually to fill the coffers of the Mahájans, and they have finally to borrow money for the payment of the water-rate. The increased yield of the crop, if reserved for the liquidation of the Government debt, is sure to prove more than enough for the purpose; but no notice is taken of it, and when the irrigator is forced to pay for the irrigation of his land, he blames the canal for the increase of his debt."

'Again, attachments and sales of the debtors' property were very frequent, and where they had not the desired effect, the debtors were arrested for the realization of the Government dues; and it is now a very common saying within the irrigable area that the major portion of the Government irrigators have been deprived of their plough-cattle for the payment of the water-rates. This is not very untrue, as the most valuable saleable property in the possession of the cultivators are the bullocks; and where we could catch hold of them no other movable or immovable property belonging to them was attached or sold. The number of sale notices and warrants for the arrest of the debtors issued during the year under review was unusually large, yet from the well-known poverty of the Midnapore raiyats, the result has not been as satisfactory as was anticipated.

'The part played by the Zamíndárs and Mahájans in the matter is shown in the following extracts from the Deputy Superintendent's reports:—

"The Zamíndárs, whose resistance to the spread of irrigation was hitherto passive, have now broken out in action, and many of them have openly prohibited their tenantry from using the canal water on the penalty of incurring their severe displeasure. They have done this with the view of securing the realisation of their own dues, and of preventing their raiyats from increasing their debts unnecessarily as they call it. The Mahájans also have been telling the raiyats not to resort to the canal any longer."

'For the Collector's explanation of the causes of this state of things reference may be made to the Revenue Report of 1875-76, paragraph 36. It should be noted, in passing, that the year 1876-77, in which coercive measures on so large a scale were found necessary for the realisation of the Government revenues, was one of exceptionally high prices, and so far peculiarly favourable to the raiyats.'

"I have at length, and I fear to weariness, made these quotations; not that I desire to repeat them in the remotest degree to depreciate irrigation,

but to show that the subject is surrounded with other difficulties, perhaps more obstructive and more powerful than those which the engineer can overcome or the financier deal with.

“What has been done already in the way of this artificial irrigation in parts of India, its cost and its results, may be rapidly sketched.

“Take first, my Lord, this great province of Bengal, with its 62,000,000 of population, and its 48,000,000 acres of land under food-crops, and its 7,500,000 acres producing industrial staples of one kind or the other, and consider its three great irrigation schemes of Orissa, the Sonc, and Midnapore.

“These three projects protect generally some 1,231,000 acres, or 2·2 per cent. of the whole cultivated area of the province; they will, when completed, fully preserve that area from drought under the worst conditions yet known. In the last year water was taken from them for 360,000 acres, or only a little more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total lands under crops. To obtain this result, we have already spent close on  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions sterling, and a little under £4 an acre will have been spent when the works have been completed.

“In the Panjáb, exclusive of ancient works, nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions sterling have been spent in irrigating a little more than 1 million acres. The Sirhind project, now drawing to completion, promises well, but none of the other numerous schemes for further irrigation in the Panjáb hold out fair prospects of immediate success.

“The same difficulty applies to the prosperous provinces of the North-West, where £5,500,000 have been already expended in irrigating, according to the last returns, some 1,300,000 acres, and in prosecution of works which will eventually command a much wider area. This accomplished, the Ganges and the Jumna, the perennial rivers of these regions, will have given up possibly all the treasures they have drawn from the glaciers of their source.

“An author, one indeed of our own circle, has in an English periodical alluding to our not having constructed the great Sardah Canal in Oudh, twitted us now in India for locking the stable door after the horse had been stolen, and has compared us to a father who has fee'd the doctor, but has forgotten to feed his own child.

“In answer to this, I shall only quote an extract from the Secretary of State's Despatch of the 9th April 1873, in which he says:—

‘At a time when the finances of India are burdened with the pressure of so many and such important public works, it was obviously impolitic to persevere in a vast undertaking

costing upwards of 3 millions of money for the purpose of bringing water to the estates of landholders, who protested against the project as being unnecessary and a source of disease, while the opinions of the great majority of the local officers in Oudh, endorsed by every Chief Commissioner of the province, and shared in by the Lieutenant-Governor, were that the proposed canals were not wanted and would not be a financial success.

“Let me pass on to Madras, where, as far as I can gather from the facts, some six millions sterling have been spent on irrigation-schemes, or rather where this amount has been calculated without taking into account the dead stock value of the ancient Native works. The results are certainly better there, for whilst in ordinary years some five million acres receive the full benefits of irrigation, in the very worst years one million six hundred thousand acres are effectually protected,—yet Madras, with its 32 millions of people, has even then but seven per cent. of its agricultural industry secured from disaster in years of ordinary rainfall, and a much smaller area in years of drought.

“In Bombay, exclusive of Sindh, with 19 million acres under cultivation, some 17,000 can now be irrigated, and when the works which are now under construction are completed, costing at present estimates more than two millions, it is hoped, at all events, some eight to nine hundred thousand acres may be protected.

“I could go on giving dry facts, but in themselves they would, I fear, convey but a small idea to the mind of the vast work already accomplished in this country, far exceeding all that has been hitherto done as regards irrigation by collected Europe with the great canals of Italy and the reservoirs and dams of Spain; and I should assuredly fail were I to undertake the still greater task of practically bringing home the boundless nature of the effort which some would have us undertake, were we to rely on irrigation alone as a universal insurance against famine.

“It must also be distinctly borne in mind that the early irrigation engineers, who have left an imperishable name in connection with the works of their creation, naturally, and indeed necessarily, selected those fields in their enterprise where all the elements of success lay in happiest combination—where in fact—

‘Mill sites fill the country as thick as you can cram’ em,  
An desput rivers run about a’ beggin folk to dam’ em.’

“One of these engineers, not the least distinguished, nor the least loud in his upbraidings at the shortcomings of those whom he has left behind

in India, for not following his good example, has quite forgotten that he has himself plucked the choicest plums off the tree and has left us only the kernels. Take for example the Kistna Delta Irrigation alone. What have we there? A garden it is admitted. But then, from the 31st December till the 1st July, it places under contribution, and claims exclusive right over, all the water from a catchment of not less than fifty times its own area.

“ Having now, however, entered upon those tracts where these advantages no longer exist in such profusion, the least want of prudence may, by bringing about failures, injure the very cause which those who most earnestly desire the extension of irrigation have most at heart.

“ I think that I have, however, sufficiently shown that the administrators of this country, whether civil or professional, have ever valued the precious treasures of its rivers and storm waters.

“ In short, as far as I can ascertain, we have spent some 24 millions sterling, and for this we have some 14,000 square miles actually irrigated with more or less certitude as regards permanency of supply. In other words, we have had to pay £1,700 for each square mile, or something under £3 an acre.

“ Even if we had the water at command, and it were otherwise practicable to protect all the agricultural land of India, it would demand on this basis an outlay of at least some three hundred millions sterling. This would build some 40,000 miles of railway, the fourth of which would give us an insurance, not against famines, but certainly against extreme scarcity, distress, and death from want.

“ I said just now *if practicable*, because, in order to irrigate, we must have water, either annual from heaven or perennial from the snows of the Himalayas. The first we must regard, I fear, as precarious and uncertain, and as for the last, great as is the extent of the region over which the snow waters have their influence, and though possibly more may yet be garnered of their generous and perpetually recurring flow, we have already in the Panjáb and in the North-Western Provinces, especially in the latter, appropriated so great a quantity of it, that we fear we are approaching the limits of the supply. This last year we are told that the Ganges Canal was strained to its utmost, and at the tail of its distributaries the cultivators got but a scant supply ; thus rendering more doubtful than before, the wisdom of drawing off any further supply for the proposed Eastern Ganges Canal.

"It is in years like the past one that the great advantages of irrigation are so apparent. We have evidence that the undeveloped Sone has already saved harvests, which must otherwise have perished, of more than a million sterling in value, whilst in the recent visitation in Madras the irrigated districts of the Godavery, Tanjore, and Trichinopoly have practically paid their land-revenue in full. The Kistna District, where the Irrigation project is not complete, has had remitted some 15 per cent.; but in the unirrigated districts, remissions ranging from 30 to 70 per cent. have prevailed, whilst they have drawn from the irrigated districts food to the value of some £150,000 exported by sea alone.

"I will not now trouble the Council with any observations as to the Embankments or Inundation projects of parts of Bengal, of Burma, or of Sindh. I only allude to them at all as significant of the fact that the Rulers of this country, Native as well as British, have in more ways than one, in the present as in the past, thought out the difficult problems that this struggle against nature has from time to time presented to them.

"So also I will not now say anything of the water-logging of land, of the raising of the spring level, of fever and other alleged evils, which even if I admit as existing at all, I admit only to say that a remedy for them by drainage exists, though its cost, a heavy item with low-lying stiff clay soils, must be added to that of the original works.

"Let me, when mentioning drainage and the necessity for applying the severest examination to irrigation schemes, quote what one of the apostles of irrigation himself says when speaking of promoting indiscriminate and wide-spread irrigation—'We should,' he says, 'make sure that we may not turn the irrigated districts into vast swamps, decimating the inhabitants with fever, and reducing, instead of increasing, the fertility of the soil.'

"And here I may remark that the nature of the soil has been a factor which has been too often wholly ignored, not only in schemes projected but since completed.

"I trust it will not for one moment be thought, because I have said what I have, that I am in the most remote degree opposed to, or the enemy of, irrigation; far from it. I believe I am—by the course I have taken in applying to every scheme and estimate that has come before me since I have taken my seat at this Council the closest enquiry and the most minute scrutiny as to the soundness of the one and the accuracy of the other—a truer friend to irrigation than the romantic enthusiasts who can only see that in water there is

a cure for every ill, or the orator who, from the vantage ground of his great eloquence, makes easy the task, and would guide us through a maze, of which it is reserved for statesmen yet unborn to find the clue. So in saying this I wish it to be understood that we do not purpose to neglect in the future irrigation-works which give prospects of being not only beneficial in ordinary years but in years of scarcity. Many projects are now under enquiry of which I hope this may be said, though of some of them the full cost of which would come to some £15,000,000 sterling, I find it already recorded that 'none of them are so urgently needed, in view to the prevention of famine, as to render it essential to extend financially the scale of operations in irrigation-works.'

"I have already alluded to the projected through water communication from Karachi to Calcutta, estimated to cost £5,000,000. If this line of navigation, passing as it does across the Peninsula through regions flooded by the great waters from the Himalayas, stretching to both seas, traversed by a net-work of rivers, flowing through a natural physical formation—fulfilling in short all the engineering conditions favourable to inland navigation—offer little or no prospect that, until years have elapsed, its practical influence as a means of communication will be felt, and that, as a reproductive work, there is but little hope for any return, how does the problem stand in other parts of Hindustan ?

"Here and there, as around this city, local works of this nature, isolated and apart, have been a success, and many other navigation canal projects are likely, in this limited form, to be carried out from time to time; but any connected system of internal navigation seems a remote possibility.

"The irrigation and combined navigation systems of the Godavari and Kistna, projected to open up traffic from the eastern sea-board to the country of their sources and even to the Western Ghâts, and ultimately to debouch at Carwar on the western coast, give little prospect or encouragement for us to anticipate from them the great benefits or facilities predicted by their projectors. It is not difficult to understand this when the main link in the chain, that of the Madras Irrigation Company, is closed for six months of the year, because the source of its water-supply is closed to it for that time! Even if this source were a constant one, the extension of the navigation to the coast is barred by physical difficulties of apparently an insurmountable character. I may be told all this can be remedied by storage tanks. I grant this might be possible, but without counting their cost, or other difficulty of even a more serious nature which, as a financial

undertaking, will make the original scheme a still more hopeless affair than now when the returns on the work do not come within a lakh per annum of the maintenance and establishment charges irrespective of interest on capital recent experience tends to show that these aids will in the hour of our direst need fail us.

“ Still I do not desire to condemn these schemes altogether, and I hope to see something practical done with them ; possibly, a remodelling of the works may ensure better results.

“ The East Coast Canal, the most promising project of all, will demand, in order to secure its ultimate success, the solution of difficulties which will try the skill, genius, and daring of another Cautley, owing to its having to cross the drainage of the whole Peninsula.

“ I fear, then, that as far as our knowledge goes, we cannot look forward to being able at any early period in India's future to see established a connected system of inland navigation. No doubt in districts favouring their construction we shall see navigable canals introduced and extended, but, judging from the past, their use and general adoption must at best be necessarily a matter of slow growth, and in the centre of the Peninsula, where they would be of the utmost service in case of the recurrence of any such famine as we have now passed through, it may be doubted whether any connected line of real utility could be constructed with advantage.

“ Accepting the difficulties of the position as thus briefly portrayed, it is evident that the only practical course at the present moment is to recognise the mutual inter-dependence of the different parts of this vast country, and provide the means of distributing the surplus of one part to meet the deficiency of other parts.

“ Happily we have not suffered simultaneously throughout India. The surplus produce of one part has been available for transport to other parts, and the enormous export of wheat which has been concurrent with the late calamity has shown that India has been able as a whole to produce more than it could consume.

“ I do not lose sight of the fact that the people of Southern India are not a wheat-eating people, but from the experience of the late famine and of that of 1874, it is evident that the calamity must be indeed frightful when India herself and the neighbouring rice-producing countries accessible by sea cannot feed any afflicted part.

“ Even if on the whole empire the scourge of famine fell, and the food of its people had to be ocean-borne, how entirely dependent must the country still be on its internal communication !

“ The point, then, at which I have arrived is that land communications have been our main stay in the recent famine and must ever be.

“ I do not purpose to enter again upon the vexed question of waterways against railways. Even could I bring myself to consider that the former were possible in places where the latter exist, I could not shut my eyes to the facts which are patent to every one.

“ We have a system of railways, and we can say that they are now paying investments in the matter of direct returns. These railways have taught the people the advantages of rapid locomotion, and the merchant and trader know well without such teaching the value of the telegraph and of the railway in the matter of quick returns. The railway system must continue to expand and will expand till every inhabitant of India is within 50 to 100 miles of a line.

“ But there is an argument for railways which has special force in a time of famine. A grass famine may be said to be as bad as a grain famine. For if the cattle on which the tilling of the ground is dependent cannot get fodder or even grass, the people are indeed in a bad way. Their only resource is to take time by the forelock, as thousands have done in Upper and Central India in the course of the last few months when scarcity threatened, and, as in the case of a water famine, emigrate to distant tracts in order to save their cattle.

“ We have not neglected the extension of railways in connection with the lessons taught us by the famines of the last few years. The Northern Bengal, the Tirhoot, and the Irrawaddy Valley lines all received an impetus from famine if they do not owe their early existence to it. The recent calamity has precipitated the construction of the Dhond-Manmar line into an almost accomplished fact, and has given a stimulus to at least two other lines in Southern India. Similarly, the threatenings of scarcity, now happily almost passed away, which came upon us a few months ago, have given an impetus to the projected lines of Central India and Rájputána.

“ The Government has not hesitated, notwithstanding the severe strain upon its resources, to devote during the present year upwards of a million sterling to railway lines over and above what it had arranged to spend this time last year.

“ And whatever views may be held on the subject of railways, there is this justification for their extension, that since October 1876 they have carried into the heart of the afflicted districts upwards of one and a quarter million tons of food-grains, representing the supply of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions of people for 12 months at 1 lb. per head per diem. But continuous as has been the inward current of food, the work of the railways has at times been far heavier than would be gathered from the even distribution of the quantity named over the entire period. Thus, in the three months ended December 1876, the Great Indian Peninsula Railway carried into the districts afflicted nearly 27,000 tons monthly, besides the larger proportion of the grain (44,000 tons in the three months), exported by sea to the Southern Mahratta ports of that Presidency.

“ In July and August of this year, when the intensity of the famine was at its maximum, that railway carried almost the same quantity.

“ And during those two months the Madras Railways distributed almost 200,000 tons of food.

“ The effect of a prompt supply of such a quantity of food can only be estimated by a consideration of the direful effects of its non-supply, and I shall not be accused of exaggeration when I say that the railways have saved Southern India.

“ The work done by a railway is only partly appreciated unless the distance over which the goods are transported is considered.

“ The rice exported from this port, Calcutta, was not carried over any great length of railway, but the wheat of Upper India, which was carried in large quantities to Puna and even as far as Bellary, and the grain of the Central Provinces, was carried over hundreds of miles descending and ascending the Western Ghâts. The waste of power over the Ghâts and the risk attending it have been eliminated for all time by the construction of the Dhond-Manmar line.

“ But vital as is the assistance which the railways have afforded, it must not be left out of sight that this aid was rendered with a concurrent unprecedented export trade, and, consequently, augmented general traffic.

“ Thus, in the first half of the current year, on all the railways of India, there were about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions of tons of goods lifted against  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions in the corresponding period of 1876.

“The pressure during the past year has been very great, and no doubt more or less loss and inconvenience has followed from this strain on the resources and means; but considering the distances traversed, and the consequent impossibility of preventing detention of rolling-stock, the working has, on the whole, been creditable to railway management in India.

“In considering the effect upon the English railway system of the construction of the Channel tunnel, the diversion of rolling-stock to continental railways has been discussed as a matter which would call for very special arrangement. Our English Railway Managers would not, I apprehend, view without misgivings the concentration of a moiety of their wagon-stock at Berlin, Vienna or St. Petersburg; yet the diversion from the lines of Northern India of a couple of thousand wagons was a frequent occurrence during the recent pressure, and on one occasion the number of wagons thus absent was close upon 2,600.

“Perhaps a few words from me here in further explanation of what has been already stated by my Hon’ble Colleague in reference to this railway traffic and the preference given in September to food destined to the famine-stricken district may not be amiss.

“Very early in February of last year the power of the Great Indian Peninsula and Madras Railways to deal with the increase of traffic thrown upon them arrested our attention, but both companies then thought that nothing special was needed to facilitate their operation.

“But on the 5th March, I find myself writing, when ordering engines from our State lines in Northern India to be placed on the metals of the Madras line, that ‘the Great Indian Peninsula is now in need of engines to work its own lines,’ so rapidly had grown the demands from various causes on the rolling-stock of the lines. This growth of traffic led to many suggestions, all pointing to the direct interference and intervention of the State with the management of the lines and the direction of trade. On this I find I again wrote pointing out that more engine power was all that was needed, adding—

‘From the north and west the lines in correspondence are working as one system, and their capacity is only limited by their united haulage power, which no new organization or fresh administration can possibly improve; whilst on the contrary the introduction of foreign interference will inevitably tend to irritation and friction; and misunderstanding, confusion, and chaos will take the place of hearty co-operation and management which at present exist between the Managers, who are mutually aware of their individual difficulties, and that these arise from physical and material causes requiring only time for their removal.

'At this moment throughout the whole of our railway system, a number of other circumstances, and not the famine alone, has caused a sudden expansion of traffic. All railways are taxed to their utmost, and even on the far Indus Valley, where, by the opening for goods traffic of a portion only of the line last January, the flotilla on the river was released for more concentrated traffic, an unexpectedly large trade has sprung up, and the wheat of Sindh and of the Northern Panjáb is seeking a market not only in the Deccan, but even in Europe itself. All this has to be watched and nurtured, and any rough or rude remedy, dictated by the momentary necessity for removing a block on a line traversing a district of Bombay or Madras, might irreparably throw back the growth of this trade and industry.'

"Again—

'I hope I have shown in this note that no exceptional *administrative* measures are really needed to meet the present pressure, which I am confident can be satisfactorily overcome without them.'

"This I wrote in March of last year.

"To do more than the railways were already doing could only be effected by two measures—one the doubling of the lines, the other the procuring of additional engines.

"The first was out of the question even if it could have been done in time to be of use in such a crisis; the second, owing to the exceptional gauge adopted in this country, was really almost as impossible as the first, since we have in Europe no reserve from other systems to fall back upon. The only alternatives left then were to contribute stock from the Northern lines, although on them, too, the pressure had fallen, and to give preference to food consigned to Southern India. Still reluctant to press, till forced by inexorable necessity, either of these courses on the railway administration, it was not till the calamity in Southern India was assuming yet darker features, that with your approval, my Lord, I wrote confidentially to the several Railway Agents on the 27th July a letter which, with the permission of the Council, I will now read—

'DEAR SIR,—The situation in Southern India appears to be graver now than ever. It is causing the Viceroy to consider with anxious solicitude the means to be adopted in order to mitigate the terrible distress which seems imminent from want of food in Mysore and Madras, and it points to our being forced to take exceptional measures for facilitating the transport of grain into and within those countries.

'This, I fear, will have to be done at the sacrifice of certain trade interests, for, in face of such a crisis, preference must be given to food-grain traffic.

'The haulage power and the stock on the Madras, and very possibly on the Great Indian Peninsula line, will have to be increased by contributions from other lines; and Lord Lytton

feels assured that he may reckon on the co-operation of other companies, should such a course be forced upon us.

'I trust that it may not come to this. But I invite your aid and co-operation to help us, and in the meantime I write this to ask you to consider what you can do to regulate and increase famine traffic, so as to give it a special service and preference over all other consignments on your lines, and to see what powerful goods engines (the gradients of both the Madras and Great Indian Peninsula Railways are bad) and covered or high-sided stock you can supply to the Madras line, in order to distribute what is sent from the north or by water. The latest information shows that the Madras Railway must have 16 powerful goods engines and 400 wagons without loss of time.

'I write this therefore to prepare you for what is probable. Please consider this in the meantime as very secret and confidential; but in case the worst comes to the worst, I should like to know beforehand what are your views on the course suggested.'

"I need not dwell upon the correspondence and negotiations that followed the issue of this circular.

"The Agents of the Northern Railways did as much as was in their power to do, but fortunately it was not necessary to insist on preference on these lines, though the Government of Bombay were compelled at the end of July or beginning of August to urge on the representative of the Great Indian Peninsula to give food consigned to the Famine districts preference over other goods.

"Hardly had this been done when the correspondents from the Calcutta Press in Madras telegraphed to their principals in this city—'People are asking, Should not the railways now carry food only?'

"I give these facts to show that this subject was fully considered, and that we did not lightly, nor without very great reluctance, urge on the companies those exceptional steps—a necessity as imperative, if not more so, than the necessity of war.

"The same distinguished statesman who has advocated irrigation as the treatment for famine has asserted that we have abandoned this remedy in favour of railways, the agents that support our military policy.

"That in the alignment of these great highways the part they might play in the defence of the empire in time of war was not overlooked by the great Proconsul who first gave them to India, is incontrovertible; but if they have not yet helped to deliver us in time of war, they most certainly have in time of famine, nor have they failed to deliver us from some of the accidents of war. After the tempest of the great mutiny had calmed down,

those who were then responsible for the future peace of India, decided that a British force of a certain strength should always be in the land. The extension and part completion of the railway system has permitted of a reduction in recent years of this force, which at the very least falls not far short of, if it does not exceed, two millions sterling a year. Thus, besides having saved India some thirty millions already, it has saved to England a corresponding drain on her people.

“Nor am I, I believe, over-sanguine when I express the idea that, judging from what has been the development of traffic on the essentially military lines of Northern India, their designers will be agreeably disappointed at finding that as commercial lines they will not be such a drag on the finances as has been anticipated, whilst of this I am sure that they will be found to be the most powerful pacificator of our troubled frontiers.

“I have purposely avoided making any observations as to what should guide us in our administration, either civil or professional, when famine with all its suite of evils is really in the land; and I can scarcely be anticipating any final conclusion if I express the opinion that in proposing works for the exigencies of famine they must be chiefly of a character suitable for unskilled labour, requiring little skilled supervision, and able to be executed by concentrated gangs whose wages can be paid with the least opportunities for speculation. Far be it from me to say that we should have no work for the artisan or the skilled labourer. This class suffers just as much as, if not more than, the mere cooly or the simple agriculturist. But, as the bulk of the labour is ignorant, the bulk of the work must be simple, and as the skilled supervision is limited (unless you divert it, and then you create mischief, from those works which must go on in any case), there exists still stronger reason that the work should be such as earthwork, collecting and breaking stone, a kind of work easy to supervise and to pay for.

“The various classes of works, suitable for relief objects taken in their order are tanks; road, river, and railway embankments; irrigation channels, canals, and drainage-works; and I agree with those who think the last three are the last to be undertaken, because if these are not thoroughly well designed, they are the cause of very serious and absolute mischief. I would dwell upon this point, as I cannot too strongly re-iterate the intention and, I believe, the instructions of the Supreme Government, that in view to the efficacious working of this policy it is primarily essential to have in reserve and ready the full and clear engineering details of such works, elaborated in quieter times by the professional officer in concert with the local civil authorities.

"To this precaution I attach the highest value, because I wish most distinctly and emphatically to disclaim, both on my own part and that of the officers of the Public Works Department generally, that we regard famine as the opportunity for advancing our schemes or airing our pet projects. The initiative in these matters should be taken by the civil administrators, who are primarily responsible for the good government and material prosperity of the peoples committed to their charge.

"In saying this, however, I do claim for the Public Works officers of the State that to them should very early in a campaign against famine be entrusted the agencies to fight it, and that operations be not postponed till to scarcity and lack of means are added disease and emaciation among the people, to say nothing of the demoralisation inseparable from the pauper's dole, or the existence prolonged only by the relief ration.

"This is the more essential in this country, where it is not, from a total absence of food within the country itself, that men perish, but from the absence of means of acquiring it. They are deprived for the time of winning their bread by their usual callings, because we have not in this country, from its social relations and the functions Government has taken on itself, men of enterprise or philanthropy as we have in our own Western Home, who see, in the failure of a harvest, or of an industry, openings for giving to the labour thus set free, employment in works of utility, of improvement, or even of luxury.

"In advocating this as the true course to follow, I am conscious of the fact that it means a larger first outlay; but it also means a very considerable decrease in the unproductive expenditure which ordinary famine relief means.

"In what I have said I have rather reviewed the past, and dealt with what has been done already in the way of those material improvements, which may to some extent have counteracted the full effect of failure of harvests, from time to time, in parts of this Great Empire.

"I have dealt with the accomplished facts of the past, and avoided profuse promises as to the future; for I believe the narrative of the past will carry to men's minds the conviction that those to whom has been hitherto entrusted the guidance of affairs in this country have not failed or neglected their duty in these respects; and this will be a sufficient earnest that this path of duty is not now likely to be abandoned."

The Motion was put and agreed to.

**ADDITIONAL RATES (NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES) BILL.**

The Hon'ble SIR JOHN STRACHEY also moved that the Bill for the levy of Additional Rates on Land in the North-Western Provinces be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Messrs. Stokes, Cockerell and Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Hon'ble Mr. Morgan and the Mover.

The Hon'ble MR. MORGAN said that, when the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Finances made his Statement with reference to the additional taxation which would be necessary, as MR. MORGAN understood him, he stated that it would be necessary to provide about one million sterling for what he called the Famine Fund, and £500,000 as what might be termed a working balance in the finances. The sum which he proposed to levy by the imposition of the taxes, Bills regarding which were now before the Council, was, MR. MORGAN understood, about £800,000. But it was not stated at the time how much was expected to be received from the tax on trades and dealings, and how much from the land-tax. At the time these Bills were brought forward, as he understood the Hon'ble Member to say, it was not intended that they should be passed so early as it was now actually proposed that they should be. But on the suggestion of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, the passing into law of the Licensing Bill, which was the only Bill which applied to Bengal, had been accelerated, and, as he believed, very properly so. But of course the arguments of the Lieutenant-Governor with reference to that Bill which concerned new taxation were so cogent that there was no reason for him to raise any objection to its acceleration. But it appeared to him that the same argument did not apply to the levy upon the people of an increased tax upon land in the North-Western Provinces. There, it was well understood what the existing rate was, and therefore the levy of an additional rate of two per cent., which he understood was agreed upon, would be raised without any difficulty at all. It was not a question of the supervision of Revenue-officers, inasmuch as all the data were before them. He would therefore suggest that the consideration of the Bills for the levy of an additional rate upon land might be postponed without any detriment to the raising of the rates in due course. And it appeared to him that this might be done with greater reason, inasmuch as the necessity for the raising of further money by taxation must depend to a large extent on the equilibrium which was to be established in the budget which was not at present before the Council. Of course he made this suggestion with due deference to His Lordship, but he would suggest that the consideration of these Bills should be postponed until the Council was in possession of further details with reference to the budget, and with reference also to the amount which was likely to

be raised under the Bill which had already been referred to a Select Committee, in respect to the licensing of trades and dealings in the North-Western Provinces.

The Hon'ble SIR JOHN STRACHEY said—"I do not know whether the Hon'ble Member who has just spoken has quite appreciated all that I intended to say at the beginning of the present sitting of the Council. All I am proposing at the present time is that these Bills should be referred to a Select Committee, not that the Council should take any action upon them in the way of passing them into law. I intended to say that this was all I intended to propose at the present moment, and that after the report of the Select Committee had been presented, the Bills should go in the ordinary course. I should like to say a very few words only with reference to the remarks of the Hon'ble Member regarding the possibility or propriety of postponing the consideration of the Bills affecting the proposed additional taxation upon land, while the Bill for imposing a license-tax, he thought, might be gone on with at once. But I would point out that if we do not proceed with these Bills *pari passu*, the whole basis of the scheme which I laid before the Council three weeks ago will really be disturbed, for it is an essential part of that scheme that these new taxes should be imposed equally, as far as one can do these things equally, both upon the commercial and agricultural classes. It will disturb the whole of that scheme if we legislate for the commercial classes only and leave the agricultural classes out. Also, as I pointed out, the necessity for imposing these rates in Northern India is justified on this ground that we have already imposed this rate in Bengal, and unless we impose similar rates in other parts of India, there is really no justification for the measure already taken in Bengal; and it is desirable that we should apply the same general system, so far as one can do so equitably, in one province as in another. I quite admit that if there were special reasons, as there are in the case of Madras and Bombay, for not imposing additional rates on land in Northern India, that would be a very good ground for acting differently. But I endeavoured to show the Council that there was certainly nothing in the condition of the agricultural classes in the North-Western Provinces to justify any exceptional treatment. I think that it is quite essential that, if our measures for taxing the commercial classes have to be gone on with, our measures for taxing the agricultural classes must be gone on with at the same time. For if the measure imposing taxation on land should not be accepted, then a reconsideration of the whole subject of the new taxation will, in my opinion, become imperative and we shall not have provided that insurance against famine which, in the opinion of the Government, it is necessary to provide.

"I will merely add now, with reference to the other remarks made by the Hon'ble Member and also to those of the Hon'ble *Mahárájá Jotíndrá Mohán Tagore*, that I shall endeavour at some future opportunity to give as full information as may be in my power upon every point to which reference has been made."

The Motion was put and agreed to.

#### ADDITIONAL RATES (OUDH) BILL.

The Hon'ble *SIR JOHN STRACHEY* also moved that the Bill for the levy of Additional Rates on Land in Oudh be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Messrs. Stokes, Cockerell and Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Hon'ble Mr. Morgan and the Mover.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

#### ADDITIONAL RATES (PANJÁB) BILL.

The Hon'ble *SIR JOHN STRACHEY* also moved that the Bill for the levy of Additional Rates on Land in the Panjáb be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Messrs. Stokes, Cockerell and Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Hon'ble Mr. Morgan and the Mover.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

#### ADDITIONAL RATES (CENTRAL PROVINCES) BILL.

The Hon'ble *SIR JOHN STRACHEY* then moved that the Bill for the levy of Additional Rates on Land in the Central Provinces be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Messrs. Stokes, Cockerell and Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Hon'ble Mr. Morgan and the Mover.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

#### HUSAINÁBÁD ENDOWMENT BILL.

The Hon'ble *MR. STOKES* introduced the Bill to make better provision for the management of the Husainábád endowment at Lucknow and moved that it be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble *SIR E. C. Bayley*, the Hon'ble Mr. Colvin, the Hon'ble Nawáb Faiz Alí Khán and the Mover.

He said that this Bill was necessary in order to provide for the due administration of the Husainábád endowment at Lucknow. He had, when moving for leave to introduce the Bill, related the history of that endowment. He had now only to state the manner in which the Bill would provide for the

management of the endowment and the settlement of a scheme for the payment of the pensions and the application of the surplus-income.

The Bill first provided for the appointment of trustees, from time to time, by the Local Government, upon the nomination of the pensioners and such of the descendants of the founder of the endowment as might for the time being reside at Lucknow; such trustees would be not less than three in number and not more than five, and the present Superintendent, Mumtáz-ud-Daola, would be one of them.

Sections 2 and 3 provided for the appointment of trustees in the place of deceased, retiring or incapable trustees, and for the vesting of the property of the endowment in the trustees for the time being.

The Bill then committed the management of the endowment entirely to the trustees.

Sections 5, 6 and 7 provided for the transaction of business by the trustees at their meetings; and section 8 authorised the appointment of some person, not of their own body, as paid Secretary to the trustees.

By section 11 the Local Government might call for such accounts and information respecting the endowment as it should think fit.

Section 12 empowered the Secretary of State in Council to sue in the Allahabad High Court for the settlement of a scheme for the endowment, or to compel the restitution of any property belonging to the endowment. An appeal was allowed as in cases decided by that Court in its extraordinary civil jurisdiction, and the plaint in any suit under section 12 was exempted from court-fees.

Lastly, the Bill indemnified all persons for anything done before the passing of the proposed Act, which would have been valid if the appointments of the Superintendents and Agent, after the mutiny, had been valid, and saved such persons from suits or proceedings in respect of such acts.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

The Hon'ble MR. STOKES also moved that the Bill be published in the *Gazette of India* in English, and in the *Government Gazette, North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, in English, and in such other languages as the Local Government thinks fit.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

**DISTRESSED SEAMEN'S EXPENSES RECOVERY BILL.**

The Hon'ble MR. STOKES asked leave to postpone the presentation of the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to provide for the recovery in British India of wages due to, and expenses incurred in respect of, certain seamen and apprentices.

Leave was granted.

**TREASURE-TROVE BILL.**

The Hon'ble SIR EDWARD BAYLEY asked leave to postpone the presentation of the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the law relating to Treasure-trove.

Leave was granted.

**ASSIMILATION OF POWERS (NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH) BILL.**

The Hon'ble SIR EDWARD BAYLEY also moved for leave to introduce a Bill to assimilate certain powers of the Local Governments of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. He said that this Bill was of a purely technical nature, and was the result of the amalgamation of the Governments of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. In those provinces the Lieutenant-Governor and the Chief Commissioner had formerly a different status. Certain powers which had been confided to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces had, in the case of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, been reserved by the Governor General in Council to himself. But as the functions of the two offices were now discharged by the same person, it was manifestly absurd to suppose that he was qualified to exercise the higher powers on the right bank of the Ganges, and disqualified to exercise them on the left bank of the same river, and in practice it was found extremely inconvenient that this distinction should continue. It was therefore proposed to assimilate the powers of the Lieutenant-Governor in Oudh to those which he possessed in the North-Western Provinces.

The Bill would be a short one and would be confined to assimilating certain enactments under which the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and the Chief Commissioner of Oudh now took powers, and care would be taken that, in assimilating differences which were merely technical between the

laws of Oudh and those of the North-Western Provinces, this Bill should not affect any personal rights or privileges, or any peculiar customs, which now existed in Oudh.

The Motion was put and agreed to.

The Council adjourned to Wednesday, the 23rd January 1878.

CALCUTTA,  
The 16th January 1878. }

D. FITZPATRICK,  
*Secretary to the Government of India,  
Legislative Department.*