

FOREIGN.....DEPARTMENT
POLITICAL.....BRANCH
.....Controlling Agency

A

1863.

CONSULTATION.....August.....

No. 63-67.

Subject Report from the Commission in kind
of the proceedings which is the basis of
his proposals to take a lease of Gwader
from the Imam of Muscat for telegraph
stations on the Makran Coast; as to grant
a subsidy of Rs. 1000/- a year to the
Chief of Pusnee.

Previous reference

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POLITICAL.—G. G.

AUGUST 1863.

No. 63. From the Hon'ble H. L. Auzanson, Chief Secretary to Government, Bombay, to the Secretary to Government of India, in the Foreign Department, with the Right Hon'ble the Governor General,—(No. 73, dated the 16th July 1863.)

In continuation of previous correspondence, I am directed to transmit, for submission to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General, the accompanying transcript of a letter and enclosure, dated the 4th ultimo, No. 70, from the Commissioner in Sindh, reporting his proceedings while in the Persian Gulf, and suggesting the sites which should be selected for Telegraph stations on the Mekran Coast.

2. In forwarding this communication, I am directed to state that the Hon'ble the Governor in Council is strongly of opinion that the town and territory of Gwadar should not be leased, but that only such portion of land as is actually required for the purpose of the Telegraph should be rented.

3. As tenants, the British Government will have no concern with the general administration, and questions connected with slavery will not arise. The Hon'ble the Governor in Council believes that, by being a tenant only, the British Government will secure the interest of the proprietor on its side, instead of converting him into an antagonist, as would probably be eventually the case if we were to become a lessee of the town.

4. His Excellency the Governor in Council would therefore submit, if the Right Hon'ble the Governor General approve of the arrangement, that the Commissioner in Sindh be instructed to open negotiation, not for a lease of the town of Gwadar, but of such ground only as is actually required.

5. I am further directed to solicit the approval of His Excellency the Governor General to the grant of the annual subsidy of Rupees 1,000, which has been promised to the Chief of Pusnee by Mr. Mansfield.

6. Referring to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Commissioner's Report, I am desired to state that this Government has not yet received any official information of the assent of the Persian Government to the construction of a line along the Persian Coast of the gulf.

No. 64. FROM S. MANSFIELD, Esq., Commissioner in Sindh, to HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON'BLE SIR H. B. E. FERRIS, K. C. B., Governor and President in Council, Bombay,—(No. 70, dated the 4th June 1865.)

I HAVE the honor to report my return to Kurrachee on the 30th ultimo, and to submit the following brief account of my proceedings:—

2. I left Kurrachee on the 19th April in the *Hugh Lindsay*, accompanied by Colonel Tremenheere, Chief Engineer in Sindh, and by Lieutenant Ross, the newly-appointed Assistant Political Agent at Gwadur. I landed at Ormara, Pusnee, and Gwadur, on the Mekran coast, and with the assistance of Colonel Tremenheere selected the fittest sites for Telegraph Stations; the reasons for these selections are fully explained by Colonel Tremenheere in the accompanying Report.

3. I found the head man of Ormara absent, and I was further disappointed in my hope of meeting at Pusnee Faqueer Mahomed, the Naib of Kedje: this man is the principal Sirdar between the territory of the Jam of Beyla and Gwadur, and I was therefore particularly anxious to have a personal interview with him and arrange for the protection of the Telegraph line. Unfortunately, the recent disturbances among the Chiefs at Khelat prevented him from meeting me, and I have therefore been unable to perfect the arrangements for guarding the line and for the distribution of the subsidy: I trust, however, that Lieutenant Ross will shortly arrive at a settlement of the question.

4. The Chief of Pusnee, Bahram Khan, I found most ready to forward our views by every means in his power, and I promised him that, in consideration of his using all his influence with his tribe to protect the line, and furnishing four men for service whenever required, he should receive a subsidy of Rupees (1,000) one thousand per annum.

5. My visit to Gwadur confirmed me in my opinion that it is highly desirable that we should have possession of it. The sketch of the place which accompanies Colonel Tremenheere's Report will give a better idea of it than any verbal description: it will be seen that the town lies at the foot of a long hill, which is surrounded by the sea, with the exception of a narrow neck of land which connects it with the main land; thus the place is defensible by a very small body of men, and, indeed, scarcely requires anything for its protection but a gunboat, which would command the narrow causeway of sand, which alone prevents it from being an island.

6. The Wallee of Gwadur and the people generally showed themselves most friendly; indeed, both here and at all the other places which I visited I found our proceedings viewed with satisfaction, and I did not hear a single complaint against any person connected with the Telegraph. The alarm caused by the threats of the Persian Governor of Bunpoor appeared to have subsided, and no apprehension was entertained of any hostile action on his part so long as we did not carry the aerial line beyond Gwadur.

7. At Muscat I found the Sultan absent on a sporting expedition, and I was therefore obliged to content myself with an interview with His Highness's Vizier, to whom (as well as to Captain Disbrowe) I fully explained the views of the Bombay Government respecting the transfer to

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us of Gwadar either by sale or on lease, and I desired that the subject might be brought under His Highness's consideration, and that I might be informed of his decision on my return from the Persian Gulf.

8. From Muscat I proceeded to Cape Mussendom, and fully explored the Malcolm and Elphinstone inlets and the narrow hill which separates them; and also the situation at El-Haraf, at which Lieutenant Stiffe proposes that the Telegraph Station should be erected. Colonel Tremcheere has kindly favored me with a Report, from which it will be seen that he concurs in Lieutenant Stiffe's views on the assumption that it is definitely settled that the Telegraph cable is to be laid from Gwadar to Cape Mussendom, and not to any place in the vicinity of Muscat; on the same assumption I beg to express the same opinion. I also agree with Colonel Tremcheere that iron barracks will be temporarily, if not permanently, the best buildings which can be erected at El-Haraf for a Telegraph Station, and should your Excellency in Council approve of the suggestion, I would request that the Military Authorities at Kurrachee may be directed to place some of the iron barracks at my disposal: as they ought to be landed at El-Haraf by the middle of September, I beg that this subject may receive early consideration.

9. Proceeding to Bushire I had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Pelly, and learned that the Persian Government have consented that a line should be constructed through their territory.

10. Learning at Bushire that Colonel Kemball had placed the *Comet* at my disposal, I thought it desirable to proceed to Bagdad, and, in a personal interview with Colonel Kemball, ascertain what prospect there might be of a speedy continuation of the line through the Turkish territory: Colonel Kemball informed me that the materials were expected out in October, and that he hoped that the Turkish Government would be induced to employ bodies of workmen simultaneously at different points of the line, so that it may be completed by the time the submarine cable is laid. The Turkish Government insist on constructing the line themselves, and on making their own arrangements for subsidising the Arab tribes and preserving the line from injury. I fear that it can hardly be expected that the line will be very well constructed in the first instance, or that the Turkish Government will show such liberality or punctuality in the matter of payment of subsidies as to secure the good-will and assistance of the wild Arabs of the desert; I hold it, therefore, to be a matter of congratulation that the Persians have consented to the construction of an alternative line through their territories.

11. On my return to Muscat I had an interview with the Sultan, whom I found strongly indisposed to sell Gwadar, and I did not therefore press the matter, but contented myself with discussing with him the terms on which he would be willing to lease to us the promontory and town; I considered it unadvisable to ask for any territory beyond this, since the possession of a greater extent of country would, as it appears to me, entail on us additional responsibilities without any corresponding advantages. I found the Sultan quite ready to give us a lease of Gwadar for a term of years, subject to renewal from time to time on the same terms, but the sum

which he asked appeared to me very large, if not exorbitant. He declared that the revenue which he now receives from Gwadar is twelve thousand dollars per annum, and that he was willing to take this sum and not less; of course, we cannot expect him to be content with less than he now receives, and he may, indeed, reasonably ask more; but I cannot but think that His Highness has considerably over-estimated the revenue he derives from Gwadar. From enquiries which we made at Muscat, Captain Disbrowe valued the revenue at four thousand nine hundred and fifty (4,950) dollars per annum; while Lieutenant Ross telegraphs to me from Gwadar that he has ascertained that the amount realized by His Highness is only Rupees seven thousand (7,000).

It is for Government to determine whether they are willing to close with the Sultan's demand for a sum so much in excess of his present receipts as that which he proposes. His Highness's Vizier, I was informed, was about to proceed to Bombay immediately with full power to settle the question with Government; and as I considered that your Excellency would probably by this time be in possession of the views of the Supreme Government on the subject, I thought it better to leave the matter to be finally settled in Bombay, and I therefore contented myself with taking from the Sultan a written statement of the terms on which he consented to lease Gwadar, which are simply that we should pay to him (12,000) twelve thousand dollars a year, and in consideration thereof have absolute authority over the town and promontory of Gwadar.

12. On my return to Gwadar I learned from Mr. Walton that our proposal to become the owners or lessees of Gwadar had become generally known, and that it was not disapproved of either by the Wallee or the people. There is only one cause from which I think that difficulties may arise, and that is the existence of slavery both at Gwadar and in the interior of Mekran. The number of slaves in Gwadar is diminishing yearly, chiefly in consequence of the numerous escapes into our territories and the stoppage of the supply from without; but there still remains a small number, the owners of whom are naturally in fear that, if we hold Gwadar, we shall emancipate their slaves, and so deprive them of their property; and, indeed, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that we must be prepared either to compensate these slave-holders or to tolerate such an anomaly as the continued existence of slavery in a British possession. Again, it may be expected that Gwadar, like Sinde, will become a place of refuge for run-away slaves from the interior, and that some irritation will thus be created among the Belooch Chiefs. I am not of opinion that this consideration is sufficiently strong to outweigh the advantages which would accrue to us from the possession of Gwadar, but I mention it because I think that it deserves to be taken into calculation, and because it is a difficulty which we shall have to face immediately, and for which, therefore, it is well at once to provide.

13. I found the body of Police comfortably located at Gwadar, and their iron barrack in process of construction; I had also the satisfaction of learning that the line of Telegraph from Kurrachee to Gwadar had been completed on the 30th April. Thus Mr. Walton has in 11 months constructed a double line of Telegraph, 409 miles in length; he has carried it

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through a country than which it is difficult to conceive one less favorable to the undertaking, a country where sandy deserts alternate with belts of extinct mud volcanoes, and where food and water are scarcely procurable. He has had from the first to train his own Assistants and to organize his own workmen; and so well has he done this, that the line throughout is a model of neat and strong workmanship. He has had to conciliate the Chiefs and people of the country and to pacify and restrain those within his own camp who were more than once alarmed and irritated by the close approach of bands of marauders, who plundered the country round and threatened the safety of our working parties: so well has he done this, that there has not been a single complaint from any native of the country; that there has never been the smallest collision between our workmen and the wild tribes about them; and that the jealous people of the country have learned to regard the erection of the Telegraph not as an attempt to take possession of their land, but as a peaceful undertaking, from which they themselves can derive nothing but advantage, and which it is well for them to assist to the utmost. I consider Mr. Walton well entitled to a marked recognition of his services, and this, I doubt not, he will receive at your Excellency's hands.

Notes regarding the Telegraph Stations on the Mekran Coast and in the Persian Gulf.

THE first point touched at was Ormara, a small fishing village, situated on a low isthmus connecting a lofty range of hill parallel to the general line of coast with the main land. The neck of land is only half a mile in width, and, being connected with the centre of the range, forms two fine bays sheltered from the southerly swell of the monsoon. The spot selected upon which to build the Office, *viz.*, on the western side of the isthmus, is unobjectionable. The present water supply is not good, but the drift sand hills in the immediate vicinity of the site afford a certain source of supply.

2. *Pusnee*.—I was unable from sickness to land here, but the information afforded by Mr. Izaak Walton satisfied me that the site chosen by Captain Cotgrave is not that which should be adopted. There is an excellent site available on coarse sand some little way from the present town, which I have no doubt would prove more convenient and more healthy than the spot fixed upon by Captain Cotgrave: instructions will be issued to Captain Cotgrave accordingly.

3. *Goadur*.—The general description given above of Ormara is equally applicable to this place with its two well-sheltered bays, the low sandy isthmus, and the hilly termination to seaward: a slight sketch copied by Lieutenant Jopp, intended to give an idea of the place, is appended. I found the spot selected by Captain Cotgrave for the Telegraph Office to be open to serious objections. Shut out from any westerly breeze by its position below the lofty hill, it was selected on the mistaken idea that the sandy ground of the isthmus did not afford a sufficiently firm foundation for the buildings. On careful examination I ascertained that this was an error, and selected an excellent site for the buildings at some distance to the north of the town. There is an abundance of water of very fair quality, and any

number of wells can be dug in the vicinity, in which, on attaining the same depth, further supplies would with certainty be obtainable.

The buildings have been marked out on the ground, and orders have been given to the Executive Engineer to proceed with the whole of them, and to complete them at as early a date as possible.

The iron-framed barrack sent up from Kurrachee for the Police Guard (100 men) was in course of erection, and, including the house for the Political Agent, 36 feet square of the same construction will be finished within six weeks from the date of commencement about the middle of June.

The western bay affords an excellent point from whence to start the Marine Telegraph Cable.

4. I understand that it is not intended to take the cable across the Gulf of Muscat, and I need enter into no particular description of that place. I would, however, observe that there would be no difficulty in landing the cable near that town, or in constructing an aerial line from thence to Dibba, should it be deemed advisable to adopt the land route suggested by Mr. Izaak Walton on the Arabian side, from Muscat to Ras-el-khyma, and to restrict the submarine portions to short lengths.

5. The next point for consideration was the position of the Station near Cape Mussendom, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Lieutenant Stiffe has proposed to land the cable in a small cove at the head of Malcolm's inlet to cross the narrow neck of land separating it from Elphinstone's inlet, and to work the line through the isthmus from the Station on Ras-el-Sheikh by means of a short cable passing down the inlet and across the bay to El-Haneh cove. The isthmus itself, surrounded on every side on high by limestone mountains, is, in my opinion, quite unsuited for the residence of Europeans. The spot selected by Lieutenant Stiffe near the village of El-Haraf is unobjectionable, but I consider it probable that its adoption may involve the necessity of taking the cable round the whole promontory, thereby avoiding the inlets and the consequent break at the isthmus.

This is a subject which will receive the attention and be decided upon by the Officers in charge of the line and responsible for its efficiency. Whichever course the cable may take, whether through the inlets or round the head land, taking the nature of the climate into consideration, there appears to be no better site available for the Station than that selected by Lieutenant Stiffe.

6. The accompanying tracing will show the position of the Malcolm and Elphinstone inlets, Cape Mussendom, and the promontory of Ras-el-Sheikh mentioned above, and the course in which Lieutenant Stiffe proposes that the cable should be laid down.

7. With the exception of store for building and for lime, the trunks of date trees, and water, there are no building materials to be obtained on the spot; firewood for burning lime, wood for building, artificers of all descriptions, must be obtained either from the Persian side of the straits, from Muscat, or from Kurrachee.

8. Building an Office for a large Establishment at this Station of the ordinary construction, *viz.*, masonry walls and timber roofing, will be very

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expensive and will occupy a considerable time; I would, therefore, strongly urge the expediency of making use of the iron-framed barracks now at this Station, which are extremely well adapted for the purpose, would require far less time to erect, and effect a considerable saving of money. I believe there is no doubt that a sufficient quantity of these iron-framed buildings could be made available from this Station without causing any inconvenience to the Military Authorities under whose charge they now are, as other buildings now empty could be made use of in their stead.

9. It is intended to take the Marine Cable from Ras-el-Sheikh to Halilah Bay near Bushire, at which point the land line through Persia will be connected, and from thence to a Station near the extreme point of land on the right bank of the Shaat-el-Arab, from whence there will be no difficulty in forming and maintaining the aerial line above the banks of the Euphrates and up to Bagdad. From the shallowness of the water near the coast at the mouth of the Shaat-el-Arab, there may be some difficulty in maintaining the line near the proposed landing-place, but this has probably been fully considered. The objection which may exist to the Turkish line being dependent upon any Station on Persian territory may, I am informed, be met by an arrangement which, in case of an interruption of amicable relations with Persia, would enable the Telegraph Officers to disconnect the Station at Halilah Bay and to work the line without break from Ras-el-Sheikh to the mouth of the Shaat-el-Arab. Whether, considering the immense importance of maintaining uninterrupted communication, it will be wise to trust to such long submarine lines as will be necessary under the arrangements now proposed, it is not my province to offer an opinion, but I believe the practical difficulties which will be met with in under-running a telegraphic cable in a depth of 50 fathoms are much greater than are generally supposed.

KURRACHEE. }
The 1st June 1865. }

(Sd.) C. W. TREMENEERE, *Col., R. E.,*
Chief Engineer in Sindh.

(True Copies.)

(Sd.) H. L. ANDERSON,
Chief Secretary.

Nos. 65 & 66.

Sketch Maps referred to in the foregoing.

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(Concluded.)

7. Under these circumstances, His Excellency requests that an explanation should be given as to the necessity for adopting a different line of policy now, more especially when the subsidy to the Jam of Beyla has been raised 50 per cent.

(True Copy.)

(Sd.) C. U. AITCHISON,
Under-Secy. to Govt. of India,
with the Govr. Genl.

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