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THE ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE THE FORMAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND DURING THE CRISIS IN THE EARLY 1860S

Summary. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the possibilities for improving the administration and delivery of the Polish transport system, which occurred in early 1860s, the last phase of local autonomous government.

Keywords: transportation structures, Kingdom of Poland, 19th century

1. INTRODUCTION

The quasi-independent Polish transport services functioning in the Kingdom before 1847 were seen in the period of crisis during the early 1860s as a sort of an administrative body that could be restored. This era of political turmoil, or rather a “thaw”, brought with it a reasonable degree of hope to improve Polish transport structures and consequently re-establish Warsaw’s Board of Land and Water Communications. This very idea became a specific goal of many Polish patriots, wishing to live in a country that was governed directly or indirectly by its citizens. It was not, however, entirely in the gift of the local Third Council of State and other governing institutions to have a decisive voice in these matters, especially in a partitioned country in which the Tsarist authorities finally decided the fate of Polish

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transport issues. In the following paragraphs, we follow some of the formal endeavours to make communication in the Kingdom of Poland more appropriate to the resolution of local transport problems.

2. PRELIMINARY IDEAS TO CHANGE THE FORMAL DEPENDENCY OF THE POLISH TRANSPORT SYSTEM ON TSARIST AUTHORITIES

On the basis of a decision made by Tsar Nicholas I, on the 5/17 December of 1846, instead of a local transport infrastructure, the so-called Vienna Congress agreed that Poland should be subject to the St. Petersburg authority, known as the Board of the 13th District of Communications of the Russian Empire², which meant the formal liquidation of the quasi-independent Polish transport services³. From a legal point of view, this situation did not completely change when a decision by Tsar Alexander II led to the introduction on 22 February/6 March 1861 in the Kingdom of a new law, which replaced the existing administrative structure with the Seventh District of (Land and Water) Communications of Russia⁴.

However, in the period of the emergence of some origins of specific and rationed autonomy in the Kingdom of Poland, on the 11/23 October 1861, at an official gathering of Warsaw's Administrative Council, which offered some form of quasi-government, it was decided to create new opportunities for the establishment of the country's modern rules required for the stable functioning of the local public land and water transport system. It was therefore proposed to widely introduce and apply new solutions in the field of transport. Soon enough, the matter was undertaken by another important administrative body of the Kingdom, namely, the Third Council of State, which was generally responsible for legislation. The very opportunity to make some improvements to the Polish communication system actually occurred to the members of the Department of Tax Administration of Warsaw's Council of State, while analysing the report of the Board of the Postal Services of the Kingdom of Poland for 1860. After reading this report in its entirety, appropriate "rules and directions" for transport were also developed⁵. The new assumptions about the role and usage of Polish transport services, specifically aimed at "improving the quality of all kinds of communications in the Kingdom and restoring in due course the authority of the [Polish] Government Commission for Internal Affairs over the old Board of Land and Water Communications" was a consequence of the original proposals concerning postage and postal matters⁶.

Having revealed in the autumn of 1861 their opinions and suggestion about the state of the Polish postal system, state counsellors issued a collective written statement on communications in Poland. They expressed their view on this matter as follows: "It is

² *Svod Zakonov Rossijskoj Imperii*. Vol. 21, Part 3: 178-181.

³ A. Okolski. *Wykład prawa administracyjnego oraz prawa administracyjnego obowiązującego w Królestwie Polskiem*, Warszawa 1880, vol. 1: 146

⁴ M. Rutkowski. 2015. *Zarządzanie Logistyką w Królestwie Polskim ery Konstytucyjnej i Paskiewiczowskiej. Infrastruktura Przydrożna*, Białystok: 9.

⁴ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 24.

⁴ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 257: 1-58.

a widely recognized truth that nothing contributes as effectively to the growth of agriculture, trade, richness and overall wealth as a convenient communication [system] that facilitates trade within the country. Wisely provided appropriate means of communication on the one hand represent the most effective lever for continuous and gradual improvement in the quality of agriculture, as well as all kinds of industry; on the other hand, serving as the most visible example of good administration, they are rightly regarded as a sign of sane national prosperity. Conversely, according to economists, the scarcity of communication is the source of poverty of the country; even though its basic area contains many natural resources which, due to lack of transportation, fruitlessly rest in its womb. The very idea of [the] facilitating of land and water connections leads the same way to some further facilitations for local population, including [a] variety of ways to improve its existence. From hence derives direct growth of industry and trade. Each and every development of these branches of economy is therefore directly and closely linked with the emergence of an increasingly dense network of transport”⁷.

As a consequence of this statement from the autumn of 1861, the Department of Tax Administration of the Third Council of State officially and directly “requested” the “improvement” of all transport networks and communication programmes, which existed at the time in the Kingdom of Poland. In order to achieve these goals, the resubmission of the existing Board of the 13th/Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire, under the authority of the Warsaw’s Government Commission for Internal Affairs, was collectively and officially proposed. At the same time, State Counsellor Łaszczyński personally submitted his preliminary request for the reorganization of the Board of Communications. After the initial overall analysis of the legal status of the Polish administration system, the General Assembly of the Third Council of State, at its 40th session, dated 11/23 November 1861, decided again to return the transportation problem issue to its own Revenue Department for further processing⁸. This administrative request for delivering some more specific arguments was also personally supported on 6/18 August 1861 by the main residing director of the Polish Government Commission for Internal Affairs, a Warsaw military governor general, as well an adjutant general and a lieutenant general in one person: Alexander Gerstenzweig⁹. What was most important was that he also considered it necessary to focus on “combining the Board of Administration of the country and the Board of Communications in one place”¹⁰.

3. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSALS FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF LAND AND WATER TRANSPORT IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND SUBMITTED BY STATE COUNSELLOR ŁASZCZYŃSKI

The submission by State Counsellor Łaszczyński on 21 November 1861, which was a “request to improve the land and water communications”, comprised in the first place a proposal for restoring laws that were obligatory in the Kingdom of Poland before 1832 concerning transportation expenses and the process for controlling spending in this regard.

⁷ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 24.

⁸ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 1, 3.

⁹ *Gazeta Rządowa Królestwa Polskiego*. 1/13 September 1861, no. 204: 1370.

¹⁰ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 1.

The basic aim was to solely leave these matters to the discretion of the local administrative authorities, as was the case before the November Uprising, which was finally crushed in September/October 1831. The most important demand from the state counsellor, however, was the request made “in order to replace the Board of the Seventh District of Communications (of the Russian Empire) with the restored Polish Directorate of Roads and Bridges [previous name]/Board of Land and Water Communications [later name] as a technical authority only”. According to this concept, these powers of the authorities of Kingdom’s communication services, which under the law of Tsar Nicholas I, dated 5/17 December 1846, which had been granted to the main manager of communications and government edifices in the Russian Empire, would be transferred to a member of Warsaw’s Administrative Council, namely, General Major Stanisław Kierbedź, as the head of the Polish government’s transport structures. The wording of the application was subsequently transferred to Actual State Counsellor Michał Lewiński, who was ordered to write a brief historical outline in the field relating to the analysed applications from Counsellor Łaszczyński. This collected data were to be presented for evaluation by the Department of Tax Administration and then by the General Assembly of the Third Council of State ¹¹.

Meanwhile, in his next project, which described the “conclusions as to the communication of land and water communications”, Łaszczyński emphatically suggested (basically repeating previously delivered theses) the restoration in Poland of the very organization of transport services, which existed in the Kingdom of Poland before 1832. However, the author of an undated dissertation specified, on this occasion, these suggestions received strong support. Firstly, Counsellor Łaszczyński demanded to exclude road/transportation funds from the general state budget. Secondly, he proposed again to replace the Board of the Seventh “Engineering” District with the re-established Board of Land and Water Communications, in turn granting them “technical and administrative powers”. Another proposal from Łaszczyński was that transport funds and corvée fees [in Polish: szarwark] (as measures directly related to the management of provincial authorities and, possibly, to counties) would remain at the discretion of the local Government Commission for Internal Affairs. He also predicted the elimination of custom charges levied at the border on certain goods from people entering the Kingdom (and the duties levied on ships passing the Polish water border). The counsellor, while acknowledging this burden was introduced solely in Tsarist Poland, claimed that he was instead proposing the idea of restoring the toll road, which had been used in the past on the main roads of the Kingdom.

Counsellor Łaszczyński also added to his official proposals to change the rules of operation of road and water transport in the Kingdom of Poland so-called “motives”¹², which proved that the amount of funds allocated annually for maintenance and building of main country roads was unreasonably and unjustly fully dependent on the general state of government finances, and therefore subject to constant fluctuations¹³. According to the counsellor, the incorporation into the state budget of the corvée funds and fees, as well as road revenues (a solution that was forced onto the Polish authorities after the fall of the November Uprising, which was even contrary to the provision decree of Tsar Alexander I dated 1820), “has brought great harm to the funds of this part of the administration and

¹¹ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 39-40.

¹² Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 43.

¹³ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 41-44.

delayed the building of main roads in many regions of the country”. Therefore, it seemed fully desirable to the author of a screed that funds derived from corvée fees and road tolls should be treated only as a “conditional amount of money kept by the state”, subject to their use only in communication¹⁴.

Finally, Łaszczyński, in his “motives”, was of course referring once more to the basic issues related to the functioning of the Board of Transportation by proposing some changes. The principle thought boiled down to the conclusion that the administration of transport “in the flat country, without mountains and gorges, as is the Kingdom of Poland itself, should not be expensive and difficult to manage”. The evidence for this assertion was to be a state in which were found some secondary/side roads located in the Warsaw Province, the length of which was even greater than 600 versts (i.e., 636.6 km) and which were built in a 15-year period between 1845 and 1860 without any possible involvement or support from the Board of 13th/Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire. Instead, this construction process took part only “under the supervision of civil and administrative authorities”. Based on this particular example, the state counsellor pointed out the need to increase the role of (still to be formed) county councils in “guiding” local transport administration, although the most important transport management issues in principle should have been attributed to Warsaw’s Government Commission for Internal Affairs.

In addition, this simple fact was recalled in the counsellor’s “motives”, given that the Department of Administration and Finance of the Third Council of State itself considered combining “in one place the Board of Communications for something as strictly necessary for the prosperity of the Kingdom”. The previously considered establishment in Warsaw of the position of “chief of the District Communications” of the Russian Empire was an obvious obstacle in that union. Thus, the only correct and proper solution to this problem would be to establish, in the Kingdom of Poland, a Board of Land and Water Communications, to be located in Warsaw, which would be completely independent of St. Petersburg’s main manager of communications and government edifices. The author of the “motives” instead proposed to hand over the existing (and even expanded) powers of the Russian head of communications to the person appointed by the Warsaw Administrative Council (or, more precisely, one of its members). In turn, the observed “institutional difficulty” would disappear and the local management of communications would be placed fully within the framework of the administration of the Kingdom of Poland. Thus, the work of the administration of transport would be considerably accelerated and one would avoid a specific “collision” of power; on the other hand, the Polish central government could have (*in spe*) a number of reasons to be satisfied with the efficiency of this branch of administration.

Assessing the up-to-date influence of the St. Petersburg headquarters on the work of transport services in Poland on the Vienna Congress, Łaszczyński expressed his opinion more clearly, writing explicitly: “Experience has taught that the [Russian minister] chief executive of communications had almost no effect on the local Board of Communications”. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, in a formal or rather final version of these “motives”, this opinion confirming the lack of any real impact by St. Petersburg’s head of communication on activities relating to Polish transport services was not expressed as sharply. Compared to the draft version of the examined document, its meaning was rather mitigated, as in

¹⁴ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 47.

the original form there was no hesitation in denying any Russian impact on Polish communications¹⁵.

4. FURTHER PROCEEDINGS CONCERNING PROPOSALS FOR THE RESTORATION OF A FORMAL QUASI-INDEPENDENT POLISH TRANSPORT SERVICE DONE WITHIN STRUCTURES OF THE THIRD COUNCIL OF STATE

Having received, in the late autumn of 1861, such formulated conclusions and supplements to previous opinions, members of the Department of Administration and Finance of the Third Council of State subsequently commenced their profound verification. Referring to the most pressing request for the formal restoration of the Board of Communications as a subordinate entity in relation to the Warsaw's Government Commission for Internal Affairs, "from which this Board in the past has been separated", the administrators considered any further lecture in this field as superfluous. Citing similar reasons previously described in relation to the issue of postal internal relations, they only emphasized the very existence of the significantly high need to "disconnect" Warsaw's Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire from its St. Petersburg's headquarters. The need for the strict fixation on the local Board of Land and Water Communications within the general structures of administration in the Kingdom of Poland was considered a "striking" one.

Moreover, as explained by members of the Department of Administration and Finance of the Third Council of State, the need to combine transport services in the Kingdom with the rest of the administrative system of the country was "in the belief that every [citizen] with any knowledge of the national administration strongly and steady confirmed". It was generally believed to be even more possible to separate (although with an obvious loss of quality in Polish governing structures) Warsaw's postal system from the local administration in the Kingdom than accept any sort of prolonged disconnection of Poland's transport services from other functioning, albeit diverse, alternatives. Therefore, the Third Council of State concluded that the function of transport services should be seen as extremely important, given that, "in all its branches, at any time, has an undoubted and unquestioned privilege to appeal to all administrative offices of any sorts and levels in their indispensable need".

In the case involving an application for the restoration of Warsaw's Board of Land and Water Communications, the main presiding director of the Polish Government Commission for Internal Affairs, Alexander Gerstenzweig made a comprehensive statement, during a session of a committee composed of members of Department of Administration and Finances of the Council of State, in which he recalled, in the first place, that this was a request "aiming to improve in the Kingdom all existing transport matters and to restore at the same time the composition of the local Board of Communications within the Government Commission for Internal Affairs itself"¹⁶.

Assessing the application on its merits, the minister of interior acknowledged that (as well as in relation to the issue of including post offices in the Polish administration system), for someone so strongly and clearly motivated, it was hard (as he said himself) to find any additional arguments in its support. Recognizing the demand as fully justified, he did not have

¹⁵ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 50-52.

¹⁶ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 34-35.

anything essentially to add. Gerstenzweig noted only that, in view of the enormous impact that would now, due to the law recently introduced, by Tsar Alexander II, be exerted on communication matters in the Kingdom of Poland's provincial and district councils, it would be even more necessary to combine "in one place" the civil administration and the Board of Transport¹⁷.

The main presiding director of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs warned, however, about the existence of legal obstacles in this regard, which, for other persons dealing with transport matters before him, came down to the fundamental issues. The problem was related to the formal establishment and existence of the formal position of the head/chief executive of the Board of the 13th/Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire.

Taken as such, the position expressed by Gerstenzweig was in principle rather a general repetition of earlier information given in this field, rather than offering much that was new to the basic discourse on changing the principles of the operation of transport services in the Kingdom of Poland.

Subsequently, the Legislative Department of the Council of State focused on the issue of transport, which finally led to the reading at a general gathering of the Council the conclusions made by State Counsellor Łaszczyński. These were labelled as "on the restoration of old regulations prior to 1832, so that the same management authorities of land and water communications, and the collection of toll would be established again". Then, at another meeting of the Legislative Department, which took place on 24 November/6 December 1861, State Counsellor Lewiński provided further comments in this regard. Besides Lewiński, also present at this meeting were Chairman and State Counsellor Putkiewicz and members of the Faculty, a member of the Council, State Counsellor Opurzecki, and Legal Secretary of the Council of State Brzozowski, as well as Vice Referendary of the Second Class Potocki¹⁸ as a substitute for another vice referendary.

According to Lewiński, in order to examine more closely the issue of the return of formal processes, prior to the period of change during the so-called Paskievich times, relating to the management structures of Polish communication, as well as the rules of road toll collection, it was advisable and reasonable to first answer a number of questions. These questions were formulated by Lewiński as follows. Firstly: what were the real incomes of all categories of road charges before changing the hearth tax? Secondly: did the abolition of additional road border duties and charges imposed on vehicles cause any adverse effects on the state budget? Thirdly: what was the exact amount of cash coming into the State Treasury from the toll roads in the last three years before abolition, taking into account data gathered from all main routes in the Kingdom? Fourthly: what additional funds were taken from the state budget to spend on the development of Polish communication before 1832? Altogether Lewiński thought that the appropriate source to obtain the necessary data would be found in the archives of the Government Commission for Revenue and Treasury. He additionally requested that Warsaw's Ministry of Finance should identify one of its employees, who would be able to submit the required data precisely.

All the observations from State Counsellor Lewiński were fully supported by the Legislative Department of the Council of State on 6 December 1861. It was thought at the same time that, given their very extensive merits and also their strictly administrative

¹⁷ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 37-38.

¹⁸ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 61-62.

nature, their proper implementation would surely require a longer time. It was also assumed that there would likely be an emergence of need to endeavour some additional archival research and collate new explanations from the administrative authorities of the Kingdom. Such a need and possibility, nonetheless, led to decision by Department of Tax Administration of the Council of State. As of the beginning of December 1861, the above-mentioned department had already completed its work on the budget of the Kingdom for the fiscal year of 1862; therefore, it was considered as quite possible and appropriate to refer the communication question to this appropriate administrative unit, namely, the Department of Tax Administration of the Third Council of State¹⁹.

As a result of its diverse works, in 1862, this department came up with several proposals for the transformation of communication services in Poland. All these proposals, however, were only to be found in the minutes of the 45th official gathering of the Third Council of State III, which took place on 8/20 October 1862. The main authorities of the Kingdom waited until 23 October/4 November 1863 for all these proposals to come into effect²⁰.

Fig. 1. Signatures of members of the committee established by the Department of Tax Administration and the Third Council of State from 1861 for the evaluation of the project to restore the Board of Land and Water Communications within the frames of administration of the Kingdom of Poland²¹

¹⁹ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 62-64.

²⁰ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 1-2.

²¹ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 23.

5. FORMAL CONVERSION OF THE BOARD OF THE SEVENTH DISTRICT OF COMMUNICATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE INTO THE BOARD OF LAND AND WATER COMMUNICATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND

The above-described delay in works of the Third Council of State on projects streamlining the transport system in the Kingdom, thereby overturning of its quasi-independence, unambiguously shows an obvious and striking lack of correlation with the process of real systemic changes, which accelerated in Poland in the summer of 1862. Now, at this time, based on the order dated 27 May/8 June 1862 to render the Tsarist governor in the Kingdom to a Polish major, who was superior to the all levels of national administration, Tsar Alexander II issued a decision to completely change the formal status of Polish transportation structures. That is, in place of the Board of the Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire was established in Warsaw, “separate and independent from the management of the Empire”, the Board of Land and Water Communications of the Kingdom of Poland. The supreme lawmaker found it suitable, however, to emphasize that the existing arrangements for the “composition and organization” of transport services were still in the Tsar’s power, unless the need to make necessary changes was proven. Tsar Alexander II formally signed his decree on the 7/19 August 1862²².

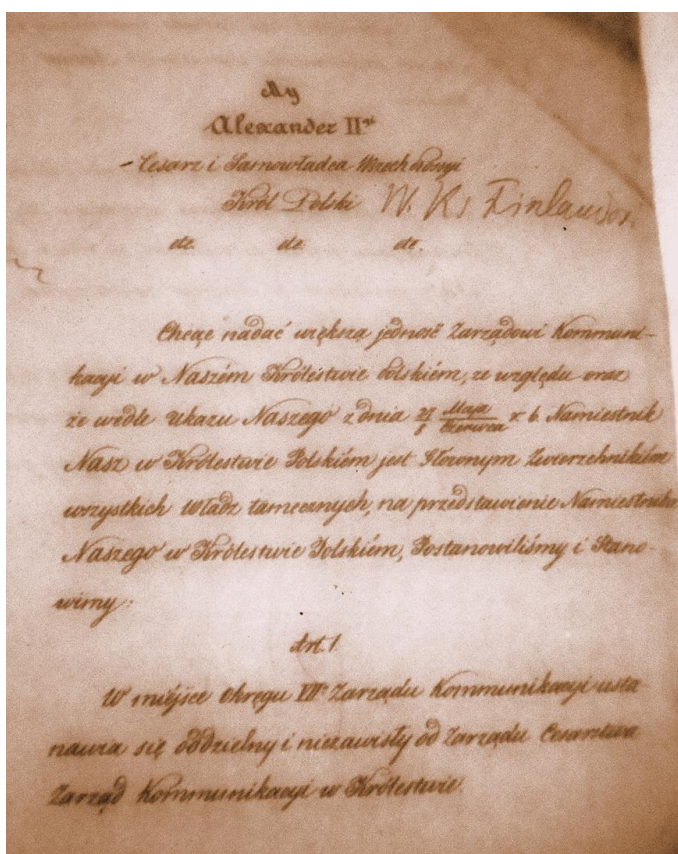


Fig. 2. Decree re-establishing the Board of Land and Water Communication in the Kingdom of Poland, dated 1862, draft version (p. 1)²³

²² A. Okolski, *Wykład prawa administracyjnego oraz prawa administracyjnego obowiązującego w Królestwie Polskiem*. Warszawa 1880: 146.

²³ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 310: 18.

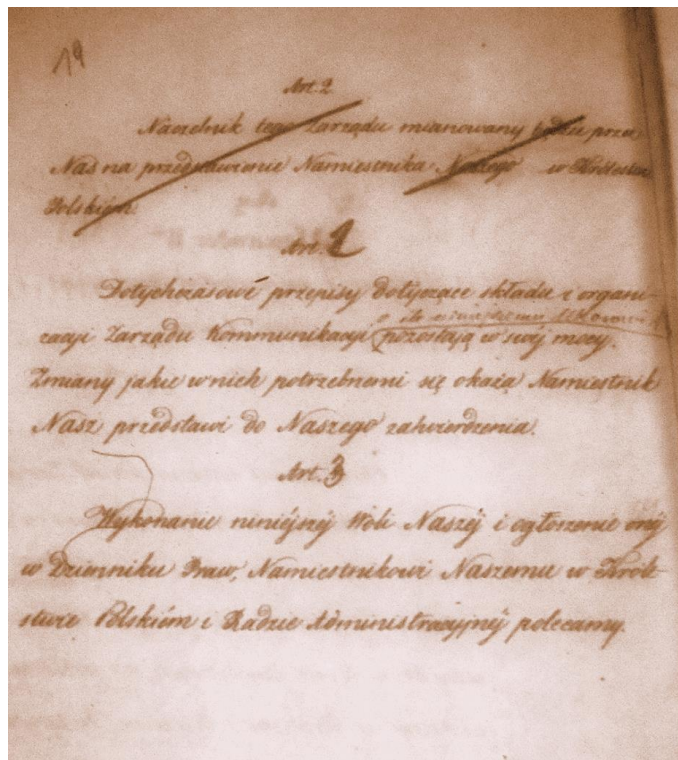


Fig. 3. Decree re-establishing the Board of Land and Water Communication in the Kingdom of Poland, dated 1862, draft version (p. 2)²⁴

6. WORKS OF COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED TO REORGANIZE THE ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSPORT IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND

At the request of the chief executive of transport services in the area of the Kingdom (since 27 July/8 August 1861, it has been General Major Stanisław Kierbedź²⁵), the Administrative Council released, on 11/23 October 1861 Order no. 6,774 on the Verification of Principles of Operation of This Branch of Government²⁶. In October 1861, it was decided to establish, working under the guidance of the head of the Board of the Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire, a special committee, which also consisted of a vice chairman and some “ordinary” members, appointed by definition from among both public officials and private citizens. The choice had to be made from among persons who were recognized as having in-depth knowledge of the industrial problems of the country. The name of this new administrative organization was the Committee for Improvement Measures and Enlargement of Resources for Communications in the Kingdom of Poland.

Despite the apparent gravity of the problem, it was only after 14 months, i.e., on 4/16 January 1863, that the head of Board of Land and Water Communications located in Warsaw, namely, General Major Stanisław Kierbedź, submitted a request (no. 105) to the Administrative Council for the appointment of a full team to work on the above-

²⁴ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 310: 19.

²⁵ *Gazeta Rządowa Królestwa Polskiego*. 1/13 September 1861, no. 204: 1369-1370.

²⁶ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 122-123.

mentioned committee, which would draft new rules for the operation of the local public transport system as well as propose new structural solutions in the field of communications.

Kierbedź proposed for its deputy manager a well-known member of the Council of State, Franciszek Węgleński. Among the other members primarily chosen for this committee were the following: two members of the Council of State, Lewiński and Kurtz; Actual State Counsellor Muszyński, who was also Director of the Department of Non-permanent Revenues in the Government Commission for Revenue and Treasury; State Adviser Łaszczyński, who was also Director of the Department of Industry and Crafts of Government Commission for Internal Affairs; Stanisław Englerhardt, Director of the Bank of Poland; Stanisław Wysocki, Chief Inspector of the Railways; Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Wasilewski of the Corps of Engineers of Communications, who was also the Government Commissioner on the Main Roads of the First Class; William Kolberg, Inspector of Communications in the Kingdom of Poland; and Tadeusz Chrzanowski, a permanent bridge constructor working in Warsaw. The chief of Polish communications additionally proposed on 4/16 January 1863 that the following should also become members of this committee: Leopold Kronenberg, Ewaryst Mokronowski, Henryk Earl Starzenski, Kazimierz Skórkowski, Stanisław Skrutkowski and Ludwik Walchnowski. The full complement of nominations proposed by the chief manager of the Kingdom's communications for membership of the committee appointed for the purpose of general improvement to the Polish transport system was accepted during the meeting of the Administrative Council, which took place on 8/20 January 1863²⁷.

Due to the outbreak of January Uprising, it should not be too surprising that it was not until 7/19 October 1863, nine months later, that any items requiring any significant development were officially presented to the new committee. It was, accordingly, "the request of the Department of Tax Administration of State Council of Kingdom for a description of the means of the proper business development of the committee established by decision of the Administrative Council of 1123 October 1861 to prepare a draft of permanent rules to be in force for the communication system of land and water, to improve the quality of existing laws and to propose new legal solutions"²⁸. In the preamble to this conclusion statement, members of Department of Tax Administration wrote mainly about the costs of transport as a major factor that was impeding the movement of goods. References were also made to famous verses written by the economist Michel Chevalier, who saw the development of transport as a "fundamental improvement, bringing at the same time advantages to all kinds of industries". Mentioning the necessity to put a considerable amount of work into the improvement of communication existing in the Kingdom of Poland, the authors of the report relied on the very content of a letter sent by the local head chief of communications to the Administrative Council on 9/21 October 1861, in which General Kierbedź described the overall unsatisfactory state of Polish transport and emphasized the absence of an overall communication development strategy²⁹.

It was also recalled that, as a result of a similar assessment of the local transport situation by the Third Council of State, the government of the Kingdom, at its gathering on 27 November/4 December 1861 unanimously adopted a specific request from the Department of Tax Administration of the Council of State concerning transport finances. The specific issue

²⁷ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 109-110.

²⁸ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 124-125.

²⁹ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 121-122.

referred to was about possibly including in future state budgets, corresponding to the real possibilities of Warsaw's treasury, the amount of money intended for the construction of main roads and for improvement to watercourses and rafting on Polish rivers. The resolution was subsequently approved by Tsar Alexander II.

Members of the Department of Tax Administration also indicated that, by acting precisely under these assumptions, their unit of the Council of State, as early as 1862, when assessing the budget of the Kingdom for 1863, detected in Poland a highly insufficient number of local roads, even in relation to the "Polish provinces" on the border with partitioning states, i.e., the Prussian Grand Duchy of Poznan and Austrian Galicia. In turn, the Department of Revenues firmly supported a strong increase in the amount of the projected loan, intended for use by the Board of Communications and a rapid undertaking of resolute measures to improve the general state of communication in the country. It should be added that the General Assembly of the Council of State unanimously supported all the observations and conclusions of its department.

The report also recalled that the previously established new committee intended to draft some new mandatory rules, which would be useful for land and water transport in the Kingdom, as well as work on a project to improve the general condition of existing transportation and introduce some concepts for the development of new lines of communication. According to the assumptions imposed in October 1861 by the Administrative Council, the tasks of this committee were then determined as follows: a) laying down tracks for the railway, linking them up with main roads of the first and second class; b) defining the scale of importance of individual plans for building up the land transport network and identifying the sequence of their execution; c) determining the scale of difficulties in river rafting and identifying measures to remedy these deficiencies; d) verifying and publicizing financial resources available in Poland in order to maintain and possibly develop the transport network structure, as well as identifying the most beneficial way to use these funds; and e) designing eventual changes to the existing transport rules and possibly introducing completely new legal solutions in this area.

According to the authors of this dissertation, in October of 1863 (i.e., the exact date when the report was written), the Board of Land and Water Communications, after adding various proposals for improving land and water transport to its report for 1862, emphasized that "all of these items will be recognized gradually by the committee [which is] separately established". The Board of Transport pledged to gradually submit to the sovereign authorities the individual proposals and observations, which had been made in the case of individual projects during the progressive works of the committee³⁰. Unable to confine itself to such vague statements, the Department of Tax Administration of the Third Council of State demanded that Lieutenant Colonel Wasilewski, a crucial member of the Board of Land and Water Communications, provide a more detailed explanation of the actual work of that committee³¹. In response, the Department of the Council of State was informed by the transport administration that "current national scale events [namely, pre-uprising social tensions in Poland] were the sole reason why the head of the Board of Communications, after getting in touch with some citizens, no earlier than at the end of 1862, saw no possibility of enforcing the provisions of the Administrative Council for creating the personal composition of the committee". From the knowledge acquired by the Department of Tax Administration,

³⁰ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 122-123.

³¹ Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of the Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 117.

it was discovered that doubly formally convened meetings of that committee were held prior to the beginning of July 1863. These events should have eventually taken place on 20 April/2 May 1863 and on 22 June/4 July 1863. As a result of the report delivered by Lieutenant Colonel Wasilewski, at these meetings, “despite constantly renewed invitation calls, none of the members chosen among the citizens showed up”.

During the time of this apparent obstruction shown by civic members of the committee, it was possible for the government side to prepare at least a draft version of its internal organization and then present such a proposal on 26 June/8 July 1863 for the approval of the Administrative Council, which approved it. Specific works conducted by the committee in the summer of 1863 included developing instructions for its international verifying administrative body appointed for the detailed description of the actual status of the Vistula River, in terms of the width of the water-based border between the Kingdom of Poland and Austria, and submitting research results to the Council of State. Subsequently, the General Transport Improvement Committee gave its opinion on the request of the local government of the Warsaw Province, as well as some resolutions from Łęczyca and Włocławek district councils to allocate from state budget amounts of money needed for the renewal of one main road of the second class, running from Zgierz and Włocławek.

The committee additionally considered one project by the entrepreneur Adolf Kurtz, concerning the construction of a navigable channel connecting Prague with Zgierz, and appointed from among its members a delegation to negotiate with him on a suitable contract. Lastly, the same committee, at the request of the Administrative Council, embarked on measures that would compensate for any possible financial losses caused by the elimination of the border road toll charged in the Kingdom of Poland.

Given by Lieutenant Colonel Wasilewski, such a presentation of the detailed analysis of previous works of the committee set up, due to the need, among others, to develop a new communication system in the Kingdom, did not meet with any evidently positive response from the representatives of central authorities in the country. Members of the Department of Revenues of the Council of State did not express full approval of its up-to-date proceedings. They pointed out that the committee was instead focusing exclusively on issues of a specific and minor nature, which did not correspond either to its rank nor its assumptions and goals. These members strongly supported the view that the originally set targets could not “be subject to any delay in their fulfilment”, especially when the development and overall improvement of Polish communication were defined as being “most pressing needs of the country”.

Furthermore, due to an acceptance by the Department of the Council of State of some of the Board of Communication members’ explanations, which in reality shifted the whole responsibility for evidently poor results of the committee working on repairing the communication system onto the difficulties that occurred when gathering together its full composition, state counsellors presented a firm proposal in this regard. In other words, they considered it necessary to submit to the General Assembly of the Third Council of State new proposals to develop some “countermeasures”, which would effectively lead to the introduction of the above-mentioned committee in its proper sphere of activities of a general nature, namely, its recovery³². That is, it was about the co-option by the committee a number of new and competent people. As such, in the early autumn of 1863, the Department of Tax Administration of the Third Council of State requested firm principles to be developed, which would result in the highly effective and efficient commencement of

³² Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw. Third State Council of Kingdom of Poland (1862, 1863 and 1864). Signature 256: 124-125.

activities by the Committee for Improvement Measures and Enlargement of Resources for Communications in the Kingdom of Poland, which had been set up in 1861.

However, at the meeting of the Council of State on 23 October/4 November 1863, its members decided to indefinitely postpone the whole question³³. This decision turned out to be a prophetic one given the much-changed political situation. On 25 February/9 March 1867, the Tsarist authorities issued a decisive decree concerning the final abolishment of any quasi-autonomous management of transport in the Kingdom of Poland. On the basis of Article 1 of this legal act, on the territory adherent to Vistula River, Tsar Alexander II decided to establish the 11th District of Communications of the Russian Empire, which was fully dependent on St. Petersburg³⁴.

7. CONCLUSION

When, in 1861, General Major Kierbedź, the head of the Board of the Seventh District of Communications of the Russian Empire, seemed to give negative feedback on the Polish transport system, he also included some extremely bitter observations: “The navigable rivers in the Kingdom insufficiently meet their appropriation because of the obstacles found within of them. The main roads are not properly maintained in all places... But the most important disadvantage of the present state of communication is the lack of any permanent transport system structure, which would meet the needs of industry and commerce, internally and externally”³⁵. Thus, despite formal independence from St. Petersburg gained in the summer of 1862, representing a short period of political “thaw” prior to the outbreak of the January Uprising, Polish administrators failed to develop and implement innovative transportation solutions, which would significantly boost the poor status of national communication. After January 1863, this kind of work became practically impossible, mostly due to obvious social obstruction and rapidly progressing ostracism on the part of the Tsarist invaders’ power base.

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