

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STEAM FLOTILLA ON THE INDUS

W. P. ANDREW, (1857)



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Sani H. Panhwar (2018)

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**CORRESPONDENCE, RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
STEAM FLOTILLA ON THE INDUS, BETWEEN THE HONOURABLE
EAST INDIA COMPANY, &c.,**

AND

W. P. ANDREW,

CHAIRMAN OF THE SCINDE RAILWAY COMPANY.

"The channel of the Indus is becoming the great highway between Europe and the North Western Provinces of our possessions."—Minute by the Marquis of Dalhousie, 28th February 1856, reviewing his administration in India.

"The railroad and the steamers may be said, with truth, to be the crying wants of the Punjaub."—*Chief Commissioner of Punjaub.*

NOTE.

In calling attention to the following correspondence with the East India Company, relative to the establishment of a steam flotilla on the Indus between Hyderabad and Moultan, I would point for a moment to the rapid increase in the amount of the trade of the valley of the Indus, as proved by the returns of exports and imports at the port of Kurrachee, given in the following table:

Year.	Exports.	Imports.	Total.
1843	£ 1,010	£ 121,000	£ 122,010
1847	£ 154,000	£ 287,000	£ 441,000
1851	£ 244,000	£ 489,000	£ 733,000
1854	£ 604,000	£ 629,000	£ 1,233,000

showing an increase, in exports, of more than £600,000, and in imports, of upwards of £500,000 within eleven years.

Among the imports of the last official year, Manchester cotton goods figure for £294,000, and silk from Persia and Central Asia for £28,000. Among the exports, may be reckoned wheat, to the amount of £66,000; oil seeds, to the value of £137,000; and sheep's wool, recently not exported at all, to the amount of £221,000.

The recent discovery of coal in Scinde, in the neighborhood of the terminus of the railway, is calculated to exert a powerful influence in facilitating the development of the resources, not only of the Valley of the Indus, but of the whole of North Western India.

The establishment of steam transit along the Valley of the Indus, will be an additional reason for the same kind of communication being introduced into the sister valley of the Euphrates, and thus complete the shortest route between Central Asia and Europe.

W.P.A.

Since the preceding Note was printed, the following additional information has been received, confirmatory of the opinion expressed as to the value of the Scinde Coal Field.

The recently discovered Scinde coal was this morning tried on board the Honorable Company's steamer *Nimrod*, and I am glad to say with the most gratifying results. It is now proved to be a coal perfectly well adapted for steam purposes. The *Nimrod* is a steamer of 60 horse power, and her boilers being tubular, her furnaces are well adapted for burning coal. The following gentlemen were present at the trial, viz., Captain Daniell, I.N., Lieut. Searle, I.N., Captain Groube, 13th N. I., Messrs Morris and Hughes, Chief Engineers, and the Deputy Collector, Captain Phillips. The fires were lighted at quarter past 6 A.M., without any wood whatever to assist in igniting the coal, it being Captain Daniell's wish fairly to test the quality of the coal itself. Nothing was therefore used, but a small quantity of greased tow.

Some difficulty was at first experienced in getting the coal to light, but when this did take place, the furnaces, three in number, burnt up with a clear bright white flame, and apparently of great power.

At twenty minutes past eight, steam was up, and the steamer then weighed anchor, and proceeded at a rapid rate up stream, presenting the gratifying spectacle of the first steamer seen on the Indus, steaming with coal the produce of the Province. The wind was blowing strongly up stream, and the pressure of steam obtained on the square inch was from 6½ to 7 lbs. This is a fair average pressure. On returning downstream, with the wind ahead, the draught was much increased, and the steam gauge showed a pressure of nearly 9lbs to the square inch, the steam consequently blowing off, as 8 lbs is the highest working pressure. This speaks much in favor of the power of the coal. The vessel was under weigh one hour, and ran eight miles, four upstream and four down. The coal consumed was one ton and four cwt., viz., fifteen cwt. in getting up steam, and nine cwt. when under weigh. The coal appeared to burn almost entirely away, so that hardly any ash was left, but much of it was in such a pulverized state, that it fell through the furnace bars and mixed with the ashes at the bottom; it was therefore difficult to determine the quantity of ash left.

On the whole the experiment was deemed most satisfactory by the officers of the Flotilla, who appeared to be greatly interested in its success. The only drawback appeared to be, that as already stated much of the coal was in very small pieces, and consequently either fell through the bars without burning, or burnt with too much rapidity. This is caused by the coal having been brought in from the pit on camels; if brought in carts it would doubtless arrive in much larger particles.

The coal appears to be free of sulphur, and is much improved by being sprinkled with water previously to use.

In ordinary practice the coal would probably be at first ignited in the furnaces with wood, and so much time would not be occupied in getting up steam. However, as with cold boilers, one hour and thirty minutes is the usual time with wood, two hours and five minutes with coal, quite unassisted with wood, cannot be deemed unsatisfactory.

The whole affair is promising, and the time may not be far distant when the Scinde Coal Pits may supply the whole of Western India with this valuable fuel.¹

The Directors of the Scinde Railway Company having received official information that the views long entertained by them, as to the best mode of introducing improved means of transit along the line of the Indus, had been approved by the local authorities, they addressed to the Court of Directors of the Honorable East India Company the following letter:—

**SCINDE RAILWAY COMPANY,
GRESHAM HOUSE, OLD BROAD STREET,**

14th March, 1856.

SIR,

The Directors having received a communication under date the 26th January, from their Agent in India, submitting for the sanction of this Board, in compliance with a suggestion of the Government of Bombay, a proposal that surveys should be made by the Scinde Railway Company, (enclosure 2) with a view to the extension of the line of railway towards Lahore and enclosing correspondence with the Government authorities relating thereto as noted in the margin; copies and extracts of the same, being annexed for the information of the Honorable Court.

2. I am requested on behalf of this Company, to state, their readiness to undertake the necessary surveys of the line from Mooltan to Lahore and Umritser, under the direction of the Government Consulting Engineer; should it be the pleasure of the Court to have them proceeded with, and that all the expenses occasioned by the surveys should be placed to a separate account, and be appropriated hereafter according to the arrangement that may be ultimately entered into.

3. Should the Honorable Court concur in the views expressed by the Commissioner in Scinde (enclosure² 1), the Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub (enclosure 7), and

¹ *Sindian*, May, 1857.

² Letter from Resident Engineer to the Commissioner in Scinde, dated 14th December 1855.

Government of Bombay (enclosure 2), as to the great importance of the extension improved means of transit along the Valley of the Indus, this Board is of opinion that instead of making a through communication by means of a railway between Kurrachee and Lahore, as appears to be recommended by the agent and resident-engineer of the Company, in their letters (enclosures 3 and 4), that the present is a favorable opportunity for introducing the economical and easily-established system of communication, combining Steam transit by land with steam transit by water, so long advocated by their Chairman.

4. For instance, the lower portion of the line from Kurrachee to Hyderabad, by the railway already sanctioned, which will avoid the dangers and delays of the Delta, from Hyderabad to Mooltan by steamers of improved construction, resuming the railway froth Mooltan to Lahore and Umritser.

A reference to the letters (enclosures 6 and 7) from the Commissioner in Scinde, and the Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub will show that these views are approved of by the local-authorities.

I have the honor to be, &c., &c.,
(Signed) W. P. ANDREW,
Chairman.

SIR JAMES C. MELVILL K.C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.,

.....

The East India Company having authorized the survey of the country between Mooltan, Lahore and Umritser, by the Scinde Railway Company, a superintending engineer of ability and experience, with a carefully-selected staff of six engineers, left England for India on the 4th of September,³ and have since reported that the survey of the line will be completed in May or June of the present year.

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³ Second Report of Directors of Scinde Railway Company, dated 4th November, 1856.

**From W. P. ANDREW, Esq., to SIR JAMES C. MEVILL,
K. C. B., &c., &c., &c.**

*Gresham House, Old Broad Street.
5th January, 1857.*

SIR,

With reference to my letter No. 74, dated 3 4th March last, copy of which is annexed, relating, to the proposed survey of the country between Mooltan, Lahore, and Umritser, and having reference to the establishment of a comprehensive system of steam transit, by rail, and river from Lahore and Umritser to the sea, and the Court having authorized the said survey being made by the Scinde Railway Company, and the existing steam flotilla on the Indus being notoriously inadequate for the requirements of Government, irrespective of the necessities of the countries traversed by the Indus and its tributaries,-

2. I have now the honor to request that you would be good enough to submit for the consideration of the Honorable Court a proposal for the provision of steam vessels of improved construction for navigating the Indus for the 570 miles which intervene between Hyderabad, the upper terminus of the Scinde Railway, and Mooltan, the lower terminus of the proposed Punjaub Railway, now under survey.

3. The introduction of railways into the valley of the Indus, in connection with improved steam vessels on the river, appears to be the most economical and best mode of affording to the Punjaub and neighboring countries access to Kurrachee, their natural port, and has already received the approval of the highest authorities in Scinde and the Punjaub.

4. The Court are aware that both Mr. Frere and Sir John Lawrence have placed their opinions on record, and the latter of these distinguished gentlemen in a recent dispatch to the Government of India, makes the following forcible remarks:—

"Indeed, these two essentials, viz., the railroad and the steamers, may be said with truth to be the crying wants of the Punjaub in the department of public works. These provided, the commerce and produce of these territories will be turned to their due course, viz., the Indus and its feeders, and to their natural outlet, viz., the port of Kurrachee."

"For the railroad, the face of the Doab offers an unusual equality of surface, while it possesses few, or none, of the requisite resources for metalling a road. For the rivers, it were preferable, instead of improving the navigable stream, to

concentrate all efforts on the provision of powerful steamers of the smallest possible draught. The Chief Commissioner, while deprecating any general extension of the public works' department in the Punjaub for the present, would yet beg most earnestly to press these cardinal objects on the attention of the Government. He believes that, if carried out, they would affect more for the development of the resources of those territories than any other work, or number of works, that could be devised."

5. Major Hamilton, the Commissioner at Mooltan, when recently in England, expressed in the strongest terms his opinion that the kind of improved transit by river and rail, as suggested in my letter before referred to, was peculiarly adapted to the requirements of the country on the banks of the Indus; and that eminent authority, Colonel Napier, the Chief Engineer of the Punjaub, has confirmed the accuracy of the views expressed by the distinguished local authorities just named, and also assured me that a railway from Mooltan to Lahore and Umritser, would have no difficulty of any kind to encounter, and would not interfere with the system of irrigating canals in the Punjaub.

6. Were any additional argument necessary, I might recall to the recollection of the Court their own dispatch of the 4th of June last, upon the want of sufficient means of transport on the Indus, wherein it is stated, that "it is very desirable that the deficiency should be supplied by the enterprise of private associations, which might have the effect also of reducing the price of freightage which is much complained of."

7. Scinde and the Punjaub (including the States under control) cover an area of 130,000 square miles, with a population of nearly 25,000,000. The flower of the European and native army occupies these provinces, and numbers 70,000 men, more than 15,000 of whom are Europeans. The political importance of having improved means of communication along the valley of the Indus is every day becoming more apparent; indeed, for commercial and social, as well as state purposes, the improvement of the transit along this ancient line of communication has become a necessity.

8. Holding, as we do, the Indus from Cashmere to the sea, we have a power which, if "well understood and wisely improved, puts us in possession of the key to the whole commerce of Central Asia, which cannot be pursued without adding to the prosperity and productiveness of our new territories (Scinde and the Punjaub)." The resources of modern science judiciously applied to this line of communication would be of inestimable benefit to our own provinces, and the enterprising European merchants now resident at Kurrachee would soon afford a medium for extensive shipments from the Punjaub and provinces to the north-west of Delhi, and the distribution of our manufactures to the remote valleys of Afghanistan, as far as Herat, and in Balkh, Khiva and Bokhara.

9. To give effect to what appears to be the wishes of the authorities, as well as essentially necessary for the security and progress of the important provinces on our north-west frontier, I beg to state that a Company, under the same direction and management as the Scinde Railway Company, is prepared to raise the necessary capital of £250,000, upon the, same terms and conditions as those granted for the formation of railways in India, for the purpose of providing steam vessels of the most improved construction, adapted to the peculiar requirements of the Indus, and to meet the rapidly increasing commerce of the countries through which it passes.

10. The above amount it is considered will be sufficient to furnish the requisite number of vessels for a daily service upwards and downwards between Hyderabad and, Mooltan, including, the necessary depots, wharves and landings, but the capital is only to be called up in such proportions as the requirements of Government and the wants of commerce may demand.

11. I may add that, before arriving at any determination as to the description of steam, vessels to be employed in this service, the most eminent practical authorities, both in this country and in America are being consulted, and result of such enquiries will be submitted to the Honorable Court for their approval and sanction.

I have the honor to be,
SIR,
(Signed) W. P. ANDREW,
Chairman.

SIR JAMES C. MELVILL K.C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.,

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**From W. P. ANDREW, Esq., to E. HAMMOND, Esq., Under Secretary of State, &c.,
&c.,**

*Euphrates Valley Railway Company
Gresham House, Old Broad Street,
London, 2nd March, 1857,*

SIR,

I have the honor to request, that you will be good enough to submit to the Earl of Clarendon the accompanying letter addressed to his, Lordship, by Major-General

Chesney, and also that you would bring to Lord Clarendon's notice the following particulars regarding the Euphrates Valley Railway and its junction with the Scinde and Punjaub Railways.

2. It is proposed, as speedily of possible, to construct a Railway from Seleucia on the Mediterranean to the head of the Persian Gulf, to be connected by means, of steamers from thence to Kurrachee, the port of the Indus. Sir, Justin Shiel's plan for a maritime line through Balochistan, which would bring the valley of the Euphrates, into connection with that of the Indus, may, be ultimately carried out; but, in the meantime, it is obvious, that the Persian Gulf presents such facilities, for steam navigation, and can be navigated by steamers of such small dimensions; that an almost daily communication could be established without incurring a large expenditure.

3. The Scinde Line from Kurrachee to Hyderabad has been for some time decided upon, with, a guarantee of 5 percent on whatever capital may be necessary for its completion.

4. The Punjaub Line from Mooltan to Lahore is now under survey by a staff of engineers, with the consent of the Indian authorities, and today I have received from the Superintending Engineer, a report, to the effect that he expects to be able to prepare plans and sections and estimates this cold season for the whole Line, and that it will be a cheap and easily constructed work.

5. Arrangements are now in progress for providing a steam flotilla on the Indus, for establishing a daily communication between Hyderabad, the upper terminus of the Scinde Railway, and Mooltan, the lower terminus of the Punjaub Railway.

6. In this way, a through steam transit by the Line of the Indus from Lahore to the sea would be provided, and the political importance of this will be apparent when it is borne in mind that the flower of the British army in India is cantened in the Punjaub. and its vicinity, numbering 70,000 men, 15,000 being Europeans.

7. This force made moveable by steam transit, would be in a position to meet and repel any attack along, the Line of the Indus, and would be rendered of incalculable importance by steamers uniting the Line of the Indus with that of the Euphrates; for, in that case, any force advancing towards the Indus, would not only be met on the line of that river, but would, be threatened along the sea-board of the Persian Gulf and the Line of the Euphrates in their flank and rear. The Indus and the Euphrates thus united, the dangerous isolation of Persia would be an end, and a Russian invasion of India would cease even to be speculated upon.

8. Mr. Frere, the Commissioner of Scinde, and the most eminent men I have consulted connected with India, concur in these views.

I have the honor to be,
&c., &c., &c.,
(Signed) W. P. ANDREW,
*Chairman of the Euphrates Valley,
Scinde, and Punjaub Railway Companies.*

SIR E. HAMMOND, Esq.
&c., &c., &c.,
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From SIR JAMES C. MELVILL, K.C.B., &c., to W. P. ANDREW, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*East India House,
4th March, 1857.*

SIR,

I have received and laid before the Court of Directors of the East India Company, your letter dated the 5th January last, submitting a proposal for establishing steam communication on the river Indus, in connection with the Scinde and Punjaub Railway Companies.

The Court have, also had before them a similar proposition from other parties. Before passing any decision upon either scheme, the Court desire to, be furnished with a fuller indication of the platy which you have submitted, than that afforded by your letter under reply; and I am desired to request that you will explain more particularly the mode by which, it is contemplated to carry out the object in view, by stating the description of steam vessels to be used and the number to be put annually on the river, the number of miles they will run, and the range of their employment: also that you will furnish estimates of the first and prospective expense, and supply all the information in your power, in order that a fair comparison may be made of the advantages of the two plans which may be submitted to a competent Committee to enquire whether either of them deserve the encouragement and assistance of the Court.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble Servant,
(Signed) JAMES C. MELVILL.

W. P. ANDREW, Esq.,
&c. &c. &c.
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From W. P. ANDREW, Esq., to SIR JAMES C. MELVILL,
K.C.B., &c., &c., &c.

*Scinde Railway Company,
Gresham House, Old Broad Street.
20th April, 1857.*

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th March last, referring to a proposal submitted by me, for establishing steam communication on the river Indus, in connection with the Scinde and Punjaub Railways, and requesting me to explain more particularly the mode by which it is contemplated to carry out the object in view, by stating the description of steam vessels to be used, and the number to be put annually on the river, and the range of their employment : also, that I should furnish estimates of the first and prospective expense, and supply all the information in my power.

2. In reply I have the satisfaction to submit for the consideration of the Honorable Court, an elaborate report on the subject under notice, by Mr. Yarrow, the Engineer of the Scinde Railway Company, drawn up by my instructions so as to place in a compendious form, the opinions of the most eminent and experienced ship builders, (who have applied themselves to the constructions of steam vessels of light draft, for navigating shallow rivers,) as to the description of steamer, which in their opinion, would be best adapted to meet the requirements of the commerce and the peculiarities of the River Indus.

3. As to the description of steam-vessel to be used, I should prefer a vessel combining various points of construction, advocated by several of the builders referred to in Mr. Yarrow's report, which would secure ample accommodation for passengers and merchandise, drawing two feet of water, and of sufficient power to give an effective speed of ten miles an hour against the current of the Indus, which would enable the average passage upwards and downwards between Hyderabad and Mooltan, the terminal points of the Scinde and Punjaub Railways to be accomplished in four days and a half.

4. The arrangement above suggested taken in conjunction with the Scinde Railway from Kurrachee to Kotree (the Port of Hyderabad), would reduce the time occupied, on the journey from Kurrachee to Mooltan, and vice versa, to an average of five days, being less than a fifth of the time now occupied by the existing steam vessels employed on the Indus.

5. If I might venture to offer an opinion upon a scientific question, I would suggest * * * *

6. It is proposed to construct fifteen steam vessels, so as to secure a daily service to and from the two points already indicated, and upon the Scinde Railway Company, receiving the sanction of the Honorable Court, for raising £250,000 for this purpose, * * * * measures would be immediately adopted for the construction of the hulls, and engines in this country, and the preparation of the necessary cabin and other fittings in India, and it is estimated that within two years from the date of the order for the construction, that five vessels would be ready for effective service in India, and five more each succeeding year, until the entire number should be completed, or more rapidly, should the requirements of Government or the exigencies of the commerce of the country demand it.

7. The distance proposed to be traversed by the steamers, that is from Hyderabad, the upper terminus of the Scinde Railway, and Mooltan, the lower terminus of the Punjaub Railway, is 570 miles, which is the range contemplated for this mode of transit.

8. Providing five steamers for three successive years, the prospective expenditure would be as follows, viz.:-

1st year—

Five Steamers with ten supplemental Barges	£ 72,000
Workshops, Machinery, and River-Stations	£ 20,000
	£ 92,000

2nd year—

Five Steamers with ten supplemental Barges	£ 72,000
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3rd year—

Five Steamers with ten supplemental Barges	£ 72,000
	£ 144,000
Contingencies	£14,000
	£250,000

Entire Capital for 15 Steamers with 80 supplemental barges and necessary appliances.

9. For detailed information as to the capacity of the steam vessels, and their supplemental barges, and an estimate of the expected revenue and expenditure, I beg a reference to the accompanying Report of Mr. Yarrow.

10. The return of 25 percent may appear large, but the communications I have had on this subject with Mr. Frere, the Commissioner in Scinde, Major Hamilton, the Commissioner at Mooltan, Colonel Napier, Chief Engineer of the Punjaub, Mr. Temple, late Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub, and other local authorities, lead me to conclude that the pecuniary result cannot but be of a highly favorable character.

11. It will be apparent to the Honorable Court, that much economy and many other advantages must accrue from the management of the proposed, steam flotilla on the Indus being entrusted to the Scinde Railway Company, as that Company is already charged with the construction and working of the Line, which will connect the inland navigation of the Indus with, the port of shipment.

12. In conclusion, it is the opinion of this Board, and all the authorities whom I have consulted, that the early establishment of an efficient steam flotilla is not only essential to the successful development of the Scinde and Punjaub Railways; but it, is most urgently demanded for the proper discharge of the public service and the pressing necessities of the countries drained by the Indus and its tributaries, whose population and commerce are at present denied free access to Kurrachee, their natural port.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant
(Signed) W. P. ANDREW,
Chairman.

SIR JAMES C. MELVILL, K.C.B.,
&c., &c., &c.,

From SIR JAMES C. MELVILL, K.C.B., to W. P. ANDREW, Esq.,
Chairman of the Scinde Railway Company,
&c., &c.

(EXTRACT)

*East India House,
17th June, 1857.*

SIR,

I am commanded to acquaint you that the Court of Directors of the East India Company, having considered the proposition submitted by the, Directors of the Scinde Railway, for the navigation of the Indus between, Kotree, the terminus of the Scinde Railway, and Mooltan, the terminus of the proposed Punjaub Railway, have resolved to allow the Scinde Railway Company to issue shares, representing a capital of two hundred anti fifty thousand pounds (£250,000) for that purpose,* * * an agreement being entered into between the Company and the East India Company upon the same terms as those which are included in the Railway contract.

(Signed) JAMES C. MELVILL.

W. P. ANDREW, ESQ.
&c. &c. &c.

**A DEPUTATION, IN FAVOUR OF THE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEEING A
MINIMUM RATE OF INTEREST ON THE EUPHRATES VALLEY RAILWAY, HAD
AN INTERVIEW WITH VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, YESTERDAY, 22ND JUNE.**

The deputation consisted of the Earl of Shaftesbury, Mr. Andrew, (chairman of the Euphrates Valley Railway), Mr. P. Anstruther, Mr. W. Ainsworth, Sir F. L. Arthur, Bart., Mr. A. F. Bellasis, Sir W. Colebrooke, C.B., the Earl of Chichester, the Earl of Carnarvon, Major-General Chesney, R.A., Mr. F. Ellis, M.P., Mr. Estcourt Sotheron, M.P., the Hon. J. C. Erskine, Mr. A. S. Finlay, M.P., Lord Goderich, Mr. I. Gladstone, Mr. W. Hutt, M.P., Mr. Thos. Headlam, M.P., Mr. T. B. Horsfall, M.P., Col. Harvey, Mr. T. K. Lynch, Mr. John Laird, Mr. Macgregor Laird, Mr. James Merry, M.P., Sir H. Maddock, Major Moore, Sir D. Norreys, M.P., Colonel W. Pinney, M.P., Mr. F. W. Russell, M.P., Sir Justin Shiel, K.C.B., Count Strylecki, Col. Steinbach, Gen. Sabine, Lord Talbot de Malahide, the Lord Mayor, Mr. Matthew Uzielli, Mr. W. Vansittart, M.P., Sir W. F. Williams of Kars, Mr. T. A. Yarrow, Mr. Wickham, M.P., Hon. A. Kinnaid, M.P., Mr. Arthur Otway, the Earl of Albemarle, Lord Ashley, Mr. Thomas Alcock, M.P., Mr. J. E. Anderdon, Viscount Bangor, Mr. W. Buchanan, M.P., Mr. F. B. Beamish, M.P., Mr. G. Bowyer, M.P., Dr. Boyd, M.P., Major C. Bruce, M.P., Lord Colchester, Lord Cloncurry, Lord Cremorne, Lord R. Clinton, Sir Edw. Colebrooke, M.P., the Hon. H. Cole, M.P., Mr. R. W.

Crawford, Alderman Copeland, M.P., the Bishop of Durham, Lord Dufferin, the Earl of Donoughmore, Mr. R. Davison, M.P., Colonel Dunne, M.P., Sir James Duke, M.P., the Earl of Enniskillen, Earl of Erne, Lord Elcho, SST' De Lacy Evans, M.P., Mr. J. C. Ewart, M.P., Sir J. Elphinstone, M.P., Mr. W. Fagan, M.P., Sir R. Ferguson, M.P., Sir G. Foster, M.P., Mr. C. Fortescue, M.P., Mr. F. French, M.P., Lord Robert Grosvenor, M.P., Mr. E. Grogan, M.P., Mr. S. Gregson, M.P., Mr. G. Hamilton, M.P., Mr. J. H. Hamilton, M.P., Colonel Harvey, Mr. A. Hastie, M.P., Mr. H. Ingram, M.P., Mr. W. Kirk, M.P., Mr. T. Longman, Lord Monteagle, the Earl of Mayo, Mr. J. R. Mowbray, M.P., Mr. R. Monckton Milnes, M.P., Sir John Macneill, Mr. H. A. Mackinnon, Sir Roderick Murchison, Mr. G. Macartney, M.P., Mr. J. M'Cann, M. r., Mr. J. M'Clintock, M.P., Mr. M'Evory, M.P., Mr. P. W. Martin, Mr. C. W. Martin, Mr. G. G. M'Pherson, Mr. F. North, M. P., Colonel North, M.P., the Right Hon. J. Napier, M.P., Mr. C. Newdegate, M.P., Sir George Pollock, G.C.B., Mr. J. Pritchard, M.P., the Earl of Roden, Lord Rossmore, Lord Stanley, Lord Sandon, the Bishop of St. David's, Mr. R. Slaney, Mr. W. Sowerby, Mr. A. Turner, M.P., Colonel Taylor, M.P., Mr. W. Tolletnache, M.P., Sir H. Verney, Lord Wrottesley, Mr. Whiteside, M.P., Mr. Thos. Williams, Mr. J. A. Warre, M.P.⁴

Lord Shaftesbury introduced the deputation to Lord Palmerston, and pointed out in forcible language the vast importance to this country of securing an alternative route to

⁴ *Times*, 23rd June, 1857.

India, and the great interest generally felt throughout the country in this great undertaking, so calculated to promote commerce, civilization, and Christianity, and stated that Mr. Andrew, the Chairman of the Company, would submit to his lordship more detailed information.

Mr. Andrew, after expressing his regret for the unavoidable absence of Lord Stanley, said, that for some years it had been considered a great, national object to secure an alternative short route to India, but that recently the establishment of the route by the Euphrates had become more and more necessary, and more especially since it had been determined to open up; the Valley of the Indus by the application of steam. The great traffic which would pour down this valley from Central Asia and the Punjaub, once flowing towards Kurrachee, would naturally seek an outlet by the sister valley of the Euphrates, at least the lighter and more valuable products as well as the mails and passengers; but the support of the government was not sought on commercial grounds. That support was sought alone on the ground of the political importance of this ancient line of communication. The grand object was to connect England with the north-west frontier of India, by steam transit through the Euphrates and Indus Valleys. The latter would render moveable to either the Kyber or the Bolan, the two gates of India, the flower of the British army cantoned in the Punjaub, and connected by the Euphrates line by means of steamers, the flank and rear would be threatened of any force advancing through Persia towards India. So that the invasion of India by this great scheme would be placed beyond even speculation, and it would be evident by the great army of India of 800,000 men being united by this means to the army in England the mutual support they would render each other would quadruple the power and ascendancy of this country, and promote powerfully the progress, the freedom, and the peace of the world. The countries to be traversed were the richest and most ancient in the world, and might again become the granaries of Europe, and not only supply us with wheat, but with cotton of excellent quality, and his gallant friend, General Chesney, who had recently visited these regions, would tell them that there were hundreds of thousands of camel-loads of this valuable commodity rotting on the ground from the want of the means of transport. Sir W. F. Williams, of Kars, would tell them there was no difficulty in dealing with the Arabs if they were fairly treated. The Lord Mayor, who had had intimate commercial relations with the East, and Mr. Lynch, of Bagdad, who had for many years traded with the Arabs, would speak to the honesty and trustworthiness of the Arab. As to physical difficulty there was none—the line had been surveyed and proved to be singularly easy. Her Majesty's government had given their powerful influence and support in obtaining the *firman* and concession. They had placed her Majesty's ship, Stromboli, at the disposal of General Chesney and Sir John M'Neill, and the engineering staff, and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had lent his powerful advocacy with the Porte. He (Mr. Andrew) was deeply grateful for the assistance thus far afforded them, but they had now arrived at that point when something more was absolutely necessary, and that was the pecuniary support of government to enable the capital to be raised for the prosecution of the work. It was not

a matter for private individuals to undertake. If they wanted an investment for their funds, they could certainly not choose Turkish Arabia. The establishment of a steam route by the Euphrates had been placed before the public and the government. Many chambers of commerce and other influential associations had already memorialized the government in favor of granting pecuniary aid; and it was believed the country was anxious that this route should be carried out by Englishmen, and it now rested with the government to say whether they concurred in the importance of the work, and if so, whether they would be prepared to recommend such an amount of pecuniary assistance, whether by guarantee or otherwise, as would enable this, the most important undertaking ever submitted to their consideration, to be proceeded with.

Sir W. F. Williams, of Kars, stated that during his long residence amongst the Arabs he experienced no difficulty in dealing with them, or in procuring, during his excavations in Susa, any number of workmen he might require; and he also pointed out the great importance of the proposed harbor of Seleucia, as there was not a single good harbor on the Syrian coast.

Count Strylecki briefly addressed his lordship on the support of successive Turkish governments to the undertaking, viewing it as of incalculable political importance to England in relation to her Indian possessions.

Mr. Finlay, MP., speaking from personal acquaintance with the country to be traversed, dwelt on the great capacity for development, if only the means of transport were afforded.

General Chesney gave full explanations regarding the harbor, as to its exact position, capacity, &c.

Sir Justin Sheil, late ambassador in Persia, dwelt on the political importance of the line, and that it would shorten the distance to Kurrachee, the European port of India, by 1400 miles.

The Lord Mayor had had (through his agents) extensive commercial transactions with the Arabs, and had found them most reliable and honest; and he considered they were as much alive to their own interests as any other race, and would be in favor of the railway because it would at once give them employment and afford them an outlet for their products.

Mr. Lynch, of Bagdad, from long residence, fully confirmed his lordship's views.

Mr. Horsfall, M.P., assured his lordship that the undertaking was viewed with great interest in the manufacturing districts generally, and placed in his lordship's hands a

memorial from the Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool, praying that the government would extend the necessary pecuniary aid to the Euphrates Valley Railway Company.

Lord Palmerston assured the deputation that the government were fully alive to the great importance of the Euphrates route; that they had supported and would continue to support it; but he could not give an opinion as to giving the guarantee on the capital without consulting his colleagues, and requested Mr. Andrew to put his proposition in writing, and that it should have a proper amount of consideration, and that government would be happy to aid it if in their power.

Mr. Andrew having thanked his lordship for the courteous reception afforded to the deputation, the deputation withdrew, much gratified by the manner in which they had been received.⁵

⁵ *Morning Herald*, 23rd June, 1857.