

water) there are to be a site for the deposit of coal and a coaling stage; and there is a project for constructing (at R), at the extremity of the eastern arm, a graving-dock, 120 metres long; but this has not yet been decided upon.

The littoral current runs south at this part of the coast, at the rate of, say, quarter knot per hour varying, of course, according to wind and tide. The closing of the Bocca di Puglia and the mole on the south-east of the Forte di Mare, are important, as well for the protection of the excellent anchorage which exists south of that fort, as for the prevention of the deposit brought into the harbour by this littoral current. But all that is required in order that mail steamers may conveniently ply to the port is to push forward the excavations by dredging, so as to enable those steamers, of whatever Company, to run into a convenient landing stage to be constructed inside the channel leading to the inner arms. The Italian Government express their readiness, if the British Government should determine to forward their mails by the Brindisi route, to provide such accommodation, if necessary, by the Spring of 1867; either at No. which they are preparing for the railway goods station, or at some other point in the internal port to which they would construct a branch railway, so as, in any case, to provide a means of transferring the mails without delay from the railway to the steamer, and *vice versa*.

Under all the circumstances of the case, I am of opinion that the harbour of Brindisi will be better adapted for a mail port than any other harbour in the south of Italy, and there appears to me to be no reason why good temporary accommodation should not be afforded by next Spring, as proposed, pending the completion of the permanent works above described. The Italian Government wished, however, that the alternative of the two places of landing should, while I was in Italy, be left undecided. The hotel accommodation of Brindisi is at present very limited and of an inferior description; but, from what I have heard from various quarters, I can have little doubt that better hotels will readily be supplied, by private or joint stock enterprise, as soon as the question of route is settled, as would no doubt be the case in regard to any part that might be selected.

I shall next proceed to refer to the land route by which the port of Brindisi may be approached.

The mail trains would of course run to Paris, and as far as Macon, over the same railways, as at present, but would diverge at Macon from the Marseilles line and take the line to Amberien, Culoz, Chambéry and St. Michel; the distance from Macon to St. Michel being 146 miles. In addition to owning the line to Culoz, the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Company have lately acquired also that to St. Michel.

There is a double line of way as far as Culoz, but a single line, doubled at the station, from that place to St. Michel. The gradients are steep and the curves sharp in places, especially between Amberien and Culoz. The steepest gradient near St. Michel is one in forty-three, and the sharpest curve between Culoz and St. Michel has a radius of 400 metres. The permanent way is laid with rails of different sections, some with, some without, chairs, and weighing from thirty-four to thirty-six kilogrammes per metre. The chairs or rails are secured by trenails, spikes, or dog spikes, to transverse sleepers. The joints of the rails are all fished between Culoz and St. Michel's, but the fishing has not yet been completed from Macon to Culoz. There are nine single line tunnels, making a total of 3151 metres, between Culoz and St. Michel. There is no night service as yet on this line, so as to provide for a train leaving Paris in the morning for Italy, the only through train now leaving Paris at 8.40 p.m.

The journey from Macon to St. Michel is now performed by the "direct" trains in six hours and five minutes. This time might be shortened by one hour for a mail train, and the construction of a new curve at Amberien would prevent the necessity which at present exists for running into that station and out again. But I shall, in my calculations of time, continue to allow six hours five minutes for this journey.

The service by horses and mules from St. Michel over the Mont Cenis to Susa can be performed, during the summer season, with as much regularity as any other part of the route, but it is uncertain during the winter. The past winter was a mild one, and the service was performed with comparatively little interruption; but in looking through the returns with which the Italian Government have been so good as to furnish me, of the running of the Courier to Susa for the last six winters, I find that in January 1863 the delays were both frequent and serious, in consequence of storms on the Mont Cenis.

The courier that left St. Michel on the 20th of that month did not reach Susa until the 22nd., as much as forty-eight hours twenty-five minutes having been occupied in the passage. On the 11th of March of the same year, fourteen hours thirty minutes are recorded; but the courier made the journey either on sledges or by diligence during the other five winters, in times varying from seven hours thirty minutes as a minimum, to twelve hours and thirty-five minutes as a maximum. I have been informed that the Italian Government would willingly undertake the conveyance of twenty passengers and their luggage, besides mails up to ten or twelve tons in weight, in eight hours between St. Michel and Susa, besides delays at these places of altogether two hours and twenty minutes, made up of one hour and forty minutes at one end, and forty minutes at the other end.

With regard to the summit railway over the Mont Cenis from St. Michel to Susa, I find that since my report of the 12th June of last year, the trials on the experimental portion of line have been completed to the satisfaction of the French and Italian Governments, and that concessions were granted for the construction of the railway (subject to the approval of the detailed plans) by the French Government on the 4th November, and by the Italian Government on the 12th December. That year was thus unfortunately lost for the works; and, indeed, the Spring of 1866 has been principally occupied in preliminary arrangements, and in preparing plans, sections, and cross-sections, on a scale of one in 500 for the two Governments. These plans had been authorized for fifty kilometres, while for the remaining twenty-seven kilometres they had been prepared and were awaiting authorization when I left St. Michel.

I observed in returning from Italy that tunnels and embankments for the rectification of the sharpest curves had been commenced, and were in active progress in six places on the Italian side of the mountain, and I learnt that two others were to be immediately commenced, the whole to be completed in, say, three months. The deviation along Napoleon's Road on that side, to avoid the well-known "escalier," was also to be commenced at once, and the masonry-covered ways, as a protection