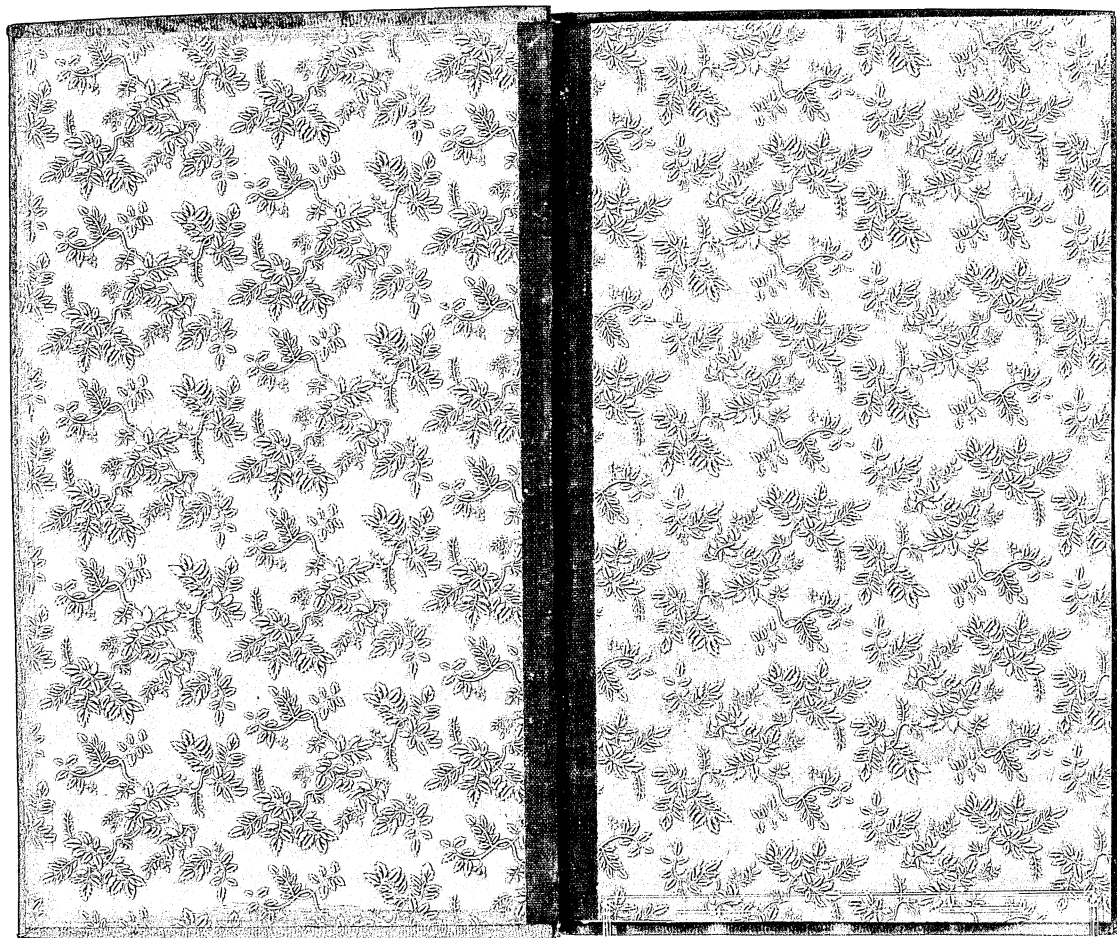
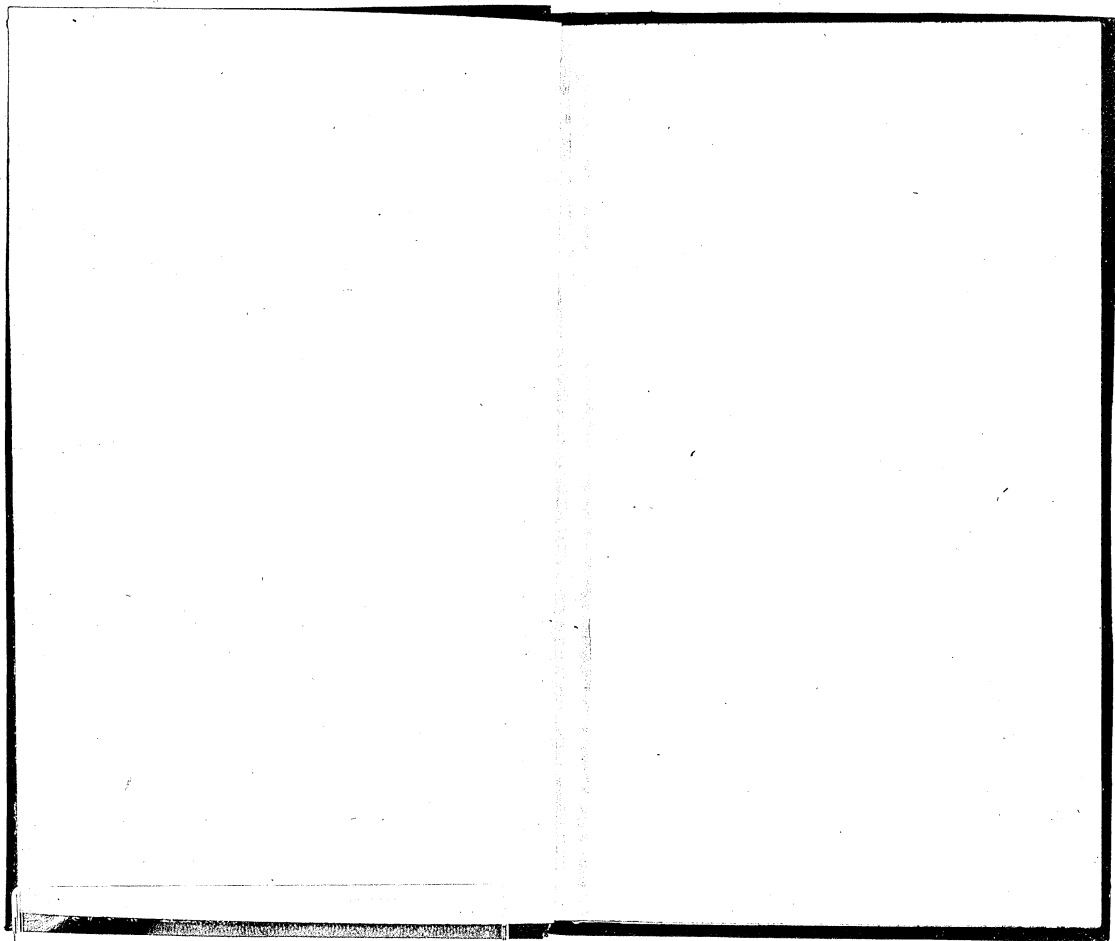


REPORT
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1853





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BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

HALF-YEARLY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

NOVEMBER, 1853.

Your Committee, in presenting to you their first Half-yearly Report since the revival of the Chamber in the month of May, of the current year, first request your attention to the detail of the various steps which led to the re-organization of the Chamber, as shown in the following Abstract Reports of the proceedings of the several meetings then held.

At a meeting of the Members of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, held on the 28th March, W. W. Kettlewell, Esq., in the chair, it was resolved, after some discussion—

That a Committee, composed of the following gentlemen,

JAS. J. MACKENZIE, Esq.,
DAVID COWIE, Esq.,
W. W. KETTLEWELL, Esq.,
D. MACKINLAY, Esq.,

be appointed to report upon the condition of the Chamber, financial and otherwise, and be requested to take into their consideration the best means for placing it on an efficient footing, and that a public meeting be called by advertisement for the purpose of considering their Reports and suggestions.

The Meeting then broke up.

A.

The Special Committee so appointed met on the 28th April, and prepared and issued the following Report to the Commercial body:—

Report of the Special Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Having been named a Special Committee by the Chamber for the purpose of inquiring into its position, financial and otherwise, and of reporting to it such suggestions as might occur to us, with a view of placing it on a more efficient footing, we have now to lay before you the result of our investigations.

1st. *As to its Financial Position.*—The Chamber when originally instituted in 1834, consisted of seventy-nine members, who each paid an entrance fee of Rs. 100, and a monthly subscription of Rs. 12, and in June, 1834, it had invested in Government Securities Rs. 6,000, exclusive of a balance at its credit in the Union Bank of Rs. 1,131.

In October, 1834, the monthly subscription was reduced to Rs. 10, and in September, 1837, to Rs. 8, for each member. In August, 1850, the subscription was fixed at Rs. 10, for each *firm*, whether consisting of one or more individuals, and at this latter date the entrance fee of Rs. 100, was entirely abolished.

The *income* of the Chamber consisted of entrance and monthly subscription fees, besides fees paid for arbitrations.

The average monthly receipts in the following years have been:—

In 1834-35	Rs. 653
" 1837-38	" 705
" 1840-41	" 570
" 1844-45	" 500
" 1847-48	" 444
" 1850-51	" 287
Being now	" 296

The Chamber seems to have attained the summit of its financial prosperity early in 1838, when it had invested in Company's Paper the sum of Rs. 16,000.

The *expenditure* consists of office and establishment charges, the former including payments for furniture, rent, newspapers, &c., and the latter the Secretary's salary, and servants' wages.

The Secretary's salary was at first Rs. 300 a month; in March, 1835, it was raised to Rs. 500, in March, 1837, the Secretary voluntarily reduced it to

400; to 350, in July, 1848, to 300, in August, 1848, and to 200, in September, 1850, being the amount which your late Secretary received up to the time of his death.

The rent paid originally by the Chamber to the Bonded Warehouse, was Rs. 200 a month, which was reduced to 100, in November, 1847, and on 1st May, 1850, to Rs. 50, the rent now paid.

In June, 1850, the then President and Vice President submitted to the Chamber a memorandum in which they stated that, "A recent investigation by us of the accounts of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, having exhibited a gradually increasing expenditure in excess of its income, we have therefore to suggest the propriety of your adopting, with as little delay as possible, such steps as may be advisable for placing its financial condition on a more satisfactory footing."

In that memorandum it was shown (which we find to be in accordance with the fact) that taking an average of 9 years, from 1st April, 1838, to 1st April, 1847,

The yearly income consisted of	Rs. 8,084
And the expenditure,	" 9,750

Showing an excess of expenditure over income, yearly of 1,666

Subsequent to 1847, a considerable reduction took place in the expenditure as well as in the receipts, and accordingly we find that the average yearly expenditure for the 5 years, from 1st April 1847 to

1st April, 1852, is	Rs. 5,388
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While the receipts are only	" 4,693
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Showing an excess yearly of expenditure over income of 795

The Government Securities of Rs. 16,000 above alluded to, were gradually sold to meet the increasing deficiency, until the last portion of them melted away in 1849.

In the memorandum of June, 1850, already quoted, the Chamber was requested to consider what steps it should adopt for the purpose of meeting its embarrassments, present and prospective;—in consequence of which a meeting was held in the following month, at which it was resolved, that an assessment of Rs. 50 should be levied on each firm to liquidate the then outstanding claims against the Chamber, and the Secretary was directed to issue a Circular, inviting such of the Commercial community, as were not members, to join the Chamber, which then abolished the entrance fee of Rs. 100, the Secretary reducing his salary to Rs. 200, as already mentioned.

That appeal cannot have been very warmly responded to, seeing that there are only three members now more than constituted the Chamber in July, 1850. The expenditure of the Chamber for the 19 years it has been in existence, amounts to 1½ lac of rupees.

The present monthly income of the Chamber

as already stated is, Rs. 296 0 0

Against a monthly expenditure of Secretary's

salary, peons, &c., Rs. 223 13 0

House rent, " 50 0 0

Office charge, say " 25 0 0

„ 298 13 0

Appended hereto is a Statement showing the existing liabilities of the Chamber to be

„ 948 4 6

And to provide for the payment of this, your Committee are sorry to have to suggest an assessment on each firm of two Gold Mohurs.

Before proceeding further, your Committee will take the liberty of glancing at *2nd. The Past History of the Chamber.*

The objects which it stated with could not be better expressed than they were at the time in its rules, or constitution,—namely, to watch over and protect the general interest of Commerce; to collect information on all matters of interest to the Mercantile Community; to use every means in its power for the removal of evils, the redress of grievances, and the promotion of the common good; to communicate with Authorities and with individual parties thereupon; to form a code of practice, whereby the transaction of business may be simplified and facilitated; to receive references and to arbitrate between disputants.

Under its Rules and Regulations the Management of the Chamber was placed in the hands of a “General Committee,” which authorised itself to be subdivided into three other Committees, called “the Committee of Management,” which had the control of the establishment and funds; the “Committee of Correspondence,” which was to receive and dispose of all communications and references to the Chamber on general points; and “the Committee of Arbitration,” for the settlement of differences between parties applying to the Chamber as a Court of Reconciliation.

The first meeting of the Chamber was held on the 16th of April, and the second, of 21, on the 3rd of June, 1834, when a full report was submitted, which was directed to be published in the newspapers.

This report bears ample testimony to the Committee, with its Secretary, having gone heartily and vigorously to work, on all questions, as they arose of

mercantile interest, and to their otherwise promoting the objects of the Chamber with proper zeal and spirit.

The first Annual Meeting was held on the 8th of April, 1835, which was well attended, and to that meeting a full report was submitted by the general Committee, touching upon the points of most interest (about twenty in number,) which had occurred in the course of the year, in a very clear and satisfactory manner.

For the first three or four years of its career, the attendance at the meetings of Committee, averaged from ten to fifteen members, and while this continued, the business of the Chamber progressed satisfactorily. A change, however, gradually crept in whenever members showed an indifference to its proceedings.

The beginning of the Chamber's decadency may be said to have become most perceptible in 1842, subsequent to which not more than two members are seen to attend some of the monthly meetings, although when a question of interest came to be brought forward, a better attendance could occasionally be secured. In fact as shown by its records, it was only in the first year of its existence that the Chamber can be said to have done anything worthy of the objects with which it was instituted. Laterly it has almost ceased to correspond with authorities or to collect information on any matter of interest. It has never formed any code of practice whereby the transactions of business may be simplified and facilitated; it has not classified or arranged such information as it has collected, and disputants of late rarely refer to it for arbitration.

3rd. The non-efficiency of the Chamber.—Your Committee is of opinion has arisen from its not having been properly supported; and, primarily, from the total want of interest and co-operation, which each and all have, for some years past, manifested in its proceedings.

4th. The Proposed Revival.—Your Committee suggest that a further trial be given to the Chamber, and, although there are no anterior successes to fall back upon, your Committee is confident that the Mercantile Community, generally, will at last accord to it that cordial co-operation, without which no great measure of good can be accomplished.

Meanwhile, the Chamber must derive vitality and support from the existing members, which, few as they are, are greater in number than those constituting the Chambers of the other Presidencies, which are said to work well.

Assured of this necessary element of success,—the cordial and zealous co-operation of its members,—your Committee will now invite attention to the suggestions which they have to offer for the re-organization of the Chamber.

The first point for consideration is the selection of a Committee; and in place of the general and Sub-Committees, as chosen under the existing Rules, your Committee propose to centralize the whole business of the Chamber in one Committee, consisting of seven members in all, including the President and Vice-President; that instead of stated Monthly General Meetings, as at present, this Committee should meet once a week for the despatch of business; and that no member should be placed upon it, except on the understanding that he is bound to give as much of his time and trouble as may be required for the efficient discharge of the business which may come before it. *

X The next point to which the Committee beg to direct attention is, the election of a Secretary; and in this great discrimination and judgment will have to be exercised—choosing from the candidates, the man best fitted for the office;—for that reason alone,—and not on personal or private grounds. The Bonded Warehouse Directors have, as heretofore, agreed to join the Chamber in choosing a Secretary, competent to do the duties of both establishments. The salary at the outset will not be very great, but it will be such as may induce a man, such as is required, to accept the appointment, on the promise that if he gives satisfaction, his pay will be increased, as the means of the Chamber are able to afford it.

The following are the further suggestions which your Committee beg to offer; viz., to raise the monthly subscription from 10 to 16 Rupees for each firm; to collect subscriptions with the view of purchasing books to form a library; to prepare for publication an annual report of its proceedings (after being approved of at a General Meeting,) and to have such points of practice as may have been decided from time to time by the Chamber formed into a Digest for the guidance of the commercial community.

To enable the Chamber to carry these views into effect, it will be, in the first place, necessary to rescind several of the existing Rules and Regulations; and as these appear rather complex, your Committee have prepared shorter rules, which they submit herewith, and which, if approved of, may be adopted by the Chamber, and the old ones entirely repealed. * A meeting for the purpose of considering this, should be advertised without delay.

With these observations, your Committee will close their report; but before doing so, they may be permitted to put it to such of the commercial community as have deserted the Chamber, as well as to those who have never been members of it—whether it is not due to themselves as Merchants to avail of this opportunity, of uniting, with cordiality and zeal, to raise the Bengal

Chamber of Commerce, to be what it ought to be, one of the most useful and powerful instruments of the kind for good in any part of the world.

(Signed,)

W. W. KETTLEWELL.
JAS. JOS. MACKENZIE.
D. COWIE.
D. MACKINLAY.

APPENDIX.

Proposed Rules and Regulations of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

1st.—That this Society shall be styled “the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.”

2nd.—That the object of the Chamber shall be to watch over and protect the general interests of commerce; to collect information on all matters of interest to the mercantile community, and to use every means within its power, for the removal of evils, the redress of grievances, and the promotion of the common good; to communicate with authorities and individual parties thereupon; to form a code of practice whereby the transaction of business may be simplified and facilitated; to receive references, and to arbitrate between disputants. The decisions in such references being recorded for future guidance.

3rd.—That it being highly desirable not to recognize any principle of exclusion, all persons engaged or interested in the commerce or shipping of Bengal, shall, upon payment of the subscription and on signature of the Rules and Regulations, be admissible as members in the manner hereinafter described.

4th.—That candidates for admission proposed by one member, and seconded by another, shall be ballotted for, and a majority of votes shall decide the election.

5th.—That voting by proxy or by members whose subscriptions are in arrear be not allowed.

6th.—That the Chamber reserves to itself the right of expelling any of its members; such expulsion to be decided by the votes of three-fourths of the members of the Chamber.

7th.—That a majority of the firms constituting the Chamber shall be held sufficient to form any general meeting, at which although two or more partners

of one firm be present, they are to count in voting as only one member; and no two members of one firm can be at the same time members of the Committee.

8th.—That the monthly subscription of each member or firm be Rs. 16—subject hereafter to increase or reduction as may be decided by a general meeting.

9th.—That the business and funds of the Chamber shall be managed by a Committee of seven members,—consisting of the President, and Vice-President, and five members,—to be elected annually at a general meeting of the Chamber in the month of May. The President, or in his absence the Vice-President, being ex-officio Chairman of the Committee, and in the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Committee to elect its own Chairman. Four to form a quorum, the Chairman in cases of equality having the casting vote.

10th.—That the Committee shall meet on such day of every week as it may fix as most convenient for the purpose of transacting such business as may come within the limits of the objects of the Chamber, and that its proceedings be laid on the table, open to the inspection of members, subject to such regulations as the Committee may deem expedient.

11th.—That vacancies in the Committee, created by the absence of members from the Presidency for two months, or by departure for Europe, or by death, be filled up at a general meeting by a majority of the members present thereat.

12th.—That the Secretary be elected by the Committee, such election to be subject to confirmation at the next ensuing general meeting.

13th.—That the general meetings of the Chamber be held from time to time as the Committee for the time being may deem necessary. That a special general meeting shall be called by the President, or in his absence by the Vice-President, or by his order, on the requisition of any five firms, members of the Chamber, to be held within five days subsequent to the receipt of such requisition.

14th.—That all proceedings of the Committee be subject to approval or otherwise of general meetings duly convened.

15th.—That strangers visiting the Presidency may be introduced as honorary members for two months by any member of the Chamber inserting their name in a book to be kept for that purpose.

16th.—That the Committee be empowered to make bye-laws, which shall not be of any force until approved of by a general meeting.

17th.—That an annual report of the proceedings be prepared; and, after being approved of at a general meeting, printed and circulated.

18th.—That the above Rules be added to or altered only by a majority of members of the Chamber.

19th.—That the foregoing Rules be printed, and an authenticated copy, subscribed by each member on admission, be kept as part of the records of the Chamber. That printed copies be forwarded to members of the Chamber, to the Secretary to Government, and to such other parties or authorities, as it may be desirable to make acquainted with the objects and rules of the Association.

JAS. J. MACKENZIE.
DAVID COWIE.
W. W. KETTLEWELL.
D. MACKINLAY.

The Special Committee then convened a General Meeting of the Chamber for the 9th May, at which the Rules proposed by them for the future guidance of the Chamber were adopted, and general business transacted, as appears from the subjoined Report.

MEETING OF THE CALCUTTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Held at the Bonded Warehouse, on 9th May, the following Gentlemen being present, viz.:

MESSRS. DEFFELL,	MESSRS. SKINNER,
" KETTLEWELL,	" MACKINLAY,
" McEWIN,	" MATHEWSON,
" STEWART PALMER,	" MACKENZIE, &C.

MR. DEFFELL, in the Chair.

The business of the day commenced by the Chairman submitting the Report of the Special Committee, after which the following resolutions were passed:—
First Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Hugh McEwin and seconded by Mr. Stuart Palmer—

That the report of the Special Committee now submitted be received.
Carried unanimously.

Second Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Mathewson and seconded by Mr. McEwen—

That the Chamber of Commerce be continued with the support of the present Members, and that the general body of commercial community, as described in the Report now submitted, be invited to join as Members.

Carried unanimously.

Third Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Stuart Palmer and seconded by Mr. Blundell—

That the Rules and Regulations proposed by the Special Committee and now submitted be adopted in place of the old or existing Rules and Regulations, which are from this date declared to be repealed.

Carried unanimously.

Fourth Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Skinner and seconded by Mr. D. Mackinlay—

That such of the Mercantile community as should express a desire to join as Members be requested to make an application to the Acting Secretary of the Chamber, who will arrange to have such applicant or applicants' names proposed and seconded, so that the votes of the Members be collected to decide the election in every such case at a meeting to be specially called for the purpose by the Acting Secretary on a day previous to a meeting to be held on the 13th instant, with a view to entitling such newly-elected Members to be present and vote thereat.

Carried unanimously.

Fifth Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Cowie and seconded by Mr. W. W. Kettlewell—

That, with the view of having the new Rules and Regulations signed by the Members, this meeting do adjourn to Saturday, the 14th instant, at noon, when an adjourned meeting will be held for the purpose of selecting a Committee, and of transacting such other business as may be brought forward.

Carried unanimously.

Sixth Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Mackenzie and seconded by Mr. D. Mackinlay—

That, in order to meet the existing liabilities of the Chamber, a contribution of two Gold Mohurs be paid by each of the present firms Members of the Chamber.

Carried unanimously.

Seventh Resolution.—Proposed by Mr. Blundell and seconded by Mr. McEwen—

That Mr. Kettlewell be solicited to act for the present as Secretary of the Chamber, with full authority to collect all contributions and subscriptions.

Carried unanimously.

The Meeting was then adjourned to Saturday, the 14th instant.

A vote of thanks was rendered to the Chairman for his able conduct in the Chair.

A Special General Meeting of the Chamber was again held on the 14th May, for the purpose of balloting for such parties as had applied to become Members of the Chamber.

PRESENT :

MR. KETTLEWELL,

MR. MACKINLAY,

„ APCAR,

„ COWIE,

„ BLUNDELL,

„ BALFOUR, &c.

At which, on the proposal of Mr. Mackinlay, seconded by Mr. Kettlewell, forty-three Firms and Individuals were elected Members of the Chamber.

On the 18th May a further General Meeting of the Chamber was held, at which, with a very large attendance of the Members, the following gentlemen were elected as office bearers for the year, from the 1st May, viz :

JAS. J. MACKENZIE, Esq., *President.*

D. MACKINLAY, Esq., *Vice President.*

D. COWIE, Esq.,

C. B. SKINNER, Esq.,

J. S. ELLIOTT, Esq.,

J. P. MACKILLIGIN, Esq.,

W. W. KETTLEWELL, Esq.,

six new Members were elected and resolutions passed to the following effect :

That the subscription for individual members of the Chamber be 10 rupees per mensem, while those alone carrying on business under any style or firm do pay the 16 rupees per mensem as resolved at the Chamber's last meeting.

Carried by a large majority.

Proposed by Mr. Finlay and seconded by Mr. Donald Gordon—

That the Rule of the Chamber requiring new Members to be ballotted for be suspended for the space of six weeks from this date, in order that time may be given to issue invitations, through the medium of the public prints or otherwise (as may be decided by the Committee) to all interested in the commerce and productions of this country to join the Chamber; those stationed elsewhere than at the Presidency, to pay a reduced scale of subscription.

Carried unanimously.

That the subscription for Mofussil Members be two Go'd Mohurs per annum.

The first meeting of your Committee, named at the above meeting, was held on the 23rd of May, to appoint a Secretary, when their choice fell upon Mr. T. M. Robinson, who was unanimously elected.

Your Committee fixed his salary at four hundred rupees a month, with the understanding that it should be increased proportionally with the increasing prosperity of the Chamber.

Having thus brought to a conclusion the narrative of the revival of the Chamber, your Committee now proceed to report upon its present position, and to render an account of their proceedings during the first Half-year of its existence under the new designation of the BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The number of local Members of the Chamber has been increased by elections from time to time until it now amounts to 86, and a Circular Letter distributed by your

Committee among parties engaged in business in the Mofussil, a copy of which is given in the Appendix, has obtained for the Chamber 18 non-resident members, the total number therefore now amounting to 104, a list of whom will be found in the Appendix.

The present monthly income of the Chamber amounts to Company's rupees 1,262-0-0, exclusive of the subscriptions of Mofussil Members of Company's rupees 576-0-0 per annum. The abstract of the accounts of the Chamber appended hereto, shows a cash balance in the Bank of Bengal of Company's rupees 4,301-7-6 on the 31st October. Your Committee have written to England for priced lists of the best and latest books of commercial information and reference, as also for sets of the newest and most complete maps of all parts of the world, in the purchase of which, for the use of the Chamber, they propose to expend the above amount; the institution being at present extremely deficient in these essential works for the reference and information of its Members.

Your Committee have opened a correspondence with the following Associations:

The East India and China Association.

The Indian Reform Society.

The Chambers of Commerce of Manchester, Dundee, Leeds, Bombay, Colombo, Port Louis, Singapore, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Rangoon, and the East Indian Association, Liverpool; and they trust by co-operation with these Societies to promote the interests of the Trade of this port, and of the East generally.

The first local subject to which your Committee directed their attention, was the state of the navigation of the Hooghly. In the Appendix will be found their correspon-

dence relating to it with the Government, from which you will observe that the Governor General entered at once with much interest into the question, appointed a Committee to report upon the state of the Hooghly, and at the same time ordered a re-survey of the Mutlah, and a survey of the country lying between the head of that River and Calcutta. The Hooghly Committee have not yet completed their researches, nor have your Committee received any official communication of the surveys of the Mutlah and the intervening land having been completed, which, however, they have reason to believe will be favorable in all respects. Since the subject was first brought to the notice of Government by your Committee, no less than seven

*Sir G. Seymour,
Queen,
Wm. Penn,
Comtesse de Brion,
Cecilia,
Faize Rohoman,
W. Jardine,*

ships, the names of which are given in the margin, have grounded in the Hooghly. Of these the *Cecilia* was totally lost, with the whole of her cargo and great part of her crew, the *Sir George Seymour*, *Queen*, and *William Penn* had to discharge their cargos and go into Dock for repairs, the *William Jardine* was totally lost, a small part of her cargo only having been saved, and the *Faize Rohoman* and *Comtesse de Brion* only floated again without damage sufficient to interrupt their voyages; thus, in every case but the last two mentioned, heavy loss, detention, and inconvenience to all parties interested in both the vessels and cargos having occurred, this repeated occurrence of serious disasters renders a continued attention to the subject highly necessary, and your Committee await with great interest the reports both of the Hooghly Committee and the Surveyors of the Mutlah and the country between the two Rivers.

The great irregularities in the despatch of the mails by the Steam Vessels of the Peninsular and Oriental Company has been made a subject of correspondence by your Committee with the East India and China Association of London and the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester; since this correspondence began, however, the terms of the new contract for the conveyance of the mails agreed to between the Lords of the Admiralty and the Peninsular and Oriental Company have come into force, and from an abstract of these terms, printed and circulated by your Committee, and now added in the Appendix, you will observe, that no such irregularities in the dates of sailing of the Mail Steamers can in future occur, although it is to be regretted that no acceleration of speed in the conveyance of the mails has formed part of the stipulations of the Admiralty contract. At the expiration of the present contract, it is confidently anticipated that, in these respects, the postal communication with Europe will be considerably improved. Your Committee is however in correspondence with the Peninsular and Oriental Company and Government on other points connected with the present dates of despatch of Mails.

Your Committee prepared a petition for presentation to the Houses of Parliament, praying for the attention of the Legislature, in arranging the terms for the renewal of the Hon'ble E. I. Company's Charter, to the following subjects:

The generally defective state of the internal communications of India.

The imperfect state of the existing Roads, Rivers and Canals.

The great want of Railways, and the long delay in their construction.

The high charges for postage, and the slowness of the dawks.

The heavy duty on Salt.

The delays and obstructions to the administration of justice in the Mofussil Courts.

The great expense of law and receipt stamps.

The imperfect and undigested state of the law as laid down in the Company's Regulations.

The inconsistency of the Usury Laws.

The uncertainty of land tenures.

The rapidity however with which the India Bill was pushed through both Houses of Parliament, having rendered it very doubtful whether the petition would have arrived in time for presentation before the final arrangement of the question, your Committee did not forward it to England: the event proved that they were right in withholding it, and the fact of the Chamber's not having addressed the Legislature on the various points mentioned above, is of less moment, as the form of legislation carried by Ministers leaves it in the power of Parliament to adopt any reforms in the Government of India during subsequent sessions, and should the Chamber deem fit to forward a petition at any future time, it will be equally as opportune.

A correspondence on the subject of the attestation of deeds, &c., by the Magistrates of Calcutta, has been brought to a conclusion by the two letters to be found in the Appendix, the concluding letter of the Chief Magistrate containing information that will be found frequently useful by Members of the Chamber.

Your Committee addressed Government on the subject of the delayed legislation for the prevention of ship-burning; their letter and the reply of Government are given in the

Appendix. Subsequent to the date of the latter, no further communication has been received from Government on the subject, which has no doubt however been under due consideration.

The injurious effect of the old Usury Laws of England, which are still in force here, has also been made a subject of representation to Government;—the letter of your Committee, and the reply it elicited, are to be found in the Appendix, and it cannot be doubted but that the present anomalous state of the Law on this subject will be speedily removed.

A recurrence of accidents to coolies working on the Custom House Ghaut, induced your Committee to address the Collector of Customs on the state of the Ghauts generally; that Officer's reply not having been deemed satisfactory, the Board of Revenue was also addressed on the subject, and further, as a temporary measure, an application was made to the Chief Magistrate, requesting his interference to prevent the impediments to the transaction of business arising from the accidents referred to; the whole of the correspondence is given in the Appendix, and your Committee have much pleasure in being able to inform you, that Government are about to construct sheds along the whole extent of the Ghauts, to build new jetties, supplied with cranes of the newest and best description, and to make the descent from the bank to the water, safe and convenient.

In the Appendix will also be found copies of a correspondence between the Collector of Customs, the Board of Revenue and your Committee, on the subject of the out-pass system and the general business of the Custom House. The recommendations of your Committee have been readily adopted by the Collector, and

with an increase of the Custom House Establishment, which that officer has the permission of the Board of Revenue to engage, it may confidently be hoped, that no inconvenience will in future be experienced by the commercial body in transacting business with the department.

Your Committee particularly beg your attention to the letter of the Collector of Customs of the 29th September and their reply of the 25th October, as a compliance with his suggestion on the subject of the presentation of Marine Bills, will enable him to detect and punish any dereliction on the part of his employés in this part of their duties.

The Draft of the new Postal Act has been made the subject of a representation to Government by your Committee, which is given in the Appendix, and they have every hope that their remarks will be favorably considered.

The publication of the new Draft Act for the Regulation of the Administrator General's Office, has also been made the opportunity for addressing a representation to Government on the subject of this unnecessary and arbitrary interference with private rights and arrangements. A memorial signed by several Agency Houses, which, with the letter of your Committee, is given in the Appendix, was sent in to Government, remonstrating against the original Act of 1849, but it apparently received little or no attention. Your Committee however trust that the communication made by them, as the constituted organ of the Commercial body generally, will be more favorably received, and that some of the alterations in the Draft Act suggested by them will be adopted by the Legislature.

Copies of a letter of your Committee to the Official Assignee, and the reply of that Officer will be found in the Appendix.

The subject to which they relate deserves the attention of the Chamber, with a view to putting a stop to the heavy losses now sustained by all who become creditors of Native Insolvents.

Your Committee addressed an inquiry to Government on the subject of the state of the Calcutta Canals; the reply received was most satisfactory, which, with your Committee's letter, concludes the copies of correspondence given in the Appendix.

An Arbitration Bond has been drafted by W. Ritchie, Esq., which is now in course of printing, and which your Committee recommend to be used in all cases of reference to the Chamber.

Your Committee have had to regret the retirement of Mr. J. S. Elliott, whose private business precluded his devoting that attention to his duties as a Member of the Committee, which he considered that the office required of him.

The vacancy so created has been filled up by the appointment of Mr. C. H. Bailey.

Your Committee take this opportunity of acknowledging the constant courtesy and consideration with which their communications have been received by the heads of all departments of Government, to whom they have had occasion to address themselves.

The Members of the Chamber are aware of the great exertions made by Mr. W. W. Kettlewell, for its revival, but your Committee consider it due to that gentleman to put on record in this report their appreciation of those exertions, which they consider merit the warmest thanks of the Chamber.

(Sd.) JAS. J. MACKENZIE,
President.

CALCUTTA,
November 1st, 1853. }

APPENDIX.

LIST OF MEMBERS.

- Allan, Deffell and Co.	Haddon, E. G. Esqr.
- Apear and Co.	Ilbery, J. W. H. and J. Jenkins.
- Anderson, W. Esqr.	Jamieson and Co.
- Barradale, John and Co.	Jardine, Skinner and Co.
- Braddon and Co.	Kettlewell, Drabble and Co.
- Brooks, A. Esqr.	Kelly, Campbell and Co.
- Carlisle, Nephew and Co.	Kelsall, Hoare and Co.
- Carter, J. W. Esqr.	Leach, Rawson and Co.
- Church, James Jun. and Co.	Livingstone, Dearman and Withers.
- Cowell, James, Esqr.	Lyall, J. and Co.
- Colvin, Ainslie, Cowie and Co.	Laroche, C. Esqr.
- Cullen, Muir and Co.	Mackillop, Stewart and Co.
- Crooke and Grey.	Dossabhoy Framjee Cama and Co.
- Dickson and Co.	May, Pickford and Co.
- Ewing and Co.	Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co.
- Eglinton and Co.	Malcolm and Co.
- Emerson, Arbuthnot, Esqr.	Mackenzie, Lyall and Co.
- Foster, Rogers and Co.	Martin, Pillaus and Co.
- Gillanders, Arbuthnot and Co.	Moran, W. and Co.
- Gisborne and Co.	Marks, C. H. Esqr.
- Gladstone, Wylie and Co.	Norman, Brothers and Co.
- Gilmore, McKilligin and Co.	Paterson, and Co.
- Gouger, A. and Co.	Pearce, Macrae and Co.
- Gordon, Stuart and Co.	Peel, Bellairs and Co.
- Griffiths and Co.	Pennington and Co.
- Gunter, Greenway and Co.	Pereira and Co.
- Gooreo Churn Sein.	Potter and Co.
- Haworth, W. and Co.	Purrier and Co.
- Henderson, Wallace and Co.	Prestwich, E. Esqr.
- Hurris Clunder Bloso.	Pehmoller, G. and Co.

Stroul, B. R. Esqr. .
Sanna Churn Mitter. .
Thomas, Marten and Co. .
Tulloh, Seal and Co. .
Tandy, J. O'B. Esqr. .
Thiault, Gve. Esqr. .
Whitney, Barstow and Co. .
Willis and Earle. .
Wattenbach, Heilgers and Co. .
Wienholt, Brothers and Co. .
Wingrove, Geo. Esqr. .
Wills, Augustin and Co. .
Thornton, J. Esqr. .

Dr.

Macrae, Begbie and Co.—*Moulmein*.
Deverell, H. Esqr.—*Acherunge*.
Savi, R. Esqr.—*Nouhatta*.
Prohby, F. Esqr.—*Dacca*.
MacLagan, F. Esqr.—*Lokenathpore*.
Maxwell, D. Esqr.—*Cawnpore*.
Longdon, G. H. Esqr.—*Agra*.
Gale, F. Esqr.—*Pandoul*.
Meuzies, T. Esqr.—*Mirzapore*.
Beecher, W. Esqr.—*Gowahatty*.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce, June, 1853.

Dr.

1853.		Co.'s Rs.	1,650	0	0	Co.'s Rs.	1,950	0	0
June 8,	To Rent paid to Bonded Warehouse...	"	50	0	0	By Cash paid into Bank of Bengal...	300	0	0
13,	" " Clantomoney Day—expenses, ...	"	100	0	0	" Subscriptions collected for May...	450	0	0
30,	" " Ditto ditto, ...	"	1,968	0	0	" " Ditto ditto, ...	250	0	0
	" Balance to July... ..	"	3,168	0	0	" " Ditto ditto, ...	268	0	0
		Co.'s Rs.	3,168	0	0	Co.'s Rs.	3,168	0	0
July 11,	To Rent paid to Bonded Warehouse...					By Balance from June,	1,920	0	0
15,	" F. M. Robinson—Salary,		100	0	0	" Amount of Subscriptions collect- ed for June,	1,252	0	0
26,	" Clantomoney Day—expenses, ...		400	0	0	" Amount of Subscriptions collect- ed for July,	1,252	0	0
31,	" " Ditto ditto,		400	0	0	" Amount of Subscriptions collect- ed from Mofussil Members, Amount of Subscriptions collect- ed from May,	160	0	0
	" Balance to August,		2,944	0	0		134	0	0
		Co.'s Rs.	4,134	0	0	Co.'s Rs.	4,134	0	0

Dr.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce, June, 1853.

Cr.

1853.				1853.			
August 9,				August 1,			
	To Rent paid to Bonded Warehouse,...	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.		By Balance from July,	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.
"	" T. M. Robinson—Salary,	100	0 0	"	" Subscriptions for July collected, ...	2,944	0 0
"	" Military Orphan Press—Printing,...	400	0 0	"	" Ditto August collected,	20	0 0
"	" Walton and Co.—Flags,	102	0 0	"	" Ditto Mafussil ditto,	1,216	0 0
"	" Balance to September,	74	0 6	"		32	0 0
31,		3,535	7 6				
	Co.'s Rs. ...	4,212	0 0		Co.'s Rs. ...	4,212	0 0
Sept. 12,				Sept. 1,			
"	To Rent paid to Bonded Warehouse,...	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.	"	By Balance from August,	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.
"	" T. M. Robinson—Salary,	100	0 0	"	" Subscriptions for August,	3,535	7 6
"	" Chitumoney Day—expenses,	400	0 0	"	" Ditto for September,	36	0 0
"	" Balance to October,	300	0 0			1,136	0 0
30,		3,907	7 6				
	Co.'s Rs. ...	4,707	7 6		Co.'s Rs. ...	4,707	7 6
Oct. 4,				Oct. 1,			
"	To Rent paid to Bonded Warehouse,...	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.	"	By Balance from September,	Co.'s Rs.	A. P.
"	" T. M. Robinson—Salary,	100	0 0	"	" Subscriptions for September, ...	3,907	7 6
"	" Chitumoney Day—expenses,	400	0 0	"	" Ditto October,	60	0 0
"	" Balance to November,	300	0 0			1,134	0 0
31,		4,301	7 6				
	Co.'s Rs. ...	5,101	7 6		Co.'s Rs. ...	5,101	7 6

iv

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CIRCULAR LETTER.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
Calcutta, 13th June, 1853.

I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to inform you that, after having maintained for many years a merely nominal existence, the Institution has been recently revived, and now numbers among its members nearly the whole Commercial Community of Calcutta.

The Committee are most anxious to induce all parties in the Presidency, engaged in the Internal Trade of the country, its Agriculture or Manufactures, to join the Chamber of Commerce; feeling that, it will not be in their power to carry out effectively the objects of the Institution, without the advantage of a large number of Mercantile Subscribers, from whom they may be able to collect valuable information, and Statistical Returns, relating to the Trade and Productions of the Presidency.

At the present time, when the form of the future Government of India is under debate in the Houses of Parliament, the Committee are particularly desirous of procuring information on the subjects of the

Articles of Cultivation.

Extent of their Production.

Prices in the Standard Station, Dealers of all articles—Gany, Cotton Goods,

Yarns, Metals, &c.

General condition of the People.

The Internal Economy of the Country.

State of the communications, by Roads, Rivers, Bridges, Ferries, &c.

from every District in the Presidency, that they may be prepared to give

prompt and accurate replies to any questions put to them on these points by

the Commercial Societies with whom they are in correspondence in England,

having the common object in view of endeavouring to obtain alleviation of the

wants and removal of the abuses which prevail in many parts of the country,

doctrinal able to its internal and external Trade.

The Committee therefore beg to invite you to become a Member of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and at the same time to inform you that, in order to facilitate the admission of Residents in the Mofussil, and to secure their accession to the Institution, the subscription of Members non-resident in Calcutta, has been reduced to Co.'s Rs. 22 per annum, and the rule of admission by Ballot been suspended for six weeks from the 15th May.

I am, Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

HOOGLY AND MUTLAH RIVERS.

To CECIL BEADON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to solicit the favor of your bringing to the notice of the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal, the difficult and dangerous state of the navigation of the River Hooghly, which threatens at no distant period to render access to the port of Calcutta altogether impracticable for any vessels but those of the smallest tonnage.

During the present season the depth of water on the James and Mary's, in Lloyd's Channel and on the Gasper Sands, has been less than ever previously known, and for many weeks past, Pilots have not felt themselves warranted in moving ships of more than 500 tons burthen without steam, during which time the towing steamers of the port have consequently been so fully employed, that many outward bound vessels loaded and ready for sea have been detained from a fortnight to three weeks unable to proceed on their voyage.

At the present time several vessels in this position have no prospect of getting to sea until the beginning of July.

It is the opinion of most nautical men well acquainted with the River Hooghly, that these serious impediments to its navigation are progressive and inevitable from the form of the River, its soil and the nature of its tides, and that they are beyond the reach of removal by any engineering skill. The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce beg therefore to submit for the consideration of the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal, the very great importance of endeavouring to open a new communication from the sea to this port by some new channel, and most respectfully to call his attention to the practicability of this object by means of the Mutlah River.

The entrance to the Mutlah River is about 50 miles to the eastward of the Hooghly, to be approached from the sea without any material difficulties of navigation. At the distance of 23 miles from its mouth it has a good sheltered anchorage for vessels of the largest burthen. Its tides never run more than 3 to 4 miles an hour, and the flood-tide is never accompanied by a bore. It has in the shallowest part $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms of water at the lowest tide, and in many places its depth varies from 6 to 9 fathoms throughout its course from the sea to within 25 miles of Calcutta, thus offering facilities for navigation superior to those that ever existed in the Hooghly.

Within the distance of 25 miles from Calcutta the Mutlah, although navigable, winds considerably and becomes narrower; the country however in this

intervening space is believed to be very favorable for the formation either of a railroad or canal, by means of which the communication could be continued to Calcutta, and every facility afforded for the conduct of the commerce of the place.

It is the earnest request of the Committee, that the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal will order a survey to be made of the Mutlah River, its approaches from the sea and country intervening between it and Calcutta, in order that, should the survey so obtained give confirmation to the views expressed above by the Committee, of its navigable advantages over the River Hooghly, the subject may be further taken into His Lordship's favorable consideration.

The rains will soon be setting in, and as the rivers are now at their lowest, the Committee beg to point out that this is the most opportune time for a survey, and also that it will very soon have passed away.

Viewing the question as one not only of local, but of national importance, the Committee trust that the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal will not deem them intrusive in soliciting, as they now beg to do, his early attention to the subject.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

CALCUTTA,
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
the 27th May, 1853.

No. 1398.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,
TO THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE.

Dated Fort William, the 20th July, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 27th May last, bringing to notice the impediments to the navigation of the River Hooghly, which now exist, and suggesting the expediency of opening, if possible, a new communication between this port and the sea by means of the river Mutlah.

2. His Lordship deferred passing orders upon your letter until inquiry could be made as to the steps, which on a former occasion had been taken in connection with the navigation of the Mutlah. The river was, it appears, surveyed in the course of the years 1837 to 1840, by Captain Lloyd of the Indian Navy, and nothing, in his Lordship's opinion, is now required but to ascertain what changes if any have taken place in the bed of the river since the soundings exhibited in Captain Lloyd's published Chart were taken. In furtherance of this object, measures will be taken without delay.

3. In the event of the Mutlah becoming the channel of conveyance for the commerce of this port, communication by railway between Calcutta and some convenient point on the Mutlah will be necessary. Such a railway, His Lordship apprehends, will be of easy execution, and Major Baker has accordingly been directed to survey the country between Calcutta and the head of the Mutlah, with a view to obtain accurate information on the subject.

4. While the above inquiries are in progress, His Lordship is desirous that measures should be taken to ascertain the facts regarding the navigation of the River Hooghly more exactly than has as yet been done.

5. The Chamber of Commerce, His Lordship observes, founds its present application on the "difficult and dangerous state of the navigation of the River Hooghly, which threatens at no distant period to render access to the port of Calcutta, altogether impracticable for any vessels but those of the smallest tonnage." His Lordship recently had occasion to call for the opinion of the Superintendent of Marine on this point. The report of that officer did not express any such strong opinion regarding the deterioration of the navigation as that above quoted. The fact therefore has still to be determined, and this, His Lordship thinks, should be done at once.

6. His Lordship therefore proposes to appoint a Committee, consisting of three members, viz., the Master Attendant, any gentleman whom the Chamber may think proper to depute, and probably a member of the Pilot Service, and I am accordingly to request that the Chamber will nominate some gentleman for this purpose. On this being done the other members will be appointed by the Government, and the Committee so constituted will be requested to meet and to enter upon an investigation similar to that which took place in 1844, in connection with the inquiry into the practicability of providing Calcutta with wet docks.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) CECIL BEADON,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
Calcutta, 26th July, 1853.

To CECIL BEADON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 20th instant.

The Committee beg that you will convey their earnest thanks to the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal for the ready consideration with which his Lordship has received their communication on the subject of the navigation of the Hooghly and Mutlah Rivers.

In conformity with the desire of his Lordship, the Committee respectfully beg to nominate Mr. James Joseph Mackenzie, as the Deputy of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to sit upon the Committee proposed to be formed to inquire into the state of the navigation of the River Hooghly.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

No. 564.

FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,
TO THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Dated Fort William, the 2nd August, 1853.

SIR,—With reference to your letter dated the 26th ultimo, and in continuation of the memorandum from this Office, No. 549, of this date, I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal, to transmit herewith, for the information of the Chamber, a copy of a letter this day addressed to Mr. J. J. Mackenzie, appointing him a Member of the Committee, for the purpose of reporting on the state of the Navigation of the River Hooghly.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) W. GORDON YOUNG,

Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

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No. 559.

FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL
TO J. J. MACKENZIE, Esq.

Dated Fort William, the 2nd August, 1853.

Sir,—I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal to inform you that His Lordship has been pleased to appoint you to be a Member of a Committee, for the purpose of reporting on the state of the Navigation of the River Hooghly. A copy of a letter this day addressed to the Superintendent of Marine on the subject is hereto appended for your information.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) W. GORDON YOUNG,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal

No. 548.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,
TO THE OFFICIATING SUPERINTENDENT OF MARINE.

Dated Fort William, the 4th August, 1853.

Sir,—I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal to forward herewith copy of the correspondence noted in the

margin, relative to the present state of the Navigation of the Hooghly, and the possible formation of a Port at the head of the River Muthah, and with reference to the 5th and 6th paragraphs of my letter to the Chamber, to inform you that His Lordship has been pleased to appoint a Committee consisting, besides yourself, of the Gentlemen named in the margin, to inquire into the state of the River Hooghly, particularly whether it has, in past years, deteriorated for purposes of Navigation, what has been the nature and progress of the deterioration, to what causes it is owing, whether it is likely to continue, and if so, whether any

H. Piddington, Esq.,
J. J. Mackenzie, Esq.

approximate guess can be formed as to the period at which Ships of large burden may be expected to resort by preference to the Muthah, supposing the head of that River to be connected with Calcutta, either by a Railway or Ship Canal.

2. His Lordship desires me to request, that the Committee will meet as early as may be convenient and enter upon this investigation. It would appear that some information on the subject was collected by the Committee which sat in 1844, to inquire into the practicability of providing Calcutta with Wet Docks, and is probably in your Office. It is alluded to in paragraph 11 of the printed Report, of which a copy is herewith forwarded for the information of the Committee.

3. In reporting the result of their inquiries, the Committee will be so good as to give a definite opinion on each point, with their reasons for it, and to append to their Report, the oral and other evidence which may be taken by them.

4. The Secretary to the Superintendent of Marine will be Secretary to the Committee, and all records of the Marine Department will be open to their inspection. All Officers of the Department will also attend before the Committee, if required to do so. Any moderate expenditure the Committee may incur in entertaining Writers, Copyists, &c., will be borne by Government.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) CECIL BEADON,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

No. 549.

A copy of this letter forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce for information.

(Signed) W. GORDON YOUNG,
Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

PENINSULAR & ORIENTAL COMPANY'S CONTRACT

Abstract of the terms of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Contract for the conveyance of the Eastern Mails, published by the Lords of the Admiralty.

DATES OF SAILING.

From Southampton, to leave on the	4th and 20th.
" Marseilles "	11th " 27th.
" Bombay "	4th " 20th.
" Calcutta "	6th " 20th.—To go to sea from the Sand Heads before 8 P. M. on these date
" Hong Kong "	11th " 27th.
" Sydney "	20th " }
" Port Philip "	24th " Alternate months.
" Adelaide "	27th " }

DATES FOR ARRIVAL.

At Southampton on the	5th and 21st.
" Marseilles from abroad on the	14th " 30th.
" Bombay from Point de Galle on the	2nd " 18th.
" Calcutta from England on the	2nd " 16th.
" Hong Kong on the	10th " 24th.
" Adelaide on the	8th " }
" Port Philip on the	11th " Alternate months.
" Sydney on the	14th " }

Number of days in which the Mails are to be conveyed to their several destinations by the Packets from Southampton—

To Gibraltar in	5 days.
" Malta in	13½ "
" Aden in	22½ "
" Ceylon in	34 "
" Madras in	38 "
" Calcutta in	42 "
" Singapore in	42 "
" Bombay and Ceylon in	45 "
" Hong Kong in	50 "
" King George's Sound in	58 "

To Adelaide in	64 days.
" Port Philip in	67½ "
" Sydney in	70 "

The stoppages of the Packets to wait for Mails by other Packets are to vary from

At Alexandria,	3 to 8 days.
" Suez, "	5 " 6 "
" Point de Galle,	5 " "

Between October and March the Packets may touch at Cossier in the Red Sea.

From Calcutta and Hong Kong the Packets are to leave five days earlier in the Months of

May,
June,
July,
August.

The Packets are allowed to reach Hong Kong five days later than the above specified time during the Months of

November,
December,
January,
February.

During the prevalence of the adverse Trade Winds, the Homeward Sydney Packet is allowed to reach its destination four days later than the specified time.

The Admiralty and the Peninsular and Oriental Company have power to order the Bombay and Hong Kong Packets to call at other places than Point de Galle, Penang and Singapore, and the Admiralty have power to require the Homeward Australian Packet to proceed direct from King George's Sound to Point de Galle.

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

CALCUTTA,
October 20th, 1853. }

ATTESTATION OF DEEDS.

Calcutta, 10th June, 1853.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE,

TO W. H. ELLIOT, Esq., CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF CALCUTTA.

SIR,—I find by your letter, No. 846, of November 6th, 1852, to the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, that the subject of voluntary affidavits and the attesting of signatures, had again been referred to the Advocate General. I shall feel very much obliged by your informing me, if the opinion of that Officer, of July 15th, 1852, has been confirmed, or in any point altered.

I am Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

No. 349.

10th June, 1853.

FROM THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE,

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA.

SIR,—In reply to your letter of this date, I beg to inform you that the Government having referred to the late Advocate General a report submitted by me of the different kinds of papers, which the Division Magistrates had at various times presented to them for attestation, that Officer gave it as his opinion that

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Declarations on oath of soldiers enlisting in the Indian Army, | } Must be attested. |
| 2. <i>Moohtarnamas</i> for use in the Mofussil, | |
| 3. Powers of Attorney for the sale of stock or receipt of Dividends with <i>Bank of England</i> , | } May be attested. |
| 4. Ditto for Transfer of Funds in Chancery, | |
| 5. Declarations of Cadets entering the Indian Army, | |
| 6. Ditto regarding children of deceased Officers, entering the Military Orphan Asylum | |
| 7. Declarations of Pensioners on Lord Clive's Fund, | |

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 8. <i>Unhalatnamas</i> for use in the Mofussil, | } Should not be attested. |
| 9. Deeds of all sorts, | |
| 10. Certificates of Health for Insurance Offices, | |
| 11. Ditto Demands against Estates, | |
| 12. Ditto Life of Government Pensioners, | |

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) W. H. ELLIOT,
Chief Magistrate.

SHIP-BURNING.

TO J. P. GRANT, Esq.,

Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to request the favor of your informing them if your Government have decided upon any new legislation for future prevention of Ship-burning. The Committee beg leave to remind you that the report of the Ship-Burning Committee is dated October 20th, 1851, and to state to you that they are most anxious to see some act of legislation on the subject considering it to be one of much moment to the commerce and shipping of the place.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce, June 10th, 1853.

No. 447.

FROM G. PLOWDEN, Esq.,
Officiating Secretary to the Government of India,
 To T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,
Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

SIR,—In reply to your letter dated the 10th ultimo, I am directed to state, *Home Dept. (Leg.)* for the information of the Chamber of Commerce, that the subject of the Ship-Burning Committee's Report, dated the 30th October, 1851, is still under the consideration of the Legislature, and that an Act for the future prevention of Ship-burning will probably be published shortly.

I have the honor to be,
 Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) GEORGE PLOWDEN,
Officiating Secretary to the Government of India.

Council Chamber, July 8th, 1853.

USURY LAWS.

To J. P. GRANT, Esq.,
Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to request the favor of your bringing to the notice of the Most Noble the Governor General of India, that the repeal of the Usury Laws having never been extended to this country; British subjects are here liable to legal prosecutions for charging upon any transaction of business a rate of interest above twelve per cent, while the natives of India enjoy the privilege of employing their capital at any rate of interest mutually agreed upon between borrower and lender.

The Committee respectfully beg to suggest that should it not be deemed advisable to extend the law of Great Britain to this country, an uniform legis-

lation might with advantage be established for British subjects and natives of India alike.

I am, Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,
 (Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce, June 18th, 1853.

No. 448.

FROM G. PLOWDEN, Esq.,
Officiating Secretary to the Government of India,
 To T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,
Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 18th ultimo, and in reply to state, that the recommendation of the Chamber of Commerce for the repeal of the laws of usury in India, as has been done in England, or for an uniform legislation for British subjects and Natives of India as regards usury, will receive the early consideration of the legislature.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
 Your most obedient Servant,
 GEORGE PLOWDEN,

Officiating Secretary to the Government of India.
Council Chamber, the 8th July, 1853.

CUSTOM HOUSE GHAUT.

To THE COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, CALCUTTA.

Calcutta, 29th June, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to beg your attention to the state of the Custom House Ghaat.

The Ghaat commands a very fine river frontage, and might be made most useful for all purposes required for the trade of the place, but from its present

neglected state, it is frequently the cause of much injury to goods, and of delay in landing and shipping them.

The bank descending to the river is in a very bad state the whole round, and at this season is always in a particularly dangerous condition, affording when wet a most unsafe footing to the coolies working upon it in the removal of goods.

Loss of life has even occurred from men falling under heavy loads, and general strike been the consequence, putting a stop to business for entire days.

The want of cranes to hoist up heavy goods is a very great inconvenience; also, those at present on the ghaut being almost useless from want of power. Much injury is also occasioned by the want of sheds on the ghaut, to protect goods from the rains, the two at present existing, of the dimensions of 60 feet by 30 feet each, being totally inadequate to the purpose required.

The Committee beg to suggest that, the construction of a Ghaut of masonry with steps descending to the river, provided with powerful cranes of the latest improved description, and the erection of spacious sheds, would be a very great convenience and benefit to the trade of the place.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

No. 279.

FROM THE OFFICIATING COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS,

CALCUTTA

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA

Dated the 12th July, 1853.

Sir,—Adverting to your letter of 29th ultimo, I request you will inform the Chamber, that the Ghaut not appearing to be in a fit state, I shall take an early opportunity of bringing the matter to the notice of superior authority.

2nd.—I believe, however, that the dangerous state of the ghaut has been exaggerated. One accident happened some years ago; but there is no recollection of more than this one in the Office.

3rd.—Nothing could be done, at the present season, nor do I suppose that before October the Ghaut could be sufficiently examined to enable an engineer to determine what might be done to improve it.

4th.—I have delayed replying to your letter in the hope, that any new arrangements for the Custom House, rendered necessary by the expected opening of the Railway, might meanwhile perhaps be considered. As the Ghaut on this side the Hooghly and the terminus on the other may require to be connected, I am unwilling to ask the Government to expend money until the whole question may be before them.

5th.—In the meantime, I have requested the Civil Architect to put one crane at least in serviceable condition.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) S. DOWRING,
Officiating Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, Govt. Custom }
House, the 12th July, 1853. }

To W. H. ELLIOTT, Esq.,

Chief Magistrate of Calcutta.

Calcutta, 25th July, 1853.

Sir,—I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to bring to your notice, that an accident happened on the afternoon of Saturday, the 23rd instant, to a cooly working on the Custom House Ghaut, in consequence of which the whole gang of ghaut coolies struck work, and the landing of goods was put a stop to. Parties to whom it was of the greatest importance to clear vessels discharging in the river endeavored to get their work done by ticka coolies, but the whole of the regular ghaut coolies united in a body and prevented their working. A similar state of things exists at this moment, and the shipping business of the port is entirely suspended; I have therefore to request that you will exercise your authority in putting a stop to this combination and strike among the coolies, and more particularly that you will give your attention to the dangerous state of the Custom House Ghaut, owing to which the difficulty has arisen, and which is the cause of the most serious inconvenience to the business of the port.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

FROM THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE,
TO THE SECRETARY OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA

25th July, 1853.

SIR,—On the receipt of your letter of this date, I went to the Custom House Ghaut; at its southern end known as Coila Ghaut, I found a number of sircars and coolies sitting idle on some empty carts. I asked the reason of their idleness, and they said there had been a refusal on the part of the Custom House coolies to work, and therefore they (when I was speaking) did not know whether or not they might work. I said I thought they could not commence too soon, and they began immediately, without remonstrance from any one.

2.—I then went to the front of the Custom House Ghaut, where a large number of men were collected; they said they could not work till the Ghaut was mended. I told them they were at full liberty to leave off work, and go to their houses for any number of months or years, but the merchants could get hundreds and thousands of men to supply their places, but they must not prevent others working; that had any one especially represented to me the state of the Ghaut as unsafe, I would have ordered its repair immediately; but that as they had consented to strike work, under the vain impression probably of enforcing the repairs of the Ghaut, I should take time, perhaps days, perhaps weeks or months, to consider the matter, and should certainly do nothing without directions till the work was carried on as usual.

3.—They then said if I would promise to mend the Ghaut, they would set to work directly; I replied that I would make no such promise, nor spend a farthing on the Ghaut, till they should set to work. A considerable number then said that I had spoken fairly, and that they would work, and in about ten minutes I left the place, with all parties apparently satisfied, and work recommenced. The Collector of Customs, his subordinate Mr. Bellew, and numerous sircars were present.

4.—The English Laws against combination of workmen do not extend to Calcutta, so that the strike would hardly be within my cognizance. I could not discover that any man was prevented working by the coolies engaged in the strike; should any force be used, or such an attempt, the Police could of course take measures and suppress it.

5.—A similar strike took place last year, but that was beyond all doubt, concerted by the sircars, and did not originate with the coolies.

6.—I have given orders that a large body of workmen be employed to-morrow morning on smoothing the bank.

I have the honor, to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed.) W. H. ELLIOTT.

TO A. R. YOUNG, Esq.,

Junior Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

Calcutta, 25th July, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to wait upon you with the enclosed copies of correspondence between this office and that of the Officiating Collector of Customs on the subject of the state of the Custom House Ghaut.

The Committee beg that you will do them the favor of laying the correspondence before the Board of Revenue, and at the same time bring to the notice of the Board that the Committee cannot but consider the communication of the Officiating Collector of Customs as very unsatisfactory.

The frequency of the occurrence of accidents on the Ghaut, and the consequent interruptions of business, have not been exaggerated by the Committee, as they can prove by ample testimony should such a confirmation of their general statement be considered necessary.

On Saturday the 23rd instant an accident again occurred to a cooly on the Ghaut, owing to its dangerous footing, and this accident, as usual, led to the abandonment of all work on the Ghaut by the coolies, which has been continued all through this day, and the entire business of the port in loading and discharging vessels in consequence suspended.

The Committee respectfully beg the attention of the Board of Revenue to the state of the Ghaut, and to urge upon their consideration the very great necessity existing for the alterations and improvements in it suggested in the letter No. 1 to the Officiating Collector of Customs.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

To S. BOWRING, Esq.,

*Officiating Collector of Customs.**Calcutta, 27th July, 1853.*

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, in reply to their communication on the subject of the state of the Custom House Gate. The Committee will feel much obliged by your informing them if the Civil Architect has examined and sent any report to your office on the state of the jetties, cranes and sheds on the Ghaut, and further by your favoring them with a copy of such a Report, should it have been received in your Office.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 304.

FROM THE OFFICIATING COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS,

CALCUTTA

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA*Dated the 27th July, 1853.*

SIR,—In reply to your letter of this day, I beg to inform you, that the Civil Architect has reported on the state of the cranes, jetties and sheds; that a copy of this Report has been sent to the Board of Revenue, and is, probably ere this, before the Government, with my recommendation, that Iron cranes be allowed and repairs be made.

2nd.—I regret that I do not feel myself at liberty to give a copy of the Report you desire to have, without an order from superior authority.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) S. BOWRING,
Officiating Collector of Customs.

*Calcutta, Custom House, }
27th July, 1853. }*

No. 1003.

FROM THE OFFICIATING JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE
BOARD OF REVENUE,

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Fort William, the 28th July, 1853.

SIR,—With reference to your letter dated the 25th instant, I am directed by the Board of Revenue to forward to you a copy of one addressed by order of the Board, to Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot and Co., in reply to a communication from them on the same subject.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) A. R. YOUNG,
Officiating Junior Secretary.

No. 1001.

FROM THE OFFICIATING JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE
BOARD OF REVENUE,

TO MESSRS. GILLANDERS, ARBUTHNOT, AND CO., CALCUTTA.

Fort William, the 28th July, 1853.

GENTLEMEN,—With reference to your letter of the 23rd instant, and its enclosure, I am directed to inform you that, on receipt of a report on the subject from the Officiating Collector of Customs, the Board have already applied to Government to have the unserviceable cranes replaced by new and efficient ones, and the sheds and wharf generally put in proper repair.

2nd. The Officiating Collector's attention will be immediately directed to the state of the Ghaut, and he will be instructed to take measures for having the evil complained of remedied, should this not have been done already.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) A. R. YOUNG,
Officiating Junior Secretary.

*Board of Revenue, }
Fort William, }
the 28th July, 1853. }*

OUT-PASS SYSTEM.

No. 1067.

FROM THE OFFICIATING JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE
BOARD OF REVENUE

TO T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce.

Dated Fort William, the 19th August, 1853

Customs.

SIR,—It has been brought to the notice of the Board E. CURRIE, Esq. Revenue by the Officiating Collector of Customs, that abuse of the privilege allowed to Importers of landing their Goods direct at their godowns, by means of out-passes, is now systematically and almost universally practised. On this subject the Board have already on several occasions been in communication with the Chamber of Commerce, and measures have been suggested and adopted with a view to check this tendency to abuse with the least possible inconvenience to the Commerce of the Port. Those measures seem however not to have been attended with any useful result.

2nd. "Whatever the abuses may have been formerly," writes Mr. Bowring in his Report of the 22nd ultimo—"these have now reached a height which it seems absolutely necessary to check. I have been informed, by persons in a position to form a just opinion on the subject, that one-half if not three-fourths of the Goods imported into Calcutta, are taken direct from the ships to the Merchants' godowns without payment of duty, and are afterwards entered, and the duty paid at the convenience of the bayans of the Importers. From some cargo books I have examined with a view of testing the above opinion it would seem that the statement of even three-fourths would be no exaggeration. The ship *Wm. Carey*, of 638 tons, from Liverpool, landed lately the whole of her cargo of manufactured Goods, none of which came to the Customs House, while the only pass granted was for two tons of coals."

3rd. It is obvious that a system which leaves the Customs Authorities without the only legitimate and effectual means of enforcing payment of the Govern-

ment dues, viz., control over the Goods on which the dues are levied, cannot be allowed to continue, and it is desirable

also on other grounds that it should be put an end to; for besides the risk to the Government revenue such a system as is shown in the extract on the margin from the Collector's Report already referred to, is productive of great inconvenience to parties who are in no way to blame in the matter.

4th. As all other means have failed, the Collector has determined, with the Board's sanction, to use the powers with which the law has invested him for checking the abuse in question, and after sufficient warning, of which due notice will be given, the provisions of Section VIII., Act No. XVI. of 1837, will be strictly enforced.

5th. In communicating to you this determination, I am desired by the Board to express a hope that the Chamber of Commerce will use its influence to secure the observance of the law, and thus obviate the necessity of the enforcement of the heavy penalty which it provides.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

A. R. YOUNG,

Officiating Junior Secretary.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

To A. R. YOUNG, Esq.,
Officiating Junior Secretary to the Board of Revenue

Calcutta, 1st September, 1853.

Sir,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your favor, No. 1067, of the 19th ult. stating that in consequence of the abuse made by Importers of Goods of the out-pass system, the Board of Revenue have determined to authorise the Collector of Customs to put into strict enforcement the provisions of Section VIII., Act No. XVI. of 1837.

The Committee have only to remark that the remedy for any such supposed abuses of the system in practice has always been in the power of the Customs House Authorities, and that if it be contemplated to bring all Goods to the Custom House Wharf, it becomes more than ever indispensable that proper accommodation in sheds, jetties, wharfs and cranes, should be provided for the large and valuable trade of the Port.

The Committee further beg to bring to the notice of the Board of Revenue that with the increase of the Trade of the Port, there has been no corresponding increase made in the Custom House Establishment, and that with the present number of hands employed in the Department, the work cannot be got through under the Rule proposed to be enforced.

Consignees cannot pay duty at once, but will have to wait for days before duty can be received by the Customs Officials for Goods.

After three o'clock no chelans are received and in the opinion of the Committee the Custom House working hours should be extended to 5 o'clock, and to 4 o'clock for receiving chelans.

It cannot be doubted but that the system of granting out-passes and other relaxations in the Custom House Rules, were made by the Collector of Customs upon the conviction that without such facilities being given to the Importers of Goods, their business could not have been got through by the Office of the Custom House without great delay and inconvenience, a conviction which the Committee can most fully confirm, and beg to urge upon the Board that if these facilities are now to be withdrawn at the recommendation of the Officiating Collector of Customs, some change, to render the whole Custom House

Department more efficient, will be absolutely necessary for the management of the trade of the Port.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 347.

FROM THE OFFICIATING COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS,
CALCUTTA,
TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA.

Sir,—I have to request you will inform the Chamber that in consequence of large quantities of Goods, and in some instances entire Cargoes, having been taken direct from Ships to the Merchants' Godowns without any duty having been paid, the provisions of Section VIII., Act No. XVI. of 1837, will be strictly enforced on and after Monday, the 19th of September next, and all Goods found out of the track described in the Boat-notes covering them in transit, will be confiscated.

2nd. I also beg you will inform the Chamber that when Invoices are admitted as proof of the value or of the quantity of Goods, it will be necessary that the original Invoices unmatulated should be produced, not merely copies even certified as such by the Consignees, but documents that the Merchants would themselves admit as good and proper Invoices. Some Houses have objections to allow the Natives employed about the Custom House to see their Invoices, in which case, if any confidential person is sent with the original and a copy with the necessary particulars only, I will myself compare them, and admit the latter as sufficient.

3rd. I beg also to remark that if the Merchants of Calcutta, were to employ generally a better class of men to conduct their business at the Custom House, much delay might be obviated. At present I sometimes reject applications merely because they are unintelligible, when returned and worded in a manner to be understood they are at once complied with. This remark, of course, only applies to the Native Sicars, but many Houses have no other Agents.

4th. It would perhaps also facilitate business if Merchants would inform us who their Custom House Agents really are.

Under the present arrangements, I believe one Native often leaves his business to be performed by another, possibly very ill-qualified. On one occasion lately, a Sircar offered to sign an application on behalf of *any House should name*; and on another, five different Sircars gave as many contradictory applications for the same Goods, all five signing as authorized by the same Custom House.

I have the honor, &c.,

(Signed) S. BOWRING,
Officiating Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, Custom House,
The 30th August, 1853. }

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE.

To S. BOWRING, Esq.,
Officiating Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 8th September, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, intimating to the Chamber that, "on and after Monday, the 19th instant, the provisions of "Section VIII., Act XVI. of 1837, will be strictly enforced, and all Goods "found out of the track described in the boat-notes covering them in transit, will "be confiscated."

The Committee beg to remark that, under the enforcement of this rule, very great inconvenience and delay may arise to Merchants, and very great oppression and extortion be exercised upon the boatmen by the Custom House Officers on the River, inasmuch as it will be practically impossible to decide what will be the track described in the boat-notes, from every mooring in the River to every Ghaut on its bank, under every variety of circumstances, of bores, wind, and tide. The Committee can foresee, in the operation of the rule in question, a most fruitful source of disputes, and conflicting assertions between the boatmen and the Custom House Officers, and would suggest, that the security of Government would be equally as well attained, and much inconvenience to the

public, as well as to your own Office, avoided, if, instead of reviving the rule in question, a new one were to be passed and enforced, making all Goods liable to confiscation when found to be *landing* at any Ghaut on the River, different from that specified in the boat-notes covering them. Under such a rule no *doubt* could ever exist as to the facts of an asserted violation of its provisions against any parties accused, and it appears to the Committee, that the supervision of even two or three active Officers *on shore*, would be more efficient for the protection of the Revenue under such a rule, than that of fifty *afloat* on the River, for the enforcement of the provisions of the Act of which your letter under acknowledgment gives notice.

On paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of your letter, the Committee have no particular remarks to offer. They have every confidence that there is no Member of the Chamber who will not most willingly enable the Collector of Customs to satisfy himself as to the description and value of Goods imported, by the production of the original invoices, or in any other manner that may be deemed necessary, and while they must protest against all vexatious and unnecessary obstructions, the Members of the Chamber will, the Committee feel assured, be always found ready and anxious to second whatever changes may be proposed for the proper and efficient working of the Customs Department.

In expressing this confidence, in the co-operation of the Commercial body in securing such efficiency, the Committee must state their conviction that, without a material increase of the Custom House Establishment, the despatch so necessary in business cannot be attained.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 1138.

FROM THE OFFICIATING JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE
BOARD OF REVENUE,

To T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,
Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, the 5th September, 1853.

Outpost.

SIR,—With reference to your letter of the 1st instant, E. CURRIE, Esq. I am directed to state that it is not contemplated by the Board of Revenue to abolish the out-pass system, a measure which, as justly

observed by the Chamber, would require an increase to the accommodation now available for the import trade; but merely to prevent the abuse of that system which the Officiating Collector reports has become almost universal. All that is required of Importers desirous of passing Goods under out-pass according to the existing system is, that they should make entry of their Goods and obtain the out-pass before removing them from the ship, instead of taking them out of the ship, under boat-notes for the Custom House Wharf, and carrying them off to their own Godowns, without any passes at all.

The Board cannot suppose that the due observance of this rule, which though in practice habitually neglected, has always been an essential condition of the out-pass arrangement, will be attended with any inconvenience. They will however communicate with the Officiating Collector of Customs on the subject of the Chamber's suggestion for increasing the number of working hours and regarding the means generally of expediting the despatch of business in the Custom House.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) A. R. YOUNG,
Officiating Junior Secretary.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

To A. R. YOUNG, Esq.,
Officiating Junior Secretary to the Board of Revenue
Calcutta, 16th September, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 1138, of the 5th instant, and to express their thanks for the explanation it contains of the intentions of the Board of Revenue with regard to the out-pass system, to which the Committee have no objections to urge, provided only that the Custom House Establishment is rendered efficient for their execution.

The first paragraph of your letter under acknowledgment states, that it is not contemplated to abolish the out-pass system "but merely to prevent the abuse" of that system which the Officiating Collector of Customs reports has become "almost universal."

The Committee feel called on to respectfully request to be informed in what sense the Officiating Collector of Customs makes this sweeping charge against the Commercial Community generally.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 398.

FROM THE OFFICIATING COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS,
CALCUTTA,
TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
CALCUTTA.

Dated the 29th September, 1853.

SIR,—Constant complaints being made to me by the Sircars of this Office that Merchants refuse to discharge the Marine and other bills presented for payment, and the Merchants complaining apparently with equal reason that such bills are often presented after the accounts to which they refer have been closed, and that the firm is subjected to inconvenience or loss by the demand being made after so long delay; I beg to suggest, for the consideration of the Chamber, that such differences might be avoided, if the Merchant would in all cases, when bills are presented from this office, note the date of presentation on the back of such account.

I trust the Chamber will see no objection in recommending such a note to be made by all houses on the back of the Custom House bills, so that it may be at once seen, whether the bills have been duly presented or not. Should the Chamber be willing to adopt my suggestion, I shall of course give no credit to any statement by a Sircar that he has presented a bill, unless a note to that effect appear on the back.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) S. DOWRING,
Officiating Collector of Customs.

xxxii

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

TO S. BOWRING, Esq.,

Officiating Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 25th October, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 398, of the 29th ultimo, recommending that Merchants should note on all bills issued from the Custom House the dates of their presentation for payment, in order to put a stop to the frequent complaints mutually made on the subject of such bills.

The Committee will gladly recommend the practice to the adoption of the Members of the Chamber, but would at the same time suggest that the date of issuing all Marine or other bills to the Collecting Sircars, should be noted by the Custom House on the face of such bills, and further that that issue should be made within seven days from the date of the liability being incurred. In such case Agents would be deprived of any reasonable grounds for pleading that ships and other accounts were closed, while in cases of delay on the part of the Collecting Sircars, the fault would be apparent on presentation of the bills, and more pointedly attract the attention of those interested. The knowledge of the Sircars that the bills themselves carried the means of detecting their idleness would further be a wholesome check on them.

The Committee feel assured that the Commercial body generally would readily aid in thus carrying out your wishes.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

xxxiii

DRAFT POST ACT.

No. 1070.

FROM THE OFFICIATING UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Dated Fort William, the 25th May, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal
General. to forward to you herewith a Copy of a Draft Act "for the Management of the Post Office and for the Regulation of the Duties of Postage," for any observations or suggestions on its provisions which the Chamber of Commerce may have to offer.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) W. GORDON YOUNG,
Offy. Under-Secy., to the Govt. of Bengal.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE,

TO W. GORDON YOUNG, Esq.,

Offy. Under-Secy., to the Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, June 3rd, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 25th ultimo, and to thank you for the consideration of the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal in sending for the perusal of the Committee the "Draft Act for the Management of the Post Office and for the Regulations of the Duties of Postage."

The Draft Act is in circulation among the Members of the Committee, and as soon as returned with their annotations, shall be forward to your Office.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,

Secretary.

To W. GORDON YOUNG, Esquire,

Offy. Under-Secy., to the Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 29th July, 1853.

Sir,—With reference to your letter of May 25th, I now have the honor to submit to you for the consideration of the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal, the following observations and suggestions of the Chamber of Commerce through its Committee, on the proposed Act "for the Management of the Post Office and for the regulation of the Duties of Postage."

Sections II. and III.—By these Sections the exclusive right of carrying letters is vested in the E. I. Company, with certain specified exceptions. In Clause No. 2, of Section II., an exception is made in favor of "letters sent by a private friend on his way, journey, or travel, &c.," while in Clauses 3 and 4, of Section III., Passengers on Board Ships, Steam Bouts, or Passage Boats, are absolutely prohibited from carrying such letters, under pain of a heavy penalty provided for by Section IV.

The Chamber is of opinion, that the same exceptions ought to be applicable to travellers by water as by land.

Section VII.—Provides for the rates of Postage to be levied on newspapers imported and not imported, and the Chamber observes with deep regret, that the proposed rates bear very unequally on the two classes, to the serious disadvantage of local newspapers.

To the great bulk of newspaper readers in India, the local journals are of far more interest than those imported can possibly be, from their advertisements and other contents affecting the daily interest of most classes. The Chamber cannot conceive any valid reason why an equal rate should not be levied on both classes of newspapers; and earnestly trust that the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal may be induced to recommend that this provision of the Draft Act be so changed.

Section IX.—Declares "that every person who shall enclose in a newspaper, or printed, or engraved paper, any letter, paper, or thing, or shall put on it any word, communication, or mark other than the name and address of the party to whom it shall be sent," shall for every such offence forfeit fifty Rupees.

The Chamber respectfully submits that the penalty is an extreme one, and the offence in question would be better dealt with by the adoption of what is believed to be the law in England in such cases. There parties convicted of so using newspapers as a means of communication, are punished by the exaction of double or treble Postage on the newspaper so used, calculated as for a

letter of the same weight, and the Chamber is strongly of opinion that a similar penalty here would be found practically far more efficient in repressing the offence in question than the heavy fine it is now proposed to lay.

Section XVII.—The additional Postage to be levied under this Section on Ship letters, (not liable to British Packet Postage) is objectionable, because it is a heavy charge in addition to Inland Postage. No remuneration out of the tax is allowed to the private Ship-owner, and in that respect it would be but fair to assimilate Government owned Sailing and Steam Vessels. The Chamber submits that the extra charge should be confined to the one anna proposed to be allowed to the Commanders of Vessels so landing letters, and solicits His Lordship's favorable recommendation of that limitation. In the present days the bulk of such letters, with the exception of those from Arracan, Burmah and the Tenasserim Provinces, merely contain duplicate Shipping documents, and are legitimately entitled to such reduced postage.

Section XXXI.—Provides a penalty to be levied from Stamp Venders, "convicted of refusing, or unnecessarily delaying without reasonable excuse to furnish Postage Stamps."

The Chamber is of opinion, that it should be made compulsory on Stamp Venders at all times to keep up a sufficient stock of Stamps, otherwise, in the event of there being none available, letters must necessarily be forwarded "bearing," subject to the tax of double Postage, as provided for in Section XX. of this Act.

Such compulsion is the more necessary as by Section XXXVI. of the Act power is reserved to the Governor General in Council "to direct that all or any letters, packets, or parcels, shall not be forwarded by Post unless the Postage thereof shall be pre-paid, by means of a proper Stamp or Stamps, or to charge on all letters, &c., on which the Postage should not be pre-paid such higher rates of Postage than would otherwise be payable as from time to time be deemed expedient."

The Chamber therefore would urge some modification of this Section, so as to protect the public from a tax resulting from a want of Stamps, over the supply of which it can have no control.

The Chamber does not observe any mention in the proposed Act of the establishment of a system of Post Office Money Orders, such as is now so largely in use in the United Kingdom. The present appears to the Chamber a convenient time for its introduction. The facility of obtaining such orders would be a great boon to the public, and the Chamber respectfully begs to bespeak His Lordship's favorable consideration and recommendation of the suggestion.

The foregoing are the principal points that seem to call for revision, but before closing this communication, I am desired to express most respectfully the opinion of the Chamber, that the penalties for a breach of the provisions of the contemplated Act, appear in many instances to be enacted in a spirit of excessive severity.

The rates of Postage proposed to be levied are so moderate that to a corresponding extent, the temptation to evade the law is lessened, and with more moderate penalties there would be a greater chance of their being successfully levied, and the exposure of the people to the extortion of subordinate agents, more particularly in the Mofussil, would be diminished.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary,

DRAFT ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL'S ACT.

To G. A. C. PLOWDEN, Esq.,

*Officiating Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department.*

Sir,—The publication of the draft of "an Act to amend the law relating to the office and duties of Administrator General," affords an opportunity to all concerned of again respectfully protesting against the monopoly now vested in the office of that functionary, and I am instructed by the Chamber of Commerce, through its Committee, to submit to you, for the consideration of the Most Noble the Governor General in Council, the objections strongly and generally urged against the law as it now is, and which by the provisions of the contemplated Act will be rendered even more hostile to non-official Executors and Administrators to estates of deceased persons.

The public has always felt aggrieved by the change of law made in 1849, not only as injuriously and unnecessarily affecting private rights long recognized both by law and custom, but as having been introduced unseasonably, at a time when the enormous and infamous defalcations of the official guardian of intestate and other estates had brought numbers to penury and misery, while

no complaints were heard as to the general management of interests entrusted to private Executors and Administrators.

The object of Government in the change was, no doubt, the supposed greater security of estate property; but it is contended with truth that its only real effect was the creation of a very impolitic and unjust monopoly for the benefit of a public officer, while to those really interested no protection was secured beyond that which they were already in full enjoyment of.

Prior to the Act of 1849, the Ecclesiastical Registrar of the Supreme Court exercised the same functions as the Administrator General of the present day, the only real difference being that the former was the officer of that Court, in the Judges of which the appointment was vested, while the present officer is the servant of Government and appointed by it.

All testators who conceived that greater safety was secured by a public rather than a private manager of their property, were then entitled to avail themselves of the Registrar's services; but, at the same time, if they preferred those of friends or agents in whom they had confidence, and in the great majority of instances such is the case notwithstanding the change in the law, they made their wills accordingly, and in the full knowledge of the remuneration that their representatives would receive.

Prior to the Act of 1849 a commission on the assets of estates was the right equally of the public officer and of private executors, &c. That Act conferred the right on the public officer alone, peremptorily excluding private executors from any such remuneration whatever. The right of testators to make compensation was, indeed, recognized, but a statutory declaration of that right would scarcely seem to have been necessary.

It is believed that the law of Great Britain not allowing a commission to executors, &c., is the ground of the above exclusion; but, it must be remembered, that social relations in India vary, in many respects widely, from those of the United Kingdom. There a man might be called on once or twice in a lifetime to act as executor as a matter of private friendship. In India it is far otherwise. The majority of Europeans, when possessed of what they deem a competency, quit the country, but leave their property behind them invested in Indian securities. The existence on the spot of this amount of property necessitates the appointment of local executors or administrators, and in consequence the members of agency firms and other individuals are constantly called on to act in those capacities as a mere matter of business.

The Chamber cannot conceive any valid reason why the difficult and responsible management of the estates of deceased persons, should be excluded from its deserved recompense more than any other description of agency.

I am further instructed to remark that even if that compensation were provided by will it would not reach administrators acting under executors; that the case of insolvent estates, and more especially of estates where the parties beneficially interested are minors, there exists no means of securing a fair remuneration by consent of those parties; that testators and administrators will continue to appoint those in whom they have confidence, and who are interested in the welfare of their families, in preference to a public officer of whom they know nothing; that such nominees will continue to act, and that the law, as in such circumstances will ever be the case, will be, and successfully, evaded.

The Chamber of Commerce solicits respectfully but earnestly the favourable reconsideration by the Most Noble the Governor General in Council of the hardships of the present law as now set forth, and prays the repeal of so much of the Act of 1849 as deprived private individuals of rights and privileges theretofore enjoyed by the public at large.

A copy of a petition, presented to Government on the occasion of the Regulation of 1849, signed by numerous firms and individual parties, is appended to my present communication.

With reference to the Act to amend the law relating to the office and duties of Administrator General, now under the consideration of His Lordship in Council, the Chamber desires to make the following remarks on some of its provisions.

Sections 7 and 8 state the security to be given by the Administrator General and his two sureties. The amount is moderate, and the Chamber, in recognizing its moderation, solicits the interference of the Government to relax the security required from private Administrators on a more equitable footing. At present private Administrators (executors of course give none) are obliged to find security by themselves and two sureties for double the amount of the estimated value of the assets of each estate administered by them. The Chamber is of opinion that a security equal to a moderate per centage on such estimated values would be ample protection to the estates, if indeed it might not be altogether done away with.

Section 9 excludes creditors from the right of taking out letters of administration, or letters, *ad colligenda bona*, by giving a preference to the Administrator General over them. In insolvent estates this is felt to be a great hardship, as depriving those naturally most interested in the successful winding up of an estate, of the opportunity of giving it the benefit of their better knowledge of its capabilities; and it is prayed that this exclusion be omitted, and the law restored as it existed prior to 1849.

Section 11 provides that if any person, not being a Mussulman or Hindoo, shall die whether within the presidencies or not, and that, within one month no person shall have applied for probate or letters of administration, the Administrator General shall be entitled to take out letters of administration.

The time here given is so short as in a vast number of instances to give the Administrator General the absolute right to deal with the estate when the will is not on the spot. Even when executors and will are both present at one presidency, it would be utterly impossible for them to take out probate and give the requisite authority, should the deceased die possessed of property in the other presidencies, to take out letters of administration in those jurisdictions within the allotted time.

But in many instances wills are known to exist that cannot be got within the prescribed time. Yet notwithstanding the Administrator General would be entitled to interfere vexatiously under the circumstances, and would indeed be prompted to do so in all cases by the provision made in Section 18 for the payment of his commission and costs.

The oppressive working of the limitation of time proposed might be traced through a variety of cases; but the Chamber submits respectfully, that enough has been advanced to warrant a considerable modification of this provision of the Act, and of all connected with it.

Section 19 provides "that any payment or delivery of assets to any legatee, or person entitled in distribution, which shall be made by an Administrator General after the expiration of one year from the grant of letters of administration under which such payment or delivery shall be made, shall be allowed to the Administrator General as against all creditors or other claimants against the estate of whose debts or claims he shall not have had notice before making such payment or delivery."

This would be a very proper safe-guard to the public officer, provided that its benefits were equally extended to private executors and administrators. As the clause now stands, the protection is partial, and consequently unjust to those excluded.

Section 22 provides remuneration to Administrators General by a commission of five per cent., two-fifths of which, however, are, in the case of the Administrator General of Bengal, to be paid by him into the public treasury, and to be carried to the account and credit of the East India Company, in consideration "of the expenses and responsibility which will be incurred by the East India Company."

As all expenses of collection and distribution are by Sections 23 and 25 to be borne by the Administrator General, and the costs incurred in the cases con-

templated, by subsequent sections are to be met out of estates' assets, it is difficult to see for what expenses under the proposed Act the East India Company will be liable, and the tax of two per cent. must therefore be meant to cover the responsibility alone.

That responsibility is however, nowhere defined: and the Chamber is strongly of opinion that it ought to be taken in the way of guarantee to the public against any possible delinquencies of the Government Administrator.

Section 26 prohibits all private executors or administrators from making a charge for anything done in those capacities; and is highly objectionable, not only on the general grounds strongly urged in my present communication, but as having a retrospective action, which British subjects have always held to be contrary to the spirit and practice of English law, and which in the present instance is unnecessary, as the prohibition formed one of the provisions of Act VII. of 1849.

Section 31 directs the payment by the Administrator General into the E. I. Company's Treasuries of their respective Presidencies on 31st December and 30th June, whichever shall first happen after the expiration of one year from the time of the granting of any letters of administration under the Act. Similar payments are directed to be made on every subsequent 31st December and 30th June.

Under this enactment estate funds would remain in the hands of Administrators General for periods varying from 12 to 18 months, free from all control. The Chamber considers this an unwise privilege to those officers, and would suggest the following modification and enlargement of the provisions of this Clause, *viz.*, that all estate funds collected by the Administrators General should be paid into the respective general treasuries after the lapse of six months from the granting of letters of administration, and that at the expiration of six months from the date of such payments into the said treasuries, all undistributed estate funds should be invested by the Treasury officers in Government securities for the benefit of the several estates interested.

Section 35 burdens estates with all costs and expenses of preparing and publishing schedules, and of every reference and examination by Auditors as provided for by Sections 33 and 34.

The Chamber is of opinion that these charges ought clearly to be borne either by Administrators General or by the Government out of their respective proportions of the commission levied on the estate.

Sections 36 and 37 direct the course to be followed against the Administrators General should the Auditors see reason to believe that the former officers have

not conformed to the provisions of this Act, and by Section 38 the costs of the proceedings may be ordered by the Supreme Courts of the several presidencies to be borne by the estates.

The same objection applies here as has been urged against the three preceding Sections.

The Chamber presumes further that nothing in the present Act is meant to interfere with the right of parties beneficially interested in the estates under the control of Administrators General from bringing these officers to account by ordinary course of law for any *laches* or breaches of trust.

Sections 48 and 49 apply exclusively to the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, and the Chamber abstains therefore from all comment on them in ignorance of the local circumstances that may make such provisions necessary, but the provisions themselves enable the Government to appropriate unclaimed monies, free of interest within a very limited period indeed, only fifteen years.

The Chamber begs to bring to the notice of the Most Noble the Governor General in Council that no provision is made in this Act for the periodical publication of lists of unclaimed balances of estates, with the names of the parties known to be interested in them.

The Official Assignee is bound to publish such lists of unclaimed dividends from Insolvent estates, and the Chamber submits to the favorable consideration of his Lordship in Council that the system might with great benefit to the public be extended to the Administrator General.

I have now brought to a conclusion the various suggestions for change in the provisions of the Administrator's Act, that the Chamber is anxious to bring to the notice of Government, but there remains a subject that as yet does not appear to have attracted the attention of His Lordship, but which the present seems a favorable opportunity of laying before him. I refer to the several jurisdictions connected with the estates of deceased persons now existent in British India.

It would be a great improvement in the law were parties enabled by taking out the Probate or Letters of Administration in the Presidency where the bulk of the estate property lay, to deal with whatever might exist in the other presidencies, without being subjected to the vexatious delay and expense now attendant on the necessity of administering there.

The consolidation of such jurisdictions is now the subject of much attention at home, and the Chamber trusts that a hardship that presses so heavily in this country on many estates that are small, though not within the limit protected by the power of granting certificates given to Administrators General in the Act

discussed above, in Sections 40, 41 and 42, and is at the same time oppressive to all, will be deemed worthy of favorable and early legislation.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
OF INDIA IN COUNCIL, &c., &c., &c.

*The humble Memorial of the undersigned British subjects,
resident within the limits of the Presidency of Fort
William in Bengal, sheweth,*

That the draft of a proposed Act for the appointment of an Administrator-General of unrepresented estates in Bengal, and for the regulation of that office, purporting to have been read for the first time in Council on the 2nd September, 1848, was published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 9th September; and that a draft of the said Act with amendments, purporting to have been read as amended in Council on the 25th of November, 1848, was published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 2nd of December, 1848, and such proposed Act will, as your Memorialists are informed, shortly become law.

That the preamble of the said amended Act recites the expediency of disconnecting the administration of the estates of British subjects, dying intestate in the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal, from the office of Ecclesiastical Registrar of the Supreme Court there, and that the several clauses of the said proposed Act are, with one exception, directed to the appointment of a public Administrator, with no greater powers than those at present possessed by the Ecclesiastical Registrar, and to the creation of certain new safeguards and securities against the abuse of those powers.

That the office of administering to the effects of deceased British subjects, within the limits of the Presidency of Bengal, has hitherto been performed, partly by the Ecclesiastical Registrar, and partly by private Executors and Administrators; and that while experience has shown that the powers of the public Administrator may be most extensively and dangerously abused, no general charge or objection has ever been made against the present system of administration by private persons.

That the safeguards which the existing law affords against breaches of trust and misapplication of funds by private Executors or Administrators, have been

proved to be sufficient, and must at the least furnish as much security against misconduct as the provisions in that behalf contained in the proposed Act in respect of the public Administrator; and that, while the security against misconduct is the same, the consequences of such misconduct can never prove so extensively injurious in the case of a private individual Administrator, as in that of a public officer.

That, by the existing law of the Presidency of Bengal, the right to a commission on all assets realized, is incident to the office of a personal representative; that such commission has for a long series of years been uniformly charged and allowed in administration accounts; and that no complaint or objection has ever yet been made against the present state of the law in that particular.

That, in suits connected with the administration of the estates of parties leaving property in Bengal, the Court of Chancery in England has long recognised the right to such commissions as aforesaid, and in cases where the party entitled to such commission has declined to charge the same, the said Court has ordered the masters of the Court to insert such Commission in the accounts taken.

That, in a majority of instances, the relatives of British subjects dying within the Presidency, (who form the class usually beneficially interested in the property of the deceased,) are resident in Great Britain, or elsewhere without the limits of the Presidency, and that instances also constantly occur of persons dying in Great Britain, who have at one time been residents in, and leave assets within the limits of the Presidency, and that in such cases no motives can exist which would induce residents here to undertake the office of Executor or Administrator without remuneration.

That in point of fact the duties of private Administrator have for a long period been discharged principally by members of the community, who have accepted the office as in the course of their business, and on the footing of obtaining a reasonable remuneration for their labours and acceptance of responsibility.

That the 8th Clause of the abovementioned proposed Act provides, that no person other than the Administrator-General shall be entitled to charge any commission or agency as Executor of any will of which probate shall have been granted in the said Presidency after the passing of the Act, or as Administrator of any effects whereof administration shall have been granted in the said Presidency after the passing of the Act.

That the present state of the law and of practice as to private administrations, being as above stated, the practical effect of the said clause will, as your

Memorialists humbly submit, be to destroy the power which British subjects have of now insuring, that their property shall after their decease be administered to by persons of their own selection, inasmuch as the office of Executor will, for the future, be one which private individuals cannot be expected to accept.

That the said clause will still more effectually prevent the personal representatives of parties dying in Great Britain, and leaving funded or other property within the Presidency of Bengal, from procuring persons resident in that Presidency to take out on their behalf letters of Administration to such property; and that there are cases in which the proposed Act does not confer on the Administrator-General any power to apply for grants of administration.

That the said clause will bring the estate of almost every testator and intestate within the Presidency, under the administration of the public officer, and will do so by creating a violent change in a long-established law, and giving this officer, working under a comparatively new and untried system, an unjust monopoly of that remuneration for labour which private Executors and Administrators have, without complaint or objection to their so doing, for a long series of years enjoyed.

That your Memorialists beg most respectfully to call the attention of Your Lordship in Council to the foregoing statements, and to the expediency of substituting in place of the 8th Clause of the said proposed Act, some enactment which shall not totally deprive private Executors and Administrators of that commission which the law has so long authorized them to receive. And your Memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

NATIVE INSOLVENTS.

To JOHN COCHRANE, Esq.,
Official Assignee.

Calcutta, 27th July, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to beg that you will do them the favor of allowing a Statement to be sent to me for their information of the names of all Native Insolvents whose estates have passed through your hands during the last five years, showing

The amount of the Liabilities Totals.
The amount of the Assets Totals.
The amount of the Dividends paid	Totals.

If this will be imposing too much labor on your Office, I shall be equally obliged if you will allow me to send some one from mine to extract the mentioned Statistics from your books.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 4759.

To T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 29th July, 1853.

SIR,—You are quite welcome to any information regarding the matters alluded to in your letter of the 27th of this month. I cannot furnish you with all the information you require previous to August, 1848, because before that time copies of the Schedules were not filed in my Office.

I believe that only one Native has paid a Dividend of 18 per Cent., and that has arisen from his holding an Office, and deductions being made from his pay. The Native Estates in nearly every instance pay nothing. If you will send a Clerk over I will direct the Office to assist him in procuring the information you want.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN COCHRANE,
Official Assignee.

CALCUTTA CANALS.

To CECIL BEADON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 17th August, 1853.

SIR,—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to request the favor of your informing them if any orders have been issued by Government for the repair and improvement of the Calcutta Canals.

Should such be the case the Committee will further be extremely obliged by your allowing the plan of the intended works to be communicated to them for the information of the Chamber of Commerce.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

No. 718

FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT
OF BENGAL,

To T. M. ROBINSON, Esq.,

Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Dated, Fort William, the 29th of August, 1853.

Recd.

SIR,—In reply to your communication of the 17th instant, I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal to forward the accompanying copy of a letter, No. 280, addressed to the Government of India, Home Department, from this office, and dated the 5th April last, relative to the improvement of the Calcutta Canals, and to state for the information of the Chamber of Commerce that the Supreme Government has accorded its sanction to the scheme therein proposed subject to the confirmation of the Hon'ble the Court of Directors, to whom the matter has been referred.

2. I am desired to add that an Act such as is alluded to in the last paragraph of the letter in question, has been passed by the Legislature, as Act No. X. of 1853.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

W. GORDON YOUNG,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

No. 280.

FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

To J. P. GRANT, Esq.,

Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

Dated Fort William, the 5th April, 1853.

Recd.

SIR,—I am directed by the Most Noble the Governor of Bengal to submit for the consideration and orders of the Governor

General in Council, copies of the documents noted in the margin, on the subject of improving the navigation of the two Canals connecting the River in Calcutta with the Sunderbunds.

2. It had long been known and admitted that these Canals, but more

From R. H. Mytton, Esq., dated 23rd February, 1852.

To Junior Secretary Board of Revenue, dated 25th February ditto, No. 266.

From ditto, dated 10th May, ditto, No. 800, with Enclosures.

To ditto, dated 15th July, ditto, No. 770.

To Military Board, ditto, No. 771.

From ditto, dated 6th August, ditto, No. 884.

From ditto, dated 24th February, 1853, No. 1139, with Enclosure and 8 Maps in original.

especially the one skirting Calcutta on the North (called the Circular and Ballighatta Canal) were quite inadequate to the enormous and increasing amount of traffic constantly passing through them. And in consequence of a representation on the subject being made by Mr. Mytton when Commissioner of Dacca, the Board of Revenue were called on for a Report.

3. This was submitted in May, 1852, together with Reports from the Collector of Calcutta, and the Commissioner of the Division. In these Reports it was stated that the most serious obstructions to commerce were caused by the inadequacy of the means of transit afforded, and more especially by the loading and unloading of boats in the Canal. The law passed in 1836, it was observed, allowed all boats, in addition to a reasonable time for passing through, to remain in the Canal two days for every 100 mounds of burden. Thus, as the Collector remarked a 2,000 mound boat was entitled to stop in the Canal and block up the thoroughfare for 40 days, whereas its Cargo could be easily discharged in five or six.

4. As to the best method of improving the navigation of the Canal, the Board requested that the opinions of Engineer Officers might be taken; but "as a measure of temporary and partial relief," they suggested the passing of some rule for compelling boats to pass through without delay, observing, at the same time, that they were doubtful whether such a Rule could be enforced

without previously altering the present law. It was remarked that the tolls realized on this Canal had long since repaid the cost of its construction, and that the large amount of revenue it brought into the Treasury, might be very properly applied to measures of improvement.

5. From a Statement prepared in the Military Board's Office, it appears that the original cost to Government of the Calcutta Canals was Rupees 19,30,844, exclusive of Tolly's Nullah, which was excavated at the expense of Col. Tolly. The aggregate toll collections up to the end of 1849-50, were Rupees 49,52,317, and the surplus Revenue, after deducting all charges, Rupees 41,46,060, so that the Canals had then paid their own cost more than twice over. The following are the gross and net collections from these Canals for the last six years :—

	Gross Collections	Expense	Net Collections.
1846-47	1,95,374	27,822	1,67,552
1847-48	1,72,350	27,041	1,45,309
1848-49	1,76,654	31,119	1,45,535
1849-50	1,82,989	21,767	1,61,222
1850-51	1,81,531
1851-52	1,90,085

6. It is understood that there has been a considerable falling off in the receipts this year (1852-53) owing solely to the fact that the Canal has been so crowded that more boats could not get in.

7. The question was referred to the Military Board, who have submitted Reports from the Superintending Engineer, and Mr. Rose, the Executive Officer in charge of the Canal.

8. Mr. Rose says, "it is not easy to convey an idea to those who have not personally witnessed the scene of the densely-crowded state of the boats and the consequent impediments to navigation. From January to May the crowding is so dense that it is hardly possible for a small native boat to force a passage along the Canal." "Along the greater part of the banks a range of boats is almost always moored for the purpose of unloading their cargoes, and from their large size they occupy a considerable portion of the Canal." From what is said on this point by the Superintending Engineer, Colonel Goodwyn, it appears that boat-owners not only block up the Canal during the unreasonably long time allowed them by the Law of 1826, but that they often

willingly pay the small sum demandable as demurrage for exceeding this time, and "keep the boats as store-rooms in the Canal, the amount of the demurrage "not being equal to what the store rent would be for the hire of Godowns." Other boats it appears "lie and repair in the Canal," paying demurrage, but creating a serious nuisance and obstruction. "In every other part of the "world," Colonel Goodwyn continues, "Canals are looked on and navigated solely "as roads leading from one point to another, no stoppage for loading or "unloading occurring till the terminus is reached; still less are they used as "wet-docks."

9. The remedies of an engineering kind proposed by the Military Board in concurrence with the Officers whom it has consulted, are as follows :—

1st.—The formation of a new Canal skirting the town and adjoining two bends in the present Canal between which the greatest crowding occurs.

2nd.—The construction of an additional and larger lock alongside the present one where the Canal joins the River Hooghly, to allow freer ingress and egress to boats.

3rd.—The constant employment of a dredging boat wherever most required in the Canal.

10. The cost of the plan is roughly estimated at something under three lacs of Rupees; and the Board strongly recommend that Mr. Rose be permitted to draw up detailed Plans and Estimates for submission to Government. They consider that even if the plan were to cost four lacs it would be money well spent. The Board also propose to deepen Tolly's Nullah, and provide it with a tow-path at an estimated cost of Rupees 50,000. For this work also they recommend that detailed Estimates should be prepared.

11. On the subject of the large net Revenue which, as the Board of Revenue and the Collector of Calcutta remark, accrues from this Canal, Mr. Rose urges, that as after paying for repairs, charges of collection and every other expense, the Ballinghatta Canal brings into Government a clear net profit of at least Rupees 1,20,000 a year, "the surplus collections of three "years would more than cover the outlay on the proposed improvements, "and pay g interest."

12. The Board of Revenue and Mr. Rose have discussed the question of the probable effect of the Railway upon the traffic passing through the Calcutta Canals, and they concur in thinking that "that traffic is far more likely to "increase on the opening of the Railway than to diminish."

13. On the whole it appears to His Lordship that the necessity of some measure by which the Canals may be freed from the inordinate crowding of native boats, which at present obstruct them, and improved facilities given to the internal commerce of Bengal by these Channels, has been fully made out.

14. The scheme of Mr. Rose appears to His Lordship to be well adapted to effect the object in view. In point of fact, it converts the existing Canals over almost their whole length into wet-docks for unloading, and provides a new one to be an unimpeded Channel for the progress of native craft into the River.

15. In His Lordship's opinion the measure is necessary; the means seem good; the cost is not great; and, at any rate, the Government which has already derived such large profit from the Canals is bound to improve them. His Lordship would accordingly recommend immediate sanction to the scheme. In anticipation of such sanction, the Military Board have been called upon to submit detailed Plans and Estimates for the work.

16. His Lordship would also recommend, as a measure urgently required to remedy the existing evils pending the execution of the new work, that a short Act be passed with the least possible delay, repealing Section IV. Act XXII. of 1836, and empowering the Government of Bengal to prescribe, by means of rules having the force of law, the time to be allowed to boats for passing through or remaining in the Canal, and the rate and amount of rent or demurrage to be paid for exceeding such time. A Draft of such an Act is appended.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) CECIL BEADON,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

(A True Copy) W. G. YOUNG,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

To W. GORDON YOUNG, Esq.,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 23rd September, 1853.

SIR—I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 718, of the 29th ultimo, covering copies of correspondence relative to the contemplated improvements in the Calcutta Canals, which have received the sanction of the Supreme Government, and informing the Committee that an Act (No. X. of 1853) has been passed by the Legislature for the better management of the Canals. The Committee beg to express their satisfaction at the whole of your communication, and observing the very large Revenue derived by Government from the Canals respectfully also to record their hope that the promised improvements and alterations will be completed with as little delay as possible.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

(Signed) T. M. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

