

SIR CHARLES NAPIER: THE FIRST ADMINISTRATOR OF SINDH

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Abstract

Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sindh was also the first governor of Sindh. He worked hard for the development of Sindh, especially for the uplift of the standard of Karachi. As a result a small fisher village was transformed into a big industrial and commercial city. This paper focuses on the works of Sir Charles Napier that were either completed or planned for the development of Sindh after the annexation inspite of the problems he faced from the British government and their political agents. A laudable volume has been written on the military achievements of Sir Charles Napier but this paper is an attempt to highlight the administrative reforms implemented by Sir Charles Napier which laid the foundations of the future administrative structure of Sindh.

Key Words: *Napier Mole, Agricultural School, Light House, Floating Mines*

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Introduction

Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sind was born in Whitehall on 10 August 1782¹. In 1784 at very young age of 12 years, he started his career as an ensign in 23rd Regiment. During 1784 to 1843 he fought different wars and won awards. For example in the Peninsular war, he got an Army gold medal known as the Peninsular Gold Medal, with a gold cross. He also received a gold medal for his services at Coruna, and after Busaco war he received a silver medal and a Military General Service medal.² He was the author of different books included, "Defects, civil and military, of the Indian government"³. He also edited a book, "*Lights and Shadows of Military Life*, from the French of Count Alfred de Vigny and Elzèar Blase.

In 1839 Napier was appointed as the commander of troops by Lord Hill in Northern Districts, England and in 1841, as an Indian command officer at Poona. In 1842 Lord Ellenborough, Governor-General of India sent Napier to control the military situation of Afghanistan with the help of Amirs of Sind. In 1843 he occupied Sind which then was annexed to Bombay Presidency and he became first governor of Sind. After the annexation on 20 May 1843, Napier issued the proclamation, which said:

You Baloch Sardars are required to present yourselves before the Governor, and make your Salams to him, and you're joggles and other property will be confirmed to you by the British government, and no diminution will take place in your rank, etc. Every Jagirdar, numbering nearly 2,000 making his Salam was given a Salam Sanad or Salam Parwana signed by Napier and bearing his seal, saying that the Jagirdars making his submission was to receive back the entire Jagirs held by him in undisputed possession on 17 February 1843 the date of the battle of Miani. The ex ruler was also granted a cash pension. They were in return required to help in the collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order. The invitation to Salam proclaimed, 'let every chief wear his sword and shield as a mark of his readiness to serve the queen. No Jagirdar is to be absent from this great meeting, or he will lose his Jagir'. Because of the strategic importance of Sindh and total lack of roads and other infrastructure, the British required the active assistance of the local Sindhi elite, the tribal Sardars, jagirdars, waders and Pirs to control and maintain law and order in the countryside.⁴

As a result on 24 May 1844, on the occasion of Queen's birthday he held a Durbar at "Hyderabad, and summoned all the Sindian Baluchi chiefs to do homage. Some three thousand chiefs, with twenty thousand men, attended, and expressed their contentment with the new order of things."⁵ After this it became a rule to hold Durbars from time to time where zamindars and the Mirs of Sind used to come and pay their respect to him.

¹ Syed Razi Wasti, Biographical dictionary of South Asia (Lahore: Publishers United, 1980), p.379

² <http://www.thornber.net/england/htmlfiles/napier.html> (accessed, May 29, 2010)

³ Wasti, Op.cit., p.379

⁴ Suhail Zaheer Lari, A History of Sindh (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.172

⁵ <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/people/napier.htm> (accessed May 25, 2010)

This system continued till the last commissioner of Sind, “who had set aside Saturday as a calling day, when the respectable citizens of Karachi wrote their names in the visitor’s book at the commissioner’s house and had an interview with commissioner for five or ten minutes, according to the nature of their business and importance”.⁶

Sir Charles Napier was appointed as the first governor [Sind] on a salary of Rs. 7000 per annum⁷, in spite of the disapproval of some government officials. Bombay Government bureaucrats were not pleased with his appointment. In their perspective he was a good soldier and a military officer, but, it is not his duty to govern the new territory. As these government officials were themselves interested in becoming the administrator they raised issues like his treatment of the Amirs and their families and tried to portray these issues as a big political issue. Because of these differences during his four years of administration, the local bureaucrats did not help his government and administration. Due to this lack of cooperation and funding problems for the Bombay government in July 1847 he resigned from the governorship of Sind and left for England where he died in 1853.

In 1849 when political problems set off in Punjab, Directors of the Company decided to change Military command. The Court of Directors requested the Duke of Wellington to recommend the name of Napier as he was an experienced military man, but he refused and suggested someone else. In February during Battle of Chillianwallah (Mandi Bahauddin) the name of Sir Charles Napier was again strongly recommend. Napier, before accepting the offer put conditions of clearing his name as a corrupt administrator and demanded the seat in the supreme council of the Company. His demands were accepted but by the time he reached India where the war was almost over. In 1849 he again resigned due to some political issues with Lord Dalhousie. In 1850 he left India but before his departure in recognition of his services the Sardars of Hyderabad presented him “a sword of honor” and public banquet was given to him in Bombay.

Administrative Reforms of Sir Charles Napier

Sir Charles Napier introduced many administrative reforms in Sindh during his governorship. For the purpose of better administration he first divided Sind in three main districts viz. Karachi, Hyderabad and Shikarpur for collection of revenue and the judiciary work, each in charge of a collector, with deputies. With them “he placed the whole staff of kardars who had been employed by the Mirs. The collector and his deputies were magistrates as well as a collector of revenue, but with the limited powers... Every decision taken by a deputy collector required confirmation by the collector, and the proceedings of all cases were ultimately sent to the Judge Advocate who, with his two deputies at Hyderabad and Shikarpur, acted as a kind of court of revision. In all cases of serious crime a preliminary inquiry was held by the collector, who then submitted the paper to the judge advocate general, who submitted them to the governor, who decided whether to order a trial by a military commission or not. The

⁶Behram Sohrab H.J. Rustomji, Sohrab K.H. Katrak, Karachi during the British era: two histories of a modern city (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.152

⁷A. W. Hughes, comp., Gazetteer of the province of Sind. (2nded.) (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2005), p.49

decision of even the military commissioner was not final, but required the confirmation of the governor.”⁸

Because of presence of the Fort, Napier made Hyderabad the capital city of Sind. He straightaway started his public works for the improvement of the city. He repaired and restored fortress, organized steamer stations, bridges over nullahs, and wall around the Mirpoor, to get secured from a flood, designed military posts for new stations, central mart etc.⁹ But soon, because of hot summer weather he and his soldiers developed disliking for the city and he decided to look for alternatives. Napier sent Captain Richard Burton to explore Karachi and to make a report on the climate and the conditions prevailing there, in order to finalize the decision to shift the capital from Hyderabad to Karachi. Burton reported that “Karachi was a fishing village by the sea and consequently was much cooler than Hyderabad and that there was the advantage of trade with the Persian Gulf through the sea route.”¹⁰ On the basis of this report he made up his mind and shifted the capital from Hyderabad to Karachi

Napier, did not trust, ‘in the red-taped bureaucrats of the civil service’ who used to serve Bombay government. Therefore he arranged his own ‘soldier-civilian’¹¹ servants, who belonged to his army. This decision proved right, as they helped him in the completion of his development works in spite of hindrances created by Bombay bureaucrats.

Revenue Department

Land revenue

When Napier took up the administrative work of Sindh, in the realm of the revenue collection system he attempted to improve the existing system instead of creating a new department. His target was to collect more revenue from Sindh than any other colonial city of the British Government. To achieve this goal, he started his work from land settlement and redistribution, and the improvement of the cultivation of land.

Napier observed that during Talpur period the landlord did not own land. He was a tax farmer on behalf of the ruler who could confiscate land any time in his life and after death and then he could reassign the land to whomsoever he pleased. Consequently the landlords failed to develop into a class with vested interests in the land. Napier believed this to be the reason for the native landlord’s lack of concern for increasing the productivity of the land. Napier thought of creating “a class loyal to them in the image of British landlords, who would have a stake in the land and, who would protect their interest on the western border of their empire which was threatened by invasion from the Russian empire.”¹²

⁸E. H. Aitken, *Gazetteer of the province of Sind* (Karachi: Indus Publication, 1986), pp.140-141

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.140

¹⁰ Rustomji and Katrak, *Op.cit.*, p.141

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Op.cit.*,Lari, p.171

To increase agricultural revenue and to create loyal landlords Napier started *Land resettlement* and *transfer system*. (As the transfer of land which was barred during Talpur period). He had no faith in Amirs and the native people. He therefore invited merchants and traders from other parts of India to come and work in Sind. For the progress of Sindh and for his own political benefits he settled people here from Punjab, Maharashtra, Memons, Khatiwari etc. These people worked hard for the development and construction of Sind. They bought land in Sind and started their business. Along with land resettlement system in 1844 Napier introduced *Feudal System*, because he thought that it will be in favor of his government.¹³ It is interesting to note that when he introduced this system in Sind, the system was coming to an end throughout the world even the British parliament had abolished the feudal system, but in Sind the British government used this old policy.

Napier observed that a huge amount of land was left un-cultivated. To promote land cultivation in order to enhance revenue he “gave land to every person, native or immigrant, who would cultivate land, leases for fourteen or twenty one years with an exemption from rent or taxes for the first two, the holders being responsible only to the government collectors without the intervention of zamindars or kardars.”¹⁴

Garden

The concept of vegetable and fruit gardens and the finances of gardens was first introduced by Napier in Sindh. To provide fresh fruits and vegetables for his army troops he decided to cultivate them on a large scale. The project of the garden was supervised by Major Blenkins who in 1843 started planting vegetables and fruits for army troops but later with the increase in the production the extra fruits and vegetables were sold to the people of Sindh. Thus this became another source of income. With the profit of gardens Napier endeavored to set up windmills at Kurrachee.¹⁵ His interest in the development of the Garden can be appreciated by the fact that he discussed with the Jam of Beila for the purchase of some chosen fruit trees to plant in the public gardens at Karachi.¹⁶ This garden project became so popular that later in 1893 it was upgraded and became a zoological garden of Karachi, which later on was re-named as *Gandhi Garden*.

More over through the combined efforts of the collectors of customs, Mr. McLeod, and Major Blenkins, a sheep and grass farm was established.¹⁷ For the transportation camels were used so to have strong and healthy camels Napier formed a breeding establishment in Larkana with the female camels taken from the hill troops.¹⁸

¹³Khadim Hussain Somro, *The British in Sindh: Immoral entry and exit* (Hyderabad: Sain Publisher, 2008), p.81

¹⁴William Napier, *History of General Sir Charles Napier Administration of scindeand campaign in the Cutchee hill* (Karachi: Indus Publication, 1995),p.249

¹⁵ Op.cit., Napier, p.249

¹⁶Ibid., p.242

¹⁷ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.33

¹⁸ Napier, Op.cit., p.249

Agricultural School

Napier was interested to make Sind a huge agricultural revenue generating area in Bombay presidency. He knew that for the improvement of land cultivation it is necessary to teach the farmer new techniques and familiarize them with new equipment of cultivation. He planned to open schools to provide education and training to farmer and landholders. He proposed to Lord Ripon to establish the institution of agricultural schools (in Sindh) as established by Captain John Pitt Kennedy, at Loch-Ash in Ireland. But this “useful project was ... set aside: [as] it did not conduce to factious interest”¹⁹ among the Bombay government officials.

Forest land

At the time of its annexation Sindh was sparsely covered with forests because of which floods were very common. To control damages from this calamity he tried to encourage people to plant more trees.

Agricultural tax

For the proper collection of revenue Napier made some modification in the existing system. As a result the annual revenue of government increased. Through the revenue regulation of 1846 he divided Sind into three collectorates each with a collector and deputy collector, all being English officers. Then there were the kardars, the head men in each village to collect the taxes and the Lumbardars to collect the grain. All these kardars and Lumbardars were to work under the new magistrates, and thus he enlisted a large body of influential men in favor of the conquest.”²⁰

Apart from agricultural tax there were other sources of tax during Talpur period. During the times of Mirs, government used to collect one - fourth of the amount which formed the matter of every civil suit as court fees (Stamp Tax). Napier contented himself with 5 percent.²¹ Napier while abolishing all transit and internal taxes imposed custom duty only on goods imported or exported by sea and import and export were allowed only in Karachi and in the two subordinate ports, *Keti* and *Sirganda*.²² Salt manufactures of Sind used to pay *batai*(*share* in the profits)to the native rulers of Sind. Napier abolished *batai* and it was not levied until 1848.”²³

Commerce and trade

Sir Charles Napier prepared several plans for the development of trade; he wanted to use River Indus as a large mercantile depot from where he desired to have commercial ties

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.250

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308

²¹ Aitken, *Op.cit.*, p.420

²² *Ibid.*,p.428

²³ *Ibid.*, p.432

with Central Asia. Napier provided facilities to merchants and traders of other cities for their business and settlement in Karachi. As a result, Parsees, Hindu and Muslims from Bombay and Gujrat migrated and settled in Karachi and started their businesses. For example 'the merchant Mahomed Ali Alibhoy, started his work as a constructor for supplies during the Afghan war in 1842, he had a special appointment as contractor of the British army,' Alibhoy and sons, started his business in 1843, Seth Aboobucar Hasan started his business in 1844 as a general merchant and was dealing with all types of goods, Moosajee Jafferjee started his work as merchants and commission agent in Karachi during 1845'.²⁴ No doubt their contributions in the development of Karachi cannot be underestimated. Because of these efforts the revenue under Amirs government which was around thirty five to forty lacs, increased rapidly during his government. 'Total revenue from 1843 to 1846 was £659, 393 and expense of civil government for three years including police force was £336, 526. The balance in favor of the general government, 1846 is £322, 869, due to abolish transit duty or *rahdari* during the 1846-47 revenue reached thirty five.'²⁵ The condition of commerce trade defined by Sir Charles Napier in his own words: "Our import of European goods has increased since 1843, from four and a half to nine lacs in 1845; and to ten lacs in the first six months of 1846".²⁶

Fish Trade

Fish trade has been the main business of the people of Sind from ancient times. Indus River which flows all the year round, has been the habitat of many rare species, like *Pulla*, which breeds only in the fresh water of Indus. Karachi has been very popular for fish trade. By fish farming rights Amirs raised revenue 4,000 to 7,000 but fishermen's become the slaves of *Bunia* contractors. To improve their condition Sir Charles Napier abolished the contracts in 1846 and started a system of licenses for fisherman, boatmen and others who were to extricate themselves from their difficulties.²⁷ 'The export of the shark fins, fish maws and salt fish was gradually increased from Rs. 12,068, in 1844 to Rs. 38,301 1845 and in 1846 it became Rs. 42,626'. The total number of boats was 164, 105 in Karachi, and 59 in coastal areas employed by the British government.²⁸

Employment opportunities

Employment and the protection of the rights of employees or labor was another great job done by Napier. The Amirs of Sind employed people temporarily for a few days or months when they need. Sir Charles Napier prepared plan to employ them, with a monthly salary, pension and other facilities. He did not believe in the discrimination on the basis of tribes, castes, religion, language etc. for the appointments. He gave equal

²⁴Alexander F. Baillie, Karachi under the raj: 1843-1947: kurrachee, past, present and future volume 1. (Karachi: Pakistan Herald Publications, 2005), pp.132, 149, 155, 168

²⁵Napier, Op.cit., pp.311- 314

²⁶Baillie, Op.cit., p.311

²⁷R. Hughes Thomas, ed., Memoirs of Sind, V.II. (Karachi: Allied Book, 1989), pp.704-705; and op.cit., Napier, p.62

²⁸Baillie, Op.cit., p.705

opportunity to Muslims and Hindus. Though Hindus were more talented as compared to Muslim because Hindus were always employed in the offices of Ameer, as accountants and they taught their children business or commercial education in “Devanagri” language. Persian language was used for literature and business work and for the collection of revenue; “but they as well as their trading brethren were only tolerated for their utility to the government.”²⁹

He gave the opportunity to the people to work by their own choice, before the annexation the labor was bound to work in or only can adopt their family professions. He also abolished forced labor and allowed common men to take the jobs of their choice. By this decision his source of revenue at once fell (especially pearl fishery)³⁰ but he believed only in dignity and qualification without discrimination of color or religion, against the previous system in which only high born people can claim high jobs.³¹

He believed that the employee should be healthy and contented and it can only be possible if the government acknowledges the rights of the employees and provides them a good salary and other benefits. When he was lieutenant-general of Indian army he fought for the rights of labor from the British government. It is the fact of history that he resigned from his post on the issue of allowances for his army. At one time he wrote letters about the payment of the allowances of the sawars, that the salary of 20 rupees a month is very meagre for sawars, as compared to the salary of officers, granted an allowance of an officer’s horse is 30 rupees, if the officer required 30 rupees to feed his horse than how a sawar feeds himself and his horse both in 20 rupees, and pay for his arms, dress, and other expenses in only 20 rupees? He recommended 30 rupees a month for sawars.³²

Judicial Department

Napier was not only interested in military law, but, also took keen interest in civil law to improve the condition of the common man. Under the natives Ameer the system was different; there were *kotwals* for each town and *kardars* of villages for each province. *Kazis* were for Muslims, used Holy Koran for each case, and Hindu settled their problems by *Panchayat* or committees of different castes. To improve the judicial system of Sindh, Napier in 1845 prepared a Judiciary system responsible to solve different legal matters. He appointed Captain Keith Young as judge-advocate-general, who had experience and knowledge of his work and military law; he appointed two deputies with him who were deployed at Hyderabad and Shikarpoor.³³ During his period he took significant steps for law and its enforcement. In upper Sindh frontier robbery

²⁹ Ibid., p. 703

³⁰ J. W. Smyth, Gazetteer of the province of Sind: volume1: Karachi District(Bombay: At the Government Press, 1919), p.80

³¹ Thomas, Op.cit., p.724

³² Minutes on the resignation of the late general sir Charles Napier of the command of the army in India by Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis of Dalhousie, and General sir Charles Napier &c.(London: John Murry, Albemarle, 1854), p.109

³³ Napier, Op.cit., p.309

was very common, nobody was safe from them, neither merchants nor common man. Jungle and dense bushes were the safe areas for them. When Sir Charles Napier came to know about them, he started crackdown operation. He planned to change the mind of the robbers and to make them virtuous and respected citizens, he decided to educate them, help them in their financial matters, and to provide them employment. He hoped that, if his experiment fails to reclaim the factors, may be in the future their children would have better lives.³⁴ But he failed.

Furious Driving [Riding]

Wealthy people who had horses, used to drive (ride) furiously in public places causing problems for common, poor and old aged people. Many people got injured from their rush and furious driving (riding). Sir Charles Napier ordered action against them. He said that nobody has the right to kill the people.³⁵

Women Rights

Napier was not only interested in military and political matters. He had great interest in the culture of Sindh, their people, their religion, languages etc. When he heard about the Hindu custom 'Satti', means, burning of the widow with her husband; he was surprised, and ordered to stop this custom. 'If your custom is to burn widows with men, then our custom is to tie a rope around the necks and hang those men who burn women alive. You may follow your custom and then we will follow ours.'³⁶ It was the first action he took against the Hindu customs. He also stopped women trafficking, and the honor killing. In 1847 he ordered that women murder is a serious crime in British government and said, "If a woman is said to have committed suicide in your district, for it shall be an evil day for all in the place."³⁷

Slave trade especially of women by the port of Sindh was very common. Women came from the route of Muscat and from Africa and send to upper Sindh and other Indian estates. For merchants and businessmen it was the trade from which they used to get high revenue. Karachi port was used to supply these slaves in different upper districts. Annually 600 to 700, slaves were imported among whom about three-fourths were females, and as a tax Rs. 5:8 was levied as the revenue from this trafficking."³⁸ After the annexation slave trade was banned in Sindh but it could not be controlled totally by the government. Use of opium and opium smuggling was also common in Sind. He extended the tax on opium after that its use and smuggling in Sind declined.³⁹

³⁴Ibid., pp. 243-244

³⁵ A. W. Hughes, Gazetteer of the province of Sind. (2nd ed.) (London: George Bell, 1876), p.51

³⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_James_Napier (accessed May 29, 2010)

³⁷ Op.cit., Thomas, p.705

³⁸ Alexander F. Baillie, Kurrachee, past, present and future (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.35

³⁹Ibid., pp.51-52

Police Department

A police system of India was one of the greatest achievements of Sir Charles Napier. Sir Bartle Frere commenting on his work said that he provided a base and model for Indian Police. During the Amirs period the concept of police was unknown, the security of the city or boundary of territory was in the hand of Kardars and Jagirdars, who used to appoint watchmen as guards on town gate, for all day and night. Sir Charles Napier was not impressed by this system he knew that Sindh is a lawless place where robbery and murders are common. So to organize the police department, Lieut. Marston was appointed as the first captain of the police force, who had served in the battle of Mianee.⁴⁰ His police system based on two cardinal principles i.e. "Police officers should be independent of the magistracy and that he should exercise no magisterial functions. The command of the Sind police was entrusted to a military officer styled as the Capitan of police. Military officer controlled district force of Karachi, Hyderabad and Shikarpur."⁴¹ From that time our police system is based on it.

Jail System

Amirs were not familiar with the concept of modern jail. In their time if someone was caught stealing anything, he had to pay four times more than the actual value of the property he stole. As three fourth of the fine was paid to the government and one fourth was handed over to the plaintiff. If he fails to pay he would be imprisoned till his friends pay for him. During this time he was taken out daily to begging for his food and whatever he gets in excess of actual necessities, was to be submitted to the government; so he became a source of revenue.⁴² Jails were first time constructed by Sir Charles Napier in Hyderabad, Shikarpur and Karachi and some minor prisons in many places.

Military Department

Camel baggage corps

Sir Charles Napier designs a system for the camel baggage corps and camel man. It was the proper system of baggage corps, in which he employed permanent camel driver (riders) as soldiers, with uniform. The plan was designed for the formation of a camel-baggage-corps, to the organization of which he had attached the greatest importance. In his view the carriage of baggage should be a government matter, and organization with as much care and order as a regiment. On this basis, he formed divisions, giving to each 6,00 government, camels, and uniforms to the drivers.⁴³

"The camel drivers were entitled, disciplined armed and paid as soldiers, and commanded by regular officer; and the general new human nature too well not to invest them with every title to respect and honor. Their animals, classed as strong and weak, bore round

⁴⁰ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.34

⁴¹ Aitken, Op.cit., p.420

⁴² Ibid.,p.456

⁴³ Napier, Op.cit., p.259

their necks tablets, engraved with a maximum load of their class. One man was appointed to each camel instead of their camels to one man as the practice was, a charge saving baggage guards.”⁴⁴

Floating Mines

Sir Charles Napier wanted navigation control of the Great Britain in Arabian Sea and Karachi port. It was one of his greatest ambitions. He improved the condition of the Karachi harbor by constructing moles, shipyards, lighthouse etc. ‘When the range of guns was not so powerful, he introduced and used floating mines, a mile or so away from Manora fort, for safety of the sea, if any enemy boat tried to sneak into the harbor, the mines would blow it up.’⁴⁵

Municipal Department

Before the annexation Sindh was very filthy and unclean place. Garbage thrown everywhere, no health, sewerage and sanitary facilities were available, people were uneducated and not familiar with the side effects of a polluted environment. Karachi was inhabited without any plan. Only Sadler and Civil lines area was the exception. Nobody considered about providing civic amenities to the people. The entire city was in unhygienic condition. Sindhi and British military officers were included in different unhealthy activities regarding which Richard Burton wrote that British army had regular drinking habits, its soldiers either were not married or were away from their families, so were indulged in many negative activities. Because the habitual drinking they had become so weak, and had lost the immunity to fight with serious illness or diseases.⁴⁶ During 1845 Sir Charles Napier witnessed that because of serious disease like cholera, seven thousand persons in Sind and hundreds of military soldiers including a Napier favorite nephew, John Napier died in Karachi.⁴⁷ He formed a committee by the name of “Board of Conservancy” in 1846, to solve the municipal problems, and appointed qualified persons for this work.”By 1851, however, due to lack of funds the Board had become nearly defunct. But the people of Kurachee had realized the value of cooperative effort to improve the condition of the city and the camp.”⁴⁸ This Board of Conservancy was converted into the Municipality in 1852.⁴⁹

Canal system

The irrigation of Sindh was depended on the canal system, means a water supply by the Indus River. It was the only reliable source of water for cultivation in Sindh. No proper

⁴⁴ Ibid., 260-261

⁴⁵ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.151

⁴⁶ Ibid.,p.162

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.258-259

⁴⁸ S. MoinulHaq, comp.,Theproceedings of the All Pakistan History conference first session held at Karachi 1951.(Karachi: Times Press, n. d.), pp.394-395

⁴⁹ Ahmed Husain Siddiqui,Karachi the pearl of Arabian Sea (Karachi: Mohammad Hussain Academy, 1996), p.83

planning and work was done by Amirs for canal clearance and development of cultivation.” These canals were excavations carried away from the river in an oblique direction, so as to secure as great a fall per mile as possible. The general direction of canal is often good, but,...They’re irregular in shape, and irregular in slope or fall the irregularity of their supply of water, arising from the variation of the inundation.”⁵⁰“The main trunks, as the *fulailee*, *goonee*, and other beds, which generally speaking, are the courses of dried-up rivers, were rare.”⁵¹“The canals were old natural branches of the river that were kept open by annual clearance of silt which collected at their mouths during inundation, when the flow of water suddenly came and find no way they change in flood, and the result; farms, crops, animals, even people and cities destroyed or inundate.”⁵²Sir Charles Napier knew that without a proper canal system no development can occur, as the land cultivation, based on it and this system was a very big source of revenue. In his administration to avoid this regular disaster he designed the dyke between Sukkur and Shikarpur. This dyke designed was finished by Captain Scott, besides many adverse circumstances, includes dearth of good engineer and loss of revenue.⁵³

Karachi Harbor

Sir Charles Napier was a sailor and seafarer, and knew the importance of Karachi harbor. He wanted to see Karachi harbor as the biggest harbor of India., “He realized that the importance of Karachi lays in developing its harbor. The port was in a deplorable condition. Ships lay at anchor near an exposed and dangerous point. Transport and merchandise had to be passed across the creek in open boats. Soldiers had to wade knee deep much to the detriment of their health.”⁵⁴ To achieve the goal he acquired qualified engineers, who prepared plans for the development of a harbor.” He had the whole harbor surveyed and proposed to widen the entrance, construct the docks, and erect a timber pile pier at Kiamari for native craft and lighters. He built a causeway between the points at Karachi; for the safety of shipping a lighthouse was also constructed.”⁵⁵ “But time and circumstances did not permit him to carry into effect, or even commence the proposed works. The last two were, however, initiated and started during his administration; but when he left Sind, in October, 1847, nothing had been done towards rendering the port more accessible to shipping.”⁵⁶ But after a few years his dream come true, Karachi harbor became the biggest harbor of Asia, but he was not alive to see this. ‘He also built an effective arsenal underneath of Oyster Rocks, some of two miles away from the Karachi harbor, they are two big rocks and the arsenal is so deep in it, so, it was to save from guns shelling even no damage can happen. For the security nobody was allowed to go near and inside this arsenal.’⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Hughes, Op.cit., pp.16-17

⁵¹ Burton, Op.cit., pp.39-40

⁵² Lari, Op.cit., p.173

⁵³ Napier, Op.cit., p.258

⁵⁴ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.150

⁵⁵ Siddiqui, Op.cit., p.43

⁵⁶ Baillie, Op.cit., p.57

⁵⁷ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.34

Napier Mole

Nobody can forget the work of Napier mole, the first biggest mole of Asia. It was very difficult work done by Charles Napier.

“The Napier mole, although affording very great benefit to the commerce of the town, had at first a bad effect on the harbor. It cuts off a considerable area, and divided into two portions. The “China Creek” which has been mentioned as the route at one time adopted by the larger boats approaching Kurrachee, was originally constructed as there was no opening in all its length between the mainland and the island of Kimari. The result was that the creek ceased to have any scouring effect on the west channel, but became greatly enlarged at the mouth where it entered the sea.”He had intended that the mole should have openings, and was doubtful as to the propriety of closing the creeks, but his advice was overruled by his senior naval officers, who thought that by closing them up the rush of water along the western side of the mole would be increased to an extent sufficient to deepen the boat channel,. But the design was strongly opposed by many among them. But when it was closed, and the mole was cut, the effect on the upper harbor channel was very favorable, while on the lower harbor, where the ships lie, it made no appreciable difference.”⁵⁸

Public Works Department

Government House

Sir Charles Napier, the commissioner in Sindh constructed a small, inconspicuous little bungalow in Karachi for his residence, situated in civil lines. It was simply a large single story room, with two wings, after the retirement of Sir Charles Napier in 1847, the government purchased it and reserved it for the residence of the most important government official of the province. A second storey was added by the late General Jacob officiating commissioner in 1856. Now its area is 40 acres and it is surrounded by the commissioner’s secretariat.⁵⁹

The Masonic Hall and the Sind Club

In 1845 Sir Charles Napier constructed The Masonic lodge in Karachi. It was built adjacent to the Sind Club and its foundation stone was laid by Sir Charles Napier himself, the aim to construct the lodge to show the power of the British government.⁶⁰ The original lodge in Karachi was lodged ‘hope’, which was founded before Sir Charles Napier in 1842.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Baillie, Op.cit., p,73

⁵⁹ Siddiqui, Op.cit., pp. 126-127

⁶⁰ Baillie, Op.cit., p.41

⁶¹ Smyth, Op.cit., p.74

Napier Barracks

Sir Charles Napier was a strong military man but when he reached Sindh he faced a very hot climate. Diseases and sickness were common in his troops and officers. He shifted his capital Hyderabad to Karachi, for the health of his army. 'He built barracks for European Army in 1847, known as Napier Barracks' now Liaquat barracks, from that time to date government officers are lodged here. This type of barracks was contracted for the first time in Sind in which large solid blocks of rocky stones were used to support the barracks, and to date not a single stone has moved out of its place, nor are any heavy repairs needed to these simple and solid buildings.'⁶²

Sanatorium and Play Ground

He not only prepared barracks for his army but, also built playgrounds, recreational centers, gardens and constructed sanatorium at *Gizree*, in Karachi. The primary purpose was the welfare of his soldiers, their health and fitness who served their lives for the conquest of the province.⁶³

Mangopir Pond

Because of the crocodiles the Mangopir Pond was a very popular place in Sindh, These crocodiles were kept in an open area, and the place was not safe for common people. They easily killed people and travelers for their food. When Sir Charles Napier was informed about the dangerous killing by them, he ordered to wall the whole pond and shifted all crocodiles to the pond to make this place safe for travelling.⁶⁴

St. Patrick's Church

After the annexation the very first church, St. Patrick Church, was constructed in 1845 at a cost of Rs.6000, for British officers and their families in Saddar Bazaar through public subscription. The building was designed by Father Wagner, in the Gothic style of architecture.⁶⁵ Today the building is flanked by St. Patrick's High School.⁶⁶

Victoria Museum

The Victoria museum Karachi was established during Sir Charles Napier period. He had a keen interest in the history and antiquities of Sindh, after the conquest he found treasures from Amirs that included very valuable things. He founded Sind Association in 1844 to promote the investigation of the history and the antiquities of Sindh. For many years the collected artifacts but had no proper place to be stored. The first separate building named Victoria on the name of Queen Victoria was built for the collection of

⁶² Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.142

⁶³ Siddiqui, p.43 ; Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.33

⁶⁴ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.141

⁶⁵ Siddiqui, Op.cit., p.132

⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Patrick%27s_Cathedral,_Karachi (accessed 29 May,2010)

these antiquities and its foundation stone was laid by Duke of Connaught in 1886.⁶⁷ After independence this building was first used as State Bank of Pakistan. It is undoubtedly the representative, in direct descent, of the museum and library started by Sir Charles Napier.⁶⁸

Education

The education system of Sindh was very pitiable. Few Amirs' were educated, and the concept of education was limited. 'When Sir Charles Napier conquered Sind, the government of Bombay had sent trained staff mostly Marathas to run the capital under his administration because the Sindhis had not come in touch with the European particularly British and had not understood the English language. Even in schools and colleges there were Maratha teachers and professors except the heads, who were British or Parsees.'⁶⁹

Syeds were scholars and teachers who were called depositories of learning or the universities of Sind. Muslim schools known as madrasas in which Muslim Children learned the Holy Koran and only two languages, Arabic and Persian. Few Hindu schools were teaching business or commercial education in "Devanagri" language. Persian language was used for literature and business work. The British government gave allowances to the Sindhi Syeds for educational purposes but under such condition of education, the British government stopped the allowances of Tatta sayads. At that time a British government wanted those servants who could understand English language. Due to the importance of this matter in 1845 Captain Rathborne, collector of Hyderabad, asked the government of India about the sanction of Rs.3,000 a year for a new system of schools, but after three years of correspondences no result was found as in the government opinion that they found no competent master.

In spite of the government's refusal to grant Napier encouraged his administrators to improve educational setup in Sindh. Captain Preedy, collector of Karachi, started a free school in Karachi with his own expenses, and was more successful. In 1846 he ensured a local committee that the purpose of the school is to provide the Christian education and the complete Bible should be included in the course.⁷⁰ It was the first church mission school established after 1939, located on North Bunder Road, now Karachi grammar school.⁷¹ The Rev. H. Brereton, the first chaplain of Karachi started an English class for Anglo-Indian children in 1847 in his own residence on the plot which is now occupied by the Methodist church.⁷² "The building is made from a local stone called "gizri" stone."⁷³ In Shikarpur the first English School was started by Captain Goldmid. At last the Bombay Government favored in the organization of an educational agency in

⁶⁷Nuha Ansari, Karachi edges of empire: jewels and gems of raj architecture. Lahore: Ferozsons, (1997), p.34

⁶⁸Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.154

⁶⁹Siddiqui, Op.cit., p.147

⁷⁰Aitken, Op.cit., pp.472- 473

⁷¹KGS, The life and times of Karachi Grammar School (Clifton: KGS, 2010), p.16

⁷² <http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/pakistan/karachi/kgrammarschool.html> (accessed 27 May, 2010)

⁷³Napier, Op.cit., p.250

Sind. In 1853 Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Barrow Ellis with the assistance of some native scholars first published 52 Sindhi language alphabets for educational purposes.⁷⁴

Resignation

Due to the continuous interference of the Bombay civil servants, to whom “his appointment fell like a wet blanket on sordid hopes of the Bombay authorities and civil servants, who looked to Sindh as a fine field for the accustomed rapine of the company’s government.”⁷⁵, Sir Charles Napier resigned from the governorship of Sindh in 1847. As he loved Karachi and worked very hard for its development therefore at the time of his departure he said: “thou shall be the glory of the East, would that I could come again in seeing you, Kurrachee, in your grandeur.”⁷⁶

‘In 1849, he was recalled in India as Commander-in-Chief, during the second Sikh war, but he again resigned in 1851’⁷⁷ at this time reason of his resignation was the dispute between Sir Charles Napier and Lord Dalhousie. The disagreement was for the increased pay for the native soldiers. He wrote in his memorandum to His Excellency the Commander in Chief, dated, 22nd May 1850.

“The governor general in council has decided that I ought not to have used my own discretion; that I ought to have lost five weeks in applying to the supreme council for instructions;....., such are the shackles put upon my conduct as commander in chief such is the support I have received on this occasion, and such the support which I may expect in future difficulties. So, circumstanced, I no longer feel safe, and shall resign a command that I could not retain, under such restrictions, with advantage to the public services.”⁷⁸

Conclusion

Sir Charles Napier was a military man, but had shown his ability as a good administrator because he had a great knowledge about the history of the world, mentioned in an article by Marjie Bloy: “when he was returning to England from Ostend, his ship sank in the harbor and Napier narrowly escaped. He devoted the next two years to studying military and political history, agriculture, construction and political economy,”⁷⁹ and had the qualities of a good administrator and organizer.

These qualities can be seen in his administration of Sindh. He prepared plans, proposals, and policies for public works with justices, and he organized his civil, military and

⁷⁴ Aitken, Op.cit., pp.473-474

⁷⁵ William Napier, Sir, The history of General Sir Charles Napier’s conquest of scinde(Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.243

⁷⁶ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p. 32

⁷⁷ HamidaKuhro, AnwerMooraj, ed., Karachi: mega city of our times (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.102

⁷⁸ Minutes on the resignation of the late General Sir Charles Napier of the command of the army in India by Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, the Marques of Dalhousie, and General Sir Charles Napier &c.(London: John Murry, Ibemarie, 1854)

⁷⁹ <http://www.thornber.net/england/htmlfiles/napier.html> (accessed 29 May, 2010)

police departments. He appointed military men as civil servants and was happy with his decision. He did not interfere the customs and culture of the Sindhi people, but, those who were not civilized, he strictly stopped slavery of people especially of girls, women killing, *sutti*,⁸⁰ work without wages, influences of beggars and Syeds, etc. He raised the confidence of Sindhis against Balooches, and tried to improve the civil life of Sindh, by providing basic human rights.

He provided employment, education etc., Work hard for the judiciary, improved military and police system, baggage and canal system, designed new revenue system, improved canal system, provided medical facilities, developed agriculture and irrigation system, improved trade and industry; fishery, controlled opium smuggling, the cultivation of sugar cane to increase revenue, etc. He constructed bungalows, barracks, bridges, steamer stations, church, boats, and forts, imposed rules for women right etc., provided municipal services, with the help of his qualified engineers and collectors. Napier had written off all the pre-1843 dues of the peasantry. He set up Sindh Police, which became a model for all other provinces.

For the development of trade and revenue he prepared many proposals and submitted to the British Government, but they were not approved. For example when Captain Baker, late Superintendent of Canals and Forests, in his letter dated 18th July 1844, informed Sir Charles Napier about the extensive salt beds in the neighborhood of the Allabund, soon afterwards, specimens of the deposit were sent to Karachi by the collector of Hyderabad. Napier thought of starting a Salt Trade and informed the Bombay government about his plan. But Bombay Salt merchants opposed the proposal, for their own interest and they did not want Sind salt to get into the market, so, no action was taken⁸¹ and the proposal was discarded.

Another plan which was rejected by the Company government was regarding the horse trade. For this purpose “he established a central mart at [Sukkur] especially for horses, by which he hoped to supply the Indian army with the fine strong animals of Afghan and Turkistan at a much less cost than the slight Arabian horses were obtained. In this scheme a trade link between central Asia and Bombay was to be established. But when several hundred fine horses had been sent to Bengal, at less than half the cost of the inferior Arabs bought for the military service, official jealousy, folly or self-interest, interfered, an order arrived to stop the trade, which was thus, with many other noble schemes and benefit plans”⁸² was abandoned.

After shifting his capital to Karachi he became conscious of the scarcity of clean water for drinking and cooking, though there were wells, but they were fulfilling the needs of the people. Considering this as a grave problem in 1845 Sir Charles Napier with the help Captain Baker a qualified engineer, conducted a survey⁸³ and planned to provide pure water from the Malir River in Karachi. Emphasizing his plan he said that “the need of

⁸⁰ Sutti: customs of Hindus, when man died; his wife burned with his body.

⁸¹ Thomas, Op.cit., pp.705-706

⁸² Napier, Op.cit., pp.51-52

⁸³ MoinulHaq, Op.cit., p.401

pure water was so grievously felt in that place and the cost of conducting the river, only 12,000 pounds, would have been quickly repaid by a small water-tax".⁸⁴ He waited for two years for the approval of the proposal but, "company was not interested at that time in investing in the city's infrastructure, and water from the wells was considered adequate for the town's needs." His plan was finally executed in 1880.

He worked hard to improve the condition of Sindh especially Karachi, which he wanted to be the biggest port of Asia and aspire to collect more revenue than any other colony of British government. With the support of Lord Ellenborough he prepared many plans, for the development of the city, but all of his plans and proposals were ignored by the political agent of the British government, and the result was that no substantial improvement could be achieved during his administration. "He carefully commenced his administrative work with a close examination of the reports submitted by collectors and engineers. He wanted to make Karachi a fortified town, the last bastion of British democracy and the bulwark against attacks from the north-west or any other power-whether inside or outside India."⁸⁵ "He envisaged the thundering mega city that Karachi today, but he imaginatively realized that it would play a hugely important role in the global world which the industrial and social revolutions and the upheavals of the nineteenth century were brought about. In the hundred years the British fashioned Karachi into a successful commercial city."⁸⁶ He dreamed of making the Indus flow "like a child in a go-cart." He cleaned silt from the old canals, opened up new acreage for cultivation, giving two years free rent and a 14 year lease to natives who moved to newly irrigated land but British East India Company directors, whom he called "a galaxy of donkeys," and who in turn did their best to see him retired to England as fast as possible."⁸⁷

Sir Bartle Frère said "if all the useful and remunerative public works he projected were carried out, there would be no work for his successor in Sind for many years to come." But these works were only, "*projects*."⁸⁸ The reason why his *projects* could not be materialized were because he had two enemies; the first one was political agents and merchants of Bombay presidency and the second was Amirs of Sindh. He did try to solve problems of the army and people of Sindh, but his efforts and hard work did not impress the ICS, and he failed to satisfy them.

Though Bombay presidency and the politicians were not happy from his governorship and administrative decisions in Sindh but to justify his appointment Sir Robert Peel said in parliament, 'no one ever doubted Sir Charles Napier's military powers. But in his other character he does surprise me; he is possessed of extraordinary talent for civil administrations'⁸⁹ After his resignation in 1850, Sindh was attached to the Bombay Presidency and Sir Bartle Frere was appointed as its first Commissioner. He started his work where it was left by Napier.

⁸⁴ Napier, Op.cit., p. 259

⁸⁵ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.33

⁸⁶ Khuhro, ed., Op.cit., p. ix

⁸⁷ Fawn M. Brodie, *The devil drives: a life of Sir Richard Burton* (New York: Ballantine, 1967), pp.57-58

⁸⁸ Aitken, Op.cit., pp.139-140

⁸⁹ Rustomji and Katrak, Op.cit., p.33