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ANGLO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE ALEXANDRIA-CAIRO-SUEZ RAILWAY (1833-1858)

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
University of London
School of Oriental and African Studies

September 1966

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to study the construction of the first Egyptian railway and its impact on Anglo-Egyptian relations: it attempts to throw new light on a neglected subject and period of 19th century Egypt. The railway was a matter of interest to the British government and produced a vast correspondence, which highlights Anglo-French rivalries in Egypt. It covers the reign of 'Abbās I, of which it illuminates several aspects, and modifies the accepted view. It is therefore intended as a contribution to a more objective appraisal of 'Abbās's rule. The principal sources used include unpublished British and French documents and published Arabic and Western materials as listed in the bibliography.

After an introductory survey of British policy concerning Middle East communications, the thesis falls into five chapters. Chapter One traces how the railway project was originated and developed, and discusses Britain's views in the setting of her general policy concerning communications with India. It explains Muḥammad 'Alī's interest in the project, and assesses his motives for abandoning it. Chapter Two examines the railway issue in view of 'Abbās's internal and external policies, and Britain's relations with both Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, and attempts to revise the verdict as to who initiated the construction of the railway. It analyses French

opposition, and appraises the motives of 'Abbās's Anglophile policy. Chapter Three deals with efforts made by Britain to secure the completion of the railway during Sa'īd's reign, when French influence predominated, and to annul any attempt to cede the railway to foreign speculators. Chapter Four enquires into the programme of construction of the railway, the organisation of the railway administration, the system of management, and the employment of English drivers and technicians. It also investigates the policy of substituting Egyptians for Europeans, the qualifications of the former and Britain's reaction to this policy. The final chapter examines the social and economic significance for Egypt of the railway, dealing especially with the corvée and with effects on the growth of towns, internal trade and communications and transit traffic.

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor P. M. Holt, for his kind advice, endless encouragement and guidance, and for the effort he made in correcting the entire work.

I wish to acknowledge facilities provided by the following for collecting the material for this work: the officials of the Public Record Office, London; the Director of the Service des Archives Diplomatique et de la Documentation, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris; the staffs of the British Museum, the India Office library, the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Senate House library, University of London, the National Register of Archives and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. I wish also to thank the Trustees of the Broadlands Archives for permission to use material from the Palmerston papers, and the management of the P. & O. Company for allowing me to consult some of the material at the Company's Public Relations Office.

I would also like to record my indebtedness to my wife for her encouragement which assisted greatly in the completion of this work.

Finally, gratitude is due to Asyūt University for awarding me a scholarship which made it possible to come to England and prepare this study.

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Abbreviations

B.P.	Broadlands papers (Palmerston's papers)
<u>B.S.O.A.S.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</u>
<u>Cah.hist.ég.</u>	<u>Cahiers d'histoire égyptienne</u>
<u>E.I.</u> ²	<u>Encyclopaedia of Islam</u> , 2nd edn.
F.O.	Foreign Office papers (P.R.O. London)
<u>J.M.H.</u>	<u>Journal of Modern History</u>
I.O.F.R.	India Office, Factory Records
M.A.E., C.P.,	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique
— C.C.,	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance commerciale
<u>M.E.J.</u>	<u>Middle East Journal</u>
Mubarak	'Alī Pasha Mubarak, <u>al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfīqiyya al-jadīda li-miṣr al-qahira wa-muduniha wa-biladiha al-qadima al-Shahira</u> , 20 vols., Cairo, 1305-6/1887-9
P.P.	Parliamentary papers
Sāmī	Amin Pasha Sāmī, <u>Taqwīm al-Nīl</u> , vol. III, Pt. I, Cairo, 1355/1936

Note on transliteration

In transliterating Arabic, the system adopted in the second edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam has been followed with slight variations. For letters jīm and qāf j and q have been substituted for dj and k respectively, although in a few instances, j has been changed to g (e.g. Gīsa and Girgā) according to Egyptian usage. Apart from that, classical Arabic forms have been used for names of persons and places. Conventional names of some places, such as Alexandria, Cairo and Suez, have been retained. Finally, Fallāḥīn and some similar Arabic plural forms have been used.

IntroductionBRITISH POLICY CONCERNING
COMMUNICATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

"Egypt is the Key to Asia, the thoroughfare to India; which cannot long be abandoned to the exclusive influence and control of those whose hostile ambition is matter of history.

Stoddart to Palmerston,
9 Feb. 1847 in F.O. 78/710.

From ancient times up to the last years of the fifteenth century, Egypt was a main channel of communication and trade. In the Middle Ages, spices, perfumes, silk and woollen textiles and metals came by sea from the East to the Red Sea, whence they were conveyed through Egypt, either by land or by the Nile, to the Mediterranean coast. The Mediterranean acted as an international route of communication, where the trade was landed at Genoa and Venice. From these ports, these products were distributed to the different parts of central and western Europe. At the close of the fifteenth century the world witnessed an important change, not in the means of transport, but in the routes of communication for, during 1497-8, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached India. The Portuguese were driven to discover an alternative route to get away from the high taxes the Mamluk governors of Egypt had imposed on trade.¹

The circumnavigation of Africa was a serious blow to the Egyptian route. It brought goods to Europe more cheaply, easily and safely than by way of the long caravan route and perilous sea

¹ M. M. Šafwat, Injiltirā wa qanāt al-Suways, pp. 1-6; for a general survey of the course of Oriental trade from the close of the great Crusades until the 18th c. see: A. H. Lybyer, "The Ottoman Turks and the Routes of Oriental Trade", The English Historical Review, XXX, 1915, pp. 577-588.

passages. Not until the last two decades of the sixteenth century did the English turn their attention to the Cape, and make efforts to round it to break the Portuguese monopoly of the Eastern trade.¹ On 31 December 1600 the East India Company was established. This Company was invested with a monopoly of trade with India by the Cape route and was forbidden to operate in the Mediterranean. The diversion of world trade to the Atlantic route did not completely suppress Egypt's external trade, but it reduced its importance to a great extent. Some of the products transported between the east and the west continued to come through Egypt.² After the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt (1516-1517), the Levant trade revived to some extent, but remained of secondary importance.³ But the Red Sea trade had been seriously affected since the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 when this sea, as holy waters, was closed to all Christian ships. This was one of the reasons which encouraged the European merchants to abandon the old trade route and turn to the Cape which took the place of Cairo and Alexandria.

¹For the penetration to the East by the Cape route see: Sir W. Foster, England's quest of Eastern Trade, London, 1933, ch. XII, pp. 127-135.

²R. al-Barrāwī and M. H. 'Ulaish, al-Taṭawwur al-iqtisādī fī Miṣr, pp. 28-32; M. F. Lahījah, Ta'rikh Miṣr al-iqtisādī, pp. 38-46.

³B. Lewis, The Arabs in history, London, 1950, p.158.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the ships of the East India Company were only allowed to go as far as Jedda.¹ It was not before the nineteenth century that main routes of world trade returned to the Middle East. The idea of re-opening the overland passage across Egypt appeared towards the end of the eighteenth century when Egypt's geographical position came to constitute an important rôle in the Anglo-French contest over interests.

1. British and French Interests in Egypt prior to 1798:

Unlike the French, British commercial interest was not developed by diplomatic activity either at Constantinople or in Egypt. Indeed, from the seventeenth century until 1756, British consuls resided in Egypt, appointed and maintained by the English Levant Company. But in the latter year the Levant Company resolved to abandon the consulate at Cairo since trade with Egypt was faced with uncertainty of success.² A distinct line must be

¹H. L. Hoskins, British Routes to India, pp. 3-5; A. C. Wood, A History of the Levant Company, p.167.

²Sometimes, when no English Consul was appointed, English affairs were left in the hands of the French Consul. For further details on this point cf. Wood, op.cit., pp. 32-35, 78-79, 124-125, 165-166. In 1756, English affairs were put under the protection of the Dutch Consul; British interest in Egypt in the second half of the 18th c. has been fully examined by Mohammad Anis in his Ph.D. thesis Some aspects of British interests in Egypt in the late 18th c. (1775-1798), Birmingham, 1950, chs. IV, V, VI, VII

drawn between the views of British officials and British travellers. The interest entertained in official circles was only in the use of the Egyptian route for official despatches to and from India. On the other hand, British travellers were interested in opening up trade between India and Egypt, and this initiative was indeed their own. Those early advocates of the Suez Overland route were James Bruce and George Baldwin.¹ The earliest British official who recognised the geographical importance of Egypt was Warren Hastings, then Governor-General of Bengal. In 1775 he succeeded in concluding a commercial treaty with Muhammad Bey Abu

(cont.) and VIII. For a comprehensive survey of official documents and other manuscript sources dealing with British interest in the same period see H. S. Deighton "Some English sources for the study of Modern Egyptian History", in Political and social change in modern Egypt (ed. P. M. Holt), to be published by Oxford University Press, London.

¹ James Bruce, Travels..... to discover the source of the Nile, in the years 1768-1773, chiefly vol. I, ch. II; vol. IV, pp. 620-650; and in 1801, George Baldwin published his Political Recollections relative to Egypt..... its relative importance to England and France...., pp. 1-227. He also published in 1784 a pamphlet entitled The Communication with India by the Isthmus of Suez (in I.O., F.R., vol. 5). There are also strong arguments made by Col. James Capper, in the service of the East India Company, and which are contained in his Observations on the passage to India through Egypt, and across the Great Desert, London, 1783, pp. x-xx. He said (p. xix) "by the several ways of the Cape of Good Hope, Suez, and Bassora, we shall be able to send despatches to and from India at all seasons; but being excluded from anyone of them, there will be an anxious interval of some months in every year, when we shall mutually be ignorant of what is passing in the different countries."

al-Dhahab.¹ This treaty followed the previous arrangement entered into between James Bruce and the same Bey in 1773.²

The idea of utilizing the overland route via Egypt sprang up in the middle of the eighteenth century when events in India called for swifter communications with Europe than by the Cape route. The East India Company had occasionally used the overland route from Aleppo to the Persian Gulf through Baghdad for emergency messages, but this route became insecure. By the second half of the 18th c. there was disorder in the Pashalic of Baghdad; moreover, the uncontrolled Beduins of the Muntafiq in lower Euphrates threatened routes of communication and were a perpetual menace to Basra.³ It seemed inevitable that the alternative route through Egypt and the Red Sea must be considered. Events in Egypt contributed to that end. During the second half of the eighteenth century Ottoman suzerainty in Egypt was ineffective, and there emerged strong and

¹ Hoskins, British Routes, pp. 7-8; idem, "The Overland Route to India in the Eighteenth Century", History, N.S., IX, Apr. 1924-Jan. 1925, pp. 303-305; for a detailed information see: F. Charles-Roux, Autour d'une route - l'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez et l'Égypte au XVIII^e siècle, ch. II, pp. 29-49.

² Hoskins, British Routes, p. 9; Bruce, I, App. ccxcix-ccci.

³ H. Dodwell, The Founder of modern Egypt, pp. 3-4. The Muntafiq occupation of Basra in 1787 was looked upon as closing this route for urgent despatches. (Hoskins, op.cit., p.40). On the Muntafiq see: Stephen H. Longrigg, Four centuries of modern Iraq, Oxford, 1925, pp. 204-206, passim.

ambitious Beys such as 'Alī Bey and Muḥammad Bey Abū al-Dhahab.¹ Once 'Alī Bey became the absolute master of Egypt and established a kind of protectorate over the Ḥijāz, he thought in 1770 to bring the trade between India and Europe back to its old route through the Red Sea. Later Abū al-Dhahab maintained the policy of his predecessor and opened the port of Suez to Christians.² In 1776, 1777 and 1778 ships were arriving at Alexandria from England, and at Suez from India, at the same time, and the old prohibition soon became a dead letter. This explains how the interest of the British travellers in the shorter and quicker route via the Red Sea was revived.

George Baldwin played a remarkable rôle in advocating the Suez route. In 1773 he resigned his consulship in Cyprus, and in the following year was in Egypt. French activities in Egypt, which culminated in the treaties of 1785, were an alarm signal to the British. Any success of France in Egypt and the Red Sea appeared to open up a sinister prospect for English interests in India.³

¹See P. M. Holt, "The 'Cloud-Catcher' - 'Alī Bey the Great of Egypt", History Today, IX, 1, Jan. 1959, pp. 48-58.

²Baldwin, Political Recollections, p.4, "I was at Grand Cairo in the time of Mehemed Bey:" Baldwin accounts, "he gave me every sort of encouragement to persevere in my scheme: he told me, 'if you bring the India ships to Suez, I will lay an aqueduct from the Nile to Suez, and you shall drink of the Nile water'."; see : Hoskins, British Routes, pp. 8-13; Charles-Roux, L'Angleterre, pp. 20-49; Wood, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

³Charles-Roux, op.cit., p.178.

British officials opposed the French wish to induce the Porte to allow France the two ports of Suez and Jedda.¹ Therefore, the British government appointed Baldwin as Consul-General in the following year. His mission was to open communications with India through Egypt and to report on all French activities. Baldwin, who may have had a personal interest in re-opening the Suez route,² contributed two main things. He drew the British government's attention to French activities and designs on Egypt; and he also emphasized the importance of the Suez route as the swifter one for despatches and trade. But the British Foreign Office did not accept these assumptions and once more abandoned the Consulate in Egypt, in February 1793, because it was an unprofitable expense.³ Nevertheless, Baldwin stayed on in Egypt and in 1794, independently of the British government, concluded a treaty with the ruling Beys of Egypt. But Britain had no interest in Egypt. The country was suffering from political unrest, and the British had no commercial establishment in any part of Egypt.⁴ Baldwin left Egypt in 1798, the last British

¹ Hoskins, op.cit., p.30; Charles-Roux, op.cit., p.180.

² He had been engaged in mercantile operations in the Levant since 1760.

³ Charles-Roux, op.cit., p. 315; Shafik Ghorbal, The Beginnings of the Egyptian Question and the rise of Mehemet Ali, p.2; see also Hoskins, "The Overland Route", History, IX, pp. 305-316; R. Bullard, Britain and the Middle East, pp. 28-29.

⁴ Hoskins, British Routes, pp. 47-48.

Consul before the French expedition. To sum up: apart from the proposals for opening trade between India and Egypt, Egypt did not enter into British schemes of expansion. "It was the active, far-seeing and ambitious statecraft of France which opened up new arenas of strife and ambition, while Britons followed, doubtfully at first, but in the long run doggedly."¹

France was not slow, as Britain was, to interest herself in Egypt. French interests in Egypt have been dealt with by many historians.² The early French interests in the Suez route can be dated to 1584. While Britain and Holland competed over the supremacy of the Cape route in the seventeenth century, France was highly interested to revive the Suez route to give her the best chance of competing with her rivals. During the reign of Louis XIV many projects appeared advocating the Suez route. Those in favour of this route were French ministers, economists and merchants. In 1676 the German philosopher, Leibnitz, presented his Concilium Aegyptiacum to Louis XIV, in which he suggested the

¹Quoted from Ghorbal, op.cit., p.3.

²Eg. J. Charles-Roux, L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez; F. Charles-Roux, Les Origines de l'expédition d'Égypte; idem, "France, Égypte et Mer Rouge, de 1715 à 1798", cah. hist. ég., Sér. III, fasc. 2, 1951, pp. 117-195; M. Kassim, The History of the Suez Canal Concession 1854-1866, unpubl. M.A. thesis, London, 1924; C. W. Hallberg, The Suez Canal, its history and diplomatic importance; J. Marlowe, The making of the Suez Canal; Hoskins, "The Overland Route...", History, IX, pp. 302-318.

conquest of Egypt to assure France's military preponderance over all European Powers, to control the Eastern trade and to protect the Eastern church. Leibnitz emphasized in his memoir that "Egypt is the link which connects Asia with Africa; the mole-interposed between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea; the granary of the East & the natural emporium of both India & Europe."¹ French interest in the Suez route was derived from France's status as a Mediterranean Power, strongly established in the Levant and in Egypt. Under Louis XV the idea of a campaign against Egypt was broached, but without effect. During the Russo-Turkish war (1768-1774), France looked upon Egypt as her share if the Ottoman Empire were to be partitioned. However, the activities of British traders in Egypt, as explained earlier, aroused French suspicion. In 1777, Mure, the French Consul-General, reported to Paris that Britain had designs on Egypt. French representatives did not quite see the difference of attitude between British officials and British traders. Nonetheless, French interest in the Suez route had increased considerably and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century many projects appeared recommending the construction of a canal or a conquest of Egypt.² However the French government was not in a

¹The "Consilium Aegyptiacum" or the Egyptian project, an unpublished memoir by Leibnitz, enclosed in Stoddart's letter to Palmerston dated London, 23 Feb. 1850 in F.O.78/842.

²See: Hallberg, op.cit., pp. 52-54; J. E. Swain, The struggle for the control of the Mediterranean prior to 1848, A study of Anglo-French relations, pp. 14-22.

position to consider these projects. The revival of a shorter route to India was reconsidered after the restoration of peace in 1783. In 1785, a French agent concluded treaties with the Beys of Egypt; and these would have re-opened the Red Sea route for Indian trade had not the Porte at once resolved to vindicate its own authority and sent an expedition which overthrew the Beys and, for the moment, re-established Ottoman authority.¹

The closing years of the eighteenth century witnessed a decline of French interests in the Levant. The first setback was felt in the loss of privileges of the French East India Company, and another was the maltreatment of French merchants in eastern markets. To redress this, in 1793 revolutionary France decided to re-open her Consulate in Egypt which had been suppressed since 1777. The new Consul, Charles Magallon, was an ardent supporter of the seizure of Egypt by France. In 1795 Magallon wrote "Masters of the Red Sea, we should not be long in giving the law to the English and in ousting them from India..."² Magallon's views guided the attitude of the French Directory and culminated in the French expedition of 1798.³ In the decree of the French Directory

¹H. Dodwell, "The Exclusion of the French, 1784-1815", The Cambridge Hist. of the British Empire, IV, p. 327; Hoskins, British Routes, p.29; Hallberg, op.cit., pp. 54-55.

²Charles-Roux, L'Angleterre, p.342 cited in Hoskins, op.cit., p.52.

³On its origins see: F. Charles-Roux, Les Origines de l'expédition d'Égypte; Chorbai, op.cit., ch. I.

of 12 April 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte was charged to take over Egypt, to expel the English from all their possessions in the Orient, especially from their Red Sea trading-stations, and to have a canal cut through the Isthmus of Suez.¹ But Bonaparte's expedition could not realize his saying "la puissance qui est maîtresse de l'Égypte doit l'être à la longue de l'Inde". The French occupation of Egypt did not last long. By her naval supremacy, Britain locked the French in Egypt and cut their communications with their motherland. Finally, Menou capitulated and concluded the treaty of evacuation with the British on 2 September 1801. The Anglo-French treaty of peace, signed at Amiens on 27 March 1802 concluded the final chapter of the first direct French attempt to reach India and to threaten the British existence there.

The landing of Bonaparte's expedition in Egypt was the beginning of a new era. It had far-reaching consequences. The old regime collapsed and a new order was ultimately established under the Albanian officer, Muḥammad 'Alī. It also brought into existence the so-called 'Egyptian Question'. The French invasion had uncovered the importance of Egypt's strategic position. It demonstrated to the British that a hostile power could cut their shortest line of communication with India. Egypt was at the head of this overland link; and from that head began Napoleon's scheme of approaching

¹ A full translation of the decree is in Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, I, pp. 61-62.

India by way of the overland route across Syria, Iraq and Persia.¹
 George Baldwin's warnings of the dangers of a French establishment in Egypt, once overlooked, proved their accuracy. Prior to the French conquest he wrote

"France, in possession of Egypt, would possess the master-key to all the trading nations of the earth. Enlightened as the times are, in the general arts of navigation and commerce, she might make it the awe of the eastern world, by the facility she would command of transporting her forces thither, by surprise, in any number, and at any time; and England would hold her possessions in India at the mercy of France."²

Yet, although the Egyptian Question was a part of the Eastern Question, it took a new and different line from the latter. One of the most important characteristics of the Egyptian Question was the interest shown by the Great Powers in Egypt's geographical position.

2. The development of British Interest in the Overland Route in the early 19th century:

When the eighteenth century ended, the overland passage was still undeveloped. The dispatches of the British government and the East India Company usually followed one of two routes: that round

¹ Sir Charles Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830-1841. London, 1951, I, p.276; H. F. al-Najjar, al-Siyasa wa'l-istratijiyya fi al-sharq al-awsat, Cairo, 1953, pp. 182-186.

² Baldwin, Political Recollections, p.79 quoted in Hoskins, op.cit. pp. 33-34.

the Cape or that by way of Egypt and the Red Sea. Furthermore, there was little thought of developing either of the shorter lines, the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, for public mails. The Cape route was the channel for commerce between Britain and India. The overland journey from Alexandria to Suez was indeed one of the major difficulties which hindered any regular opening of the Red Sea route.¹ The advent of Muḥammad 'Alī and the autonomous status which he acquired was a major contribution to its development. He resumed the ambitious schemes of 'Alī Bey, one of which was the re-opening of the overland link through his territory. Individual efforts, similar to Baldwin's, did not cease in the nineteenth century. The organisation of the overland route was the work of one man, Thomas Fletcher Waghorn (1800-1850). He was a pilot in the service of the East India Company in Bengal. In 1827 he was chosen by a committee of merchants to forward the project of a steam communication between England and India. From this grew his great interest in the project to establish the overland route. He resigned from the Indian pilot service in 1829 in order to devote the whole of his energies to establishing an overland mail line through Suez. In 1835 he began to organise the Egyptian passage and set himself up in the business of transporting mails,

¹ J. K. Sidebottom, The Overland Mail, p.15.

passengers and goods from Suez to Cairo. Two years later the East India Company appointed him as their deputy agent in Egypt.¹ He wrote in 1837 "I felt convinced that that country ought to be the road to India; and I will never content myself till I find it the high road to India."² Muhammad 'Alī never hindered Waghorn's efforts but lent him every support possible.³ In point of fact, Waghorn roused British public opinion, and made known the advantages of the Red Sea route.

Britain's interest in developing a shorter route to India was a turning point in the revival of the Suez route. But it was not until the eighteen-thirties that the British government evinced an ever-growing interest in this route. This was in the time of Palmerston, the most dominant figure in British foreign policy for thirty-five years. The circumstances connected with this sudden change will be discussed later. However, this does not imply that Britain had no other interest in Egypt during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Egypt was destined to become a focal point of Anglo-French rivalry. As a result of the French expedition, the British began to take precautionary measures. The

¹H. Addison, "Thomas Waghorn and the Overland Route", Royal Central Asian Journal, XLV, Apr. 1958, Pt II, pp. 179-185; Sidebottom, op.cit., chs. IV, V, VI and VII; see also ch. I; B. Cable, A hundred year history of the P. & O., ch. X; P. E. Clunn, Lieut. Waghorn... Pioneer of the Overland Route, pp. 1-6.

²T. Waghorn, Egypt as it is in 1837, p.26. In 1838 he wrote another pamphlet: Egypt as it is in 1838.

³A. F. C. de Cosson, "The Overland Route across Egypt to India", Bengal Past & Present, X, Jan.-June 1915, pp. 211-221; see also: Cameron, Egypt in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 221-223.

belief that "the possession of Egypt by any great European power would be a fatal circumstance to the interests of this country"¹ became the ultimate concern of the British government during the whole of the century. The failure of Bonaparte's expedition did not terminate his schemes concerning Egypt. One of the measures taken by the British government was to secure the frequent and safe transmission of despatches through the Ottoman dominions in Europe and Asia, and in this it succeeded.² The fact that the Egyptian route could no longer be relied on urged this decision. It can probably be said that the British government was uninterested, at that time, in the Suez route on political grounds.³ Muhammad 'Ali's expansion towards the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, during the Arabian campaign might have originated the British distrust of his policy.⁴ Yet, the other side of this lack of interest can be seen in Hoskins's words: "the character of the new era beginning with the treaties of Vienna was determined not so much by cabinet

¹Henry Dundas, British Secretary of War in 1798, quoted by Ghorbal (op.cit., p.62)

²Hoskins, British Routes, p.66.

³Sidebottom, op.cit., p.14.

⁴cf. Dodwell, The Founder of modern Egypt, pp. 55-61; also J. B. Kelly, "Mehermet 'Ali's Expedition to the Persian Gulf 1837-1840", Pt. I, Middle Eastern Studies, 1/4, July 1965, pp. 350-381; Abdel Hamid El-Batrik, "Egyptian-Yemeni relations (1819-1840) and their implications for British policy in the Red Sea", Political and Social change in modern Egypt (ed. P. M. Holt) to be published by Oxford University Press, London.

officers and Parliamentary speakers as by a host of inventors whose combined efforts vastly speeded up industrial life and produced new problems and new relationships".¹ Nevertheless, the most probable object was to keep that route dead and closed against all competition which could endanger British supremacy in the east.

The plan for organizing connection by steam, between Britain and Bombay, by way of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea dates from the eighteen-twenties. By 1822, a series of campaigns was launched in England and India for the accomplishment of steam communication linked with the overland route through Egypt.² The Anglo-Indian merchant houses in the Indian Presidencies, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, were greatly interested in steam connection with Britain.³ This scheme also had the support of the local governments in the same Presidencies.⁴ Furthermore, the Egyptian route was recommended by travellers who journeyed to and from India through Mesopotamia and Egypt.⁵

¹Hoskins, British Routes, p.86.

²Hoskins, op.cit., pp. 89-93.

³G. S. Graham, "By steam to India", History Today, XIV/5, May 1964, pp. 301-312.

⁴For example see the support of W. C. Bentinck, the Governor General of Madras for Steam Navigation with India in the Asiatic Journal, XIV, N.S., No. 59, Nov. 1834, pp. 156-158.

⁵The most illustrative article on travellers is Rashad Rushdi's "English travellers in Egypt during the reign of Mohammad Ali", Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo Univ., XIV, pt. II, Dec. 1952, pp. 1-61. See also the works of the following travellers: Mrs. Colonel Elwood, Narrative of a journey Overland from England to the Continent of Europe, Egypt and the Red Sea, to India... in the years 1825, 1826, 1827 and

The interest of the public in England and India had a number of reasons. The French expedition, undoubtedly, revealed the need of a shorter route to India. But the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars was a period of protecting commercial interests on one hand, and developing the channels of communications on the other. The Industrial Revolution and consequent commercial growth in Great Britain tended to make British possessions in the east more appreciated.¹ India's economic importance to Great Britain increased. In 1814, the year the trade was opened, the export of cotton manufacturers to India was 817,000 yards. The amount rose from 1,355,476 in 1815 to 7,127,661 in 1819 to 23,658,426 in 1824, and from 45,016,850 in 1827 to 51,833,913 yards in 1832. Consequently, the value of cotton exported in the above duration increased from £201,182 to £3,238,248; and the value of all exports from Britain in the same period increased from £1,874,690 to £4,674,673.² On the other hand, British imports from the East increased enormously. In 1790, imports amounted to 27,000 tons, and exports to 26,400 tons. But in 1817 eastern imports were raised to 80,7000 tons and exports to India and neighbouring countries to 109,000 tons.³

The Cape route was not a feasible one for speedy and cheap

(cont.) 1828, 2 vols., London, 1830; Lieut.-Col. Fitz-Clarence, Journal of a route across India through Egypt to England, in 1817-1818, London, 1819; the Asiatic Journal, III, N.S., pt. 1, pp. 196-206.

¹See H. L. Hoskins, "The Growth of British interest in the route to India", Journal of Indian History, II, pp. 165-177.

²Evidence given by Major Charles Franklin in P.P., 1837 (539), VI, p.97.

³Hoskins, British Routes, p.87.

communications. Therefore steamships were given, after certain improvements, a chance to cut the long distance of the Cape route. This attempt was the outcome of the campaigns launched both in England and India.¹ Although there was a preference for the overland route, the insistence upon the Cape route outweighed this desire, partly because it was quite safe, so long as the British fleet dominated the seas. The shorter routes, either through Egypt or Mesopotamia, were subject to the whim of the Pasha or the Sultan.² Believing that Bombay was the only presidency that could benefit from the opening of the Red Sea route, Calcutta and Madras furnished the necessary funds for building a large steam vessel to gamble on the long journey round the Cape. The Enterprise was the first vessel built in England designed exclusively for the service on high seas; and it sailed for India in 1825. This attempt was a real disappointment. It proved that rapid communication by steam vessels round the Cape was unobtainable, but it did suggest the feasibility of opening one of the shorter routes.³

¹G. S. Graham, op.cit., History Today, pp. 301-302.

²F. Sheer, The Cape of Good Hope versus Egypt, London, 1839, p.14; Graham, op.cit., p.302. This route was still argued until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1851, a select committee was appointed to discuss steam communication with Australia, and reported that the line favourable to British interests was that via the Cape: see P.P.. 1851 (372), XXI, pp. xi-xiii.

³Hoskins, "First Steam Voyage to Suez", Bull. Geog. Soc. of Philadelphia, XXIV/4, pp. 179-188; idem, "The First Steam Voyage to India", Geog. Review, XVI/1, pp. 108-116.

Henceforward, Bombay began to press for a steam line by way of the Red Sea and Egypt, or by the way of the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia and Syria.¹ Its successive governors spared no effort in advocating the opening of the overland route for regular communication. Members from the marine department were sent in 1829 to examine the nature of the Red Sea, and to work for the establishment of coaling stations at Aden, Jedda, Cosseir and Suez.² Difficulties in the Red Sea arising from winds would no longer hinder navigation, since the steamship was independent of the wind.³ Another vessel, the Hugh Lindsay, was built at Bombay for a voyage to Suez. On 20 March, 1830, she made her first journey to Suez by way of Aden, Jedda and Cosseir; and in due course "foretold the decline of Britain's main highway to the East".⁴ The practicability of the Red Sea route was finally demonstrated.

Before long the British government began to show signs of interest in the means of access to the East. The interest in a shorter route to India was one of the reasons for Britain's policy of maintaining "the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire".⁵

¹Hoskins, op.cit.; Asiatic Journal, XXIV, pp. 719-722; XVV, pp. 40-42.

²Hoskins, op.cit.; Bull. Geog. Soc., XXIV, pp. 179-188.

³P.P.. 1831-1832 (735-11), Pt. II, App. No. 25.

⁴P.P.. 1834 (478), XIV, App. 17, p.112; Graham, op.cit., History Today, pp. 303-305.

⁵Apart from Hoskins's extensive account in his British Routes, there are also economic historians who attempted to place Palmerston's

Prior to 1833 British policy in the Middle East was largely defensive. But in consequence of the political situation, resulting from the French occupation of Algiers in 1830, the Russian threat to control the straits and Muḥammad 'Alī's conquest of Syria in 1831, Britain had to play an active role. Palmerston opposed any move that would contribute to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. If nature had given Muḥammad 'Alī the Egyptian highway to the East, the Euphrates route must be kept away from his control.¹ These considerations interested Palmerston in the alternative route through Mesopotamia.² Steam Navigation with India was one of the factors that formed, to some extent, Palmerston's policy. As far as British interests were concerned, the Ottoman Empire possessed the two overland routes to the East, and therefore its regeneration was very essential. Thus, it was the geographical position of the Ottoman Empire that determined British foreign policy in the Middle East after 1833.

By the thirties, a connection with India by means of steam was widely discussed both in India and Britain. It was the subject of correspondence with the consular officers in Egypt during the early

(cont.) policy in its true economic setting. Those are: Swain, op.cit., V. J. Puryear, International economics and diplomacy of the Near East. A Study of British commercial policy in the Levant, 1834-1853; F. E. Bailey, British policy and the Turkish reform movement. A study of Anglo-Turkish relations, 1826-1853, chs. I, II; idem, "The Economics of British Foreign Policy, 1825-50", J.M.H., XII/4, Dec. 1940, pp. 449-484.

¹cf. H. C. F. Bell, Lord Palmerston, New York, 1936, I, 179.

²Bailey, British policy, pp. 66-67.

part of 1829. On 16 November that year, one of the East India Company's brigs was despatched from Bombay to Cosseir with two boxes of correspondence and nine passengers.¹ The Bombay businessmen continued to press the British government and Parliament in support of the Red Sea route. In January 1832, the House of Commons appointed a committee to investigate "the present State of Affairs of the East India Company, and to inquire into the State of Trade between Great Britain, the East Indies and China".² One part of this inquiry was to get information on trial steam voyages up the Red Sea, the survey in Egypt and the preliminary investigations of the Euphrates river as a possible route to India.³ This Committee made no recommendations to Parliament. Although the Committee received much valuable information, it could not produce upon the evidence any detailed statement because of the approaching termination of the session.⁴ Nevertheless, the Suez route had been much debated in the House of Commons. Earlier in 1830, Lieutenant Frances Rawdon Chesney (1789-1872), of the Royal Artillery, had made a tour of inspection in Egypt and Syria, which led to two important results. He proved that the Suez Canal would

¹Stoddart to Palmerston, Report for the year 1845, on the commercial navigation of Alexandria, dated 30 June 1846, ch. III, in F.O.78/663.

²P.P., 1831-32, (735-11) X, Pt. I & II.

³P.P., 1831-32, X, Pt. II, App. No. 25.

⁴P.P., 1831-32, X, Pt. I, p.xxxv.

be a perfectly feasible undertaking from the engineering point of view. It was on the strength of this report that de Lesseps was first led to attempt the enterprise. The second was his exploration in 1831 of the Euphrates Valley, the matter that interested the British government in opening the alternative route to India through Syria and the Persian Gulf.¹

Although the Egyptian route did not assume any regularity until 1838, the railway was looked upon as the most effective means of establishing communication across Egypt. However, its construction depended, to a great extent, on the state of relations between the British government and the Viceroys of Egypt. This is the starting point from which the subject of the present thesis has emerged.

¹ F. R. Chesney, The Expedition for the survey of the River Euphrates and Tigris.....; idem, Narrative of the Euphrates expedition; see also: Dictionary of National Biography, X, 195-198.

Chapter IMUHAMMAD 'ALĪ AND THE SUEZ-CAIRORAILWAY PROJECT (1833-1848)

"In the present state of our relations with the East, and especially with China, it is obviously our interest to encourage every enterprise which may have for its object to facilitate our communication with our establishments in those countries..... It is clear then that the establishment of a railroad, if practicable, between those two points, cannot fail of being highly advantageous to Great Britain."

Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 14
of 31 Oct. 1843 in F.O. 141/10.

"I would beg your Lordship to bear in mind that I long ago ventured to express an opinion that the Pasha was not sincere in the desire he expressed to meet the views of Great Britain by carrying out the undertaking [the railway]."

Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 17
of 7 May 1845 in F.O. 142/13.

"As France opposes, openly, and Austria, secretly, the construction of a rail-road, His Highness will not for the present lend a favourable ear to the scheme."

Murray to Palmerston, No. 68
of 24 Dec. 1847 in F.O. 78/708.

1. The First Stage of the Egyptian Railway

Muhammad 'Alī was highly favourable to the establishment of steam communication through his territory. He was as anxious for it as the English themselves, because he imagined that its establishment would divert trade from the Cape route to the Red Sea. The influx of travellers and merchandise passing through Egypt would undoubtedly open up new commercial spheres. The revenues extracted from corn and other commodities passing by the overland route would probably give him a considerable sum of income.

Coincidentally, the Egyptian link began to gain popularity because of its rapidity and the opportunity it afforded for visiting Egyptian antiquities. Chesney pointed out in his letter to the British Ambassador at Constantinople that once the difficulties in crossing the Isthmus of Suez were overcome, the Suez route would be still quicker.¹ Muhammad 'Alī realised that unless the route was safe, he would suffer more than anyone. Consequently conveyance through Egypt became as secure as in the most civilized parts of Europe.² He organised a camel service to transport coal between

¹P.P., 1831-1832, (735-11), X, Pt. II, App. No. 25, Chesney to Sir Robert Gordon, 2 Sept. 1830, pp. 753-756; Chesney, Narrative of the Euphrates expedition, App. I, pp. 364-373.

²J. Bowring, Report on Egypt and Candia, P.P., 1840, XXI, p.72; A. E. Crouchely, The Economic development of Modern Egypt, p.78; A. Anderson, Communications with India, China, &c. via Egypt. The political position of their transit through Egypt, p.12; M. Rifaat, The Awakening of Modern Egypt. London, 1947, p.41.

Cairo and Suez; and in 1819, he opened the Maḥmūdīyya Canal for navigation between Alexandria and al-‘Aḥḥ. Since the desert portion between Cairo and Suez was the most uncomfortable part of the journey, Muḥammad ‘Alī thought of facilitating transport by means of a railway.

a) The origin of the idea:

The idea of constructing a railway first came from Thomas Waghorn, the promoter of the overland route through Egypt. In 1832, he brought before Muḥammad ‘Alī the advantages which would accrue to Egypt if a railway were established over the desert from Cairo to Suez. The whole camel system would be replaced by a modern means of transport which would facilitate the conveyance of corn to Arabia, coal to Suez, and passengers to and from India. He pointed out to the Viceroy that the adoption of this railway would yield a vast revenue from the 50,000 pilgrims who would pass annually over it to and from Mecca.¹

Chesney's findings about the possibility of cutting a canal revived a hope long felt by French scientists. A group of Saint-Simonians, headed by Enfantin,² came to Egypt in 1833 to complete

¹ T. Waghorn, Overland guide to India by three routes to Egypt, p.72.

² Saint-Simonians, Comte de Saint-Simon (d. 1825) who was called the founder of French socialism. Among his less visionary schemes were the ideas of cutting canals through the isthmuses of Panama and Suez. He seems to have been less interested in the Suez Isthmus. But the idea was earnestly taken up by Prosper Enfantin, one of his disciples, who in 1833 attended by a small group of followers arrived in Egypt for this purpose.

the study made during the French occupation for establishing direct communication between Suez and the Mediterranean.¹ Muḥammad 'Alī himself was in favour of a canal direct from Cairo to Suez. The Pasha's wish led to correspondence between the Foreign Office and the Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India. Although the India Board did not think that the execution was very near, "they anticipate none but desirable consequences from the accomplishment of such a work".² But this scheme had been superseded by two new projects; the first for a direct canal between the two seas, recommended by Enfantin; the second for the proposed railway line, presented by Thomas Galloway.³ These two projects, with the plan of constructing a Barrage across the Nile, were presented to the Grand Council of Cairo on the 28th, 29th and 31st January 1834. The Council agreed on the Barrage project and on 3 Feb. 1834, a French engineer in the Pasha's service was commissioned by Muḥammad 'Alī to begin this work.⁴

¹ J. Lajard de Puyjalon, L'influence des Saint-Simoniens sur la réalisation de l'Isthme, pp. 69, 71; F. Charles-Roux, L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882, vol. VI, pp. 238-239 in Histoire de la nation égyptienne, J. Charles-Roux, L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez, I, p.175.

² J. Neill to J. B. Macaulay, 9 Aug. 1833 encl. in the India Board letter to Backhouse, 16 Aug. 1833 in F.O. 97/411 (Suez Canal).

³ Thomas Alexander Galloway (d. 1836), an English engineer and the son of Alexander Galloway, the railway manufacturer, was em-

It seems that Galloway's project, despite the Grand Council's opposition, had won Muḥammad 'Alī's favour. Before the council was due to meet, Campbell, the British Consul-General in Egypt, reported to the Foreign Office about the measures taken by the Viceroy for a railroad from Cairo to Suez. He adds, "as these operations would occupy the Pasha's mind (which requires occupation), and that they would also require all the money he could dispose of, it is to be hoped that these plans will be a good guarantee for his future conduct".¹ The French Consul-General in Egypt also reported that, in spite of the recent publication of a memoir by one of the St. Simonians and the calculations made to the Pasha about the canal, Muḥammad 'Alī preferred the railway. A statistical table had recently been published in England, evaluating the wealth which would shower on Egypt from the profits of the transit duty on merchandise exported from India for Europe by way of the Red Sea. Naturally Muḥammad 'Alī was very impressed by these advantages.²

(cont.) ployed in Muḥammad 'Alī's service for steam engine establishment in Egypt. He was the chief protagonist of the Suez-Cairo railway.

⁴Lajard de Puyjalon, op.cit., p.75; M. F. Shukrī, Bina' dawlat Miḡr Muḥammad 'Alī, pp. 44-45.

¹Campbell to Palmerston, 1 Jan. 1834 in F.O. 97/411; The Asiatic Jour., (XV, N.S., Nov. 1834, p.176) reports that the French scheme of cutting a canal had been abandoned in favour of the railway.

²Mimaut to Duc de Broglie, No. 166, 6 Mar. 1834, M.A.E., C.P., tom.4.

By now the subject of steam-communication with India via Egypt was widely discussed by the commercial bodies as well as the authorities in Bengal. Therefore both urged upon Campbell to enter into this subject with Muhammad 'Alī, who promised to do everything in his power to promote the objects in question. The success of this object was a matter in which Egypt was deeply interested. Campbell acquainted the Bengal government that two civil engineers in the service of Muhammad 'Alī, Thomas Galloway and Wallace, were surveying the ground between Cairo and Suez for laying a double railroad. This was for the purpose of conveying goods by means of carts attached to locomotive engines. Campbell comments "in this case I shall suppose that a considerable sum might be saved to the enterprise by Steam vessels in the article of coal".¹ It would then be sent direct from Britain to Alexandria, from which it would be transported to Cairo in boats, and thence to Suez by the railroad. Consequently, transport and costs would be easy and cheap.

Campbell wanted to know Muhammad 'Alī's intentions regarding the railroad, which had become an object of some interest to the mercantile community in Britain as well as in India. He informed the Viceroy that communications with India would be materially assisted by the construction of the Suez-Cairo railroad. Muhammad

¹ Letters from Campbell to both secretaries to the Bengal and Bombay governments, encls. in Campbell to Palmerston, 18 Mar. 1834 in F.O. 78/245; I.O. F.R. (Egypt and the Red Sea), vol. 10.

'Alī replied that this railway had already been surveyed by Galloway, and he intended to give directions regarding it very soon.¹ Campbell then told the Pasha that "the speculators in the intended steam-communication would ask, not what was intended to be done, but was already done, and that no moment would be more favourable for the railroad than the present one, as the steamers to and from India would enter into operation at the same time. The Pasha without any hesitation said it would be done."²

On the following day, Muḥammad 'Alī sent for Galloway and gave him directions to go to Britain, with the orders and funds to obtain the iron for the railroad.³ The Pasha did this when he had learned through various channels about the British government's intentions to establish a steam-communication with India via Egypt and the Red Sea, or Syria and the Euphrates.⁴ On 22 December 1834 Galloway had an interview with the Duke of Wellington, the British Foreign Secretary, and seven days later, he submitted in writing the substance of his verbal communication. In his letter, Galloway explained the difficulties connected with the proposed route from Alexandretta in the Mediterranean to Bīr

¹Campbell to Palmerston, No. 38 of 9 Aug. 1834 in F.O. 142/6.

²Campbell, No. 38 of 9 Aug. 1834 in F.O. 142/6 .

³Campbell to Palmerston, No. 44 of 1 Sept. 1834 in F.O. 142/6; I.O. F.R. (Egypt and the Red Sea) (Campbell to Peter Auber, 2 Sept. 1834 in vol. 10.

⁴Galloway to Wellington, 29 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 141/2.

on the Euphrates. These difficulties, in his view, were due to three main factors: the inconvenience to travellers; the liability of contracting malignant fevers; and above all the uncertainty of protection for persons or property against the wandering tribes of Arabs "who may be said to entirely rule those parts and over whom the Pasha had no control". The Egyptian route, on the contrary, even under its present conditions, did not offer these inconveniences and annoyances; moreover, it was secure and safe. In regard to distance, the Egyptian route did not exceed the other route, being about 200 miles by water from Alexandria to Cairo; while the land distance between Cairo and Suez was just about $80\frac{3}{10}$ miles, "but which will be very much reduced and increased facilities afforded by the execution of the plans at present under construction".¹

Galloway made it clear that the construction of a railway was subject to the British government's decision to establish steam-communication with India via Egypt and the Red Sea. He informed the British government that Muḥammad 'Alī would immediately cause to be laid down a double line of railway instead of the single one which was under execution across the Suez desert. Furthermore, he would also extend this railroad from Cairo to Alexandria. In return for his readiness to establish this additional line of railway,

¹ Backhouse to Campbell, 1 Apr. 1835 in F.O. 141/2; Galloway to Wellington, 29 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 141/2.

"which would be achieved by British skill and British material", Muḥammad 'Alī had two demands to make. He would not ask the British government for any assistance, pecuniary or otherwise, but a promise to adopt the line of the route via Egypt and the Red Sea. Secondly, that all goods passing through Egypt would be subject by treaty to "a transit duty or toll, for the safe delivery ... on board any vessel at Alexandria... or Suez - His Highness will guarantee, which guarantee could not be given either as regards persons or property by the route of Syria and Euphrates". Muḥammad 'Alī, therefore, looked for an assurance that he would get an adequate return from the railway.¹

The British government did not take the initiative in building a railway or call upon the Pasha to do so. What Britain had hoped was that Muḥammad 'Alī would render every facility in his power to the overland route for the mutual benefit of the two countries. When the British government had decided to establish a regular communication by steam vessels between Malta and Alexandria for the conveyance of passengers and despatches from January 1835, Campbell was only instructed to state to Muḥammad 'Alī that his government adopted this arrangement "with the additional object of keeping up a speedy and regular communication with the British possessions

¹Galloway to Wellington, 29 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 141/2; W. D. Holmes, Report on Steam communication with India via the Red Sea, London, 1838, p.29.

in India by way of the Red Sea."¹

At the time of Galloway's proposal, it seemed that the Foreign Office preferred to wait for the results of the Euphrates expedition. Galloway was informed that a Committee of the House of Commons had desired the establishment of overland communication with India by way of the Euphrates, and the government was now in the course of adopting measures to carry that scheme into execution. Moreover, as the Treasury would decide whether any other scheme should be adopted, it was not a subject upon which the Duke could give any opinion.² The Treasury welcomed the establishment of communication with India by the Red Sea route, but it advised the Foreign Office to inform Galloway that this subject was still under the deliberation of the British government and of the Indian authorities, and that "an early intimation [would] be made to Galloway Bey of the result."³ Moreover, when it was decided to establish communication by the Red Sea, the British government would consider with Muḥammad 'Alī what duties it might be expedient to levy upon goods conveyed through Egypt by the intended railroad.⁴ The British government would not, therefore, commit itself to such an undertaking,

¹Palmerston to Campbell, 1 Nov., 1834 in F.O. 78/244; Campbell to Palmerston, No. 66 of 18 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 142.

²Wellington to Galloway, 9 Jan. 1835 encl. (2) in Backhouse to Campbell, 1 Apr. 1835 in F.O. 141/2.

³Treasury, Minute Book, 29/363, 1st Division, 3 Mar. 1835.

⁴T.29/363.

while an expedition was being despatched to the Euphrates to ascertain whether that might not be the best route for steam-communication with India.¹ Besides, the Treasury found it useless to give a final word on Galloway's application while the Red Sea route was still under examination.²

Did Muḥammad 'Alī authorize Galloway to negotiate with the British government on the subject of transit duty? This raises one of the questions closely connected with the construction of the railway in its early stage. The details of Galloway's mission were not discussed in full with the British Consul-General in Egypt. Campbell only knew about the projected line, but Muḥammad 'Alī never informed him that Galloway would discuss with the Duke of Wellington the question of transit duty. When the Foreign Office transmitted to him the correspondence concerning this project, Campbell answered that he neither knew of, nor had the Pasha requested him to communicate to his government the intended visit of Galloway and its object.³

Having been informed about this matter, Muḥammad 'Alī asked Bāghūş Bey, Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs (mudīr Dīwān al-Tijāra al-Miṣriyya wa'l Umūr al-Ifrinkiyya), to state to Campbell

¹Treasury to Viscount Mahon, 5 Mar. 1835 encl. in Backhouse to Campbell, 1 Apr. 1835 in F.O. 141/2.

²W. W. Forbes to E. Stanley, 7 Apr. 1835 encl. in Backhouse, 1 Apr. 1835 in F.O. 78/257.

³Campbell to Wellington, No. 14 of 22 May 1835 in F.O. 142/6.

that he had not instructed Galloway to enter into any arrangements with the British government relative to transit duties; and if he had wished this to be done he would have made the communication through him or through Samuel Briggs.¹ Bāghūş Bey was ready to put this fact in writing to Campbell in the Pasha's name.² Campbell thought that the Pasha might have expressed to Galloway his hopes that a scale of transit duties would be agreed to by the British government "such as would make it an object for the Pasha to extend this line of railroad". Having been deeply interested in the project, Galloway might have construed this as an authority to obtain a promise from the British government relative to transit duties. Furthermore, Galloway originally might have undertaken the promotion of the overland route because he had intended to be nominated in Egypt as the agent for the Steam Navigation Company to be established between England and India.³

¹He was appointed as British Consul at Alexandria in 1803. He resigned this office in 1810 and established a commercial house there. For more information see: F. S. Rodkey, "The efforts of Briggs and Company to guide British policy in the Levant, 1824-1841", J.M.H., 1933, pp. 324 and following.

²Campbell to Wellington, No. 14 of 22 May 1835, in F.O. 142/6.

³Campbell to Auber, 2 Sept. 1834 in I.O. F.R. (Egypt and the Red Sea), vol. 10. Campbell warned the Court of Directors of the East India Company not to appoint any person receiving salary from Muḥammad 'Alī to this post. From his dependence on the Pasha, Galloway could not be an independent agent.

b) The Euphrates Expedition: Opposition of Muhammad 'Alī and Russia:

Before a final decision could be made on the establishment of communications via the Red Sea, the suitability of the Euphrates had to be given a thorough trial. This was a project which found support not only from the leading members of the government, such as Lord Palmerston, but also from King William IV. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1834 to consider this subject and recommended on 14 July a grant of £200,000. Chesney undertook the survey of the Euphrates river.

The obvious motive behind launching the Euphrates expedition was to check any Russian move towards the Euphrates and Persian Gulf. The question of rapid communication was of little importance, as Chesney pointed out to the Select Committee, when compared with the paramount one of forming a barrier against Russia, based upon a more extended and beneficial commerce to Britain, to her Eastern colonies, and to Arabia.¹ This route would consolidate British relations with Persia to protect the Bombay commerce, which was all in that region and not in the Red Sea.² This route was also taken into consideration from the mercantile point of view. It was 284 miles shorter and took two days less than the Egyptian route. Chesney stated that the Egyptian route did not offer any advantage beyond those of speedy and safe communication, but it

¹P.P.. 1834 (478) XIV, pp. 393-394, passim.

²P.P.. 1834 (378) XIV, Ev. by T. Peacock, p.385.

would be properly organised if a canal was to be cut across the Isthmus.¹ An Egyptian railway could be easily established, but he doubted it paying because Egypt had very little commerce with India, while on the Euphrates route Britain would have both transit and local commerce.² By the Euphrates, coal could be transported much more cheaply by the Persian Gulf than to the Ports of the Red Sea, and passengers using the Euphrates could find a variety of means of proceeding whether by land or by sea. Moreover, it was in the interest of the Bombay Presidency to establish this route, for it was natural that the Bengalis should wish Bombay to be the direct port of communication with London.³

As to the tranquility and safety of the Egyptian route, it would be very much bound to the question of profit and loss. If the traffic through Egypt were enough to pay for the expense of keeping the country in order and also leave Muḥammad 'Alī a profit, he would undertake and guarantee this safety. If the profit was not so high, he would ask for higher duties.⁴ In addition, Muḥammad 'Alī would not like to make Egypt the channel of such an important communication, for it would draw the attention of Europe to her. Conse-

¹P.P., 1834 (478) XIV, Ev. by Chesney, p.398.

²P.P., 1834 (478) XIV, Ev. by Chesney, pp. 423-424.

³P.P., 1834 (478) XIV, App. No. 4, an extract from the Bombay Gazette's article on the reasons for preferring the Euphrates (7 Aug. 1833, pp. 626-28).

⁴P.P., 1834, (478) XIV, App. No. 4.

quently, he would secretly make difficulties and intrigues to hinder steam transport through his territory.¹

Muhammad 'Alī was not as dangerous as the Russians to British interests in the Middle East. If the question was whether Constantinople should belong to Russia or Muhammad 'Alī, it might be in the interest of Britain to assist the latter against the former, who sought to dominate the Straits to get access into the Mediterranean.² Despite the reciprocal dislike between Russia and Muhammad 'Alī, the Euphrates expedition gave both a common reason for reconciliation and joint counter-action. When the future of the expedition was still in the air, Ibrahim Pasha gave some hints to Campbell about it. He believed that communication by the Euphrates would be uneasy and expressed his optimism in the prospect of steam navigation being established by way of Egypt.³

However, Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, was instructed to get the Porte's consent to the arrangements connected with the Euphrates route.⁴ He was ordered to ask the Porte to direct the Ottoman authorities in the districts through

¹P.P.. 1831-2 (735-11), X, Pt. II, App. No. 25, Letters from Chesney to Sir Robert Gordon, 2 Sept. 1830.

²Palmerston to Bligh, No. 5 of 28 Feb. 1834 in F.O. 78/472, Pt. I, fols. 75b-76b.

³Campbell to Palmerston, 16 July 1834 in F.O. 78/246.

⁴Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 42 of 23 Aug. 1834 in F.O. 78/234.

which the expedition was to pass to render the most effective assistance to the attainment of its object; and to obtain the issue of a ferman for this purpose.¹ The British Consul-General in Egypt was also instructed to make the necessary communication with Muḥammad 'Alī on the subject, and request his co-operation and support in furtherance of the undertaking.² Muḥammad 'Alī would perceive that the establishment of this regular communication would promote the welfare of the people and the general interests of the country itself, and this also would cultivate the goodwill of England.³ Muḥammad 'Alī acquainted Campbell that in his present relations with the Porte he did not think it possible to do anything relative to the navigation of the Euphrates without the sanction of the Porte.⁴ The Porte granted a ferman of protection for the British steamships on the Euphrates on 29 December 1834.⁵ Despite this ferman, Muḥammad 'Alī did not feel himself at liberty to deviate from the reply he had given to Campbell on 3 December 1834.⁶

¹ Palmerston to Ponsonby, 13 Sept. 1834 and Wellington to Ponsonby, No. 17 of 28 Oct. 1834 in F.O. 78/234.

² Palmerston to Campbell, 1 Sept. 1834 and Palmerston to Campbell, 16 Sept. 1834 in F.O. 78/244; Palmerston to Ponsonby, 13 Sept. 1834 in F.O. 78/234.

³ Palmerston to Campbell, 1 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 78/244.

⁴ Campbell to Palmerston, No. 63 of 8 Dec. 1834 in F.O. 142/6.

⁵ For the text of the ferman see: H. Hertslet, A complete collection of the Treaties and Conventions.... etc., London, 1877, XIII, pp. 838-839; an English translation is to be found in Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, I, pp. 109-110.

⁶ See footnote 4.

The attitude of Muḥammad 'Alī led Campbell to wonder "whether H.H. has been swayed by any suggestions from other quarters, or, if this repugnance proceeds from the idea that the communication with India by the Euphrates, may be prejudicial to that by Egypt and the Red Sea, which is an object of more immediate interest to him".¹ But Campbell was very soon able to discover the real reason for Muḥammad 'Alī's refusal to assist Chesney. This, as Campbell concludes, "had its origin in the same views and for the same motives, and... at all events, Egypt would be benefited by being the sole channel of communication by the Mediterranean, between Europe and India".²

In order to overcome any obstacle raised by Muḥammad 'Alī, Ponsonby took the necessary steps to get him a ferman from the Ottoman Porte. The Porte declined to send Muḥammad 'Alī a personal "and specific ferman on the subject of the Euphrates because he was regarded with suspicion."³ Ponsonby carried on attempting to get this ferman, and the Porte insisted that the fermans already given were directed to all the authorities great and small and therefore to Muḥammad 'Alī. "Why" asks the Porte, "does Mehemed Ali, who treats the Porte with contempt demand from it permission to do a

¹Campbell to Wellington, No. 3 of 27 Feb. 1835 in F.O. 142/6.

²Campbell to Wellington, No. 5 of 24 Mar. 1835 in F.O. 78/257.

³Ponsonby to Wellington, No. 27 of 18 Jan. 1835 and No. 31, 25 Feb. 1835 in F.O. 78/252.

thing agreeable to England? It is impossible Mehemed Ali can believe that he wants authority from us to act on this occasion, and therefore, we conclude that he is induced to require it by some concealed motives."¹ So Ponsonby resolved to duplicate and forward the additional ferman, addressed also by the Porte on 29 Dec. to all its own officers in the area and concluded in the same terms of the original ferman,² to Campbell to show it to Muḥammad 'Alī. Although the ferman was general and not in the name of Muḥammad 'Alī, Ponsonby did so partly because it was the only way the Viceroy could be made cognisant of the will of the Sultan, and partly because it was impossible for him to persuade the Porte to address a direct ferman to Muḥammad 'Alī.³ Ponsonby's last effort was to threaten to present an official note in the Turkish language to the Sultan himself complaining of the refusal of his ministers to do what was necessary for the performance of their engagements and for the gratification of the British government and nation.⁴ But when he discovered later that Muḥammad 'Alī was persuading the Porte not to grant fermans to the British government, he took

¹Ponsonby to Wellington, No. 46 of 24 Mar. 1835 in F.O. 78/252.

²See footnote 5, p.49.

³Ponsonby to Wellington, No. 70 of 18 Apr. 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

⁴Ponsonby to Wellington, No. 75 of 1 May 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

the strongest measures to frustrate his attempt and to prevent the total ruin of the expedition.¹

Ponsonby insisted that Russian intrigues and domination were, in his confirmed opinion, the true cause of these difficulties.² He discovered the causes of the continuous refusal of the Porte to grant a ferman to Muḥammad 'Alī. The Reis Efendi held himself bound by the alliance between Russia and the Porte to communicate Ponsonby's demand to the Russian minister. No sooner had Bouteneff, the Russian Ambassador at the Porte, learned that the original fermans were really granted that he expressed his dissatisfaction to the Reis Efendi in the strongest manner.³

While Ponsonby was straining every nerve to get the ferman for Muḥammad 'Alī, the latter sent two messengers with letters to the Porte setting forth the dangers to the Ottoman Empire which would attend the execution of the British plans. He desired the Porte not only to refuse the issue of the ferman required by Britain, but also to order him not to aid the project. These letters were the consequence of Russian influence. When Bouteneff knew of the granting of the first ferman he wrote to the Russian Consul in Egypt to urge the Pasha to defeat the English plan.⁴ It is obvious that Muḥammad 'Alī would not in any way tolerate the development of any other route,

¹Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 91 of 20 May 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

²Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 101 of 10 June 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

³Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 116 of 30 June 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

⁴Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 116 of 30 June 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

but the one through his own territory. The outcome of the expedition, if successful, would defeat the whole enterprise planned by him to revive the overland route. He had already expressed his views through Galloway, that the Euphrates route was impracticable and unsafe. Now, both Russian and Egyptian opposition combined to defeat the British plan. Count Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Ambassador in London, directed Bouteneff in Constantinople to urge the Porte against it. These directions exactly corresponded with those set out in Muḥammad 'Alī's letters to whom they had been dictated by Duhamel, the Russian Consul-General in Egypt.¹ Very lately, Bouteneff had made a confidential communication that the Pasha was ready to throw every obstacle he could in the way of the expedition's success, provided the Porte would order him to do so. The same communication was made to the Porte by Mūsā, Muḥammad 'Alī's political agent at Constantinople.²

Finally, Ponsonby accepted the additional ferman to avoid any misunderstanding between the Porte and Britain, and to show the Reis Efendi that it was Muḥammad 'Alī, not the Porte, who was hostile to Britain.³ He asked Pisani, the dragoman in the British Embassy, to write a conciliatory letter to the Kāhya Bey, the deputy of the Grand Vezir, acquainting him with the fact that Muḥammad 'Alī aimed at creating

¹ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 161 of 6 Sept. 1835 in F.O. 78/255.

² Ponsonby to Palmerston, (Secret) 6 Nov. 1835 in F.O. 78/256.

³ Ponsonby to Palmerston, No. 116 of 30 June 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

a misunderstanding between the Porte and the British government.¹
 Pisani was also to ask the Kâhya Bey "why Mehemed Ali himself sought to establish a road for the British communication with India through his own territories, if he entertained the opinion that such a thing must be dangerous; Mehemed Ali wanted an iron rail road to be established - the communication he wished would have been up the Nile and across the Isthmus of Suez - that is to say through the heart of his territories and by his capitals. Why again is it only now that Mehemed Ali has discovered this danger?"²

At last the crisis came to an end. The Porte issued a ferman to Muḥammad 'Alī on 24 December 1835, but a long time elapsed before he consented to afford Chesney all requisite assistance and support. This news arrived in London when Palmerston was on the point of instructing Campbell to express to Muḥammad 'Alī the great surprise and displeasure of the government at the manner in which he had acted, and emphasising that they could not allow the undertaking to be defeated by the Pasha or his subordinate authority. This situation, however, helped Palmerston to form an opinion as to the motives behind the Pasha's delay. The Pasha was desirous to make the operations of Chesney upon the Euphrates a means of obtaining a ferman from the Sultan, specifically acknowledging him as Pasha of Syria. Secondly, the Russian government, jealous of the growing

¹Ponsonby to Pisani, 13 May 1835, encl. in No. 116 of 30 June 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

²Ponsonby to Pisani, 15 May 1835 in F.O. 78/253.

commerce of Gt. Britain in the Levant, and desirous of preventing any political intercourse with India, persuaded the Pasha to oppose it. Thirdly, he supposed that the Pasha desired to drive communication with India to the line of Egypt. "But it is unnecessary to say, that the British Government cannot submit to be so confined in its choice of lines of communication, merely because it may suit the local interest of the Pasha of Egypt."¹

c) The First Setback of the Egyptian Railway:

The offer to build a railway came at the same time as arrangements for the Euphrates expedition. Although the negotiations for its construction were protracted, and the British government did not give Muhammad 'Alī a definite answer, the undertaking was going on with some vigour. The shipments of machinery, iron bars and rails were carried on with great activity.² Galloway had placed the first order for rails with his father, Alexander Galloway, and five ships loaded with necessary equipment arrived from Cardiff at Alexandria in 1835.³ Mimaut, the French Consul General, wrote to his government that the rails had started arriving from England and were being kept in store. But he hastened to add that the plan had been put off; and he would not be surprised that, because of the

¹Palmerston to Campbell, 1 July 1835 in F.O. 141/2.

²The Times, 2 Oct. 1835; Asiatic Jour., XVIII, N.S. Pt. II, p.193.

³R. Cattani, Le règne de Mohamed Aly d'après les archives Russes en Egypte, II, pp. 46-47; L. Weiner, L'Egypte et ses chemins de fer, p.61; one third of the whole line had been sent to Egypt: P.P.. 1837 (539) VI, Ev. by A. Galloway, p.450.

actual state of his relations with England, Muhammad 'Alī might be less interested than hitherto in the Suez railway.¹

Why had the project been put off? Whilst it was progressing, some steps had been taken for the accomplishment of steam-communication by way of Egypt. But neither the British government nor the East India Company wanted to involve themselves in political complications, so the route via Egypt was left to private enterprise. Several London merchants wrote to ask Palmerston to instruct the British Consul General in Egypt to afford every assistance in his power to Thomas Waghorn, who was about to leave England for Egypt to establish agencies at Alexandria, Cairo and Suez for the acceleration of mails.² Waghorn condemned the Euphrates venture, and called attention to the greater advantage of the Suez route. He petitioned the House of Commons on 23 July 1835, hoping that the House would prevent a useless expenditure of money. In addition to the advantages of the Suez route over the Euphrates, he said that "His Highness the Pasha of Egypt has publicly signified his intention to construct a railroad from Cairo to Suez, at his own expense, to shew his co-operation with British interests in this truly important undertaking."³ But even these attempts did nothing to encourage the

¹ Mimaut to Thiers, No. 230, 10 May 1835, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 5.

² Merchants of London to Palmerston, 2 Oct. 1835, encl. in Palmerston to Campbell, 24 Oct. 1835 in F.O. 141/2; The Times, 2 Oct. 1835, Asiatic Jour., XVIII, N.S., Pt. II, pp. 192-193.

³ Asiatic Jour., XVIII, N.S., p. 276 (for the full text of the petition; The Times, 24 July 1835; Journal of the House of Commons, XC, 1835, p. 482.

government to adopt Galloway's proposals.

The first setback which the project suffered can be attributed to the manner in which Galloway dealt with the question. Galloway was not a diplomat, and so his mission seemed to be a sort of commercial bargain. The inclusion of this crucial point of transit duty was highly impolitic. A contemporary, unofficial opinion hoped that someone would point out to the Pasha the extreme impolicy of imposing, for example, 2 or 3 per cent. on goods. By adopting this measure, the Cape route would remain the cheaper and Muhammad 'Alī would prevent Egypt from deriving immense revenue and commercial importance.¹ Campbell also hoped that the Pasha would adopt a more liberal system in regard to this subject.² On the other hand, the illness of Thomas Galloway and his death on 3 July 1836 may have been one of the factors which contributed to the first suspension of the railway.³ But this work might have devolved upon Galloway's brothers, two of whom were in Alexandria. One of his brothers asserted that the commencement of the work would not be delayed, and on completing this line, another from Cairo to Alexandria would begin.⁴

¹ Asiatic Jour., XV, N.S., 13 Aug. 1834, pp. 94-95.

² Campbell to Palmerston, No. 44 of 1 Sept. 1834 in F.O. 142/6.

³ Asiatic Jour., XXI, N.S., Pt. II, 1836, p. 53; J. Tagher, "Mohammad Ali et les Anglais à Suez dans la Mer Rouge et en Abyssinie", cah. hist. ég., 2, Nos. 5-6, 1950, pp. 483-84.

⁴ Cattani, op.cit., p. 47.

Political circumstances contributed much more to the delay. The political situation arising from Muhammad 'Alī's policy was complicated. His hostile attitude towards his suzerain, in addition to ^{the} increasing French influence in the Mediterranean, upset the balance of power in the Middle East. Ever since the seizure of Algiers in 1830, France had continued her efforts to have a footing in Egypt "the thoroughfare to Asia and perhaps the key to universal dominion". French agents in Egypt had remarkable influence on Muhammad 'Alī, especially M. Drovetti who remained in Egypt from the evacuation of the French forces in 1801 until 1828. His devotion to Muhammad 'Alī's cause was so entire that he was admitted to councils concerned with the organization of Egyptian resources under French auspices.¹ By his advice, youths were sent to Paris for education; the organisation of the army, the navy and the medical establishments were entrusted to Frenchmen such as Colonel Séves and Clot-Bey.

Chesney's Euphrates expedition postponed for a time the adoption of the route via Egypt and the Red Sea. After it had proved the unsuitability of the Euphrates for navigation, attention in Britain reverted to the Red Sea route which lacked only a sufficient quota of ocean steamships and an arrangement with the Viceroy of Egypt to be made effective. During the Survey of

¹Stoddart to Palmerston, Report on Egypt, 9 Feb. 1847 in F.O. 78/710.

the Euphrates, the examination of the Red Sea and the adjacent ports continued; and the search for safe and convenient stations was taken into consideration.¹ Accordingly, on 10 June 1837 a Select Committee, the third in succession, was ordered "to inquire into the best means of establishing a communication by steam with India by way of the Red Sea".

The Egyptian railway question was again considered by this Committee. Evidence was taken of the hostile attitude of Muḥammad 'Alī, and the possibility that any ruler of Egypt might interrupt British communications. Waghorn testified that the Pasha repeatedly emphasized that he would never oppose the British government; moreover, he clearly perceived it was in his interest to support steam communication established with Egypt.² Alexander Galloway³ indicated that Muḥammad 'Alī or any one of his successors would support every liberal measure that could be suggested.⁴ Major Head, in the service of the East India Company, said it was to the interest of Egypt to have that means of communication because "Egypt is a very impoverished country, and the money which would be spent by passengers

¹P.P.. 1837, (539), VI, pp. 390-395, 429.

²P.P. 1837 (539), VI, Ev. by Waghorn, p.394; Ev. by T. Peacock, p.443.

³He was a civil engineer and the father of Thomas Waghorn. He stayed in Egypt for some time when Muḥammad 'Alī wanted to consult him upon the propriety of forming a railway between Alexandria and al-'Aṭf to replace the canal in that direction. This proposed portion was about 50 miles in a straight line (see his Ev.. P.P.. 1837, pp. 449-50).

⁴P.P.. 1837, VI, Ev. by Galloway, p.451.

passing through would be of immense benefit to the people".¹

Briggs explained to the Committee that it was unlikely that any other European Power could cause the Pasha to deviate from his policy towards England, which aimed at friendly intercourse. If he did deviate, Britain could rely on the power she possessed in the Indian Ocean and in the Mediterranean.² All the persons who gave evidence on Egypt agreed that the material Muḥammad 'Alī had ordered for the railway was a genuine proof of his good faith.³

In the evidence given by Alexander Galloway about the railway, he explained in detail the circumstances leading to its delay. First, the British government had not given the Pasha any countenance in the measure. Secondly, Muḥammad 'Alī had not got what he hoped. The Viceroy was anxious for the British government to express a disposition to pay a mileage fee, such as they themselves should fix. He thought that 6d a ton per mile for 80 miles would be an adequate remuneration for Muḥammad 'Alī. But as to the conveyance of passengers the Pasha made no stipulation.

The failure of the Euphrates expedition encouraged Galloway to suggest that if this Committee could express any opinion, or

¹P.P.. 1837, VI, Ev. by Head, p. 479.

²P.P.. 1837, VI, Ev. by S. Briggs, p.510.

³P.P.. 1837, VI, Ev. by Peacock, p.443; Galloway, p.451; Head, p.479.

give Muḥammad 'Alī any encouragement, he would proceed with the undertaking, for he had already about £200,000 worth of material, with engines and apparatus. He informed the Committee that the Pasha could easily accomplish his work, since the hire of labour was rather cheap in Egypt; about 6d a day for a strong man. Excluding labour, the engines, iron and work for the line would cost £600,000, that is to say £7,500 per mile. The length of time occupied in crossing the desert would no longer be a problem. "If railways were laid down judiciously in Egypt, and steamers from Adfa [al-'Aḥḥ] to Cairo established, we should be enabled to perform the distance from Alexandria to Suez in 24 or 30 hours, instead of which it now generally averages from eight to ten days." Muḥammad 'Alī would never contemplate asking more than 6d., but Galloway believed he would be satisfied with 3d. per ton a mile.¹

The Select Committee reported to the House on 15 July 1837, approving the current arrangements entered into between the British government and the East India Company for the establishment of a monthly steam communication from Suez to Bombay.² But no further action was taken in regard to the railway, either on the part of the British government, or on the part of Muḥammad 'Alī. So the Suez railway, long in discussion, became a subject for speculations.

¹P.P.. 1837, VI, Ev. by Galloway, pp. 449-450. Taking it at 80 miles at 6d. it would be 40s. a ton, and at 3d. 20s. for the whole distance.

²P.P.. 1837, VI, p.387.

Dr. John Bowring, a member of Parliament sent to Egypt in 1838 by Lord Palmerston to report on its progress, sums up the question in his report. The project did not offer many engineering difficulties, but the quantity of goods and the number of travellers passing through could not furnish anything like an adequate return for the outlay. "But considerations of the vastness of the undertaking and the uncertainty of its financial results have interfered to prevent its progress - though contracts have been already entered into by the Pasha's government for the rails of which the road is to be constructed."¹ Campbell, on the other hand, attributed the suspension of the project to the unsettled question of steam navigation, whether it was by the way of Egypt or not. He stated to Bowring that "my opinion is, that a railroad between Cairo and Suez will be for many years needless and superfluous; and the accumulation of sand upon it would render it almost impossible to keep it in a fit state for constant use; moreover, it is not probable that Egypt will ever be a channel for heavy merchandize between Europe and India;..."² Even Duhamel, the Russian Consul-General, thought that its construction was impossible because of the many obstacles which faced it. If a railroad were completed, he

¹J. Bowring, Report on Egypt and Candir. P.P.. 1840 (277), XXI, p.61.

²Report by Campbell to Bowring, 18 Jan. 1838. P.P. 1840, XXI, App. A., p.190.

doubted its ability to divert the Indian trade from the Cape route.¹

Although a railway was urgently needed to bridge the land portion of the Egyptian passage, the time was not yet ripe for its execution. Firstly, the period from 1833 to 1841, witnessed enormous political disturbances, in which this question was a marginal one. Secondly, the French idea of cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Suez was from the outset to raise the issue of an alternative scheme. Finally, until 1839 nothing definite was accomplished in establishing communication with India by the overland route.²

The acquisition of Aden in 1839 was the corner-stone in the definitive establishment of the Suez route for the regular transportation of mails and passengers to and from India. But this took place when the political future of Egypt and Muhammad 'Alī were still undecided. The British government had no enmity to the Pasha, because the order and security he established in Egypt were more valuable to Britain than to any nation.³ Nevertheless Palmerston thought it was not reasonable to support Muhammad 'Alī to retain wrongfully what he had got possession of dishonestly because of communications

¹ Cattani, op.cit., II, p.387. Report on Egypt by Duhamel to Nesselbrode, dated 6 July 1837.

² P.P.. 1843 (301)XXXV, pp. 2,3. By 3 July 1839, the Court of Directors, with the approval of the Admiralty, Treasury and Post Office Departments, sent to both the Bombay and Supreme Indian Governments a list of "Regulations for the establishment of a Monthly Communication with India".

³ Lord Beauvale to Hodges, 12 Nov. 1839 in F.O. 141/5.

with India.¹

"If he were entitled to determine whether we should or should not pass through Egypt and Syria with our Indian correspondence and travellers, his own interest would decide him to encourage us to pass, unless he were swayed the other way by some hostile foreign influence. But he has no right to say yes or no; he is the subject of the Sultan and if the Sultan gives us leave the Pasha cannot refuse to let us pass."²

During Commodore Sir Charles Napier's meetings with Muhammad 'Alī in Alexandria in 1841 the latter observed that he was now ready to do everything Britain wished. According to Napier, Muhammad 'Alī was under the impression that Britain was opposed to him either cutting a canal through the Isthmus or establishing a railroad. On this point Napier could give him no positive opinion, but he felt quite certain that "he [Muhammad 'Alī] will do anything we wish in reason, and would become our vassal if we required it".³

¹Palmerston's policy towards Muhammad 'Alī caused dissatisfaction amongst his colleagues, particularly Lord Clarendon who believed that Britain's interest lay more in the direction of Egypt than of Turkey because of overland communication with India. See: Sir Herbert Maxwell, The Life and Letters of George William Frederick Fourth Earl of Clarendon, I, p.190.

²B.P., Palmerston's reply (8.3.40) to a letter from an English traveller in the Levant dated 15 Feb. 1840 on Muhammad 'Alī and the Eastern Question. The traveller said (item 33 of the letter) "The Pasha knows that he is in great need of us and we ought to feel that we stand in great need of him and his influence. We want him to facilitate our intercourse with India, either by the Euphrates or the Red Sea, to make either or both secure and permanent."

³Commodore Napier to R. More O'Ferrall, 21 Jan. 1841 encl.(1) in Sir John Barrow to J. Backhouse, No. 157 of 10 Feb. 1841 in F.O. 406/5, Pt. III (Private and Confidential).

2. The Second Diplomatic phase of the Egyptian Railway (1841-1848).

About eight years elapsed before the idea of constructing the Suez-Cairo railway was revived. Defeated and confined to the limits of the Pashalic of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī began to develop the resources of the country to consolidate his status. The failure of his political adventures did not cause him to abandon his interests.¹ However the proceedings of Britain appeared to him during his conflict with the Sultan, he resolved never to throw the slightest difficulty in the way of the communications with India.² His conduct, as Sir Robert Peel put it before the House of Commons "was dictated by wisdom, and a genuine appreciation of his own true interest".³ Muḥammad 'Alī, however, was still attached to his idea of building a railway, and took it up each time there seemed a favourable occasion.

With the incorporation of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company by Royal Charter in December 1840⁴ a new era of transit through Egypt began. The Charter included an undertaking

¹See: al-Ayyūbī, Muḥammad 'Alī, pp. 134-135.

²T. Waghorn, The acceleration of Mails between England and the East Indies and vice versa, p.16.

³Hansard, 3rd series, LXVIII (24 Apr. 1843), p.883; grateful thanks were presented from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to Muḥammad 'Alī for the services which he had rendered to the overland route during the crisis of 1839-40, dated 2 July 1841 encl. in Barnett to the Secretary to the Bengal Cham. of Comm., 30 Sept. 1841 in F.O. 141/8, Barnett to Aberdeen, 30 Sept. 1841 in F.O. 78/451.

⁴B. Cable, A hundred year history of the P. & O., p.43; (C. W. Crawley, (cont.)

that within two years, the P. & O. would establish a mail service with steamers between India and Egypt. In 1841 the Company deputed Arthur Anderson to enter into an arrangement with Muḥammad 'Alī for permanently securing the transit through Egypt.¹ Finding that any negotiations with the Viceroy might be both ill-timed and unlikely to attain any practical result, Anderson proceeded to Constantinople, to wait until the settlement of the Eastern Question and to seek the advice of Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador, on this matter. When he returned to Cairo, he wrote to Palmerston about the vast benefits which would result to Britain from communication between the two seas by a ship canal. Palmerston admitted that a canal would be highly advantageous to commerce and prosperity of the world, but it seemed to him bootless speculation.²

However, Anderson offered his proposals to Muḥammad 'Alī for improvements to the overland route which would guarantee the diversion of merchandise, amounting in value to £10 m. sterling, from the Cape route to Egypt. It was necessary: (a) that the road across the desert from Cairo to Suez should be improved and cleared of the stones which rendered carriage travelling on it difficult and

(cont.) "The Mediterranean", New Cambridge Modern History, X, p.431; Stoddart to Palmerston, 30 June 1846 in F.O. 78/663.

¹ A. Anderson, The political position of their transit through Egypt, p. 17; see also John Nicolson, Arthur Anderson, a founder of the P. & O. Company, Lerwick, 1932, ch. IV.

² Anderson to Palmerston, 20 Feb. 1841 in F.O. 97/411: B.P.. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 26 March 1841, Palmerston to Ponsonby, 25 April 1841. In 1841 Anderson advocated the Canal in his Observations on the practicability of..... a ship canal through the Isthmus of Suez.

and disagreeable, and; (b) that the road from Qinā to Quṣayr should be made fit for coaches to use. The execution of these proposals, as Anderson stated to Muḥammad 'Alī, would afford employment to many thousands of Bed uins and their camels. Moreover, approval would narrow the misunderstanding between him and the British government, which was interested in facilitating this communication.¹ Muḥammad 'Alī agreed to the proposals, and signed an agreement which authorised the P. & O. to undertake the transit of goods for one year, paying to him half per cent as a transit duty instead of three per cent.² The Company was also given the privilege of navigating the Nile and the Maḥmūdiyya Canal. When the P. & O. requested the Foreign Office's opinion on that arrangement, Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary, declined to express any because it was avowedly an experiment for a period of twelve months. What the British government really hoped to achieve was to secure to British commerce the benefit of an easy and cheap transit through Egypt, by means of a treaty with the Sultan, rather than by private arrangements which might be liable to interruption either from a change of policy on the part of the Pasha of Egypt or from the

¹ A memorial from Anderson to the Pasha of Egypt, dated 10 Sept. 1841 in F.O. 141/8.

² P.P.. 1851 (605) XXI, App. 4, pp. 1057-1059; Annual Reports of the P. & O., (30 Nov. 1841), I, p.10; Reply from Boghos Bey to Anderson, 15 Sept. 1841, encl. in F.O. 141/8; also Anderson, The political position, pp. 16-27.

disapprobation and intervention of the Porte.¹

Nevertheless, the number of passengers increased considerably from 573 in the first year to 800 in the second year 1842. Although facilities of conveyance had increased by placing two iron steamers on the Nile and the Maḥmūdīyya Canal, the transit between Cairo and Suez was not on the same footing as that between Alexandria and Cairo.² As the transit of goods and travellers became one of the sources of revenue to the Pasha's Treasury, he gave it his utmost attention. The Egyptian government was considering the different means of transport from Suez to Alexandria by carriages and camels to Cairo, by a boat canal to and across the Delta, by a railroad to Cairo, or by a railroad directed to Alexandria, or by a ship or a boat canal from Suez to the Mediterranean.³ He established a line of telegraph across the desert between Cairo and Suez at the request of the agent of the Oriental Company.⁴ Barnett notes "I am happy to be able to bear testimony to the readiness shewn upon all occasion by His Highness to facilitate our communications with India through Egypt".⁵

¹Canning to James Allan (Secretary to the P. & O.), 30 Nov. 1841, encl. in Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 6 of 30 Nov., 1841 in F.O. 141/7.

²Annual Reports of the P. & O. (4th Report of 30 Nov. 1841), I, p.9.

³Hekekyan Papers, II, Add. 37,449, fols. 9-10.

⁴Annual Reports of the P. & O. (30 Nov. 1842), I, p.9; A. A. Paton, History of the Egyptian Revolutions, 2nd ed., London, 1870, ii, p.226.

⁵Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 50 of 5 Dec. 1842 in F.O. 142/13.

The stream of passengers and merchandise passing through Egypt encouraged Muḥammad 'Alī to return to the idea of constructing a railroad, although the French Consul-General had been very active in endeavouring to persuade him to carry into effect the plan of a ship canal.¹ Early in 1843, he talked with Hekekyan about the state of Egypt and said "that the ^{Dry} Docks were finished - that he intended to build the Barrages and have a railway direct from Suez to Alexandria".² Since the first suspension of the project, the remainder of the order contracted with Messrs. Galloway had not been completed. In 1837 Bāghūṣ Bey requested the House of Galloway & Co. at Alexandria to suspend the shipment of the remaining rails and machinery; and in August 1838 he requested that the order be annulled. On both these occasions Messrs. Galloway explained that this request could not be complied with unless a fair compensation was made.³ Muḥammad 'Alī informed them that should the undertaking be renewed at any future period, it would be again placed in their hands.⁴ On 9 September 1843, he ordered Messrs. Galloway in Egypt to supply the necessary material and machinery for the line, and to superintend its building as planned by their late brother Thomas Galloway in 1834 and as described in

¹Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 3 of 17 Jan. 1843 in F.O. 142/13.

²Hekekyan Papers, II, Add. 37,449, fol. 113 b (24 March 1843), Hekekyan then suggested to Muḥammad 'Alī that a Canal from Suez to Alexandria direct should be made.

³Alfred A. Fry to Bruce, 28 Apr. 1856 in F.O. 141/30.

⁴Galloway to Barnett, 29 Nov. 1843 in F.O. 141/8.

the report of the Committee of the House of Commons of 1837.¹

The departure of W. Galloway had to await Muhammad 'Alī's official confirmation. But a few days after he had given his orders for the resumption of the project, Artin Bey, Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, requested Messrs. Galloway on behalf of the Viceroy to defer Galloway's departure and suspend the order until the Pashahad returned to Cairo to make the necessary arrangements for this work. A period of silence passed without any news from Artin Bey, although they had written to him on the subject. Later on, the Viceroy changed his mind and allowed W. Galloway to proceed immediately to Britain to take the necessary steps with the British government for the speedy construction of the line.²

Galloway explained to Sir Robert Peel the extreme importance of this undertaking to the interests of the government and the people of England, and requested his concurrence, and that he would instruct the British Consul-General in Egypt to support and countenance the project, should it, from any unforeseen circumstance, be suspended.³ Barnett was instructed to employ his best endeavours

¹Messrs. Galloway to Sir Robert Peel, 14 Oct. B43 encl. in Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 14 of 31 Oct. 1843 in F.O. 141/10: P.P.. 1837 (539) VI, App. No. 2, p.588.

²Galloway to Barnett, 29 Nov. 1843 in F.O. 141/8.

³Galloway to Peel, 14 Oct. 1843 in F.O. 141/10.

to defeat any opposition either overt or secret, and to encourage Muhammad 'Alī to complete this project.¹ In reply to Messrs. Galloway's letter inquiring about the government's opinion, Barnett informed them about the government's consent for establishing the railroad. He asked them to furnish him with an outline of the plan submitted to Muhammad 'Alī, together with the estimate of the probable cost of laying the line.² The plan presented to Barnett was the outline originally proposed by the late Thomas Galloway and modified afterwards by the engineers in London and presented by them to the Committee of the House of Commons.³ The only estimate they had ever given was for the rails, because it was very difficult to give an accurate estimate of the cost of public works in a country where everything was in the hands of the government. But they thought it might be completed at a comparatively trifling expense "less than the cheapest Rail-Road in Germany or Belgium inasmuch as there is no ground to purchase, nor bridges, viaducts or Tunnels to make, and which constitute the principal expense of Rail-Roads in Europe".⁴ They calculated that the rest of the rails necessary from England would cost £60,000 as there were already 21 miles of rail in Egypt.

¹ Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 14 of 31 Oct. 1843 in F.O. 141/10.

² Barnett to Galloway, 24 Nov. 1843 in F.O. 141/14.

³ See footnote 1, p. 70. Details of this modified plan are enclosed in the Parliamentary Papers in a condensed form.

⁴ Galloway to Barnett, 29 Nov. 1843 in F.O. 141/8.

Barnett conversed with Artin Bey on the subject but Artin appeared to be aware that a communication had been made by Messrs. Galloway to the British government soliciting their support for the plan. Artin admitted that on his return from Europe, and on learning that Muḥammad 'Alī had given an order for the rails, he advised the Pasha for the present to suspend that order. He remarked that Muḥammad 'Alī was too ready to adopt hastily any scheme that was proposed to him, without previously examining the expense and the resulting advantages, or having due consideration of the embarrassed state of his own finances. The £60,000 estimated by Galloway was only for rails, and did not include the cost of locomotives, the salaries of the English engineers, nor the laying and maintenance of the railroad. Artin, however, was of opinion that the project was impracticable as Egypt had not got the timber required for the work; and water would have to be carried the whole distance between Cairo and Suez.¹ Artin suggested that Barnett should be instructed to make some proposal to Muḥammad 'Alī, securing to him a certain annual remuneration for the conveyance of the Indian mails by railway between Cairo and Suez.² Barnett promised to report this

¹ Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 42 of 1 Dec. 1843 in F.O. 142/13; Aberdeen Papers, Add. 43, 186.

² Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 42 of 1 Dec. 1843 in F.O. 142/13; although Hekekyan had no official status in this matter, he expressed a similar view in his papers when he talked about the project. He thought that the two or three hundred travellers who would use the railway would not pay its expenses of first cost, repairs and police. And as it would be a more expensive

conversation to Aberdeen.

The proceeding with the work was interrupted once more. The French Consul-General happily reported the abandonment of the project to his government.¹ The question of remuneration was the main reason for interruption. Another was probably the Pasha's confusion over the total costs. Barnett thought that "Galloway [was] not in the best odour with the old Pasha, for he [had] made a good many jobs out of him, and [wanted] in my opinion to stick another into him".² The project suffered also from endless discussions on its practicability, and the alternative of a canal. Lord Aberdeen supported the railway on condition that it were practicable from the engineering point of view. Barnett had his own views on the project, which he openly expressed to his government. Messrs. Galloway, he said, committed an error in supposing that any danger existed in the transmission of mails across the desert by the present means.

(cont.) matter than it was generally supposed to be "it being necessary to carry the line over bridges of great length and numerous to be built.... that it would be (bona fide) a work for the accommodation of the British government and that it would be necessary to enter into arrangements with the government and treat in the manner in which the Egyptian government should be remunerated." See: Hekekyan Papers, II, Add. 37,449, fols. 224-225.

¹Benedetti to Guizot, No. 11, 22 Sept. 1843, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 16.

²Barnett to Bidwell (Private), 18 December 1843 in F.O. 78/542.

Only one accident had occurred in seven years.¹ He gave the opinion that "a greater danger is to be apprehended from negligence, and perhaps from wilful obstruction, along a line of Rail-road traversing an uninhabited country for a distance of above eighty miles, and it may not be unworthy of the consideration of H.M.'s Government whether a Canal between Cairo and Suez might not be preferable to a Rail-Road".² The attitude of Stoddart, the consul at Alexandria, was similar to Barnett's. A railway would not seem to be of great utility because "circumstanced as this country is, the result would probably be a mere tram-way, or, at least a very incomplete establishment, and consequently a slow rate of travelling".³

France's opposition was significant. Although the Marquis de La Valette, the French Consul-General in Egypt, had no instructions from M. Guizot, the Foreign Minister, on the subject, he was convinced that the feeling in France would be very strong on the question.⁴ La Valette had been regularly informed of all the Pasha's resolutions relative to the railway. He reported that a few months previously the Pasha had ceased to support it when one of the East India Company's agents made him a proposal

¹Barnett to Aberdeen, 1 Dec. 1843 in F.O. 78/541; Aberdeen to Barnett (Confidential) No.7 of 21 Oct. 1843 in F.O. 78/542.

²Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 42 of 1 Dec. 1843 in F.O. 142/13.

³Stoddart to Aberdeen, No. 8 of 23 Mar. 1844 in F.O. 78/584.

⁴Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 10 of 9 Mar. 1844 in F.O. 142/13.

of 25 million Francs if he would decide to have the railway constructed.¹ La Valette made known to the Pasha that he knew of the proposition, and indicated to him the serious and incalculable inconveniences which would result from his adhesion to the English project. He urged the Pasha not to welcome exclusive propositions because they would soon give way to exorbitant pretensions and embarrassments.² Thus, France was capable of dissuading Muḥammad 'Alī from commencing the railway.

The railway question was resumed several times during the negotiation of the Postal Convention between the British Post Office and the Egyptian government. The idea of a Postal Convention first came from Dr. Bowring, who suggested that Sir Henry Hardinge the new Governor-General of India,³ should discuss this question with Muḥammad 'Alī during his visit to Egypt.⁴

¹There is no reference to such proposition in the British archives. La Valette is probably referring to Waghorn's proposition; and if so, Waghorn proposed a financial help from some European bankers and not from the East India Company.

²La Valette to Guizot, No. 29, 12 Feb. 1844, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 16. La Valette adds, "any repugnance that the Pasha had always shown for any establishment erected on the Egyptian territory, in a foreign interest, was, a sufficient guarantee in ordinary circumstances, against the tentatives of the India Company. But it was to be feared that at the moment of financial embarrassment, the Pasha can get enticed by the enormous sum which has just been proposed to him and to which one will not fail to raise to a more considerable figure to reach the proposed aim".

³He was the first Governor-General of India who went out by way of Egypt and the Red Sea.

⁴Peel Papers, CCCLXXVI, Add. 40,566, Transit of English and Indian Mails, Passengers, and Merchandize, through Egypt (Confidential), fol. 155.

According to Hardinge's instructions from the Foreign Office, Muḥammad 'Alī was to undertake on behalf of himself and his successor a safe, regular and expedient conveyance of mails between Alexandria and Suez.¹ The Convention was not proposed because the government was dissatisfied with the way the transit was performed, but to ensure its maintenance after the Pasha's death, because his successor might take measures prejudicial to British interests in regard to it.² The British government intended to make these arrangements with Muḥammad 'Alī through an agent sent by the Post Office, in order to avoid making a formal treaty with a vassal of the Sultan.

Until August 1844, Messrs. Galloway had neither begun the work on the line, nor received the final approval of Muḥammad 'Alī. The news of the British government's intention to conclude a Postal Convention encouraged them to contact Lord Aberdeen once more on the subject. They urged the British government to take advantage of the proposed negotiation to advance the scheme in which they had an interest. Accordingly, Lord Aberdeen instructed Barnett to inform Artin Bey that the government did not propose directly to interfere in the matter of the railway, of the practicability or impracticability which they did not profess to be able to judge;

¹ Aberdeen to Hardinge, Memo. for Comm. with Muḥammad 'Alī on the Transit of the Indian Mails through Egypt, 6 June 1844 in F.O. 78/585; Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 7 of 13 Aug. 1844 in F.O. 141/10.

² Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 7 of 13 Aug. 1844 in F.O. 141/10.

that the government took the deepest interest in every plan which might facilitate and accelerate the transit of mails and passengers, and, finally, that the Pasha alone would judge whether and how such a measure might be rendered practicable and advantageous.¹

The first time Muḥammad 'Alī broached this subject with Barnett was during an interview with him on the Postal Agreement. The Viceroy alluded to an extract from a French newspaper, which he had seen, of coal produced and the quantity of iron made in the different countries of Europe. This subject gave Barnett the opportunity to make some observations on the extent of railroads constructed in England. Then he further asked him when did he mean to commence the railroad to Suez? Muḥammad 'Alī replied that its commencement depended upon Britain, it could be begun tomorrow. He added that the British government "would hardly wish that I should be a loser by the undertaking".² But Barnett found it inadvisable at that moment to pursue the subject further. He assured Aberdeen that, once the success of the Postal Convention was secured, he would take an early opportunity to bring the question of the railroad more fully under the Pasha's notice. In a further communication, Barnett said that if the Pasha agreed on the first proposal

¹ Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 8 of 26 Aug. 1844 in F.O. 141/10. This was also a reply to Artin's suggestions (see above, .. 72)

² Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 22 of 14 Oct. 1844 in F.O. 142/13.

of the Postal Agreement,¹ it would relieve him of all responsibility for the conveyance of the mails, and would place at his disposal annually a certain sum of money which he might very appropriately devote to the railway project.²

Having lost hope that the railway would be fully supported by the British government, John Alexander Galloway began to defend the

¹Bourne, the Post Office negotiator, was furnished with two draft proposals for the convention. He was instructed to press upon Muhammad 'Alī proposal No. 1, "namely of allowing the transport of the mails to remain with the British Post Office. By so doing, Mehemet Ali will relieve himself from all responsibility as to the sufficiency of the means of transport, and the punctuality by which it shall be effected". (see: Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 7 of 13 Aug. 1844 in F.O.141/10.) These modifications were proposed by the British government, first because much misapprehension having arisen as to the views of H.M.'s government in proposing to enter into a postal agreement with Muhammad 'Alī it would be better to make as little change as possible in the existing arrangement for conveying the mails; secondly because H.H., should he take upon himself the whole responsibility of their safe and speedy transmission across Egypt, might through the negligence of his servants, or from other causes not now to be seen, be exposed to disagreeable discussions with the Post Office and eventually perhaps with H.M.'s government. (see Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 16 of 18 Sept. 1844 in F.O. 78/582; Peel Papers, Add. 40,566, fols. 160-160b). If Muhammad 'Alī insisted on the means of conveyance being provided by the Egyptian government, proposal No. 2 was framed to meet these circumstances. It stipulated that the Mails should be placed under the special charge of an officer of the British government, who should accompany them through Egypt, according to the system adopted with the Indian Mails transmitted through France. (Peel Papers, Add. 40,566, fols. 157-158.)

²Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 24 of 6 Nov., 1844 in F.O.78/582.

project publicly in Britain by issuing a pamphlet on this subject.¹ He thought that the attitude of the government discouraged the enthusiasm shown by the Pasha, because he had undertaken this work on condition that the government would agree to pay a fair sum for its use, to get sufficient revenue to justify the costs of the project. In so doing, the government was losing a most favourable opportunity of overland communication with India, "more especially when the advanced age of His Highness (76 years) is considered".² It seems as though Galloway aimed at forming a pressure group, in support of the project. His appeal was likely to find a response among industrialists and manufacturers. The introduction of railways gave rise to vast expansion in the metal trade and to a much greater demand for coal. Moreover, rails and other component parts became an article of export and British financiers were deeply interested in railway construction abroad.³ A shorter, more efficient and more speedy means of transport to India and the East would serve the economic needs of the industrial society. A constant stream of raw materials was necessary for the new factories; manufactured goods had to be speeded to the markets to make way for new production; and the exchange of raw materials for manufactured goods, especially where food-stuffs were also involved.⁴ So the execution of the rail-

¹ Observations on the proposed improvements in the Overland Route via Egypt, with Remarks on the Ship Canal, the Boulac Canal, and the Suez Railroad /Galloway, Observations, in later references./ He was the brother of the late Thomas Galloway.

² Galloway, op.cit., p.15; Asiatic Jour., 3rd Ser., III, p.427, 546; IV, p.207.

³ Sir Ernest Woodward, The Age of Reform, 1815-1870, Oxford, 1962, p.41.
(cont.)

way would correspond, no doubt, to the increasing political, commercial and domestic interests of Britain. This railroad, if immediately constructed, would serve the new arrangements due to begin on 1 January 1845 by the establishment of a system of bi-monthly communication with India.¹ Consequently, 48 days would be saved in traversing the desert per year.²

An appeal similar to Galloway's was made to the government by the Westminster Review. To give the Pasha support for the railway would open the way to new markets in India and China instead of the ones closed against their trade on the Continent, and would also facilitate the way of merchants and capitalists in the plains of Asia. This would be a great achievement for the government to accomplish because "seldom has it been the good fortune of a government to enjoy so fine an opportunity of effecting an invaluable national object by measures so obviously beneficial and so easily attainable.

"These labours peace to happy Britain brings,
These are imperial works, and worthy Kings."³

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⁴ Bailey, British policy and the Turkish reform movement, p.64.

¹ Asiatic Jour., IV, p.207.

² T. Waghorn, Overland guide to India, p. 73; Westminster Review, XLII, 1844, pp. 428-436.

³ Westminster Review, XLII, p.436.

Galloway and the writer of the article in the Westminster Review asked the government to defeat any attempt on the part of Foreign Powers to stop the project. The Westminster Review also drew the government's attention to an article extracted from the German Universal Gazette and published by The Times of 1 Nov. B44, which denounced the project because the miserable financial state of Egypt could not face a costly undertaking at the Pasha's own expense. "Why millions should [sic] be spent and thousands of Fellahs withdrawn from the cultivation of the soil to save the British ten hours of time and a few shillings of transport charges which the poor Bedouin is earning at present with his faithful dromedary?"¹ A hostile spirit was equally evident in the two French papers, the Journal des Débats and the Constitutionnel, the organ of the two parties of Guizot and Thiers. They attacked the railway because it would be a British monopoly. Furthermore, Britain wanted to establish herself militarily in Egypt, take possession of the port of Suez, and construct a railway to transport her troops and munitions to India in a short time.²

Galloway submitted his views to the public in the hope that some steps would be taken immediately to urge the government's

¹Westminster Review, XLII, p.430.

²Le Journal des Débats, 17, 19 Sept. 1844; Le Constitutionnel, 13 Nov., 18 Sept. 1844. It adds "Ici la politique apparaît, et on réclame le droit de prendre pied sur la mer Rouge, à un des bouts de la ligne, et attendant l'heure où on pourra prendre à l'autre bout, sur la Méditerranée."

co-operation with the Viceroy of Egypt, and accelerate a measure of such importance to Britain. He also called upon the government to consider the recent statements of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, in both houses of Parliament, about the stake that Britain had in the East. He added "Whatever tends to facilitate our intercourse with those realms is a material ingredient in the political and commercial greatness and security of England. An opportunity now presents itself of carrying out a plan eminently calculated for that object."¹

Although the answers given to him by Barnett were not encouraging, Muhammad 'Alī proceeded with the plan. He ordered Thurburn, an English merchant, to engage a civil engineer from England for the purpose of surveying the line and make an estimate of the cost of its completion.² Thurburn informed Barnett about these new steps and said that a Mr. Walker was ready to enter into an engagement with the Pasha to undertake the work. But Barnett doubted that the Pasha would remain many days in the same mind. He had almost daily some new project in view, such as his favourite scheme for the Barrage, which Barnett was afraid might supersede the railroad. This led Barnett to inquire privately from Addington, Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, whether it would be possible for the government to make an advance of money

¹Galloway, Observations, p.17.

²Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 29 of 14 Dec. 1844 in F.O. 142/13.

to be laid out on the railroad, on account of the Post Office charge. But the unsettled opinions of Muḥammad 'Alī made Barnett uncertain whether it would even be prudent to advance a large sum for one object, which might perhaps be applied to another.¹ Muḥammad 'Alī's immediate suspension of all further proceedings until he received the ratification of the Postal Agreement from England added more doubt about his intention. Barnett was inclined to think that Muḥammad 'Alī took up this subject at the moment when the postal negotiation was going on because he knew that it would be agreeable to the British government. Furthermore, it might divert public attention from the measures he was about to take to monopolize the whole of the transit.²

By 1845 news from Egypt was that the railway had been nearly abandoned; and the plan proposed by M. Mougel, the French engineer, to open a canal between Cairo and Suez had replaced it.³ It appeared to the British government from the earlier reports of Barnett that Muḥammad 'Alī was just amusing himself and others with this project. While he wanted to build a railway, his final object was to secure a revenue to be levied on mails, at least a guaranteed rate of 2¹/₂d.

¹Barnett to Addington (Private), 18 Dec. 1844 in F.O. 78/582.

²Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 2 of 17 Jan. 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

³The Times, 2 Jan. 1845; Asiatic Journ., 3rd Ser. VII, p.439.

per letter.¹ Artin Bey proposed to James Emerson Tennent² that the British government should give a guarantee of £50,000 extending over five years, and not to exceed £10,000 in any one year, against any loss by the undertaking.³ Tennent was of opinion that all the present difficulties would be got rid of were the British government to press upon the Pasha the advantage of the railway from Suez to Cairo in the first instance, and eventually from Cairo to Alexandria. The Treasury shared Tennent's opinion but there was great doubt whether the Pasha was in earnest in proposing the project and whether he did not prefer the immediate gains derived from his independent establishment of carriages and horses.⁴ But the situation concerning the transit through Egypt was becoming difficult because of the new measures taken by the Pasha. He objected to the clause in article six of the Postal Convention, giving travellers the liberty to select their own means of conveyance across the Isthmus.⁵ Furthermore, he was taking into his own

¹Galloway, Observations, p.14.

²He was a member of the Board of Control of the East India Company, and the Secretary of the Government of Ceylon. It was thought by the French Consul-General that on his way back to his post he was charged by the British Post Office to talk to Muhammad 'Alī on the transit question. Barrot to Guizot, No. 4, 4 Sept. 1845, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 17. He also reported that in his conversation, he insisted on the necessity of constructing a railway. Barrot to Guizot, No. 13, 19 Oct. 1845, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 17.

³Tennent's letter to Peel, dated Alexandria, 23 October 1844 is referred to in the Minute of the Treasury dated 27 February 1845 'on the Transit... through Egypt' (see: Peel Papers, CCCLXXXVI, Add. 40,566, fol. 177b).

⁴Peel Papers, CCCLXXXVI, Add. 40,566, fol. 177b.

hands the transport of passengers between Cairo and Suez by setting up the "Egyptian Transit Company".¹ The Treasury minutes recommended, then, in regard to the railroad, to inquire from the Pasha whether he was prepared to adhere to the proposition made by him to Tennent, and if not, whether he had any other proposition to make on the subject.

However, new steps were taken by the Pasha. On the arrival of John Alexander Galloway in Egypt in January 1845, the Pasha immediately commissioned him to prepare an estimate of the cost of completing the Suez line.² This new measure meant that the negotiations entered into between Thurburn and Walker, the civil engineer, for the work of surveying the line, were considered at an end. But Barnett was still doubtful. He wrote to Aberdeen that the question whether the Pasha was sincere in the desire of executing this work might shortly be decided.³ John Galloway

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⁵ Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 2 of 17 Jan. 1845 in F.O. 78/623; Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 16 of 5 May 1845, in F.O. 142/13.

¹ Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 3 of 18 January 1845 in F.O. 78/623. Egyptian Transit Company: The proposal contract between the P. & O. and Hill and Co., the company in management of transit, meant that the transit would probably be still in the hands of an English establishment. In March 1843, Turburn borrowed from Muhammad 'Alī £20,000 with which to undertake the transit, and Hill and Co., being called on either to sell or to return the risk of being overpowered by an establishment under the immediate protection of the government, disposed of their business and stock to Thurburn, who gave to his new agency the title of "Transit Company". In 1846 Muhammad 'Alī finally dispossessed Thurburn of all control in transit matters and the "Transit Administration" succeeded this company. (Walne's report on the state of the transit, encl. in Murray to Palmerston, No. 32 of 6 June 1847 in F.O. 78/707.)

(cont.)

had finished his survey and submitted to the Pasha a plan and estimate of the cost of laying the line. The Viceroy went into a minute examination of all the details of Galloway's plan. He asked him to proceed to Alexandria and await his decision. But Barnett noted that "the adoption by the Pasha of Mr. Galloway's proposals has, I fear become less probable than when I had last the honour of writing to Your Lordship on the subject".¹ He confirmed his previous information about the Pasha's desire to build his Barrage, when he sent to Paris M. Mougel to submit his plan to the Council of Civil Engineers there. He also promised M. Mougel that should the plan be approved, the Barrage would be immediately commenced under his superintendence. However, the Pasha could not undertake two major works at the same time. The number of hands needed for the Barrage would render it impossible for him, even had he the inclination, to commence upon a railroad until the Barrage was completed.² But the information the French Consul-General had from Artin Bey, as well as from the persons around the Pasha, and indeed the language of the Pasha himself, convinced him that the Pasha had the intention of connecting Cairo

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² Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 4 of 29 Jan. 1845 in F.O. 78/623; The Illustrated London News, No. 146, VI, p.130 (1 March. 1845).

³ Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 10 of 18 March 1845 in F.O. 78/623; Benedetti to Guizot, No. 9, 2 Feb. 1845, M.A.E., C.P. tom 17.

¹ Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 13 of 12 Apr. 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

² Barnett, No. 13 of 12 Apr. 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

with Suez by a railroad only after the completion of the Nile Barrage, which was more highly beneficial to Egypt.¹

Lastly, Artin Bey notified John Galloway that the Pasha had declined for the present to commence the railroad. The reason he gave was the high price of iron in England.² On learning that, Galloway proposed to Muḥammad 'Alī to complete the railroad at his own cost upon certain conditions,³ but this proposal was rejected. In due course, Galloway appeared to think that Barnett had not given him that support to which he was entitled, according to Aberdeen's instructions. But since Barnett's return from England, he had frequently spoken both to the Viceroy and to Artin Bey on the subject. Barnett always looked upon the question "as secondary to the more important object which H.M.'s Govt. had in view, and [he had] guarded [him]self from committing H.M.'s Govt. by urging the measure on the Pasha as a speculation which was likely to be advantageous to him in a pecuniary point of view".⁴ Accordingly, Aberdeen reported to the Treasury, in connection with the refusal of the British government to ratify the Postal Agreement, that the railway project had for the present at least

¹ Benedetti to Guizot, No. 9, 2 Feb. 1845, M.A.E., C.P., tom.17.

² Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 17 of 7 May 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

³ See Memorandum in App. I, pp. 370-72.

⁴ Barnett, No. 17 of 7 May 1845, in F.O. 78/623.

been abandoned.¹ Benedetti, the French Consul-General, believed that the desire to shorten the desert by means of a railway, though often manifested by the Pasha, had never been serious. The Pasha openly modified the language which he had always used on this question, and began to recognise that the railway would be an expensive and unfruitful work.² Meanwhile, the British agent was very eager to know the Pasha's decision on the railway. When Barnett learned that M. Mougél had made proposals to the Pasha of a very advantageous nature on the part of an English company to lay down the railway,³ he talked to Muhammad 'Alī about this mediation and asked him if he was disposed to consider those proposals favourably.⁴ Muhammad 'Alī answered that when the Barrage was completed, he would then determine whether it would be more expedient to make a railroad, or a canal from the Nile to Suez. Barnett thought that this vast undertaking was a new manoeuvre on the part of the Pasha. By adopting it, he wished to have a pretext for declining either to make a railroad, or to undertake the canal.

¹ Aberdeen to Barnett, No. 12 of 6 June 1845 in F.O. 141/10.

² Benedetti to Guizot, No. 16, 24 Mar. 1845, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 17.

³ Nothing is known about the nature of these proposals and whether Mougél mediated on behalf of Galloway or other company.

⁴ Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 44 of 1 Nov. 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

While the negotiations with the British government did not advance the railway, French and Austrian opposition was highly effective. Both were hostile to British interests and both supported a ship-canal across the Isthmus as a counter-poise to the railway. Austria followed this policy because she thought that if the commerce of India and China were diverted from the Cape route to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, Trieste would become a great emporium for the commerce between Asia and Europe. France, on the other hand, was anxious for the construction of the Suez Canal because it would place her as a military and naval power in the Medi terranean much nearer to India than Britain would be.¹ Day after day, French fears were increasing as they saw the growing importance of Egypt to the English. Barrot, the French Consul-General told Hekekyan that if the Pasha would not take to himself the transit through Egypt, he should abdicate, "because the French could not remain his friends if he did nothing for himself and the English who had a finger in Egypt would by and by put in their hand".² As they pressed upon Muḥammad 'Alī to monopolize the transit, they did the same in respect of the railway. French influence over Egypt and the Pasha's ministers, such as Artin Bey, helped them to do this. This was

¹Palmerston to Murray, No. 17 of 27 May 1847 in F.O. 407/3.

²Hekekyan Papers, III, Add. 37,450, fol. 104.

emphasized by the Marquis de La Valette's letter to the government on the railway question. He says that "he could never shew his face in Paris, were he to permit the construction here of a Railroad".¹ Not only de La Valette but also his successor, Benedetti, drew the attention of the Viceroy to the enormous advantages of opening a canal.²

Muhammad 'Alī, despite this opposition, was desirous to benefit from the transit through Egypt. He attempted to blame French policy. He acquainted the French Consul-General that the cause of the difficult position in which he found himself was principally due to the repugnance of the French government to the construction of the Suez-Cairo railway. However, Muhammad 'Alī soon changed his language, and described this opinion as a joke when Barrot demonstrated to him quite evidently "that the repugnance of the King's government had no other motive than the real and logical interest it takes in him, and I told him that if he had in the present state of things so many difficulties in remaining master of the territory that had been left to him, to permit the construction of a railway across the desert would mean delivering himself tied hand and foot to the demands of English interests".³

¹ Stoddart to Palmerston, No. 8 of 29 Aug. 1846 in F.O. 78/661 B; Stoddart to Palmerston, 9 Feb. 1847, in F.O. 78/710.

² Benedetti to Guizot, No. 8, 17 Jan. 1845; No. 10, 4 Feb. 1845, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 17.

³ Barrot to Guizot, No. 38, 23 Mar. 1846, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 18.

Muhammad 'Alī did have an interest in constructing railways throughout his territory. Before his visit to Constantinople in 1846, he was considering two lines, one from Alexandria to al-'Aṭf and the other from Alexandria to Cairo directly. After his return from Constantinople, he talked to Hekekyan about the projects he wished to accomplish and said "we must now think of nothing but improvements in our interior..... I will first lay down a railroad between Alexandria & Cairo".¹ When Barrot, the French Consul-General, ^{that} knew the Viceroy's imagination had been occupied with these two railway projects, he reported to Paris for instructions. This document is of invaluable importance because it sheds more light on the views of the French representative connected with the construction of railways in Egypt generally. With regard to the line from Alexandria to Cairo, Barrot said that its construction along the edge of the desert would be useless. Such a railway would leave all the products of the delta outside this new line, while a railway to al-'Aṭf would open a rapid transport to all the products of Upper and Lower Egypt. On the other hand, Barrot added that the construction of one or the other of these railways would lead subsequently to the realisation of the Suez railway project which the King's government had opposed. Nevertheless, it seemed to Barrot that

¹Hekekyan Papers, III, Add. 37, 450, fol. 157.

France would go the wrong way if she made use of her influence to prevent Egypt from enjoying the great facilities that railways offered to commerce, industry and the population in general. France, therefore, would evidently depart from "her rôle of enlightened and intelligent friend of Egypt", and her resistance to projects of incontestable utility could result in the substitution of another influence to hers. He accordingly thought

"si la question de ces chemins de fer vient à être discutée nous devons (sans aucun doute) être les premiers à engage le Vice-Roi à donner, le plus cõt possible à l'Egypte les avantages qui doivent résulter pour elle de ces grandes voies de communication dont le monde civilisé et la France en particulier, se sont enrichis, depuis quelques années. Il sera facile, d'ailleurs, de faire comprendre à Méhémet-Ali la grand différence qu'il y aura toujours entre des voies destinées à faire arriver rapidement et à peu de fraix, au port d'embarquement, les immenses produits que donne l'Egypte, produits que l'achèvement du barrage est destiné à tripler, et un chemin de fer du Caire à Suez qui ne serait d'aucun avantage pour la population du pays et qui n'offrirait d'utilité qu'à une très faible portion du commerce et à une nombre toujours limité de voyageurs d'une seule nation."¹

¹Barrot to Guizot, No. 55, 18 July 1846, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 18.

Another period of discussions and correspondence on the railway began with the appointment of Charles Augustus Murray, as the British Consul-General in Egypt in June 1846. For about a year the Consul-General did not receive any directions from the Foreign Office. As soon as he settled in Egypt, he wrote to Palmerston on the subject of communications with India and their present condition under Muhammad 'Alī. So long as France determinedly opposed the railway, supported by the agents of the Great Continental Powers, Murray considered it completely impossible that this project could be urged with reasonable prospects of success. Nevertheless, Murray enquired whether this railway was so highly desirable for British interests as to be pressed as a matter in which the government was interested, or to be considered as an affair between Galloway (or any other private person or company) and the Pasha.¹ Murray asked for instructions not only because Galloway had strongly urged it upon him, but because he was convinced "from all that I have read and heard since my arrival, that nothing has been more prejudicial to the influence of the British Consul here, than occasionally pressing unpalatable measures upon the Pasha, which have afterwards

¹Murray to Palmerston, 4 Nov. 1846 in F.O. 97/408.

been abandoned as unnecessary or impracticable."¹

Palmerston acknowledged the importance of a railway, but he instructed Murray to say whenever the subject was mooted that "Her Majesty's Government would be glad to see that undertaking commenced; and you shall point out the advantages which it would produce to Egypt by its tendency to draw commerce as well as passengers through Egypt, and by the employment it would give to Egyptian labour."² Palmerston was not likely to enter upon the construction of the line so long as Muḥammad 'Alī was engaged in an expensive operation for damming the Nile. But Murray was instructed to inform him that when he decided to construct the line, he ought to know that it would be at his own expense.

The idea of the canal gained ground when Muḥammad 'Alī, in order to satisfy public opinion both in France and Austria, afforded the Société d'études du Canal de Suez³ the opportunity to survey the Isthmus of Suez. When Murray asked for instructions in regard to the canal, Palmerston was of opinion that he should remain entirely passive on the subject, and to say that he had no instructions from his government either to support or to oppose

¹ Murray to Palmerston, (Conf.) 4 Nov. 1846; Murray to Palmerston, 3 Jan. 1847 in F.O. 97/408.

² Palmerston to Murray, No. 4 of 8 Feb. 1847 in F.O. 97/408.

³ The Société was formed in 1847 comprising of three national groups - French, British and Austrian.

the canal; but the government realised that the commercial advantages to be derived from a canal would be attained nearly as well and at a much lower cost in time and money by a railway across the desert.¹ Murray, however, was to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity to suggest to the Pasha the greater practicability of a railroad.²

On the other hand, Palmerston sent a copy of this despatch to Lord Cowley, British Ambassador at Constantinople, who entered confidentially with Reşid Pasha, the Grand Vezir, into the reasons why a railroad would be preferable, and asked him to tell the Pasha that the Sultan would rather see a railroad constructed than a canal.³ Reşid answered that he had lately had some conversation on the subject with Kâmil Pasha, Muḥammad 'Alī's son-in-law. Muḥammad 'Alī desired him to tell the Grand Vezir that he had been urged by Foreign Powers to construct a canal either at his own expense, or at that of a company established for the purpose. The Viceroy had turned a deaf ear to all propositions for a foreign company. He requested that if any offer from foreigners were made to Constantinople, the Porte should equally discourage the idea. Although Reşid was of opinion that several years would elapse before this could commence, he informed Lord

¹Palmerston to Murray, No. 17 of 27 May 1847. in F.O. 97/408.

²Murray to Palmerston, No. 44 of 9 July 1847 in F.O. 97/408.

³Cowley to Palmerston, No. 215 of 3 July 1847, in F.O. 97/411.

Cowley that he would take every opportunity of stating the Porte's preference for a railway to a canal.¹ He further assured Lord Cowley that as long as he remained Grand Vezir, no canal would be cut.² When Şevket Bey, private secretary to the Sultan, was sent on a special mission to Muḥammad 'Alī, he was furnished with instructions to speak to him in the sense desired by the British government.³ But to Reşid's surprise, Muḥammad 'Alī answered that he was against both projects, and would not give permission for either.⁴

3. Conclusion:

Muḥammad 'Alī had finally abandoned one of his favourite projects. An attempt to find out his motives of declining to commence this work is worthwhile. Was it due to the state of his finances, or his fears of external domination; or because of the jealousies of the other European Powers?

Barnett pointed out in one of his private letters that he had no doubt the Pasha would see about the work if it were made worth his while.⁵ The British government supported the railway,

¹Cowley, No. 215 of 3 July 1847 in F.O. 97/411.

²Cowley to Palmerston, No. 259 of 31 July 1847 in F.O. 97/408.

³Cowley to Palmerston, No. 287 of 1 Sept. 1847, in F.O. 97/408.

⁴Cowley to Palmerston, No. 358 of 17 Oct. 1847 in F.O. 97/408.

⁵Barnett to Bidwell, (Private), 18 Dec. 1843 in F.O. 78/542.

but this was not sufficient to induce Muhammad 'Alī to execute the work. He wanted a financial guarantee to be sure that he would not be the loser. Hekekyan himself notes in his papers that the best way of executing the railway was for England and Egypt each to furnish half of the necessary capital.¹

Muhammad 'Alī failed, however, to conclude a formal agreement concerning the costs of work. At the same time, his exhausted finances could not meet the expenses of the line; particularly as they were mostly devoted to the completion of the Barrage.² The question of money was solved when Thomas Waghorn assured him verbally about financial help from some European bankers and in a further letter, he reassured him that Messrs. Rotschilds, the financiers of Europe, could find him the money either in London, Paris or Vienna for the construction of the line. "Money if wanting, is to be had, and the execution of a railroad from Cairo to Suez will send your name to posterity greater than any act that I can remember in modern history".³ Muhammad 'Alī also turned down Galloway's proposals when he offered to build the railway at his own expense on certain conditions.⁴

¹Hekekyan Papers, III, Add. 37,450, fol. 275. He discussed this subject with a group of Austrian engineers during his visit to Vienna. He also suggests that "should the receipts for a year be less than the interest of the capital laid out the deficit should be paid to Egypt by the English government. On the contrary, the overplus of the receipts should be paid to England on account of the repayment for advances made to make up former annual deficits in the receipts."

²Walne to Lyons, 14 June 1847 in F.O. 97/408; see also: al-Barrawī and 'Ulaish, op.cit., p.83; Lahitah, op.cit., p.206.
(cont.)

As far as the Suez railway is concerned, French intrigues were the insurmountable barrier to its accomplishment. What was the aim of French policy in Egypt? The setback which France had suffered after 1841 did not make her abandon her own interests. Egypt remained as one of her centres of activity along the African coast. On the other hand, the betrayal of Muhammad 'Alī by France did not affect his attitude towards her; it was 'Abbās I who remembered this humiliation and took revenge. French traditional policy had never changed. It aimed at the interruption of the overland communication with India, and striking a deadly blow at the political and commercial interests of Great Britain. After the pacification of the Levant, the Comte de Chabot was sent to take charge of the French Consulate-General, with instructions to soothe the irritation of Muhammad 'Alī, to reassure him for the future, and to counsel the line of policy best calculated to repair his stability. From 1843, French policy in Egypt was pursued with a greatly augmented activity. She had already conferred on her representative the rank of political agent which Britain had taken from her in 1841. The Marquis de La Valette, an able man, was appointed as France's political agent. The Duc de Montpensier, Louis Philippe's son, visited

(cont.)

³ T. Waghorn to Muhammad 'Alī dated Cairo, 18 Oct. 1844 (The Times, 5 Nov. 1844); See App. II, pp. 373-75.

⁴ See App. I, pp. 370-72.

Egypt in August 1845. The visit of the French prince was made to strengthen French influence in the Mediterranean, in Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt and Greece.¹ Not only French agents, but also French employees in Egypt played on Muhammad 'Alī's fears. They tried to convince him that Britain had aggressive views upon Egypt as the half-way house to India.² When Waghorn's offer was known in France, the French press carried on a campaign of attacks upon the project as an obstacle to the realization of the canal.³ M. Pérodeaud, Muhammad 'Alī's political agent in Paris, conveyed to him the views of the French government, that the canalization of the Isthmus should be given the first place.⁴

¹ Stoddart to Palmerston, 9 Feb. 1847 in F.O. 78/710.

² Waghorn to R. Stephenson, 13 Mar. 1847 in F.O. 97/411 (Suez Canal); Merruau, L'Egypte contemporaine, p.93. He says "the cabinet of the Tuileries knew that they had to be on their guard against the consequence of an even purely industrial intervention of England in foreign countries"; see also: al-Ayyūbī, op.cit., p.136.

³ Le Journal des Débats, 8 Nov. 1844 published a full translation of Waghorn's letter in The Times. Le Journal des Débats, 26 Nov. 1844; "Lorsqu'ils soutiennent qu'en poursuivant cette entreprise, l'Angleterre ne ferait rien qui ne fût dans son droit; et que les capitalistes Anglais peuvent employer leur argent à deux travaux publics dans les domaines de Méhémet-Ali, sans qu'on puisse raisonnablement en conclure que le cabinet de Londres convoite l'Egypte, ils sont dans le vrai,....." See also: Le Constitutionnel, 8 Nov., 13 Nov.; 29 Nov. 1844.

⁴ Abdin Arch. uncatalogued Doc., Cit. in J. Tagher, "Mohammed Ali et les Anglais à Suez", cah. hist. ég., 2, 1950, pp. 489-490 (28.2.45.)

France took every precaution to defeat the railway project. Barrot, the French Consul-General, warned the Pasha not to charge an English engineer to construct a steam vehicle on the Suez desert, because after its construction, he would recommend the railway saying to him, "continuez, vous êtes sorti de votre système si arriéré; faites encore un pas, voici une voiture à vapeur sur le route de Suez; Vous avez de rails sur les lieux depuis dix ans, faites un chemin de fer."¹ France also viewed any action taken either on the part of the Pasha or the British government as a renewal of activity. Such actions were the projects of Murray's voyage with the Pasha to Upper Egypt and Alexandria; the sending of ten young people for education in England; the reception of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India; certain words of the Viceroy; and lastly, Lord Palmerston's invitation to Muhammad 'Alī to visit England. Barrot assumed that Palmerston ended his despatch of the invitation by expressing the hope that Muhammad 'Alī would no longer refuse the establishment of a railway.² The opposition of France, however, to this railroad "has ever been of the most determined nature. Its existence, or its non-existence, seemed the point on which her policy turned; and eventually it became a question involving her support to her hostility."³

¹Barrot to Guizot, No. 90, 6 Dec. 1847, M.A.E., C.E., tom 19.

²Barrot to Guizot, No. 91, 16 Dec. 1847, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 19.

³Anonymous, The Present Crisis in Egypt, No. 1, p.5; see also Barnett to Aberdeen, No. 10 of 9 March 1844 in F.O. 142/13.

Muhammad 'Alī viewed the question as one which would affect his relations with Europe much more than his local interests. He said to Murray "Why should I quarrel with the other great Powers to advance the interests of England alone."¹ He admitted to the French Consul-General that he would not like to make either the canal or the railway; but if all the governments agreed on one or the other, he would accede without hesitation to the wish which was expressed to him.² As the situation was absolutely in his hands, he was happy that he could lean upon England for refusing the canal, and upon France and Austria for opposing the railway. In the face of such rival interests, the project was abandoned. Waghorn wrote to Muhammad 'Alī in his letter that "whether Your Highness makes a railroad between Cairo and Suez, or not, it will come, as certain as these lines are written". His prediction was realised.

By the middle of the nineteenth century both the British government and British public had come to realise the significance of the construction of a railway through Egypt. The number of British passengers across the Isthmus of Suez was well over 3,000 in 1847. A British traveller, who made observations in Egypt, Arabia and Syria, enumerated, in a report to the Board of Trade in 1849, the

¹Murray to Palmerston, No. 68 of 24 Dec. 1847 in F.O. 78/708.

²Barrot to Guizot, No.91, 16 Dec. 1847, M.A.E., C.P. tom.19.

great advantages of a railway across Egypt, and showed how it would also develop the resources of the countries bordering the Red Sea. In urging the British government, he said "with all these facts before us, and such testimony from men who have continually trafficked in the East, I cannot but believe that the British Government would do well so consider the matter, and if the ancients could afford the expense of making a deep, and broad canal, across the Isthmus, and the present American Government can at their own expense lay down a rail-road across the Isthmus of Panama for the purpose of reaching California it certainly would appear much more advantageous for the British Government to endeavour to carry out this project, when we consider that they have the Indian Empire at the further extremity, and regions on the route to the right and left, whose commercial resources are far more valuable than many Californias".¹ However, the railway project did not terminate with Muḥammad 'Alī's reign, but survived it, to be one of the major questions which shaped the state of affairs during the reign of 'Abbās Ḥilmī I.

¹ A Report on the railway across the Isthmus of Suez presented by E. Macdonald to Henry Labouchere, dated July 1849, in F.O. 97/411.

Chapter II'ABBAS I AND THE "VEXATA QUAESTIO"OF THE RAILWAY, 1848-1854

"C'est Abbas Pacha un jour dans un sens, et le lendemain en sens contraire. Il y a quelques jours, - il me disait que le chemin de fer était sa folie à lui, comme le Barrage était un folie de son grand père, et depuis il a déclaré à un de mes collègues que le chemin de fer ferait la fortune de l'Egypte et que, plus tard, il solliciterait de la Porte, l'autorisation de le pousser jusqu'à Suez."

Sabatier to Minister of For.
Affs. No. 24, 30 April 1853,
M.A.E., C.C. (Alex.), tom. 34.

"One would really suppose from the vast importance attached at Constantinople to the construction of this Egyptian railway, and from the manner in which the plan has been discussed, that no person in that capital had ever before heard of a railroad, and that the one now under consideration was the first thing of the kind ever made in the world, instead of railroads being, as they now are, the common means of locomotion all over Europe and North America, and even in some of the West Indian Islands. There cannot be a more striking instance of the backwardness of the intellectual and social condition of Turkey than the fuss which has been made about so common an undertaking."

Palmerston to Canning, No. 223,
23 Aug. 1851 [No. 86] in F.O.
424/7A.

"Egypt has many memories for me..... I kept
the cursed tanzimat (legalised anarchy) out of
it, in spite of Sir Stratford Canning and the
Sublime Porte; and I brought the railway into
it, in spite of French and Turkish intrigues."

Murray in H. Maxwell,
The Hon. Sir Charles Murray,
pp. 244-245.

1. 'Abbās's refusal to construct a Railway and
the French opposition:

The mental disorder of Muḥammad 'Alī rendered him unfit to rule, and on 1 Sept. 1848, the Sublime Porte reluctantly invested his son, Ibrāhīm Pasha, with the government of Egypt.¹ However, the prospects of an unsettled political situation seemed inevitable, because Ibrāhīm became seriously ill. Although the succession was ruled by provisions in the ferman of 1841, passing "in a direct line, from the elder to the elder, in the male race among the sons and grandsons",² the members of the family were all at variance with each other.³ On 22 October 1848, 'Abbās Pasha, the successor apparent to the Viceroyalty, left Egypt on board a British steamer for the Ḥijāz, on the pretext of seeking a change of air. Being the President of the Council and the head of the Transit Administration, 'Abbās would not have left Egypt unless there had been a misunderstanding between him and Ibrāhīm.⁴

This situation aroused the suspicion of the British and French Consuls-General in Egypt who wrote to their respective governments about the serious consequences of the situation. Murray

¹ Canning to Palmerston, (No. 74 Confidential), 18 Aug. 1848, in F.O. 78/734; copy of the ferman is enclosed in Canning to Palmerston, 13 Sept. 1848 in F.O. 78/735.

² Text of ferman in Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, I, p.121.

³ Murray to Palmerston, No. 43 of 4 Oct. 1848 in F.O. 78/757. There were three claimants to the Viceroyalty, Aḥmad Bey, Ibrāhīm's son,

the British Consul-General, urged Palmerston to settle this question to avoid anarchy, civil war, or foreign occupation, which could endanger the very existence of the British Indian Empire. The situation, Murray thought, could be resolved by one of three likely ways. Egypt could be re-annexed by the Porte. France could step in and occupy Egypt, using the plausible excuse that she was protecting the rights of the family. A British occupation would maintain, at all risks, the security of Anglo-Indian communications. But Palmerston wanted the decision on the succession to be left to the Sultan.¹ Barrot, the French Consul-General, recognized the incontestable right of 'Abbās, but he feared the intentions of the Sultan towards the succession. This could mean that the Porte would reduce Egypt to an ordinary pashalic of the empire, and this would be fatal to the tranquility of the country. He said that if this was true, France should paralyse the execution of such a measure. Moreover, the Porte should be convinced that,

(cont.) Sa'id Pasha as Muḥammad 'Alī's next son, and 'Abbas Pasha, the eldest surviving member of the family; see also Barrot to Bastide, No. 31, 21 Oct. 1848, M.A.E., C.P., tom.20.

⁴Murray to Palmerston (Private), 4 Oct. 1848 in F.O. 78/757; Barrot, No. 31, 21 Oct. 1848, tom. 20; Mme Olympe Audouard, Les mystères, pp. 136-137; Rafi'i, Asr Isma'i, I, p.10.

¹Murray to Palmerston (No. 30 confidential), 6 July 1848 in F.O. 142/16; Palmerston to Murray, No. 24, 28 Oct. 1848; No. 27, 28 Nov. 1848 in F.O. 141/15.

in these circumstances, Britain would intervene to secure her communications with India.¹ Nevertheless, 'Abbās's position was firm. Whatever the intentions of the Porte, it consented to the recognition of 'Abbās as the lawful ruler, and he was summoned from the Ḥijāz on Ibrāhīm's death on 10 Nov. 1848.² On 5 Dec. the Hatt-i Şerif of his nomination was read in Cairo amid the cheers of the townspeople.³

The conveying of 'Abbās to and from the Ḥijāz was a gesture of British friendship which 'Abbās acknowledged and appreciated.⁴ It aimed at increasing British influence with the Egyptian government. Murray was not an admirer of 'Abbās nor did he expect much from his capacity or intelligence, but he thought he would be less

¹ Barrot to Bastide, No. 31, 21 Oct. 1848; No. 37, 4 Dec. 1848; Barrot to Lamartine, No. 1, 18 Mar. 1848, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 20.

² Artin to Murray, 12 Nov. 1848 in F.O. 195/278. Sa'īd headed the council until 'Abbās's return; Ibrāhīm intended to exclude both 'Abbās and Sa'īd in favour of his own son Aḥmad, and in a secret note he urged the Sultan to set aside 'Abbās's claim. This letter was not without effect, but 'Abbās had the support of "the council, the army and the majority of all classes in Egypt". Canning to Palmerston, 14 Sept. 1848 in F.O. 78/735; Barrot to Bastide, No. 33, 5 Nov. 1848; No. 37, 4 Dec. 1848, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 20; Murray to Palmerston, No. 54 of 5 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 78/757; Murray to Palmerston, No. 50 of 6 Nov. 1848 in F.O. 195/278; The Illustrated London News, No. 347, XIII (9 Dec. 1848); No. 349, XIII (23 Dec. 1848).

³ Murray to Canning, No. 27 of 6 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 78/757. He already made himself popular by releasing the city youths who had been forcibly seized as conscripts under Ibrāhīm.

⁴ 'Abbās to Murray, 22 Oct. 1848 in F.O. 78/757.

under French influence than his two predecessors.¹ Palmerston instructed Murray to express to 'Abbās, on his arrival in Egypt, the conviction of the British government that the more friendly and intimate the intercourse between Britain and Egypt, the more this would conduce to the interests of both countries, and he stated that he would give every encouragement and facility in his power to improve the arrangements for transit through Egypt.²

This Murray had already done, and 'Abbās was anxious to facilitate the Transit Administration.³ The thorny question of the Suez railway was still in the offing; but 'Abbās's accession offered an opportunity to renew the question. Palmerston asked Murray to recommend to 'Abbās the expediency of making a railroad from Alexandria to Suez. This he was to do unofficially, pointing out that if this railroad were not made, some other line might entirely divert the stream of passengers and merchandise from Egypt.⁴ When Murray received these instructions 'Abbās was at Constantinople for his investiture.⁵

¹Murray to Palmerston, No. 52 of 15 Nov. 1848 in F.O. 142/16; Murray to Palmerston, No. 54 of 5 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 195/278.

²Palmerston to Murray, No. 28 of 6 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 141/15.

³Murray to Canning, No. 27 of 6 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 195/278.

⁴Palmerston to Murray, No. 29 of 21 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 141/15.

⁵Murray to Palmerston, 5, 16 Jan. 1849 in F.O. 78/804.

At Constantinople, Sir Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador, was preparing to settle with 'Abbās the questions of the Sennar monopoly and the Transit arrangements through Egypt, which had been outstanding since the time of Muḥammad 'Alī. Although Canning was willing to show confidence in the government of Egypt, he preferred to uphold the Sultan's authority and to rely upon its occasional exercise for the vindication of British interests there through the execution of commercial treaties. Canning welcomed 'Abbās's attitude towards Britain,¹ although with some reservations as to his character and tastes, and to the still predominant influence of Artin Bey, who was more than a little partial to France.² Even before 'Abbās went to Constantinople, Murray's reports on Egypt were not promising. Sāmī Pasha, one of the leading officials in Egypt, passed his opinion of 'Abbās to Murray, which he, Murray, passed on to Canning. Sāmī believed that 'Abbās, being inexperienced in public affairs, would from the outset be compelled to turn to Artin Bey. The first thing to happen in that case would be the introduction of a large number of French officers into the Egyptian army, Sāmī thought that it would be better if the Porte maintained its control over Egypt. The provisions of the Hatt-i Şerif should be enforced. These

¹ 'Abbās, on his request, brought Canning a letter of recommendation from Murray.

² Canning to Palmerston, No. 6 of 4 Jan. 1849 encl. in Canning to Murray, No. 1 of 8 Jan. 1849 in F.O. 141/9.

included the regular payment of tribute, an equal balance of foreign relations and, not least, acceptance of the will of the Porte. Although Murray knew that *Samī* and the other officials were biassed against 'Abbās, he advised Canning to support the Porte's authority if French officers were put in charge of the troops. He added "the efficient commander in chief of the army is a Frenchman by birth, and the Foreign Minister is a Frenchman by adoption, it only remains to officer the Troops with Frenchmen in order to make Egypt another Tunis, as a preliminary to its becoming another Algiers".¹

On meeting 'Abbās, Canning was inclined to change his opinion. 'Abbās assured him that the improvements already commenced in the transit² by the selection of a new foreign superintendent were to be continued and furthered on his return to Egypt by the introduction of other foreigners and the establishment of more commodious post houses. Canning then broached to 'Abbās and Artin the question of constructing a railway.³ After discussion with them he wrote to Palmerston that a railway did not seem to be among the more urgent items for consideration, but "it's [*sic*] utility is recognized, and if funds were obtainable, in ~~past~~ at least, from England, Your Lordship's urgent recommendations might, perhaps

¹Murray to Canning (confidential), 17 Dec. 1848 in F.O. 78/757.

²For these improvements see: Palmerston to Murray, 31 Jan. 1849 in F.O. 78/804; Murray to Palmerston, No. 9 of 24 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 142/16.

³Canning to Murray, No. 2 of 15 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 141/9.

succeed in hastening the accomplishment of that desirable object".¹

What was the real policy of 'Abbās? Despite the fact that the Sultan loaded 'Abbās with honours and dignities, he intended to curtail the powers formerly exercised by Muḥammad 'Alī, and to bring Egypt under his immediate supervision.² So the Sultan's power in the Egyptian government increased considerably, but only through the disposition of 'Abbās.³ 'Abbās was a loyal Ottoman subject and a devout Muslim. He was fully prepared to admit that Egypt was only a province of the Ottoman Empire.⁴ At Constantinople he expressed his intention to reduce his army and navy, and talked of presenting a ship annually to the Sultan in addition to the tribute. He also promised to dismiss the French engineer supervising the additional fortifications of Alexandria.⁵ On his return from Constantinople, he made a great show of his devotion to the Sultan when he mourned

"Egypt is no more a Turkish country; this is a Christian country. The representatives of the European Powers bring their power to influence all the acts of the government. My grandfather believed himself an absolute sovereign, and was towards us, his servants, and his children. But he was the slave of consuls-general. Well then, if I must be governed by someone, I had rather be governed by the chief of all Muslims, than by Christians whom I hate."⁶

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 28 of 5 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 78/772.

²Murray to Palmerston, No. 8 of 19 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 142/16.

³Canning to Palmerston, No. 98 of 23 March 1849 in F.O. 78/774.

By this statement he put forward his three main political objectives: closer relations with the Porte; reaction against European influence; and a break with the traditions of Muḥammad 'Alī. 'Abbās could not forget that the superior genius of his grandfather had been forced to submit to the Sultan. He was anti-European and opposed western penetration.¹ French influence fell to its lowest ebb. His close association with Muḥammad 'Alī during the Syrian crisis had taught him how frail were the promises of France.

Within the frame of 'Abbās's general policy, could Britain achieve the construction of the railway? 'Abbās sometimes showed a disposition to temporise between his prejudice and his interest. The transit through Egypt was well-kept and the macadamized road in the desert between Cairo and Suez was progressing² 'Abbās's

(cont.)

⁴Dr. Pruner to Ayrton, letter dated 9 Jan. 1850 in F.O. 78/842 (Pruner was 'Abbās's German physician); Benedetti to Tocqueville, No. 1, 17 Apr. 1849, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 21 (a detailed document on 'Abbās's relations with the Sultan); 'Abbās was reported to have denounced Muḥammad 'Alī's attitude towards the Sultan and said "je suis parfaitement résolu à demander à Constantinople les conseils et les directions qui me seront nécessaires". (Benedetti to Tocqueville, No. 31, 6 Dec. 1849, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 21.)

⁵Canning to Palmerston, No. 28 of 5 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 78/772.

⁶F. Charles-Roux, L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882, VI, p. 243 in Histoire de la nation égyptienne.

¹Before his accession, he was thought to have formed the so-called "Turkish or bigoted party", of fanatical elements, which "should oppose itself to the inroad of European adventurers and
(cont.)

absurdities and caprices did not affect in any way British interests or commerce; moreover personally Murray was on very friendly terms with him.¹ The views and measures adopted by 'Abbās led the Directors of the Peninsular & Oriental Company to hope that further measures might be effected by sending a mission to discuss the matter with 'Abbās. Having officially consulted Palmerston, the Company sent Sir John Pirie, the Deputy Director of the Company, to Egypt.²

Pirie availed himself of the introduction of the subject of the Indian transit to press the question of the railway on 'Abbās's attention. Murray seconded him and both dealt with the question, first, as a more effective agency for improving communication; secondly, as ultimately the most economical one; thirdly, as the surest method of advancing the common interests of Britain and Egypt. Furthermore, the capital required for construction could be found at once in Britain, under reasonable guarantees. At this juncture 'Abbās had to be very careful. He had the project of the Barrage on hand and other unfinished public

(cont.) improvements". (St. John Boyle, "Egypt under Abbas", Sharpe's London Magazine, XIV, 1851, p.71.)

² The Times, 25 Sept. 1849.

¹ Murray to Palmerston, 6 July 1849 in F.O. 78/804.

² Howell to Palmerston, 22 Jan. 1849; Addington to the Director of P. & O., 24 Jan. 1849 encl. in Palmerston to Murray, No. 2 of 24 Jan. 1849 in F.O. 141/15; for details on this mission, the Company's address of congratulation on 'Abbās's succession and 'Abbās's letter to Pirie, see: Annual Reports of the P. & O., I, pp. 4-5.

works which were likely to involve him in a vast expenditure of money and labour. 'Abbās considered it unwise for the time being to undertake a new enterprise of such a vast character, because his policy was to effect economics and conserve the resources of Egypt. He also refused the cession of the scheme to a company of individuals because the peculiar position of his government in reference to the Foreign Powers was such as to render any step of this kind questionable.¹ Pirie, nevertheless, formed the opinion that the construction of a railway was but a question of time.

The P. & O. sent the Foreign Office an account of Pirie's interview. With reference to the allusion which 'Abbās had made to the Barrage, Palmerston instructed Murray to report to him on the progress of the work and the practicability of completing it.² Murray agreed with Pirie that some day or another a railway through Egypt would be made and it was only a question of when. But he reported that Pirie had misconstrued the language and intentions of 'Abbās, who could not do otherwise than give a polite reception to a deputy. It was quite evident to Murray, who understood his language and countenance, that the subject

¹ Pirie to the Directors of the P. & O., 17 March 1849 encl. in Palmerston to Murray, No. 9 of 5 Apr. 1849 in F.O. 141/15.

² The work was almost discontinued (Palmerston to Murray, No. 9. of 5 Apr.; Murray to Palmerston, No. 24 of 19 Apr. 1849 in F.O. 78/804).

was distasteful to 'Abbās. The only expression he used that could admit a favourable construction was Bakalim (we shall see), with which Turks dismissed a question under circumstances which did not admit of a direct refusal. Furthermore 'Abbās would not listen for a moment to the suggestion of making a railway by means of funds raised in England or elsewhere. Murray believed the matter required some further explanation on his part "for His Highness [had] taken up the opinion that the railroad would immensely increase the influence exercised by England over Egypt, and that it [was] easy to understand that the impression would be materially strengthened if English capital were offered for its construction".¹

Though French influence was in decline, it did not cease so long as Artin Bey, France's adopted son, continued to serve under 'Abbās.² On learning of Pirie's arrival and his intention to ask for a railway concession, Barrot immediately sent Benedetti, the French Consul in Cairo, to urge 'Abbās to reject this plan. In a report to his government Barrot summarized the arguments he had used. He stated that the railway would not bring a return of one per cent of the capital. There must therefore be a strong political interest present under the pretence of a commercial

¹Murray to Palmerston. No. 23 of 19 Apr. 1849 in F.O. 142/16.

²Cf. Barrot to Bastide, No. 37, 4 Dec. 1848, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 20.

interest, so zealously to pursue an undertaking, which was like an English sword piercing Egypt's heart, and a mortal blow at Muslim power in that country. He believed that 'Abbās as a Turk, and as a Muslim should oppose this plan with all his strength. However 'Abbās emphasized that Egypt was not wealthy enough to afford the luxury of a railway. He reminded the Consul that in no European country had concessions of this nature been granted to foreigners; Egypt would therefore not build the railway and would not allow others to do so.¹

'Abbās's refusal of the English offer to build a railway encouraged French representatives to continue their systematic campaign for shelving this undertaking indefinitely and for cutting instead a maritime canal. In 1850, in an audience with the French Consul-General, 'Abbās said that England pressed him more and more every day to construct a railway, complaining sometimes of the delays, sometimes of the inconveniences and sometimes of the expenses which arose out of the present transport system. 'Abbās declared that he was going to improve this system even at the price

¹Barrot to Minister of For. Aff., No. 56, 17 Mar. 1849, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 21. He said that Pirie arrived at Alexandria accompanied by MacDonald, an English engineer, talking of a railway as if the concession was decided upon. Artin gave him the most positive assurances that "il s'opposerait de tout son pouvoir à ce que la concession eût lieu et que, si contre son attente, Abbas-Pasha avait la faiblesse de céder, ce serait lions certainement contre son avis très nettement exprimé."

of other sacrifices but one of his ambitions was to give his name to the opening of a canal, if France, Russia and Austria would support him in agreement with the Porte. "To England," he adds, "one would give as a pretext that before starting new major works in Egypt, I must devote myself to those already underway, especially the Nile barrage."¹ Nevertheless, the Quai d'Orsay showed no sign of interest in the matter.²

It is hard to decide whether 'Abbās was sincere or bluffing the French Consul-General. It is certain that Egypt was ceasing to be the satellite of France. The French representative himself viewed with jealousy the remarkable advantages enjoyed by Murray, who was always on top of French agents. He also reported Murray's unceasing demands for the construction of the Suez railway.³ Cordial relations developed between 'Abbās and Murray who aimed at countering French influence.⁴ "Abbas seems not to be a very enlightened governor, but he is evidently a good Turk." This Palmerston

¹ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 3, 1 Feb. 1850, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 21.

² Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 49, 9 Juillet 1850, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 22. This was due to the political instability in France. Few months earlier 'Abbās asked Le Moyne whether he had received any communication from his government on the Suez Canal (Le Moyne, No. 27, 25 Apr. 1850, tom. 22).

³ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 35, 20 May 1850, M.A.E., C.P. tom 22.

⁴ Murray was still suspicious of French designs on Egypt because Soliman Pasha was occupied in Lower Egypt with inspecting and strengthening fortifications. Murray thought that it could only be intended for one of two objects: either to enable the Egyptian Viceroy to resist, if necessary, his sovereign the Sultan, or to
(cont.)

considered a great political merit which made amends for a multitude of faults. He preferred 'Abbās to Muḥammad 'Alī because "Egyptian civilization must come from Constantinople, and not from Paris, to be durable or consistent with British interests of a most important kind".¹ During the first year of his reign, 'Abbās stood firmly against any European influence, because Europe had dominated too long in Egypt. Egypt's salvation was in Constantinople.

2. 'Abbās's Difficulties: His Entente with Britain and the construction of the Railway:

'Abbās continued to show the highest respect for the Sultan and was ready to prove his devotion in different ways. When the Austrian Consul-General attributed the tranquility of Egypt to his good administration, he replied that it was not due to him but to the high intelligence of the Sultan.² He made considerable

(cont.) cut off England from her Indian communications (see: Murray to Palmerston (separate and confidential), 16 Dec. 1849 in F.O. 78/804).

¹B.P., Murray to Palmerston (Private), 10 May 1849; Palmerston to Murray, 30 Aug. 1849.

²The Times, 20 May 1850.

presents and presented the Sultan with the steam-frigate Sharqiyya.¹ The Sultan sent 'Abbās three full length portraits, which were escorted on their way to Cairo by four battalions of troops and by military and naval bands of music. These portraits were to be suspended one in each of the three principal offices in Cairo.² Moreover, 'Abbās incurred the serious displeasure of France by his endeavour to get Aḥmad Pasha, Bey of Tunis, to accept the Tanẓīmāt, and not to declare his independence.³

But 'Abbās's harmonious relationship with the Sultan was disturbed by his internal policy and administration. Since his return from Constantinople, 'Abbās turned his attention to those who had offended him years ago. A number of leading officials in his administration were dismissed, or exiled and their properties ruined by so-called long outstanding government claims. Among those sent out of Egypt were Samī Pasha and his son Ṣubḥī Bey, whom 'Abbās accused of being the cause of many feuds and quarrels in Muḥammad 'Alī's family.⁴ All the wheels of internal administration were clogged, and no real business was transacted excepting the constant change of appointments; whereby no officer felt assured that he would be in

¹He sent in May 1849 a squadron of 2,000 seamen to Constantinople to be at the Sultan's disposal. (The Times, 24 May 1849)

²The Times, 4, 17 June 1850.

³The Times, 1 July 1850; I. Sarhauk, Ḥaqā'iq al-akhbār 'an duwal al-bihar, I, p. 437; II, p. 263; Samī, III, Pt. 1, p. 32; Canning to Palmerston, No. 215 of 4 July; No. 225 of 19 July 1849 in F.O. 78/777; Gilbert to Palmerston, No. 18 of 17 June 1850 in F.O. 78/840; Benedetti to Minister of For. Affs., No. 13, 16 Feb. 1849; No. 4, 30 Apr., 6 Dec., 1849, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 21.

the same office tomorrow. The members of 'Abbās's family were in constant conflict with him. Secret complaints were sent to Constantinople, especially by the adherents of Ibrāhīm Pasha's family who hoped for a change on Aḥmad Bey's arrival from France.¹ The exile of Kāmil Pasha, a relative of Reşid Pasha, the Grand Vezir and the husband of Naḡlī Hanım, Muḥammad 'Alī's daughter, added more complications to the situation.² The Ottoman cabinet contemplated the removal of 'Abbās at the first favourable opportunity; but the Porte's desire for a more complete re-establishment of its authority in Egypt was not justified at the time.³ 'Abbās sent Artin Bey to the Porte to settle this matter, where Artin sounded Canning as to the possibility of British support for 'Abbās. Artin did not obtain from the Porte enough to satisfy 'Abbās's expectations. 'Abbās was required to send Kāmil's wife and her sister to Constantinople. The conflict was intensified by the Egyptian exiles at Constantinople who were cooperating with Reşid for 'Abbās's deposition. They selected Artin as their active agent

(cont.)

⁴ Murray to Palmerston, No. 12 of 5 March 1849 in F.O. 78/804. A list of these persons is in the Hekekyan Papers, V, Add. 37, 452, fols. 32-33.

¹ Murray to Palmerston (No. 28 confidential), 7 May 1849 in F.O. 142/16.

² Murray to Palmerston, No. 52 of 5 Oct. B49 in F.O. 78/804.

³ Canning to Palmerston (No. 44 confidential), 5 Feb. 1850 in F.O. 78/817; Canning to Palmerston (No. 82 confidential), 14 March 1850 in F.O. 78/818. Kāmil, Minister of Public Instructions, was banished to Aswān from where he managed to proceed to Constantinople. Hostilities were caused by his close friendship with Samī Pasha and his son. The forced separation of Kāmil from his wife was a strong case against Abbas.

in Egypt. Although he identified himself with French policy in Egypt, Artin pretended to enter into 'Abbās's views and remained as his minister.¹ But 'Abbās was becoming more and more estranged from him, and when several considerable deficiencies were discovered in the accounts of the Ministry of Commerce, the head of which he had been, Artin fled to Constantinople on 14 September 1850.²

This was the gloomy situation in which 'Abbās found himself. He realized that France would never forgive his antagonistic policy, and supposed that French intrigues had been set on foot at Constantinople to replace him by another member of the family, presumably Ahmad Bey, who would be more favourable to French interests. He also supposed that Artin would proceed to Constantinople where he would work with his enemies and the French for his downfall.³ To protect himself and his throne, 'Abbās looked for an ally, and resolved to establish an entente with Britain.

On 18 September 1850, 'Abbās sent for Walne, British Consul at Cairo, and talked to him about his fears. In return for friendship with Britain, 'Abbās hoped to have the support of the British

¹ Anon., The present crisis in Egypt, p.18; Bayle, op.cit., p.73.

² The Times, 4 Oct, 1850; Gilbert to Palmerston, No. 19 of 18 June 1850; 7 Aug. & 21 Sept. 1850 in F.O. 78/840. The reception given to Artin, when 'Abbās had sent him to Constantinople, offended the Viceroy (see: Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., Nos. 40 and 43, 5 Juin, 20 Juillet 1850, M.A.E., C.P., tom 22.).

³ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., Nos. 70 and 75, 18 Sept., 22 Oct. 1850, M.A.E., C.P., tom 22. 'Abbās knew that the French agent helped Artin to get out of Egypt and he blamed him for so doing.

government and consequently of Canning at Constantinople, to guard him against the insinuations of Artin, and to improve his relations with the Sultan. 'Abbās, as Walne described, entered immediately into the question of the railway. He feared that he had caused offence when he declined to accept the proposal made by Sir John Pirie. Excluding financial and physical difficulties, 'Abbās attributed this to French opposition which was so great that he could not resist it. He authorized Walne to communicate to Palmerston his conclusion that he was prepared to make a regular and efficient railway between Alexandria and Cairo. Two views guided him: he took into consideration the means of the treasury and the chances of profitable returns; moreover, he intended to conciliate the interests of the British with those of other nations and the actual necessities of Egyptian commerce. Walne added that 'Abbās was not going "to make railroads for his own accommodation, or because the Egyptian Treasury has any surplus funds to employ in such operations, but because our Government has expressed a wish to that effect".¹

The new evidence given in this confidential despatch has really reversed the traditional view, as Dr. Helen A. Rivlin has recently stated. She consequently argues that "it was 'Abbās who offered the railway in return for British support rather than the other way round and that he did not ask for help to prevent the application

¹Walne to Murray (Private and Confidential letter), 20 Sept. 1850 encl. in Murray to Palmerston, 9 Oct. 1850 in F.O. 78/841.

of the Tanzīmat to Egypt but only that he be protected from the intrigues of his enemies".¹ Despite this a controversial point still remains as to whether the initiative over the construction of the railway came from 'Abbās or from Walne. The writer agrees with Dr. Rivlin that the railway offer antedates the application of the Tanzīmat as will be shown later,² but in the light of new information the first part of her hypothesis could be revised. It is not necessary to assume in this respect that most of the diplomats had often gone beyond the limits of their instructions. Murray had pressed the construction of this railway upon 'Abbās even before Palmerston's despatch of 21 December 1848, and much more since that date "as the greatest boon that he could confer upon commerce, and as an undertaking that could not fail ultimately to be productive of the greatest credit, honour, and advantage to himself".³ Rivlin has overlooked the most essential document which reveals the real circumstances of the original proposal. It can be seen now that the circumstances in which 'Abbās invited Walne encouraged the latter to press the idea once more. Walne himself wrote later on :

"His Highness having last Autumn been pleased to consult me as to some difficulties in which his Government was then involved, I availed myself of this favourable opportunity to suggest a project [the railway] which I considered well calculated to improve the relations of the Vice-Roy with the British Government, and which when carried into effect, would be not less advantageous to the general

¹"The Railway question in the Ottoman-Egyptian crisis of 1850-1852", MEJ, XV/4, 1961, footnote 69, p.385. The traditional view is represented in: EI², Vol. I, p.13; Charles-Roux, L'Égypte de 1801 à 1882, vol. VI, pp. 245-247; A. Sammarco, Les régnes de

internal commerce of Egypt than to the overland communication with India. My views were at once adopted; and, as soon as political circumstances seemed to warrant, a preliminary survey was made by a distinguished Engineer then travelling in the country, whose report, made through me to the Pasha, proved in every respect favourable to the scheme proposed."¹

Later on in 1859, Colquhoun, the British Consul-General, wrote to the Foreign Office, in connection with the abolition of the packet agency in Cairo held for 22 years by Walne in consequence of the completion of the railway, that "I have made enquiries of persons well conversant with what passed here during the last fifteen years, and it is their opinion that Mr. Walne's personal influence over the late Abbas Pasha contributed in a large degree to induce Abbas Pasha to set on foot and successfully carry out, the Railway from Alexandria to Suez".² Thus the railway was originated at Walne's suggestion and by his counsel.

'Abbās wanted the British government to appoint and send him two engineers to carry out the project, but preferred to wait until he was sure of the intentions of the British government. In October 1850, Robert Stephenson, the railway engineer, went to Egypt but without any idea of investigating the project of the Isthmus railroad.

(cont.) Abbas, de Said et d'Ismail (1848-1879), vol. IV, pp. 14-17 in Précis de l'histoire d'Égypte.

² See below, pp. 126-129; there are two still more recent works, and although they are based on archival material they overlook the fact that the application of the Tanzimât was put forward after the construction of the railway had been offered: A.A.R. Mustafa, "Some aspects of Egypt's foreign relations under Abbas I with special reference to the Tanzimât dispute", The Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, VIII, 1963, pp. 69-70; M. F. Shukri,

However Walne asked him to meet 'Abbās, who wished to have a conference with him on the railway from Alexandria to Cairo. 'Abbās remarked to Stephenson that he proposed to build the railway in two sections, and to start with the first one from Alexandria to Cairo, to avoid unduly wounding French susceptibilities. Later the other section, from Cairo to Suez, would be constructed.¹ This, however, was only a tentative consultation which did not amount to a definite confirmation.

As soon as Murray, on leave in England, received Walne's communication, he wrote to Palmerston on the subject. He also received a private letter from 'Abbās written in Turkish, over his personal signature. It told of his desire to throw himself, as far as he could, on English protection. Murray informed Palmerston that it was their best policy to support 'Abbās; moreover, a railway from Cairo to Alexandria would be more beneficial both to Indian communications and to Egypt.² Palmerston instructed

(cont.) Miṣr wa'l-Sūdān, pp. 29-38.

³ Murray to Palmerston, No. 14 of 15 June [No. 51] in F.O. 424/7A.

¹ Walne to Johnson dated 3 Mar. 1851 encl. in Johnson to Melville, Secretary to the India House, dated 5 Mar. 1851 in I.O., F.R. vol. 15.

² Colquhoun to Russell (Separate) 18 Nov. 1859 in F.O. 78/1468. Walne had this to say when he became a sufferer of the railway: "it is but due to myself to represent to Your Lordship that it is mainly to my personal influence with Abbas Pasha, and to my active intervention in 1850, during the absence of Her Majesty's Agent and Consul General, that Her Majesty's Government and the public are indebted for the establishment of that line of Railway from Alexandria to Cairo..." (Walne to Stanley, 14 June 1859 encl. (2) in Walne to Colquhoun, 11 Nov. in F.O. 78/1468).

(cont.)

Canning at Constantinople to dissuade the Porte from displeasing 'Abbās and from appointing Sa'īd Pasha or any other person instead, since 'Abbās was "friendly to Great Britain and not inclined to become a tool for the promotion of ambitious and encroaching views on the part of France with respect to Egypt".¹

Since his arrival at Constantinople, Artin had reported 'Abbās to be opposed to the Sultan's reforms, and as even inclined to hail with pleasure the accession of Abdulaziz to his brother's throne.² Artin joined the Constantinople party which tried to influence the Porte against the Viceroy.³ On 31 October 1850, the Porte requested 'Abbās to introduce the Tanzīmāt into Egypt.⁴ The deterioration in Ottoman-Egyptian relations took place when Reşid was led to promulgate the high-sounding programme of reform to win the goodwill and support of the European Powers.⁵ Canning's policy at Constantinople

¹(cont.)

¹P.F., 1851 (605) XXI, pp.900-908

²Murray to Palmerston, 9 Oct. 1850 in F.O. 78/841. 'Abbās's relation with Murray was at its peak. On the latter's return from London, 'Abbās ordered his poet to compose a poem of praise congratulating him on his arrival. The poet also praised Palmerston and the British nation. (see: diwan 'Alī al-Darwish, al-Ishā'r bi-hamīd al-ashā'r, Cairo, 1867, pp. 154-159)

¹Palmerston to Canning (No. 275 Confidential) 21 Oct. 1850 in F.O.78/817.

²Canning to Palmerston, No. 309 of 19 Oct. 1850 [No. 37] in F.O. 424/7A.

³Hekekyan Papers, Add. 37,452, fol. 14.

⁴Walne to Canning, 14 Nov. 1850 in F.O. 352/33; B.P., Walne to Canning, (Confidential) 14 Nov. 1850; Walne to Murray (Confidential) 17 Nov. 1850; Murray to Palmerston, 3 Dec. 1850, with undated translation of 'Abbās's reply to the Porte's letter of 24 Dhū'l Ḥijjah 1266/13 Oct. 1850.

⁵Lewis, The emergence of modern Turkey, p. 113; cf. H. Temperley, (cont.)

was to demand reform as the reward of his support and British friendship. The policy of the two men combined in a proposed alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Britain in 1849; and the Sultan authorized Reşid to submit the question of reform to a council of ministers including Şeyh-ül-Islâm.¹ Thus motivated by hatred and revenge, Reşid used the Tanzimat as an instrument to humiliate 'Abbās.² Palmerston supported 'Abbās who was inclined to assume the role of subordinate of the Sultan and friendly towards Britain.³ When the Tanzimat became involved, Canning was instructed to continue supporting 'Abbās against the intrigues of his enemies at Constantinople but ^{not} to support him in resisting the application of the Tanzimat to Egypt.⁴ Palmerston could not with consistency urge the Porte to exempt Egypt from the Tanzimat. Britain befriended

(cont.) England and the Near East, the Crimea, 2d ed., London, 1964, pp. 241-243.

¹S. L. Poole, Life of Stratford Canning, II, pp. 206-227; Canning to Palmerston (No. 363 most confidential) 26 Nov. 1849 in F.O.78/782.

²On the Tanzimat see: G. Baer, "Tanzimat in Egypt - the Penal Code", BSCAS, XXVI/1, 1963, pp. 29-49; Reşid's ultimate object was probably to get rid of the hereditary government vested in Muḥammad 'Alī's family and to have the revenues and patronage of Egypt immediately dependent upon the Porte. (Murray to Palmerston, No. 2 of 17 Feb. 1851 in F.O. 142/16).

³Palmerston to Canning, No. 290 of 13 Nov. 1850 in F.O. 78/816; B.P., Palmerston to Canning (Private) 8 Dec. 1850.

⁴Palmerston to Murray, No. 1 of 20 Jan. 1851 in F.O. 141/17; Murray to Palmerston (Private & Conf.) 6 Feb. 1851; Palmerston to Canning, No. 45 of 20 Feb. 1851; Palmerston to Murray, No. 1 of 20 Feb. 1851 [No. 7] in F.O. 424/7A.

'Abbās in his difficulties by good offices; but British officials in Whitehall, Cairo and Constantinople had different views as to the application of the Tanzimāt to Egypt. Murray went too far in his support of 'Abbās against the Tanzimāt; he said he would persuade him to accept it so long as it was not extended to deprive him of the rights granted to him by the ferman of 1841. He wanted Palmerston to support 'Abbās in maintaining these rights, and told him that it was impossible for 'Abbās or any other Viceroy to govern Egypt, with Sennar and the Sudan, with the limited powers entrusted to him by the Tanzimāt. Murray stressed that he was not cajoled or misled by 'Abbās's flattering attentions but he was acting for the sake of British interests. 'Abbās, he said, sought British support and felt that his existence depended upon it.¹ On the other hand, Sir Stratford Canning viewed the Egyptian question in relation to the general political state of the Ottoman Empire. It was impossible for Canning to renounce for 'Abbās's sake his long standing policy of reforming the empire. He aimed at avoiding any decided appearance of a separate understanding between 'Abbās and the British government which would no doubt be a cause of jealousy at Constantinople. He sought to remove 'Abbās's mistrust of Reşid, and to reconcile him to the gradual admission of the Sultan's general system of administration.²

¹Murray to Palmerston (Private & Conf.) 6 Feb. 1851; Murray to Canning (Secret & Conf.) 14 Feb. 1851 encl. (1) in Murray to Palmerston, No. 2 of 17 Feb. 1851 [no. 8] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Canning to Palmerston, No. 54 of 20 Feb. 1851; No. 94 of 19 Mar. 1851 in F.O. 424/7A.

Canning had his own policy for Turkey and knew it to be the right one. Yet, Murray believed that both Canning and the Porte were misled by misrepresentation on the state of Egypt. He, therefore, decided to send Walne to Constantinople to give Canning the right information.¹ Between these two extremes, Palmerston successfully managed to maintain the principle of reform and to obtain a railway in Egypt.

It was therefore political factors altogether which led to the creation of the Egyptian railways and gave rise to their establishment. Meanwhile 'Abbās kept these agreements such a profound secret that they had begun to be implemented before their contents were revealed. The French Consul-General in Egypt reported to his government the continuous meetings between the British representative and 'Abbās, but he was completely ignorant of what was discussed;² and he remained uninformed of 'Abbās's decision until March 1851. But 'Abbās's fears of Ottoman hostilities and his great need of British support led him to impress on Walne that the French Consul-General urged him not to make the railway and to throw himself whole-heartedly upon the protection of France, the ancient faithful ally of Egypt.³

¹ Murray to Canning (Private) 29 March 1851 in F.O. 352/34 Pt. I.

² Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 86, 30 Nov. 1850, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 22.

³ 'Abbās claimed that Le Moyne appeared to be acquainted with his intentions of making a railway and reminded him that "France was the only country that had really the power and inclination to support him, that the fleet of England were widely dispersed, and her armies insignificant in point of number..." (B.P., Murray to Palmerston, (Private) 21 Nov. 1850). As no information on this interview exists in the French Archives, it would seem that this was a product of (cont.)

On seeing Le Moyne, the French Consul-General, on 12 March 1851, 'Abbās informed him that he had decided to make a railway which, in accordance with instructions given to his predecessor, Le Moyne did not oppose. At his request 'Abbās gave him an assurance that the management of the railway would not go out of the hands of the Egyptian government and that the transit of mails and goods would not be granted as an exclusive privilege to any power.¹

This was not enough to allay Le Moyne's suspicions, particularly as he foresaw the continuation of the line as far as Suez. He decided to remain in unofficial opposition. He believed that Britain would reap the greatest benefits, as the railway would mainly improve the route to India. The Porte would also consider the stretch from Alexandria to the Red Sea dangerous. He wondered whether the partial independence granted to the Viceroy in 1841 included matters relating to the vital political and general interests of the Ottoman Empire and if, in that case, the Porte had the sole right to decide at first.²

Aupick, the French representative at Constantinople, thought the same and added "cette concession une fois obtenue, on provoquerait un rapprochement entre le Sultan et le Vice Roi et le chemin de fer serait le prix de l'intervention officieuse".³

(cont.) 'Abbās's imagination.

¹ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 116, 13 Mar. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 23.

² Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 131, 17 Apr. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 23.

³ Aupick to Minister of For. Affs., No. 155, 25 Feb.; No. 157, 15 Mar. 1851, M.A.E., C.P. (Turquie), tom 305.

French policy in Egypt was hesitant and the despatches of the French agent received no reply for several months. In 1851, 'Abbās sent a French engineer to Paris with instructions to offer *carte blanche* to the French government, promising that if they assisted him in obtaining modifications of the Tanzimat, he would refuse permission for the railway. Louis Napoleon and his government flatly refused because the railway would be useful to Egypt and the world.¹ 'Abbās, on the other hand, informed Murray and showed him a confidential letter from the French representative at Constantinople offering him support and promises which he thought were not vague or unauthorized. 'Abbās added:

"I have now told you the two particulars² in which I wish the support of the British Government, and in return for which friendly services I am ready to promote her interests by all means in my power. France is soliciting me - I am soliciting you - you may act as you think best, but do not afterwards blame me if you refuse me your support, that in self-defence I turn towards France."

Convinced of 'Abbās's sincerity, Murray reported to Palmerston that Le Moyne, after having exerted in vain all his means to prevent

¹ N. W. Senior, Conversations and Journals in Egypt and Malta. I, pp. 28, 142, 164; see also Merruau, L'Égypte contemporaine, pp. 100-101.

² These were the introduction of the Tanzimat and the summoning of Muḥammad 'Alī Bey, a junior member of his family to Constantinople.

³ Murray to Canning (Secret & Conf.) 14 Feb. 1851 encl. (1) in Murray to Palmerston, No. 2 of 17 Feb. 1851 [no. 8] in F.O. 424/7A.

the construction of the railway, told the first interpreter of 'Abbās that should this railway be undertaken, he should insist upon French engineers being employed either in its construction or maintenance. 'Abbās knew that the newly appointed French minister at Constantinople, La Valette, and his first secretary, Benedetti, had both served in Egypt, and would do all in their power to injure him in the esteem of the Porte. So he asked Murray to inform Palmerston that so long as he would afford him his steady and friendly support, he would neither fear nor care what they could do.¹ Murray also took into consideration the attitude of 'Abbās's family, who gathered at Alexandria and corresponded with Kāmil and others at Constantinople. They all had a leaning to France and declared that 'Abbās had sold Egypt to Britain in agreeing to make a railroad.² Palmerston, therefore, wrote to the British Ambassador in Paris hoping that the French government would instruct her Consul-General in Egypt to abstain from throwing any further impediments in the way of the railway. Louis Napoleon agreed with the Ambassador that it was desirable on both sides "to check the tendency which distant agents sometimes showed to act upon feelings of traditional rivalry, and to imagine that because a measure was evidently advantageous to

¹ Murray to Canning, No. 5 of 23 Mar. 1851 encl. (1) in Murray to Palmerston, No. 8 of 1 Apr. 1851 [no. 20] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Murray to Canning, No. 6 of 27 Mar. 1851 encl. (2) [in no. 20] in F.O. 424/7A.

one of the two Powers, it must necessarily be injurious to the other."¹

The Porte seemed to have known about the railway, since Mukhtār Bey, who was sent on a mission to Egypt concerning matters in dispute,² was commissioned to dissuade 'Abbās from making the railway.³ Mukhtār's language conveyed that 'Abbās could not, with propriety, commence such a work without first obtaining the Porte's sanction, "a suggestion" as Murray comments, "which was in fact introducing the edge of the wedge which [was] intended to be driven home by the Tanẓīmāt".⁴ 'Abbās replied that in no previous work of internal improvements had either Muḥammad 'Alī or Ibrāhīm asked the Porte's permission. Furthermore, if he made this railway, he did so without neglecting any other of his financial obligations; he deserved "not the reproof but the approbation of the Sultan and His Majesty's European allies".

3. The Alexandria-Cairo Railway contract as a "fait accompli":

Murray found himself fighting the battle of the railway absolutely alone. He learned that the representatives of all other European Powers, had instructions, either secret or open, to oppose it.

¹Palmerston to the Marquis of Normanby, No. 159 of 21 Apr. 1851; Normanby to Palmerston (No. 122 conf.) 28 Apr. 1851 [nos. 27 and 32] in F.O. 424/7A.

²The Times, 20 May 1851; Hekekyan Papers, Add. 37,452, fols. 42, 54.

³La Valette to F.O., No. 3, 15 Mai 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 305; Alison to Canning, 31 July 1851 encl. in Canning to Palmerston, No. 236 of 1 Aug. 1851 [no. 74] in F.O. 424/7A; also cf. P. Mourier, Des intérêts Européens en Orient, pp. 41-46.

⁴Murray to Palmerston, No. 9 of 17 April 1851 [no. 34] in F.O. 424/7A.

Fearful that 'Abbās, being a man of no firm and energetic character, would hesitate to commence the undertaking, Murray insisted on his keeping the promise, and gave him assurances of British support.¹ Seeing that until its actual commencement he would be allowed no rest from remonstrances, 'Abbās decided to send Nubar Bey,² his first secretary and interpreter, to London armed with full powers to make the necessary contracts for the railway materials under Robert Stephenson's advice.

Earlier, on 1 March 1851, Murray wrote, on behalf of 'Abbās, to Stephenson to consult him as to the preliminary steps to be taken.³ Thus, 'Abbās took official steps to put into practice his intentions of making a railway.⁴

The controversy over the railway entered a new phase when the Porte stepped in, claiming the right to authorize its construction. Canning did not know that Mukhtar was instructed to talk to 'Abbās about the railway. But at the beginning of May, he received information from Malta that orders had been sent from Constantinople to forbid its

¹ Murray to Palmerston, 17 Apr. 1851 [no. 34] No. 10 of 2 May 1851 [no. 36] in F.O. 424/7A; Murray to Canning, No. 8 of 1 May 1851 in F.O. 142/16.

² Later Nubar Pasha (1825-99) an Armenian Christian who was brought to Egypt by his uncle Baghus Bey, Muhammad 'Ali's foreign minister. He was promoted to high posts after his return from France in 1849, and later ran the railway under Sa'id. (For a full biography see: J. Tagher, "Portrait psychologique de Nubar Pacha", *cah.hist.ég.*, I, nos. 5-6 (1949), pp. 353-72; A. Holynski, *Nubar Pacha devant l'histoire*, Paris, 1886.

³ Murray to Stephenson, 1 March, 17 Apr. 1851; Stephenson to Murray, 24 March 1851 in F.O. 141/19, Pt. 2; *P. & O. Ann. Reports*, I, p. 9.

⁴ *The Times*, 24 March 1851.

construction and that 'Abbās had applied, under impression of alarm, for the presence of a British steamer at Alexandria. The Porte denied all knowledge of any such order;¹ but Reşid remarked to Canning that the Viceroy of Egypt was clearly not at liberty to make a railway without permission from the Porte, and the Porte alone was entitled to authorize the adoption of this measure on the Viceroy's application. The Grand Vezir added that his only wish was to have his sovereign respected and Egypt well governed.² Reşid based his argument on the narrow interpretation of the clause of the ferman of 1841, granted to Muḥammad 'Alī, that "... thou, thy children, and they descendants ... ye shall apply for orders on all matters of importance which concern those countries..."³

Canning told Reşid that it was far from clear that 'Abbās was at all bound to ask the Sultan's permission. The argument Canning used was that the payment of a fixed annual tribute to the Porte, coupled with the grant of an hereditary internal administration, seemed to leave the Viceroy at liberty to improve the province, using

¹Canning to Palmerston (No. 151 Conf.) 5 May 1851 [no. 37] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Canning to Palmerston, No. 165 of 17 May 1851 [no. 38] in F.O. 424/7A.

³Hurewitz, Diplomacy, I, pp. 122-123.

its own resources to do so. He informed Reşid that the Porte, having raised the question of authority, would place itself in the awkward position of having either to counteract the very legitimate wishes of Britain, or to dissatisfy the Powers who opposed the railway.¹ He drew Reşid's attention to two previous cases, the Barrage and the Postal Convention, in which Muḥammad 'Alī did not apply for permission or ratification.² Reşid insisted on permission being sought, but he disclaimed any ground of objection to the railway which he promised to sanction, in defiance of any opposition, not only from Alexandria to Cairo but to Suez provided the work were carried on with Egyptian money.³ The Porte's insistence, as Canning conceived, was because of its jealousy of the support and goodwill which 'Abbās was likely to obtain by meeting the wishes and interests of Britain. So guided by general interests in both Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, Canning wrote to Palmerston that British influence would be put to hazard if their advocacy of 'Abbās's interests were not kept within the limits of the ferman of investiture. Consequently he did not welcome Nubar's mission to London of which he only knew through Reşid and Mukhtār.

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 165 of 17 May 1851 [no. 38] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Canning to Palmerston, No. 174 of 19 May 1851 [no. 39] in F.O. 424/7A.

³Canning to Palmerston, No. 188 of 4 June 1851 [no. 43] Canning to Murray, No. 9 of 26 June 1851 encl. (2) in [no. 53] in F.O. 424/7A; Canning to Murray, No. 8 of 18 June 1851 in F.O. 141/18; B.P., Canning to Palmerston (Private) 5 June 1851.

Furious at 'Abbās, Reşid announced his intention to protest against his assumed right of independent decision, and intimated, if the Porte were "pushed to the wall", to appeal to all the Powers signatory to the settlement of 1841. To prevent the immediate execution of this design, which would commit the Porte irrevocably, and increase 'Abbās's irritation, Canning undertook to apply privately through Murray for a suspension, if necessary, of the intended plan, until the Sultan's demand could be brought under Palmerston's consideration.¹ Canning objected to Reşid's proposal to write at the same time to 'Abbās. Explaining the whole situation to Murray, Canning hoped that he, Murray, would have no difficulty in cooperating with him during the time required for referring to Palmerston and receiving his instructions. "His Majesty's [the Sultan] consent might, I think," he wrote, "be given with the approval of the Foreign Office, in such manner as to guard the Viceroy's rights to a separate internal administration, and to secure to him eventually the fruits of this politic reliance on the cordiality and support of Great Britain".² However, Canning succeeded in obtaining the Sultan's sanction for suspending the protest in order to liquidate the difficulties between the Viceroy

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 188 of 4 June 1851 [no. 43] in F.O.424/7A.

²Canning to Murray, No. 6 of 4 June 1851 [encl. in no. 43] in F.O. 424/7A.

and the Sultan without more disturbance. But from his constant discussions with Reşid on the subject, Canning became convinced that the concluding paragraph of the ferman afforded a sufficient justification of the Porte's demand. He was assured that when Muḥammad 'Alī visited Constantinople he had applied personally for the Sultan's permission to construct the Barrage. Nevertheless, he suggested to Murray that 'Abbās could frame his request so as to avoid the establishment of an embarrassing precedent.

French representatives at Constantinople were, to some extent, behind the Porte's insistence. France, which had stood as champion of Egypt in 1841, stood as the champion of the Porte at the beginning of the 1850's. Nubar's mission to London offended the French representatives both in Constantinople and Cairo, who reported 'Abbās's purpose to solicit Palmerston's help by constructing a railway from Cairo to Alexandria.¹ As the Ottoman Cabinet seemed firmly resolved to oppose the railway concession, La Valette reported that he would neglect nothing to keep it in this frame of mind to prevent the difficulties which would inevitably arise from such a construction.² Admitting that the creation of a railway between Cairo and Alexandria might be useful, Reşid declared that the railway could only be set

¹La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 3, 15 May 1851, M.A.E., C.P. tom. 305; Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 132, 20 Apr. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23.

²La Valette, No. 3, 15 May 1851.

up with the authorization of the Sultan; it could neither be conceded to a foreign company, nor financed by means of a foreign loan. Reşid informed La Valette of Canning's attempts and intervention. On Canning's attitude, La Valette said that he had always given his support to the Porte so long as in Egypt one had remained deaf to the pleas of a British agent.¹ He added that in 1841, it did not depend on Britain that the hereditary concession granted to Muḥammad 'Alī was hedged with most rigorous restrictions. Now 'Abbās undertook to build a railway and Canning immediately modified his conduct. Reşid assured Lur, the first dragoman of the French Embassy, that the Sultan was in complete and entire agreement with the Ottoman Cabinet's resolution to oppose the railway. Reşid asked Lur "You seem reserved... could it be that you do not have the same interest that we take in this affair and the same care that we bring to it?" According to La Valette's instructions, Lur assured Reşid that they shared his opinion and on the railway they never ceased and would never cease to speak the same language in Alexandria as in Constantinople.² La Valette thought it his duty not to let Reşid suppose that the French could today express an opinion contrary to that which they had always expressed.

¹La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 9, 4 Juin 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 305.

²La Valette, No. 9, 4 Juin 1851.

While in London, Nubar met Palmerston to plead the cause of 'Abbās. As to the other matters in dispute,¹ Palmerston told Nubar that 'Abbās ought to be careful to keep himself with the obligations of the ferman of 1841. As to the railway, Palmerston thought that 'Abbās had every right to make one if he chose without asking permission of the Porte; but if the Porte deemed its permission necessary it had only to send that permission. He also discovered from Musurus, the Turkish Ambassador in London, that there was something more than a feeling of etiquette on the part of the Porte; that Russian, Austrian and French intrigues were at work upon Ottoman jealousy to prevent the execution of the railway. He asked Murray, therefore, to encourage 'Abbās to go on and wrote "we will back him up with all our influence and means at Constantinople, and as right and good sense are on his side he need fear nothing".² Palmerston's support had already been won. Earlier, he wrote to Canning that if these intrigues were to succeed, and if 'Abbās were to be replaced by a pro-French candidate, "the Porte would soon find that they had been doing the work of others, and that they had been led blindfold to establish a dangerous foreign influence in an important province of the Turkish Empire, instead of having therein a loyal vassal".³

¹These were the reduction of the army; the question of 'Abbās's family; forced labour and the Tanzimat (Palmerston to Canning, No. 77 of 9 July 1851 [no. 50] in F.O. 424/7A). On Nubar's mission see: Hekekyan Papers, Add. 37,452, fol. 44; also Sammarco, op.cit., p. ; Charles-Roux (op.cit., p. 246) says that it was Nubar who convinced 'Abbās to seek support in London; 'Abbās to Palmerston, 15 Jumada II 1267/17 Apr. 1851 in F.O. 78/877.

²B.P., Palmerston to Murray (Private) 7 May 1851, Murray to Palmerston, (Private) 20 May 1851.

Having been informed of the Porte's demand, it seemed to Palmerston that the Porte was setting up a pretension which was founded neither upon right nor upon precedent. He expressed his great surprise to Musurus. Palmerston said that Egypt was differently circumstanced. The detailed administration was left to an hereditary Pasha according to the settlement of 1841, which did not entitle the Sultan to require the Pasha to ask his prior sanction to undertaking works, either public or private, unless such works should have an important political bearing. He argued that the Porte had adopted a new position. There had been no interference when Muḥammad 'Alī had spent millions of pounds on establishing manufacturers and the Barrage. The Porte had turned a blind eye when Ibrāhīm began and 'Abbās continued the building of the gigantic system of fortifications. Palmerston said that the Porte had not dared to interfere with Muḥammad 'Alī's internal politics but it reserved its assertion of prerogative until a railway was proposed and "to which the only real objection is that it would be productive of convenience to the best and most useful and most disinterested friend and ally of the Sultan".¹ Palmerston told Musurus that he could not see that this was a matter in regard to which the Pasha was at all bound to ask permission. It was for the Porte and 'Abbās to settle the question of etiquette as they could. Palmerston

(cont.)

³ Palmerston to Canning, No. 108 of 25 Apr. 1851 [no. 30] in F.O. 424/7A.

¹ Palmerston to Canning, No. 176 of 9 July 1851 [no. 47] in F.O. 424/7A. Palmerston declared in the House of Commons 'Abbās's right to make a railway without permission. (Hansard, 3d. Ser. CXX, pp. 30-40); B.P. Canning to Palmerston (Private) 5 June 1851.

also repeated to Canning his views, adding that the railway would neither affect the position of European maritime Powers towards each other, nor the foreign relations of the Ottoman Empire as would a ship canal through the Isthmus.¹

In Cairo, Murray's views differed in some respects from those of his superior at Constantinople. Murray's only means of obeying Canning's instructions was to forward his despatch to the Foreign Office leaving Palmerston to make his own decision. This he resolved to do because no actual work on the railway had been commenced in Egypt, but plans were only being made by Nubar and Stephenson in London. Murray told Palmerston that 'Abbās was surprised and grieved to find that Sir Stratford Canning was not yet authorized to hold language more firm and explicit. Furthermore, in communicating Canning's instructions to 'Abbās, Murray was counteracting and nullifying the suggestion that he had been pressing upon 'Abbās even before 21 December 1848 'both privately and officially'.² The French in Constantinople tried to bring about a coup to counteract the railway project, but Murray was able to thwart it.³ However, if, after all these preliminary steps, the British government thought fit to refuse to support 'Abbās's rights against the arbitrary pretensions of the Porte, Murray said that

¹Palmerston to Canning, No. 195 of 24 July 1851 [no. 58] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Murray to Palmerston, No. 14 of 15 June 1851 [no. 51] in F.O. 424/7A.

³Encl. (2), the Egyptian Commissioners to Abbas, in [no. 51] F.O. 424/7A; Encls. (6), Edhem Pasha to Abbas, 8 Shaban 1267/8 June 1851, and (7), Edhem to Abbas 9 Shaban 1267/9 June 1851, in Canning to Palmerston, No. 224 of 10 July 1851 [no. 66] in F.O. 424/7A; Canning to Murray, No. 13 of 7 July 1851 in F.O. 141/18.

his position in Egypt would be a most painful one as he should thus become the unwilling instrument of fulfilling the prophecy made to the Viceroy by the French agent.¹ On the other hand 'Abbās seemed determined not to allow the Porte to diminish or cripple his authority. To concede this precedent would open the way for interference with future internal improvements. 'Abbās declared that if one official letter written by either of his predecessors could be shown, applying for the imperial permission to make any internal improvement, he was prepared to write a similar letter immediately. Whatever it might be, 'Abbās told Murray that "I have pledged my word to make the railroad, and I will keep my promise if it costs me my Pashalic."² Murray pointed out to Canning that it was Palmerston who was in a position to delay the commencement of the railway by personal communication with Nubar, the Egyptian agent on the spot. Yet Murray told Canning that he believed his government would not accede to the Porte's pretension for several reasons. This sanction had never before been required or obtained for any internal work since the ferman of 1841. The government had always instructed him to continuing pressure with

¹ Murray wrote that the French Consul-General gave 'Abbās "a warning (almost in the tone of a threat), against making the railroad, and prophesied to him that England would for her own interests drag him into this difficulty with the Porte and with the old allies of his family, and then would leave him unsupported to get out of it as he could".

² Murray to Palmerston, No. 15 of 27 June 1851 [no. 52] in F.O. 424/7A.

regard to the subject of the railway with the Viceroy of Egypt, without reference whatever to the Porte. Lastly, Nubar had informed 'Abbās from London that Palmerston considered such opposition to the railway unjust and out of place.¹

More decisive action followed. After the preliminary arrangements between Nubar and Stephenson in London, the latter sent Borthwick to Egypt to conclude, on his behalf, an engineering contract for the Alexandria-Cairo railway.² To present everyone with a fait accompli, regardless of Canning's instructions and without receiving Palmerston's orders, Murray advised 'Abbās to sign the contract at once. Then, 'Abbās could reconcile the Sultan to the matter by writing a most deferential letter, to announce the commencement of the work, hoping it would receive the Sultan's protection.³ Consequently, on 12 July 1851, Stephan Bey, acting on behalf of 'Abbās, signed and executed the contract with Borthwick.⁴ "The Rubicon being now passed", Murray recapitulated to Canning the circumstances and the motives that guided his conduct. He did not want to make the Viceroy "a laughing-stock and a by-word in England"; and he had executed Palmerston's instructions to press the railway project upon 'Abbās to the best of his ability.⁵ As he wrote to Palmerston, had he adopted

¹ Encl.(1), Murray to Canning No. 11 of 22 June 1851 [in no. 52] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Stephenson to Murray, 20 June 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

³ Murray to Canning, No. 17 of 23 July 1851 and Murray to Palmerston, No. 19 of 17 July 1851 in F.O. 142/16.

⁴ Murray to Palmerston, No. 18 of 16 July 1851 [no. 61] in F.O. 424/7A; for a copy of the contract see encl. (3) in Murray to Canning, No. 19 of 25 July 1851 in F.O. 195/348; The Times, 29 July, 1851; Le Constitutionnel, 18 Oct. 1851. (cont.)

a contrary course, the result would not have improved 'Abbās's relations with the Sultan. Nubar, acting under instructions received long ago, had signed contracts in London for the delivery of 10,000 to 12,000 tons of rail. If later 'Abbās had declined to sign the contract with the agent of Stephenson in Egypt, the latter would have withdrawn from the transaction offended and disgusted.. There would have remained the complete absurdity of railroad material purchased, but no engineering department to organise the work. This would have given the Porte exactly the right opportunity for finding fault with 'Abbās.¹

4. 'Abbās versus the Sultan: the Ist'idhān dispute and the dissension between Canning and Murray:

However, the railway was not to be continued to Suez. Murray did not advocate it, because it would be of use only to Britain, and it would not pay Egypt 2⁰/o interest. To facilitate Canning's mediatorial exertions, Murray persuaded 'Abbās to write a respectful letter to the Porte. But 'Abbās's letter was far from being conciliatory. True, he followed Muḥammad 'Alī's ~~example~~ in saying that the railway, when finished, would

(cont.)

⁵ Murray to Canning, No. 17 of 23 July 1851 in F.O. 142/16; Murray to Palmerston (No. 20 Conf.), 2 Aug. 1851 [no. 81] in F.O. 424/7A. Murray wrote "whet her right or wrong, prudent or imprudent, the Viceroy had gone so far in respect to the Rail-Road that he had no choice but to complete the contracts..." (Murray to Canning (Private) 19 July 1851 in F.O. 352/34 Pt. I).

¹ Murray to Palmerston (No. 20 Conf.) 2 Aug. 1851 [no. 81] in F.O. 424/7A.

be named after the Sultan, as had been the Barrage and the Maḥmūdīyya Canal. But he deemed himself bound to obtain previous authorization only if he were to construct a railway between Cairo and Suez, because it would yield no advantages for the internal good of the province and would have a great political bearing.¹

The question of authority became a crucial issue not only because of the conflict between the Porte and 'Abbās, but also because of the discrepancy of opinions between Canning and Murray. 'Abbās adopted Murray's advice but at the latter's own responsibility. Murray did not steer his course according to Canning's instructions, although he knew that Canning would be greatly disappointed. He did not deny the Porte's right to renew a privilege but believed 'Abbās was entitled to use the power exercised by his predecessors, until a formal announcement of the Porte's intention to curtail it (by enforcing the disused clause of the ferman) was made to him.² Palmerston saw in 'Abbās's action no breach of the Sultan's authority. Fearful of Ottoman interference, Palmerston however instructed the Admiralty to send some ships of Admiral Parker's squadron to visit Alexandria, to give encouragement and moral support to 'Abbās. This was an indication of the interest which the British government took in the affair of the railway, and of a friendly feeling towards 'Abbās.³ Palmerston's decision,

¹ 'Abbās to the Grand Vezir, encl. (1) in Murray to Canning, No. 19 of 25 July 1851 in F.O. 195/348.

² Murray to Canning, No. 17 of 23 July 1851 in F.O. 142/16.

³ Palmerston to the Admiralty, 4 Aug. 1851 encl. in Palmerston to Murray, No. 14 of 4 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/17; Palmerston to Canning, No. 204 of 4 Aug. 1851 [no. 63] in F.O. 424/7A.

when it became known in Egypt, brought some relief to Murray, and much more to 'Abbās, whose cause was becoming desperate. He was constantly being told by those who were violently anti-British that Britain would not scruple to sacrifice him.¹ Now the question is: what was France's reaction to the contract? Would the Porte and Canning concede victory to 'Abbās and Murray?

a) The French reaction:

The clamour did not subside as soon as Murray expected. The French reaction to the railway contract was inconsistent. In Paris, Louis Napoleon gave Britain assurances of friendship and cordiality because he did not suppose the British meant to monopolize transport. He admitted that some other Powers, particularly Austria, were incessantly urging France not to be blind to what was going on under her eyes, and content to let Britain get complete possession of Egypt.² Meanwhile in Constantinople and Cairo the opposition of French representatives was strong. This opposition was mainly due to the composition of the French legation in Constantinople. At its head, La Valette always claimed that his former residence in Egypt enabled him to know the precise merits of the railway question; that it would only benefit Britain. He looked upon the railway as a

¹ Murray to Palmerston, No. 24 of 18 Aug. 1851 and No. 22 of 6 Aug. 1851 [nos. 88 and 83] in F.O. 424/7A.

² The Marquis of Normanby to Palmerston (Secret and Conf.) 11 Aug. 1851 and Palmerston to Normanby, No. 379 of 14 Aug. 1851 [nos. 72 and 73] in F.O. 424/7A.

step that nothing could justify, and gave his reasons. First of all, 'Abbās had no right to make it without the authorization of the Sultan. Secondly, the railway would be unprofitable for the inhabitants and the transport of produce. Thirdly, the capital invested in the railway would produce no benefit and it was doubtful whether the receipts would be sufficient to cover the costs of working. Finally, the railway would become the source of anxieties and complications which it was very prudent to prevent.¹ Thus, he claimed that his opposition was merely of a moral character.²

Four days after having discussed with 'Abbās the disadvantages of building a railway, Le Moyne learned of the contract from M. D'Anstacy, the Swedish Consul-General in Egypt. The news heightened his opposition. He prophesied that the Cairo-Suez railway would follow that of Alexandria and added "en un mot l'influence de l'Angleterre est tout puissante en ce moment en Egypte et menace de ce changer en protectorat."³ In French eyes, 'Abbās's decision of 12 July condemned him as a rebellious vassal, who had acted without authorization from his suzerain. He had openly thrown himself into Britain's hands; and he had alienated himself from the other four Great Powers. This was a fine opportunity, which France should not let

¹ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 14, 23 June 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 306.

² Canning to Palmerston, No. 239 of 4 Aug. 1851 [no. 76] in F.O. 424/7A.

³ Le Moyne to La Valette, No. 40, 13 July 1851 encl. in Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 154, 18 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23; also Le Moyne to La Valette, No. 38, 2 July 1851 encl. in Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 52, 3 July, tom. 23.

escape, to urge a decree of dethronement against 'Abbās.¹ It remained, therefore, for French representatives strongly to defend the Sultan's authority and the treaty obligations of 1841 which 'Abbās had violated. Le Moyne considered the railway as neither more nor less than "la Question d'Orient". He repeated to 'Abbās's interpreter that the Barrage and the canals in Egypt were made by permission of the Sultan. He believed that Britain's main objective was to undermine the Porte's position in Egypt. He alleged that Britain would reverse her policy and prevent the application of the Tanzimat to Egypt. The only course left for France was to cooperate with the other Great Powers in order to expose Britain's real policy towards Egypt. As a result, Britain would abandon both 'Abbās and Murray rather than jeopardise her larger interests in the Ottoman Empire.² Stephen Bey, Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave some assurances to Le Moyne about the railway. The railway, he said, had no political bearing so long as it was not extended to Suez. In addition, 'Abbās had no intention of alienating the other Great Powers, especially France, with whom he would always remain on good terms.³ But this did nothing to stop the stubborn opposition of the French representative. Huber, the Austrian Consul-General in Egypt, was in general agreement with Le Moyne about the

¹ Le Moyne to Min. of For. Affs., No. 154 18 July 1851 and Le Moyne to La Valette, No. 41, 14 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23; Delaporte to Min. of For. Affs., No. 96, 6 Aug. 1851, M.A.E., C.C. (Le Caire), tom. 29.

² Nubar to 'Abbās's Private Secretary, 19 July 1851 encl. in Murray to Canning (No. 22 Conf.) 8 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 195/365.

³ An extract from Le Moyne to La Valette, 30 July encl. in Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 158, 31 July, M.A.E., C.P., tom 23.

question of authority.¹

The Quai d'Orsay had considered La Valette's language so far excellent in every respect.

"Vous avez parfaitement raison de penser," wrote the French Foreign Minister, "que le gouv't. de la République ni peut ni ne veut changer la politique jusqu'à présent suivie en ce qui concerne le projet du chemin de fer à construire du Kaire à Suez et vous saurez comme vous le dites très bien, appuyer au besoin la résistance de la Porte sans vous substituer à elle dans la lutte où elle est engagée avec l'Ambassade britannique, ce qui aurait l'inconvénient d'intéresser l'amour propre de Sir Stratford Canning et peut être même de son gouv't. à un résultat auquel ils tiennent déjà si fortement pour d'autres motifs."²

La Valette emphasized that he maintained this line of policy and his efforts always tended to prevent a collision between the parties. However, he did report the feelings which he discovered in some members of the Ottoman Cabinet whose expectation had, perhaps, been disappointed by his counsel of moderation. La Valette analysed the situation thus: Regid had the sympathies neither of Russia nor of Austria; the principles and ideas of which he was the representative in Turkey obliged him to give all his confidence to the British Ambassador and to the French legation. But Britain had taken, by the attitude of her agents in Egypt, a position which could not fail to arouse the deepest mistrust in the Porte. The ministers at Con-

¹ Le Moyne to La Valette, 21 July 1851 encl. in Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 156, 22 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 23.

² Minister of For. Affs. to La Valette, No. 18, 27 June 1851, M.A.E., C.P. (Turquie) tom. 306. Despatches from the Quai d'Orsay are extremely difficult to decipher.

Constantinople thought that France, on the contrary, should be, if not disinterested, at least disposed to share in the irritation which 'Abbās had aroused. They had been not a little surprised at the language La Valette had adopted. La Valette claimed that he had succeeded in forestalling violent measures for the ruin of 'Abbās, an object which the Ottomans relied on France's moral cooperation to achieve. The principal members of the Divan had perhaps understood the necessity of conciliating Britain.¹ He knew that the Ottoman ministers thought that, as soon as the Porte showed less hostility to the railway, Britain would be less favourable to 'Abbās, and he would not be surprised to learn that Sir Stratford Canning himself had pointed this out.

When the news of the contract arrived, La Valette found Reşid surprised and irritated. La Valette reported the failure of Canning's good offices to find a peaceful and satisfactory solution for the railway question. He was told by Canning that Palmerston's resolutions on this subject seemed to him irrevocable. However, La Valette understood that the conciliatory language which he had held in Constantinople did not flatter any interest, any passion, and one must welcome any proposition which would permit the Divan to get the better of 'Abbās's resistance to the Tanzimat, even at the price of an eventual concession concerning the railway. He saw that Reşid's deference to Canning, and the weakness and blindness of 'Abbās, had led to

¹ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 24, 15 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom.306.

the strange situation in which both were placed. 'Abbās, La Valette said, was paying the price for an assistance for which he henceforth had no guarantee. Meanwhile Turkey was struggling with two alternatives: either to give consent by silence with regard to 'Abbās's action which the French considered as an act of rebellion; or to intervene and find herself confronted with England. "Now the silence will be an admission of inability and the Sultan appears resolved to never submit to an humiliation." Having exposed the anxieties of the Ottoman Cabinet, La Valette admitted he was unable to understand the spirit of his government's instructions. Fearing to see the Porte resort to an imprudent act, he reminded the Sultan's ministers of the project which they had taken the initiative to make an appeal to the Great Powers, and suggested the idea of substituting a canal for the railway.¹ La Valette had no authority to talk about the Suez Canal suggestion.

Meanwhile, the Quai d'Orsay's line of policy was being dispatched to La Valette. It seemed to the French Foreign Minister, Baroche, from the information he was able to piece together, that the interests of Russia and Austria coincided with those of France in opposing the British project. Yet France was not assured of assistance in a struggle to wreck the railway project. He assumed that the Continental Powers might perhaps take pleasure in seeing Britain and France struggling

¹La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., 4 Aug. 1851 and also La Valette, No. 24, 15 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom.306.

against one another on the Egyptian Question; and hoping to prolong this misunderstanding, they would not hurry to intervene. He pointed out a more cautious line. He instructed La Valette to oppose the railway, not openly, but from behind the scenes. La Valette was left to judge by the dispositions in which he would find his colleagues. He was instructed not to lag behind if they were disposed to act in order to sustain the resistance of the Porte. In case of need he should arouse their zeal but not to place himself too far ahead of them.¹

La Valette asserted that he had always counselled prudence and moderation. He had constantly in mind all the inconveniences which would result for the French from a hostility which ascribed to them responsibility for the resolutions taken by the Divan.² La Valette was in constant touch with Regid who informed him of the latest developments in the railway question and in Palmerston's attitude. When Regid asked his opinion, La Valette was greatly embarrassed and replied that he had foreseen this great difficulty for a long time; that he had urged him three months ago to take hold of the Egyptian Question before it openly became an English question. Moreover, he always told him that the French government desired, in the interest of Turkey, a peaceful solution and he viewed with

¹Minister of For. Affs. to La Valette, No. 21, 28 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 306.

²La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., 24 Aug. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 306. Both La Valette and his Foreign Minister deplored the astonishment produced at Constantinople by the position taken by France. This astonishment, according to La Valette, was explained by the character of the Grand Vezir, the antecedents of the question and the rôle
(cont.)

sorrow that they were further away than ever to understand one another.¹ On the other hand, he told Canning it was unpleasant that 'Abbās's precipitancy placed the Porte in a difficult position. He also reminded Canning of his friendly attitude which still continued.² La Valette did not conceal his opposition to the railway from Canning, but pointed out to him that anything approaching to intimidation was remote from his thoughts.³

Nevertheless, La Valette aimed more particularly at procuring a reference to the Five Powers in his conversation with Canning.⁴ To what extent was this effective? Russia abstained from all interference in this question. Neither La Valette nor his government were ignorant of Russia's attitude.⁵ La Valette himself remarked that the conduct of M. de Titoff, the Russian envoy at Constantinople, had been full of precaution and reservation. La Valette asked Regid if it was true that Titoff had conveyed to him Russia's assurances of an absolute and effective support. Regid replied that Titoff had informed him officially that the Porte had, in the Tsar's opinion, right on its side in the struggle with 'Abbās, but Titoff was left

(cont.) played by France in 1840. (See: Minister of For. Affs., to La Valette, No. 22, 7 Aug. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom 306.)

¹ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., 24 Aug. 1851.

² La Valette, No. 39, 24 Aug. 1851.

³ Canning to Palmerston, No. 239 of 4 Aug. 1851 [no. 76] in F.O. 424/7A.

⁴ Canning to Palmerston, No. 278 of 17 Sept. 1851 [no. 109] in F.O. 424/7A.

⁵ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 37, 14 Aug. 1851, also Minister of For. Affs. to La Valette, No. 21, 28 July 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 306.

discretion to act according to circumstances.¹ The British Ambassador in Russia learned that France had attempted to induce the Russian government to oppose the railway. However, Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, had nothing against 'Abbās, and all he knew was that Palmerston had offered considerable support to 'Abbās. British policy was well explained by the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. Palmerston, he said, afforded 'Abbās some support in the railway question because he considered that 'Abbās had the right to undertake such a public work. Yet Palmerston had no wish that 'Abbās should glide into independence, or, in defiance of the Porte, arrogate to himself such a right of sovereignty as the independent exercise of capital punishment, the Qisās.² The Russians, however, had no fear that the differences between the Porte and 'Abbās would lead to any serious results.³ Ālī Pasha, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, informed Canning that Russia had addressed a despatch to her Consul-General in Egypt hoping that 'Abbās would acknowledge his error and pay due obedience to his lawful sovereign. But Canning discovered that Titoff's account of the despatch was somewhat less unilateral than the Ottoman description. Titoff gave no indication of siding with 'Abbās either. Indeed, Canning found Titoff totally ignorant of the signing of the

¹ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 39, 24 Aug. 1851.

² See below, p. 176.

³ Buchanan to Palmerston (No. 37 Conf.) 19 Aug. 1851 [no. 89] in F.O. 424/7A; Cte. Asten Sackinsy to Comte Orloff (Particulière) 14/25 Dec. 1851 in F.O. 352/34 Pt. II.

railway contract.¹ Nesselrode assured the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg that the Russian government had had no part in the railway affair.² On the other hand the Porte had made no overtures to Russia. The language which was used to the representatives of other Powers was also used to the Russian envoy: "That were Abbas Pasha to refuse compliance with the contents of the Firman of investiture, and establish the railway without applying for permission and obtaining the Sultan's sanction, they would then submit the case to the European Powers to decide whether the pretensions of the Porte were well-grounded."³

Prussia had committed herself to a different view. When Stephenson first surveyed the ground for the railway in 1850, the Prussian Consul-General informed 'Abbas that wood for sleepers was to be obtained more cheaply and of a better quality in Prussia than elsewhere. 'Abbas consented on condition that the price and the quality of all materials should be first approved by Stephenson. The Prussian Consul-General sent official communications home, and advertisements appeared in many of the Prussian newspapers asking for tenders for the supply of timber. Stephenson advised the use of iron sleepers because they were much cheaper than wood; but recommended that if wood were required, it should be imported at a lower price from Norway,

¹ Canning to Palmerston, No. 261 of 25 Aug. 1851 [no. 97] and No. 278 of 17 Sept. 1851 [no. 109] in F.O. 424/7A; Seymour to Palmerston, No. 49 of 20 Oct. 1851 [no. 123] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Seymour to Palmerston, No. 56 of 21 Oct. 1851 encl. in No. 520 dated 4 Nov. 1851 in F.O. 146/419.

³ Encls. (1) and (2) in Canning to Palmerston, No. 359 of 26 Nov. 1851 [no. 154] in F.O. 424/7A.

Sweden or Trieste.¹ No contract, therefore, was given to Prussia. This decision might have offended the Prussian Consul-General, although he told Le Moyne, when this engagement was still in force, that he had informed 'Abbās that this railway was prejudicial to the financial and political interests of Egypt.² Prussia's opposition would have been effective if this question had lasted longer, and had been brought before the Powers.

b) The Porte's reaction:

In Constantinople, there was an outcry against the signing of the contract. An acute crisis of right and dignity had developed, the result of which could not reconcile the differences between 'Abbās and the Sultan. Furthermore, the action taken in Cairo put Canning in a very embarrassing situation, and completely paralysed his means of serving 'Abbās. 'Abbās brought himself into immediate conflict with the Sultan. He announced the conclusion of the contract to the Grand Vezir without any such attempt to obtain the Sultan's permission as had been expected of him in order to comply with the terms of the ferman.

"Considering the state of the Sultan's feelings towards Abbas Pasha on other questions, and the opposition made to the project of a railway in Egypt,

¹Murray to Palmerston (No. 20 conf.) 2 Aug. 1851 [no. 81] in F.O. 424/7A; Hekekyan Papers, V, Add. 37,452, fol. 55.

²Le Moyne to La Valette, No. 40 of 13 July 1851, encl. in No. 158, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23.

by France openly, by another Great Powers secretly," Canning wrote "I thought there was room for congratulation in the prospect thus offered of obtaining our end with so slight a sacrifice on the Viceroy's part, and none at all on ours, but on the contrary, with decided advantage to our general policy in this part of the world."¹

Canning understood that the Porte would revert to its former intention of protestation, and would reserve the adoption of any stronger measure till later. He had no doubt that the French Ambassador would encourage the Porte not only to protest but to appeal to the Five Powers.²

Though put immediately in possession of Murray's explanations and of Palmerston's arguments in so far as they supported 'Abbās's view, Resid firmly informed Canning that neither he nor the Sultan could condone the insulting manner in which 'Abbās had acted. The railway itself was not in question. He maintained that Muḥammad 'Alī had asked leave for the Barrage; and that no other work of great public importance had been constructed in Egypt since 1841 except the fortifications, which had been commenced some time before. Resid declared his intention to summon 'Abbās to revoke the contract, and to abstain from renewing it until the Sultan's permission should be officially granted.³ In such circumstances, Canning wrote to

¹ Canning to Palmerston, No. 236 of 1 Aug. 1851 [no. 74] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Alison to Canning, 31 July 1851 encl. in Canning to Palmerston, No. 236 of 1 Aug. 1851 [no. 74] in F.O. 424/7A.

³ Canning to Palmerston, No. 237 of 4 Aug. 1851 [no. 75] with encl. Alison to Canning, 3 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 424/7A.

Palmerston, "I hope, though I cannot yet engage my word, that the Porte will be reasonable enough to afford him ['Abbās] a decent bridge for passing Mr. Murray's Rubicon".¹

When Edhem and Hayreddin, the Egyptian Commissioners, waited upon the Grand Vezir with 'Abbās's letter and instructions, Regid informed them that the Porte was by no means prepared to accept their master's announcement that he had concluded the railway contract without permission.² They informed Regid that the first materials for the railway had been imported as far back as Muḥammad 'Alī's time; so to all appearances a precedent had already been established because of no opposition having been made at that time to those preliminary measures. But Regid confirmed that the only means of bringing the railway question to a satisfactory conclusion was by addressing an ist'idhān in the full form of the ferman to the Porte giving full explanations respecting the funds which were to be applied to the undertaking.³ The Egyptian Commissioners saw the dilemma in its true light, and were ready to concur with Canning in advising 'Abbās to adopt the course best calculated to spare him the perils of an open collision with the Porte.

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 240 of 5 Aug. 1851 [no. 77] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Canning to Palmerston, No. 248 of 19 Aug. 1851 [no. 93] in F.O. 424/7A; The Times, 18 Aug. and 19 Sept. 1851; Le Constitutionnel, 20 Sept. and 18 Oct. 1851.

³Lockwood to Richard (Confidential) 11 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. I.

Canning saw that whether collision or foreign intervention were to result from 'Abbās's continued resistance, much eventual hazard would ensue, not only to the parties themselves, but most probably to European interests also. Canning dismissed any sinister interpretation of the Porte's demand. The repeated assurances, given to him by Resid in the Sultan's name, left no room for any doubt. As 'Abbās had already admitted the principle of asking permission for a railway between Cairo and Suez,¹ the same principle might be applied to the railway from Cairo to Alexandria. He added "the times of Mehemet Ali no longer exist, and the issue of a conflict between Egypt and Turkey would now be more likely to turn on the moral, than on the military or naval relations of the respective parties".² A majority of the Ottoman State Council, when called to deliberate upon the question at issue, expressed their opinion that 'Abbās had violated the conditions of the ferman, and ought to be deposed. But owing to the full exertion of Canning's influence, the tone of the Porte's declaration was moderated, and the execution of its final intentions postponed. Canning persuaded the Porte to desist

¹ Nevertheless, Canning criticized the clause characterizing the Cairo-Suez railway as unprofitable and having a political bearing. He said that this clause stood in striking contrast with the terms in which Palmerston had described the railway to Musurus in London. (see above, p.) Moreover, it might be quoted in opposition to British interests when wishing to obtain the completion of the railway to Suez. (Canning to Palmerston, No. 242 of 5 Aug. 1851 [no. 79] in F.O. 424/7A.)

² Canning to Palmerston, No. 248 of 19 Aug. and No. 240 of 5 Aug. 1851.

from its intention of requiring that the contract should be cancelled, and to be content with insisting on permission being requested previous to the commencement of the work. Consequently the policy of sending a Vezirial letter written in moderate terms in reply to 'Abbās's letter was adopted by the Council.¹ Canning told Murray that the subsequent conduct of the Porte towards 'Abbās would depend upon his decision in this respect. He added "my belief is, that if he resists the Sultan's demand it will be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent his immediate deposition".² But if 'Abbās were to write a new letter in proper form, Canning promised to use whatever influence he still had at the Porte to bring about an amicable agreement on the question of the Tanzimat. Thus Canning afforded 'Abbās an opportunity of reconciling his position towards the Porte. On the other hand, British influence in Constantinople would have considerably diminished, had not Canning successfully intervened. He explained to Palmerston the real situation. Resid deplored the manner in which the long-standing policy of Britain towards the Ottoman Empire had been apparently sacrificed without necessity to a partial interest and to the pretensions of a provincial governor. Although Canning's counter-argument to these assumptions had little effect upon Resid's mind, he continued his argument to

¹ Canning to Murray, Nos. 19 and 23 of 16 and 23 Aug. 1851, encls. (1) and (5) [in no. 93] in F.O. 424/7A; Canning to Palmerston, No. 260 of 25 Aug. and No. 237 of 4 Aug. 1851 [nos. 96 and 75] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Canning to Murray, No. 19 of 16 Aug. 1851 encl. (1) [in no. 93] in F.O. 424/7A.

reconcile these adverse views.¹

On 5 September 1851, Hayreddin Pasha embarked for Alexandria with the Vezirial letter to 'Abbās, and the conferences for the adaptation of the Tanzimat to Egypt were suspended. 'Abbās was blamed for his precipitancy in authorizing the signature of the contract without applying for the Sultan's permission. He was reminded of the admonitions which previously had been conveyed to him, and of the obligations distinctly imposed by the ferman of investiture. He was made more fully aware of the conditions which the Sultan attached to the construction of the proposed railway; and he was peremptorily called upon not to commence the execution of that enterprise without the sanction of the Supreme government. It was plainly stated that the Sultan's permission would not be granted unless the Viceroy showed that the revenues of Egypt, after paying the appointed tribute and defraying the expenditure of all the administrative departments, left a surplus sufficient to provide for the cost of the railway. Neither would the Imperial permission be accorded except under the condition that 'Abbās should not employ forced labour, nor seek a loan, nor give over any part of the undertaking to a company.² In a statement accompanying the letter, Reşid gave Canning a pledge ensuring the construction of the railway if the stated conditions be complied with.

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 255 of 24 Aug. 1851 [no. 95] in F.O. 424 /7A.

²Encls. (1) Reşid to 'Abbās, 6 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1267/2 Sept. 1851, (2) Statement accompanying the Grant Vezir's letter, (3) Canning to Murray No. 24 of 3 Sept. 1851, (4) Canning to Reşid 4 Sept. 1851, in Canning to Palmerston, No. 263 of 4 Sept. 1851 [no. 102] in F.O. 424 /7A; Le Moynes to Minister of For. Affs., No. 170, 7 Oct. 1851, M.A.E. C.P., tom 23; La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 41, (cont.)

The conditions required by the Porte had acquired a certain extension not indicated in the earlier communications on the subject. To Canning, they seemed however to come under the same principle, namely, the prevention of foreign entanglements, and the protection of Egypt from additional or unnecessary burdens. Canning informed Palmerston that it was for 'Abbās now to withdraw from the position which he had assumed without sufficient attention to the consequences. No real difficulty appeared to impede the fulfilment of the Porte's conditions. Canning learned from 'Abbās's commissioners that 'Abbās's original motive for entering into a contract without permission was to secure British support in favour of his views about the Tanzimat. Through Edhem Pasha's official acquaintance, Canning believed that 'Abbās's own plan for carrying out the building of the railway was altogether independent of those projects to which the Porte objected, that is foreign loans or companies formed no part of this plan.¹ He trusted that Palmerston's concurrence in the question of permission would allow 'Abbās sufficient latitude. Canning admitted that there were ample grounds for Palmerston's surprise at the difficulty of introducing railways into any part of the Ottoman Empire,² and observed that "Turkey is still immeasurably behind the smallest States

(cont.) 4 Sept. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 306.

¹Encl. (1) Resid to Canning, 1 Sept. 1851 in Canning to Palmerston (Private and Conf.), 7 Sept. 1851 [no. 103] in F.O. 424/7A; see also Canning, No. 263 of 4 Sept. 1851.

²See Palmerston's comment on p. 103.

of Christendom in point even of common roads, and that the Sultan and his Ministers have nevertheless engaged from the beginning to sanction the Egyptian Railway when placed on a proper footing."¹ He repeated that in addition to the question of authority there was that of influence. The Porte had reduced the influence of France by means of 'Abbās, and was unwilling to have another foreign influence, especially of a consular description, established by the same means in its place.² Reşid promoted British influence as much as he could with regard to Russia and his own power, but at the same time looked upon the same influence in Egypt as hostile to the interests of the Sublime Porte.³

5. 'Abbās's Submission and the Sultan's Ferman:

Would Murray persuade 'Abbās to comply with the Sultan's requisition? Since the signature of the contract, Murray had not reconciled himself to Canning's attitude. Canning's language vexed and alarmed 'Abbās, who expected the British Ambassador to support his rights.⁴ Murray criticized Canning's conduct, saying that he had entirely accepted Reşid's views, which were instigated by Artin. Not only had Canning openly declared these to the Egyptian Commissioners

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 277 of 17 Sept. 1851 [no. 108] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Canning, No. 277 of 17 Sept. 1851.

³Hekekyan Papers, Add. 37,452, fols. 45, 56.

⁴Lockwood to Richards (Conf.) 11 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. I; Murray to Palmerston, No. 24 of 18 Aug. 1851 [no. 88] in F.O. 424/7A

at Constantinople, but he also wrote to him (Murray) admitting that his opinion differed from Palmerston's.¹ He wondered what he should say if 'Abbās were to ask him: "Sir, what am I to think of you English? You tell me one thing as being the sentiments of Lord Palmerston and of Her Majesty's Government, and the Ambassador communicates to my Commissioners and myself, through you, sentiments exactly opposite - which am I to believe."² Murray was completely satisfied with Palmerston's language to Musurus. Amid the feeling of triumph, he reminded Palmerston of the necessity of making an early arrangement with the Egyptian government for the conveyance of Indian passengers, goods and mails by the railway. He entertained little doubt that the Porte, finding itself "compelled with good grace to concede its construction", would next be desirous of insisting on the right to regulate its internal arrangements.³ But Palmerston had changed his mind and decided to back Canning when he learned of the bad impression made at the Porte by 'Abbās's step. He observed to Murray that it would be wiser for 'Abbās to yield to the wishes of the Sultan, and to apply for the permission which had been promised beforehand. Palmerston resolved to do so because the Porte had made no objection to the construction of the railway, and only stood out upon a point of

¹ Murray to Palmerston, No. 25 of 4 Sept. 1851 [no. 100] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Murray, No. 25 of 4 Sept. 1851.

³ Murray to Palmerston, No. 22 of 6 Aug. 1851 [no. 83] in F.O. 424/7A.

form and etiquette. Moreover, a comparison of dates showed that Muḥammad 'Alī had asked permission for the Barrage before the work was actually begun.¹ 'Abbās had already, in his letter to the Porte, felt himself bound to ask permission for a railway from Cairo to Suez; and the admission made by 'Abbās in regard to the one, might in all reason apply to the other.²

Palmerston thought that although the British government had every desire and intention to give 'Abbās all fair and proper support, yet the extent of that support must find its limit in the difference which existed between the relation in which the British government stood in regard to 'Abbās, and in the relation in which the Sultan stood towards him. The Sultan was unquestionably the sovereign of 'Abbās, and the interference of a foreign government between a sovereign and his subjects could not go beyond certain limits. He summed up his view to Murray as follows:

"The question at issue was thus brought down to one in which no direct interest of Great Britain was concerned, and which simply regarded a point of etiquette between the Sultan and his vassal, and an interpretation of a vague phrase in the Firman of investiture.

Upon such a question the position of the British Government was necessarily very different from that in which that Government would have stood if the discussion had turned

¹Palmerston to Murray No. 16 of 18 Aug. 1851 and No. 17 of 23 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/17; see also Le Constitutionnel, 19 Oct. 1851.

²Palmerston to Murray, No. 20 of 19 Sept, 1851 in F.O. 141/17.

upon the questions of railway or no railway, and Her Majesty's Government could not hold out to the Pasha any expectation of physical aid and if he were to be involved in a rupture with the Sultan upon such a question as this on which the difference between him and the Sultan now turns."¹

Murray immediately passed on Palmerston's opinion to 'Abbās, and succeeded in obtaining 'Abbās's promise to request the Sultan's permission. Murray felt it was not his duty to argue with Palmerston any more than it was that of 'Abbās to argue with his sovereign. Nevertheless, he tried to prove to Palmerston that the verbal permission asked by Muḥammad 'Alī was a recent product of Regid's imagination. He disapproved of the conditions contained in the Vezirial letter which were not only foreign to previous usage and to the ferman, but were also directly contrary to the opinions which Palmerston had expressed on the obligations of the respective parties. 'Abbās's great difficulty was going to lie in satisfying the Porte that Egypt was solvent enough for him to build the railway, yet not disclosing each and every item of expenditure for his internal administration. In order to prove a surplus he would have to present some form of detailed accounting. With the existing system of taxation and the great extension of produce and commerce, 'Abbās would be able to meet the expenses of the railroad without either borrowing money or increasing taxation. But suppose, Murray argued, that 'Abbās required some additional supplies; had the Porte any right to prevent

¹Palmerston to Murray, No. 21 of 27 Sept. 1851 [no. 105] in F.O. 424/7A.

him from re-imposing for two or three years that portion of the established taxation which he had remitted in 1850? Or were they entitled to forbid him to follow the practice uniformly adopted by Muḥammad 'Alī whenever he incurred any extra expenditure?¹ Again in the matter of compulsory labour,² Murray disapproved of the Porte's demand because it had not previously discussed the right of the Egyptian government to employ forced labour on all public works; yet labour was paid under 'Abbās.³

'Abbās wrote to Palmerston on the points stipulated in the Vezirial letter. He was ready in pursuance of Palmerston's advice to ask permission; but such conditions as those were not contained in the ferman of hereditary government. He adds "is it not as clear as the sun, that the meaning of this peremptory tone is to prevent the construction of the railroad, and to meddle and to interfere in the revenues and internal affairs of Egypt?" It was not his intention to borrow money from abroad, or to turn over the enterprise to a foreign company. But should there not be sufficient money, and should the people, who, he claimed, were in arrears to the amount of 300,000 or 400,000 purses, be made to pay up a certain portion on account, it could not be said that this was the

¹ Namely to borrow certain sums from the merchants at Alexandria, which he repaid when the state of the market enabled him to sell government produce to the best advantage.

² Forced labour is fully discussed in Ch. V.

³ Murray to Palmerston, No. 27 of 15 Sept. 1851 [no. 110] and No. 28 of 18 Sept., enclosing Muḥammad 'Alī's letter to the Porte 25 Rabi' II, 1263 [no. 111] in F.O. 424/7A.

imposition of a new tax or an augmentation of the actual taxes; the people would, in short, have paid a part of their debt. So the conditions imposed by the Porte were to render him unable to construct the railway.¹ Thus, 'Abbās would only ask for permission and if the Porte would not be satisfied with the conditions accepted by him, 'Abbās would apply to Palmerston to know what course to pursue.

Murray was still distrustful of the Porte's intentions and accused it of considering the railway as a private amusement, and not a work for public benefit. He urged upon Palmerston that no time was to be lost because Stephenson and his engineering staff were expected by the next Calcutta Steamer; and they had already received an instalment amounting to £16,000.

"Their employment in the construction of the Egyptian Railway" he wrote, "has been at least known to if not sanctioned by, Her Majesty's Government; the honour of England is therefore to a certain extent implicated in the carrying out this undertaking.

It results, therefore, that unless some very strong representations are addressed to the Sublime Porte on this subject, a serious dilemma must ere long arise. Either England must submit to the humiliation of seeing her first civil engineer and his staff remaining for an indefinite period idle at Alexandria, unable to commence a work for which they have received part payment, or else if they commence the work, according to their contract, the Viceroy will thereby incur the risks and penalties attaching to an act of overt disobedience to the Sultan's orders."²

¹ 'Abbās to Palmerston, 21 Sept. 1851 encl. (1) Murray to Palmerston, No. 29 of 19 Sept. 1851 [no. 112] in F.O. 424/7A; Nubar to Palmerston, 3 Oct. 1851 [no. 133] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Murray to Palmerston, No. 28 of 18 Sept. [no. 11] in F.O. 424/7A.

Murray used the same arguments with Canning. 'Abbās seemed quite determined not to accept those clauses of the letter which would be made the ground for fresh disputes and difficulties. If therefore the Porte transgressing the limits of the ferman, insisted upon these clauses as necessary conditions of granting permission to construct the railway, it might assuredly be considered by the British government "as a subterfuge adapted to obstruct its construction without openly forbidding it".¹ He hoped that Canning could induce the Porte to accept a letter asking permission according to the purport of the ferman. Meanwhile, he had used all his ability to persuade 'Abbās to give a conciliatory tone to the letter about to be written; and also to avoid any overt or public commencement of the railway until a reasonable time had been allowed for the receipt of the reply from Constantinople. However, by the end of Sept. 1851, 'Abbās wrote his letter in the most unambiguous terms, agreeably to the concluding clause of the ferman. So the letter, as Murray thought, could not fail to prove to the representatives of the European Powers that 'Abbās had done all that could be demanded of him according to the terms of the ferman or the usage of his predecessors.² If further obstacles were thrown in the way of

¹Murray to Canning, No. 27 of 23 Sept. 1851 in F.O. 195/365.

²Murray to Canning, No. 29 of 30 Sept. 1851 in F.O. 142/16; Le Moynes to Minister of For. Affs., No. 170, 7 Oct. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23; The Times, 18 Oct. 1851. Hayreddin left Egypt for Constantinople on 2 Oct. with 'Abbās's letter of permission. An undated French translation of 'Abbās's letter is enclosed in Murray to Palmerston, No. 30 of 5 Oct. 1851 [no. 117] in F.O. 424/7A.

the railway, it would be a breach of the promise made to Canning by Reşid, and 'Abbās would then be compelled to go on with the work in order not to forfeit the contract made with Stephenson.¹

Palmerston did not accept Murray's arguments. 'Abbās could have no difficulty in giving the assurances required by the Porte, because they appeared to be in strict conformity with his intentions. Moreover, it could not be supposed that the Porte could have meant to require 'Abbās to produce his accounts in corroboration of these assurances. The costs of the fortifications and the Nile Barrage had been paid for out of the surplus revenue of Egypt; and this fact was sufficient proof that the expense of the formation of this railway could be defrayed from the same sources.² Canning, on the other hand, observed with anxiety that 'Abbās took exception at the Porte's stipulated conditions.³ If 'Abbās's pretensions were justified, it would lead to serious consequences. Consequently, Canning met Reşid and informed him that the Porte's conditions had in some respects made an unpleasant impression at Cairo. Reşid confirmed that the Porte had no intention of looking into the details of 'Abbās's financial administration, but all he required on that point was an

¹Murray to Palmerston, No. 30 of 5 Oct. 1851.

²Palmerston to Murray, No. 23 of 11 Oct. 1851 in F.O. 141/17;
Palmerston to Murray, No. 22 of 29 Sept. 1851 [no. 106] in 424/7A.

³Canning to Palmerston, No. 296 of 5 Oct. 1851 [no. 116] in F.O. 424/7A.

explicit assurance of 'Abbās's ability to provide for the expenses of the railway out of the ordinary revenue of Egypt. He did not object to 'Abbās's obtaining supplies in advance from the merchants, according to the practice prevailing both in Constantinople and in Egypt; the Porte's objection was limited to taking up money on loan. In the same manner Reşid did not exclude the compulsory employment of the peasantry on works of public utility. He only required that their labour should not be entirely gratuitous.¹ Accordingly the Ottoman Council accepted 'Abbās's reply to the Grand Council's letter and the ferman of permission was prepared.² Finally, in Dhu'l-Hijja 1267/Oct. 1851, the Sultan granted 'Abbās a ferman authorizing the immediate construction of the railway under the following conditions:-

1. That the inhabitants of the places along the line must not be obliged to work free of charge on this work but must be paid a moderate wage and given the bread they need;
2. That new taxes should not be imposed to build

¹ Canning to Palmerston, No. 300 of 10 Oct. [no. 124] and No. 301 of 15 Oct. 1851 [no. 125] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Canning to Palmerston, No. 304 of 15 Oct. [no. 106] and No. 312 of 17 Oct. 1851 [no. 127] in F.O. 424/7A; Palmerston to Murray, No. 26 of 8 Nov. 1851 [no. 134] in F.O. 424/7A; Le Constitutionnel, 10 Nov. 1851. It comments that if this news were true, Britain would have got her double object, preventing a rupture between Turkey and Egypt, and obtaining the railway; La Valette to Minister of For. Affs. No. 47, 14 Oct. and No. 50, 24 Oct., M.A.E., C.P., tom. 307.

this line, nor the existing one increased;

3. That only the surplus remaining after payment of the tribute due to the Porte and other internal expenses, should be devoted to this construction;
4. That the setting up of a foreign firm to build this line should not be allowed, and lastly;
5. No foreign loan should be raised to meet this expense.¹

Canning, thus, found little difficulty in reconciling Reşid to the very few passages in 'Abbās's letter which were at all calculated to give umbrage.² This conflict, having been terminated in the manner which Canning liked and defended, he wrote to Murray,

"it must be no less satisfactory to you than to any who may have partaken your apprehensions, to find the Porte has accepted the Viceroy's simple declaration of his intention to construct the railway out of the ordinary revenue of Egypt, instead of requiring a financial exposition of the means by which that intention is to be carried into effect. It can hardly be denied that the Sultan and his Ministers have thereby proved the sincerity of their earliest assurances expressed to you from the beginning by me."³

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 319 of 29 Oct. 1851 [no. 135] in F.O. 424/7A; encls. (1) French translation of the ferman, (2) the Grand Vezir to 'Abbās 3 Muḥarram 1268/27 Oct. 1851, (3) another letter of the same date, in Canning to Palmerston, No. 324 of 4 Nov. 1851 [no. 140] in F.O. 424/7A; H. Nahoum, Recueil de Firmans impériaux Ottomans, adressés aux Valis et aux Khédives d'Egypte, pp. 255-6; The Times, 18 Nov. 1851; La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 52, 30 Nov. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 307.

²Canning to Murray, No. 29 of 29 Oct. and No. 30 of 29 Oct. 1851, both encls. (4) and (5) in Canning to Palmerston, No. 324 of 4 Nov. 1851 [no. 140] in F.O. 424/7A. Canning believed that two matters contributed powerfully to the removal of any unpleasant impression at the

And to Palmerston, he comments,

"from first to last it was not a question of railway or no railway, but of a railway to be regularly, or of one to be surreptitiously obtained. On the one side was a transaction securing much benefit to British commerce without prejudice to British policy or to British character; on the other an act which might have frustrated the accomplishment of its own object, at the same time that it compromised not only our influence throughout Turkey, but the Sultan's expressly reserved right, and even the security of the Viceroy's position."¹

Having received no ferman within a month after the departure of Hayreddin for Constantinople, Murray became worried about the possible delay of permission. He asserted that the blame for the new complication which might arise if 'Abbās was obliged to commence the work before the arrival of permission would fall upon the Porte and not on 'Abbās.² Stephenson's staff of engineers did arrive in Egypt on 5 October; and they remained doing nothing but awaiting the Sultan's sanction.³ But the arrival of the ferman on 4 November

(cont.) Porte; the passage of the Sultan's troops through Egypt and 'Abbās's mediation to settle a long-standing claim of the Sharif of Mecca. These troops, sent to strengthen control over Arabia, were afforded every facility by 'Abbās. £20,000 of pay due to them, which the Porte had been unable to disburse, were paid to them in cash. 2,500 camels were also employed to convey their luggage and ammunitions to Suez. (Murray to Palmerston, No. 29 of Sept. 1851 in F.O. 78/876.) 'Abbās's role in settling the Sharif's claim is far from clear.

³ Canning to Murray, No. 29 of 29 Oct. 1851 encl. (4) [in no. 140] in F.O. 424/7A.

¹ Canning to Palmerston, No. 325 of 4 Nov. 1851 [no. 141] in F.O. 424/7A.

² Murray to Canning, No. 34 of 2 Nov. 1851 in F.O. 195/365; Murray to Palmerston, No. 35 of 3 Nov. and No. 37 of 4 Nov. 1851 [nos. 136 and 137] in F.O. 424/7A.

³ The Times, 18 Oct. and 1 Nov. 1851; Murray to Canning, No. 34 of (cont.)

pleased everyone, and 'Abbās gave orders for the immediate commencement of the work.¹ Thus there was no further necessity for the presence of the British war-ships, which had arrived at Alexandria on 15 September to give 'Abbās moral support in case the commencement of the railway should be impeded by any interference from without.²

6. Conclusion:

So long as Muḥammad 'Alī and Ibrāhīm lived, the Porte, under a wholesome dread of their stern and warlike character, completely refrained from interfering in the internal administration of Egypt. The tribute was paid, and the ferman of investiture was laid upon the shelf, the Divans never troubling themselves with the examination or construction of its stipulations. No sooner had 'Abbās become Viceroy, than the Porte, believing him to be weak in character and inexperienced in government, made its plans and began to put them in operation.³

(cont.) 2 Nov. 1851 in F.O. 195/365.

¹ Murray to Palmerston, No. 38 of 7 Nov. 1851 [no. 138] in F.O. 424/7A; The Times, 18 Nov. 1851.

² Murray to Capt. Russell, 4 Nov. 1851 in F.O. 142/17; Murray to Canning, No. 34 of 2 Nov. 1851. The ostensible purport of the visit of these ships was to bring an engineer charged to examine Cleopatra's Needle which had been given by Muḥammad 'Alī to the British nation; see the comment of the French papers on this visit; Le Constitutionnel, 18 Oct. 1851. An editorial article on the situation in Egypt and 'Abbās's policy, 7 Nov. 1851.

³ Murray to Palmerston, No. 40 of 26 Nov. 1851 [no. 151] in F.O. 424/7A.

The vexed question of the railway had just been settled. Canning trusted that this most desirable reconciliation was a good augury for the arrangement of the remaining question of the Tanzimat.¹ In November 1851 the negotiations were resumed. 'Abbās still needed British support to persuade the Sultan not to deprive him of the power of inflicting capital punishment - the Qisās² - a power without which it was impossible to quell insubordination, or to rule Egypt advantageously. In exchange for the railway he expected a very effective return through British good offices at Constantinople. This had become his real hope. France would never forgive him for making the railway in opposition to her repeated remonstrances. The representatives of the other Great Powers were all angry with him for the predominance of British influence in Egypt,³ but so long as Murray remained in Egypt, 'Abbās's rights were strongly defended. Murray hoped that Canning would succeed in persuading the Sultan to be content with the tribute and the acknowledged vassalage of Egypt, and to leave its internal administration in the hands of its hereditary governor.⁴

¹Canning to Palmerston, No. 312 of 17 Oct. 1851 [no. 127] in F.O. 424/7A.

²See Baer, "Tanzimat", BSOAS, XXVI/1, 1963, pp. 32-38.

³Murray to Granville, 16 Jan. 1852 in F.O. 142/18; Murray to Granville, 16 Jan. and 19 Jan. 1852 in F.O. 78/916.

⁴Murray to Palmerston, No. 38 of 7 Nov. 1851 [no. 138] in F.O. 424/7A.

Until the Qisās question was settled in mid-July 1852¹, the railway was occasionally put forward as a pretext to resist the application of the Tanzīmāt. 'Abbās claimed that as soon as the Egyptians, the Beduins and the adjacent tribes heard that this power had been taken from him, they would begin to be disobedient. It would be impossible then either to make the levy in time or collect the full amount due. Consequently, not only would difficulties ensue in raising the funds sufficient for constructing the railway, but owing to the feebleness of the executive power it would be impracticable to collect from the different provinces the number of men requisite to continue the work.² The construction of the railway being exposed to these serious difficulties and delays, its completion could be made almost impossible. Murray was unable to foretell with any certainty if the enforcement of the Tanzīmāt would defer or prevent the completion of the railway. However he was certain that the tranquillity of Egypt could not be ensured, and this could affect the Anglo-Indian Mails passing through the country.³ However, the construction of the line was carried on uninterruptedly.

¹ Canning to Malmesbury, 12 March 1852 in F.O. 78/891; Canning to Malmesbury, 4, 5, 6 and 12 May and de Redcliffe of 19 May and 17 June in F.O. 78/892; Rose to Guilbert, 6 July 1852 in F.O. 78/893; the ferman containing the details of the settlement is enclosed in Rose to Malmesbury, 23 Aug. 1852 in F.O. 78/893.

² 'Abbās to Murray, 23 Rabi' Awwal 1268/16 Jan. 1852 encl. in Murray to Granville, 16 Jan. 1852 in F.O. 195/365.

³ Murray to Malmesbury, 22 March 1852 in F.O. 142/18 ; the memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of Bombay to Granville, 1 April 1852 in F.O. 78/918; Rose to Malmesbury, 14 April and (Conf.) of 21 Apr. 1852 in F.O. 78/916. At the same time Murray was assisting the agent of the East India

Did the achievement of the Alexandria-Cairo railway satisfy British interests? In a motion made in the House of Commons by the Managing Director of the P. & O. Company (who was M.P. for Orkney and Shetland), there was criticism of the insubordination among British diplomats and the way they had acted in the dispute between 'Abbās and the Porte. He informed the House that 'Abbās felt this keenly and was indignant at the manner in which British diplomacy had advised him to subject himself to the Porte by asking permission. The result would be seriously detrimental, as 'Abbās would repudiate any intention of continuing the railway to Suez. The railway for which permission had been asked and obtained was not, after all, the railway which they required for communications with India. Because of this unfortunate circumstance, the greater part of the overland route was indefinitely postponed, instead of commencing the railway at Suez at the same time as at Alexandria.¹ The building of the railway was of the greatest service to the P. & O., and they did everything they could, giving moral and material encouragement of the Pasha of Egypt to forward the project. This included loans and financial backing to an extent of about £100,000.² Thus, the

(conf.) Company to make a contract with 'Abbās for the carrying of Anglo-Indian Mails through Egypt. (I.O. F.R., vol. 15; State Papers, vol. 57, pp. 778-780).

¹ Hansard, 3rd Ser., CXX, pp. 33-34; Anon., The Egyptian Railway, or, the interest of England in Egypt, pp. 37-41.

² B. Cable, op.cit., p. 153; P. & O. Ann. Reports, I (13th Ann. Rep. of 6 Dec. 1853), p. 12 and (27th half-yearly Rep. of 12 June 1854), p. 6.

Company's activities did not end with Pirie's mission. At the beginning of the conflict with the Porte with regard to the railway, Hayreddin Pasha, the Director of the Egyptian Transit, wrote to Pirie on 18 Feb. 1851, requesting him to communicate with Palmerston on the question. The Directors of the company lost no time in doing so; and they informed 'Abbās that they would at all times feel pleasure in being made the channel of communication between him and the British government, either with reference to the railway, or in any other way in which he might be interested.¹

The Directors welcomed the commencement of the Alexandria-Cairo railway; and they agreed to submit to a reduction of £20,000 per annum of the Mail money, payable under the new contract, on the completion of the railway throughout from Alexandria to Suez.²

Nevertheless, Britain emerged triumphant from the long drawn out controversy of railway versus canal, a controversy which indeed involved two distinct lines of policy. After the settlement of the railway question Canning requested Murray to assist in establishing

¹The Company's Secretary wrote to Hayreddin that in a conversation between one of the Company's Managing Directors and Palmerston, the latter intimated that "the British government would support the interests of Egypt to the utmost of its power, and that H.H. the Viceroy would not carry out a measure which would be so certain to command the hearty cooperation and even the protection, if required, of Gt. Britain than the speedy establishment of a railway between Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez, affording as it would to this country such incalculable advantages, both politically and commercially." (B.P., P. & O. to Hayreddin, 24 March 1851, encl. in Canning to Palmerston, (Private) 31 May 1851; Palmerston to Canning, 9 July 1851). Palmerston said that he did not exactly authorize Wilcox to send such a message.

²P. & O. Ann. Rep., I (25 half-yearly Rep., 28 May 1853), p.7.

more friendly relations between 'Abbās and the French Consulate than those which had existed for some time past. It was extremely difficult for Murray, even with the best intentions, to succeed in his task as a peace-maker. La Valette continued writing from Constantinople, attacking the railway project, the British and 'Abbās. As long as he remained there, he would not fail to do everything in his power to embroil 'Abbās more and more with the Porte.¹ Murray also still had his apprehensions that the Porte encouraged intrigues to weaken the resources of 'Abbās, to make it impossible for him to govern, and to raise Sa'īd to the Vice-royalty. This result would be agreeable to France, who would in all probability be disposed to support it as a fait accompli.²

Britain had instituted the railway against the will of the French representatives. Le Moyne foretold that 'Abbās would not delay granting Britain a concession for the other railway between Cairo and Suez.³ Having been rebuffed in counteracting British influence, Le Moyne sought to replace 'Abbās by Sa'īd, French-educated and therefore more susceptible to French influence.⁴

¹ Canning to Murray, 12 Nov. 1851 encl. in Murray to Palmerston, 19 Nov. 1851 in F.O. 78/876.

² Murray to Malmesbury, No. 22 of 20 May 1852 in F.O. 78/916.

³ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 224, 8 Sept. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23.

⁴ F. Charles-Roux, op.cit., pp. 247-248.

From the beginning, La Valette was anxious to tighten the bonds of vassalage and did all he could to obstruct 'Abbās in making the railway. He had welcomed the Porte's letter of September 1851 and announced that the Porte followed the line which he had always indicated to it. His action was guided by his conviction that the construction of a railway in Egypt at the solicitation and in the interest of Britain would become the source of serious embarrassments. So, in the interest of Turkey and in the view of the diverse influences disturbing the Orient, France could not regard passively such concession. He asserted that France could only intervene by means of counsel. La Valette added that he had often told the Ottoman Ministers and Sir Stratford Canning that France interpreted the Hatt-i Serif of 1841 in favour of the sovereign rights of the Sultan. The day the Porte and 'Abbās agreed on the railway concession, France would no longer deplore an act which was a great fault, and both would not delay to regret it.¹ When 'Abbās asked for permission, La Valette claimed that he did not hesitate to urge Reşid to consider this request favourably.² Yet La Valette could not have acted contrary to his instructions. The Quai d'Orsay had always advised the course of moderation in order to avoid disturbing Anglo-French

¹ La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 41, 4 Sept. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 306.

² La Valette to Minister of For. Affs., No. 47, 14 Oct. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 307.

relations. Moreover, the French government did not instruct its representatives, at this stage, to encourage construction of the canal.¹

The Quai d'Orsay did not blindly follow its representatives in Cairo and Constantinople. Napoleon III sent Count Bacciochi, his private secretary, on a special mission to Egypt to invite 'Abbās to re-establish the former cordial relations between Egypt and France.² 'Abbās explained to the French envoy that he had had reasons to complain of the conduct of France, or of her agents, in several matters. But he was now willing to forget the past and he was anxious to be, for the future, on as friendly terms with France as with all other Powers.³ It was felt in Paris that a change of Consuls-General might lead to better relations, and Sabatier replaced Le Moyne.⁴ Before he left for Egypt, Napoleon III remarked to him that his predecessors in Egypt had attached importance to a mass of trivial questions.⁵ He instructed him to avoid anything which might have the appearance of jealousy of Britain on the part of France, and to observe discretion in his relationships with Sa'id.⁶ Sabatier was

¹ The first active interest shown by the French Foreign Minister dated 1 June 1853, when he wrote confidentially to the French Consul-General in Egypt to seize any opportunity to promote the idea. He asked for details about costs on the overland route, terms of the railway concession and the results of Linant's survey in the Isthmus. (Drouyn de Lhuys to Sabatier, No. 8, 1 June 1853; Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 29, 15 May, 1853, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 25.) The Egyptian government had already agreed to Sabatier's demand and allowed Linant to start his survey. Sabatier to Minister of For. Affs., 27 Dec. 1852; Report from Linant de Bellefonds about his survey in M.A.E., C.P., tom. 25; The Times, 8 April 1853; cf. Marlowe, The making of the Suez Canal, p.56.

² Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 229, 7 Oct. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 24; Murray to Malmesbury, 15 Dec. 1852 in F.O. 78/917.

³ Paget to Malmesbury (No. 2 Conf.), 2 Jan. 1853 in F.O. 78/966.

ready to cooperate with his British colleague and told him "if you want a Railway from Cairo to Suez I shall make no opposition to it. It is true you will profit more by it than we shall, but after all, it will be for the common good of all". He emphasized that he would be the first to approve of its execution and had spoken to 'Abbās in that sense on his alluding to the subject in conversation.¹

What were the motives behind 'Abbās's Anglophile policy? He informed Sabatier that:

"mes ennemis ont fait de moi d'abord un tigre, un imbécille [sic]; puis ils m'ont accusé d'être vendu à l'Angleterre. Je ne suis et je ne veux être ni anglais ni français, parce que je comprends très bien qu'il est de mon intérêt d'être soutenu par ces deux puissances. Je m'efforcerai donc de les traiter l'une et l'autre avec la même balance, précisément pour ne pas les mécontenter. Vous pouvez l'écrire à Paris et vous verrez par la suite si je suis sincère. Voilà la France et voilà l'Angleterre.... mais pour le bien de l'Egypte je dois rester au milieu. En ce qui me concerne personnellement je suis Egyptien et je resterai Egyptien, mais je tiens comme par la passé à être l'ami de mes amis et l'ennemi de mes ennemis".

(cont.)

⁴ Sabatier to Minister of For. Affs., No. 17, 17 Oct. 1852, C.P., tom 24. The Times, 29 Oct. 1852.

⁵ Bruce to Clarendon (Separate & Conf.), 16 March 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

⁶ Paget to Malmesbury (Private & Conf.), 3 Jan. 1853 in F.O. 78/966; Drouyn de Lhuys to Sabatier, 19 March 1853, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 24.

¹ Paget to Malmesbury (Conf.), 3 Jan. 1853; Bruce to Clarendon (Separate & Conf.), 16 March 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

² Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 2, 2 Nov. 1852, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 24.

It seems that there is much truth in this statement. 'Abbās looked to Britain as his natural and most sincere ally. Through her friendship, which he secured by constructing the railway, 'Abbās overcame his enemies and retained his throne. This railway had served some purposes, and its extension to Suez would have been put forward to serve others if 'Abbās had lived.

Having succeeded in preserving the personal status of the Viceroy as prescribed by the ferman of 1841, and in strengthening his relations with the Sultan during the Crimean War, 'Abbās aimed at changing the order of succession in favour of his son Ibrāhīm Ilhāmī. It seems that he had some greater ambitions. During his conflict with the Porte in 1851, Reşid accused him of writing letters to the Arabs of the Hījāz, the Wahhābīs and the tribes near Aleppo and Baghdād, and sending men to persuade them to revolt. 'Abbās dismissed this charge as "a malicious falsehood". Murray believed that this tale may have arisen from his dealings with the Beduins of Arabia and Syria for the purchase of Arab horses, of which he had been passionately fond since his youth.¹ Nevertheless, it was not impossible that he fed his vanity and ambitions with the anticipations of the rise of an Egypto-Arabian monarchy.² In these views,

¹Encl. (2) in Murray to Palmerston, No. 29 of 19 Sept. 1851 [no. 112] in F.O. 424/7A.

²Hekekyan (VII, Add. 37454, fol. 359) assumes that 'Abbās might have intended to become Caliph. This, however, makes him no exception to the rest of his family. On the family's interest in the Caliphate see : Elie Kedourie, "Egypt and the Caliphate 1915-1946", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1963, pp. 208-48; Albert Hourani, Arabic thought in the liberal age. 1798-1939, London, 1962, pp. 261-262, 269-270.

he was encouraged by the predictions of a certain shaykh in whose knowledge of future events 'Abbās had great confidence. 'Abbās had never mentioned this subject in the conversations he had with Bruce, the British Consul-General who succeeded Murray. On one occasion he said, when talking of the extension of the railway to Suez, that he would be prepared to begin it when the line to Cairo was finished, but he had an object to attain which was of great importance to him; and that he would expect Britain to assist him. Bruce expressed the readiness of the British government to assist him in all legitimate objects. But Bruce learned afterwards from one of 'Abbās's confidential servants about his intentions.¹

After his death many facts came to light to prove that he had aspirations inconsistent with his position as a vassal which must sooner or later have brought him into collision with the Sultan. He might not wish to see the Russians extend their influence at Constantinople, but he was anxious that the safety of the empire should be due to the allied Powers alone (Britain and France), and that it should be made patent to the eyes of Europe that the empire could no longer form any barrier to the ambition of Russia, or provide any solid basis for the regeneration of Islam. The shaykh persuaded him that the Ottoman dynasty was approaching its end. He applied to the Porte to change his title of Walī to that of al-'Azīz.² He also requested the Sultan

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 22 of 30 May and No. 35 of 17 July 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

² Cf. Ismā'īl in art. "Azīz Mīṣr" in EI², p. 825, by B. Lewis.

to bestow on him as a grant Jabal Shammar, on the pilgrimage road from Baghdad to Mecca.¹ If 'Abbās were disappointed in his designs, Bruce wrote "the great weight of his hatred would have been directed against England whose support he considered himself entitled to on account of the preference he had evinced towards her, and in consequence of the obligation he had conferred on her by constructing the Railway. Who knows whether in despair of the West, he might not have looked to the North? " In his arrangements connected with the Transit, Bruce said, 'Abbās had shown sufficiently that he had no intention of promoting the development of the traffic through Egypt. Several circumstances convinced Bruce that the Alexandria-Cairo railway would have been made subservient to his schemes of monopolizing the produce of the interior in his own hands, and that, as under such a system the enterprise would not have answered financially, he would have made use of its failure as an argument for postponing its extension to Suez.²

Thus, 'Abbās believed that governments as well as individuals had their price and that by holding out offers favourable to their particular interests, he might prevail on them to disregard all general considerations drawn from the advantages of not disturbing existing arrangements. He never believed that Britain and France were acting sincerely together in the affairs of the East, and could not comprehend

¹Bruce to Clarendon, No. 39 of 13 Aug. 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 39 of 13 Aug. 1854.

that their policy in Egypt would naturally be made subordinate to their general system. He thought he might ensure the support of the former in the question of succession whatever view might be taken of the question in France by professing a particular friendship for Gt. Britain and by forwarding the railway, the importance of which undertaking to her interests he considerably over-rated. 'Abbās's career is to be judged from Bruce's words:

"it may be safely assumed, my Lord, that when the Vice Roy of Egypt betrays a disposition to throw himself into the arms of any one Foreign Power he has at heart personal objects inconsistent with the subordinate position he ought to occupy as a Vice Roy of Egypt."¹

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 39 of 13 Aug. 1854.

Chapter IIITHE COMPLETION OF THE TRANS-ISTHMUSRAIL LINK UNDER MUHAMMAD SA'ID1854 - 1858

"The world will have the satisfaction of feeling that not only will the railroad from Alexandria to Cairo be fully carried out, but likewise the line projected so long ago as 1834, by our countryman Galloway Bey from Cairo to Suez across the desert (which is even more necessary than the other for the transit through Egypt) will be successfully completed."

The Illustrated London News,
No. 696, vol. XXV, 5 August,
1854

1. The Railway between the rival scheme of the Canal
and the alternative route of the Euphrates:

The temporary disappearance of French influence in Egypt was the right time to revive the railway project. Before 'Abbās's sudden death at Banhā on 13 July 1854 the first section had been opened. This was from Alexandria to Kafr al-'Iṣ on the side of the Nile opposite Kafr al-Zayyāt. The Kahya Pasha, Elfy Bey, concealed the death of 'Abbās and everyone was refused admittance to the citadel. No council was called and no notice was given to Sa'īd Pasha, the successor according to the terms of the ferman. The Kahya's object was to hold the succession of Sa'īd Pasha in abeyance; to ultimately refer this matter to Constantinople in the hope that these delaying tactics would give time for intrigues which would eventually result in 'Abbās's son, Ilhāmī, succeeding instead of Sa'īd Pasha.¹

Maḥmūd Bey, the Egyptian acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, called upon Bruce, the British Consul-General, voicing disapproval of the attitude assumed by the Kahya. Without loss of time Bruce decided to proceed to the citadel and requested the French Consul at Cairo, Delaporte, who took the same view, to accompany him. Bruce did so because he believed that there was a hope entertained by the Kahya and his adherents that he, Bruce, might be inclined to support

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 35 of 17 July 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

them in any course calculated to promote their pretensions on behalf of Ilhāmī, "his father being represented as favourable to the English, while Said Pasha was supposed to prefer what were called French interests".¹ However these hopes were in vain and Sa'īd, not Ilhāmī, was chosen to succeed 'Abbās.

The joint action of the French and British representatives in Egypt was indeed to uphold the order of succession conceded to the members of the family by the ferman of 1841; but what would be the future of British interests under Muḥammad Sa'īd? Would these interests suffer at the hands of a man who identified himself with French policy and interests? Sa'īd always claimed that his French education was no fault of his but that his father sent him to France when he was young. He had done all the great favours for which the French Consul was always asking; but the British agent was more discreet.² Sa'īd was said to tremble whenever he saw Sabatier, the French Consul-General, and he openly confessed that "he could not help it".³ Sabatier, himself, gives us a very clear picture of the situation in Egypt on Sa'īd's succession. On the death of 'Abbās the influence of the British Consul-General had ceased to exist for some time. Sabatier adds, "we had resumed our place, a good place in the councils of the Egyptian Government, and I myself was

¹ Bruce to Stratford de Redcliffe, No. 16 of 20 July 1854 in F.O. 195/412.

² Bulwer to Russell, No. 124 of 15 Dec. 1862 in F.O. 198/27.

³ Baron de Malortie, Egypt: Native rulers and foreign interference, London, 1882, footnote 310, p.69.

on a very intimate footing".¹ On 22 December 1854, Sabatier invested Sa'id with the insignia of the Legion of Honour, on behalf of the French Emperor, and added "in conferring on Your Highness this great distinction.... Napoleon III .. is... anxious to express his deep interest in Egypt itself, and in the glorious but arduous work of reorganisation and reform bequeathed to Your Highness by your father of illustrious memory. Your Highness is aware that in carrying out this work the encouragement and, if need be, the support of the Emperor will never fail you..."²

The construction of a canal for uniting the Mediterranean and Red Sea was much discussed before and during the construction of the Egyptian railway. The scheme however did not really coalesce until the appearance of Ferdinand de Lesseps, who had been very intimate with Sa'id, when young. On the receipt of the news of Sa'id's accession, de Lesseps at once hastened to Alexandria to submit his canal project, which had been superseded by the railway.³ On 30 November de Lesseps obtained a concession from Sa'id; and his plan received consent from the Viceroy on condition that it met with no opposition from any of the Great Powers. The French government denied most positively that it had any interest whatever in the scheme, but acknowledged that it

¹Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 100, 31 Dec. 1854, M.A.E., C.P., tom.25.

²de Lesseps, The Suez Canal, Letters and documents, p.45.

³See above footnote 2, p.19.

approved of such as being likely of great mercantile utility, and would view completion of the project with satisfaction.

The British government, on the other hand, steadily opposed the canal for various reasons:

1. The vast capital outlay required to build the canal could not produce a profitable return, so the idea could be prompted by political reasons.
2. Such a vast expenditure would greatly embarrass Egypt financially.
3. The canal once made, Egypt would be completely separated from 'Turkey', and might declare its independence whenever it pleased.
4. If war were to break out between France and Britain, France would at once seize both ends of the canal, whereby it would be available to France but denied to Britain. In addition, during a time of peace Aden was only lightly garrisoned, and before British reinforcements could arrive the French could take it easily if they controlled the canal. Then again, a French squadron proceeding down the Red Sea would sweep British commerce east of the Cape, and probably take Mauritius.
5. It would be a suicidal act on the part of Britain to assent to the construction of this canal, even if a railway were not in progress towards completion.¹

The British opposition entered its toughest phase at the beginning of 1855. On 30 January Aberdeen's government was overthrown and

¹F.O. 198/27, pp. xxxi-xxxii; Clarendon to Cowley, No. 761 of 18 July 1855 encl. Clarendon to Green (No. 10 Conf.), 5 Nov. 1855 in F.O. 142/27.

on 6 February Palmerston formed an administration. There is no need here to repeat Palmerston's attitude towards the question of the Isthmus of Suez, which has been explained in the preceding chapters. In short, although Lord Clarendon was the Foreign Secretary in Palmerston's administration, the latter appears to have exercised a very close supervision over foreign affairs. Palmerston was still convinced of the necessity, from the point of view of British interests, of maintaining Ottoman suzerainty over Egypt as defined in the ferman of 1841; he was still deeply suspicious of French designs on Egypt and was irrevocably opposed to the cutting of a canal. Again Palmerston had always considered a railway across the Isthmus more practical as well as much cheaper. In reply to a question asked in the Commons in 1857, Palmerston said

"for the last fifteen years Her Majesty's Government have used all the influence they possess at Constantinople and in Egypt to prevent that scheme from being carried into execution... It is founded... on remote speculations with regard to easier access to our Indian possessions, which I need not more distinctly shadow forth, because they will be obvious to anybody who pays any attention to the subject... That scheme was launched, I believe, about fifteen years ago, as a rival to the railway from Alexandria by Cairo to Suez, which being infinitely more practicable and likely to be more useful, obtained the pre-eminence."¹

In Paris, Lord Cowley, the British Ambassador, informed Walewski, the French Foreign Minister, that the British government had no object in view with reference to Egypt but the rapid transmission of their correspondence to India.² The question of the

¹Hansard, 3rd Ser., CXLVI, pp. 1043-1044.

²Cowley to Clarendon, 4 June 1855 in F.O. 78/1156.

railway was one of the main British objections to the canal. Lord Cowley told the French that this scheme would take a long time to complete and would interfere with, or delay or even entirely prevent the completion of the Cairo-Suez railway. This would be extremely injurious to British interests in India. He added that the British government wanted no ascendancy, no territorial acquisition in Egypt. All it wanted was a free and unmolested road to India, "and the continuation of the railway would give that thoroughfare rapid, while the continuation of the present political condition of Egypt as a dependency of the Turkish Empire gives them that thoroughfare free and secure".¹

The French government acknowledged that the political importance of Egypt with regard to Britain consisted in the freedom of transit to India, and that France was more disinterested than Britain in that respect. The French openly admitted that through Egypt was the shortest and most direct route from Britain to India and should be open constantly to her; that "on anything which relates to this important interest she can never give way".² No doubt Napoleon III wanted to act together with Britain in the East as they both agreed in wishing to uphold the Ottoman Empire. It had never escaped Napoleon that Egypt had been an object of some difference between the two governments. He understood that the British only wanted the

¹Clarendon to Cowley, No. 606 of 18 June 1855 in F.O. 78/1156.

²de Lesseps, Letters and documents, p.143.

railway for their communications with India, and he had pointed out to those who seemed to forget that Britain, not France, possessed extensive territories in that country.¹ The British seemed to fear that the vast outlay in money, time and labour would only retard completion of the canal. The French government thought that if the two schemes were committed at the same time to private enterprise, there might be reason to fear that the canal would attract the shipping of the world, and then the railway could not possibly pay its way. This would create an even heavier loss for the first section from Alexandria to Cairo had already proved a financial burden on the Egyptian treasury. According to the arrangements made by the Viceroy to continue the railway, as will be explained later, this objection in the French point of view was unfounded.²

During this period (1854-1858), three projects for communication with India were put forward for consideration. Two of them were through Egypt, the much discussed railway from Alexandria to Suez and the Suez Canal. The third was to link the Mediterranean coast to the Persian Gulf by means of a railway through the Euphrates Valley.

¹S. L. Poole, Life of Stratford Canning, pp. 236-237: Memo of a conversation on 10 Mar. 1853 between Sir Stratford Canning and Napoleon III in Paris.

²de Lesseps, op.cit., p.144; de Lesseps (The Isthmus of Suez question, p. 16) says "far from being retarded by the canal project, the railway will, on the contrary, be indebted to this very design, for its speedy completion; for it can only obtain sufficient returns from the activity occasioned by a considerable maritime commerce across the Isthmus of Suez."

French hostility to the Egyptian railway justified British intolerance of a navigable waterway. The railway was useful as a political pawn, but the Euphrates project soon took its place. The promoters of this project assumed that this railway would speed up communication far beyond the possibilities either of an Egyptian railway or a Suez Canal. They believed that the Euphrates would afford an undoubted advantage as an alternative route. Moreover, this line would have a greater political value than that through Egypt. It would tend to neutralize French influence in Egypt and Syria, and would forestall Russia in her design of reaching the Persian Gulf. The promoters tried to get the support of the British government, and nothing was left undone to show the advantages derived from the construction of the line.¹

In 1857, Palmerston announced in the Commons that by the Euphrates railway "a considerably increased facility in the conduct of our commercial and political intercourse with that empire must be the result. We should also have the advantage of an alternative route in competition with the line of railway from Alexandria to Cairo, thence to Suez, and down by the Red Sea!"² The British government undertook to give diplomatic support at Constantinople for the securing of a concession from the Ottoman government. Later for political reasons Palmerston considered it wiser to abandon this project and it rested for the time being.

¹Hoskins, British Routes, pp. 319-320, Ch. XIII; W. Bamforth, British interests in the Tigris and Euphrates, unpubl. M.A. thesis, London, 1948; W. P. Andrews, Memoir on the Euphrates Valley route to India, 1857; idem, A letter to Palmerston. on the political advantage of the Euphrates Valley Railway, London, 1857.

²Hansard, 3rd Ser., CXLVII, p. 1676.

2. The prolongation of the railway from Cairo to Suez

In October 1854, shortly after Sa'id's accession and in accordance with Clarendon's instructions¹ Bruce informed Sa'id that Britain was duly interested in the development of the resources and commerce of Egypt and of the improvement of transit through it. Sa'id replied that he had an equal if not greater interest. He assured Bruce that he had decided to carry the line of railway from Cairo to Suez "as soon as possible, the more so, as he had always been of opinion that it was the most important link of the chain destined to connect the two seas, and the one that ought to have been executed at first."²

After making the final arrangement of the Suez Canal concession, de Lesseps went, at Sa'id's request, to explain the arrangement to Bruce.³ Sabatier reports that his British colleague while reserving the opinion of his government, had yet shown himself personally favourable to the project. He claimed that Bruce told him that he could not understand the opposition of his predecessor (Murray) of an enterprise of such great interest. The first dispositions were not long in being modified and the change was first shown by the proposal addressed to Sa'id of prolonging the railway from Alexandria to Cairo as far as the Red Sea.⁴

¹Clarendon to Bruce, No. 45 of 12 Aug. and No. 50 of 13 Sept. 1854 in F.O. 78/1034.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 42 of 13 Oct. 1854 in F.O. 42/18.

³de Lesseps, Letters and documents, p.27.

⁴Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 100, 31 Dec. 1854, M.A.E, C.P., tom.25.

However, Bruce immediately reported to the Foreign Office the proposal made by de Lesseps for the formation of a company for cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Suez. Bruce abstained from giving any objections against it but he urged Sa'īd not to commit himself to any such scheme. He thought it advisable to bring forward a proposal for the extension of the railway to Suez, the money for which would have been found by the contractors of the Alexandria-Cairo line, and the repayment of which would have been spread over a period of three years. The future of this line was still very shaky. 'Abbās until his death had shrunk from the expense which continuing the railway would impose on the Egyptian treasury. Sa'īd declared emphatically that his financial difficulties would not allow him to think of carrying out this work for some time yet.¹ Bruce knew of Sa'īd's invincible repugnance to any scheme which would impose a financial burden on Egypt, because he was being pressed from all sides to discharge the debts left by 'Abbās's administration. Moreover, from the nature of his position in Egypt Sa'īd found it difficult to obtain a loan large enough without applying to Constantinople. Bruce, in any case, did not have the authority to urge such a step on Sa'īd in the absence of instructions from London because of the financial and political condition of the Ottoman Empire.²

¹Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 98, 6 Dec. 1854, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 25.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 49 of 3 Dec. 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

The Egyptian government hoping to sweeten Britain about the canal, showed its inclination to support her.¹ Sa'īd expressed his readiness to do business. The whole line could be leased for a long term to a company, subject to the condition it was extended to Suez. There was also to be part repayment of the money already expended on the line by 'Abbās. To Bruce this seemed the best proposition made yet. Though the line would remain exclusively in government hands, he did not think it would always remain so. Bruce thought all parties² gave their approval not only because of any advantage to them, but because of the immediate financial advantage to Egypt, who owned the larger part of the work. He counted on this pecuniary interest "as two guarantees of Sa'īd Pasha's sincere wish that His proposal may meet with success".³

Sa'īd's terms were to lease the railway on the same terms as the canal, i.e. 99 years with a view to its completion.⁴ According to Sabatier, a universal company was not acceptable to Bruce. Bruce reported that Muṣṭafā Bey (Sa'īd's nephew and Ibrāhīm Pasha's son) was prepared to undertake the work and fulfil the conditions. Bruce thought if Sa'īd could be persuaded to agree to this, it would be possible to manage the company. This would ensure that British interests

¹ Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 100, 31 Dec. 1854, M.A.E., C.P., tom.25.

² Even those most bent on a canal could not object to a proposal which emanated from their own.

³ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 49 of 3 Dec.

⁴ Bruce to Stratford de Redcliffe (Private) 9 Dec. 1854 in F.O. 195/412.

would get fair consideration without giving offence to the French and make sure of the line being finished within a reasonable time.¹

There was another proposal made by Hugh Thurburn, a British merchant resident in Egypt and the founder of the Egyptian Transit Company during Muhammad 'Alī's reign. Thurburn wanted something to be done by the British because the line between Cairo and Suez most probably would fall into the hands of a French company headed by de Lesseps. He informed Bruce that if the Viceroy would accept his terms, he would be able to form a company amongst his friends to carry out the line. To sum up Thurburn's terms, they were as follows: He would pay for 99 years' lease of the line from Alexandria to Cairo at £35,000 annually, the same to be made good in half-yearly instalments from the time the line was open and ready to be worked officially. This sum would represent to the Pasha a capital of £700,000 upon which he would be receiving 5⁰/o interest annually. This was a higher rate of interest than railways in general yielded in Britain. He would, over and above this sum, pay to the Pasha's government in the shape of a bonus the sum of £100,000 in return for a concession of the line from Cairo to Suez, which the company would complete within six years time, entirely at their own expense and risk. He stipulated that the ferman should detail these conditions.²

As far as the documents show, Bruce did not communicate Thurburn's

¹ Bruce to Clarendon (Private), 16 Dec. 1854 in F.O. 195/412.

proposal to Sa'id. About the time this proposal was presented to Bruce, Charles Murray, the former British Consul-General in Egypt, whose efforts contributed to the establishment of the Egyptian railway, was in Egypt on his way to Persia. He visited Sa'id who was reluctant to see him, but de Lesseps begged him not to hurt Bruce's feelings.¹ Bruce admitted that he had had the benefit of Murray's advice, in connection with the company to be formed by the Viceroy to undertake the continuation of the railway.² Later, Bruce revealed that he was opposed to a proposal made to obtain a lease of the railway for a company, in which the British element was predominant. There is no doubt that Bruce was referring to Thurburn's proposal. Thurburn himself mentioned that Murray took a deep interest in the matter. Indeed, Murray warmly backed the proposal because he had been persuaded by the advocate of the scheme that the railway would otherwise pass into the hands of the

(cont.)

² Thurburn to Bruce, 6 Dec. 1854 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2. Thurburn also offered to make a contract with Sa'id for the construction of the Suez line under some conditions. It was proposed that the first section of twenty miles should be completed in March 1856, when the first call for money should be made on the government (say to the amount of £100,000 or £120,000). The whole line should be finished in March 1857 when there should remain in the government's hands 25% of the whole contract to be liquidated in the course of another year, the whole closing in March 1858. The intermediate payments between March 1856 and 1857 were to be regulated to produce this result (Memo. as to the railway from Cairo to Suez encl. in Thurburn, 6 Dec. 1854).

¹ de Lesseps, op.cit., p.43.

² Bruce to Clarendon (Private) 16 Dec. 1854 in F.O. 195/412.

French. Bruce comments

"I was not blind to the consideration which has escaped their notice, that if I had not influence to keep it from being given to the French, I should be less able to induce the Viceroy to give it to the English. But I refused to present it on the grounds, that such a concession was contrary to the policy of the Porte, and contrary, I believe, to the general interests of Trade."¹

What was the attitude of the French representative towards the continuation of the railway? Sabatier favoured the Suez Canal scheme as much for Egypt's interest as for speedy communication. He believed the concession made for the canal would solve the problem of continuing the railway. Sabatier reminded the Foreign Minister of the details of the two undertakings since the accession of 'Abbās. The French interest was general trade, the British interest was speedy communication with India. However, now things had changed, relations with the Porte were good, and the new Viceroy was fully alive to the situation, though supposedly impartial. Sabatier added that Sa'id offered interest and help to any enterprise which would further the interests of his country.

Having given the canal concession to the French, Sa'id could not refuse the request from the British to continue the railway. Under the surface calm there was hidden opposition based on the comparative merits of the two undertakings. Sabatier had no doubts,

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 21 of 13 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 142/20.

he declared, that time would prove who was right. For him, it was the canal that would meet the general interests of European trade. He allowed that the railway would be a quicker route to and from India, but financially the margin between receipts and expenses would be so small that he advised no one to invest money in such an undertaking.¹ Sabatier did not overlook Bruce's attitude to the canal concession and request to continue the railway. Had Bruce obeyed instructions from his government or had he tried to minimise the blow of the French gain by announcing success in gaining the railway concession? The Frenchman said that opinion in Cairo was that the railway was a mad project. No one any longer discussed the dangers it might present to Egypt, "but no one, not even the Viceroy, will examine the political aspect of the project".² Sabatier knew nothing of Thurburn's proposal, but he reported Murray's visit to Egypt with an interesting comment.³

On 4 December 1854, Sa'id had written asking the Sultan for his approval for both the canal and the railway. The British Ambassador in Constantintople was still Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (formerly Sir

¹ Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 98, 6 Dec. 1854, M.A.E., C.P., tom.25.

² Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 100, 31 Dec. 1854, M.A.E., C.P., tom.25.

³ Sabatier said that Murray urged the construction of the railway from Alexandria to Cairo and if "towards the end of his mission all this insistence could not obtain a continuation as far as Suez, his failure which is very careful to conceal was even more wounding for a friend of the Viceroy. The reputation of the agent was in no way affected. Already the railway was nearly finished between Alexandria and the Nile and before leaving Egypt Mr. Murray could see the first locomotives in operation." (Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 100, 31 Dec. 1854.)

Stratford Canning) who was feared by Ottoman ministers because of his domineering personality and unhesitating threats to invoke the vast powers of the government he represented.¹ Stratford de Redcliffe met Resid and recommended that he should actively support the railway and discountenance the canal. The Ambassador thought that if Sa'id's income could not be stretched to cover the progress of the railway, the Porte would not object to it being carried out by a company.² His opinion had weight at Constantinople.

Sa'id's letter, requesting the Porte's consent to lease the Alexandria-Cairo railway to a company, was laid before the Sultan. The Porte wished the railway completed; and did not doubt that if Egyptian revenue allowed it, Sa'id would make every effort for the completion of the portion from Alexandria to Cairo even before the appointed time, and if necessary for the extension from Cairo to Suez. The Porte had no objection to it being leased to a foreign company and informed Sa'id that refusal during 'Abbās's reign was because the latter's administration had inspired no confidence.³ The Porte requested specific details about the contract and company undertaking the work.⁴ Sa'id informed the Porte that there were companies wanting to undertake the extension of the railway to Suez, but the contract had not been drafted and the subject was being yet under consideration. Sa'id agreed to prepare and forward

¹ de Lesseps, Letters, p.80. His colleagues frequently spoke of him as "Sultan Stratford".

² Stratford de Redcliffe to Clarendon (No. 21 Conf.) 11 Jan. 1855, and F.O. to Redcliffe (No. 76 Conf.) 25 Jan. 1855 in F.O. 78/1156; de Lesseps, op.cit., p.129.

³ Resid's reply to Sa'id, encl. in Redcliffe to Clarendon (No. 105 most conf.) 12 Feb. 1855 in F.O. 78/1156.

the contract for the Grand Vezir's inspection on the issue of the Imperial sanction.¹

Reşid told Sa'id that Stratford was of opinion that the Suez Canal might not be free from inconvenience and therefore could be useless, while the railway was perfectly sufficient. Reşid also informed Sa'id that the Ambassador had charged the British Consul-General to make other important observations to him.² The French Consul-General always suspected the intentions of Bruce. In January 1855, Sabatier wrote that the British government still attached the same importance to the railway project, and would be grieved to see it abandoned in favour of another enterprise. Sa'id would not oppose the setting up of an international company on the lines of that of the canal. Sabatier knew that discussions had taken place in Cairo between Bruce and Lee Green, the Director General of the Transit. His information, although he was not quite sure of it, was that the plan for the organisation of the company was already being prepared in secret with a view to call later on, for the issue of shares to the capitalists in London. Sabatier did not worry about these secrets because, as he said, they were not worth worrying about. "If the railway," he adds, "is continued as far as Suez, everyone will benefit except the shareholders. It is therefore of little

¹(cont.) ⁴Reşid to Sa'id in Redcliffe, 12 Feb. 1855.
¹The Valee of Egypt to the Grand Vizier, 27 Feb. 1855, encl. in Redcliffe to Clarendon, No. 197 of 16 Mar. 1855 in F.O. 78/1156.

²de Lesseps, op.cit., p.129.

importance to us that the shareholders should be English rather than French."¹ To these assumptions the Quai d'Orsay replied that it certainly had no objection to this plan and the support given to it in England, provided it did not exclude the canal scheme.² No plan of this kind had ever been referred to by Bruce himself.

However, Sa'id had second thoughts about handing the railway to a foreign company. It was not until May 1855 that Sa'id decided upon the prolongation of the railway as far as Suez. He had begun to realize, either because the administration of the Transit had produced more satisfactory results over the last few months, or because the increasing volume of passengers between India and Europe through Egypt might seem to ensure the financial success of the operation.³ De Lesseps wrote that Stratford de Redcliffe's persistent opposition and the opinion he had expressed that the railway ought to be sufficient for everything, "or, to speak more correctly, ought to serve the English interests only" gave Sa'id matter for reflection. Sa'id thought there would be danger in the future if he gave up the railway, traversing the centre of Egypt, to a company of which the English would be the real masters.⁴ Sa'id, however, undertook

¹ Sabatier to Drouyn de Lhuys, No. 103, 25 Jan. 1855, M.A.E., C.P., tom.26.

² Minister of For.Affs. to Sabatier, No. 3, 13 Feb. 1855, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 26.

³ Sabatier to Walewski, No. 110, 19 May 1855, M.A.E., C.P., tom.26.

⁴ de Lesseps, Letters, p.131; also cf. Sabatier, No. 110, 19 May 1855.

to carry out this railway at his own expense. He announced his intention to give notice of the steps which were to be taken "so as to give due heed to English interests".¹ Sabatier commented that once the decision was made speed was necessary to prevent the formation of any rival company or the making of further demand. As a preliminary step, Sa'id had given a written authority to Briggs & Co. of Alexandria to buy rails for about a quarter of the distance and one of the partners had started for England to place the order. Mouchelet, one of Sa'id's engineers, was commissioned to commence the surveys and the embankments on the Suez line without delay.²

Before making these decisions, Sa'id saw Sabatier because he was very preoccupied with the reception which this project would have in France. He remembered the opposition of the French Consulate General to the railway between Alexandria and Cairo; he possibly might have feared that the continuation as far as Suez might be regarded at that moment as a renunciation of the cutting of the Isthmus. Hence, he found himself obliged to repeat several times that the canal between the two seas (which he called his great project) was still nearest to his heart. In his opinion the two projects must function side by side, and that only their completion would assure Egypt her commercial prosperity, "a natural consequence of her geographical position and

¹ de Lesseps, op.cit., p.131.

² Bruce to Clarendon, No.15 of 21 May 1855 in F.O. 142/18; Benedetti to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept., M.A.E., C.C., tom. 35; see below p. 258.

her resources."¹ Sabatier answered Sa'īd that the Consulate General of France had never been a determined opponent of any useful project. Even under 'Abbās, the "hostility" of Le Moyne had taken the form of expressing a preference for the canal, a preference which the French could not abandon because it was founded on more general interests. Sabatier assured Sa'īd that he could rely on French sympathies and need not fear that France would object. He begged Sa'īd not to judge the future by the past. The Emperor was neither selfish nor exclusive. In 1852 when Sabatier left France for Egypt he had an audience with the Emperor who told him:

"je ne comprends pas qu'on se soit opposé à la construction de chemin de fer. Toute entreprise, qui au ra pour but de rendre les communications plus promptes, et de faciliter les relations commerciales, ne doit jamais vous trouvez parmi ses adversaires. Je désire, au contraire, que vous la sou teniez de toutes vos forces."²

The certainty of French approval had a very good effect on the mind of Sa'īd. He hoped, moreover, that once the railway was in course of execution, Britain would show herself less hostile to the canal project - but this hope was just an illusion.

As the Porte had issued a ferman to 'Abbās giving him authority to carry out the railway project, in the case of Sa'īd it was not considered necessary. Yet he could not order the beginning of work on

¹Sabatier to Walewski, No. 110, 19 May 1855, M.A.E., C.P., tom.26.

²Sabatier, No. 110, 19 May 1855.

the Suez Canal because the Porte's official sanction had not been received. (Consequently, de Lesseps complained that neither the Porte nor Britain thought of raising the smallest objection to the absence of Imperial authorisation in the matter of the railway.)¹ Even when Sa'id proposed handing over the construction of the railway to a foreign company there was no protest from the Porte, though this was contrary to the stipulation in the ferman issued to 'Abbās. It seems that the Porte trusted that Sa'id's judgment and experience was sound. The influence of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe cannot be ignored. He was pressing the Porte to let Sa'id push on with the railway in order to divert him from the Suez Canal project to which Britain was strongly opposed.

Thus Sa'id had publicly expressed his determination to commence the work. Bruce's attitude towards this railway was not as Sabatier had said. He dealt with this question when circumstances arose. Bruce was aware that Sa'id was not as forward for perseverance as he was for ardour in the commencement of a new work. His desire to finish the railway increased but he avoided pressing this affair on Sa'id in such a manner as would deprive him, Sa'id, of the gratification of claiming its execution as his spontaneous act.² The only safe guarantee for the termination of the work, Bruce said, was to appeal to Sa'id's vanity. The Pasha's position and circumstances were not yet such as to enable

¹de Lesseps, op.cit., p.252.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 15 of 21 May 1855 in P.O. 142/18.

Bruce to impose it on him. The British government approved Bruce's proceedings and learned, with satisfaction, of the continuation of the railway. Clarendon advised Bruce to see if he could obtain an estimate of the probable increase in revenue.. If this figure were presented to Sa'id by someone whom the Viceroy trusted, it would do much to secure the completion of the railway.¹

Sa'id's intentions of extending the railway to Suez were serious. Rüysenaers, the Dutch Consul-General and de Lesseps' friend, told Green, the British Consul at Alexandria, that Sa'id observed to him that the British government was not convinced that these intentions were serious. Green did not believe that any doubt need be entertained on this matter as the engineers were working on the line, and the rails ordered from England were on their way to Egypt. Green informed Clarendon that Sa'id declared that he would not only have this railway made, but it should be made with all practicable speed.² No doubt Sa'id realised the advantages of rail communication. In Bruce's presence the Director of the Transit handed to Sa'id a paper including the returns of the Transit Administration for one month which showed a net profit to the Egyptian government of £15,000. Sa'id was very pleased with the results.³ and stated that as soon as the month of Ramaḍān was over he intended to put 6,000 men to work on the Suez railway.

¹Clarendon to Bruce, No. 19 of 5 June 1855 in F.O. 141/26; Clarendon to Green, Nos. 1 and 2 of 16 and 31 Aug. 1855 in F.O. 141/27.

²Green to Clarendon, No. 4 of 6 Aug. 1855 in F.O. 142/20.

³These returns were from the Alexandria-Cairo line. Green to Clarendon Nos. 6 and 12 of 20 Aug. and 7 Sept. 1855 in F.O. 142/20; Green, No. 16 of 20 Sept. in F.O. 78/1123.

Bruce did his best to keep the work going on without interruption in order to speed up communications with India. He avoided, as far as possible, pressing too many demands upon Sa'id. At the beginning of 1856 Mr. Holton, agent for the P. & O. Company, began urging Sa'id to reduce the fares for the journey through Egypt. His argument was that local fares on the Alexandria-Cairo line had been reduced. Bruce considered this was unreasonable, his objection being that Sa'id's line to Suez was to facilitate transit to and from India. However, once construction was complete Bruce thought then would be the opportunity to thoroughly discuss transit charges and duties. He aimed to get rid of the latter once for all.¹ He wrote to Anderson, Managing Director of the P. & O., requesting him to not let his agent "higgle about little advantages". Bruce also reminded him of Sa'id's double expense. Not only was he financing the Suez line but was maintaining the horse and camel establishments at Suez also.

The P. & O. Company were not the only ones making overtures. The agent of the British Post Office in Egypt complained that there was no improvement in the time taken in carrying the mail, even though the Cairo-Alexandria railway had been opened. When Bruce heard of all these complaints he feared that Sa'id would be annoyed and might refuse to continue the Suez line. He hoped that orders would be given requiring the complainants to discuss their problems with him before going to the Egyptian government.²

¹ Bruce to Anderson, 22 Feb. 1856 in F.O. 142/19.

² Lee Green to Bruce, 12 Sept. 1856, encl. (1) in Bruce to Clarendon, No. 40 of 18 Sept. 1856 in F.O. 78/1222; Clarendon to Bruce, No. 34 of 8 Oct. in F.O. 141/29.

Bruce was alive to the situation in Egypt and knew well the channels through which British interests could be best served. He had had to contend with difficulties and obstacles to forward the cause of railways in Egypt. Bruce resolved to work through and not in opposition to Lee Green, the then Director of the Transit. Sa'id, influenced by the jealousies of the people around him, decided to confine the railway to the portion already completed between Alexandria and Kafr al-'Iṣ. Bruce and Lee Green decided to give him an exhibition of its results to convince him of its utility. They opened to local traffic as much of the line as was finished, trusting that the receipts would prove the mistake of those who asserted that the line would not pay. Sa'id then decided that the revenue derived should be applied to furnish what was requisite for further railway work. Bruce, moreover, did not support any proposal made to the government to lease the railway to a company. Bruce counted much on Lee Green's assistance in extending the railway to Suez. Green was able to convince Sa'id that the expenses and difficulties of the existing Transit through the desert were so great as to render it indispensable that the line should be completed without delay. It was to his suggestions that the order to commence the Suez railway was given in May 1855.¹

So, Green's assistance was really needed at a time when French influence was at its peak. Bruce never complained of French influence,

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 40 of 18 Sept. 1856.

but it was nonetheless true that his difficulties were seriously increased by the fact that Sa'īd's entourage consisted almost exclusively of Frenchmen, such as Clot Bey, Mougel Bey and Pastré, who can be designated as the "Egypto-French party". There were persons of other nations, such as Ruyssenaers, the Dutch Consul-General, whose views were identical with theirs. Bruce believed that these men were, at heart, opposed to the extension of the railway to Suez, as being likely to prove prejudicial to their favourite canal scheme. Although de Lesseps had always declared that he considered the railway necessary, he introduced, in his first pamphlet on the Suez Canal,¹ calculations to show that as a financial operation the railway would be a failure. Bruce believed that de Lesseps and his friends lost no opportunity of pressing this argument on Sa'īd, and they could not have chosen their ground better, "for the Railway being the continuation of a scheme begun by his predecessor, holds out no bait to his vanity, and it is by financial considerations that he has been guided in undertaking it."²

Whatever Bruce's efforts the opposition suddenly produced a very serious (but a purely technical) objection. It disputed the course of the line, a matter which could effect progress and efficiency. Bruce attributed this to the badly thought out plans of Sa'īd's engineers. Mr. Rouse, Chief Engineer of the Alexandria-Cairo line,

¹de Lesseps (The Isthmus of Suez question, App. I, p.40) says that the railway, by itself, was not sufficient; it would never acquire any substantial importance, and would only be assured of its revenues when it would become the auxiliary of the Suez Canal.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 40 of 18 Sept. 1856.

proposed a counter scheme. This was that the line should run from Banhā to al-Zaqāzīq along Wādī al-Ṭumaylāt. Sa'īd discussed it with Mouchelet, but he had already given orders for pushing on with work on the existing line. When Stephenson arrived in Egypt, he became interested in Rouse's proposal and suggested that it be re-considered before the present line was carried further. On the condition that Bruce went with him, Stephenson was willing to go to Cairo to discuss the subject with the Princes and other members of the council, Sa'īd being in Upper Egypt. However, Bruce declined as he did not think that the line would have steep gradients, or that he would be justified in stopping the work.¹

Both Stephenson and Rouse criticised the lack of water along the route, the absence of which would make working the line more expensive. Bruce, however, wrote to Clarendon about the consideration which weighed most with him in this.

"Sa'id Pasha having once begun, is pledged to carry out this Railway to Suez; but if it had to be begun de novo, and he were called upon to decide whether the Fresh-Water Canal or the Railway were first to be carried through Wady Tomilat, I feel no confidence that his decision would be in favor of the latter. My position with reference to the Canal would be seriously compromised; at present his financial embarrassments enable me consistently, to urge the completion of the Railway, and to oppose the commencement of the Canal at the same time; but, were the two plans to be discussed simultaneously the argument would be in favor of the advocates of the Canal, as they would represent, that it would afford a means of communication, and contribute to the productiveness of Egypt by the irrigation of the neighbouring lands."²

¹Bruce to Clarendon, No. 10 of 17 Feb. 1857 in F.O. 78/1313.

²Bruce, No. 10 of 17 Feb. 1857.

These were the reasons which made Bruce think that under existing circumstances the real question at issue was whether it was better to have this railway or none, and not, whether they could substitute an easier line for the present one. The Foreign Office entirely approved these reasons,¹ and referred Bruce's despatch to the Board of Trade for an opinion. In reply, the Board said that it appeared from that despatch that the steepest gradient on Mouchelet's line presented no serious impediment to traffic. Under these circumstances the Board saw no reason whatever to object upon this ground to the line in question between Cairo and Suez.²

Bruce had put a stop to any further proceedings about the railway via Wādī al-Tumaylāt. As the subject had been mooted, and the direct line from Cairo to Suez had been condemned as incapable of accommodating a large traffic, Bruce wrote to Lee Green in Jan. 1857, hoping that he would prevail on Mouchelet to examine the ground thoroughly and select the line which would give the easiest gradients out of Suez. Mouchelet had already re-made a careful and detailed examination and reported to Bruce that the line presented no more severe gradients than were to be found on that part of the road which had been finished and over which Bruce had already travelled.³ Bruce thought that the line would accommodate all the traffic, and that it was desirable under the circumstances to push on the construction as rapidly as they could.

¹Clarendon to Bruce, No. 12 of 7 Mar. 1857 in F.O. 141/31.

²Letter from the Board of Trade (dated 12 Mar. 1857) encl. in Clarendon to Bruce, No. 14 of 17 Mar. 1857 in F.O. 141/31.

³Bruce to Green (Private) 12 Jan. 1857, encl. in Bruce to Clarendon, No. 22 of 16 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 78/1313.

During November 1857, a pamphlet of anonymous authorship was published in London entitled Railways in Egypt; communication with India. Its object was to prove that the Cairo-Suez line was impracticable, and recommended that it should be abandoned and a new line commenced from Banhā to Suez through Wādī al-Ṭumaylāt. This proposed line was not original as it had been proposed by Rouse. The anonymous author pointed out the reasons why he criticised the present line. He stated that complete absence of water, and total sterility of soil were not the only difficulties. The gradients were also exceedingly disadvantageous. The author of the pamphlet accused the narrow policy of the Egyptian administration of keeping plans and sections of Egyptian railways somewhat in the nature of state secrets. In this state of affairs, no one cared to make too close an inquiry.¹ Furthermore, so little in every respect was the Suez line adapted to the purposes of traffic; the writer added that it could be supposed that it had been started from Cairo "in true Turkish fashion 'Alā bāb Allāh" (at the mercy of providence)," without previously ascertaining by what route, and under what conditions, it was ever to reach Suez.² The writer continued by explaining how different the alternative line through Wādī al-Ṭumaylāt would be. It was argued that the water flow from the Nile along the canal of the Wādī could be carried on to Suez by continuing the canal along the railway. This water would admit of

¹ Anon., Railways in Egypt, p.57.

² Anon., op.cit., p.79.

sufficient cultivation to maintain the people employed locally on the railway and their families. Moreover, command of water would make this valley fertile enough for the growth of rice, corn, cotton and fruit. Politically, the continuation of the railway to Suez by this route would give a much better access to the Sharqiyya province, which had always had reputation for turbulence. Moreover, Arabs approaching Egypt by that frontier would be effectually controlled.¹

In conclusion, the writer of the pamphlet asked that the question should be dealt with while it was yet in its comparative infancy. He suggested that the British government should depute a properly qualified person to report on the state of communications with India through Egypt. The result might enable the British government to make such friendly suggestions to the Pasha of Egypt as the case required.² The writer added "Turks, Arabs, native Christians, and Europeans join in the same prayer; and it is only natural that the nation which has the most positive interest in securing the right working of Egyptian Railways should speak out for the whole, and insist upon their proper administration. That nation is England."³ This pamphlet was circulated in Egypt. Green, the acting British- Consul General, identified it as the product of Frederick Ayrton,⁴ and who

¹ Anon., op.cit., pp. 62-64.

² Anon., op.cit., pp. 90-91.

³ Anon., op.cit., pp. 91-92.

⁴ Frederick Ayrton (1812-1873) an English officer in the British army who was closely associated with Egypt. He studied civil engineering in 1832 and was selected an associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1835. He worked in Aden in 1840 as an executive engineer on the fortifications. He entered himself at the Middle Temple, and
(cont.)

had presented a memoir to Green in favour of the same course as that he advocated in this pamphlet. Green informed the Foreign Office that the arguments used in the pamphlet were groundless. The writer of the pamphlet had not made actual survey, and the data was quite incorrect. Green told Clarendon that it was impossible to read this pamphlet without perceiving the handle it would afford those surrounding Sa'īd. By quoting it they would turn him against the railway, for it was an undertaking which was continually subjecting him to annoyance.¹

Nevertheless, the progress of the Suez railway was rapid and satisfactory. Sa'īd showed no inclination to abandon the construction of the line. Green was satisfied with the good faith Sa'īd had displayed from the first on the subject.² Yet, no one was certain when the railway would be opened. By April 1858, unsatisfactory reports reached Green respecting the progress of the work. He was told that there were hardly any men now employed on the works, that the rails and the sleeper chairs had been taken away for other lines, and there

(cont.) in 1846 was called to the Bar. Having taken to the study of Arabic whilst at Aden, he devoted himself to that until 1851, when 'Abbās I, hearing of his qualification, appointed him as his secretary. 'Abbās, moreover, confided to him the supervision of the education of his son Ilhamī. After 'Abbās's death, Ayrton continued to assist Ilhamī until the latter's death in 1860. He then occupied himself occasionally as a consulting barrister in the consular courts. He took a great interest in the railway system in Egypt, which was commenced at the time of his arrival there, and anonymously published this pamphlet. (Boase, Modern English Biography; Min. of proc. of Institution of Civil Engineers, 1874, xxxviii, pp. 306-308.) In 1857 he presented a memo. to Green on the proposed Fresh Water Canal from the Nile through the Isthmus of Suez and its relation to the projected Ship Canal based on a ... personal estimation of the ground between Cairo and Suez (encl. in F.O. 78/1317).

¹Green to Clarendon, No. 69 of 1 Nov. 1857 in F.O. 78/1314.

²Green to Clarendon, No. 29 of 6 Aug. 1857 in F.O. 142/20.

was no prospect of the line being finished immediately. He, therefore, asked the Director of the Transit for some explanations before speaking to the Viceroy on the subject.¹ He was assured that the Egyptian government would not relax its endeavours to complete the railway. He attributed the extreme uncertainty about these works partly to the difficulty of establishing efficient supervision of large bodies of fallāḥīn and, in a measure, to an inclination on the part of Mouchelet to make too light of the work before him. Although the question of labour was overcome, Green felt that the incapacity of the French engineer was rather aggravating. However unpleasant it may be in his position to have to complain of a Frenchman, Green informed the Foreign Office that he should be compelled to do so.²

Six months later, on 5 December 1858, the Suez railway was completed and opened to traffic.³ The transit of the mails and passengers was at last effected from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean by rail. The construction of this line owed much to Bruce and Green, to whom it caused so much anxiety. Hardly three months before the completion of the line, Green had been earnestly assured that the French engineer had received his orders not to finish the works. Green paid little attention to this report, as from the same quarters he had been accustomed to hear that this railway was an impossibility, and that, if made, no train could pass over it. He commented:

¹Green to Nubar, 22 Apr. 1858 in F.O. 142/22.

²Green to Hammond, 10 June 1858 in F.O. 78/1401.

³Nubar to Green, 5 Dec. 1858 in F.O. 141/36 Pt. 1.

"the Railway between Cairo and Suez, may not have been laid out on a judiciously selected line, and gross errors may have been committed in its construction, but an actual Railway however defective which admits of the Desert being crossed with ease in a few hours, is better than the project of one however perfect only existing on paper.

We have now a Railway which has cost us nothing, by which our Troops can be conveyed easily from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea in ten hours."¹

The building of the Suez line would have taken even longer if foreign political considerations to Egypt had not hastened its completion. One should not forget that the aim was to speed up English transport to India. When in May 1857 the Indian Mutiny necessitated troops and munitions being rushed out to India the British government refused a spontaneous offer of ships from the P. & O. Company in order to spare French susceptibilities. Because, instead, Britain sent them via the Cape of Good Hope, she lost precious time. The Porte and Sa'id were ready to grant every facility, as had been done in 1855.² In October 1857, Napoleon III offered permission for British troops to pass through France to Marseilles en route to Egypt and India.³ Thus encouraged, the British government instructed Stratford de Redcliffe to request the Sultan's authorisation to send troops by the Egyptian line. On 5 October, the Sultan unhesitatingly granted a ferman for this purpose. In the same month the first unit of 200 men was

¹Green to Malmesbury, No. 196 of 5 Dec. 1858 on F.O. 78/1402.

²The Egyptian route was first used for the transport of military supplies and personnel during the Crimean War. P.P., 1857-8 (382) X, pp. 625-626, 714, 753-754; Wiener, *L'Egypte et ses chemins de fer*, pp. 74-76; Hoskins, *British Routes*, ch. XVI.

³P.P., 1857-8, X, pp. xix, 190.

sent to India via Egypt.¹ They covered the distance from Plymouth to Bombay in only thirty-seven days. This made the public begin to realize how useful the railway was. The troops were entrained from Alexandria to the end of the railway which, in 1857 was only complete to station no. 12 in the desert. Troops and civilians covered the remaining distance to Suez, about 25 miles, in vans. The passage through Egypt occupied little more than 50 hours.² The last regiment which passed through Egypt took only 12 hours from sea to sea, including stoppages and a march of several miles.³ About 199 officers and 4,894 men were sent through Egypt before the first of March 1858.⁴ The Egyptian government charged £3 for transporting each soldier and £5 for an officer.⁵ Consequently the taking of the line greatly increased.

3. The Railway neither to be ceded to a company nor to be given in mortgage

In April 1857 Bruce called Lord Clarendon's attention to the system which had sprung up in Egypt⁶ of persons in the Viceroy's favour obtaining exclusive privileges for the exercise of particular branches

¹P.P., 1857-8, X, p.753; also Green to Malmesbury, Nos. 57 and 68 of 12 and 28 Oct. 1857, and other documents in F.O. 78/1314; B. Cable, A hundred year history of the P. & O., pp. 193-194.

²Anon., Railways in Egypt., pp. 15-18; Cable, op.cit., p.194.

³Green to Malmesbury, No. 196 of 5 Dec. 1858 in F.O. 78/1402.

⁴P.P., 1857-8, X, p.826.

⁵P.P., 1857-8, X, p.753; cf. Wiener, op.cit., p. 75 (Wiener says that £5 was received for each soldier and double for an officer).

⁶cf. Bruce to Clarendon, No. 21 of 13 April 1857 in F.O. 142/20.

of industry, and selling them to companies by which they were to be worked. For various reasons Bruce stated that it would fall on Britain alone to defeat these monopolies and to assert in Egypt the great principle of the "freedom of industry" as she had already asserted the "freedom of trade". To him, the question was both important and urgent, for these companies tended to overpower and supersede the Viceroy's authority, and thereby gradually supplant the "Turkish race" in Egypt. Moreover, generally these companies were controlled by the French. As these companies were equally repugnant to the interests and to the policy of the Porte, Bruce thought that the Porte would disallow the Viceroy's power to confer either exclusive privileges on companies or individuals.

Since this was the system likely to be followed, the railway should be protected from speculators. One of the British concerns in the East was the state of communications through Egypt. Assuming that the railway to Suez would be completed, Bruce wanted to get the views of his government as to the course he should pursue should attempts be made by speculators to lease the railway from the government. Bruce was very decided as to the advantage of its remaining in the hands of the government, and he was successful on more than one occasion in preventing it from being transferred to companies.¹ At this point the reasons which appeared to justify his conclusions are discussed. They were partly political and partly commercial.

¹See above, pp. 200-202.

Politically, Bruce laid considerable stress on the known feelings of the Porte as evidenced by the ferman authorising 'Abbās I to construct the railway. By articles IV and V control by a foreign company or a foreign loan were disallowed.¹ Thus Bruce considered that the railway was to remain in the hands of the government.² He added that a company formed to work the railway would probably seek to evade the clauses of the ferman by placing itself under Ottoman jurisdiction. Such an arrangement would equally violate the spirit of the ferman, and ought, on that ground, to be opposed by the British agent. As far as communications with India were concerned, Bruce believed that Britain should act in concert with the Ottoman government.³

His commercial reasons depended mainly on the answers to the question whether the government or a company was likely to be more liberal in its charges for railway accommodation, and which arrangement would more effectually provide for the security of passengers and of the valuable transit cargo. He knew that the Egyptian government did not look upon public works, such as the Maḥmūdīyya Canal, as a source of revenue, but was satisfied with receiving in tolls a sum sufficient for repairs and maintenance. Bruce hoped that when the railway was finished, the government would agree to adopt a tariff based on the same principle. Although the rates were high Bruce discouraged all attempts to revise them

¹ Nahoum, Recueil de firmans, p.256.

² Under Sa'īd, the Porte did not object to this railway being handed over to a company. (see above, p.204.)

³ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 22 of 16 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 78/1313.

because the progress of necessary works would suffer from any diminution of the receipts. However, should the government lease the railway to a company, the Viceroy would naturally look to receiving, in the shape of a bonus, or of an annual payment, some return for the heavy outlay he had made. The company therefore would be obliged to fix its tariff at the highest figure in order to meet this payment, and to realize the profit they would expect to derive from the railway considered as a commercial speculation.

Moreover, the transit duty on goods passing through Egypt had been gradually reduced by the influence of the British government from 3⁰/o to 1/4⁰/o. Nevertheless it still weighed heavily on articles of small bulk and great value, which would probably constitute the chief articles of the transit trade. In this case, the Egyptian government, being the carrier, ought to look to its profit in that capacity, and should therefore abolish a duty which would check the development of trade. This would not be the case if the railway was handed over to a company. Furthermore, Bruce thought that without the active co-operation of the government, serious damage to the line could not be repaired, or the safety of the desert portion be adequately provided for. Finally, the moral pressure which Great Britain "as the representative of Eastern Trade in general, can wield, will be sufficient to introduce gradually such improvements as its administration may require; and will act with more force on the Government than it would on the Company of speculators".¹

¹Bruce to Clarendon, No. 22 of 16 Apr. 1857.

Clarendon instructed Bruce to use his influence to prevent the transfer of the railway to a joint stock company.¹ He also instructed Stratford de Redcliffe to request the Porte to give similar advice to the Viceroy.²

Never was a property more coveted by speculators than the Egyptian railway and the British Consul-General was always on his guard. In June 1858, it was reported that some English capitalists had sought to obtain the railway as security for a loan. Green knew that Sabatier, the French Consul-General, had objected to such a transaction. Therefore Green considered this attitude would apply also if the French, or any other, company desired the concession of the railway. Once more Green based his objection on the ferman which would also preclude its revenues being ceded to a company as security for loan.³ Malmesbury, the British Foreign Secretary, instructed Green to support Sabatier in his objections.⁴

Although this subject was not pushed further, Green decided to inform Sa'id of his having positive instructions from his government to oppose any such transaction.⁵ Green referred Sa'id to the attitude of the British government and to the objections of Sabatier. Sa'id replied that Sabatier had not mentioned the subject to him, but that he

¹Emerson Tennent to Hammond, 15 May 1857 encl. in Clarendon to Bruce, No. 26 of 18 May 1857 in F.O. 141/31.

²Clarendon to Stratford de Redcliffe, No. 440 of 20 May 1857 in F.O. 78/1247.

³Green to Alison, 24 June 1858 in F.O. 142/22.

⁴Malmesbury to Green, No. 2 of 9 July 1858 in F.O. 141/35.

⁵Green to Malmesbury, No. 111 of 17 July 1858 in F.O. 78/1402.

had quite given up the idea either of a loan or an issue of treasury bonds.¹ But in 1859 steps were taken, in obedience to the commands of the Sultan, for putting an end to the works for the commencement of the Suez Canal.² The British government was informed that in this state of things, de Lesseps and his associates in the canal scheme would put forward excessive demands for the Pasha to meet. It was said, therefore, that the parties intended to propose in lieu of compensation the assignment of the railway between Alexandria and Suez. Consequently, Lord Russell, the then Foreign Secretary, asked Colquhoun, the newly appointed British Consul-General, to defeat any attempt to carry out his scheme which would be against the conditions of the ferman of October 1851. Lord Russell added "the Pasha therefore by allowing himself to be cajoled or frightened into any agreement to assign the Railway to the Shareholders in Mr. Lesseps' abortive scheme for the Canal would justly incur the displeasure of the Porte, while at the same time, in order to escape from a temporary inconvenience, he would deprive himself of the valuable revenue which he derives from the increasing traffic through Egypt".³

Colquhoun confidentially mentioned to Sa'id the tactics that most probably de Lesseps and his associates would follow. Sa'id assured Colquhoun that he would listen to no proposition of the kind; and he would

¹Green to Malmesbury, No. 117 of 24 July 1858 in F.O. 78/1402.

²Colquhoun to Russell, No. 12 of 7 Oct. 1859 in F.O. 78/1468.

³Russell to Colquhoun, No. 4 of 17 Oct. 1859 in F.O. 141/38.

throw all the onus of non-fulfilment of the scheme on the Porte.

Sa'id added "in no case will I ever consent to place this railway in the hands of Foreigners. I refused it to an English company (Mr. Stephenson and Thurburn) and am resolved to keep an entire control over it, so you may assure the British Government".¹

However, fresh overtures were made in that respect on the arrival in Egypt of Mr. Pastré, one of the wealthiest French merchants. It was rumoured that some attempts were to be made to make over the railway to the "Compagnie Universelle". Such appeared to have been the case, but Sa'id still kept his word. He is quoted to have told an English merchant in his confidence "je préférerais confer ma main droite plutôt, que de céder mon Chemin de Fer".² True, Pastré came to Egypt to make a serious offer concerning the railway. On his arrival, he requested Thurburn to present him to Colquhoun, and he brought with him a letter of introduction from Britain, very strongly recommending him. He told Colquhoun that the Viceroy would be exposed to great pressure by de Lesseps and his associates, and would be urged, if unable to indemnify the company, to cede the railway as compensation. To encourage Sa'id to accede to this, an offer would be made of a considerable sum of ready money to enable him to satisfy his pressing creditors. Pastré was representing several large capitalists,

¹Colquhoun to Russell, No. 20 of 3 Nov. 1859 in F.O. 78/1468.

²Colquhoun to Russell, No. 75 of 11 Nov. 1859 in F.O. 78/1468.

both English and French, who had agreed to unite to frustrate this scheme of the Suez Canal shareholders. C. Devaux & Co. and other large capitalists of London, were his English supporters, and had charged him, as personally well acquainted with the Viceroy, to negotiate the purchase of the Egyptian railway.¹

Pastré represented, as Colquhoun said, what was certainly the fact: that the mode in which the Pasha worked the railway was most defective; that he neglected the industrial and commercial object for which it was constructed; and that he offered a handle to those who advocated the necessity of a canal, and declared the railway insufficient to satisfy the increasing demand of the Eastern trade. On the other hand, Pastré did not fail to bring forward its many advantages. Under new management, the railway would develop the resources of Upper Egypt; would extend and consolidate the legitimate influence of Britain in Egypt, the necessary result of material and commercial interest; by admitting French capitalists and some other personages in Paris to the subscription of the necessary capital, the French public might be conciliated, and the subscribers would derive the immediate advantages in the undertaking which the canal did not offer, and lastly; the canal scheme with its promoter and adherents would fall to the ground. Colquhoun was positively assured that Pastré was supported by the P. & O. Company, which was to hold a large amount of shares.

¹Colquhoun to Russell (No. 29 Conf.) 19 Nov. 1858 in F.O. 78/1468.

In addition Pastré was also to interest one or two of the larger English houses in Alexandria. Colquhoun, following Foreign Office instructions, was extremely guarded in replying to Pastré. He informed him that while admitting there was very large room for improvement in the working and administration of the railroad, he believed there was an insurmountable difficulty in carrying out his views, because of the condition in the ferman granted to 'Abbās. He also refused to take any measures because of the known opposition of the Viceroy to ceding the railway to foreigners.¹

By 1860, Sa'id's financial position was precarious; his palace and the Ministry of Finance were besieged by claimants. He succeeded in September in getting a loan from French bankers to pay his creditors.² Yet, Sa'id still needed loans and there were offerers of new ones subject to various conditions. An English company, under Lionel Gisborne, who brought the transmarine cable to Egypt,³ offered to give Sa'id within three weeks £1m. as a loan, provided Sa'id would place in their hand the Alexandria-Suez railway for a term of ten years. The said company would take over all the rolling stock and work the railway on its own account. Colquhoun told the company's agent that, in addition to the often-avowed determination of Sa'id not to remove the railway from under his own management, he also would feel bound not to support the proposal as the railway was never to be worked by private individuals, or companies of what-

¹ Colquhoun to Russell (No. 29 Conf.), 19 Nov. 1859.

² Cf. Landes, Bankers and Pashas, pp. 106-108.

³ In 1856, he obtained concessions for the carrying of a telegraph line across Egypt in connection with laying a submarine cable from Constantinople to India (cf. Hoskins, British Routes, p.376).

ever nationality.¹ In spite of this, Gisborne made repeated efforts to get this concession. Colquhoun was asked to increase the amount offered to Sa'īd to £2m. paid down and to bear no interest, if Sa'īd agreed to lease the railway for the same period. Colquhoun did not forward the offer. Colquhoun could not close his eyes to the fact that "if in the Firman... of the undertaking a proviso had been made that it should be purely, and entirely an Egyptian work, and that no European Company should be entrusted with its working; such provision was a wise and proper one, so long as the Vice-Roy is fair and impartial in his dealings with the various Governments".² European capitalists nonetheless continued to make overtures to lease the railway during the reigns of Sa'īd and Ismā'īl,³ but without success.

4. The settlement of Galloway's claim against the Egyptian government.

Galloway, as discussed in Chapter One, was the first who undertook to construct a railway between Cairo and Suez. Muḥammad 'Alī gave him verbal and written orders and commissions for materials for a railway, which orders he withdrew as capriciously as he had given them. 'Abbās, on the other hand, signed a contract with Robert Stephenson to construct the Alexandria-Cairo railway. Having found that the opportunity had slipped from him, Galloway wrote to Murray, British Consul-General, on 26 Feb. 1852

¹ Colquhoun to Russell, No. 131 of 13 Sept. 1860 in F.O. 78/1523; Letter from Gisborne dated 14 Sept. 1860 encl. in Russell to Colquhoun, No. 28 of 20 Sept. 1860 in F.O. 141/42; also Landes, op.cit., p.227.

² Colquhoun to Russell, No. 136 of 5 Oct. 1860 in F.O. 78/1523.

³ Saunders to Russell, No. 82 of 19 July 1862 in F.O. 142/26; see Landes, op.cit., p.227.

claiming compensation from the Egyptian government.¹ Galloway stated that when finally in 1844 the railway project was given up, an express stipulation was made binding the Egyptian government, whenever the railway should be undertaking, to give him the contract for rails.

Murray replied that this verbal promise given to him by the reigning Viceroy could not, after a lapse of years, be construed into a legal obligation binding his successor. Murray told him that if he wished to establish a successful claim against the Egyptian government, he should produce documents to prove that the withdrawal or cancellation of the order for the remainder of the rails caused him an actual loss. In the absence of such proofs, it was not in Murray's power to call officially upon the Egyptian government to agree to Galloway's demands.² Galloway stated that on two occasions he had written to inform the administration of commerce that he could not suspend the orders for iron already given in England without compensating the parties to whom these orders had been sent. Murray had spoken to 'Abbās and submitted these demands in writing to the Egyptian government. The latter did not consider Galloway's claim legitimate. Murray informed Galloway that he did not doubt his statement about the orders made for rails, but Galloway neither showed nor named any sum that he had paid or been called upon to pay to these parties in the form of compensation.³ Galloway then

¹On 'Abbās's accession, Galloway submitted plans and estimates to him. Galloway thought that 'Abbās refused to give him the order for the rails because he had identified himself too much with Sa'īd. (Alfred A. Fry to Bruce, 28 Apr. 1856 in F.O. 141/30.)

²Murray to Galloway, 30 Mar. and 5 Apr. 1852 in F.O. 142/17.

³Murray to Galloway, 4 May 1853 in F.O. 142/19.

resolved to submit the question to arbitration, but Murray told him that without some such documents he could not successfully press the Egyptian government to accept arbitration.¹

When Bruce succeeded Murray in 1853, he reviewed Galloway's claim. He informed Clarendon that it appeared that when Muḥammad 'Alī first dropped the project, in order to compensate Galloway for his disappointment, he commissioned him to supply whatever machinery he required for his various works in Egypt. When, therefore, Muḥammad 'Alī again in 1843 proposed the construction of the railway, he commissioned Thurburn to purchase the materials. So this proved that Muḥammad 'Alī did not consider himself under any obligation to employ Galloway. Bruce was informed that the survey made in 1845 was a speculation on the part of John Galloway, Galloway's brother, for which he received no order from Muḥammad 'Alī but merely permission to execute it. If these facts were correct, Bruce stated, Galloway's claim fell to the ground and under these circumstances the Egyptian government refused to consent to arbitration, alleging that the fact of referring a claim to arbitration was an admission that a claim existed.²

Galloway's claim remained unsettled until Sa'īd's reign. Bruce realised that before reopening the question with the Egyptian government, it must be satisfied that the claimant had a bona fide claim. The British government, however, could not press this demand for arbitration without

¹Murray to Galloway, 14 May and 8 June 1853 in F.O. 142/19.

²Bruce to Clarendon, 27 Nov. 1853 in F.O. 78/966.

becoming a guarantor for the validity of the claim. The production of such documentary proof was indispensable before his demand for arbitration could be urged.¹ In January 1856 Sa'id deputed de Lesseps to inform Galloway that it was his intention to put up to public tender the remaining three quarters of the rails required for the Suez line. Moreover, Sa'id wished to have the particulars of Galloway's claim with a view to settling it amicably. Galloway accordingly sent in such particulars. On 6 February 1856 de Lesseps wrote to Galloway telling him that Sa'id had taken cognisance of the claim and wished it to pass through Bruce's hands. Galloway's firm in London sent Alfred A. Fry to Egypt to terminate this long pending claim.²

After a careful examination of the documents, Bruce found that the order was given to Galloway in writing. Galloway claimed the sum of £24,000 but Sa'id thought it was excessive. Bruce succeeded in reaching an amicable settlement in which Sa'id consented to give £8,000 in cash as compensation for the losses incurred by the abandonment of machinery; and to add commission to the value of £110,000 as a substitute for that part of the rails which remained to be supplied by Galloway when the work was stopped.³

¹ Bruce to Clarendon (Separate) 27 Nov. 1855 in F.O. 142/20.

² Alfred Fry to Bruce, 28 Apr. 1856 in F.O. 141/30.

³ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 34 of 15 July 1856 in F.O. 78/1222; Clarendon to Bruce, No. 23 of 31 July 1856 in F.O. 141/29; Galloway to Zoulfikar Pasha, 15 July 1856, enco. in Zoulfikar to Bruce, 20 July 1856, in F.O. 141/30.

Chapter IV

THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RAILWAY

"In England, or indeed in Europe generally, or in North America, no limits would be placed on the inventive genius of an engineer, by any consideration as to the ability of workmen for conducting requisite operations; but in Egypt, where a prejudice exists in favour of employing native, and consequently unskilled labour, it was necessary to combine, if possible, superabundant power with the utmost simplicity of management: and this has been attained so completely that the Arabs, receiving less than four pence daily wages (out of which they have to purchase bread, their only provision), are quite equal to the nicest adjustments of this ponderous affair"

Quoted from Sopwith, Notes of a visit to Egypt, pp. 102-121 in J. C. Jeaffreson, The life of Robert Stephenson, II, pp. 175-176.

"It is a pity we cannot get the management of the railway into our own hands."

A comment of an English passenger five years after the completion of the railway. (see below p. 287, footnote 2)

1. The Programme of Construction of the Alexandria-Suez Railway:

a) The Correspondence on the Programme of Arrangements:

The original plan under Muḥammad 'Alī was to construct a railway from Alexandria to Suez, but begin with the Cairo-Suez line to bridge the most difficult portion of the overland route. Galloway was the planner of this line which he had surveyed and mapped. The entire length of the road, as estimated in Galloway's plan, from the grand depôt at Cairo to Suez, was 84 miles and the general character of the ground was favourable.¹ Galloway's project takes up a large share of the diplomatic correspondence of the time. Nevertheless, there were others who were interested in the construction of an Egyptian railway. This is seen in the documents that another proposition was made by Adams & Co. in 1848, for the construction of a railway to Suez on a new and more economic basis. We do not know the fate of this proposition, to whom it was presented, or whether it was communicated to Muḥammad 'Alī.² Apart from political opposition, a railway across the desert from Suez to the Mediterranean was exposed to severe attacks from its opponents, as being impracticable from the engineering point of view. It had always been claimed that

¹Galloway, Observations, p.24., P.P., 1837 (539) VI, App. 2., p.588; M.A. Ḥassuna, Miṣr wa l-turuq al-ḥadīdiyya, pp. 78-84; see map, p.403.

²F.O. 141/14. It appears from the report (dated London 15 June 1848) that Adams & Co. were employed on the construction of the Eastern Counties railway in England. The report was probably presented to the British government, but no further evidence is extant.

no railway could be laid in any part of the desert on account of the shifting sand. Even if it could, no harbour could possibly be built on that portion of the Mediterranean coast, capable of affording wharfage either for steamers or merchant ships. These assumptions had never convinced the supporters of the line. In a report to the President of the Board of Trade, these objections were thoroughly dealt with as "on these plains, no sand ever is known to rest, and for this simple reason that when a substance almost as fine as cephalic snuff, is impelled onwards by the impetuosity of the desert winds, it cannot by any possibility rest upon smooth and polished surface, but it acts precisely as we find the fine snow, in a snow storm, it settles in enormous wreaths behind the first hill, rock or mountain that lies in its course, and there it remains until removed by the wind in another direction".¹ Yet the technical objections were less effective in delaying the construction of the railway than the many modifications made since 1834 in accordance with changes in external policies.

On the accession of 'Abbās, the railway was adopted for political purposes.² 'Abbās applied to Robert Stephenson, one of the most eminent engineers of his time. Stephenson had already been to Egypt twice and had, among other things, studied the possibility of building

¹Report on the railway dated July 1849 in F.O. 97/411.

²See Chapter II.

the Suez Canal. While he was in Egypt in 1850, 'Abbās discussed with him the construction of a railway at first from Alexandria to Cairo, and not between Cairo and Suez, for political reasons.¹ In February 1851, 'Abbās had asked Charles Murray, British Consul-General, to get Stephenson's advice and assistance in making the preliminary arrangements for this railroad with the least possible delay.² After this a period of negotiations and correspondence started.

In March 1851, Murray wrote to Stephenson, on behalf of 'Abbās, tendering the offer of the entire superintendence of the contemplated railroad from Alexandria to Cairo. Murray informed Stephenson that 'Abbās was prepared to place full responsibility and full management in his, Stephenson's hands. 'Abbās was personally financing the railway project, and preferred no interference from boards or committees as there would be no subscription. If Stephenson accepted, 'Abbās required a rough but comprehensive estimate as soon as possible. The specific points requiring clarification were: cost of all materials to be used; amount of labour; number of European employees; Stephenson's opinion of and estimated costs of a double track as against a single one; and estimation of date for completion

¹ See above, pp. 124-5; also cf. Sopwith, Notes of a visit to Egypt, p. 124. The commencement with the Alexandria-Cairo line is often interpreted by economists as being due to purely economic reasons regardless of political considerations. Dr. Lahitah (Ta'rikh Miṣr al-iqtisādī, p. 207) wrongly believes that it was Stephenson who suggested to 'Abbās the construction of the line at first from Alexandria to Cairo, to transport the materials for the construction of the Cairo-Suez line when decided upon. He assumes that the

of the railway. With regard to iron rails, Stephenson knew that the considerable quantity imported by Galloway long ago still lay in the government store. Wood for sleepers and stone for ballast would have to be brought from considerable distances and 'Abbās was anxious that no time should be lost in arriving at an approximate figure.¹

Stephenson accepted the appointment from 'Abbās. His idea was to divide the ground between Cairo and Alexandria into two districts, each to be superintended by a resident engineer. These engineers would be co-equal, one making his residence at Cairo, the other at Alexandria. To each would be attached a chief assistant capable of acting in case of illness or casual absence, and two other assistants - one a competent surveyor and the other a good draughtsman, but all qualified to take part in the general business. In addition to these, there would be an accountant, with his assistant. There must also be a store-keeper at Alexandria to receive and distribute the materials imported from abroad, and a clerk to help him keep the necessary register. The European staff would therefore consist of the following: two resident engineers, two chief assistants, four

(cont.) commencement of the Suez line first would need the conveyance of the materials by the Nile but this would cost much because of the small size of the river boats.

²Murray to Palmerston, No. 2 of 17 Feb. 1851 in F.O. 78/875.

¹Murray to Stephenson, 1 Mar. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2. There is a letter enclosed from 'Abbās in Turkish dated Rajab 1267.

assistants, two accountants, a store-keeper and three clerks. Two qualified dragomans would be attached to each establishment and as many native assistants as might be found necessary.¹ Subdivisions for local superintendence would be spaced about every 12 miles.² To each of these districts there would be appointed one thoroughly practical man as inspector and foreman under the direction of the engineer, to superintend work requiring skilled labour, such as bridges, culverts and the permanent way. Twelve plate-layers would have to be added to this number. Stephenson suggested that the iron-way probably might be done cheaper and better by contractors from Europe, who were accustomed to such work. The materials required, for the railway, were to be imported. Stephenson preferred the use of iron sleepers throughout the permanent way.³ As for the iron rails the quantity for the single permanent way (with double lines where necessary) would approach 40,000 ton,

¹ Stephenson to Murray, 24 Mar., 5 Apr. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

² These were in the following places:

- 1) Cairo to the Barrage
- 2 & 3) The Barrage to Terranch [al-Tarrāna]
- 4) al-Tarrāna to Teirieh [al-Tayriyya]
- 5) al-Tayriyya to Kantarah Kafr Boulīn [Qanṭarat Kafr Būlīn]
- 6) Qanṭarat Kafr Būlīn to Ramses [Ramsīs]
- 7 & 8) Ramsīs to [Damanhūr]
- 9 & 10) Damanhūr to el-Careon [al-Karyūn]
- 11 & 12) al-Karyūn to Alexandria

The names of these places have been checked and corrected according to: Bionet Bey, *Dictionnaire géographique*, pp. 461, 563, 564, 567; Filīb Jallad, *Qamus al-idara wa l-qaḍa*, Alexandria, 1890, IV, pp. 1765, 1774, 1778, 1783; Mubarak, X, 51; XIII, 34, XV, 5. All these places were in the Buḥayra province.

³ See above pp. 156-57.

but could be reduced to 500 tons if those in government store were equal to 40 miles of single track.¹

Stephenson took into account the season when operations would be begun with regard to the warm weather. The proper setting out of the line and works might occupy about four months, during which no great force of men would be required. But immediately afterwards, it would be necessary to have at command a body of from 15,000 to 20,000 men, whom he supposed would be marshalled by the shaykhs of the different towns on the requisition of the resident engineer. This force would need to be increased from time to time as the work proceeded. A considerable number of camels and horses must also be provided for the transport of the materials.

The costs would be about £840,000, an analysis of which was: £350,000 for earthwork and bridges, £280,000 for rails and permanent way, £10,000 for stations and rolling stock (which included ten engines with necessary carriages and wagons) and £70,000 for engineering superintendence and a balance of £40,000 for contingencies including the additional force of European inspectors. The workmen would be paid by accredited agents of the Pasha in each sub-district, on the certificate of the engineer. Those payments were to be weekly and in the presence of the district inspector who would duly report to the resident engineer and so have it accounted. Stephenson wrote

¹ Stephenson asked to be authorized to apply for tenders to a few of the principal houses, and such tenders should be delivered to him in London.

to Murray

"I may be too European in my notions on this point and the detail must necessarily be settled on the spot, although I am sure you will agree with me that English character must be maintained in this particular, and that on the completion of the works His Highness the Pasha should know exactly how his money has been spent, and what the work has actually cost him".¹

Finally, Stephenson asked for £20,000 to be placed to his credit, or secured to him in London, to cover the passage-money and advances of those whom he would dispatch to Egypt and must pay in advance.

Before this programme was received in Egypt, 'Abbās had decided to send Nubar Bey to England to confer with Stephenson on the construction of the line with full powers to make the necessary contracts. Murray observed to Stephenson that it was highly desirable that commissions for the purchase of iron, machinery and other requisites should be handled directly in England and not through British merchants in Egypt.² On the receipt of the programme of arrangements, Murray laid it before 'Abbās who approved it with two modifications. He thought that the two accountants, the store-keeper and the three clerks might be dispensed with, as persons might be found in Egypt capable of discharging those duties. The other modification was that he preferred that the bridges should be made of masonry and not of iron. Thus, it seemed to Murray that 'Abbās wished to take the whole responsibility of

¹ Stephenson to Murray, 5th Apr. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

² Murray to Stephenson (Private), 17 Apr. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

the cost and labour upon himself and to leave to Stephenson only that of the technical side. Murray regretted this "on account of our national reputation in Egypt, as the poor laborers will doubtless get much worse paid than they would if paid by us, but I fear this is a matter in which we can not interfere otherwise than by friendly remonstrance and representation".¹

Stephenson did not say a word against the modifications suggested by 'Abbās although they considerably limited his responsibility, and at the same time somewhat removed the control of expenditure out of his hands; and the total cost was, therefore, left more uncertain. He could not object to the use of stone or brick instead of iron for the bridges, as it would bring out native industry and talent, but iron might be the cheapest. His insistence on the necessity of making contracts for materials to be sent from England direct with the parties supplying them was certainly not to prevent the merchants having every fair and legitimate commission, but to avoid such enormous increases in price as he was informed were usual in Egypt. If such costs were to be allowed for procuring the materials it would be impossible to confine the price of the undertaking within the estimate which he had submitted. That was why he suggested the contracts. After further consideration and before he received Murray's letter, Stephenson revised the European staff. He added that 'Abbās's

¹ Murray to Stephenson, 4 May 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

suggestions would require some, but no very material, modifications of personnel.¹ Stephenson welcomed Nubar's presence as it would tend greatly to remove any anxiety or difficulty. He described him as an 'intelligent and agreeable' gentleman.

b) The Engineering Contract for the Alexandria-Cairo Section:

Although the discussion in London between Nubar and Stephenson was fruitful, there were some details which Nubar did not feel at liberty to decide. Michael Andrews Borthwick,² Stephenson's agent, went to Egypt to explain all the details to 'Abbās, and to conclude the contract³ which was signed at Kafr Magar on 12 July 1851. Stephenson was thereby entrusted with the planning and supervising of all work and buildings and to supply technicians from England, but had to supply all surveying and mathematical instruments, drawing materials and books at his own expense. The Egyptian government agreed to pay a sum of £56,000 which was split up as follows: £16,000 on 1st August following the date of agreement, and a further five half yearly instalments of £8,000 each from February 1852 to February 1854. Furthermore, the Egyptian government undertook to provide the engineering staff with suitably furnished offices, together with stabling for the horses. 'Abbās was to provide competent medical staff and all necessary medicines for the engineers. The staff were to be provided

¹ Stephenson to Murray, 24 May 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

² (1810-1856) see: Min. of proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers, XVI (1857), pp. 108-113.

³ Stephenson to Murray, 20 June 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2; The Times, 23 June 1851, p. 4;

with tents for their accommodation. The government further agreed to supply native labour, overseers, materials, impliments etc. Both parties agreed that if the work were delayed beyond three years from September 1851 for reasons beyond Stephenson's control, he should receive £800 for each month or part of one for the continuation of his services. However, if the delay were caused by Stephenson or his staff, he was bound to remain on the work until it was completed.¹

On 21 July 1851, Borthwick wrote to Murray that he was fully authorized, immediately on his return to England, to start recruiting staff. He accordingly asked for the supply of tents. These should not be a casual encampment but staff houses and offices during the work. He thought that the resident engineers should make their headquarters at Cairo and Alexandria, probably in rooms attached to the offices. Each of the four district engineers would require an encampment for which the ordinary military camp would obviously not suffice for so long a period of residence. Accommodation would be necessary as half-way resting house.²

'Abbās immediately complied with the conditions stipulated in the contract. On 6 August 1851, Murray transmitted to Borthwick a letter of credit from the P. & O. agent in Egypt for the sum of £16,000

¹See above, p. 144 ; the contract is published in Wiener, L'Égypte et ses chemins de fer, Appendix A, pp. 641-644.

²Borthwick to Murray, 21 July 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

as arranged on account from the £56,000.¹ On 20 Dhū'l Qa'ada 1267/16 Sept. 1851, 'Abbās issued an order to the Katkhudā Pasha for the establishment and opening of three offices (one at Alexandria, another at Cairo and the third half-way between the two) for the arrangement of the special needs for the railway, and the appointment of a qualified and energetic mudīr (director) to facilitate the requirements of the engineers, and to watch their work. 'Abdallāh Bey (known as al-Injlīzī)² was appointed Mudīr 'Amm (director-general) of these three offices because of his sound experience and understanding. He had also given orders that all the administrative councils of Cairo and Alexandria should follow the advice of this mudīr and carry out his orders immediately. But if any negligence or delay occurred concerning the supply of the railway material, the mudīr of the council responsible and his deputy should be referred immediately to Majlis al-Ahkām al-Misriyya (the Council of Judicial Decisions)³ to be punished for this negligence, according to the law. These orders were duly circulated to the councils in Cairo and Alexandria.⁴ On 18 September, Nubar ordered in London the necessary materials, including coaches, engines and cast iron for the rails.⁵

¹ Katkhudā Pasha to Murray, 5 Aug. 1851 and Borthwick to Murray, 6 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

² Formerly Captain Henry Collingwood Selby Rickards, an English officer converted to Islām. He spoke Arabic fluently. Under Muḥammad 'Alī, he was in charge of the coal stores for the transit at Shubrā, at a salary of £E5. For his new post as director, he received a monthly salary of £E80. (See Wiener, op.cit., p. 69; Ḥaṣṣunā, op.cit., pp. 97-98.)

³ See Deny, Sommaire des archives turques du Caire, pp. 123-4.

⁴ Sāmī, III, Pt. I, p. 42.

Stephenson's proposal was for a line to proceed almost direct from Alexandria to Cairo, up the west side of the Delta (which was perfectly level) by al-Karyūn, Damanhūr, Ramsīs, al-Ṭayriyya, al-Ṭarrāna, the Barrage and thence to Cairo. He selected this route to avoid the permanent way crossing the branches of the Nile, thus obviating the building of enormous number of small bridges over a great many canals. It was also preferable to make this short route because either only a ditch on each side, or a small embankment of three or four feet high was required. Except for these, there was little else requiring to be done; the canals were very few in number and very narrow.¹ The same line was suggested in an article written in The Builder in February 1851. The writer of the article thought that the line should skirt the desert, avoid the more cultivated districts and then terminate at Gīzā, opposite Cairo. For this line, there were no insurmountable physical obstacles. Moreover, it could be built efficiently at such a reasonable cost as would give guarantee of remuneration to the contractors.²

(cont.)

⁵ Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 170, 7 Oct. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23; Stephenson to Murray, 25 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

¹ P.P., 1851 (605) XXI, p. 903.

² The Builder, IX, No. CCCCXX, pp. 124-125.

c) The Tanṭā line and Stephenson's subsequent Re-arrangements:

However, 'Abbās had different views as to the course of the line. He wished the railway to pass by way of Tanṭā so that it might run through the centre of the Delta, where the greaterpart of the produce of Lower Egypt ~~Egypt~~ might be easily collected for transmission to Alexandria.¹ From a letter sent from Nubar to his brother in Egypt, 'Abbās learned that Stephenson was strongly against this plan. Murray informed Stephenson that 'Abbās was aware of the difficulties of crossing the two branches of the Nile, but notwithstanding was anxious that Stephenson should attempt to overcome those obstacles. The greater part of the opposition now offered to the construction of the railroad was due to its skirting the desert and leaving the traffic of the richest part of Egypt undeveloped. "It is this," Murray wrote, "which gives a plausible colouring to the arguments of those who pretend that the Railway is an English job, and not an undertaking desired, or calculated to advance the commerce and internal traffic of this country".² When Borthwick had been told of this a few months earlier, he said he had no objection to it. However, if he did have a preference it was for the route already submitted to 'Abbās. To meet 'Abbās's wishes, he surveyed the land between Cairo and Kafr al-Zayyāt, from there on to the Maḥmūdiyya feeder to Fuwwah. Enough detail was accumulated to enable another report to

¹The Times, 28 Aug. 1851.

²Murray to Stephenson, 6 Sept. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

be sent from England on the whole subject.¹

When Borthwick arrived in London, he laid before Stephenson the particulars of the suggested line to Tanjā. Stephenson informed Murray that he had serious doubts about the bridges which could not be allayed without further personal inspection in October 1851. Meanwhile no time would be lost as the preliminary operations (which would be chiefly near Cairo and Alexandria) were common to the two lines, and for these two lines, the staff would be sent out by the packet boat of 20 September.² He believed that crossing the Nile twice would involve great problems, not merely regarding the construction but the future working of the line. However, he assured 'Abbās that the whole subject should have his serious attention.³ Borthwick with the assistance of Swinburne and Rouse, the two engineers in charge of the Cairo and Alexandria divisions, made the necessary observations of the Tanjā line so that the whole matter would be ripe for Stephenson's decision upon his arrival.⁴ However, the construction of the railway remained speculative until 'Abbās received the Porte's ferman in November 1851 signifying its approval of the railway contract.⁵

¹Borthwick to Murray, 21 July and 6 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

²Stephenson to Murray, 25 Aug. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

³Stephenson to Murray, 19 Sept. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

⁴Borthwick to Murray, 11 Oct. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

⁵See above, pp. 172-75.

Consequently the engineers started the surveys,¹ but were awaiting Stephenson's arrival before the final decision on the exact course to be followed.²

Having visited Egypt in December, Stephenson finally submitted to Murray the modified arrangements. He said that when he visited Egypt in 1850 the question was simply a means of communication between Cairo and Alexandria. Looking at the Barrage, then progressing towards completion, it at once solved the difficulty attending any crossing of the Nile, and he had not hesitated to advise a route in which the Barrage could be available. But now, observing no activity in the work of the Barrage, and recognising the importance of opening up the resources of so rich and productive a district as he saw on his late journey through the Delta, Stephenson came to the conclusion that "it [was] best for Egypt to carry the line by way of Tanta and Benha".³

¹The Times 18 Oct. 1851. When the construction began the engineering staff was arranged as follows: divided at about midway by the Nile, at Kafr al-Zayyāt, the Alexandria-Cairo railway had two separate corps of engineers, one for the district north, the other for the district south of the Nile. Borthwick acted as resident engineer and supervisor of both divisions. Under him were H. J. Rouse (having the ordinary control of the northern half of the line) and Mr. Swinburne (having the entire southern half). Rouse was assisted at his headquarters in Alexandria by Mr. Pringle; and at Cairo, where Swinburne had his quarters, the principal sub-assistant engineer was Mr. Duff. Belonging to Rouse's corps were the following engineers: Mr. Anger and Mr. Bidder, Jun. (stationed between Kengis Osman and Damanhur), J.H. Stanton and Joseph Harrison (appointed to the part between Damanhur and the Nile. Belonging to Swinburne's division were Mr. Fowler and Mr. Vaughan stationed at Banha; Mr. Rushton and Mr. Hardcastle employed on the line between Cairo and the Nile. In addition, there were the surveyors, Mr. Graham and Mr. Preston, (with Cheffins, Jun. as assistant), and the architect of the stations, Mr. Edward Baines (Jeaffreson, The life of Robert Stephenson, II, p.179).

²The Times, 4 Dec. 1851.

³Stephenson to Murray, 22 Dec. 1851 in F.O. 141/19 Pt. 2.

His inspection of the new roads had completely satisfied Stephenson of the competence of the native labour for the embankments. When all were constructed, including the bridges except those of Banhā, Birkat al-Sab' and Kafr al-Zayyāt, he advised a contract with an English contractor of great experience for the laying of the permanent way. This part of the work would require a considerable amount of skilled labour, and upon its perfection depended the efficiency and safety of the railway. He suggested bringing not more than twenty English platelayers into Egypt. Under the guidance of these skilled men, a large number of Egyptians, probably two or three thousand to be paid by the contractors, would be required. Some of these in the progress of the work would become acquainted with the process requisite in the construction and maintenance of this vital part of the railway. It was also hoped that by the time the whole work was completed the majority of the men would be sufficiently expert to undertake the upkeep of the road, and consequently, very shortly after the opening of the line, foreign assistance, could be almost completely dispensed with.

He added

"in the commencement however it is essential that a few experienced English labourers, should be mixed with the Egyptians to teach them all the minutiae required to be known. In England even at this time very few labourers, comparatively speaking, are competent to the task of laying down and adjusting the permanent way with the necessary precision and solidity; it is in fact a process requiring some amount of mechanical judgment, combined with skilful manipulation, which have been acquired gradually in England and other countries, but in the commencement of railways France and Germany had similar assistance from England to that which is now proposed for Egypt."¹

¹ Stephenson to Murray, 22 Dec. 1851.

After further thought Stephenson said that though his original view of the single line was correct making the single line meant half the work would be done and to repeat this process at a later date to make double line would be much more expensive. Therefore, he recommended that all the embankments and ordinary masonry necessary for a double line between Alexandria and Kafr al-Zayyūt should be made. The permanent way and large bridges at Banhā and Birkat al-Sab' however should only carry single track for the time being. Stephenson drew up a sketch of the general conditions between 'Abbās and any contractor for the laying and maintenance of the permanent way on the single line between Alexandria and Cairo. The Egyptian government would deliver materials for the permanent way to such places along the line, as would be defined by Stephenson from time to time. The government would aid the contractor in obtaining native labour. Then when the work to be executed under this contract was completed, Stephenson was to certify the same, and the contractor was to maintain the works for a period of three months, commencing from the date of such a certificate of completion. Furthermore, the contractor was to provide all native and foreign labour with all tools and implements and every other article requisite for the execution of his contract from his taking possession of the permanent way material to the completion of the contract.¹

¹ Conditions of a contract to be entered into between Abbas and...., for the laying and maintenance of the permanent way, encl. in Stephenson to Murray, 22 Dec. 1851.

Finally, it was decided to make the Tanjā line. 'Abbās declared that he meant to finish the railway within two or three years, even if it cost twice the estimate. He dealt with the contractors personally, granting the necessary permits; but he declined to take any further part in the progress of the actual work. Edward Price, an English contractor, was the chief contractor of the railway. He started the line at both ends simultaneously supplying material directly.¹

But did 'Abbās wish to construct the Tanjā line to annul French opposition? As far back as the 19 July 1851, Le Moyne, the French Consul-General, asked 'Abbās's secretary what profit could the Delta get from a railway which would connect Cairo with Alexandria, passing round the edge of the desert? Which provinces would gain by it?² On the other hand, Le Moyne criticised the line passing through the Delta. He reported to his government that this course would meet obstacles and delays which would long postpone completion. He added that it would be more expensive than a railway skirting the desert along the left bank of the Nile, as it would mean building two huge bridges. It would surely, he said, have been cheaper and quicker to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Suez.³ It did not really matter

¹Wiener, op.cit., p.73.

²Arakel Nubar to 'Abbās's private secretary, 19 July 1851 encl. in Murray to Palmerston, No. 20 conf. of 2 Aug 1851 [no. 81] in .F.O.424/7A.

³Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 172, 19 Oct. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23. Delaporte said that the direction proposed by Stephenson was the shortest and less expensive but "que la fanatisme et la convenance personnelles de l'ancien Vice-Roi [Abbās] ont rejetée pour
(cont.)

much to the French representative which course was adopted, but he wished to see the railway entirely abandoned in favour of the canal.

The French representative very much disliked seeing British employees engaged on the construction. He comments

"pour fair ce Chemin de Fer, on se servira d'Ingénieurs Anglais, - une fois terminé [sic] comme il est déjà établi pour le Transit, le service se fera par des Anglais, l'on ne pourra point confier aux mains des Habitants, l'entretien d'une Route, d'où dépend la vie de tant de Personnes, il faut encore là un matériel Anglais. L'Influence change, la Politique aussi, l'argent répandu fait qu'à la Fin S.A. se trouve obligée de passer par là ou l'on voudra, et quelque temps après, elle verra, mais trop tard, qu'elle n'est plus maîtresse chez elle, et qu'elle s'est donné un maître exigeant là ou elle ne demandait qu'un appuis. La Végétation pousse vite en Egypte. Aujourd'hui c'est un Arbrisseau, demain c'est un arbre. Quelques Années seulement ont suffi pour faire cette Transformation".¹

Linant de Bellefonds, in his Mémoires, criticised the course of the line through Lake Maryūt. For fear of flooding the railway embankment, the drainage of all the provinces could no longer flow into the lake. This, he said, had the twofold disadvantage of not allowing the land to be watered enough and preventing the flood waters from

(cont.) favoriser Tanta et Benha." (Delaporte to Drouyn, No. 159, 14 Aug. 1854, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 29).

¹ Arakel Nubar to Abbas private sec. encl. in Murray to Palmerston, No. 20 Conf. of 2 Aug. 1851.

depositing enough silt.¹ Furthermore, he was critical of the line through the heights of Damanhūr. He comments "on a dit que cela était une malice d'Abbas-Pacha contre son oncle; est-il possible que des ingénieurs respectables aient pu consentis à un fait semblable? Cela ne peut-être, et il faut un autre motif, car en ce point certainement le tracé est fautif".² He thought that from Tanja, it would have been better for the railway to go directly to Suez through Wādī al-Ṭumaylāt, instead of diverting it via Cairo across the desert to Suez.³ But a modern writer⁴ says that most of these criticisms were without foundation. The scheme for periodic flooding, introduced by Muḥammad 'Alī, disposed of those concerning the passage of Lake Maryūt, and the railway benefited from serving towns which could bring traffic to it, instead of following the edge of the desert where it could not pick up anything.

The railway was not completed in three years as was required in the contract. When 'Abbās died in 1854, the railway had reached Kafr al-ʿIṣ opposite Kafr al-Zayyāt. At the other end, the line between Cairo and Banhā was approaching completion, but a considerable time would elapse before the two bridges across the Nile were finished.⁵ When Saʿīd succeeded 'Abbās, he was dissatisfied with the manner in which the work was being conducted. A misunderstanding

¹ Mémoires sur les principaux travaux d'utilité publique exécutés en Egypte. pp. 498-99.

² Linant, Mémoires, p.499.

³ Linant, op.cit., p.499.

⁴ Wiener, op.cit., p.72.

⁵ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 10 of 2 Apr. 1854 in F.O.78/1035.

soon arose between Stephenson and the Egyptian government. This was due to delays in work and difficulties in construction of the bridges across the Nile. Sa'id's financial difficulties also played a part in developing this misunderstanding. He was greatly annoyed at the idea of having to pay £800 per month, according to the contract, for what he considered no fault of the government.¹ To remedy this state of things, Lee Green, the Director of the Transit, told Borthwick that he was pushing on the work as far as furnishing men and materials. He hoped that Borthwick would also instruct the resident engineers to do their utmost to ensure all being finished by the end of 1855. One of the engineers, Mr. Rouse, also came in for criticism because of the methods he was adopting in his section. His interference in the official details of the service was rejected. Green's opinion was that the engineers had little to do but to lend their assistance in details upon which the government might be ignorant. After making this complaint about Mr. Rouse, Green concluded "the time has come, when the stations and plant on the line ought to be handed over to us and whatever is wanting for the works carrying on, I as Director on the part of the government ought to be consulted before anything is appropriated."²

Borthwick referred this letter to Stephenson, who assured Green that he was very glad of this and "indeed only undertook the thankless

¹The Times, 31 Aug. 1855.

²Lee Green to Borthwick, 21 Feb. 1855 encl. in Borthwick to Bruce, 9 Mar. 1855 in F.O. 141/28.

and ultra professional commission of signing contracts to save the difficulty that seemed to present itself on the change of government, at the same time my opinion is what it was four years ago when in my first Report upon the Railway in Egypt I entered a quiet protest against the commercial system then existing and which I do trust is not to be renewed to the injury of the country and the discredit of those who may have the honour of giving advice to His Highness".¹

Stephenson stated that the Viceroy could not be more annoyed than he was at the prolonged execution of the works which had arisen from no cause within his control. The bridges and ferry were not even contemplated when his agreement with the government was made. About Rouse's conduct, he was sure that he had done a public good and ought to have credit for it, even if he had erred in arrogating functions that did not strictly belong to him. Notwithstanding, Stephenson did instruct Rouse to avoid any additional responsibility in the working of the line. He should confine himself strictly to the duties of construction, retaining over the working only such a check that no train would be started without his previous knowledge and sanction, in order to have no accident arising from the state of the work. Stephenson also did not wish Rouse to retain any control over the station buildings beyond the expressed requirements of the government, and did not regret being freed from responsibility and expense, which were voluntary on his part and not contained in the

¹ Stephenson to Lee Green, 9 Mar. 1851 encl. in Borthwick to Bruce, 9 Mar. 1855 in F.O. 141/28.

agreement.¹ The English engineers viewed this matter as "there is more meant than meets the eye and that English honour more than English interests may be concerned".²

Sa'id, however, placed the misunderstanding between the Egyptian government and Stephenson, in the hands of the British Consul-General and showed his readiness to abide by any decision made by the latter. Bruce said that the line would be finished by October 1855.³ It was not until January 1856 that the Alexandria-Cairo railway was completed, a distance of 210 kilometres.⁴ Trains passed from each city each alternate day until Oct. 1856, when daily trains were established.⁵ Pending the construction of a bridge at Kafr al-Zayyāt, connection between the two sections of the line was maintained by a steam ferry.

d) The Cairo-Suez Section:

Sa'id decided in May 1855 to continue the railway to Suez. The work was to be carried out at the Pasha's expense under the direction of Mouchelet, a French engineer. The absence of any serious obstacles to this extension, and the good disposition of Sa'id made Mouchelet hope that a year would be enough to complete the line. Sabatier, the French Consul-General, bearing in mind the difficulties

¹ Extract from Borthwick's letter to Rouse, 9 Marc, 1851 encl. in Borthwick to Bruce, 9 Mar. 1851.

² Borthwick to Bruce, 9 Mar. 1851.

³ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 15 of 21 May 1855 in F.O. 142/18.

⁴ The French agent wrote: "je viens de parcourir cette voie ferrée

with which even a well devised project met in Egypt, did not share the confidence of the engineer that the line would be completed towards the middle of 1857. Many obstacles delayed progress. It was only in September 1855 that the preliminary work began. On the other hand, the government, after promising the help of several thousand workers, could only provide a few hundred.¹

To these first difficulties were added others about the course of the line. The requirements of the government complicated, to some extent, the engineers's task. Mouchelet was guided by three orders: not to damage under any pretext any house or enclosed property; to spare as far as possible private property; and to spend as little as possible. For all that apart from an area of cultivated land round Cairo, only desert lay between Cairo and Suez. The postal route was straight between the two cities and that was the shortest way. Yet there were two inconveniences in following it. First, it would have been necessary to go through the cultivated lands surrounding Cairo. Private properties on the outskirts of Cairo were very valuable, and to compensate the owners, it would

(cont.) qui est fort douce et solidement établi. Le voyage est des plus agreable, on arrive à Alexandrie en 7 heures." (Delaporte to Walewski, No. 198, 22 Jan. 1856, M.A.E., C.C., tom.29).

⁵ Sopwith, Notes of a visit to Egypt, p.125.

¹ Benedetti to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept. 1851, M.A.E., C.C., tom.35.

have been necessary to pay 15,000 to 18,000 francs per hectare. Secondly, the desert was divided by the end of the chain of the Muqattam mountains, which rose to 300 metres above sea-level. The postal route went through these and crossed them at Jabal 'Uwayba.¹ Nevertheless, the railway had to go from Cairo to Suez by the most direct route.

Sabatier said that these requirements were incompatible with the conditions imposed on Mouchelet and made the obstacles much greater than they had seemed at first. In order to deviate as little as possible from his instructions, Mouchelet had to renounce the idea of a straight line and to divide it into four sections connected by bends to go round the base of the mountain. By these means all the cultivated lands, round Cairo, could be left to their proprietors and not one sāqiya (water wheel) would be sacrificed. Moreover, to avoid levelling, Mouchelet had to give up the idea of a line all on the same level and had to build a series of small lines with combined level and slopes. After crossing the peak of the mountain, the railway went down towards Suez on a continual slope which was softened by two bends.² Thus, the Suez line started at Cairo station, breaking away from cultivated ground along the shortest way from the station to the

¹ Merruau, L'Egypte Contemporaine, pp. 10-110, 224.

² Benedetti, to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept. 1856, M.A.E., C.C., tom.35.

desert, and came out between al-Ḥaṣwa and al-Qubba, north of the postal route without touching a house, garden or a water wheel. From this point the line ran north-west along cultivated lands in the villages of al-Qubba, Maṭariyya, Kafr al-Gāmūs, Birkat al-Ḥajj, swerved eastward leaving the Khanka Dunes on the north. It then ran north following the route of al-Dār al-Bayḍā', crossed Jabar Jafra and reached the peak of 'Uwayba to finally descend towards Suez passing by al-'Aḡrūd.¹ The total length of the line was 136 kilometres and it was a single line.

The Suez line was completed on 5 December 1858. It only remained to finish the stations and secondary works, and to organise a regular service.² By the completion of this section the foundation of the Egyptian State Railway was laid. Finally, the Kafr al-Zayyāt bridge was inaugurated on 25 May 1859 with great celebration. The description, which the French agent has given us, is worthy of note. The troops stood in a line on the pavement and the sound of music was ringing in the air. He added

"du moment où S. A. Saïd Pacha s'est mis en marche pour traverser le pont, le cadi, le mufti et les Ulémas en grande costume ont prononcé des prières. Aux prières de la religion on ~~avait~~ joint des oeuvres de charité, plus de 50 buffles on été égorgés sur les deux têtes du pont et immédiatement dépecés au profit des pauvres. Il a été fait en outre d'abondantes

¹Merruau, op.cit., pp. 225-226.

²Schefer to Walewski, No. 76, 9 Jan. 1859, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 35.

distributions de pain. À son arrivée à la gare de Kaffar Zaïat, le Vice-Roi a remercié l'ingénieur en chef, Mr. Rose [sic], de son beau travail et lui a fait don de deux cent cinquante mille francs pour avoir devancé d'un an l'époque où l'on pouvait en espérer l'achèvement. Il a fait donner également des gratifications à tous les ouvriers dont le zèle a si bien - Seconde l'ingénieur en chef."¹

2. Administration and Management

The first development of railways took place under the control of the Transit Administration, which has passed through some developments. At the end of 1845, Muḥammad Alī was determined to control the transit of passengers, mails and merchandise to show that he himself could manage the business. Whatever his intentions were, it was a means of his monopolistic practices. He entrusted Artin Bey with the organisation thereof, and in a council held at al-Māliyya (Ministry of Finance) Hekekyan was suggested as the only person who could fulfil the duties of chief inspector. Nevertheless it was said that, after Muḥammad 'Alī had seen the "Constantinople Chamberlain" and without the concurrence of Artin, he commanded 'Abbās Pasha to take the direction of the Transit affairs, employing Thurburn, an Englishman, as manager. Hekekyan comments "it is a curious fact that the Pasha had been induced to retain Thurburn in his own service, because being of Aberdeen, the present British minister for foreign affairs would be pleased in seeing the management given to

¹Delaporte to Walewski, No. 250, 30 May 1895, M.A.E., C.C., tom.30.

a townsman or countryman of his".¹ Artin retired because he had no more to do with the Transit question. The organisation was discussed by the Grand Council composed of 'Abbās Pasha, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of War, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Public Instruction and the Minister of Finance. Accordingly a dīwān called Dīwān al-Murūr (Transit Administration) was established in January 1846.² This dīwān was under the directorship of a Nāzir. During this discussion, it was proposed that the servants of the dīwān should be 'Turks' and 'Turkish officers'. Edhem Bey, the Minister of Public Instructions, checked them saying

"Turks will sit down and smoke, and when an Englishman comes, they will not rise - nor will they say anything until they have finished their pipes; and Englishmen then will not be in the humour for staying to take a cup of coffee and to smoke a pipe. They will beat them..... and the affairs of the transit will be in a short time turn out worse than those of Syria."³

So they appointed 'Abd al-Rahmān Efendi, an Italian renegade who spoke English tolerably well. This dīwān was provided with the necessary persons as well as animals and carriages. It had its principal establishment in Cairo with agencies at Alexandria and Suez.⁴

¹Hekekyan Papers, III, Add. 37450, fols. 123b-124.

²For previous arrangements of the transit see above p.85 ; Rāfi 'ī, Ta'rikh al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya, III, p.568; Mubārak, xii, p.71. Mubarak calls it in another place (vii, p.64) Maṣlahat al-Pazāport. It was usually called al-Imrariyya (Ḥassunā, op.cit., p.74).

³Hekekyan, III, Add. 37450, fol. 125b. Criticising the appointment of 'Abbās, the Bombay Times wrote "at present the chief powers are lodged with Abbas Pasha whose bigotted attachment to Islamism, and hatred to everything connected with Turks, English or French, all equally point him out as the last person fit for this office." loc.cit., Hekekyan, Add. 37450, fol. 151b).

This administration remained as constituted until 'Abbās's succession. Wishing to improve the overland communication,¹ in February 1849 he appointed Kīānī Bey, one of the most active officers in Egypt, as head of the Dīwān al-Murūr. He had full powers and authority and was told not to consider the Transit as a source of profit or revenue at present, but to do everything requisite for putting it on an improved and enlarged scale, both on the Nile and in the desert.² However, shortly after, Kīānī was removed. His energy and independence of character lost him 'Abbās's favour and consequently his place. He insisted on keeping his dīwān entirely separate from the other dīwāns. He would not receive orders about steamers, free passage and similar details from Artin or any other officials. Murray

(cont.)

⁴The managers of these depts. were:

Cairo	Chief Director	'Abd al-Rahmān Efendi
Alexandria	Agent	Mr. R. Green
Suez	Agent	Mr. C. Betts

The Cairo and desert establishment consisted of about:

5 European clerks	45 other native servants
31 native coachmen, under a European	440 horses
110 grooms	46 vans
15 nazirs	

The Nile establishment, seven steam-boats, consisted of:

No. 1 "Delta"	4 "Cairo"
2 "Lotus"	"Little Nile"

The Canal establishment:

3 steam-tugs.

track-boats.

(Walne's report on the past and present state of the transit through Egypt, encl. (1) in Murray to Palmerston, No. 45 of 6 June 1847 in F.O. 97/408.)

¹The Times, 31 May 1851.

²Murray to Palmerston, No. 9 of 24 Feb. 1849 in F.O. 78/804.

did all in his power to end this conflict between Kiānī and 'Abbās.

'Abbās said that he had promised the British government a speedy and secure transit and it was not on Kiānī, nor on any other officer that these improvements depended. Meanwhile Khair al-Dīn was appointed as the new nāzīr of Dīwān al-Murūr. This change was taken by Murray as probably affecting British interests more directly.¹

When the construction of the railway was decided upon in 1851, 'Abbās nominated 'Abdallāh Bey al-Injlīzī as the railway Ma'mūr.² On 10 Rabi' I 1269/22 Dec. 1852 'Abdallāh was appointed Mudīr al-Murūr, and 'Abd al-Raḥman Bey,³ the governor of Suez, succeeded him as Ma'mūr al-Sikka al-Hadīd, for his attainment as a linguist.⁴ In 1854, the management of the railway dīwān was also put under Mudīr al-Murūr. On 22 Rajab 1270/20 April 1854, 'Abbās entrusted the direction of the railway dīwān to 'Abdallāh because the two departments had common characteristics.⁵ When Sa'īd succeeded, Lee Green, who had been working in the transit for thirteen years and was the brother of the British Consul at Alexandria, replaced 'Abdallāh Pasha. Bruce, the British Consul-General, interpreted this appointment as a justification of Sa'īd's intention to improve these important branches of the public service.⁶ By 1856 the employees of the Dīwān al-Murūr were as follows:

¹ Murray to Palmerston, No. 12 of 5 Mar. 1849 in F.O. 78/804.

² Le Moyne to Minister of For. Affs., No. 173, 9 Nov. 1851, M.A.E., C.P., tom. 23; "The construction development and organization of the Egyptian State Railway", article in L'Égypte Contemporaine, XXIV, No. 139, 1933, p.118.

³ It seems this was the same as the 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendi on previous page. He was born in Malta to Italian and Maltese parents. He lost them very early in life and was brought to Egypt, where he was converted to Islām. (Murray to Canning, Private, 19 July 1851 in F.O. 352/34 Pt.1.)

2,535 Turkish and Arab employees including coachmen, grooms, sailors, engineers, overseers, clerks, masons, carpenters employed on works but not including fallāh labourers. The pay of these amounted to 448,274.20 piastres. There were also 127 Europeans of various nationalities including agents, clerks, engineers, drivers, platelayers and telegraph clerks. Their total pay amounted to 154,944 piastres.¹

In Egypt everything was concentrated in the hands of the Viceroy. Therefore two important questions arise. Could the Viceroy understand the difficulties arising from the introduction of an entirely novel system of locomotion and what were the functions of the general director of the Transit and the railway? Consider Sa'īd in whose reign the railway was completed. Sa'īd seemed to have looked upon the use of the railway by others as subordinate to his own use of it. He got the habit of moving large bodies of troops and artillery by the railway which rendered impossible the accommodation of passengers and goods which the necessities of Egypt required.² He did not allow the director to derive the financial resources he should have from the railway, and

(cont.)

⁴ Sāmī, III, Pt. I, 56; The Illustrated London News, No. 609, XXII, p.140 (19 Feb. 1853).

⁵ Sāmī, III, Pt. I, 55; The Times, 30 Jan. 1854, p.7.

⁶ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 37 of 30 July 1854 in F.O. 142/18.

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 23 of 17 May 1856 in F.O. 142/20.

² Anon., Railways in Egypt, p.52; Bruce to Clarendon, No. 40 of 18 Sept. 1856 in F.O. 78/1222; Sopwith, Notes of a visit to Egypt, p.125.

"with the egotism of a true Turk, he will sacrifice revenue rather than subject himself to the necessity of consulting the interests of the public, when he wishes to make use of the line". Therefore, Lee Green was obliged to keep the working expenses of his establishment as low as possible in order to provide funds for other necessary requirements, whereby he was unable to increase his working staff.

In directing the work, Lee Green was faced with many difficulties both in preserving order at the stations, and in obtaining respectable men for the responsible posts of station-masters, and guards. If 'Turks' were employed, they were slow and apathetic, and the European passengers neither understood, nor respected their authority. On the other hand, the Europeans in Egypt, available for these posts, were needy adventurers on whom no great reliance could be placed. It was the habit among the Consuls-General to seek employment in the Transit for the incapable and doubtful characters they wished to get rid of, obtaining from the Viceroy a recommendation for them. The director was frequently obliged to comply with these exigencies. Lee Green determined to get experienced station-masters for the Cairo and Alexandria stations from England, to improve the railway management, but was prevented from doing so by the Viceroy's dislike of European employees in which he was encouraged by the French and Turks around him.¹ Bruce, however, avoided invoking interference in the details of a very complex administration in order not to produce

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 40 of 18 Sept. 1856 in F.O. 78/1222.

increased difficulty and confusion. An appeal to the Pasha, he said, would produce an order for alteration in the Transit arrangements.

The unwillingness to employ Europeans on the railway was not a new phenomenon in Egypt. Under 'Abbās, Robert Stephenson had requested permission to engage some English engineers to work the engines, but 'Abbās refused declaring that the line should be worked by 'Arabs' alone, and complained that the employment of foreigners had been attended with a great deal of annoyance to himself. In the meantime Bruce decided not to interfere because the system of management to be adopted had to be settled by experience. He did not wish, before the railway to Cairo was finished and if possible extended to Suez, to urge the Pasha to employ Europeans on it. He feared that any such arguments could be made use of by the opponents of the railway to dissuade 'Abbās from carrying on with it, on the ground that he would thereby establish a foreign interest in Egypt. Bruce was convinced that this feeling arose "not so much from a dislike of foreigners, as such, as from his dislike to employing men whom he cannot treat with the injustice and want of consideration which he displays towards the Egyptians in his service".¹ This could have been the most likely reason. Yet on the other hand, the contract he had signed with Stephenson did not change his attitude towards the coming of foreigners to Egypt. On his accession, foreigners lost the encouragement they enjoyed under Muḥammad 'Alī. Having feared the spread of French influence he dismissed French employees in the

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, 16 Feb. 1854 in F.O. 78/1035.

factories and workshops.¹

Under Sa'īd, some influential 'Turks', among them Muṣṭafā Fāḍil Bey, Sa'īd's nephew, endeavoured to exclude Europeans from employment on the railway by playing on his jealousy. They intended to obtain possession of the railway. To realize their main object, intrigues were directed against the English Mudīr al-Murūr, Lee Green. In 1857, Sa'īd reorganised all the dīwāns of Egypt into four ministries, one of which, al-Maliyya, was given to Muṣṭafā Bey,² under whom was put the Dīwān al-Murūr.³ Thus a favourable opportunity was given to him for renewing his intrigues against Lee Green, with a view to obtaining the Transit management through a mudīr appointed by him. The principal charges brought against Green were that he employed too many Europeans, and that he listened too readily to applications on their behalf for an increase of pay.⁴ Bruce decided to resist a change advocated on such grounds. He intended to prevent the confusion which prevailed throughout the different branches of the Egyptian administration as a result of the frequent removal of officers from important posts by secret intrigues. Bruce therefore informed Muṣṭafā Bey that as he was satisfied with the general management of the

¹Cf. Shukrī, Miṣr wa'l-Sūdān, pp. 54-56.

²Rafi'ī, Aḡr 'Isma'īl, I, p.47.

³Sāmī, III, Pt. I, p.216.

⁴Bruce to Clarendon, No. 18 of 2 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 142/20. In Bruce's opinion "the number of Europeans employed might be augmented with advantage to the public, and the salaries paid were inadequate, owing to the rise of prices in Egypt".

Transit, he would oppose any attempt to displace the present mudir. Sabatier, the French Consul-General, supported Bruce. Muṣṭafā assured Bruce that he had abandoned any such intention, but this did not prevent him from making every underhand effort to effect his object through the Viceroy.

In order to conciliate Bruce, Muṣṭafā seemed to have intended to appoint 'Abdallāh, the English renegade, in Green's place. Bruce said that Sa'īd liked Lee Green personally and he had a great repugnance to 'Abdallāh. Bruce could calculate on 'Abdallāh's support in forwarding the Suez railway, but the effect of the change would be to weaken the British hold of the Transit, for 'Abdallāh, disliked by Sa'īd, and unpopular with Sabatier and the other foreigners in Egypt, could not maintain his position long. Bruce added "a great step will be gained by those who, from various motives, wish to see the Railway handed over to a private company".¹ However to support himself against these intrigues, Lee Green proposed that a council of persons in the Viceroy's confidence should be formed, to whom the financial questions connected with the railway should be referred. To this, Sa'īd assented, and declared his intention of naming some Turks, and with them, two or three of the European merchants. Since it was alike objectionable and uncalled for, from the Egyptian government's view, to invite merchants to share in the management of a government department, Bruce took the opportunity to state

¹Bruce to Clarendon, No. 18 of 2 Apr. 1857.

his objections to such a measure. He pointed out to Sa'īd that the complaints from which he wished to be relieved did not arise from bad management of the Transit, but were the results of intrigue.

The institution of a council was in itself a good measure, Bruce said, but it ought to consist solely of persons in Sa'īd's own service.¹

However, Lee Green retained his post until December 1857 when he resigned because of ill health. Nubar Bey replaced him.² John Green, the acting British Consul-General, comments "[Nubar] being looked upon by them [the Turks] as one of themselves, a great difficulty was got over, for it could not be otherwise than a subject of jealousy to the Turks that they should be compelled to place a foreigner at the head of one of the most important Government Administration; more especially as there is considerable patronage attached to this Post".³ Nubar was an Armenian.

Because Riāḍ Bey, Wakīl al-Sikka al-Ḥadīd, was transferred to another post, Muḥammad Sa'īd Efendi, a Turk, was appointed in his stead on 28 Jamāda II 1274/14 Jan. 1858.⁴ But Nubar was removed from Nizārat al-Sikka al-Ḥadīd on 27 March 1859. Sa'īd had ordered him to send some cannon by a special train but he sent them by an ordinary one. Sa'īd thought that Nubar was relying on other support, and in the decree of

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 18 of 2 April 1857.

² Sāmī, III, Pt. I, pp. 262-63; See Tagher, "Portrait psychologique de Nubar Pacha", cah.hist. ég., I, nos. 5-6 (1949) pp. 360-362.

³ Green to Clarendon, No. 92 of 22 Dec. 1857 in F.O. 78/1314.

⁴ Sāmī, III, Pt. I, pp. 270-271.

his dismissal, he told Nubar to go to those upon whom he had relied.¹ Sa'īd Efendi succeeded him on 23 Sa'abān 1275/28 March 1859.² Since Sa'īd Efendi spoke no European language, Charles Betts, an Englishman, was appointed as the first deputy.³ His qualifications were his knowledge of the English language, and that he had been employed for eighteen years in the Transit.⁴ Betts had to observe the movement of trains from railway stations and to execute the work after consultations with Sa'īd Efendi. Yūsuf Efendi, Nāzir Maktab al-Suways, was appointed as the second deputy to control Arabic accounts and to supervise general routine during Sa'īd's absence. To increase his zeal and to encourage him, Yūsuf Efendi had 500 piastres added to his allowance starting from April 1859, making the total 4,000 piastres.⁵ In Rabi' I 1277/Sept. 1860 Sa'īd and Yūsuf were removed with the chief clerk because of their inaccuracy and negligence. Selīm Pasha al-Gazāyrlī was appointed as Nāzir but in December of the same year Paolino Bey replaced him.⁶ Nevertheless throughout all these changes Charles Betts still retained his position as deputy. There is one conclusion in

¹ Sāmī, III, Pt. I. p.318. Nubar was regarded by the French as a creature of the British (cf. Marlowe, op.cit., p.184).

² Sāmī, III, Pt. I. p. 318.

³ Sāmī, III, Pt. I. pp. 318-319; Green to Malmesbury, No. 35 of 1 Apr. 1859 in F.O. 78/1467.

⁴ See above footnote 4, p. 262 .

⁵ Sāmī, III, Pt. I. pp. 318-319.

⁶ Sāmī, III, Pt. I, p.358. The management of the railways continued under Diwān al-Murūr until 1864, when the railways were brought under the Ministry of Public Works. In Jan. 1866, the railways were made an inde-
(cont.)

particular which can be drawn from these constant changes in the key posts in the administration, the instability of management. Consequently there was not a continuous line of policy.

Could the railway work without employing foreigners? 'Alī Mubārak says in his Khifāṭ

"it is known that every work must have difficulties at its beginning, and the railway, no doubt, is one of the largest works, for it needs a lot of necessary works and buildings for its solidity, fitness, management, supplying its necessities and housing its employees. All this needs time, money, increase of the number of employees and continuous thinking until it is completed and organised."¹

According to Mubārak, the natives of Egypt at the beginning of this project were unable to carry on all the works necessary to run this Maṣlaḥa because they lacked the knowledge of this new work. So it was necessary to employ foreigners with them because, in highly technical matters, the employment of foreigners was inevitable. In 1857, the Egyptian government applied to the Society of Civil Engineers in London to select an engineer to work as Nāzīr of the repair and engineering workshop of railway locomotives. This request was responded to, and Sa'īd agreed to employ the engineer under a five-year contract at an annual salary of £800, with payment of his travelling expenses to and from London.² As the natives were not experienced as drivers, Egypt had to rely on Europeans, mainly English. Some of the contracts

(cont.) pendent administration. ("The construction... of the Egyptian State Railway", art. in L'Egypte Contemporaine, XXIV, p.118).

¹Mubārak, VII, p.89.

²Sāmī, III, Pt. i, pp. 242-43.

throw some light on the conditions and terms of service under which the drivers were employed. The agreement was entered into between Mudīr al-Murūr wa'l-Sikka al-Hadīd and the driver; for instance, the contract signed with an English driver, John Wigley, on 17 February 1857. This driver was employed at the salary of £18 per calendar month, payable monthly. He was liable to have fines deducted from his salary if he were reported in writing to the mudīr by the foreman of the locomotive department. He could also get a "bonus". All the fines imposed on the European drivers were allowed to accrue and at certain times this sum was divided out among the most deserving drivers.

The Egyptian government were responsible for paying the driver's travelling expenses out and back to England. If the driver were discharged for misbehaviour and the British Consul in Alexandria agreed this was a correct decision the driver was not entitled to claim the return fare to England. Should the driver be unable to fulfil his contract through illness brought on by his work, Sa'īd would pay his return passage to England and his salary until the driver's arrival in London. It was necessary that he should be examined by a competent European doctor approved by the British Consul in Alexandria. There were very comprehensive and concise details laying down hours of work and leisure and all general conduct. However, if the driver felt he was being imposed upon he could appeal to the British Consul, whose decision was to be regarded as final.¹

¹ Memo. of Agreement: A and B in F.O. 141/36 Pt. 1.

It would seem that there was no common contract for drivers, each man having a personal one. Another driver was to serve two years also at a salary of £18 per calendar month, but at the end of the first year it was to be increased to £20 per calendar month if he would stay for the full length of the second year. Another interesting point was that the driver during his service should not directly or indirectly be engaged in the cultivation of land or in any other trade or occupation. In this same contract there was a difference in the way of dealing with complaints. These were to be put before a committee consisting of the mudīr, the chief engineer and the superintendent of the locomotive department; all of whom had to be serving at the time. As a British subject he had right of appeal to the constituted consular authorities.¹ Some of the drivers were required to carry out repairs to locomotives and tenders.

On 21 Rabi' II 1274/9 Dec. 1857 a meeting was called at the Ministry of the Interior between Nubar Bey and 'Abdallāh Bey, Berto and Green Bey, Riād Bey, Mr. Betts and Khurshid, Capūdān Nāzīr of the railway office at Alexandria. The purpose of this meeting was to consider the arrangement of Dīwān al-Murūr wa'l-Sikka al-Hadīd with the utmost accuracy, and also to assess the minimum number of employees who were needed for the department; and if possible to reduce the number of employees on condition that the work could be done properly. They were also

¹ Memo. of Agreement: (C) Nubar and William Elkington, 2 Aug. 1858 in F.O. 141/36 Pt. 1.

asked not to retain Europeans except those who were urgently needed, and it would be impossible to replace them by others.¹ In April 1858, Green, the acting British Consul-General, reported that Sa'īd had appointed natives as engine drivers. This must have been the consequences of this reorganization. Consequently Green informed Nubar that although he was not entitled to dictate to the administration the nationality of the persons it might employ

"the magnitude of British interests in all that relates to the Railway through Egypt entitles me to draw your serious attention to the enormous responsibility which must weigh on the Administration, if persons who have not gone through a thorough apprenticeship, and are not possessed of such professional certificates as must remove all doubts of their competency, are employed in the onerous and delicate position of English Drivers, to whose judgment and experience so many lives are entrusted".²

A number of persons had expressed considerable anxiety as to whether this measure was not calculated to give rise to very serious accidents.

¹ Sāmī, iii, Pt. 1, pp. 258-259.

² Green to Nubar, 21 Apr. 1858 in F.O. 142/22. Few years earlier Lee Green told Nassau William Senior that if he did employ 'Arab' drivers, all his English drivers would leave him. He added "we have only a single line. An English driver, who knows that there is an engine coming up, will not start, whatever be the authority that commands him; an Arab, though he might foresee the danger, or rather the certainty, of a collision, would obey. A few days ago an order came from the Pasha to forward some persons immediately by a special train. I objected that an engine was coming up. 'Nonsense', said the man who brought the order, 'you engineers are always raising difficulties to frighten us; we must go'. The driver of course flatly refused. If he had been an Arab he would have obeyed. (Senior, Conversations and Journals, II, pp. 56-57; cf. Ḥassūnā, Misr wa'l-turuq al-hadidiyya, pp. 140-142.)

This feeling did not only amount to anxiety but also to actual complaint from some Australian passengers because of a narrowly escaped collision of two trains on the Alexandria-Cairo railway. Green sent the statement of the passengers to Nubar telling him that he believed, from the information he had received, that the 'Arab' telegraphic department neglected to pass a message with which it had been entrusted. This gave him ground to indicate the impracticability of carrying on the service safely with an establishment into which a number of persons had been introduced who were ignorant of the duties they had to perform. He drew Nubar's attention to the urgent necessity of employing none but skilled Europeans in all posts of responsibility connected with the railway.¹

Colquhoun, the British Consul-General, also reported that Sa'id was unwilling to renew contracts with foreign railway drivers and telegraphists. He said that Sa'id was naturally desirous to have his 'Arabs' trained by the foreigners at the head of the railway and telegraph establishment, so as to replace by degrees the foreign engine drivers who might leave Egypt. Sa'id already had several 'Arabs' who did drive, chiefly in branch lines, or luggage trains. "He," Colquhoun comments, "professes himself very desirous to have foreigners, but he would like them to be as his Arabs are, from whom in a case of momentary pecuniary difficulty he stops three months pay."² He pointed out to Sa'id the

¹Green to Nubar, 20 Mar. 1859, in F.O. 142/22.

²Colquhoun to Russell, (No. 14 Consular) 6 Oct. 1859 in F.O. 78/1468.

large income he was deriving from the Indian traffic and the high rates of fares and that they could not entrust such a number of lives and such large interests "to men who, whatever may be their natural talent, had only lately taken to the business, and who in a moment of difficulty or danger could not be relied on".

The British government received this news with much concern. Lord Russell instructed Colquhoun to inform Sa'id that the railway between Alexandria and Suez was only a single line and great caution in working it was necessary to prevent collision or other accidents. It might justly be apprehended that collisions and accidents would occur if the driving of the trains should be entrusted to native engineers who could not be expected to possess the skill or steadiness which was required to ensure the safety of the trains. He also instructed him to point out to Sa'id that the expenses consequent on repairing a single accident would much more than counterbalance the saving of wages to the engineers that might be effected by the substitution of natives for foreigners.

"Her Majesty's Government therefore feel themselves justified in seriously representing to the Pasha the inexpediency of the change which he has in view and in expressing their earnest hope that His Highness will continue the services of the European Engineers on the Egyptian Railway, at all events as regards the Trains employed in conveying Passengers arriving in¹ Alexandria or Suez on their way to and from India."

¹Russell to Colquhoun, No. 16 of 18 Oct. 1859 in F.O. 141/38.

The qualifications of the native drivers will be discussed later. But this does not mean that all the drivers were Egyptians. The Transit Administration continued to ensure a proper supply of European drivers, Belgians, French and English, the last predominating,¹ to meet the requirements of the overland service, and to comply with the P. & O. contract under which it was bound to provide English drivers for all passenger trains.² This engagement was carried out satisfactorily, and a large number of English drivers entered the service in 1865 and 1866.³ However, about thirty of them began to complain of certain grievances and went on strike on 20 April 1867. They complained of excess work, accompanied by inadequate remuneration; the cost of lodging accommodation incurred by the complainants when detained on duty away from their ordinary residence; and the penalties illegally inflicted upon them. They were tired of waiting for redress. In January 1866, they forwarded a memorial to the administration, and a few days afterwards were formally promised a payment of two shillings and six pence an hour for all overtime after a certain number of hours. This promise was not kept. Some of the drivers received one and four pence an hour overtime, and even that for a smaller number of hours than they had worked. They therefore refused to proceed to work until

¹Phillips to Stanton (Private and Conf.), 26 May 1866 in F.O. 141/60; Stanton to Stanley (Separate), 17 June 1867 in F.O. 78/1976.

²See below, pp. 354-56.

³See some of these contracts in F.O. 141/63.

justice was done. They claimed the amount of £1,489.5.8. on account of overtime and of the sums due to them for lodging expenses and fines illegally imposed on them.¹ Consequently the Egyptian government appointed a commission to investigate these complaints.² On the other hand, the British government, without waiting for the report of the commission of enquiry, instructed the Consul at Cairo to sequester as much of the quarterly mail subsidy as would suffice to pay the drivers the money due to them at the time of their strike.³ However, the commission recognised in its report that the drivers were occasionally unreasonably overworked; that for this excessive overwork they were inadequately paid, and that the system by which the administration reckoned their overtime was illiberal and wrong. It recommended that the men should be paid up to the day on which such decision was communicated to them. After a thorough consideration of the report, the British government believed that by striking, the drivers placed themselves in a wrong position and that their claim for damages could not be supported in law. Nevertheless the Consul at Cairo was instructed to effect a fair settlement according to the commissioners' recommendation.⁴ The

¹Reade to Raghib Pasha (Minister of Foreign Affs.) No. 94 of 7 June 1867 encl. in Reade to Stanley, No. 1 of 10 June 1867 in F.O. 78/1796. This was not the first incident in Egypt. In 1858, a dispute arose between the Transit Administration and the English engine drivers. They threatened to strike not so much for an advance of wages as for a reorganisation of their work. (The Times, 19 Apr. 1858, p.5.).

²The commission composed of the inspector general of the Egyptian railways (an Englishman), the traffic manager (also an Englishman), and Sami Bey, an Egyptian officer of rank from the Egyptian Foreign Office, who thoroughly understood English. Reade, British Consul in Cairo, also attended as a delegate from the British Consulate.

³Hammond to Reade, No. 24 of 29 June 1867; Stanton to Stanley (Separate), (cont.)

railway administration offered to pay drivers a portion of overtime arrears, and deplacement allowance for one night in every three of their claims, but refused to refund fines.¹ Because the Egyptian government refused to continue to employ them, the drivers left for England on 13 July 1867. Finally, the Egyptian government consented to pay the drivers the full amount of their salaries during the period they were detained in Egypt to appear before the Commission. The total sum paid to them was £3,215.6.8.² Since a large number of European drivers ceased work, the Transit Administration employed native drivers in charge of the trains conveying the overland passengers. This was unavoidable. Because of these circumstances, the P. & O. Company began to complain of the incompetence of native drivers; and accordingly, the British Consul-General addressed a representation to the Egyptian government for the discontinuance of their employment.³

In accordance with the Viceroy's policy, Egyptians were employed to drive the engines and to maintain the line. An investigation is necessary to throw more light on the rôle they played in that respect. Therefore, we have to answer the following questions: what was the educational background of the native drivers? What sort of training

(cont.) 26 June 1867 encl. in Stanley to Reade, No. 25 of 29 June 1867 in F.O. 141/61; Reade to Stanley, No. 10 of 4 July 1867 in F.O. 78/1977.

⁴ Stanton to Stanley, 24 July 1867; the report is enclosed in Reade to Stanley, No. 21 of 18 Aug. 1867 in F.O. 78/1977; Hammond to Reade, No. 30 of 27 July 1867 and Stanley to Reade, No. 38 of 16 Oct. 1867, in F.O. 141/61.

¹ Reade to Stanley, No. 7 of 27 June 1867 in F.O. 78/1976.

² Zoulfikar to Stanton, No. 43 of 22 Jan. 1868, encl. in Stanton to Stanley, (cont.)

had they? Who were the skilled workers? How they were selected? And what provision was made for them at this stage?

First of all, it seems that native drivers had been given a European training. This task had been given to a European engineer called Jeffry, whom Sa'id had promised to give £100 for each engineer he trained and prepared to work the train by himself. In 1859, he trained eight engineers as required, and Sa'id ordered Nāzīr al-Murūr to give him the sum of £800 after testing them, and seeing that they were capable of doing the job. The same system of payment was to be followed in case of each engineer he would train.¹ However this system seems never to have been carried out successfully. 'Alī Mubārak, who was appointed as Nāzīr Maṣlahat al-Sikka al-Hadīd in 1868,² deals with this question in his Khiṭaṭ. He says that there was no official specification showing the task of each worker. There were no rules for the Sawāqīn (drivers) on the lines and for the Mulāhizīn (foremen) in the workshops. Most of the drivers were unqualified for their jobs, being taken on without examination or certificate of fitness for the job. The majority was from Awlād al-'Arab al-'Aṭashjiyya³ who knew nothing about steam, and were

(cont.)

³Hammond to Stanton (Separate), 14 June 1867; Howell to Stanley, 27 May 1867 enclosing a letter from the company's agent dated 27 May 1867 encl. in Stanley to Reade, No. 1 of 18 June 1867 in F.O. 141/61; copies of the P. & O. agent's representations to the British Consul at Cairo and to the British government in F.O. 141/63.

¹Samī, III, Pt. i, p.319.

²Mubārak stayed in the railways until Aug. 1870 (for a fuller biography see: Maḥmūd al-Shar qawī and 'Abdallāh al-Mishadd, 'Alī Mubarak, ḥayātuḥu wada'wātuḥu wa'alḥāruḥu, Cairo, 1962; also Mubarak's personal autobiography, ix, 37-61).

³'Aṭashjiyya = stokers. (This means that the stokers were already Egyptians.)

ignorant of the requirements of a railway and locomotives. Very few could read and write, and this, of course, had unfortunate consequences. Mubarak says that although the railway maṣlaḥa knew this, it overlooked the consequences because of the smallness of the salaries. This was not only to economise but also to gain by not employing foreign skilled workers because of their high salaries. But if one reckoned comparative cost, he adds, employing skilled workers with large salaries was cheaper than repairing the damages caused by unskilled workers. The maṣlaḥa could have selected a batch from the students of schools to train in the workshops until they became fit to run this department in the most desirable way.¹

Secondly, a great number of Egyptians seem to have been employed on the Cairo-Suez railway. A few months after its completion, Betts, Wakīl al-Sikka al-Ḥadīd, drew up a Lā'ihah (schedule) for Awlād al-'Arab (Egyptians) employed on this line. This schedule arranged the works and salaries of the following groups: Uṣṭawāt (construction craftsmen), Mu'ammirī al-sikak (repair-workers on the line), Mu'awinī al-tarkīb (construction assistants) and their Talāmīdh (apprentices) from Muṭṭabjiyya (shunters) and al-Tablajīyya (who operated the turn-tables). Sa'id approved this schedule and ordered it to be adopted as a constitution for work from 19 Muḥarram 1276/18 August 1859. Moreover, the conditions included in this schedule concerning the above groups were to apply to their counterparts in the railway stations generally.² This schedule

¹Mubarak, VII, pp. 91-92.

²Samī, III, Pt. I, pp. 334-335.

classified these groups into four sections with their distinctive grades, and sketched out the procedure for their promotion and the amount of salary ascribed to each group according also to their grades. It is also clear that this schedule laid down guidance for selection and promotion which was mainly based on education and experience.¹

It is impossible to say to what extent this Lā'ibah was carried out, but this was the kind of work the skilled native workers were able to perform. On the other hand, the Egyptian railway was dependent on European technicians. The two chief engineers were Europeans. Rouse, the English engineer, remained as the Viceroy's chief engineer of the Alexandria-Cairo line; and Mouchelet, the French engineer, was the chief engineer of the Cairo-Suez section.² Two English medical men were appointed in the service. However in 1861, Sa'īd resolved to reduce every branch of his administration in the sweeping plans of economy he had determined to follow. Consequently, he made reductions in the railway amounting to upwards of £12,000 a year. Among those dismissed were the two chief engineers, Rouse and Mouchelet. The Mudīr al-Murūr called on Colquhoun, British Consul-General, to explain these plans of economy. He then told Colquhoun that the two English medical men, Drs. Ogilvie and Patterson at Alexandria and Cairo, were also on the list of proposed redundancies and that their places were to be filled by 'Arab Surgeons' educated in Europe. Colquhoun told the mudīr that he

¹ See translation of the Lā'ibah in Appendix III, pp. 376-78.

² Green to Malmesbury, No. 113 of 18 July 1858 in F.O. 78/1402; Colquhoun to Russell, No. 84 of 12 Aug. 1861 in F.O. 78/1591.

could not sanction this measure. That the railroad was actually supported by the Indian passage, that from ten to twelve thousand travellers travelled on this line annually, that a large body of English artisans and workmen were employed on the line, and all these required medical attendance constantly. The diseases of Egypt, chiefly dysentery, required great vigour and medical knowledge for their treatment. Moreover an English practitioner~~y~~ should be at hand in the event of any accident happening to any of the Indian trains. He informed the mudir that he would protest against their removal just to effect a paltry saving of £15 a month. Accordingly, the two doctors were retained. About Rouse, Colquhoun admitted that his salary was large, £1,700 a year, but the efficient state of the road bore testimony to the valuable services rendered by him. He warned the mudir that "economy could be carried out to an extent which would compromise the public safety.... . if any accident should now occur, [~~he~~]/should hold his Highness' government responsible for all the consequences".¹ A number of employees was accordingly dismissed at a moment's notice. In spite of this, the whole line was entrusted to three English sub-engineers, Hardcastle, Parry and Duff, and all were young men. Later on, in 1866, the whole of the permanent way from Cairo to Alexandria was still under the charge of Hardcastle and Parry, who acquired a long experience in Egypt. They had under their orders, for the maintenance of the line, English foremen and native workmen. The Cairo-Suez section was in the hands of an Egyptian engineer, whose subordinates were also

¹ Colquhoun to Russell, No. 84 of 12 Aug. 1861; Colquhoun to Bulwer, No. 54 of 26 Nov. 1861 in F.O. 142/26. Mouchélet was paid an indemnity of £8,000 but Rouse claimed a heavy one which amounted to £11,267.

Egyptians.¹

But the management of the Egyptian railway seems to have been deficient. Mubarak writes that until Ismā'īl's accession the railway requirements were incomplete, and the only stations built were those at Cairo and Alexandria. The rest were wooden huts,² mud-bricks or stones. At all the stations, there was only one platform for passengers, and no consideration was given for their comfort and protection from the summer heat and winter cold, or the necessary furniture, chairs, benches and waiting rooms for the stations.³ In 1858, several passengers made complaints about the filthy state of the Cairo railway station and about the unsuitable accommodation in the waiting rooms. They found, when they reached the station at 4.30 a.m., no accommodation, only dirty cold stones to stand upon, no fire, and after waiting were told that the train would start at 9 a.m. instead of 6 a.m. They wrote to Walne, the agent of the East India Company "we... beg you will bring to the notice of the government, the mismanagement of their railways, and as the Lucknow refugees, who are in the most delicate state of health, will be here by the next steamer, we hope for their sake, that they will not be inconvenienced as we have been".⁴

¹Phillips to Stanton (Privage & Conf.), 26 May 1866 in F.O. 41/60.

²The station of Kafr al-ʿĪs, for example, was extremely simple in architectural appearance. It had more the aspect of a workhouse than a station, and did not bear the least resemblance to those on European lines of railway. (The Illustrated Times, No. LXXXV, III (13 Dec. 1856).

³Mubarak, VII, p.89.

⁴Passengers from India to Walne, 4 Jan. 1858 encl. in Walne to Green, 5 Jan. 1858 in F.O. 141/36 Pt. I.

Mubarak writes again about the employees of these stations. Those such as Wukalā' (deputies), Mu'awinīn (assistants) and all the employees of the trains and stores were indistinguishable from one another. Most of them were foreigners who knew neither the native language nor the condition of the people. Accordingly, the state of the railway, in this period, was unsatisfactory and that was why it did not make a profit. The heads of the maglaha were always keen on improving it and fulfilling its requirements, but when its revenues did not increase, they failed to achieve this. This was probably due to their failure to know what was really needed, and their orders were not carried out as they required because of the ignorance of the people who were entrusted to supervise this work. The result was damage to carriages and locomotives which the maglaha did not repair at the time because of the constant decrease in revenue. Moreover, the Warshat al-'Amaliyyāt (workshop of repairs) was too small and unsuitable for doing this job as it should be done. There was continued loss of tools and instruments and a lack of workers. The workshop became so full of the wrecks from all the branches that finally there was not enough room for repairs. So the maglaha was obliged to store some of these arrivals in al-Qabbāry, ¹Bab al-Gharb and on the rail-lines made as stores in some of the intermediate stations. There were also other causes of damage such as the poor quality coal and the absence of roofs over the stores' lines to protect the carriages from the heat of the sun which warped the wood during the summer. Furthermore, they neglected to paint the carriages; and the general carelessness, of al-Mufattishīn (inspectors), Mulāḥiḡīn

and the deputies of the stations was responsible for this. Enormous sums of money were wasted in the name of repairs in the two workshops of Būlāq and Alexandria. Owing to the increasing amount of damage, the Kāzāstine workshop, situated on the Maḥmūdiyya bank in Alexandria, was needed for this purpose at the end of Sa'īd's reign. When eventually the number of locomotives awaiting repairs became really great, and the maintenance of the status-quo would harm the railway maṣlaḥa, and perhaps result in its complete stoppage, it was decided to send some of these locomotives to England for repair.¹

The mismanagement of the railway had further consequences. Only five years after the completion of the railway, one of the P. & O. staff, who travelled on it, saw this constant deterioration.² Furthermore in 1866, one of the railway officials foresaw a rapid deterioration in the rolling stock in consequence of the recent dismissal of the English employees from the workshops at Būlāq.³ The standard of repairs was very low. Although the number of the carriages repaired was few, the repair was done at the expense of the other carriages, that is to say, to repair one carriage necessitated the damage of two or more; and to repair one locomotive cost another.⁴ During Ismā'īl's reign,

¹Mubārak, VII, pp. 89-90.

²He wrote "the carriages which must first have been handsome first-class carriages, are... dirty and full of dust, their brasswork has never been touched since they came out... Everything is slovenly, and you see a lack of energy in everything and everybody." The same person wrote earlier, just as the railway was completing, that the second-class carriages were equal to first-class in England, and the firsts "were the finest carriages I have ever been in". (cit. in Cable, A hundred year history of the P. & O., p.154.)

³Phillips to Stanton (Private & Conf.), 26 May 1866 in F.O. 141/60. (cont.)

and under the nāzirship of 'Alī Mubārak, the establishment of temporary workshops in Alexandria was decreed, and the necessary workers and artisans were recruited for it. Similar establishments were made in Suez, Kafr al-Zayyāt and at Cairo station. The necessary tools were brought from abroad and rail-lines were extended to link these workshops with the main line. Technical engineers, to work as observers, were appointed along the lines to supervise the trains and write down their reports which were referred to the railway dīwān. Before the appointment of Mubārak, there was not sufficient houses for the employees. The most important of all was the organization of Warshat al-'Amaliyyāt.¹ Until Mubārak's appointment, it was a huge piece of land consisting of ruined buildings and stagnant pools. This workshop lacked the necessary conditions and what was left of it was in an unsatisfactory state. Although there were great numbers of tools and instruments, they were not used partly because some of them were incomplete and partly because of the rust and dust of long neglect.²

By the construction of the railway, Egypt had made a solid material advance in westernization, but the system of management and recruitment was deficient. No institution was established to supply

(cont.)

⁴Mubārak, VII, p.90.

¹It was Muḥammad 'Alī who established this workshop. 'Abbās appointed Mubārak to organise it, but Sa'id closed it in Dec. 1854. It was re-opened in the first months of Ismā'il's reign. It belonged at first to dīwān al-sikka al-ḥadīd (see: A.I. Abd al-Karīm, Ta'rīkh al-ta'līm fi Miṣr, I, pp. 112-14; II, pp. 502-503.)

²Mubārak, VII, p. 91.

this innovation with trained, qualified and competent men. Mubārak says that if this system of training had been adopted at the beginning of the construction of the railway, it would have been possible to supply these qualified workers in a few years' time. This was not thought of until the reign of Ismā'īl who issued orders for the establishment of Madrasat al-'Amaliyyāt (the school of operations) to graduate Egyptians fit for jobs in Maṣlahat al-Sikka al-Ḥadīd, such as drivers, engineers for locomotives and steamers. At the beginning of 1867, the Dīwān al-Madāris thought of organising this school, but it soon set it aside for some time. Nevertheless the idea was taken up again because of the government's need for Egyptian engineers to replace Europeans in the railway works. In 1867/1868 the arrangements for the opening of this school were made during a meeting held at Dīwān al-Madāris between a group of industrial men, the nuzzār of schools, the chief engineer of Warshat al-'Amaliyyāt, the nāzīr of Būlāq workshops, the chief engineer of the railways, the nāzīr of the preparatory school and the nāzīr of the engineering school. This school was situated in the midst of the workshops where the students were trained in a suitable atmosphere and where they could acquire ample experience. The apprentices and the soldiers, found in Warshat al-'Amaliyyāt, were examined, to recruit the capable ones to the railway and the army workshops. Study at this school began in May 1869, and one of the sections was firqat 'amaliyyāt al-murūr (transit operations group). It was decided at that meeting that the school students should pass two years in this section and then be distributed to the different crafts and works in the railway workshops according to the importance of each one. The number of graduates of the school during the first years

was between 17 and 24, but this number decreased to about 8 and 15 when the course of study was increased to five years. The monthly salary the government gave to the graduate of the school was 500 piastres. The railway dīwān appointed them as 'Aṭashīyya (stokers) of the third grade at a monthly salary of 200 piastres. Then the apprentices protested and Dīwān al-Madāris mediated on their behalf with the railway dīwān which agreed to increase their salaries to 250 piastres.¹

Nevertheless, the construction of the railway gave employment to Egyptians who returned from educational missions to Europe. Some Egyptian engineers were also employed on the works of construction such as Salāma Ibrāhīm Pasha, Thāqib Pasha, Muṣṭafa Bahgat Pasha and Maḡhar Pasha.² Most of these engineers were amongst the students of the first educational mission sent to Europe. Muṣṭafa Bahgat, for instance, studied hydraulics in England, and he took part in supervising the construction of the railway from Banhā to Kafr al-Zayyāt. Some of the people in the area under his inspection accused him of damaging too much land. Consequently, 'Abbās Pasha went in person to inspect this work, which he admired, and awarded Bahgat Pasha 200 feddans.³ There was another engineer, Ḥasan Bey Nūr al-Dīn, who was appointed, with Mouchélet the

¹ Mubārak, VII, p.92; Abd al-Karīm, op.cit., II, pp. 504-506, 515; J. Heyworth-Dunne, An introduction to the history of education in modern Egypt, pp. 357-358.

² Rāfi 'ī, 'Asr Ismā'īl, I, pp. 13-14.

³ Rāfi 'ī, Ta'rikh al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya, III, p.515; Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., p.160; Mubarak, XVI, p.57.

French engineer, to the construction of the Suez railway. Nūr al-Dīn was chosen from the Muhandiskhāna (the school of engineering) in 1844 for a mission to France where he visited the sites of the railway works as a part of his study and especially the railways between Paris and Marseille.¹ In addition, there were others, who were chosen from the Muhandiskhāna employed on the railways after their return from England.² Some of the graduates of Madrasat al-Alsun (the school of languages) which was placed under Rifā'a al-Taḥṭawī,

¹ Rāfi'ī, op.cit., III, pp. 520-521; Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., p.256; Mubarak, XII, p.60.

² The following students were sent to England to study mechanics in 1847. Only a few of them studied railway administration and management:

Ahmad al-Mahdī, returned in 1852.

'Uthman 'Urī, returned in 1850 and became master of several stations.

'Alī Ṣadiq, returned in 1853. He was master of several stations and eventually became general manager of the railways.

Isma'īl Bushnaq, returned in 1853 and was employed in the workshop of al-'Amaliyyat.

'Uthman Yusuf, returned in 1853 and was appointed to the carriage building dept. He built one particular carriage for Sa'id which was called after him as 'arabat 'Uthman Yūsuf.

Salāma al-Baz, returned in 1855 and was appointed to the telegraph dept. of the railway.

'Alī Ḥasan al-Iskandrānī, returned in 1853.

Jaudat 'Awad, returned in 1856 and was employed in the carriage dept.

'Uthman al-Qaḍī, returned in 1856. He was an engineer in the carriage dept. and then a carriage inspector.

Ibrāhīm Samī. Date of return is unknown.

Aḥmad Tal'at. " " " " "

Sulayman Sulayman was appointed as a translator.

'Abbas 'Abd al-Nur, returned in 1856.

Ghanim 'Abd al-Raḥīm, returned in 1852. (See: Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., pp. 2521-252, 263-264)

were appointed to the railways administration as translators and accountants.¹

¹They were: Ḥasan Fahmī, Qāsim Muḥammad, Aḥmad Ṣafī al-Dīn, Muḥammad Shīmī, 'Umar Sabrī and 'Alī Rashād. (See: Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., pp. 269-71.)

Chapter V

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

"The most useful work achieved by 'Abbās was the construction of the railway, the benefits of which no pen can relate nor imagination compass within its reach. Truly it is a great steam power discovered by the thought and knowledge of man to bring him to the zenith of felicity, and enable him to achieve within his short life-time the happiness and the utmost wishes which he could not attain to if he lived thousands of years. Indeed it shortens a journey of ten days to less than one, drawing about a hundred carriages, heavily laden and thousands upon thousands of human beings and others, with ease and without the least possible hardship or harm, and with low fares and expenditure, the converse of what one experienced before without achieving one's purposes but while incurring great hardship and abundant expenditure."

Mubārak, VII, 64.

"L'ouverture de ce chemin de fer, va changer..... la physionomie des provinces Galiobié, Garbié, Menoufié et Bahiré qu'il traverse. Les produits de l'agriculture s'écouleront maintenant par cette voie, et donneront une vie nouvelle à ces provinces si fertiles."

Delaporte to Walewski, No. 198,
22 Jan. 1856, M.A.E., C.C., tom.29.

1. The Corvée

Railways were a heavy burden on the Egyptian fallāḥ, since they, as well as other public works, were constructed by means of forced labour. The Corvée is called in Arabic Sukhra. This system had been in existence for ages during which the Egyptian labourer was inhumanly treated. These labourers were originally employed to clear canals, to strengthen dikes, and to guard the banks of the Nile during the flood. Muḥammad 'Alī introduced the practice of moving corvées to any part of Egypt to construct canals for summer irrigation. The corvée labour was arranged by the khutt¹ officials with the ma'mūr,² at the request of the government, from within their districts or from neighbouring districts. They also had the additional responsibility of apportioning the government's demands among ^{all} the nāhiyas³ in their districts.⁴ When the construction of the Maḥmūdiyya Canal was begun in 1817, the kāshifs⁵ of the provinces of Lower Egypt were ordered to raise a levy of one worker for every ten inhabitants and about 100,000

¹Khutt: Subdivision of a province.

²Ma'mūr: Chief official of a markaz (district).

³Nāhiya: Subdistrict of a province (canton).

⁴H. A. Rivlin, Agricultural policy of Muḥammad 'Alī in Egypt, p.94; for a general account of the corvée see: Olympe Audouard, Les mystères de l'Égypte Dévoilés, pp. 212-223.

⁵Kāshif: Governor of a district.

men participated in the corvée. In 1819 the total number reached 313,000 after orders had been issued to the principal governors to assemble a number of fallāhīn proportionate to the size of their provinces.¹

The fallāh, working in the corvée, was often accompanied by his wife, children and parents, and the entire family would establish itself in the open air in the locality to which the peasant had been assigned. But if the family remained in the village, some member was always obliged to bring provisions every few days to the person working in the corvée. The fallāhīn were accompanied to the place of work by their Shaykh al-Balad² who put a tent or banner at the place allotted to his men and remained with them until the job was finished. For small works the fallāhīn furnished their own tools, the mattock and the quffa (basket). In large public works, the government sometimes provided tools;³ but these tools were insufficient in most cases for the huge number of labourers.

¹Rivlin, op.cit., pp. 218-220; Shukrī, Bina' dawlat Miṣr, p.42; see also: Umar Tusun, Ta'rikh Khaliḥ al-Iskandriyya al-qadim wa-tur'at al-Mahmudiyya, pp. 66, 86-87, 113-118, 121-122; F. Mengin, Histoire de l'Egypte sous le gouvernement du Mohammed-Aly, II, pp. 331-334.

²Shaykh al-Balad: Village headman. For the development of this office see: G. Baer, "The village shaykh in modern Egypt (1800-1950)" in V. Heyd (ed.) Studies in Islamic history and civilization (Scripta Hierosolymitana, ix), Jerusalem, 1961.

³Rivlin, op.cit., pp. 243-245; see also Marlowe, The making of the Suez Canal, pp. 101-102.

When Sa'īd decided to clean the Maḥmūdiyya Canal one mattock was given to each five labourers.¹ The draftees were forced to work under sub-human conditions which Madden records in his Travels:

"in Egypt , when any public work is to be done, soldiers are sent to surround the villages; the unfortunate peasants are taken prisoners, linked to a long rope, and marched, sometimes hundreds of miles from their homes and families, to the place of employment... Here the poor naked fellahs are to be seen digging the soil with their fingers to excavate a temporary canal, or raising water in baskets to irrigate the soil: how the work is accomplished, Heaven only knows; but the task masters are seen armed with their whips, parading amongst the labourers, lashing right and left the lazy and the weak; and when the work is finished, they get checks on the Sheik or Kaimacan, for payment of a piastre a day..... As there is always delay in the payment, the unfortunate peasants are obliged to sell their tiscarees or checks, for a third or fourth less than their value."²

The means of remunerating the fallāḥīn were the same throughout the 19th century. Each district kept an account of the amount of labour supplied, credit being given for it in the accounts against taxes. Before a man left his village, a purse was made up for him by the government, to compensate for his loss of time and the annoyance of going on unpleasant duty.³ In the case of the Maḥmūdiyya

¹Rāfi'ī, 'Aḡr Ismā'īl, I, p.27.

²R. R. Madden, Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia, and Palestine in 1824, 1825, 1826 and 1827, I, pp. 208-209, quoted in Rivlin, op.cit., p.245.

³Green to Malmesbury, No. 101 of 1 July 1858 in F.O. 142/21.

Canal, each fallāh was granted twenty riyāls to cover his travelling expenses, ten of which were paid in cash and ten deducted from the taxes he owed. One piastre per day was paid for his labour.¹ Nassau William Senior, who visited the sites of the Suez railway works, gives us a full description of the workers and their conditions. The pay to which the fallāhīn were entitled, without any distinction of age or strength, was fifty paras (50 paras = 1 piaster) per day. From this sum forty-five paras a day were deducted as the price of four very hard biscuits supplied by the government, which, with water, formed their food for the day. The remaining five paras were paid to them when they were dismissed after thirty day's service; but it would be paid in a receipt from the government, to be taken in payment of taxes. Of the two superintendents with whom Senior talked, one said that they would never get the money; the other said that their Shaykhs would take from them the receipt, hand it in to the tax-collector in payment of the taxes of the village, and account to them for it.² The treatment of the labourers was not humane. The superintendents kept striking the fallāhīn with their sticks and "they were truly worked under the lash as a horse is". He also

¹Rivlin, op.cit., p.220.

²Senior, Conversations, II, pp. 59-60; see footnote p. Hekekyan says that every village was bound to contribute its share of draftees for public works. Writing on the Maṣūriyya, he adds "now all these labourers have to maintain themselves - excepting those who work out in the desert, at the railway and the barrages." (Hekekyan Papers, V, Add. 37,452, fol. 486b).

writes:

"I can understand the Fellah's aversion to government employ. He is taken from his village, which he never voluntarily quits, forced to labour for ten hours a day in constant terror of the stick or the whip, fed on hard sour biscuits and water, and is rewarded when he gets home, with a credit on the government of a half penny for each day that he has worked; a credit of which the real value seems to be doubtful."¹

So under the corvée system, the labourers also furnished their own food, although sometimes the government provided rations of biscuits or indifferent bread. Therefore, the government was put to no immediate expense beyond these provisions, for the normal wages were not paid in money, but were deducted from the land-tax payable by the villages which furnished the men. The loss was thus only felt indirectly, by the treasury which was generally able so to arrange the accounts as to bring in the villages as debtors. Writing in 1857, the British Consul-General said that were the labour to be paid for, not only would the projects themselves be more maturely considered, "but the difficulty of obtaining labor, and the expense of paying for it, would compel the government to work in the cheapest manner, and for this purpose to avail itself of the discoveries of modern science, by which human labor is so much economized."² Thus the bad state of repair of the public

¹Senior, op.cit., II, p.61.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 25 of 29 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 142/20. A year later Green wrote "if the pay of the Fellahs, the bread supplied to them, the little work obtained from them, and the enormous roguery of officials who charge for double and treble the amount of labour actually supplied, were duly taken into consideration, a more expensive system could not be had recourse to." (Green to Malmesbury, No. 101 of 1 July 1858 in F.O. 142/21).

works was to be attributed in great measure to the same cause.

The canals were left until the agriculture of the provinces suffered, and then a levy of men was made.

The corvée was injurious both to the fallāh and to the interests of the proprietors and the peasantry. About 12,000 fallāhīn perished and were buried on the banks of the Maḥmūdiyya Canal because of hard usage and the lack of food and water. They were badly treated by the soldiers, who acted as overseers and obliged them to work continually from dawn to night.¹ On the other hand, because of this system, a proprietor could not know beforehand whether if he increased the area of cultivation he would be able to reap what he had sown. Bruce tells us of a wealthy shaykh who, in 1856, lost the produce of 500 acres owing to the withdrawal of the men from his village at harvest-time. He offered to pay any sum the governor of the province might demand for the services of labourers to enable him to get his crop in, but they were required for some public works in progress and could not be had on any terms.² In addition, the corvée was an important cause of deserted villages, neglected fields and forfeiture of lands. Hekekyan writes during 'Abbās's reign about the village of Maṣṣūriyya,

¹ Rafi 'I, Ta'rikh al-baraka al-qawmiyya, III, p.541; Rivlin, op.cit. pp. 221, 354 footnote 16; Madden, Travels, I, p.208.

² Bruce to Clarendon, No. 25 of 29 April 1857 in F.O. 142/20.

in Gīzā, of around 3000 inhabitants that

"the number of hands this village alone sends for forced labour in the Pasha's palaces Elhamiyeh, Abbassiyeh, Atabat-il-Khadra, Benha, Darb-il-Beida, mount Thor and the mosques of Sitti Zeineb in Cairo - and of Tanta - to the Bridges of the Delta (the barrages) the Railway - and the Vice-regal farms, amounts to 450..... These labourers are maintained by the village; and they are relieved once a month; so that nearly a thousand of the male population are almost constantly on the move out of their village."¹

The Shaykh of the village of Bortos, near Mangūriyya, told Hekekyan that there was scarcely a man left in the village because they were engaged in public works.²

The laws of the Ottoman Empire, established by the Hatt-i-Serif of Gulhane of 1839, prohibited forced labour. Furthermore, the hereditary ferman of 1841, enjoined Muḥammad 'Alī and his successors to carry on the government as much as possible in conformity with the principles adopted in the other parts of the empire, i.e. he and his successors should "be careful to ensure the repose and the tranquility of the Egyptians by protecting them from all injury and from all oppressions".³ But Muḥammad 'Alī had never put this into effect.⁴ 'Abbās was reported to have

¹ Hekekyan Papers, VII, Add. 37454, fol. 365a; V, Add. 37452, fol. 486b; VI, Add. 37453, fol. 70a; Loc. cit., G. Baer, A history of landownership in modern Egypt, p.32; Idem, "The dissolution of the Egyptian village community", Die Welt des Islams, N.S., vi, 1959, Nr. 1-2, p.64.

² Hekekyan Papers, VI, Add. 37453, fol. 62b.

³ Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, I, pp. 122-23.

⁴ In May 1847 a corvée was ordered to begin the excavation of three canals, cf. Rivlin, op.cit., p.237.

maintained the old system, and did nothing to alleviate the condition of the fallāh.¹ According to Professor Baer, there seems to be a change in the way of recruitment: while Muḥammad 'Alī carried out this system arbitrarily, 'Abbās imposed manpower quotas on all villages.² He writes that under 'Abbās the village Shaykhs acquired the responsibility for filling the quotas.³ But this view is no longer conclusive. The evidence suggests that those shaykhs were entrusted with such functions under Muḥammad 'Alī as well.⁴ Therefore, it can be

¹B. St.-John, "Egypt under Abbas", in Sharpe's London Magazine, XIV, 1851, p.74. Apart from the corvée and conscription, 'Abbās was reported to have improved the condition of the fallāh in two ways: (a) the fallāh, instead of being forced to cultivate some specific crop, was free to cultivate what paid the best, his tax being all that was required of him; (b) Previously no fallāh could leave his village, but under 'Abbās, if a village was overpopulated, he could move to another village where his labour found a better market or gave a better return. (The Times, 31 May 1851). Furthermore, it was alleged that 'Abbās's accession marked a change for the better in the condition of the fallāh because he had none of Muḥammad 'Alī's ambitious schemes of foreign conquest or any need for a large military force. (See D. M. Wallace, Egypt and the Egyptian Question, London, 1883, pp. 266-267, 302-303.)

²Cf. Baer, "The village Shaykh", pp. 131-132, 137; also Baer, "The dissolution of the Egyptian village community", op.cit., pp. 63-64.

³Baer, "The village Shaykh", pp. 131-132.

⁴Providing people for the corvée, supervising their work and preventing their flight from the corvée was one of the functions devolved on the canton officials, one of whom was shaykh al-balad (see La'ihat Zira'at al-fallāh wa tadbīr ahkām al-siyasa bi-qaṣd al-najah, Cairo, 1245/1830, pp. 38-39. For extensive use of the La'ihat see Rivlin, Agricultural policy, pp. 95-97.) Merruau (L'Égypte contemporaine, p.16) writes on shaykh al-balad: "quand il s'agissait des corvées d'hommes, des emprunts de chevaux, d'ânes, de chameaux..... demandés par le gouvernement, le cheik choisissait les hommes..." He provided not only people for the corvée, but also conscripts for the army. (see (cont.)

concluded that the system of recruitment was carried out through the same channels (i.e. the shaykh) as was the case under 'Abbās's predecessors. However, Hekekyan records in his papers the opinion of lower classes about forced labour under 'Abbās. He was told by a donkey lad in Cairo in 1851 that

"Mohamed Aly was a 'vely' indeed, and that the present Viceroy [Abbās] was idle. He said he [Abbās] was cruel towards the poor - putting them to hard labour in the deserts and paying them nominally [sic] nothing. The two piastres an able-bodied working man was to receive per diem dwindled away down to one piastre. He said that many of his countrymen died daily [sic] in the works of the Pasha's palaces... He said that if the levies were abolished the Viceroy would be pardoned his manifold sins - it was unjust and cruel to deprive parents of the services of an only son for whom they would willingly pay a thousand piastres rather than lose their aide [sic] in agricultural labours."¹

Bayle St. John, who made a tour of Egypt in 1851, in his book touched on the question of the railway and its connection with forced labour:

"iron, they say, is a great civiliser; and its presence in that capacity is greatly wanted in

(cont.) Merruau, p.15; Lane, The manners and customs of modern Egyptians, pp. 200-201; Murray to Palmerston, 1 June 1848 in F.O. 78/757.)

¹Hekekyan Papers, V, Add. 37452, fol. 26 (dated 6 Mar. 1851). Somebody well-informed gave Hekekyan the following list of wages:

		government
little boys and girls	15 paras a day	10
grown up boys and girls	20 paras a day	15
full grown man	40 paras a day	30
overseers	60 paras a day	40

Hekekyan, Add. 37452, fol. 31a.

Egypt. But I do not think that the introduction of a railway, unless under certain conditions not likely to be complied with, will be beneficial at the present moment..... Has it been stipulated that free labour shall be employed, or are the unfortunate fellahs to be again dragged from their villages, as they were for the construction of the canal [the Maḥmūdiyya] as they are for the Barrage and all other so-called public undertakings, and forced to work in hunger, whilst the divans of Cairo and Alexandria are disputing whose turn it is to send them their miserable supply of rice? Unless these questions be satisfactorily settled, I should regard the commencement of a railway as a curse rather than a blessing to Egypt.....

What Egypt wants is a gradual emancipation of the fellahs, the destruction of the system of forced labour. Its people are remarkably acquisitive and naturally industrious. Let them alone, and they will soon find the way to prosperity, and make railroads for themselves when necessary. In the meantime, if English capitalists could obtain permission to spend about a million sterling in their own way in improving the communication between Alexandria and Cairo, it would be very convenient for Indian travellers, and would not only be temporarily beneficial to the fellahs, but might lead to a permanent improvement in their condition.

There is no reason, however, for supposing that proper stipulations have been made; It will be the more regrettable if arrangements have not been made in the interest of the fellahs....."¹

Indeed, under 'Abbās, the question of forced labour was one of the points under discussion between him and the Porte. When Mukhtar Bey, 'Abbās's confidential agent at the Porte, was sent

¹St. John, Village life in Egypt, I, pp. 11-14.

to Egypt in 1851, he urged 'Abbās to abolish the use of unpaid labour by compulsory means.¹ Murray, then the British Consul-General, wrote to Palmerston privately that he had often told 'Abbās that he was to blame for spending so much public labour on buildings which were only for his private gratification. But Murray admitted that no work of any magnitude could be undertaken except by compulsory labour

"for the fellah would rather smoke all day and eat his mess of beans than earn half a crown and eat beef".²

'Abbās, on the other hand, Murray reports, paid for the corvée regularly and the books of his land-steward were shown to Mukhtar Bey. He claimed that the system pursued by 'Abbās was more liberal and humane than that pursued by Muḥammad 'Alī, under whom the labour was compulsory and not paid. Murray concluded "when our rail-road commences I will endeavour to persuade the V.R. to have all the labourers engaged in that work paid regularly and I hope to show him that the work will be more cheaply and better done."³ St. John believed that 'Abbās had no disposition to be a tyrant but "he has not yet had the desire or the courage to emancipate the fellāhs; and if he be persuaded that such and such a work - a

¹ Nekakyan Papers, V, fol. 54; Canning to Palmerston, No. 104 of 4 Apr. 1851 [no. 26] in P.O. 424/7A.

² B.P., Murray to Palmerston (Private), 20 May 1851.

³ B.P., Murray to Palmerston (Private), 20 May 1851.

railroad, for example - be useful and desirable, he will, of course, think it no sin to carry it out according to the custom of the country".¹ Since the rough work of the railway was to be carried out by forced labour, St. John adds "the men required are taken wherever they can be found; and are nominally paid a piastre a day, and supplied with rations. I say nominally, because if these promises be strictly carried out it will be the first time to my knowledge in the history of Egyptian public works."²

Forced labour to be employed on the Alexandria-Cairo railway became also one of the prime concerns of the Sublime Porte. Regid informed 'Abbās, in his letter of 2 September 1851, that the Sultan's permission to construct the railway would not be given except under conditions, one of which was that 'Abbās must not employ compulsory labour. Murray considered this demand "no less inconsistent than unjust" because this matter had long been undisputed. 'Abbās, he said, paid labour 20 paras a day in addition to their food.³ 'Abbās, on the other hand, told Regid that forced and gratuitous labour imposed in former times upon the Egyptian people for works not of public utility, had, under his administration, been abolished. As the

¹St. John, Village life, II, pp. 179-180.

²St. John, op.cit., II, p.180.

³Murray to Palmerston, Nos. 27 and 28 of 15 and 18 Sept. 1851 [nos. 110 and 111] in F.O.424/7A.

railway was profitable to all, 'Abbās added, the work and upkeep ought also to be made in common.¹ However, the Porte did not exclude the compulsory employment of the peasantry on works of public utility, but it required that their labour should not be entirely gratuitous. 'Abbās reassured the Porte that the treatment of the workmen would be regulated by public consideration. Nevertheless, to insure humane treatment for his subjects, the Sultan stipulated in the first article of the ferman that workers should be paid.² But the ferman was granted after everything had been arranged. In the preliminary correspondence, Stephenson informed 'Abbās that the railway would require from 15,000 to 20,000 men. By article XIII of the contract the number of the labourers 'Abbās had to furnish should be in accordance with the terms of a memorandum to be delivered by Stephenson to 'Abbās on or before 1 October 1851. All requisitions for labourers were to be made by the resident engineer at Cairo or at Alexandria to the appointed agent of the government. In November 1851, measures were taken by the government to procure a supply of workmen, who were to be drafted from the different provinces³ in proper proportions. The correspondent of The Times reported that these workmen would be liberally remunerated

¹ Abbas Pasha to Reshid Pasha, encl. in Murray to Palmerston, No. 117 of 5 Oct. 1851; Canning to Palmerston, No. 129 of 17 Oct. 1851 in F.O. 424/7A.

² Nahoum, Receuil de firmans, p.255. See above, p. 172.

³ Harlowe (The making of the Suez Canal, p.101) says that the burden of the corvée for some distant public works such as the Maḥmūdīyya Canal and the Alexandria-Suez railway usually fell on the peasants
(cont.)

and fed for their labour.¹

As usual in the case of forced labour, the labourers worked in gangs under military surveillance. Several parties of cavalry were posted along the works to prevent desertion.² About 24,000 labourers worked on the Alexandria-Cairo line. This was in addition to the soldiers and sailors known as al-Junūd al-Imdādiyya (the supply soldiers) who were making embankments and carrying wood and materials. They were divided into two sections, both being supervised by military

(cont.) of Upper Egypt. This is an inaccurate generalisation for which Marlowe cites no source of information. The labourers, who worked on the Mahmūdiyya Canal came from al-Buḥayra, al-Gharbiyya, al-Sharqiyya, al-Daqahliyya, al-Minūfiyya, al-Qalyubiyya and al-Gīsa provinces. (See: Mengin, Histoire de l'Égypte, II, p. 335). All these provinces were in Lower Egypt. However this does not imply that Upper Egypt did not take its share in any corvée. Generally the corvée was collected from the neighbouring districts. From the evidence at hand, Upper Egypt supplied quite a number of workers for the Suez railway. For instance, Girgā province had to supply 2500 labourers for the Suez line. The government discovered from the lists submitted by the Suez railway ma'mūr that the number already sent from Girgā was only 954. In June 1856, the government ordered the governor to expedite sending the remainder. (See: Sāmī, iii, Pt. 1, p. 229)

¹ The Times, 4 Dec. 1851.

² The Illustrated London News, No. 588, XXI, p.380, 6 Nov. 1852.

cavalry.¹ The employment of the sailors of the Egyptian navy on the railway work by 'Abbās was not strange as he took very little interest in the fleet, the arsenal or anything appertaining to the marine.² The greater part of the sails were distributed over the country for use as tents. This might have been the result of the conflict between him and Sa'īd Pasha, who was the Serasker of the Egyptian squadrons. On 7 Shawwāl 1269/16 July 1853 an order was given to Ḥusayn Pasha, the general of the second and seventh regiments at Alexandria, to have all the soldiers of the regiments under his command stripped of their uniforms and arms and to have their names struck off from the registers, and to send them guarded to Selīm Bey, Ma'mūr al-Sikka al-Hadīdiyya.³

When 'Abbās received an application from the Porte, during the Crimean War, to send contingents of men and ships, preparations were made for the departure of the Egyptian fleet and 15,000 troops for Constantinople.⁴ So a considerable number of sailors were withdrawn from the railway work between Alexandria and Cairo, and

¹ Ḥassūnā, Misr wa'l-turuq al-hadīdiyya, pp. 113-114; Lahīṭah, Ta'rikh Misr al-iqtisādī, p.208; Rafi'ī, Asr Ismā'il, I, p.14.

² Sānī, iii, Pt. 1, p.29; Sarhank, Ḥaqā'iq al-akhbār, III, p.262. This was not a new phenomenon. After 1841 settlement, Muḥammad 'Alī did not send his soldiers away to their villages, but he employed them in the corvée. (cf. Rivlin, op.cit., pp. 209-210)

³ Sānī, III, Pt. 1, p.58.

⁴ Green to Clarendon, No. 2 of 6 July 1853 in F.O. 78/966.

were employed in the arsenal.¹ But the Copts enrolled in the regular army were withdrawn from the troops sent to Constantinople because it was considered unsafe to send Christians to fight against Christians. Therefore, about 2400 of these Coptic soldiers were placed on the railway work. The acting British Consul-General reported that they were stripped of their clothes which were not replaced by other garments and "were subjected to great neglect and privations".² The engineers expected to have the line from Alexandria to the Nile opened by November 1853. Yet the French Consul-General, who visited the work-sites, said that the withdrawal of the sailors would probably retard the work until other men replaced them.³ When the railway was not progressing satisfactorily 'Abbās sent Ḥasan Pasha, the President of the Council at Cairo, to give the engineers every assistance.⁴

An eye-witness⁵ reported that the native labour was badly paid. He judged, in the absence of published information, from facts which had become generally known. The wages paid by the Pasha's

¹Green to Stratford de Redcliffe , 23 June 1853 in F.O. 78/966.

²Green to Addington, 18 Aug. 1853 in F.O. 78/966; Green to Clarendon, No. 33 of 30 Nov. 1853 in F.O. 142/18.

³Delaporte to Drouyn de Lhuys, No.138, 25 July 1853, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 29.

⁴The Times, 13 Jan. 1854.

⁵Anon., Railways in Egypt, pp. 26-27.

government varied according to the type of labour but were much below that paid for similar labour in free competition. The wages were irregularly paid, and when paid, were filtered down through intermediate agents to perhaps one-half of the rate allowed. According to this eye-witness, the ordinary able-bodied day labourers, who could not be obtained for private work under two and a half piastres, were paid by the government no more than one and a half piastres, which included rations, per day. Moreover, the masons and carpenters,¹ who used to earn from ten to fifteen piastres a day, did not receive more than six to nine piastres a day. In addition to the hardships and exposure to which the labourers were subjected, the government did not supply them with sufficient implements. This eye-witness once saw a man painting iron-work with his hands because the government had not provided him with brushes. Carpenters and masons were supposed to find their own tools, but very few had stocks.

To the Egyptian fallāh forced labour was an adversity, but working on the Alexandria-Cairo railway, through the inhabited and cultivated area of the Delta, was very different from working in the waterless desert of Suez. Thus the supply of labour caused

¹Masons: banna'in. Carpenters: najjārīn. These groups (the building crafts) must have been supplied by the Shaykhs of guilds. The supply of services and labour for public works was one of the functions maintained by the guilds. This function survived throughout the 19th century. For a detailed study see: Baer, Egyptian guilds in modern times, pp. 93-100.

some delays on the Suez line.¹ The work was retarded until September 1855 because the government could only supply a few hundred people, as it was necessary to wait for the harvest to be finished and agricultural labour completed. Then came the customary cleaning of the various canals which comprised many branches, the thorough cleaning of the Maḥmūdīyya Canal which occupied up to 115,000 men, and at last the month of Ramaḍān during which everything remained in suspense.² Around September 1856, Sa'īd took measures to hasten the building of the railway and to complete it, if possible, within a year. He ordered Edhem Pasha, the governor of Cairo, to go personally to the work-sites to inspect progress, and to report to him. Since the control of the work was entrusted to Edhem, he had to take the train and go to the sites during holidays, such as Friday, and at times when he was not engaged in any other work. This was to encourage the workers.³ On the other hand, Mouchélet asked for a regular and permanent force of 4,000 workers. Therefore, Sa'īd called together the mudīrs of the provinces and ordered them to increase the number of workers to 7,000, and to go in person to the sites. The 2,500,000 cubic metres remaining were to be shared between

¹Green to Clarendon, No. 12 of 7 Sept. 1855; No. 16 of 20 Sept. 1855 in F.O. 78/1123.

²Benedetti to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept. 1856, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 35.

³Samī, III, pt. 1, pp. 181-182.

the workers in the ratio of 2 cubic metres per man. Each province would be entrusted with a task to carry out proportionate to its contingent, and it would therefore be in its interest to furnish as many men as possible in order to be freed that much quicker. These orders were carried out. Not only was the required number of men collected, but all their needs were attended to, i.e. fresh bread was brought by train daily and distributed among them.¹ Merruau, describing the effects of a huge number of labourers, wrote

"once gathered in sufficient number, the workers fell to their task with an unparalleled zeal: the track seemed, under thousands of arms, to move by itself, and advanced little by little just as lava makes a bed in the mountains. The men doing the levelling were followed by those laying the rails along the track at a speed of 1.20 metre per minute, and on certain days at a speed of 1.33 metre or 80 metres per hour which is equivalent to laying 133 pairs of rails in a ten-hour working day."²

In 1856, the number of fallāh workmen amounted to over 15,000.

The point reached was near al-Dār al-Bayḍā', a distance of thirty miles from Cairo, over which the trains ran to carry the materials and to supply the workmen with all provisions. From the rail head camels were used to carry the food to the labourers.³ In 1857

¹ Merruau, L'Égypte contemporaine, pp. 111-112, 228-230.

² Merruau, op.cit., p.112.

³ Commercial report for 1856, encl. in Green to Clarendon, No. 15 of 14 Feb. 1857 in F.O. 78/1316.

the encampment of the fallāḥ workmen extended to about 20 miles along the line. The number of men employed was nominally 10,000 but they could not be considered more than 8,000 effective workmen, as some deserted and others obtained leave of absence.¹

But twenty-five miles short of Suez, the work came to a standstill. This arose from the difficulty of keeping the fallāḥīn at work in the desert. The anonymous eye-witness wrote that very many died from hardship and disease. Two to three hundred men at a time were lost from the works. The eye-witness added, "driven by hard usage to flee from the works, and not reaching water in twenty-four hours, they become prostrate, and perish, leaving their bodies to hyenas and vultures, and, after the lapse of a few days, their scattered bones the only trace of their existence."² To keep the fallāḥ at work, Nubar Bey informed Green that this remaining distance of twenty-five miles would be divided into sections, to be apportioned to the various provinces, so that the contingent of each province after having performed the task assigned to it, might depart for good, thus interesting the fallāḥīn in completing their work quickly.³

¹Green to Stratford de Redcliffe (semi official), 14 July 1857 in F.O. 142/20; Green to Clarendon, No. 19 of 4 July 1857 in F.O. 78/1314.

²Anon., Railways in Egypt, p.85.

³Green to Clarendon, No. 5 of 14 Jan. 1858 in F.O. 78/1401.

At the end of March 1858, the workmen escaped, as their replacements did not arrive. Mouchelet complained that this system of relays would mean a loss of time. The Railway Administration thought on the contrary that the system of replacement would speed up the work because a man who had worked thirty days in the desert needed to be relieved. In order to satisfy Mouchelet, the Minister of the Interior, although of the same opinion as the administration, ordered that the replacements for the month of Sha'bān should not be sent from the provinces until the men on the job had finished their work. The result of this measure was very simple; the workers waited a few days and then, with the exception of two or three thousand newly arrived, they all deserted. This happened on the 6th and 7th of Sha'bān. The minister immediately sent orders by telegraph to the mudirs to seize fugitives and to send them back to the works at the same time as the replacements. These orders were sent on the 8th Sha'bān, but the men could not reach the sites before 22nd and 23rd of the same month. Nubar wrote to Green that for five or six days work (the days left in Sha'bān) the government did not hesitate to move over 10,000 men, because in the following month of Ramaḍān all government works would stop. Nubar concluded that "this measure was adopted not in the hope of speeding up the works but rather to demonstrate to the world that the government was concerned to finish speedily the Suez line".¹ So the number of workmen

¹ Nubar to Green, 11 Apr. 1858 encl. in Green to Malmesbury, No. 57 of 15 Apr. 1858 in F.O. 78/1401.

at work, at this stage, was estimated at 11,000 men. Therefore the uncertainty that prevailed as to the progress of the line was attributed partly to the difficulty of establishing an efficient superintendence of the large bodies of fallāḥīn. Moreover, the month of Ramaḍān was a period of universal idleness in Egypt.

During his visit, Nassau William Senior noted down the boys' and girls' songs which Hekekyan interpreted to him. The songs were as follows:¹

Strophe: "We are all in rags; we are all in rags."

Antistrophe: "That the Sheykh may be dressed in cloth."

Another song:

Boys: "They starve us, they starve us,"

Girls: "They beat us, they beat us,"

Boys: "But there's some one above,
There's some one above,"

Girls: "Who will punish them well,
who will punish them well."

Hekekyan heard them singing: "No work on Friday,
No work on Friday."

¹Senior, op.cit., II, p.133.

Our concern is not to investigate whether these songs suggest what the labourers felt towards the oppression to which they were subjected. Senior suspects that the songs were meant to be heard by the people in authority. But in the view of another writer¹ the songs of the people were generally found to reflect popular feeling better than any other form of expression, and Egypt was no exception to the rule.

Green wrote that "the system of forced labour [was] indeed ... one of the principal curses of Egypt". To British representatives forced labour was an injustice and an evil if it was called for to serve useless and childish purposes of the Viceroy. But since it was called for government purposes, it might be justified as necessary in a country where fertility depended on canals and where without it the people would not serve the government.² The employment of forced labour on the Suez Canal came under severe attack although the July 1856 agreement³ with Sa'id, for the supply of labour, had never been published. This opposition also applied to any other company of speculators who undertook their projects by means of forced labour. Writing to his government Bruce did not presume to say that forced

¹E. L. Butcher, Egypt as we knew it, London, 1911, p.33.

²Bruce to Clarendon, No. 21 of 13 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 142/20; Green to Malmesbury, No. 101 of 1 July 1858 in F.O. 142/21.

³Cited in Marlowe, op.cit., p.102-103.

labour could be abandoned all at once in Egypt. He thought that it would require great judgment and an administration in whose justice the people would have confidence to obviate the inconvenience which so important a change in the habits of an entire population, would in the first instance produce. He believed that if the Porte was anxious to retain its hold of Egypt and to carry out in practice the just principles of the Hatt-i-Serif of Gulhane, it ought to make the Viceroy understand distinctly, at first in a friendly manner, and if necessary, by a formal document, that the system was inconsistent with the just rights and with the improvement of the Egyptian population. Although it might be necessary for the present to retain the power for the repairs of works of acknowledged public utility, it was to be restrained in the narrowest limits possible. Moreover, the Viceroy ought to be warned that any attempt on his part to exercise this power on behalf of companies, "whether foreign or so-called Egyptian" would be an infraction of the rights of the Sultan's subjects, and a violation of one of the most important conditions under which he administered Egypt.¹ The real aim was to hinder the construction of de Lessep's canal. In 1859 Colquhoun wrote to Lord Russell "it is true that in Egypt this has been overlooked, and the forced labour has been and is, imposed in cases of Public works such as

¹Bruce to Clarendon, No. 25 of 29 Apr. 1857 in F.O. 142/20.

the Railroad, Barrage etc., but this is an abuse, nor must we lose sight of the nature of the work required, which proved so fatal when the Mahmoudieh Canal was excavated."¹ Concerning the abolition of forced labour, Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Foreign Minister, told the British Ambassador in Paris that no other kind of labour existed in Egypt; moreover, the railroad had been executed by forced labour.² Lord Russell replied that the railroad and other public works in Egypt, having been made by forced labour, "had no bearing whatever as an argument against the abolition of an evil of which the works thus mentioned were only instances in time past."³

2. The Economic Significance of the Railway

Before the construction of the railway, the Nile and the canals were the most important highways of communication. Paved roads were unknown in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, although it would have been possible with little trouble to construct roads on the canal banks. But because of political circumstances, the roads were left in a state of neglect. Under the Mamluks, paved roads were not favoured because they were con-

¹Colquhoun to Russell, No. 42 of 9 Dec. 1859 in F.O. 78/1489.

²Cowley to Russell, No. 585 of 19 May 1863 [no. 209] in F.O. 198/27.

³Russell to Cowley, No. 675 of 20 May 1863 [no. 210] in F.O. 198/27.

sidered a help for an enemy to over-run the country.¹ Stage-coaches were not known in Egypt.² Land transport was by animals, mainly camels, mules and donkeys. Under Muḥammad 'Alī a new era of transport began in Egypt. He directed his attention to improving the routes of communication for the transportation of produce from the interior to the ports for exportation. Some of the roads which he constructed known as al-Turuq al-Sultāniyya (the Imperial roads), were long and wide roads with trees planted on both sides. He also made use of the Nile embankments for internal communication particularly to transport agricultural produce and mails, and also to link Cairo with the different provinces of Egypt.³

Primitive means of conveyance had restricted contacts and commercial exchanges between the towns. Furthermore, people, incapable of communicating with each other, subsisted exclusively upon the products of their own labour and their own soil. Each

¹ Clot-Bey, Aperçu générale, II, pp. 421-422; Māhannā & Fahmy, Iqtisādiyat al-sikak al-badīdiyya, pp. 80-81; J. Lozack, Le Delta du Nil, p.132.

² 'Alī al-Gritly, Ta'rikh al-sinā'a fī Miṣr fī al-nisf al-awwal min al-qarn al-tasi, 'ashar, Cairo, 1952, pp. 14-15. Clot-Bey's assumption, and Crouchley's after him, that wheeled vehicles were almost unknown in Egypt before Bonaparte's carriage was greatly exaggerated. (Clot-Bey, II, p. 423; Crouchley, The Economic development, pp. 77-78). The carriage was used and known in Ottoman Egypt (see: al-Jabartī, 'Aja'ib al-āthar fī'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār, I, p.252.).

³ Lahījah, op.cit., p. 144; Clot-Bey, II, p.422.

town formed, together with the surrounding agricultural area, a largely self-contained economic unit.¹ The administrative units into which Egypt was divided underwent constant changes because of the lack of proper communications. Another drawback was the fluctuation in boundaries at the beginning of the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī. For instance a province could be divided into two or more parts, each under a mudīr, or again, two provinces could be merged into one.² The development of commerce, the extension of cotton cultivation and the re-opening of the overland route necessitated, in the early years of Muḥammad 'Alī's reign, the opening of the Maḥmūdiyya Canal. The introduction of railways in the 1850's was a major change which revolutionized internal means of transport. The development of transport, therefore, was one of the factors which contributed to the growth of Egyptian urbanism which had remained at a primitive stage until the end of the nineteenth century.³ Before the railways, the perennial irrigation system introduced by Muḥammad 'Alī, marked the beginning of urbanism when cotton cultivation concentrated around the urban centres close to the water-ways. In addition, Muḥammad 'Alī's Egypt was passing through a period of industrialization.

¹Crouchley, op.cit., p.29; G. Hamdan, The population of the Nile Mid-Delta past and present. A Study of dialectical integration in regional ecology, Ph.D. Thesis, Reading, 1953, vol. II, p.195.

²M. Ramzī, al-Qāmus al-jughrafī li'l-bilād al-Misriyya, II, Pt. I, pp. 13-14.

³Hamdan, op.cit., II, p.200.

At the time of construction, the railway was looked upon as a means of connecting the administrative and important commercial centres in the Delta. Consequently, it ran through the most populated and fertile area, starting from Alexandria to Cairo via Damanḥūr, Kafr al-Dawwār, crossing the Nile at Kafr al-Zayyāt proceeding to Tanṭā, Birket al-Sab', Banhā and Qalyūb. In 1858, the railway was extended to Suez. The exploitation of the railway was such a profitable operation that Sa'īd extended it to different parts of Lower Egypt. Commercial or military purposes were not, in all cases, taken into consideration. In 1860, Sa'īd constructed a branch line between Alexandria and Maryūt, which had neither economic nor military importance but was only for his private excursions. The total length of railway lines, existent in Egypt until the end of Sa'īd's reign, was 490 kilometres as follows:¹

<u>The year</u>	<u>from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>The length by kilometres</u>
1856	Alexandria	Cairo	209
1857	Tanṭā	Samannūd	53
1858	Cairo	Suez	144
1859	Banhā	Zaqāzīq	39

¹Wiener, L'Égypte et ses chemins de fer, pp. 83-88; Lahīṭah, op.cit., p. 234.

<u>The year</u>	<u>from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>The length by kilometres</u>
1860	Alexandria	Maryūt	19
1861	Banhā	Mīt Barrah	13

In his Studies in Egyptian Urbanism, Dr. Hamdan writes that "the railway created a new order of nodalities and reassessed existing situational values although it re-emphasized the value of internal cotton situations to a large extent."¹ To interpret this statement, it is necessary to study the effects of the railway on towns and consequently on internal trade.

a) Effects on towns:

Alexandria: The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the continuing decline of Alexandria, which had begun with the diversion of world trade from the Mediterranean to ocean routes. This transference had placed Turkey as well as the countries over which she ruled in a stagnant backwater through which the life-giving stream of world trade no longer flowed. At the time of the French Expedition, the population of Alexandria hardly amounted to 8,000 inhabitants.² The city resembled, in the eyes of an observer, "un orphelin dont les parents illustres ne lui auraient laissé que le nom".³ The commercial importance of any point of the Egyptian

¹Hamdan, Studies in Egyptian Urbanism, p.51.

²Clot-Bey, I, p.265.

³J. Nahas, Situation économique et sociale du fellah égyptien, p.40, cit. in Lozach, Le Delta du Nil, p.150.

coast of the Mediterranean depended on the ease of its communications with Cairo, the commercial, industrial and political centre of Egypt. No sooner had Muḥammad 'Alī come to power than he understood the threefold military, naval and commercial importance of Alexandria. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Alexandria achieved a spectacular rise which Dr. Hamdan calls a 'risorgimento' when Egypt began to feel the need for a coastal gateway to the outside world. Previously, Alexandria had been partly isolated from the rest of Egypt because of the neglected state of its ancient canal. The destruction of this canal prevented the supply of Alexandria with fresh water, and made it difficult for the merchants to reach Alexandria with their merchandise from the interior. So, in 1811 Muḥammad 'Alī began to think of restoring the canal to navigation; but this was not achieved until 1819, when the Maḥmūdiyya Canal was constructed. Foreign ships were allowed to enter the western Port of Alexandria which had been closed to them previously, ^{they} being permitted to land only at the eastern Port which was not suitable for landing.¹

Native as well as foreign commercial houses were established in the city.² The population of Alexandria had increased to 130,000

¹ Mubarak, VII, p.50; Issawī, Egypt: an economic and social analysis, p.15; Crouchley, op.cit., pp. 34-36, 77-80; Boaz, Egypt: A familiar description of the land, people, and produce, pp. 17-18; Tusun, op.cit., pp. 51-52, 65, 81-83.

² Clot-Bey, II, pp. 307-308; according to one estimate, the European mercantile houses in Alexandria were twenty-one in 1822 (see Boaz, op.cit., p. 293); in 1837 there were more than seventy foreign mercantile houses (Bowring, Report, pp. 80-81).

by 1830.¹ By the middle of the century, the city became once more one of the world's great entrepôts with a population of 150,000.² The construction of the railway was a further step in the growth of the city, as it linked Alexandria directly with the capital and with Suez on the Red Sea. Within the Delta, Alexandria was connected with Damanhūr, the capital and the trading centre of the Buḥayra province. By 1840 the population of Damanhūr amounted to from 8 to 10,000 inhabitants.³ Muḥammad 'Alī established there a cotton spinning factory and another one for spinning and weaving wool.⁴ But it is difficult to illustrate the growth, which took place in the towns of the Delta, in the absence of comparative censuses.

Kafr al-Zayyāt: The railway had a creative effect on other towns. Where it crossed the Rosetta branch, the railway created a perfectly new break-of-bulk point, Kafr al-Zayyāt. Muḥammad 'Alī created it as a modern planned village.⁵ Since then it became an

¹It is to be noted that prior to 1882, the population figures for Egypt were merely estimates. The first census of Egypt in which modern methods were employed was that taken in 1882. For a detailed investigation see: I. A. Farid, The population of Egypt, some aspects of its growth and distribution, Cairo, 1948, pp. 8-14.

²Landes, Bankers, p.85; V. Crouchley, op.cit., p.138.

³Clot-Bey, I, p.272; Al-Surūḡī, "al-Iskandariyya fī'l-'uṣūr al-ḥadītha" in Ta'rikh al-Iskandariyya, pp. 376-378.

⁴Rāfi 'I, Ta'rikh al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya, III, p.561;

⁵The institution of model villages, adopted by Muḥammad 'Alī, aimed at introducing a system of architecture more commodious and healthy than the old. He built several villages which were peopled with fallāḥīn evicted from their mud caverns. (See St. John, Village life, I, pp. 102-103)

important port where boats stopped laden with passengers or merchandise for Tanjā.¹ When the river was bridged at Kafr al-Zayyāt after the construction of the railway, an artificial nodality came finally in its favour. This, consequently, assisted the growth of this urban centre which at the present time has become an industrial town.²

After the construction of the railway, the markaz of a district was selected from the places situated near the railway stations in order to expedite official work and transfer of officials and inhabitants. Kafr al-Zayyāt is a good example of this trend. In 1871 the Dīwān of Basyūn district was transferred to Kafr al-Zayyāt, which has become known since then as markaz Kafr al-Zayyāt.³

Tanjā: The capital of the Gharbiyya province, was the most important commercial and agricultural centre in the Delta. It was a depôt for many goods from the interior, and here came the speculators and the buyers, representatives from firms in Alexandria, Marseilles, Trieste and England.⁴ Its situation in the middle of the Delta between the two branches of the Nile, no doubt conferred on Tanjā these spectacular advantages. But this was not

¹St. John, op.cit., I, p.102.

²Lozach, op.cit., pp. 222-223; Hamdan, Studies, p.51.

³Ramzī, II, Pt. 2, p.128.

⁴Merruau, L'Égypte contemporaine, p.106.

all. The existence of the shrine of Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Badawī made Tanṭā one of the most celebrated religious centres in Egypt. Every year, at the time of his mawlid (annual fair) Tanṭā was overcrowded by visitors who came from all over Egypt to celebrate this remarkable occasion. No other religious festivities in Egypt exceeded this mawlid except the great pilgrimage to Mecca. This gave profitable opportunities for commercial activities,¹ so that the money annually expended during the mawlid was estimated at not much less than £2,800.² Clot-Bey writes "pendant la grande foire de Chouroum, une affluence immense encombre Tantah; des marchands s'y rendent de la Turquie, de la Perse, des Indes et de plusieurs parties de l'Afrique".³

The railway re-emphasized the situational value of Tanṭā and also played a great part in its urban growth. Sometimes about 100,000 people were collected at Tanṭā during each fair.⁴ It was 'Abbās who reconstructed the Badawī mosque at Tanṭā, and it was he who insisted upon the construction of the Tanṭā line. This was not a mere coincidence. 'Abbās was a religious man; several times he visited the Badawī shrine.⁵ This could be a reason for his insistence on the

¹ Mubārak, XIII, pp. 45-51; Delaporte to Walewski, No. 198, 22 Jan. 1856, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 29. "Tantah où se tient annuellement une foire universelle, et sans contredit la ville qui profitera le plus de ce changement." See also: Olympe Audouard, Les mystères, pp. 259-265.

² Boaz, op.cit., p.27.

³ Clot-Bey, I, p.274; see Crouchley, op.cit., pp. 30-31.

⁴ Anon, Railways in Egypt, p.41.

⁵ The Times, 25 Sept. 1849 and 17 July 1854.

Tanṭā line. However, Alexandria, Kafr al-Zayyāt, Tanṭā and Cairo have since become a chain of "correlated" urban centres.¹ This chain of railway communication was diverted to link the Alexandria railway with the most important centres of lower Egypt. One of the most profitable links was that connecting Tanṭā with Samannūd, on the left bank of the Damietta branch. Samannūd was one of the earliest urban centres in the Gharbiyya province. It gained an industrial function in the second decade of the 19th century, when Muḥammad 'Alī established a cotton factory there.² The Tanṭā-Samannūd line, in cutting through the Delta from east to west served the most important towns of Maṣṣūrā and Damietta, and linked the villages situated on the lower Nile between Samannūd and the Delta of the river directly with Alexandria. At that time, the produce of this part of Egypt had to go with difficulty up the Nile as far as Banḥā to reach the railway and then be re-directed towards Alexandria.³ This re-emphasized the situational value of the city of Tanṭā which has flourished until the present time.

al-Zaqāzīq: The capital of the Sharqiyya province was created when Muḥammad 'Alī ordered the construction of the barrage

¹Hamdan, The population of the Nile Mid-Delta, II, pp. 226.

²It became a markaz in 1826. (Ramzī, II, Pt. 2)

³Benedetti to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept., M.A.E., C.C., tom. 35; Lozach, op.cit., p.112; Mubarak, XII, 46-51.

at al-Zaqāzīq on Baḥr Muways. Originally, it was a camp for the workers employed on the construction of the barrage, who built mud huts on the banks of Baḥr Muways in which to live. At that time food-sellers followed them and al-Zaqāzīq began to grow as an urban centre. When the barrage works were finished in 1832, those houses were reconstructed and the mosque was rebuilt. Therefore al-Zaqāzīq overtook Belbays and became the capital of the province. Its growth increased after it had been linked with the railway.¹ A considerable number of firms connected with Manchester had established themselves in the cotton industry at Zaqāzīq, and its growing importance led the British Consul-General in 1862 to suggest to the Foreign Office the appointment of a consul or agent there.² One of the advantages it had was its being the terminus of one of the branch lines. This, however, sustains the theory that the railway emphasized the trend inaugurated by the irrigation and cotton revolution. Marginal situations, such as Belbays, had declined and interior situations nearer to agricultural areas began to flourish as happened in the case of al-Zaqāzīq.³ The railway from al-Zaqāzīq joining the

¹ Mubārak, XI, pp. 93-94; al-Rāfi'ī, Ta'riḥ al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya, III, p. 567; Ramzī, al-Qāmus, II, Pt. I, pp. 14, 89-92.

² Colquhoun to Russell, No. 76 of 6 June 1862 in F.O. 78/1693; Russell to Colquhoun, Nos. 8 & 12 (consular) 8 July, 13 Oct. 1862 in F.O. 141/47; Saunders to Russell, No. 18 (consular) 23 Sept. 1862 in F.O. 142/26.

³ Hamdan, Studies, p. 51.

Alexandria line at Banhā was destined to offer enormous advantages to this region. It established a direct link between Alexandria and Cairo and that part of Lower Egypt contained within the right bank of the Damietta branch and the desert frontiers. This region assumed much importance from the vast increase in the amount of first quality cotton it produced. Zaḡāzīq's prosperity was due, then, to agricultural exploitation. It was an important depôt for the produce of the Delta, that is to say for cotton, sesame and other products. The journey between Zaḡāzīq and Banhā took twelve hours by water and six to eight hours by land. Building the railway could only increase the commercial importance of the town, and provide more rapid transport for the produce of the fertile province of al-Sharqiyya.¹

Suez: Suez was one of the first towns to benefit from the railway. Situated on the western side of the gulf of Suez, it was a port and a terminus for the commerce of Arabia, India and the Sudan. Suez, which replaced the town of Qulzum, had been important throughout the centuries because of its geographical position, the passage of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the amount of merchandise coming to it. In Suez, there was a permanent governmental force, a resident governor and a customs house. Nevertheless it was a small town whose inhabitants were few in number and had come mainly

¹ Benedetti to Walewski, No. 12, 26 Sept. 1856; Schefer to Walewski, No. 76, 9 Jan. 1859, M.A.E., C.C., tom.35.

from Hijāz, al-Ṭūr and Egypt. It lacked the main essential, fresh water. The Beduins came in great numbers, but only during the pilgrimage period. They sold their goods and departed owing to this serious problem of obtaining fresh water. Its inhabitants used to drink from salt wells, far from Suez, such as Ghardaqa and Mūsā wells. Situated on the desert fringe, Suez was very poor with few buildings, and remained so until Muḥammad 'Alī turned his attention to it. With continued security Suez began to prosper for it became important in the transit of trade between India and Britain. Before the construction of the railway, camels were used to transport goods and coal to Cairo. In 1846, the Dīwān al-Murūr was formed. At first the route was divided into four stations, then to fifteen. In 1849, 'Abbās issued orders for the macadamization of the Suez route, and only half of the road was finished at al-Dār al-Bayḍā'. When the Suez line was built, this route ceased to be used and some of its stations were used for the railway.¹ In 1859, the inhabitants of Suez were estimated at about 6,000, whose provisions were brought by camels from the Nile Valley, especially from Cairo.²

There is no doubt whatever that the railway was very essential to the prosperity of Suez. Above all, it facilitated the so necessary supply of fresh-water. On the inauguration of the Cairo-Suez railway, Delaporte reported "M. Nubar Bey, Directeur du Transit, a eu l'heureuse

¹Mubarak, XII, pp. 69-71; Dassy, Notes on Seuis and its trade with the Red Sea; E. de Leon, The Khedive's Egypt, London, 1877, p.42; report on Suez and the importance of the railway to it: Batissier (Vice Consul de France à Suez) to Sabatier, 21 June 1851, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 35 (Alex.); also Hoskins, British Routes, p.228.

²Dassy, op.cit., pp. 9-10.

pensée d'envoyer avec la première locomotive, qui est entrée dans la ville un train d'eau du nil qu'on a distribué à tous les habitants qui ne buvaient jusqu'à présent, que l'eau saumâtre de puits environnants. Cet événement a été un jour de fête pour Suez."¹ On the other hand, the railway was destined to confer great advantages on Suez before the opening of the Suez Canal. A quick look at the volume of merchandise, money and travellers passing through it will justify this fact. The value of its trade in 1856 was 65,334,938 frs., of which 40 millions was levied from goods in transit from Europe to Asia and vice versa. But what characterized the movement of the port of Suez was not just trade in goods but the transit, always growing in currency and specie, which was not included in the figure of 65 millions. There came through Suez in 1856 of precious metals, bars or coins in silver 51,568 coffers containing 463,432,500 frs. Three years earlier, the transit at Suez only amounted to 15,337 cases of currency, its movement of goods did not exceed 36 million frs.; the number of passengers did not exceed 17 to 18,000; its maritime movement did not exceed passage, to and from, of 400 ships. In 1856 this had risen to 596 ships and over 22, 235 passengers. The Journal des Débats, quoting from the Annales du commerce

¹Delaporte to Walewski, No. 247, 12 Dec. 1858, M.A.E., C.C., tom. 30.

extérieur, gives the total volume of goods and currency during the first six months of 1857 at 320,404,000 frs.¹ Consequently, Suez began to acquire different characteristics, and to lose its uncared-for appearance. This growing European intercourse with India had largely contributed to its prosperity. In 1858, the Illustrated Times reported "in Suez, as in Manchester, you meet with travellers of every nation, our own countrymen being largely in the majority. They are to be found in every café, where with the Arabs, they smoke the chibouques, sip coffee, and listen to the writings of some favourite Eastern poet."²

The progress of internal prosperity owed much to the construction of the railway and the increase of European commerce. Moreover, the railway marked the revival of the three key cities of Egypt, Alexandria, Cairo and Suez. A contemporary writer comments

" arrest English commerce, and Alexandria would collapse in a single year. Suez would, of course, become a mere pilgrim-khan, and her brackish well, instead of giving water to the three or four hundred noble camels that transport British merchandise across the sands, would degenerate into the annual drinking-trough of the Haj caravan. Cairo would suffer greatly, yet less, perhaps, than other Egyptian cities; as she is not quite so dependent

¹This is the total of 62,206,000 frs. in goods and 255,198,000 frs. in currency, cf. Merruau, L'Égypte contemporaine, pp. 230-232; Hoskins, op.cit., p.367.

²The Illustrated Times, No. 164, VI, pp. 361-362 (22 May 1858).

on foreign traffic. But Alexandria would soon shrivel up into a fourth of its present dimensions; and not all the power of Greek enterprise or French ambition could prevent such a catastrophe.

Britain needed a short route to India; and this necessity has been the revival of Egypt..... Across the narrow strip of land, the whole West pours into the East, and the East into the West..... For, let it be remembered, that this revival of Egypt is only commencing; and the completion of the railway between the two seas¹ will bring with it wonders on which we do not calculate."

b) Effects on Internal Trade and Communication:

On 10 Muharram 1271/3 October 1854, Sa'id approved the tariff laid down by the Diwan al-Murur for railway and Nile transport.² According to this tariff, passengers were divided into three classes:

- 1) First-class passengers provided with food in the cabins on the Nile steamers;
- 2) Second-class passengers provided with food on board the steamers, and
- 3) Third-class travel (confined to Egyptian workers and farmers) with conveyance by ordinary boats without provision of food.

Although the Alexandria-Cairo railway was still under construction, the fares for each destination, between Alexandria and Suez, were

¹ The North British Review, XXIX, Art. VII, p.163, Aug.-Nov. 1858.

² Nile transport was included in this tariff because Kafr al-Zayyat bridge was not yet constructed and conveyance over this portion was performed by the Nile steamers.

fixed. Fares were fixed for first and second class passengers between Alexandria and Suez, but there was no announcement of third-class fares. No reason is given for that. Nevertheless, the fare for third-class travellers, workers and fallāḥīn, was 40 piastres. In addition there was a fixed tariff for the conveyance of goods and money. Furthermore the tariff specified the general regulations for travellers, and the weights, free of charge, allowed for first and second class passengers. Third-class passengers had no such privileges.¹

At the beginning of 1855, it seems that Lee Green, Director of Dīwān al-Murūr, made some effective reduction in the fares, and increased departures between Alexandria and Cairo. The British Consul-General reported that a large and increasing number of the poorest classes had already begun to avail themselves of these advantages; and on the part of the railway which was opened, a considerable local traffic had sprung up between the towns situated near it. Bruce, however, advocated on all occasions low fares for the third class, and was convinced that if managed on liberal principles, the railway would justify "the statement made by it's [sic] founders of the advantages it would confer on the population and trade of Egypt itself being infinitely greater than those derived by any Foreign transit trade."² Henceforward, the lower classes of the population

¹Sāmī, III, Pt. I, pp. 90-92.

²Bruce to Clarendon (Private), 17 Jan. 1855 in F.O. 195/412.

adopted the railway. It was a curious fact, Merruau wrote, that the greatest part of its income came from transporting the fallāḥīn, who paid ten francs each third class. This was contrary to the expectation that the only serious custom would be from the English trade. Merruau comments that in Egypt as elsewhere:

"ease and rapidity of communications will multiply journeys and trade..... In fact the railway which Mehemet Ali envisaged as a charge upon the state, now constitutes one of the resources of the Treasury. The first year it yielded 30,000 bourses or 3,750,000 frs.; the second year, receipts rose to 40,000 bourses or 5,400,000 frs."¹

In 1856, the railway dīwān issued a pamphlet of the Tarifs et Réglements Du Chemin De Fer Egyptien.² The passengers were also divided into three classes. The fares were fixed for each of the following destinations: Alexandria, Kafr al-Dawwār, Damanhūr, Kafr al-Zayyāt, Tanṭā, Maḥallat Rūḥ, al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā, Samannūd, Birkat al-Sab', Banhā, Qalyūb, Cairo and Suez. Merchandise was also classified into various categories, some charged on weight, some on volume, some on value and some by the piece. The various sources of revenue illustrate the progress of the traffic in and through Egypt.³

But before the completion of the railway to Suez, the effect of railway transport charges on passengers and commerce was

¹Merruau, op.cit., pp. 108-109.

²Tarif et Réglement in F.O. 141/30.

³See the illustrative table in Appendix IV, p.379.

questioned. The passenger fares were higher than in any other country in the world.¹ The writer of the anonymous pamphlet was critical of these charges. He based his criticism on the published tariff and compared the charges with those adopted on European railways. If a first class passenger was proceeding from Alexandria to Cairo, or vice versa, with his wife, three servants, a carriage, and two horses and a proportionate quantity of luggage, it would have cost him formerly, for a commodious boat which would have taken all except the horses, £4; and the horses would have been sent for £1 more, making the total £5. But if conveyed by the railway, he would pay about £15.14.1.d The third class passengers were, from want of adequate rolling stock on the railway, generally packed indiscriminately with goods and luggage, or "may be seen swarming on the convex roofs of the third-class covered carriages, of which there were a few". When there was a great rush of passengers, as during the pilgrimage to Mecca, the government seized the opportunity to double the fares, or announcing that there were none but first-class tickets available. Moreover, return, season and excursion tickets, at reduced rates, did not appear to have been thought of in Egypt.²

The railway's effects on internal commerce must have been unquestionable as it facilitated the supply of provisions to the

¹The Times, 29 Apr. 1858, p.5.

²Anon, Railways in Egypt, pp. 33-35, 38-39.

different provinces of Lower Egypt. No less was its importance to Alexandria whose fresh provisions were brought from the surrounding provinces and Cairo. In 1854, the 'Towing Company', with Egyptian capital and administration, was established by a ferman from Sa'īd, conferring upon it certain privileges and Egyptian status, to transport produce and passengers by tug steamers and improved boats on the Nile and the Maḥmūdiyya Canal. Sa'īd's main object, in establishing this company, was to avoid the delays of the sailing-boats, which were controlled by winds and travelled the distance from Cairo to Alexandria in fifteen days. So long as Alexandria was dependent on provisions from the interior, a faster means was necessary to meet its needs particularly after the population had increased.¹ This means that greater advantages were expected after the construction of the railway. But the charges for merchandise seem to have been obnoxious and frustrating. The anonymous writer asked in his pamphlet why the food for Cairo and Alexandria should be charged as if it were as dangerous as gun-powder. He gives us some examples because he lived in Egypt and knew the prices of commodities. 1 Qinṭār of eggs in Cairo cost 15/- in Cairo, while in the villages it was half that sum. Butter in Cairo was about 7¹/₂d per pound, but in Alexandria people were sometimes glad to pay as much as 2/6 per pound. So, because of the high cost of transport, Alexandria was not at all well supplied with fresh provisions or garden produce.²

¹Rafi'ī, 'Aṣr Ismā'īl, I, pp. 34-35.

²Cf. Anon, op.cit., pp. 41-43.

Yet, it was asserted that the line did not repay the administrative expenses. This was partly explained by the free services rendered to the government in the transport of troops, material and stores of all kinds. To remedy this, wrote the correspondent of The Times, moderately good management was necessary for the railway to become a most lucrative source of revenue. Secondly, a large addition to the rolling-stock was required to enable the government to make reductions in its charges to render the railway truly valuable to the agricultural and commercial interests of Egypt. Concluding his observations, the correspondent adds "the tariff for the carriage of goods would elsewhere be looked upon as amounting to an absolute prohibition, notwithstanding which, at all the principal stations along the line may be seen piles of cotton bales and of other produce which the railway administration, with its present means, is totally unable to bring forward to port of shipment."¹ According to another estimate, the transport service on the land side of Suez by railway did not afford adequate accommodation to merchants either in respect of the frequency of goods trains or of rates of carriage. The cost by railway for all goods was still much higher than by camels, which amounted, for the distance between Cairo and Suez, to about 16d. per 100 lbs. carried, equivalent to 4¹/₂d. per ton per mile.²

¹The Times, 29 Apr. 1858, p.5.

²Dassy, Notes on Sueis, p.15.

It is particularly important to examine the effects of the railway rates on cotton transport. Camels and boats on some of the large irrigation canals as long as there was water enough, conveyed the cotton to the larger arteries, the Nile and the Maḥmūdiyya Canal and the railway leading to Alexandria. Considerable difficulty was experienced at times from the low level of water. The railway rate for carriage from Cairo to Alexandria imposed on impressed bales, an additional $11\frac{1}{4}\%$, and in pressed bales an additional $7\frac{1}{2}\%$. The means for pressing cotton in the districts of Egypt were so limited, that almost the whole work was effected in Alexandria. Thus, the railway from Cairo to Alexandria with its absurdly high rates,¹ and its capricious management was not as useful as it could have been. Merchants used it only when other means failed, or when time was of more importance than cost. But even on such occasions, the railway did not always afford relief, and "it [was] a common occurrence to see the camel in competition along its embankments".² The average cost of carrying goods from the land on the eastern branch of the Nile (via the Delta and the Maḥmūdiyya Canal) to Alexandria was approximately one shilling per qinṭar. If the goods came from an

¹According to the official tariff charges imposed on cotton were 20 Egyptian piastres per qinṭar for round bales, or 16 pes. for pressed bales from Cairo to Alexandria.

²A memo. from Hekekyan dated Oct. 1857 on the cultivation of cotton in the Nile-Valley; also a memo. from acting Consul Müller, in answer to queries of the office of Cotton Supply Association, Manchester dated 4 Nov. 1857 in F.O. 78/1316; Anon., op.cit. pp. 22-24, 44-45.

inland area the extra charge for camel-hire brought it up to about one and sixpence per qinṭār. The steam tug company, charged 6 to $6\frac{1}{2}$ piastres per qinṭār (14.77 to 16 pence) as their maximum freight, insurance included, from Mnaṣūrā to Alexandria; and $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 piastres (8.61 to 9.84 pence) from Cairo to Alexandria. Hekekyan concluded, in his report to the Cotton Supply Association, "a reduction of the unreasonable and unjustifiable rates on the Railway, and the extension of branch lines, of which some are projected and the usefulness of which the natives have already well understood to appreciate, are most desirable".¹

Because of maladministration in the railway, people gave up using it. For instance, Mubārak describes the state of the Alexandria station, the terminus for imports and exports. When he was appointed in 1868, there were no places for storage. Goods were thrown out of the trucks on the ground between the locomotives and the trains, and the result was appalling. Olive casks, acids and paints, all mixed up with wood, were tossed with woven materials, cotton bales and grain baskets. The employees who moved the goods from the track to owner had an almost impossible task. No wonder the owners of the goods made repeated complaints about the extra expenditure paid to the porters and the carts. The charges were too high and the carts carried only half loads because the ground

¹ Memo. from Hekekyan, Oct. 1857 in F.O. 78/1316. For an example of the expenses of the accommodation afforded by Alexandria-Cairo railway to Manchester manufacturers see: Anon., op.cit., p.45.

was not level and the accumulation of dust tired the animals, particularly in winter when the goods got wet from rain and were mixed with mud. This bad state of affairs became widely known.¹ Indeed in 1864 the abuses of the railway forced the British merchants at Alexandria to protest to the Egyptian government. They complained of the monopoly of the railway to serve the Viceroy in his mercantile capacity. A British merchant was told when trying to forward machinery into the interior "that so long as there remained for transport a single package of the merchandize belonging to H.H. the Viceroy, the goods of private persons could not be forwarded". The roads from the merchants' stores to the shipping wharves, and from the customs house and the railway station to town, were in a disgraceful state, the holes merely filled up with loose earth and broken pottery. They also complained because their properties were detained for weeks in transit, exposed to weather, and to pillage, and whole bales of goods were often stolen. If the railway and the steamers were sufficient only for his own requirements, they asked the Viceroy to authorize the formation of an international company to facilitate the transport of produce and merchandise by means of steamers, lighters and tugs.²

¹Mubarak, VII, p.90.

²The resolutions of the British merchants are enclosed in Colquhoun to Russell, No. 27 of 25 Mar. 1864; Merchants to Saunders, 26 Apr. 1864 encl. in Colquhoun to Russell, No. 63 of 3 May 1864 in F.O. 78/1818; Memorial from Chairman of British Mercantile Community dated 30 Apr. 1864 encl. in Saunders to Russell, No. 14 of 19 May 1864 in F.O. 78/1838.

Railway expenditure exceeded revenue. The fares were very high, particularly for third-class passengers. Despite this, they were exposed to many inconveniences because most of the third-class carriages looked like animal trucks, which were not covered for protection against wind, dust, heat and cold. These trucks were also seatless. The administration had none of the European third-class carriages.¹ The behaviour of the employees of the trains was often very bad. This displeased passengers and made them unwilling to travel.² "In the railway carriages," Nassau William Senior notes in his diary, "the third-class passengers, who stand staring at the novelty of the scene [were] admonished to sit by being struck on the head by the sticks of the railway-porters".³ 'Alī Mubārak tried to get rid of these evils. Since the revenues of the railway dīwān depended upon commerce, it required particular attention because passenger fares could not cover the expenditure. So three means were necessary to attract the merchants to transport their merchandise by the railway. These were : to reduce the railway charges on merchandise to less than those paid if conveyed by land or sea; to transport merchandise to its destination in less time than taken by rival means of transport; and to protect merchandise from disasters, such as fires, theft and damp. According to Mubārak,

¹Phillips to Stanton (Private and Conf.) 26 May 1866 in P.O. 141/60.

³Mubārak, VII, p.92.

⁴Senior, Conversations, II, p.59.

the second and third points were achieved through publishing regulations in all the stations, and by building roofs to loading and unloading bays. With regard to the first point, all means of persuasion were pursued, such as signing contracts with merchants; deducting a certain sum from the fares of some sorts of merchandise for well-known merchants; deducting 10⁰/o from the total fares of the merchandise conveyed in every three or six months or one year; grades were fixed and a temporary tariff was drawn up which was published and circulated to all the stations, the dīwāns and to the leading merchants. Furthermore, inspectors were appointed to supervise the execution of these regulations so that each train would start with its full load. Previously this point had been neglected so that frequently the train carried only one-fourth or one-half of its proper load. The cultivators' desire to transport their crops to the markets, or to another town of the countryside trading centres, had not been realized. There were many obstacles against achieving these purposes, for instance some of the lines were far from some of the important towns and villages, and, finally, there were also long distances between some of the stations.¹

A last point ought to be made here. The adoption of the railway for conveyance of local mails was a turning point in the history

¹ Mubarak, VII, pp. 92-93.

of postal communications in Egypt. Under Muḥammad 'Alī the transport of government letters between Cairo and Alexandria was by couriers on foot. The couriers were relieved at every telegraphic station, of which there were nineteen between the two cities. The government's courier-service was daily, and the distance was covered in twenty-four hours. The Egyptian government always permitted consuls to send letters by government couriers, but the weight was limited. To avoid some inconveniences, the consuls and European merchants in Alexandria and Cairo combined to establish a regular post between these two places. This was carried into effect in August 1831. The service of the European post was done by 'Arabs' and by an arrangement with the shaykh of the couriers in Egypt,¹ who furnished the couriers for which he was paid by the European Postmaster, Signor Meratti.² The Post Office also undertook the conveyance of letters between Cairo and Alexandria and vice versa. This was the first organised Post Office in Egypt.

Under the successors of Meratti, the Post Office was developed and became known as the Posta Europea.³ It achieved an increasing success so that it opened new offices in Lower Egypt. When the railway was constructed, the Post Office was not slow to make use of it for conveyance of mails. This was a marked sign of confidence in the new method of transport, and the relation between the Post

¹ Cf. Baer, Egyptian guilds in modern times,

² Campbell to Wellington, No. 5 of 5 March 1835 in F.O. 78/260; 'Umar Amīn and I. Girgis, Ta'rikh al-barīd fī Miṣr, pp. 47-48.

³ Ta'rikh al-barīd, p.48.

Office and the railway became close. The expansion of the European Post Office followed the railway. After the completion of the line from Alexandria to Kafr al-ʿIṣ in 1854, three offices were opened, in Cairo, al-ʿAṣf and Rosetta. Another two were established in Damanhūr and Kafr al-Zayyāt in 1855. When the line was extended to Cairo, the owners of the Post Office concluded an agreement with Maṣlahat al-Murūr for the conveyance of letters between Cairo, Alexandria and the intermediate stations and vice versa, in return for an annual sum of 72,000 piastres. The agreement lasted for five years from January 1856. On 5 March 1862, the European Post Office acquired a ten year concession by which it was authorized to carry the mails on the railway free of charge in return for undertaking to convey government letters free of charge as well.¹ The Post Office operations proved so profitable that Ismāʿīl purchased it in 1865.

c) Effects on Transit Traffic:

Geographical position, together with the construction of the railway, made Egypt the principal channel of communication, and the intermediate station between Europe and Asia before the opening of the Suez Canal. On 30 March 1852, the East India Company concluded

¹Taʾrīkh al-barīd, pp. 49-52, 99.

an agreement for the transmission of the British mails.¹ The Transit Administration undertook to convey the mails from Alexandria to Suez in 75 hours, and from Suez to Alexandria in 65 hours. These hours were to be computed from the time the mails were delivered over to the Transit Administration. For the performance of this service, the East India Company agreed to pay to the Administration £6,000 per annum in quarterly payments. It was a three-year contract which could be extended for another three years. The contract was made under the then existing means of conveyance in Egypt. But the railway was in process of construction; therefore the two parties agreed that if it were completed before the first term of three years, the mails should be carried by the railway, and the clauses concerning the time of conveyance were to be modified so that the mails should reach their destination at Alexandria and Suez, at or about the same time as the Indian passengers conveyed by railway.

If the opening of the Alexandria-Cairo railway in 1856 had conferred great benefits on all branches of commerce in Egypt, it especially facilitated the transit of British passengers, mails, merchandise and specie to and from India. The total number of passengers that passed through Egypt on their way to India during the year 1855 was 2,458, being an increase of 282 on the previous year. The number of packages of merchandise and specie for India was 45,339, showing an increase of 11,478 on the previous year. The number

¹State Papers, vol. 57, pp. 778-780.

of passengers homewards was 2,571 showing a decrease of 42 passengers. The number of packages of merchandise and specie from India was 16,827 being a decrease of 2,274 on the previous year. The value of the specie forwarded to India from Europe by this route during 1855 was about nine millions sterling.¹ Furthermore, the railway was no less beneficial to Egypt than to the Peninsular and Oriental Company. From 1852 to 1857, there was a steady increase of passengers.²

Nevertheless there were some complaints about the conveyance of the mails. In November 1857, the British Post Office wrote to the Treasury calling their attention and through them the British Foreign Secretary and the President of the Board of Control to the irregular and unsatisfactory manner in which the Indian mails were conveyed through Egypt. They referred the Treasury to the agreement of 1852, particularly the two articles indicating the time-limit of conveyance. At that time, the Cairo-Suez railway was not yet completed. The Post Office did not overlook the fact that since the date of the agreement, the weight of the mails had been much increased, but a proportional increase should be made in the means of conveyance. The Post Office wished Lord Clarendon, British Foreign Secretary, to instruct the British Consul-General in Egypt not only to press for an improvement of the present service, but to take early measures for the renewal of the agreement of 1852 with a much reduced allowance of time.³

¹ Commercial report for 1855 encl. No. 1 in Green to Clarendon, No. 23 of 10 Mar. 1856 in F.O. 78/1224; for effect on Indian Mutiny see above, pp. 220-221.

² See the table in Appendix V, p. 380.

³ Hill (Post Office) to Wilson (Treasury) 4 Nov. 1857; Wilson to Hammond, 7 Nov. 1857 encls. in Clarendon to Green, No. 59 of 9 Nov. 1857, in F.O. 141/32; also enclosing tables of the date of the dispatch from Alexandria, and of arrival at Suez and hours occupied between dispatch from Alexandria and (cont.)

Nubar Bey, the director of the railway, replied that when the time of the renewal of the agreement drew nearer the Suez railway would have been completed, so the question would be rapidly resolved. He said that a special train would transport the mails in 18 hours from Alexandria to Suez and vice versa. He pointed out that in order to speed the transport of the mails, the Administration could slow up transport of goods; but even then there would travel with the mails the passengers, their luggage and their valuables which all together could not be carried in less than fifty hours. Besides, the bridge at Kafr al-Zayyat was not finished, and the steam-ferry operated slowly in low water. The line was primitive and to avoid crashes, the trains were often obliged to go into sidings especially when the boats arrived at the same time at Suez and at Alexandria. Nubar also added that the most considerable source of income of the railway was the speedy transport of coin and goods. Sa'id hoped that Green, acting British Consul-General, would stress to the British Ministers, in case they should decide that only the mails should be speeded up, the great losses which the Administration would suffer. So, the only possible way to reconcile all these interests was to alter the arrivals and departures of the P. & O. ships.¹ Because Green knew that the real difficulty in reducing the time did not arise from the mails but from the cargo, passengers and specie, he believed that Nubar's suggestion, for re-arranging

(cont.) delivery by Transit Dept. at Suez.
¹ Nubar to Green, 22 Jan. 1858 encl. (1) in Green to Clarendon, No. 11 of 25 Jan. 1858 in F.O. 78/1401.

the arrivals and departures of the P. & O. ships, would meet the case. Green observed to Nubar that £12,000 annually would be a very moderate remuneration for the transmission of mails through Egypt.¹ However, Green had to wait for Clarendon's instructions to conclude the formal agreement.

Having learnt from Trollope² of the Post Office, that Nubar's idea had also occurred to the Post Office authorities in London, Green drafted an agree ment which Sa'id accepted. According to article III of this draft agreement, the time for conveyance from Alexandria to Suez and vice versa, should not, except under uncontrollable circumstances, exceed eighteen hours. But Nubar reiterated his assertion that this time was not sufficient.³ Green neither agreed with Nubar, nor believed he had any valid reasons to offer in this matter. Green believed that the real objection was on the part of the P. & O. which considered that the transit of mails should not be so rapid as to interfere with the transport of the cargo and the convenience of the passengers. But Green hoped to settle this question on Anderson's arrival in Egypt, which was expected. However after allowing sixteen hours for the transit of mails from station to station, Green inserted this clause:

¹Green to Nubar, 25 Jan. 1858 encl. (2) in Green to Clarendon in F.O. 78/1401.

²Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), the novelist and Post Office official. He was sent on a postal mission to Egypt in 1858.

³Nubar to Green, 2 Mar. encl (2) in Green to Clarendon, No. 33 of 4 March 1858 in F.O. 78/1401.

"The time to be employed in conveying the mails from the Packets at Alexandria and Suez to the Railway stations - and from the Railway stations at Alexandria and Suez to the Packets - shall not exceed eight hours per trip; so that the whole time employed in the transit from the packet at Suez to the Packet at Alexandria, shall not exceed twenty four hours each way."

Nubar refused to accede to this article because the mails were only delivered to the Transit Administration at the station on the shore, and no such stipulation existed in the agreement in force. Unwillingly, Green consented to its exclusion from the draft.¹

Having examined this draft agreement, the Postmaster General drew up an amended draft which included the alterations he had made. Instead of the 18 hours stipulated for the transit, the whole time occupied from packet to packet should not exceed 24 hours. This stipulation was to be subject to the same proviso in Green's draft (that the packet between Southampton and Alexandria should arrive 20 hours before and sail 20 hours after the packet conveying the overland mail),² The agreement was signed on 16 June 1858. Green made, on his own responsibility, a change in article VI, without reference to London. The original article provided that "so long as any part of the Railway between Cairo and Suez shall remain unopened for use, additional time shall be allowed for the conveyance of the mails viz: two hours for the loading of the camels, and a

¹The Draft Agreement encl. (1) in Green to Clarendon, No. 33 of 4 March. 1858.

²Art. III in the new drafted agreement. For a copy of the agreement see encls. in Malmesbury to Green, No. 14 of 24 May 1858 in F.O. 141/34.

quarter of an hour per mile for the slower pace of camels as compared with travelling by Railway." Green found that a number of loaded camels could not be made to proceed for any distance even at three miles an hour. Therefore, this article was re-worded as follows: "so long as any part of the Railway between Cairo and Suez shall remain unopened for use, additional time shall be allowed for the conveyance of the mails, calculated on the slower pace of camels as compared with travelling by Railway, and the Administration binds itself to accelerate the transport of the mails through the Desert by camels as much as possible."¹ In September 1859, the Postmaster General intended to send Page, one of the principal clerks of the Post Office, to Egypt to inspect personally whether since the completion of the railway the full advantage of this improved mode of transit was given to the mails.² By this agreement, the mails were to be conveyed, on the railway in closed trucks and neither passengers, goods, nor anything else was to be placed in the same trucks. Warehouse room was also to be provided at the railway stations at Alexandria and Suez for storing the mails. In return for these services, the British government agreed to pay to the Egyptian government £12,000 per annum, the payments to be made quarterly.³

¹Green to Malmesbury, No. 91 of 16 June 1858 in F.O. 78/1401; copy of the Postal Agreement is enclosed in F.O. 141/36 Pt. I; State Papers, vol. 52, pp. 897-99.

²Hill (Post Office) to Hammond, 16 Sept. 1859 encl. in Hammond to Colquhoun, No. 27 (c9nsular) 19 Sept. 1859 in F.O. 141/38.

³See articles IX, X, XII of the agreement. Here is a Return of the sums paid in each year since 1850 for the Transit of Mails across the Isthmus of Suez:

While the Post Office was concerned with speeding up the transit of mails, the P. & O. Company was trying to reduce the transit dues, both for passengers and cargo. The directors of the Company wrote to the Board of Trade that the completion of the railway and its approaching opening to traffic from Suez to Alexandria made it the appropriate moment to obtain the assent of the Egyptian government to this reduction. They indicated that since the reduction of the transit duty from 3 per cent. *ad valorem* to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which was obtained by the company from Muḥammad 'Alī in 1841, the transport of costly articles of merchandise and specie had gradually increased and amounted during the twelve months ending 30 September 1858 to £30,000,000 in value. During the same period there passed through Egypt en route to and from India, China, Australia and other places in the east, about 8,000 passengers consisting chiefly of commercial men, officers in the civil and military services and their families. Since the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, the Company conveyed by this route, exclusive of those carried by other means, 333 officers and 7,857 men. The Company paid to the Pasha £188,802 for the transit of the foregoing during that period. On the other hand, the charges made by the Egyptian government for the transit

(cont.)	£
Year 1854 (first payment, being for a portion of the year)...	1,789
" 1855	8,000
" 1856	8,000
" 1857	9,833
* 1858	11,000
" 1859	12,000

(P.P., 1860, LXII, p.187.)

were high, viz. £10 each for passenger and £8 per ton for goods and parcels, and the means of transit consisted of steam boats on the Nile and a large and costly establishment of camels, horses, mules for the desert portion. To get a material reduction the Company sent Anderson to Egypt to negotiate with Sa'id. They believed that their demand was justified by the fact that while the cost of construction of the Egyptian railway was estimated at somewhat less than one-third of the average cost of railways in England and on the continent, the present charges for the conveyance of merchandise and passenger, across Egypt were about four times the average of the rates charged for conveyance by these other railways. Furthermore, the working expenses of the Egyptian railway were also less than on European railway.¹

To assist Anderson's mission, Malmesbury, the British Foreign Secretary, instructed Green to represent to the Egyptian government that "such a direct discouragement to intercourse as a tax upon transit, in addition to the high cost of transport [was] so manifestly at variance with interests of Egypt that it ought to be entirely abolished". As the charges of conveyance by the railway were 400⁰/_o greater than by European lines, Malmesbury told Green that it was possible to make large reductions in the tariff and still make a profit. In addition, it was of great consequence to remove from

¹Howell to Tennent, 7 Dec. 1858 encl. in Malmesbury to Green, No. 62 of 15 Dec. 1858 in F.O. 141/35. For the amount of duties paid by the P. & O. to the Egyptian government since 1852, see Appendix VI, p. 381.

the overland route impediments which might discourage its use in favour of the less advantageous route of the Cape of Good Hope. Moreover, he believed that many articles, such as indigo (which, from risk of damage could not be sent through Egypt because of the imperfect mode of conveyance upon camel), might now be entrusted with entire safety to the new railroad. But this advantageous change "would be altogether neutralized if the charges continue so high as to secure a preference to the route by the Cape."¹ Sa'id had no objection to abolishing transit duties. But to avoid getting himself into difficulties with others, he had given orders to make enquiries on the subject, and asked Green whether transit duties existed in other countries. Green informed him that there were no transit duties in England, and that he rather thought they had been abolished on the continent.² Nubar was entrusted with these enquiries.

Anderson's mission was a complete success, and a five year contract was signed on 1 March 1859.³ In addition to reducing the cost of transit of passengers, goods and specie across Egypt, the contract contained provisions for the safety and comfort of travellers, and security of prosperity. The passengers, booked by the P. & O., were considered as belonging to one of two classes and were charged the following rates: class (a) £7 and class (b) £3.10.0. Sa'id consented to remit the duty of $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent ad

¹ Malmesbury to Green, No. 62, 15 Dec. 1858 in F.O. 141/35.

² Green to Malmesbury, No. B of 10 Feb. 1859 in F.O. 78/1467.

³ Return of the amount of the reduction on the Mail contract with the (cont)

valorem charged on merchandise in transit, but he reserved to himself the right of re-establishing it when the goods were no longer so conveyed.¹ These rates for travellers were more than double the ordinary local fares for passengers between Alexandria and Suez, viz. 314 piastres (£3.4.5.) for first and 206 piastres (£2.2.3.) for second-class. Anderson accepted this high scale of charge for two main considerations: (a) to get some extra facilities for passengers, such as being taken to and from the ships by small steamers, conveyed from the hotels and railway stations at the Viceroy's expense, also to be allowed to carry extra luggage free of charge; (b) to insure greager safety to passengers on the railway.²

While in Egypt, Anderson discussed with the Egyptian officials the question of the irregularity of trains and its grave consequences. He was told that the Viceroy was the sole proprietor of the railway, and had a right to the uncontrolled use of it for his own pleasure or convenience. He discussed these matters verbally with the then mudīr al-murūr, but for the information and guidance of any further mudīrs, Anderson placed on record these matters. He pointed out, in his letter, the principal conditions for

(cont.) P. & O. Company occasioned by the opening of the Alexandria-Suez railway was as follows:

India and China Mails	£20,000 per annum
Bombay and Aden Mails	27,000 " "

Both these deductions commenced from the 25th November 1859.
(P.P., 1860, LXII, p.187.)

¹ See copy of this agreement in F.O.78/1472; Annual Reports of the P. & O., I, pp. 8-9; P. & O. archives kept in the Public Relations office.
(cont.)

which the high rate of transit charge was submitted to. These conditions were¹:

First: The increase of regular and discontinuance of special trains.

These high rates were for the sake of running extra regular passenger trains (say two trains in the 24 hours instead of only one as at present). Consequently the service was to be regulated as follows:

- a) The hours of departures and stoppages at intermediate stations should be arranged so as to meet in the best practicable manner the comfort and convenience of the passengers;
- b) For their greater safety, none but drivers of known ability and experience should be entrusted with the trains conveying those passengers.
- c) With reference to article V of the contract², the providing of suitable retiring rooms and conveniences should be completed and their situations should be marked in English (as well as any other language used) in the manner adopted on the European lines of railway.

Second: The railway transit tickets, agreed upon to be issued by the Company's agent, should be available without necessitating the taking out of any tickets from the transit offices.

(cont.)

²Anderson to Walne, 9 Apr. 1859 encl. in Howell to Malmesbury, 29 Apr. 1859 in F.O. 78/1472.

¹Anderson to Nubar, 5 Feb. 1859 encl. in Howell to Malmesbury, 29 Apr. 1859 in F.O. 78/1472.

²This article provided that "proper refreshment stations to be (cont.)

Third: Police regulations. The Egyptian government was bound responsible for adopting every reasonable precaution for the comfort and safety of persons and security of property (art. VI of the contract). The government was also to make proper regulations for the maintenance of order , and employ competent officers and employees to enforce them and give every needful aid and information to the passengers. But Anderson demanded some more efficient means to be provided than the ones which existed.

But a few months after the conclusion of the contract, the directors of the P. & O. began to complain of much procrastination on the part of the Transit Administration in carrying into effect the arrangements stipulated for, particularly the running of two regular passenger trains daily and the abandonment of the frequent and extra despatch of special trains. Therefore, the directors of the Company decided to send a representative, James Davidson, to Egypt to press upon the Viceroy a more prompt fulfilment of the contract. They also asked for the support of the British government "to keep the Railway in a safe and efficient state both as regards the fabric, and the manner of working it".¹

(cont.) erected and maintained by the Egyptian government at Kafr Zayat or Tanta, Cairo, a convenient point on the Desert and at Suez with suitable retiring rooms and conveniences attached to be kept in a state of proper repair and in a clean and healthy condition to which passengers will have free access and where they can obtain wholesome and suitable refreshments at their own expense and at a reasonable rate (to be regulated by published Tariff which will be afterwards attached hereto)."

¹ Howell to Malmesbury, 29 Apr. 1859; Hammond to Howell, 7 May 1859, Howell to Malmesbury, 4 June 1859; Hammond to Howel, 8 June 1859; (cont.)

It had not escaped Sa'id's attention that the railway was of great benefit to the Egyptian revenues. Railways in Egypt were constructed, controlled and owned by the government, i.e. the Viceroy. Had the government not built the railway, it would have never been constructed, as individual capital investment did not exist in Egypt. Being the sole proprietor of the railway, the Viceroy could not resist the temptation of using it to suit himself. Nevertheless, he responded to the demands for reducing the transit fares to encourage the continuous use of the overland route. In 1860, at the request of the British Consul-General, he extended the reductions, recently given to the P. & O., to the British troops in their passage between Alexandria and Suez. Under this new scale, officers were to have first-class at 314 piastres (£3.5.0.) and soldiers second-class carriages at 206 piastres (£2.2.0.). In addition, officers were allowed 80 lbs. weight of luggage and 50 lbs for soldiers.¹ But these fares were reduced once more in 1865 to the effect that officers paid 240 piastres (£2.9.3.) for first-class and soldiers paid 120 piastres (£1.4.8.) for second-class.²

(cont.) Howell to Russell, 6 Sept. 1859 encls. (1-5) in Hammond to Colquhoun (No. 26 Consular) 16 Sept. 1859 in F.O. 141/38.

¹ Colquhoun to Russell, No. 15 of 15 Feb. 1860 in F.O. 78/1522.

² Betts to Tisquet Commr. Sup. Des Forces Navales Francaises stationnées en Egypte, 31 Oct. 1860; Tables of fares for conveyance of Troops through Egypt; Nubar to Colquhoun, 6 Feb. 1865 encls. (1), (2) and (3) in Colquhoun to Russell, No. 12, 6 Feb. 1865 in F.O. 78/1871.

Conclusion

Egypt was the first country in Africa and the Middle East to adopt railway transport. The Alexandria-Cairo-Suez line was one of the first to be constructed outside Europe, just twenty-eight years after the Railway Age had started in England. In this field of technical advance, Egypt was more progressive than the rest of the Ottoman Empire. The first Turkish railway, from Izmir to Aydin, was opened to traffic in 1866.¹ When Sultan Abdülaziz visited Egypt in 1863, it was his first acquaintance with a railway. On this occasion, the British Consul-General remarked "I am not without hopes that travelling over this really good line with every possible comfort, His Majesty's attention may be called to the subject of railroads as an element of civilization in this country".² The railway was indeed commented upon by Gardey, who accompanied the Sultan on this visit. He wrote:

"Puis, on a causé. Le chemin de fer avait fait impression et l'on s'écriait: Plût à Dieu qu'il y'en eût beaucoup en Turquie! Les grandes quantités de marchandises, venant de la Haute-Egypte, du Soudan ou de l'Inde, transportées par les trains que nous avons rencontrés en route, avaient été remarquées; et l'on trouvait que sous ce rapport, comme sous celui du transport des voyageurs, les voies ferrées sont une excellente chose."³

¹B. Lewis, The emergence of modern Turkey, p.180.

²Colquhoun to Russell, No. 55 of 9 April 1863, in F.O. 142/27.

³L. Gardey, Voyage du Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz de Stamboul au Caire, Paris, 1865, pp. 60-61.

One might search for the factors which promoted railways development in Egypt. As explained above, politics were responsible for the inauguration of the first Egyptian railway. Once this railway was a fact, economic needs guided its growth. From 1858, the pace of construction went steadily ahead linking the chief towns of Lower Egypt with Alexandria, Cairo and Suez. When increasing movement of transport began on the main line, it was necessary to make double tracks to lessen the pressure. This work started in 1859 and was done by sections according to local needs and as far as financial restrictions permitted. The line from Kafr al-Zayyāt to Tanṭa was double tracked in 1859; from Qalyūb to Cairo in 1861; from Alexandria to Damanhūr and to Kafr al-Zayyāt in 1864 and 1865. The section from Tanṭa to Qalyūb was doubled in 1866. Construction continued in Lower Egypt; two lines extended from Qalyūb, one to the Barrage (12 kms.) and the other to al-Zaqāzīq via Belbays (62 kms.) These two lines were inaugurated in 1865 and the line from al-Zaqāzīq was extended to Maṣṣara via Abū-Kebīr and al-Sinbillāwīn in 1869. A junction was established from Abū-Kebīr to al-Ṣālihiyya in the same year. Railways were reaching the borders of Egypt and there was a sufficient network for agricultural and commercial purposes.¹

The defects of the old Suez line, inaugurated in 1858, became very evident. There was enormous wear and tear on the rolling stock

¹ See: Ḥassūnā, *op.cit.*, pp. 145-146 and seq.; al-Ṣayyād, *al-Naql fī al-bilād al-ʿArabiyya*, pp. 38-40; Art. in *L'Égypte contemporaine*, XXIV, p. 91; Rafīʿī, *ʿAsr Ismāʿīl*, II, pp. 14-16.

because of numerous curves and steep inclines, as well as the expense of carrying all the water required.¹ Supplying water was a major problem. Stations on the Suez line had water containers, either stone cisterns or iron tanks, but capacity was extremely variable. The water was pumped daily from the Nile at Banhā and distributed to the desert stations by special "water trains".² In spite of this expensive operation, nothing developed along the track. The engineering defects of the line were revealed in May 1860 when the Suez desert was visited by heavy rain storms. The embankments, made almost entirely of loose stones and sand, gave under pressure of water, and over five miles of embankment were swept away, leaving the rails suspended in mid-air.³ It soon became apparent to Ismā'īl, the new Viceroy, that this line was only maintained at great financial loss to the government, and actually absorbed much of the profit from the Alexandria-Cairo section.

These disadvantages of the old desert line led to its abandonment. The main line from Banhā-Zaqāzīq was extended 98 miles along the Fresh Water Canal to Ismā'īliyya, with a branch line from Nafīshā Junction to Suez. This new line from Banhā to Suez was formally opened for traffic on 8 September 1868, and two days later a regular daily service between Alexandria and Suez commenced.⁴

This main line from

¹P.P., 1866, LXVII, pp. 614-615.

²H. Phillips to Stanton, (Private & Conf.), 26 May 1866 in F.O. 141/60.

³Colquhoun to Bulwer, No. 25 of 15 May 1860 in F.O. 142/25.

⁴P.P., 1866, LXVII, pp. 614-615; J. C. McCoan, Egypt as it is, New York, 1877, p. 237.

Cairo to Suez had better gradients and avoided the worst portions of the desert. Although it was longer than the old route, it ran through more productive country, and cost little in making and maintenance.¹ The old Cairo-Suez line became redundant and was finally dismantled in 1879.²

While the railway network was developing in Lower Egypt, introduction into Upper Egypt was not carried out until 1867. While Sa'id was visiting Paris in 1862, Messrs. Murray & Tucker, an engineering company in London, presented him and the French government with a project and map for a proposed railway from Cairo to Qusayr and thence to Ras Benas, by which the overland route to India would be shortened by at least two days. The Viceroy was pleased to approve the project subject to the approbation of the British and French governments. The promoters obtained French approval and therefore expected to receive it from the British also. They proposed the formation of an Anglo-French company for the construction of the line because easy communication through Egypt was important for both countries.³

Lord Russell, British Foreign Secretary, informed them that although he saw no reason for opposing the project, he was not prepared

¹P.P., 1866, LXVII, pp. 614-615; J. C. McCoan, Egypt as it is, New York, 1877, p.237.

²This line was re-constructed and re-opened on 11 October 1935, mainly for purposes of tourism. (Ḥassūnā, op.cit., pp. 297-298)

³Walmisley and others to Russell, 5 September 1862, encl. in Erskine to Saunders, No. 12 of 30 Sept. 1862 in F.O. 141/41.

to instruct the British Ambassador in Constantinople to press either the Porte or the Viceroy in favour of this proposal.¹ Messrs. Murray & Tucker sent a deputation to urge this project upon the Viceroy who was then visiting Constantinople.² However as the Viceroy had left Constantinople and the Porte knew nothing about the project, the British Ambassador asked the British Consul-General in Egypt to make enquiry and pass any information to Lord Russell.

The deputation followed Sa'īd to Egypt. The British Consul-General learned that Sa'īd, when at Paris, was invited by M.de Thouvenel, French Foreign Minister, to consider this enterprise favourably. He thought that sa'īd might not be unwilling to concur in a useful project for internal communications. Nevertheless, he scarcely anticipated that Sa'īd would be disposed to listen to any proposal which would involve a guarantee from the Egyptian treasury. The returns expected from this proposed line were not obvious, and because they must depend mainly on attracting transit traffic going by way of Suez, the Egyptian government would hardly favour this project.³ Nothing was achieved during the life time of Sa'īd.

The British Consul-General mentioned the project to Ismā'īl, who replied that he intended continuing the railway up the Nile at least as far as Qina, and this would be undertaken by his government

¹F.O. to Walmisley, 17 Sept. 1862 in F.O. 78/1675.

²Walmisley to Hammond, 3 Oct. 1862 in F.O. 78/1675.

³Saunders to Russell, No. 93 of 17 Oct. 1862 in F.O. 78/1675.

as soon as finance allowed. The Viceroy was unable to give an opinion about the continuation of the line from Qina to Ras Benas. However his private secretary said that "there were no inducements for the Government to lay out three millions sterling on a line which had no traffic to look to but that of India and China".¹

By June 1863, the British government thought it desirable for the sake of their communications with India that this line should be constructed. But "the question of a guarantee, the facilities afforded by the country for making the line, the expense per mile, the natural disadvantages of the Port to which the Railway should be carried as its terminus, all these are matters which must be discussed between the Vice Roy and the parties who undertake the enterprise".² Isma'il replied that he had already made arrangements for the first portion of the Upper Egypt railway, which he hoped to be able to make at a cost far below that which Messrs. Murray & Tucker had offered. He seemed resolved that whatever was done should be done by himself.³

Isma'il fulfilled his intention about Upper Egypt. This region did not require a huge network of railways as did Lower Egypt because the populated areas south of Cairo were in a narrow valley and mostly

¹Colquhoun to Russell, No. 44 of 23 Mar. 1863 in F.O. 78/1754.

²Bulwer to Colquhoun, No. 6 of 14 July 1863, encl. in Russell to Bulwer, No. 289 of 26 June 1863 in F.O. 141/41.

³Colquhoun to Russell, Nos. 122 and 137 of 15 Aug. and 10 Sept. 1863 in F.O. 78/1755.

on the west bank of the Nile. Therefore one main line from the north to the south, with some branches, could easily serve Upper Egypt. The people of Upper Egypt themselves began to feel the need for a railway, and were prepared to welcome it. During his tour in Upper Egypt in September 1863 Ismā'īl received a petition bearing thousands of seals at Banī-Suwayf which earnestly implored him to proceed immediately "to confer on Upper Egypt the boon, of which the natives below Cairo had, for so many years, been in the possession, namely, a railway; the petitioners say that, this year, they had been so much harassed by clearing the canals, that they were unable to give more labour to the public weal, but, that next year, they would most carefully unite in masses to complete the earthwork on such part of the railway as may be decided on."¹ Ismā'īl, too, had a personal interest in developing this line up the Nile because it would open up his large sugar factories and cotton fields.

Work began in 1867, and in 1874 the line reached Asyūṭ, the most important town in Upper Egypt 368 kms. south of Cairo, but work halted for some years during the period of financial crisis. In 1893 work was resumed and the line was gradually extended to Suhāg, Girgā and then to Qina, passing by Nag'-Hammādi where the line was transferred from the western to the eastern bank of the Nile. The line from Qina to

¹ Colquhoun to Russell, No. 137 of 10 Sept. 1863 in F.O. 78/1755.

to Aswan was opened in 1898 and reached al-Shallāl in 1900. One of Ismā'īl's motives for constructing this railway was to connect Egypt with the Sudan, to assist administrative centralisation. The idea was not new. When Sa'īd visited the Sudan in 1857, he considered linking the four administrative provinces of the Sudan more closely to Egypt by camel post. A railway from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum was discussed, but this scheme was abandoned. In 1873, under Ismā'īl, work started on the section from Wadi Halfa to Metemma but it was not finished. Apart from an abortive attempt to construct a line from Suakin to Berber during the Mahdia, there was no further railway-building in the Sudan until Kitchener's campaign in Dongola during 1896, when a railway was constructed for the Reconquest of the Sudan.¹

Trade in Upper Egypt greatly benefited from the extension of the railway south of Cairo. The tourist trade did not develop until after World War I, so this profitable business does not fall within the period under consideration. Nevertheless the reign of Ismā'īl was a new phase in the history of Egyptian railways. He attempted to reform the system. This movement of reorganisation increased particularly after his numerous visits to Europe where he enquired into the systems and regulations of European railways. A time table of arrivals and departures of trains was arranged. A number of new rolling stock was purchased and a register was established for recording the date

¹P. M. Holt, A Modern history of the Sudan, pp. 59, 71, 120;
R. L. Hill, Sudan transport, pp. 23-27; Ḥassūna, op.cit., pp. 159, 273-281.

and place of purchase and the date of repair. Most of the engines were bought from Britain. Between 1852 and 1858, 27 engines were acquired, all from British makers. Of the 79 engines bought between 1859 and 1864 56 were British made and 23 came from France. From 1865 to 1869 all the 116 engines ordered came from British makers. There is no record of new engines being ordered between 1869 and 1887 and for this there are two probable reasons. Traffic from Alexandria to Suez possibly decreased because of the increasing use of the Suez Canal, and, Egypt was going through a period of severe financial crisis. At such times purchases of engines were undesirable. Ismā'īl insisted on the strictest economy when buying new equipment necessary for replacement.¹ For example, in 1854 there were 111 wagons and these had only been increased by 8 by 1874.

Illumination on the railway, at this early stage, was very simple as electricity was not used until 1892. Lighting on passenger trains was confined to oil lamps though candles were used in the rulers's coaches. Petroleum lamps were used on the stations, either fixed on posts or attached to the ceiling. The rules and regulations of the railway were published in Arabic, sometimes being translated from English. English was almost the official language of the railways and was used for correspondence, memoranda, reports, and all internal correspondence between the railway departments and the administration

¹P.P., Egypt, Cd. 1010, pp. 53-54; Ḥassūnā, op.cit., pp. 190-191.

or between the latter and the government branches in the different ministries. In the first phase of the railway, most of the employees in the technical and administrative posts were British. In later periods, which are beyond the scope of this research, the organisation and administration of Egyptian railway underwent a series of serious changes in accordance with the subsequent financial difficulties of Egypt. Arabic only became the common language of correspondence in 1933 when Maḥmūd Shākīr Pasha was appointed as mudīr.

Without the extention of a network of railways further economic development of Egypt would not have been possible. Railways established, in the reign of Isma'īl, and up to the end of September 1873, stretched 1,110 miles at a total cost of £12,334,320. It is a common dictum of economic historians that the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) diverted from the Egyptian railways the rapidly growing and profitable transit traffic in goods and passengers from East to West. It was not because of this, as Crouchley states, that the railway from Cairo to Suez went entirely out of use and was dismantled.¹ For some time there remained the transport of mails which constituted a source of revenue. Mail contracts with the P. & O. in force in 1870 provided for the use of the Egyptian railway. When the company's mail steamers began using the canal, they still landed the mails at Alexandria or at Suez and continued through the canal with their other cargoes. However, this

¹cf. Crouchley, op.cit., p.140.

arrangement was no longer enforced in 1874.¹ In 1868, the British Secretary for War believed that the existing system of transit of British troops through Egypt by railway was preferable to that by the Suez Canal.² In 1871, the India Office experimented with the use of the Suez Canal for the conveyance of troops during the trooping season 1871/72.³ Therefore, the effects of the canal were not immediately damaging, but the overland route gradually ceased to serve its original purpose.

¹Hoskins, British Routes, p.417.

²Stanton to Stanley, No. 97 of 19 August 1868 in F.O. 78/2039.

³Stanton to Granville, No. 30 of 23 March 1871 in F.O. 78/2186;
Stanton to Granville, No.15 of 6 March 1872 in F.O. 78/2229.

Appendix I

Memorandum of Galloway's conditions for constructing the Suez railroad at his own cost.

"Sur la cession d'un firman à être accordé à l'Ingenieur J. A. Galloway ses héritiers ou mandataires a fin de construire et exploiter un chemin de fer entre le Caire et Suez aux conditions ci après mentionnées:-

1. D'accorder au susnommé Sieur J. A. Galloway le terrain nécessaire pour la construction du susdit chemin de fer...
2. Qu'aucun autre firman ne sera donné à d'autre individu si le travail est commencé dans l'espace de douze mois de la présente date...
3. Le S^r J. A. Galloway s'engage de fournir l'argent nécessaire pour la construction et mise en activité du susdit chemin de fer...
4. Par ce firman le Gouvernement s'engage de vendre à J. A. Galloway tous les matériaux / au prix du Gouvernement / dont il pourra avoir besoin ainsi que de lui accorder le nombre suffisant d'ouvriers et travailleurs auxquels il payera leur travail journalier...
5. En vertu dudit firman le Gouvernement vendra au S^r J. A. Galloway tous les articles qui se trouvent ici et seront en état à être employés pour ses travaux aux prix qu'ils auront couté au Gouvernement et dont le montant sera payé par J. A. Galloway.
6. Le firman accordera protection entière tant à J. A. Galloway qu'à ses employés dans l'exécution de ses travaux...
7. J. A. Galloway s'engage de donner passage aux officiers, troupes [sic]

employés, provisions du Gouvernement au même prix que ce transport leur coûte actuellement ou contre le paiement des fraix occasionés pour ces voyages...

8. Le Gouvernement aura sa part dans les profits annuels après une déduction de huit pour cent, et un montant suffisant pour servir de fond pour le conservation en bon état de la Route, le surplus à être divisé par moitié égale, laquelle moitié sera payée chaque demi année, ou sans cela une rente fixée par an soit environs £10,000...
9. Le Gouvernement pourra s'il le désire acheter le chemin de fer lorsqu'il sera achevé au prix coûtant en y joignant un surplus de 25^o/o pour S^r J. A. Galloway.
10. Un quart du montant que le Gouvernement Britannique paye à S.A. pour le passage des Malles par l'Égypte sera payé à J. A. Galloway.
11. On admettra libre de Droit de Douane les Matériaux et Charbon nécessaires à l'usage de chemin de fer...
12. En cas de quelque différend sur l'interprétation dudit firman entre le Gouvernement et J. A. Galloway on soumettra la question en discussion au Consul Général Anglais, et celui de France, et si ces deux personnes ne puissent pas tomber d'accord ils devront nommer une troisième personne à choisir parmi les Negotiants Anglais resident en cette ville..

L'utilité pour l'Égypte sera:

1. L'usage de la route.

2. L'achat des Matériaux existant ici, tant Machinerie que Rails &c. &c.
3. La moitié des bénéfices après la déduction de certaines dépenses, ou une rente annuelle.
4. L'augmentation d'argent dépensée en Égypte par un plus grand nombre de passagers.
5. Une augmentation de Droit de Transit sur le trafic commercial lequel naturellement prendra un grand développement.
6. La faculté de faire l'achat du chemin de fer si le Gouvernement le désire.
7. Une dépense faite en Égypte de £200,000.¹

¹Encl. (1) in Barnett, No. 17 of 7 May 1845 in F.O. 78/623.

Appendix II

Letter from Thomas Waghorn to Muhammad 'Alī urging him to construct the Cairo-Suez railway.

Cairo, Oct. 18, 1844

To His Highness the Pasha of Egypt

"You asked me for a letter last evening. This is the letter promised to Your Highness in my interview with you.

The time is now come; the British Government require the shortest route to the East. This is only to be got at through your country, Egypt being the centre and high road between China to the East, and America to the West. Eleven years ago, your Highness projected a railroad over the Desert of Suez - the time has now arrived to execute it.

Let no political object stop its execution; do it, through the highest auspices, and you will make Egypt the emporium, as it was of old.

This I write confidently - Messrs. Rothschilds, the most extensive financiers of Europe, can find you the money either in London, Paris or Vienna. Should you doubt it, I have been assured by them it can be done. The railroad through Egypt must come. I beg your Highness to reflect on this, in order to hand your name to posterity as a greater man, beyond any sovereign, in any European country.

Political, commercial, and domestic relations between the East and the West call upon you to do this work. Egypt has already become the high road for Governors-General, officials, and their dependents, also of letters, valuable merchandise, &c . between Europe and the East and the West.

Let a railroad be consolidated, by acquiring information from the first-rate engineers of Europe - Messrs. Stephenson or Brunell [sic]/. Your country is destined to rise. The views of Russia, Austria, Prussia, England, America, and all other nations, except France, now wish for this railroad. Because France knows, if it be done, that Trieste will become what Marseilles now is. Look to the map of Europe for the truth of these observations, and if your Highness will place yourself or me in communication with both the financiers and engineers, you will have ample proof it will pay your country, and be the means of more wealth and commerce than now is foreseen.

The diplomatists would keep your Highness from its execution. Reasons call on you to do this work. By it you will attract the whole world to this country; destined, I believe to rise among nations.

Whether your Highness makes a railroad between Cairo and Suez, or not, it will come to pass by time as certain as the sun rises.

Seize the opportunity at once, and effect it. In your dynasty of Egypt it will come, as certain, as these lines are written.

Money, if wanting, is to be had, and the execution of a railroad from Cairo to Suez will send your name to posterity greater than any act that I can remember in modern history.

I seek no emolument, no honour, no credit.

Your Highness stands forward among rulers for what you have done. Complete this railroad from Cairo to Suez, and Egypt is sure to become greater; and who can predict the benefits it may not produce?

I am only a humble man is telling you these ideas; I feel that every word here expressed comes from my heart, as I hope it may carry conviction to your own feelings.

Circumstances call on you to make the railroad.

With humble respect,

Your Highness's humble servant,

THOMAS WAGHORN."¹

¹The Times, 5 Nov. 1844.

Appendix III

Translation of a La'ihah published in Arabic on 18 August 1859 setting out the work, promotion and salaries of Egyptians employed on the Suez railway.

Section I: The craftsmen found in the large and intermediate stations shall consist of two grades and their salaries be fixed as follows:

Piastres

500	Monthly salary for the first grade.
450	" " " " second grade.

These construction craftsmen shall be selected from the maintenance workers of the first grade, from senior government workmen, being literate, as far as possible.

Section II: The maintenance workers, assigned to the repair and maintenance of the railway between the intermediate stations, and in charge of the upkeep and cleaning of these railways, shall consist of three grades, and their salaries be fixed as follows:

Pes

360	Monthly allowance for the fourth part of the maintenance workers considered first grade.
300	Monthly allowance for the fourth part of the maintenance workers considered second grade.
240	Monthly allowance for the fourth part of the maintenance workers considered third grade.

Those workmen shall be selected from the first grade apprentices

with distinction and none of them shall proceed to a higher grade before serving one full year in his grade; [i.e. anyone in the third grade may not be transferred to the second before serving one full year at least, and also one in the second grade shall not be promoted to the first grade before serving one full year.]

Whereas the number of maintenance workers must be equal to the number of intermediate stations, the number of those promoted to the first grade shall not exceed one-fourth of the total, and the same applies to those promoted to the second grade.

Section III: Construction assistant apprentices shall consist of apprentices whose grades, and salaries be fixed as follows:

Pes	
200	Monthly salary for one-fourth of the apprentices considered first grade.
180	Monthly salary for one-fourth of the apprentices considered second grade.
150	Monthly salary for one-half of the apprentices left considered third grade.

Those workmen shall be selected, as far as possible, from the youths of the age of twenty, from craftsmen [arbāb al-sinā'a] such as carpentry, iron-working and filing. Since the apprentices of the Suez railway were neither educated nor trained for the works, and the necessary workmen for railways construction shall be chosen from those being trained and educated, they shall be 24, six of them for the first grade, six for the second and twelve for the third.

Section IV: The group of shunters, al-ṭablajīyya [who operated the turn-tables], maintenance workers, pumpers and the assistants of the maintenance workers shall consist of three grades, and the salaries be fixed as follows:

Pes

120	Salary of those of the first grade.				
100	"	"	"	"	second grade.
90	"	"	"	"	third grade.

Those persons chosen from the old veterans for employment on the Suez railway shall be promoted to the first and second grades if they are trained in shunting, rolling the ṭabla [turn-table], digging and assisting the maintenance workers on condition that those selected for the two grades shall not exceed half the number of the workmen.¹

¹Sāmī, III, Pt. I, pp. 335-336.

Appendix IV

A return of the receipts of the Transit Administration during the Coptic month of Baramhat (10 March to 9 April 1856)¹:

Local Traffic

Passenger fares	E.P.	527,307	20
Freight of merchandize		462,504	5
D ^o on Baggage		<u>63,674</u>	<u>30</u>
		1,053,486	15

Peninsular & Oriental Company's Service

Passenger fares		359,043	30
Freight of merchandize		169,282	14
D ^o on Specie		412,513	38
D ^o on Baggage		<u>9,659</u>	<u>32¹/₂</u>
		950,499	34 ¹ / ₂

Govt. passengers by orders

<u>207,774</u>	<u>39</u>
2,211,731	8 ¹ / ₂

Value of old materials returned to store

<u>42,292</u>	<u>35</u>
2,254,024	31 ¹ / ₂

Less amount of Salaries and other expenses

<u>729,060</u>	<u>-</u>
1,524,964	31 ¹ / ₂

Egyptian
Piastres

¹ Bruce to Clarendon, No. 59 of 13 Dec. 1856 in F.O. 78/1222.

Appendix V

The following table is to illustrate the increase of the P. & O. passengers from 1852 to 1857¹:

PASSENGERS		CARGO	
Year	Number	Year	Tons
1852	2,257	1852	957
1853	2,471	1853	1,285
1854	3,919	1854	1,774
1855	4,324	1855	1,420
1856	4,454	1856	2,844
1857	8,293	1857	3,694
Total	<u>25,723</u>	Total	<u>11,974</u>

The number of passengers conveyed through Egypt from July 1857 to June 1858 were:

	PASSENGERS	MONEY
	9,037	£68,833
From July 1858 to December 1858:		
July	453	3,870
Aug.	365	3,130
Sept.	534	4,710
Oct.	698	6,108
Nov.	637	5,515
Dec.	679	5,731
Total	<u>3,366</u>	<u>£29,064</u>

¹ This table is taken from the P. & O. archives deposited in the Company's Public Relations Office.

Appendix VI

The two following tables show the amount of transit duties paid only by the P. & O. to the Egyptian government between 1852 and 1857¹:

TRANSIT DUES	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	Total
Passenger transit for year	23,994	23,236	34,670	38,137	39,285	63,458	222,780
Tonnage rate £8 per ton	7,656	10,261	14,200	11,223	22,405	28,706	94,451
1 ¹ / ₄ per cent. on value cargo	5,566	7,541	7,088	3,751	8,028	14,248	46,222
3/8 ditto on value Specie	8,735	20,893	23,910	31,522	54,508	79,390	218,958
Transit Coy.'s Employees	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,000	2,000	3,000	16,000
	48,951	64,931	82,868	86,633	126,226	188,802	598,411

VALUE

	Cargo	Specie	Total
For the year 1852	1,112,256	2,329,512	3,441,768
" " " 1853	1,508,222	5,571,664	7,079,886
" " " 1854	1,739,564	6,377,208	8,116,772
" " " 1855	1,523,925	8,416,311	9,940,236
" " " 1856	3,214,049	14,536,324	17,750,373
" " " 1857	5,067,712	21,071,130	26,138,842
	14,165,728	58,362,149	72,467,877

¹Encl. (2) in Malmesbury to Green, No. 62, 15 Dec. 1858 in F.O. 141/35.

Appendix VIIBritish and French Consuls-General in Egypt (1833-1858)1. Great Britain:

Campbell, Col. Patrick	1833-1839	Agent & Consul-General
Hodges, Col. George Lloyd	1839-1841	" "
Barnett, Col. Charles John	1841-1846	" "
Murray, Charles Augustus	1846-1853	" "
Bruce, Frederick William	1853-1858	" "
Green, John	1853-1859	Appointed Consul at Alexandria on 11 Feb. 1853; was acting Agent and Consul-General from 22 June to 19 Dec. 1853; from 14 July to 20 Nov. 1855; and from 7 May 1857 till 13 Apr. 1859.
Colquhoun, Robert Gilmour	1858-1865	Agent and Consul-General
Saunders, Sidney Smith	1859-1863	Appointed Consul at Alexandria, 20 May 1859; was acting Agent and Consul-General from 12 Aug. to 17 Sept. 1861; and from 11 June 1862 to 12 Jan. 1863.
Walne, Alfred Septimus	1837-1861	Appointed vice-Consul at Cairo, 31 Aug. 1837, and Consul 16 Aug. 1841. Was Her Majesty's Com- missioner at Jeddah from 2 Dec. 1858 to 6 Sept. 1860. Was transferred

Walne (cont.)

to Alexandria, 6 Feb.
1859, which appointment
was cancelled 2 May 1859.
Was acting Agent & Consul-
General at Cairo from 3
Apr. to 13 Aug. 1859.
Resigned 15 Oct. 1861.

2. France:

Mimaut, Jean François	1829-1837	Appointed Consul at Alex- andria 5 Feb. 1829, then Consul-General 7 Oct. 1830.
Cochelet, Andrien Louis	1837-1843	Consul-General
Gauttier d'Arc	1841-1843	" "
La Valette, Charles Jean Marie Félix, Marquis de	1843-1845	" "
Benedetti, Vincent	1840-1849	Appointed Consul at Alex- andria in 1845; acted several times as Consul- General.
Barrot, Adolphe	1845-1849	Consul-General
Le Moyne	1850-1852	" "
Sabatier, Raymond Gabriel Baptiste	1852-1859	" "
Delaporte	1850-1861	Consul at Cairo

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Leiden, 1954- .

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1956-1960, Cambridge, 1958, 1962.

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New York, 1929.

II. Unpublished Archival Sources

A. British

1. Government archives (P.R.O., London)

a) Foreign Office Papers:

F.O. 78 (Turkey: Egypt)	General Correspondence
F.O.141 (Egypt)	Consular Archives
F.O.142 (Egypt)	Letter Books
F.O.146 (France)	Embassy Archives: Correspondence
F.O.195 (Turkey)	Embassy Archives: Correspondence

Supplement to general correspondence:

F.O. 97/408 (1841-1848)	Transit through Egypt, Navigation of the Nile
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Confidential Print:

F.O.407/3 (1846-1848)	Transit through Egypt. Correspondence
F.O.424/7A (1850-1852)	Relations between the Porte and the Pasha of Egypt

This was printed in 1852 for the use of the Foreign Office. The volume contains documents relevant to the railway and the Tanẓīmāt questions. These documents have been checked against their originals in F.O.78 and copies of correspondence in F.O. 141 and 195. When material is used from this volume, the original serial number of each despatch has been given as well as the accession number in this volume, which is inserted between two square brackets.

The following volumes on the Suez Canal were also used:

F.O. 78/1156 (1854-1855)	
F.O. 78/1340 (1856-1857)	
F.O. 78/1421 (1858)	
F.O. 78/1489 (1859)	
F.O. 97/411 (1843-1851)	
F.O.198/27 (1859-1865)	Confidential

b) Treasury Minutes, Public Record Office:

T. 29/363	(Minute Book. 1st Div.)
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2. The India Office Records: Factory Records (India Office Library, London):

(Egypt and the Red Sea): Letters to the East India Company from the agent in Egypt:

vol. 10 (1834-38)

vol. 15 (1849-53)

3. The Archives of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, at the company's Public Relations Office (London) have not been fully exploited because they are not at present accessible. Most of the correspondence can however be found in the Foreign Office papers. There is some useful information on the transit through Egypt in a collection of half yearly reports of the directors of the P. & O. printed and compiled under Annual Reports. P. & O. S. N. Co., (1840-1866), vol. I [referred to in the footnotes as Annual Reports of the P. & O.]. Some of the archival material consulted is used in Appendix V .

4. Private Papers:

- a) Aberdeen papers Add. MS.43186 (British Museum)
- b) Papers of Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, F.O. 352 (Public Record Office).
- c) The Hekekyan papers (British Museum). Yusuf Hekekyan was an Armenian, who was maintained by Muḥammad 'Alī while studying engineering in England and was employed later in the service of the Egyptian government as director of the School of Engineering. His papers are a collection

of 24 vols. consisting of journals, correspondence etc., and cover the period from 1840-74. (For a critical study of these papers, see below: Ahmed Abdel-Rahim Mustafa). Relevant material is in the following volumes:

vol. II	Add.MS.37449
vol. III	Add.MS.37450
vol. V	Add.MS.37452
vol. VI	Add.MS.37453
vol. VII	Add.MS.37454
vol. XV	Add.MS.37462

d) Palmerston papers (Broadlands Papers, National Register of Archives, London).

e) Peel papers (British Museum). Add.MS.40566 contains a confidential minute on the "Transit of English and India Mails, Passengers, and Merchandise through Egypt", fols. 155-1776. Material on the transit through Egypt is to be found here and there in the following Add.MSS. 40503, 40523, 40526, 40573 and 40574.

B. French

Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris:

1. Egypte: Correspondance Politique des Consuls:

Alexandrie et le Caire: Tomes 4 (1834) to 28 (1858 Mai - 1859 Déc.)

2. Turquie: Correspondance Politique:

Tomes 303 (1850 Jan.-Juin)

304 (1850 Juin-Déc.)

Tomes 305 (1851 Jan.-Juin)

306 (1851 Juin-Sept.)

307 (1851 Oct.-1852 Fev.)

3. Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale:

Alexandrie:

Tomes 25 (1832-1834) to 35 (1856-1859)

Le Caire:

Tomes 27 (1833-1842)

28 (1843-1849)

29 (1850-1857)

30 (1858-1866)

III. Published Sources

A. Published Documents:

1. Parliamentary Papers:

Most of the following reports were based on minutes of evidence given before Parliamentary Select Committees, appointed to investigate Steam Communication with India. They are referred to under their respective years followed by the report and volume numbers.

1831-32, (735.-II) X, Pt. I and II: Minutes of evidence... on the affairs of the East India Company.

1834, (478) XIV: Report... on Steam Communication with India.

1837, (539) VI: Report. on Steam Communication with India.

- 1840, (277) XXI: Report on Egypt and Candia, addressed by John Bowring to ... Palmerston and presented to both Houses of Parliament. (It is the published text of the MS. in F.O. 78/381.)
- 1851, (372) XXI: First report... on Steam Communication with India, China, Australia and New Zealand.
- 1851, (605) XXI: Second report... on Steam Communication with India... etc.
- 1857-58, (382) X: Report... as to the lines of Communication ... during the pending Revolt in India [the Indian Mutiny].
- 1860, (396) LXII: Return of the sums paid in each year since 1850 for the Transit of Mails across the Isthmus of Suez.

2. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: 3rd Series

Vols. LXVIII (1843)

CXX (1852)

CXLVI (1857)

CXLVII (1857)

3. British and Foreign State Papers:

- vol. 57, pp. 773-780 Agreement between the Honourable East India Company and the Egyptian Govt., for the transmission of Her Britannic Majesty's Mails to and from the East Indies, through Egypt (Cairo 30 Mar. 1852).
- vol. 52, pp. 897-899 Agreement between the British Government and the Viceroy of Egypt, relative to the Transmission of British Mails through Egypt (Alex. 16 June 1858).

4. Other Published Documents:

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1. Asiatic Journal, London
 vols. 1-28 (1816-1829)
 1-40 New Series (1830-43)
 1- 4 3rd Series (1843-45)
2. The Builder, London.
3. Le Constitutionnel, Paris.
4. Le Journal des Débats, Paris.
5. The Illustrated London News, London.
6. The Illustrated Times, London.
7. The North British Review, Edinburgh.

8. The Times, London. The most important of all. The Times maintained an agent in Alexandria, whose principal duty was to transmit the Indian Mails, but who finally gained the status of a correspondent. His reports were lively eye-witness accounts which provide the best journalistic record of Egypt of the period.
9. Westminster Review, London.

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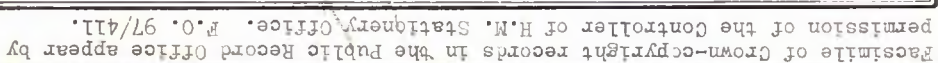
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