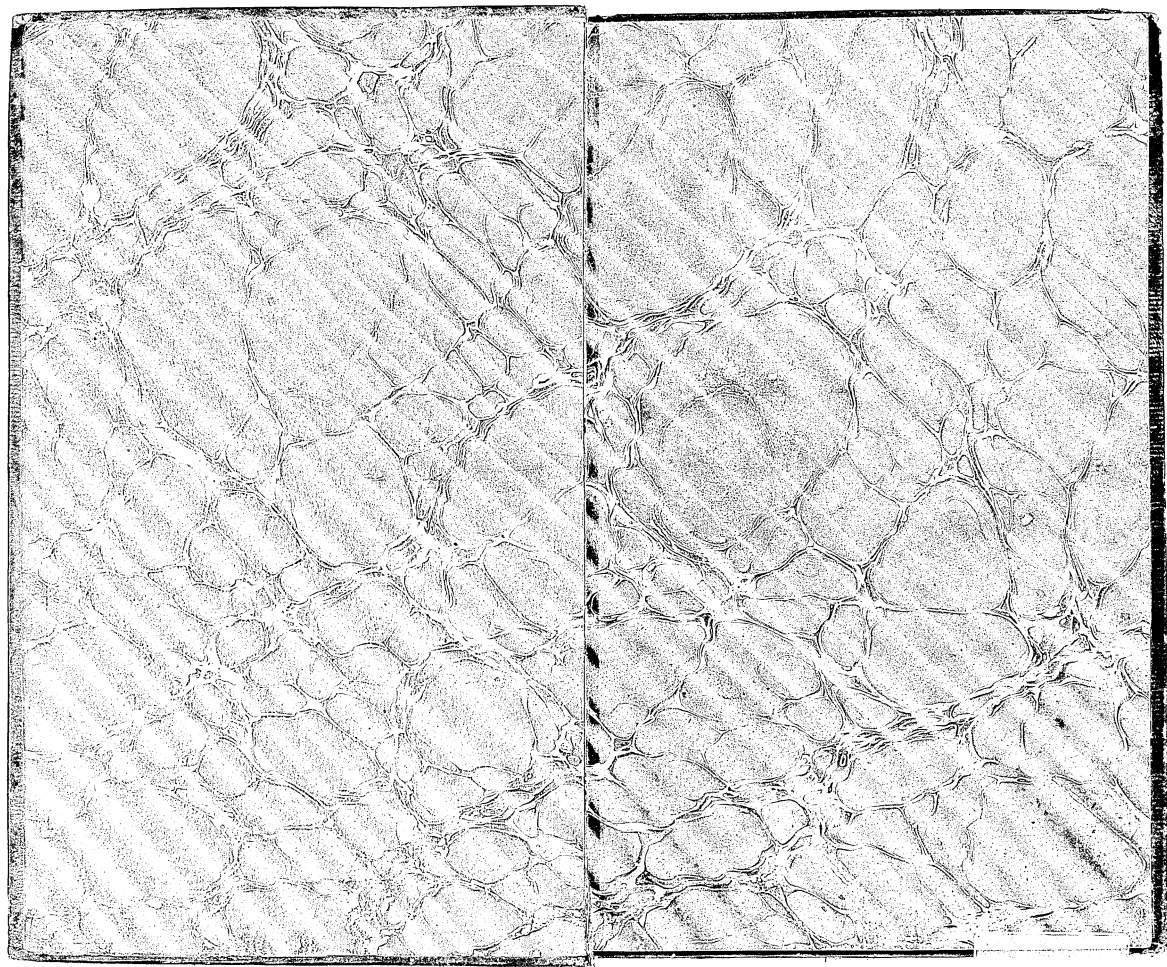
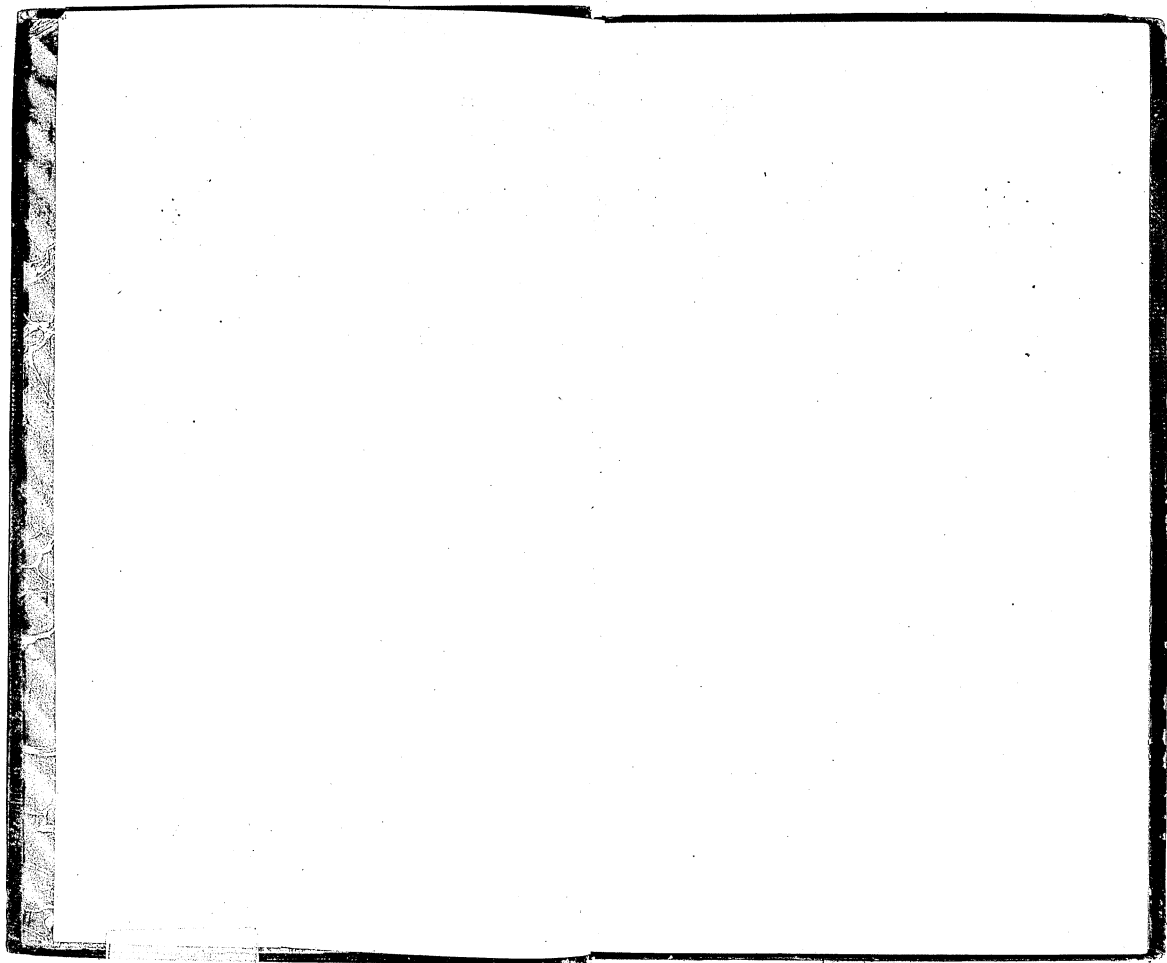


REPORT
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FROM 1st MAY TO 31st OCTOBER 1871.





REPORT

OF

THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

From 1st May to 31st October 1871.

Calcutta:

PRINTED BY CONES AND CO., No. 19, LALL BAZAR.

1871.

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Proceedings of the Half-yearly General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on Saturday, the 16th December 1871.

The Hon'ble J. R. Bullen Smith, *President*,
in the chair.

The Chairman opened the proceedings by reading the advertisement convening the meeting, and in moving the adoption of the half-yearly report drew attention to the subject of the five-per-cent loan of 1856-57, and observed that this was a subject in which the Committee had thought they should take immediate action. He observed that the main provisions of the conversion were such as no exception could perhaps be taken to, and the eagerness with which holders had come forward and taken up the loan showed that the terms were liberal. But the subsidiary arrangements, he remarked, were in some respects decidedly objectionable. For instance, it had been decided that the option of conversion was to be determined by priority of application, dating from the issue of the notification. Now, by this ruling, the choice was practically denied to many ; for the securities of the new five-per-cent loan were, in common with

others, largely held in this city by the banks and various agency houses on behalf of constituents absent from this country, and were in many cases only accompanied by a power of attorney to draw interest, leaving the securities themselves to be dealt with, as regarded sale or transfer only, under instructions and special authority transmitted by the owners from time to time. This ruling had put those holding securities on behalf of constituents in a position of much doubt and perplexity, for they were either to take upon themselves the responsibility of acting without instructions, or passively permit their constituents to run the risk of being shut out altogether from the advantages which conversion appeared undoubtedly to confer. Thus, the choice was practically denied to many, for Government refused to accept applications unless the papers came in accompanied by a power of sale, which, within the limited time allowed, was, in consequence of the absence of holders from this country, impossible to be transmitted. He referred to the able letter on the subject from Madras, printed in the report; and he entirely failed to see how the interest of Government could be damaged had they given previous notice putting people on their guard. He regretted that the representation of the Chamber had failed.

The next subject which called for a few remarks was the decimal sub-division of the rupee. He reminded the members that some months back the Committee received from the Government of Bengal sundry papers on this subject, accompanied by a request for the expression of their opinion as to whether the proposed change was desirable. Although he was fully impressed with a sense of the advantages of a decimal system considered generally, yet he thought that there was no practical necessity for the decimalisation of the rupee. He referred to Mr. Molesworth having introduced a decimal system in Ceylon, and observed that that gentleman, impressed with its successful acceptance there, had ventured to hope that a somewhat similar system might be inaugurated in this country: but he thought that the question was altogether different as regards India, for the rupee had already been otherwise divided, whereas in Ceylon it was not so. He further thought that the adoption of the proposed system was to be deprecated as tending to harass and disquiet the masses of the people without securing for them any corresponding advantage. The decimal system had been rejected in England after the most searching inquiry into every circumstance that could be conceived as likely to be advantageously affected by the

change ; and such having been the case in England, the necessity was greater for abstaining from doing anything which was opposed to the established habits of the people of this country, who viewed with suspicion all such changes. He said in conclusion that the Madras Chamber of Commerce had addressed the Government on the subject to a similar effect, and he hoped that the measure would not be pressed forward.

In thus giving an opinion against the decimal sub-division of the Rupee, the Committee had not, however, been inconsistent with their late assent to the introduction of a decimal system of weights and measures. In respect of these no uniformity existed throughout the country, they differed in every zillah, he might almost say in every bazar ; and this being so, while it was very desirable to have uniformity, and necessary for this end to introduce a system altogether new, the decimal sub-division appeared undoubtedly the most desirable to adopt.

The next subject for remark was the Paunben Channel. In their last report the Committee alluded to the increased attention which the opening up of this channel between the mainland and Ceylon was attracting in England, and they had since received from Government a number of papers on the subject, which were embodied

ed in the report. In response to the request for an expression of their opinion, the Committee had no hesitation in stating their belief that the opening up of the passage would be to the already large and rapidly increasing steam-trade a substantial and decided benefit, affording as it would to steamers a saving of over 700 miles of distance and corresponding economy of fuel. More recent papers showed, however, that the expense of the project would be very much larger than was originally supposed, and it was for Government to consider whether the shipping likely to pass through the channel could bear the amount of toll which would be required to cover the outlay.

The Chairman said that complaints had reached the Committee that octroi-duties were being levied at certain stations of the North-West and the Punjab in such a manner as to invest them with the character of an inland transit duty. The Committee accordingly addressed the Government of the N. W. Provinces, by whom they were informed that within the limits of that Government every precaution was taken to prevent the octroi being a transit duty, and that the Committee had been wrongly informed on the subject. He was glad that the Committee had such an authoritative denial of the practice alluded to, and he hoped that the results of the inquiry

ry instituted in the Punjab and the Central Provinces would be as satisfactory as the present assurance.

The Chairman said that the recent occurrence of another disastrous fire in a jute screw-house situated in the very heart of the business part of the city, had anew forced upon the Committee the necessity of moving in the matter of protection from similar danger. The local Government recognized the importance of the subject, and within the last few days had submitted to the Committee draft of the Bill which it was proposed to pass in the local Council for the more effectual control of jute screw-houses and depôts, but in his opinion the Bill did not go nearly far enough. It seemed to him, the Chairman, that there was no middle way in this question, and that proper protection could only be arrived at by the absolute removal of all such places beyond the limits of the town, where operations in this inflammable article could be carried on with less risk to property generally. He was glad to see one of the Members of the Chamber who now sat in the local Council, Mr. Colvin, had advocated this view when leave was asked to introduce the Bill, and he hoped this course would be adopted. But should this measure be thought too extreme, and that an alternative one must

be accepted, then he, the Chairman, trusted the Bill would be made more stringent, leaving less to the discretion of Magistrates and others, and providing specially by legal enactment for various points such as that no work should be done in any compound, court or other uncovered space attached to any jute screw-house or godown; that all such places should have pucca roofs and be protected by fire-proof doors and shutters, &c., &c. The Chairman then moved the adoption of the Committee's Report which was seconded by Mr. A. C. Pott and unanimously carried.

The Chairman next presented to the meeting the new tonnage schedule lately drawn up by the Committee, in concert with various other Members of the Chamber who had been kind enough to assist in the work. He pointed out some of the chief alterations and additions which had been made, finally moving the adoption of the schedule. A lengthened discussion ensued, chiefly as to the advisability of reducing the measurement ton of cotton, jute and similar articles from 52 to 50 feet, on which subject much difference of opinion existed,—resulting in the following resolutions:—

1st.—Proposed by Mr. E. C. Morgan, and seconded by Mr. Abbott, *that the revised sche-*

dule be adopted, with the amendment that the ton of jute, cotton, and similar articles now set down at 52 feet, be altered to 50 feet.

Amendment proposed by Mr. VanCutsem, and seconded by Mr. Vlasto, that the schedule remain unaltered, was lost.

2nd—Proposed by Mr. Cox, and seconded by Mr. Duncan, that so much of the first foot-note to the schedule as refers to measurement on the wharf be omitted.

Amendment proposed by Mr. Whitney, and seconded by Mr. Abbott, that the words "within a radius of five miles from the Custom-house wharf" be added to the same foot-note after the words "the measurement be taken" in lieu of the words now concluding that note,—was carried.

Mr. Willcox then proposed that the measurement of jute and cotton be taken alongside of ships; but the proposition, being out of order, was not put to the meeting.

A vote of thanks to the Chair terminated the proceedings.

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

TONNAGE SCHEDULE FOR THE PORT OF CALCUTTA, submitted at a General Meeting of Bengal Chamber of Commerce, held on the 10th December 1871, and adopted with effect from 1st July 1872.

| ARTICLES. | Cwt. per Ton Nett. | Cubic feet per Ton. |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| Aloes, in bags and boxes | 20 | ... |
| Alum, in ditto | 20 | ... |
| Aniseed, if packed in bags of one maund | 12 | ... |
| " " " otherwise | 8 | ... |
| Arrowroot, in cases | ... | 50 |
| Arsenic, in bags or cases | 20 | ... |
| Asafoetida, in bags and boxes | 20 | ... |
| Apparel, in boxes | ... | 50 |
| Bark, in bags | 8 | ... |
| Bees' Wax | 20 | ... |
| Betel-nut | 16 | ... |
| Books | 20 | 50 |
| Borax | 14 | ... |
| Bran | 20 | ... |
| Brimstone | 20 | ... |
| Bullion | ... | at per cent. |
| Cake-lac, in bags | 16 | 50 |
| Camphor, in cases | ... | 50 |
| Cardamoms, in robins | 8 | ... |
| " boxes | ... | 50 |
| Cassia, in boxes | ... | 50 |
| " bags | 12 | ... |
| Castor Seed | 15 | ... |
| Chillies, (dry) in bags | 8 | ... |
| China Root, in bags | 12 | ... |
| " boxes | ... | 50 |
| Chiretta | 10 | ... |
| Chutrah | 14 | ... |
| Cigars | ... | 50 |
| Gloves, in bags | 8 | ... |
| " boxes | ... | 50 |
| Coals | 20 | ... |
| Cochineal, in cases and barrels | 20 | 50 |
| Coffee, in bags | 18 | ... |
| " casks | 16 | ... |
| Coin, loose and unscrewed | 12 | ... |
| Copras, or Coconut Kernel | 14 | ... |
| Cotlander Seed | 12 | ... |
| Cotton | ... | 50 |
| Cowries | 20 | ... |

| ARTICLES. | Cwt. per Ton Nett. | Cubic Feet per Ton. |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Tapioca ... .. | ..... | 50 |
| Tea ... .. | ..... | 50 |
| Teel Seed | 20 | ..... |
| Timber, round ... .. | ..... | 40 |
| " squared ... .. | ..... | 50 |
| Tinical | 20 | ..... |
| Tobacco leaf, in bales | 12 | ..... |
| Tortoise Shells, in chests ... .. | ..... | 50 |
| Turmeric | 12 | ..... |
| Wheat | 20 | ..... |
| Wool, ... .. | ..... | 50 |

Goods in Casks or Cases to be calculated gross weight when paying freight by weight; and where freight is made payable on measurement, the measurement be taken on the Custom House wharf, or other shipping wharf within a radius of 5 miles from the Custom House.

Jute, Jute Cuttings, Hemp, Cotton and Safflower, and other articles similarly packed, are screwed in bales varying from 300 lbs. to 400 lbs.

The term "dead weight" shall be understood to mean the following articles—Sugar, Saltpetre, Rice, Wheat, Gram, Dholl, Peas, and all Metals.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

CALCUTTA, }
16th December 1871. }

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE HALF-YEAR
ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 1871.

The Committee have the pleasure to submit their report on the principal subjects which have come under their consideration during the past half-year.

Mode of collection of Income Tax on interest on Government Securities.

In their last report the Committee recorded the correspondence which had passed between them and the Financial Department of the Government of India in relation to this matter, and have now merely to submit the closing letter from the Government which came to hand after issue of their report. From this letter it will be seen that the Government finally declined to admit the injustice of which the Committee complained, or to accept the remedy they proposed. While regretting that their action was not attend-

ed with relief to those concerned, the Committee are still of opinion that the position they took up was incontrovertible, and can only express their hope that as to any future change in established procedure in matters of this nature Government may see fit to give a much more extended notice than was vouchsafed on the occasion under review :—

Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 5th June 1871.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 9th May.

2. The income tax Act of 1871 altered the method only of levying the duty upon the interest on Government securities,—it made no change in the incidence of the tax. As explained in my former letter, income tax was due for the year 1870-71 upon no interest on Government securities which was not actually payable between the 31st March 1870 and 1st April 1871, and income tax under the Act of 1871 is due upon the interest actually payable between the 31st March 1871 and the 1st April 1872.

3. The Chamber of Commerce admits that this is reasonable and equitable, but urges that it may not have been understood, and that a buyer on the 1st March may have reasonably supposed that he would not be liable to duty

in respect to the interest on securities purchased by him due shortly after the 1st April.

4. I have already had the honor to inform you that if it can be shewn that, under any misapprehension, income tax was paid under the Act of 1870 on more than two half years' interest on any Government securities, a refund will be made; but the Governor General in Council cannot admit that there was any ground for such misapprehension in the state of the law or in the practice of the administration, and he regrets that he cannot suspend the law for the relief of any purchaser who may have suffered under a misunderstanding of this character.

5. I am to add, however, that it is not understood how any misapprehension of the law can have injured any person who intends to hold securities which he has recently bought

6. Upon any interpretation of the law such a purchaser must have known that he would be called upon to pay during the year 1871-72 any income tax that might be imposed upon twelve months' interest. Had the method of taxing such interest not been changed, he would have had to return 12 months' interest as part of his income, and half the income tax on this would have been due at once—even earlier indeed than under the new method.

7. And a person who bought to re-sell will recover the income tax from his purchaser as readily on this occasion as on any future occasion.

Conversion of 5 per cent Loan of 1856-57.

When the Notification No. 3206 of the Government of India in the Financial Department was issued, your Committee felt that while the main provisions of the conversion were such as no exception could perhaps fairly be taken to, the subsidiary arrangements were in some respects decidedly objectionable and ill-calculated to afford to all holders of the 5 per cent stock the option to which they deemed them fairly entitled. The objections taken by the Committee were embodied in their letter of 20th September to the Financial Secretary, which, together with the reply thereto, will be found below. It will be seen that this reply scarcely touched upon the main objection urged by the Committee, which was that while the option of conversion was apparently offered to all holders of the 5 per cent loan it was, in consequence of the early date at which reception of applications commenced, and still more in consequence of the ruling that no applications for conversion would be received unless accompanied by a power of sale of the securities to which they referred, practically denied to many. In a second letter, under date 6th October, the Committee anew endeavoured to urge

their views upon the Government of India, but in vain; and the conversion scheme has since been closed on the terms at first notified, to the certain exclusion of many holders, who find themselves shut out from its benefits, because they had not made arrangements which nothing in the previous practice of the Government nor in the ordinary conduct of business could have led them to suppose were necessary. The Committee believe that their action in this matter although, like that referred to in the preceding paragraph, unsuccessful in obtaining any modification of the evils complained of, has yet met with general acceptance; and they deem it well to add to their own correspondence copy of a letter addressed to Government by the Madras Chamber of Commerce, in which the hardship of the obligatory production of powers of sale is forcibly dwelt upon:—

Chamber of Commerce to Government of India.

Calcutta, 20th September 1871.

I am desired by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to submit the following observations relating to Notification No. 3206 of the Government of India, in the Financial Department, published in the *Gazette Extraordinary* of the 16th instant.

The Committee feel that it is not their province in a communication of this nature to comment upon the leading features of the Resolution of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council in reference to the new 5 per cent. loan of 1856-57 as detailed in the above-mentioned notification, and they recognise with much satisfaction the feeling which has prompted the Government to make public the nature of the arrangements determined upon somewhat in advance of the date when such intimation was looked for. The Committee may, however, be permitted to say that, as Government had resolved not to offer the option of conversion to the full extent of the loan, it would, in their opinion, have been a course more equitable and more likely to afford general satisfaction to have allotted the sum available for conversion *pro rata*, in proportion to the extent of their holding in the 5 per cent. loan, among all those who were willing to accept this mode of discharge rather than be paid off in cash.

It having been decided, however, that the option of conversion is to become available not on the above principle but according to priority of application, I am desired to express the regret of the Committee that such application should have been made receivable immediately after issue of the notification, instead of at a date sufficiently distant to have put the privilege within the reach of all. The securities of the new 5 per cent. loan are, in common with others, largely held in this city by the Banks and various Agency Houses on behalf of constituents absent from this country, and are in

many cases only accompanied by a power of attorney to draw interest, leaving the securities themselves to be dealt with, as regards sale or transfer only, under instructions and special authority transmitted by the owners from time to time.

The orders of the Government of India, under which the option of conversion is to be determined by priority of application, dating from the issue of the notification, have put those holding securities as above on behalf of absent constituents in a position of much doubt and perplexity, for they must either take upon themselves the responsibility of acting without instructions, or passively permitting their constituents to run the risk of being shut out altogether from the advantages which conversion appears at the present time undoubtedly to offer.

The Committee would further remark that the constituents themselves cannot be said to have committed any laches in this matter, seeing that the intimation of the intentions of Government was not expected before the middle of October, and that action upon them prior to the date of maturity of the loan, or 16th of January next, was not anticipated. What has been said of Calcutta is doubtless equally applicable to Bombay and Madras; and it may be remarked that, although the Government notification has been published simultaneously in London, the position of the absent holders in question is not thereby improved as their securities are in this country, and no application for conversion will be registered by His Grace the

Secretary of State for India without their production. Had the earliest date for application been fixed at, say, the 1st or 15th December, the most distant holders would have been able to transmit their instructions and necessary powers, much doubt and anxiety would have been saved to agents, and not a few holders, among them many of those who can least afford it, would have been spared the loss which the Committee fear must now inevitably fall upon them. The Committee cannot for a moment conceive that Government would intentionally put some holders of its securities in a different and less favorable position than others interested in the same loan, yet such will undoubtedly be the practical effect of that part of the notification of 16th instant to which I have been instructed to draw attention.

A few months ago the Committee had occasion to point out, in connection with the rules issued for the collection of the income tax, how hardly a sudden and unnotified change in the previously existing practice had fallen upon a certain class of operators in Government securities, and it is with corresponding regret they find in the notification now under review a defect somewhat similar in character, but likely to be attended with much more serious consequences.

Government of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, the 30th September, 1871.

I am directed by the Governor General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 20th

instant, upon the subject of the notification recently issued, announcing the discharge, at maturity, of the 5 per cent loan of 1856-57.

2. The first duty of the Government of India in such transactions is to secure for the revenues of India the greatest amount of benefit at the least probable risk. These objects have been secured as effectually as was practicable by the course which the Government of India has adopted in this instance.

3. The alternative courses which are now recommended by the Chamber do not at all commend themselves to the judgment of the Government of India, and run counter to one of the essential principles of the recent notification. The adoption of any such alternatives would have obliged the Government of India to concede more favorable terms than those actually conceded, would have protracted unnecessarily the period of uncertainty, and would have involved a certain amount of public loss. The Government of India, as steward of the general interest, is not prepared to incur such sacrifice for the sake of conferring on the holders of a small portion of the whole stock a benefit to which they are not entitled.

4. The market price of Government securities since the notification appears to show that the terms offered by the Government are considered satisfactory by the public creditors as a body, and there is no doubt in the mind of the Governor-General in Council as to their being fully liberal.

5. The holders of the five per cent loan were entitled to nothing more than re-payment in cash at due date, and the Government of India are unable to admit that, in discharging a portion of the loan in cash, and the remainder by conversion into another loan acceptable to its creditors, it is chargeable with any injustice whatever.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of India.

Calcutta, 6th October, 1871.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication No. 4059, dated 30th ultimo, replying to the letter which the Committee of this Chamber addressed to you on the 20th idem, regarding the notification lately issued as to the conversion of the 5 per cent loan of 1856-57.

It is matter of much regret to the Committee that the whole point of their letter appears to have been overlooked, for a reference to that representation will show that they entirely abstained from commenting upon the main features of the late operation to which allusion is made in paragraphs 4 and 5 of your letter under reply. So far from questioning in any degree the liberality of the terms offered by Government, the Committee, had they deemed it their duty to enter on the subject at all, would have expressed the opinion that at the time the notification was issued terms less liberal would have secured to the Government the full success of the scheme; and they certainly would not have questioned for a mo-

ment the absolute right of the Government to discharge a loan partly by cash and partly by conversion acceptable to the creditors.

The object of the Chamber's representation was to draw the attention of the Government of India to the—in their opinion—inequitable nature of the subsidiary arrangements under which the conversion of the 1856-57 loan has been brought forward, which, while nominally offering the option of conversion to all the holders of 5 per cent stock, practically denies such option to many. The Committee of this Chamber concur in the proposition stated in your 2nd paragraph, to the effect that in financial operations it is incumbent upon the Government of India to secure for the revenue of the country the greatest amount of benefit at the least possible risk, but they cannot admit that such general benefit is to be secured by dealing exceptionally with a certain section, however small, of a large body of public creditors who have hitherto all been upon the same footing. It is the opinion of the Committee that all holders of the 5 per cent loan had, if not a legal, at least an equitable and moral right to be placed on precisely equal terms in respect of the conversion, discharge, or payment of the loan as might be determined by Government. The rules for conversion as set forth in the notification under review do not confer such equality, but practically put the option of conversion beyond the reach of many. In this respect and to this extent the notification appeared to the Committee unfortunate and inconsistent with the broad spirit of equity by which they are sure the Government of India would be

desirous of characterising all its dealings with public creditors; and, with all respect, I am directed to add that the Committee can find nothing in your communication under acknowledgment tending to alter this opinion.

Government of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 13th October 1871.

I am directed by His Excellency the Right Hon'ble the Viceroy and Governor General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 6th instant.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of India.

Madras, 30th September 1871.

The Officiating Accountant General of Madras, in a Notification under date the 20th instant, which was published yesterday evening, has announced that the Secretary of State has been requested to warn all holders of Government Promissory Notes of the 5 per cent Loan of the 28th February 1857, that transfers to the new $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Transfer Loan of 1872 cannot be effected in India by agents unless on the production of powers of sale.

I am now desired by the Chamber of Commerce to bring to the notice of the Government of India, that no intimation of the above mentioned arrangement was

made in the Notification of the Right Hon'ble the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, of the 16th instant, with regard to the discharge of the 5 per cent Loan. In that Notification, it is stated, that His Grace the Secretary of State for India has been requested to receive tenders for the transfer of any Notes of the 5 per cent Loan held in England; and further "that no application for transfer" assumedly in either England or India, "will be received after the 15th November next." You are, however, aware that a large amount of the 5 per cent Loan is held by parties resident in England, but whose paper is deposited with agents in this country, who have powers of attorney enabling them to draw interest thereon. The new Notification of the Accountant General strikes a serious blow at the interests of the above large class, for even if it is possible to ask them by wire to send out powers of sale, and if these powers do reach India before the 15th November, it is almost certain that the great bulk of their applications for transfer will reach the proper department after the whole amount to be transferred has been taken up by investors who happen to be on the spot where their paper is. Even had the members of the Chamber been led to suspect that any departure from the usual course was in this instance contemplated, and that any additional authority to transfer beyond what has hitherto been considered sufficient would be demanded by the Government, they would at once have inferred that a letter from the Comptroller General of Accounts to the Bank of Bengal, dated 3rd February 1870, had been overlooked, for it is stated there by that officer, that—"2nd. Under a power for

the receipt of interest, a letter of instruction from the Principal to his Agent is necessary before a transfer can be permitted. As in the Notification of the Right Honorable the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, no modification of this authoritative ruling was announced, the Chamber naturally concluded that it would hold good, and they respectfully protest against the new action of the Financial Department, as tending to create uneasiness in the minds of investors, and a feeling that their interests are liable to be compromised by capricious departures from what they understand to be the fixed policy of Government.

Were the 5 per cent loan to be paid off in cash, and a new loan offered with no ostensible reference to the old one, the need of a new authority to tender for the new loan would be indisputable; but this is not the present case. The Chamber fail to understand why a power of attorney that has been held sufficient for the receipt of interest and renewal of notes of the 5 per cent. loan, should not be deemed sufficient for transfer to the loan that has sprung from it.

The Chamber would also point out that the regulation, now for the first time imposed, will oblige owners of paper to entrust their agents with the absolute control of their property, and that, in very many cases, great hesitation may naturally be felt in doing so.

I have, therefore, the honor, on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, to solicit the Government of India

to rescind the Notification, that by their order has been published by the Accountant General, Madras, or, if that cannot be done, that the Government will be pleased to allow transfers to be made on the personal guarantee of agents that the power of sale will be produced within three months from the date of application. The effect of the Notification, as it now stands, published as it was yesterday, must be to exclude applications for transfer by agents on behalf of principals from whom it is almost physically impossible to obtain the authority now insisted upon, until two or more weeks after the last day on which applications will be received. The Chamber are sanguine that having pointed out the hardship which the new Notification involves, Government will be pleased to take immediate steps to remedy it. They are loath to believe that, merely to add a little to the revenue from stamps, the Government of India will persist in a course which will injure severely many innocent holders of the Government's own securities.

Decimal Sub-division of the Rupee.

The Committee received from the Government of Bengal sundry papers bearing on this subject, accompanied by a request for the expression of their opinion as to whether the proposed change was desirable. Although fully impressed with the advantages of a decimal system considered generally, the Committee were unanimous in

thinking that as no practical necessity for the decimalization of the rupee exists, the adoption of the proposed measure is to be deprecated, as tending to harass and disquiet the masses of the people without securing for them any corresponding advantage. The Committee's reply to Government in this sense is given below, and as they understand the Chamber of Commerce at Madras have addressed the Government of that Presidency on the same subject to a similar effect, they are hopeful the measure will not be pressed forward.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 5th October 1871.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 33 of 28th August, and its enclosures, relative to the decimal sub-division of the rupee as propounded by Mr. Molesworth and submitted for the consideration of the Government of India; and I am instructed to communicate the following observations.

The arguments used by Mr. Molesworth in his interesting memorandum, and the grounds upon which he so strongly advocates the modification of the system which has long prevailed throughout British India, have been weighed with due regard to the important question which the proposition involves.

The scheme appears to be based mainly upon the movement recently made in Ceylon, and on the fact that if a decimal system is established there it may be regarded as a fair presumption that it would pave the way to a similar change in the currency of India. Impressed with its successful acceptance there, Mr. Molesworth ventures to hope that a somewhat similar policy may be inaugurated in India—though at the same time he frankly admits there are difficulties in the way, which may nevertheless be gradually overcome and removed—and anticipates with great confidence the realisation of material benefits by the practical adoption of his proposition.

It cannot be denied that the people of Ceylon took a wise step in endeavouring to associate the decimal system with the introduction of a totally distinct currency; their position was singularly favorable for its adoption; and the abandonment of the sterling currency of the Island—for reasons doubtless good and sufficient, though not declared—opened an easy path for the change which Mr. Molesworth was instrumental in effecting.

The superiority of the decimal principle—in the abstract—to the existing practice commends itself to the judgment of the Committee of the Chamber; indeed their opinion in this respect has already been recorded in their representation to Government on the question of revising the system of *weights and measures* used in this country; but after a careful review of all the points of Mr. Molesworth's memorandum the Committee are unable to discover any sufficient reason why the *monetary* arrangement with which the people of India are familiar

should undergo any modification ; for if the rupee is to retain its position as the unit of Indian money—and there does not appear the remotest prospect of that position being disturbed—it is difficult to comprehend the expediency of altering its sub-divisions to which the millions are so well accustomed. No case of practical necessity for the change appears to be made out, and the papers before the Committee fail to satisfy them that the anticipated advantages of the project would be of that appreciable character which would justify any alteration in the established coinage of the country.

Very decided opinions have been pronounced in favor of the decimal principle by some of the most eminent men of science in England, and their strong concurrent testimony as to the necessity and advantages of its adoption has been powerfully expressed : but on the other hand, equally high and experienced authorities have held views adverse to that conclusion, and the greater weight of their opinion has hitherto prevailed.

The comprehensive investigation to which the question was submitted clearly established the fact that the proposal to decimalise the sub-division of the pound sterling would not be favorably received by the country at large, and that not only in England have preponderating objections been raised, but even in European States and in America, where the decimal principle has long been legally recognised, the reluctance to abandon the settled customs of the people in their ordinary monetary arrangements has been minutely demonstrated and authoritatively declared.

If therefore the decimal principle has been rejected in England after the most searching scrutiny into every circumstance that could be conceived as likely to be advantageously affected by the change, how much greater is the necessity for abstaining from any action that may oppose itself to the established habits of the people of India, jealous of ancient usages, averse to innovation, and slow to adapt themselves to any new system based though it may be on the soundest theory.

To these reasons may be added the suspicion with which such a change would be received by a naturally sensitive people, and the apprehended disquiet and disaffection which may be created thereby ; and on all these grounds the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce are unable to concur in the measure suggested by Mr. Molesworth.

Paumben Channel.

In their last half-yearly report the Committee alluded to the increased attention which the opening up of this channel between the mainland and Ceylon was attracting in England, and they have since received from Government the subjoined papers relating to the subject. In response to the request for an expression of their opinion, the Committee had no hesitation in stating their belief that the opening up of

the passage would be, to the already large and rapidly increasing steam trade, a substantial and decided benefit, affording as it would to steamers a saving of over 700 miles of distance and corresponding economy of fuel. The Committee doubt not that the new route would be at once adopted by all steamers plying from the westward to places in the Bay of Bengal, especially as with the opening up of the channel there would probably come into speedy existence a coaling port at the eastern end, where steamers could replenish their store of coal with greater despatch and convenience than is now possible in the open roadstead of Colombo or in the exposed Harbour at Point-de-Galle.

Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Sinla, May 4, 1871.

I am directed to enclose copy of a letter from Sir J. Dalrymple Elphinstone, Bart., M. P., enclosing one from Captain Donnan, Master Attendant at Colombo, and to request that the Government of India may be favored with the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the proposal made therein to open a channel at Paumben for vessels of large tonnage to pass through, thus avoiding the more lengthened and tedious passage round the South of Ceylon.

Dated the 4th February 1871.

From Sir J. DALRYMPLE ELPHINSTONE, BART., M. P.,

To the Secretary of State for India.

Referring to the interview I had with your Grace on the 24th ultimo, I now beg to enclose the original letter and tracing of the proposed cut through the point of territory in the district of Madura, forwarded to me by Captain Donnan, Master Attendant at Colombo.

Captain Donnan is probably the best authority living on the navigation of the Gulf of Manaur and Palks Bay, having commanded the *Pearl* colonial steamer employed watching the Pearl Banks and circumnavigating the island for a period of three years.

I can also commend Captain Donnan to your Grace's notice, as a person in whom the Government of Ceylon place confidence, and who (in the event of these proposals being entertained) would be of great service to any enquiry which the Supreme Government may wish to institute, previous to entering upon the work.

"On the 20th of March 1862, Lord Halifax (then Sir Charles Wood) granted a committee to enquire into and report on the practicability of shortening the voyage to Her Majesty's possessions in Madras, Bengal, and Burmah, by facilitating the passage through the obstruction known as Adams Bridge, and thereby avoiding the circumnavigation of Ceylon."

I had the honor to act as the Chairman of that committee ; we reported on the 22nd of May 1862, and the concluding paragraph of the report was in these words,—

“ They are therefore of opinion that the question of deepening the channel and improving the approaches is deserving of the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and they suggest that further enquiries should be prosecuted on the spot as soon as possible to ascertain with certainty whether the passage between Ceylon and the main land of India can be made safe and practicable for the general trade at a moderate expense.”

The evidence contains the experience of Generals of Engineers, Monteith, Duncan Sim, and Sir Arthur Cotton, as also the testimony of Sir J. Emerson Tennant, who, in answer to Question 736, “ Whether generally you would approve of deepening that channel to such an extent as to admit ships of all sizes ? Answered “ So strongly so, that my only emotion is of astonishment that it has not been done long ago.”

The appendix contains most valuable and interesting reports from Generals D. Sim and Sir Arthur Cotton, which entirely exhaust the subject, as I am confident will be found to be the case, having visited the place on two occasions and carefully examined the locality.

The parliamentary papers moved for since the enquiry of 1862, shew that Sir William Denison examined the place, but failed to see sufficient advantage to the *Presidency of Madras* to justify him in laying out money

there which was granted for public works in that Province.

A dredge was ordered and built in England, but when she was put up at Coconada, she floated so deep that it was not deemed to be advisable to send her down to Pambun.

Practically, I understand the channel is not so good as it was in 1862, probably, indeed I may say entirely, from want of the trifling outlay necessary to maintain the depth of water which existed at that time.

But notwithstanding that the depth only admits of vessels drawing 11 feet, the tonnage has increased.

In 1838 it amounted to some sixty thousand tons, while in 1869 it had increased to two hundred and ten thousand, although the depth of water in the channel had not been maintained to within a foot of what it was at that period (1838).

The cause of this neglect of a work of such importance to the trade of India is not far to seek. The burden of rendering the channel navigable for all classes of ships has been thrown entirely on the resources of the Presidency of Madras, when in truth it is an imperial work in the widest sense of the term.

The Presidency of Madras has had much to do to keep pace with its local requirements, and can scarcely be blamed for neglecting a work which ought to be prosecuted by the Supreme Government.

Important as this work has been at all previous periods, it is now of paramount necessity.

The opening of the Suez Canal is the precursor of a total change in the trade from Europe to India

The ships which have hitherto maintained the traffic by the Cape of Good Hope will be superseded by lines of steam vessels, to whom the shortening of distance and economy of fuel are objects of primary importance.

A closer investigation of the difficulties of erecting break-water wharves, &c., at Point de Galle has disclosed objections of such a formidable character as to make the Secretary of State for the Colonies shrink from the encounter of them, and in consequence the Government of Ceylon have turned their attention to making a large, commodious, and land-locked harbour at Colombo.

The authorities there are now engaged in the preliminary boring and investigations before they make a final report on the subject. The opinions of competent persons are unanimous that a large, convenient and land-locked *fresh-water* harbour can be constructed there.

If this is so, the saving of distance would stand thus, as compared with the present circuitous route touching at Galle and circumnavigating the Island of Ceylon.

I take the centre of the Eight-day Channel as the common point to the westward, and a point off Carical

on the Coromandel Coast as the common point to the eastward. The excess of distance of the Galle route over that by Paumben is 360 miles, or 720 miles on a double voyage, involving an expenditure of say 60 tons of coal, at a cost of £120 to a ship of 2,000 tons, and a delay of 3½ days at least, besides the great and increasing risk of damage at Galle.

Should a harbour be formed at Colombo and that point adopted for a coaling station, the difference would still be 260 miles in favor of the Paumben channel.

In conclusion, I have to state that previous to my interview with your Grace, I submitted Captain Donnan's tracing to Admiral Richards the Hydrographer to the Admiralty, who I am confident will bear me out in the opinion I have expressed, and whose views on the subject (may I venture to suggest) would carry great weight with the Government of India.

Dated Colombo, the 31st October 1870.

From—CAPTAIN J. DONNAN, *Master Attendant*
at Colombo.

To—SIR JAMES D. ELPHINSTONE, BART., M. P.

Knowing as I do that you are the chief promoter and supporter of the scheme which forms the subject of this communication I feel that I need not offer any apology for thus addressing you on the question of opening a deep channel at Paumben for vessels of large tonnage to pass through and thus avoid the more lengthened and tedious passage round the south of Ceylon. The publication

of the proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry into this matter, of which you were President, at a time when I commanded the Ceylon Government Steamer *Pearl* and frequently passed through Paumben on my voyages round Ceylon, first brought the subject prominently to my notice, and ever after I paid particular attention to the various objections that had been raised as to the difficulties and dangers vessels would have to contend with in adopting that route, and I must confess that I never met with any of them. My own experience, which extended over three years of navigating the Gulf of Manaur and Palks Straits, only led me to the conclusion that there is no easier or safer navigation to be found anywhere in the world; and I believe my experience will be borne out by the fact that although a number of native craft are constantly passing through these seas an accident very seldom occurs to any of them.

I believe no engineering difficulty was ever raised in discussing the question of opening up the Paumben, or cutting an entirely new channel; and the only point of view in which I ever doubted the success of the scheme was financial, so long as the revenue depended on tonnage dues to be derived chiefly from sailing vessels, as I considered that route would not be adopted by any sailing vessels but the native coasting craft, except in some few instances of rice ships bound from the rice ports in the Bay of Bengal to Colombo, which would not have added materially to the tonnage through the channel.

Since the successful opening of the Suez Canal which admits of steam vessels being employed in the trade

between England and her eastern possessions to an extent which is likely in a few years to entirely supersede sailing vessels round the Cape, the question of deepening the Paumben or cutting a new channel has assumed a different aspect to that which it had previously, and admits of its financial success being no longer doubted. The saving of 365 miles which a channel through Paumben would effect to steamers bound from ports in Great Britain, the Mediterranean, and on the West of India, to Madras and its northern ports, Calcutta, and Burmah, and *vice versa*, equal to 730 miles each voyage, would unquestionably induce them to adopt that route, and the dues which they could afford to pay in consequence of this great saving in distance would no doubt realize a very handsome return on the cost of the work. We have already four steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company passing round Ceylon monthly that would gladly adopt the Paumben route, and when the number of steamers that will eventually be employed in the carrying trade *via* the Suez Canal between the ports above-named is considered, there seems to be no prospect of a heavy due being required to be levied owing to lack of tonnage; on the contrary, there is every prospect of the tonnage passing that way being so great that a very moderate due would suffice to be remunerative.

The question to be decided is whether the existing channel should be deepened to, say, twenty-four feet throughout its entire length, or a new channel be cut in some other more favorable place, and this can be decided by a Commission of qualified men, embracing

the nautical and engineering elements, being appointed to visit and examine the locality. Until recently I have been of opinion that deepening the present channel to a sufficient depth would be preferable to cutting a new channel, as the islands and reefs to the southward form a natural breakwater for protecting it from the heavy sea that rolls in from the Gulf of Manaur during the south-west monsoon, and would afford shelter to vessels not desiring to pass through the channel at once, and also enable them to coal in smooth water alongside of a wharf if required; all of which are points of importance not to be overlooked and which I thought could not readily be secured in cutting a new channel. I have, however, in looking over a chart of the western coast of the Gulf of Manaur on a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch scale, which I obtained recently, observed a place about ten miles to the westward of the present channel, where a new cutting could be made possessing advantages that appear to give it the preference over any other place. The principal advantage it possesses is a capacious, deep and smooth harbour at all seasons of the year on the south side of the cutting, where a very large fleet of vessels could lie, and where, if a branch of the Southern Indian Railway from Trichinopoly to Tuticorin now in progress were brought down to it, the cotton and other products of the southern districts of India could be shipped on board of vessels lying alongside of a wharf instead of at Tuticorin where they have to anchor five miles off the shore. This harbour may be said to be four miles in extent north and south, and the same distance east and west, possessing a depth of water ranging from 20 to 36 feet, having a few

patches of 15, 16, and 18 feet which could easily be marked off by beacons. The promontory of the mainland to the northward protects it on that side, while on the south it is protected by the islands and connecting reefs between them stretching east and west for many miles at some distance off the coast, on which the heavy sea of the Gulf of Manaur is broken, so that practically the harbour may be said to be completely land-locked. It only requires a short cutting of about 550 yards through the centre of the reef between Morlee and Mosel Islands, where there is at present a depth of 16 and 18 feet to form its southern outlet into the Gulf of Manaur; while a cutting of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles through the sandy promontory on the north side would form its outlet into Palks Straits. To illustrate what I have here described, I enclose a tracing, on which I have marked the proposed cutting in red of part of the coast from the chart of survey by Lieutenants Powell and Ethersey and Mr. J. J. Franklin, on a scale of $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch to a mile, published by John Walker, Geographer to the Hon'ble East India Company 30th April 1846.

The Admiralty Chart of Palks Straits and the Gulf of Manaur shows a more favorable place for obtaining a shorter cutting at the eastern end of Rameseram, if the object to be obtained is simply a channel for the passage of vessels; but I consider the importance of obtaining a capacious smooth harbour along with a channel cannot be overlooked, especially when both can be obtained at the place I propose at very little additional cost over that of cutting a channel through Ramese-

ram; and also when it is considered that the station would be conveniently situated for steamers to coal at, and that facilities for that operation could not easily be afforded in a channel simply made for the passage of vessels from one sea to the other. Another important consideration in favor of the new channel being cut where I propose it, is that steamers of light draft up to 18 feet could proceed to the westward inside of the islands along the line which I have marked in the tracing in red, and enter the Gulf at Valinookum Point, and if they were bound round Cape Comorin they could hug the western shore all the way in smooth water, and thus avoid the heavy sea of the Gulf of Manaur during the south-west monsoon, which they could not do if the channel were cut through Rameseram. The channel marked out inside of the islands carries deep water all the way, with the exception of a short distance to be dredged over the spot between Naajimundel and Shermoodely Island.

In regard to the probable cost of the work, I have shown in the tracing referred to a cross section of the proposed channel through the sandy promontory, and have noted the quantities required to be removed, assuming that the land is not higher than twelve feet above the sea, which, from my recollection of it, I believe to be the case. I have estimated the cost of removal at six pence per cubic yard, on the supposition that nothing but sand would be met with. The depth 24 feet and width 120 feet at water line, would, I believe, be sufficient for all practical purposes, as vessels would

not be required to pass each other in the channel: it would cause very little delay for a vessel to wait on one side of the channel while another steamed through such a short distance. I have also shown the quantities to be removed in cutting through the southern reef entrance, providing for a width of 100 yards and a depth of 30 feet, and the quantities to be removed in dredging into 24 feet water on the north and south sides of the cutting through the promontory, both of which I have estimated at one shilling per cubic yard; so that with an allowance of 20 per 100 for contingencies on the prices quoted, I make the total cost of cutting a new channel and providing a smooth and deep harbour of about sixteen square miles in extent to be only £90,511-16-0.

I only of course submit my figures as to the quantities of stuff to be removed and the cost as being approximate. I do not profess to be capable of giving a strictly reliable estimate. I believe, however, that the cutting and dredging could be done for the prices named, if nothing but sand and mud were met with, which is all that is to be anticipated judging by the sandy surface of the promontory. A few borings, however, along the site of proposed channel would decide this point. Soft coral or sandstone might be met with in cutting through the southern reef entrance, and for that portion of the work my estimate might be exceeded, but not so much as to materially affect the whole cost of the undertaking, as the cutting required in this place is but short. But even if the whole cost of the work exceeded my figures so as to bring it up to £150,000, it would be a mere

bagatelle compared with the boon it would confer on the steam commerce of these seas.

The question of opening up the Paumben in connection with the construction of a harbour at Colombo has been lately discussed in the local papers, and the Madras Chamber of Commerce has been in communication with the Colombo Chamber on the subject which I believe is one that is most favorably entertained amongst the mercantile communities of Madras and Colombo generally, but I am not aware of any decided steps having been taken to push the matter beyond mere discussion, and that is my principal reason for addressing this communication to you, knowing that you are desirous of seeing the scheme carried out, and will urge it in the proper quarter.

It would be presumptuous on my part to dictate to you what steps should be taken to give effect to the suggestions that have from time to time been made for cutting a deep channel between the seas of the Gulf of Manaur and Palk Straits, but I may be permitted to suggest that if gentlemen in London interested in the steam trade between England and ports in the Bay of Bengal *via* the Suez Canal took the matter up and brought it before the Secretary of State for India, the work might probably be taken in hand by the Indian Government, as the advantages to be gained by completing the proposed channel must now be beyond dispute, and its success, financially and otherwise, beyond doubt.

Having no other object in view than that of merely affording my humble testimony in favor of what I consider a necessary work in the advancement of steam communication in these seas, I beg you will excuse my having troubled you with this long letter.

Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 25th May 1871.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 144 of 4th instant, forwarding copies of letters from Sir J. D. Elphinstone, Bart, M. P., and Captain Donnan, Master Attendant at Colombo, on the subject of opening a channel between Ceylon and the Coast of Madras to enable vessels of large tonnage to proceed through and thereby avoid the longer passage round the south of the Island.

This subject appears to have been submitted for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government many years since; and the result was the appointment of a Committee to report on the practicability of a scheme similar in all respects to that which is now under discussion, and the Committee's suggestion that steps should be taken to ascertain whether it could be safely adopted. No active measures were subsequently taken, and the question remained undisturbed until recently, when it was revived under the pressure of circumstances created by the opening of the Suez Canal.

Supported by the evidence and testimony of the high authorities who had been consulted with regard to its

feasibility the project will probably be recommended to the Government of India as an engineering work of comparatively easy execution, and the only point on which the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce need express an opinion is that which touches the convenience of commerce and the advantages to the shipping that may be engaged in carrying the Indian trade. In these respects the proposed channel would no doubt afford facilities which would be promptly availed of; the shortening the distance by 720 miles in a steamer's voyage from London to Calcutta and back, and saving 3 to 4 days' time besides the cost of fuel, &c., would be regarded as a material advantage and well worth securing by the payment of a moderate toll, and if the channel is rendered perfectly safe for the passage of shipping at all times it would unquestionably be regarded as a great benefit to the steam shipping engaged in the trade between England and certain British Indian Ports via the Suez Canal.

Alteration of Rule VIII.

A special General meeting was held on 30th August, in accordance with 3 months' notice duly given, to discuss the expediency of altering the terms of Rule VIII of the Chamber, which provides for vacancies occurring in the Committee between the ordinary annual election of office bearers. The reasons which induced the Committee to ask for some modification of the existing rule were so fully put forward and dis-

cussed at the time, that it is unnecessary to re-produce them or do more than refer to the terms of the rule as it now stands altered by the vote of the meeting. It will of course be the duty of the Committee to use the discretionary power now given them to the best advantage, and they are sanguine that much convenience will hereafter be felt in providing for the vacancies which so often occur during the currency of a year, and which, in the interests of the Chamber, it is desirable should be filled up as speedily as possible.

RULE VIII.

Annual elections of President, Vice-President, and Members of the Committee shall be determined by a majority of votes of Members, such votes being given in voting cards to be issued by the Secretary,—numbered and bearing his signature; and no voting card shall be received for such purpose unless so authenticated. All vacancies created by the absence of the President, or Vice-President, from the Presidency for three months or by departure for Europe, or by death, shall be forthwith filled up, and the election determined by votes to be taken as above and declared by the Committee. All vacancies creat-

ed as above by the absence, departure, or death of any of the Members of the Committee shall be forthwith filled up by selection by the Committee subject to approval at first ordinary general meeting thereafter.

Octroi Duties.

At the last half-yearly Meeting the President brought to the notice of Members that complaints had reached the Committee that the octroi duty was levied at certain stations of the North-West and the Punjab in such a manner as to invest it with the character of an inland transit duty,—contrary to the intention of Government and to the representations which the Chamber had on a former occasion made on this subject : and this intimation was followed up by the Committee's renewed reference fully set forth in their letter of 21st July, given below.

That communication received the early attention of the Government of India ; and in the following correspondence will be found the views expressed by the Government of the North-Western Provinces, who assert that within the limits of their administration every precaution is taken to prevent the octroi from becoming a transit duty,

and that the apprehensions of the Chamber, as far as relates to the duty levied in those provinces, are based on inaccurate information.

It is satisfactory to the Committee to be in possession of this authoritative denial of the practice which they were led to believe existed in the North-West ; and they hope that the results of the inquiry instituted in the Punjab and Central Provinces will be as acceptable as the assurance which the present correspondence conveys.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of India.

Calcutta, 21st July 1871.

The levy of octroi duties in the Upper Provinces formed the subject of a representation by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to the Government of India in March 1867.

A lengthened investigation into the matter ensued, and the result was communicated to the Chamber in your reply of 14th October following, under cover of which they were favored with a series of departmental papers conveying the opinions of the Governments of the Punjab and North-Western and Central Provinces.

As the Committee are constrained to address the Government again on the same subject, it may be conveyed

nient to you to have all the previous correspondence before you for reference, and I am directed to attach printed copies of it hereto.

The objections which were raised by the Chamber five years ago to the imposition of a tax amounting practically, as they believed, to a transit duty were fully recognised by the Governor General in Council, for, while His Excellency was unwilling to admit that the octroi duty was obnoxious to the people as a means of local assessment for local purposes, still it was declared to be essential that its incidence should in no case assume the form of a transit duty; and in all the reports submitted on the inquiry then made, a careful regard was expressed for the levy of *town duties only* and that they in no respect approached the character of a *transit duty*.

The Committee raise no objection to the octroi duty if levied in its integrity; they do not deny its adaptability as a means of raising funds for purely municipal purposes, nor do they assert that it is a form of local taxation unacceptable to the people: but what they urged on the former occasion they desire to urge now—viz., that the town or octroi duty should in no degree prejudicially influence the traffic of merchandise in course of transit to other places, or during its temporary detention in places where the octroi is imposed.

The Committee consider it their duty to renew their representation on this point in consequence of complaints having reached them from native dealers that, at certain stations of the North-West and the Punjab, the octroi

duties granted to municipalities are being worked in such a way as to have all the effect of a transit duty, and they have been informed on unquestionable authority that in the city of Umritsir, into which British piece goods are largely imported, the octroi is practically a transit duty, and as such adds materially to the cost of those articles and lessens their consumption.

From information in the Committee's possession it would appear that the octroi collections are there farmed out; that bonded warehouses are established at different places in the city for the reception of goods not intended for local consumption; but that in the event of any such goods breaking bulk—although sub-divided and declared to be for transmission elsewhere—the octroi would be imposed just as if the charge were made on goods locally consumed: and no drawback or refund of such duty is allowed even though the contents of a bale of piece goods—for instance—are sub-divided and bought by retail dealers in small lots for convenience of transmission to neighbouring marts where it would be difficult probably to dispose of their purchases on a larger scale. Under such circumstances the octroi duty loses its proper character, and its application to merchandise passing through a temporary depôt obviously reduces it to a charge not recognised by the local tariff, and, though levied under another name, renders it essentially and practically a transit duty.

If the inquiry which the Committee respectfully request the Governor General in Council will be pleased

to make in this matter confirms the representation now submitted, they hope His Excellency will direct the discontinuance of a system which more or less affects the interests of a very large branch of trade and serves to retard its greater development.

From Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce, to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 29th September 1871.

With reference to your letter, dated 21st July last, to the address of the Secretary to the Government of India in the Financial Department, I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, copy of a communication* from the Government of the North-Western Pro-

* No. 4156A., dated 16th September 1871.

vinces reporting that every precaution is taken in those Provinces to prevent the octroi from becoming a transit duty; and to state that enquiries are being made in the Punjab and the Central Provinces on the subject of the Chamber's representation.

2. In forwarding the report of the North-Western Provinces' Government, I am directed to enquire if the Chamber have any further information to give in regard to these Provinces. The precaution mentioned in the last portion of para : 2 of Mr. Elliott's letter seems to the Governor-General in Council well calculated to prevent abuses.

From Government, North Western Provinces, to Government of India, Department of Agriculture, Revenue and Commerce.

Dated Nynce Tal, the 16th September 1871.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your office letter No. 15, dated the 29th August last with its enclosure, in which the Supreme Government call for a report with reference to a memorial received from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, complaining that the octroi duties levied in the Upper Provinces assume the form of transit duties.

2. In reply I am desired to state, for the information of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council, that every precaution is taken in the North-Western Provinces to prevent the octroi from becoming a transit duty. Traffic is protected in three ways : (1) goods are not taxed if housed in a bonded ware-house : (2) they are not taxed if they are carried straight through a town without stopping ; (3) refund is granted on all re-exported articles. Moreover, when the annual reports are received, the quantities of each imported article are carefully scrutinised, and compared with the calculated average consumption per head, and stringent orders are passed if there is a suspicion that the taxation falls on through-trade.

3. The statement made in para. 7 of the letter from the Secretary to the Chamber to the effect that goods

intended for re-exportation, but which have broken bulk in bonded warehouses, are taxed in the same manner as goods locally consumed, and that refunds are not allowed, is diametrically opposed to the facts as they exist in these Provinces. Rules are carefully made to provide that such goods, when housed in bonded ware-houses, should not be taxed, and that refund of duty levied on any kind of article on importation should be given when it is re-exported. The only limit is one of quantity, refunds of less than 1 rupee being, as a rule, not granted.

4. In order however to enable this Government to institute enquiries, I am to request that this Government may be favored with the names of the places where the octroi is supposed by the Chamber to have degenerated into a transit duty, and that a specification of the articles of commerce affected may be given.

5. I am to add that the Chamber cannot be more jealous against any abuse of the kind than the Lieutenant-Governor himself is, as the proceedings of this Government will abundantly testify.

Port Canning.

His Excellency the Governor-General in Council having decided upon closing Port Canning and withdrawing all establishments and appliances maintained there, except the outer light vessel, regarding which the opinion of the Committee

was requested as to the necessity for its permanent retention, the Committee stated, in reply to that inquiry, that the continuance of the Mutlah Light-Ship would be desirable as an auxiliary to the lights at the Sandheads and useful to vessels making the pilot station from the eastward: but they suggested that the question was one in which the Government would be rightly advised by the Master Attendant, whose recommendation would probably lead to a decision on the subject.

The following Notice was subsequently published:—

Inasmuch as the harbour of Port Canning, at the mouth of the river Mutlah in Bengal, has not attracted trade and has not answered the purpose for which the harbour was established, notice is hereby given to all merchants, ship-owners, and ship-masters trading to Bengal that:—

From the 15th October 1871, or from such day after that date as may be convenient, all harbour establishments will, under the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy of India in Council, be withdrawn from Port Canning; the moorings and buoys in the river Mutlah will be taken up, and Port Canning will no longer be maintained as a British Indian Port.

The outer light vessel and the buoy at the entrance to the river Mutlah will, until further notice, be maintained

for the convenience of ships and vessels trading in the Bay of Bengal.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,

C. BERNARD,

Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

FORT WILLIAM:
Revenue Department.
The 30th September 1871. }

In connection with the decision of the Government of India above referred to, the Committee place on record a letter addressed to them by the Agent for the Port Canning Land Company and their reply, which communicated the reasons why the Committee considered the recent resolution of the Government fully justified, and their inability to second the Agent of the Company in his endeavours to obtain a reconsideration or modification of the final orders issued regarding the Port :—

From Agent Port Canning Land Company Limited to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 10th October 1871.

Government having recently promulgated its resolu-

tion of removing the Harbour establishment from Port Canning and otherwise doing away with the place as a port, I take leave to request the favor of your moving the Committee of your Chamber as to whether they will be willing to second this Company in the representation it is about to make to Government, with a view to induce a reconsideration or modification of the resolution in question.

I am led to come before the Chamber with this request from a knowledge that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was formerly in favor of establishing Mutlah as an auxiliary Port to Calcutta.

I may add that this Company has taken over only recently the property and assets of the Port Canning Land Investment Reclamation and Dock Company, and amongst other things we propose to utilise the Rice Mill at Port Canning which will render necessary the resort of shipping to that place and otherwise foster Canning as a centre of business. In that event I need scarcely say the contemplated resolution of Government, if carried out, will hamper the action of the Company, and will be productive of much inconvenience to merchants and others connected with the rice trade, and it is because the Bengal Chamber of Commerce has always shown itself solicitous to assist enterprises projected for the benefit of Commerce that I am induced, on the present occasion, to seek on behalf of this Company the aid of its influence and authority.

From Chamber of Commerce to Agent Port Canning Land Company, Limited.

Calcutta, 14th October 1871.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have had under consideration your letter of the 10th instant, in which you inquire whether they are willing to support the representation your Company propose to make to the Government of India with the view to a reconsideration or modification of the resolution recently adopted for closing Port Canning.

In reply I am desired to inform you that the Committee are reluctantly compelled to decline the duty which your Company request them to undertake; for it is impossible to ignore the disastrous circumstances that have already attended the attempt to establish a port on the Muthah, and the experience of the past scarcely encourages the belief that any renewed efforts would be less unsuccessful.

The adverse views expressed by the Chamber two years ago on the occasion of the Company applying for the suspension of all port charges for a period of five years—a measure which the Directors were persuaded would advance the object of their enterprise—have been painfully confirmed: and after the fruitless encouragement which the Government has extended to the place the resolution that Port Canning shall no longer be maintained as a British Indian Port appears to be amply justified.

Reporting Steam Tugs in Telegraph Gazette.

This subject was referred to in last Report as having been submitted to Government, whose reply had not then been received.

The following communication subsequently placed the matter on the footing desired by the Committee:—

*From Director General of Telegraphs in India
to the Superintendent, Bengal Division.*

Simla, 20th May 1871.

Replying to your No. 563 T of the 3rd current, I have the honor to inform you that a vessel passing a Signal Station on the River Hooghly in tow of or towing a vessel which does not shew a proper signal, should be reported in the Telegraph Gazette if it shews the proper signal and satisfies the terms of the Marine Notification, but any vessel which does not show a signal should remain unreported in the Telegraph Gazette, but must be reported to the Bengal Government as having neglected to comply with the provisions of Act I of 1862 B. C. In other words any vessel that shows the proper signals whether being towed or towing another, or alone, should be reported in the Telegraph Gazette.

2. For some time after the Act had been passed, a weekly or perhaps a fortnightly report of defaulting vessels used to be submitted by the Bengal Superintendent's office to that of the Director General who forwarded it to the Government of Bengal. It is not known how or why this practice came to be discontinued.

3. As evasion of the law by masters or commanders of vessels does not appear to be uncommon, the practice in question must be resumed. A form of the report will doubtless be obtained from the records of 1862 of this office in Calcutta.

No. 221T.

Simla, 20th May 1871.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary Chamber of Commerce, Bengal, with reference to his letter dated 29th April to the Superintendent Bengal Division.

D. G. ROBINSON, COL. R. E.

Director General of Telegraphs in India.

Customs.

Collector's account at the Bank of Bengal.

In May last the Committee received from the Government of Bengal the communication which closes this paragraph. The officiating Accountant General was of opinion that the practice observed by the Collector of Customs of keeping at the Bank of Bengal a portion of his balance and drawing cheques in payment of claims for refunds and drawbacks to meet the convenience of merchants who might prefer that form to payment in cash was unnecessary, and recommended its discontinuance. The matter was referred to the Chamber, and the Committee replied that the arrangement was adopted some years ago at the suggestion of the Chamber, and they were not aware that it had been attended with any inconvenience; that although the account at the Bank may not have been operated upon to any considerable extent, still its existence gave merchants the option of receiving payment in a form that better suited their convenience than payment in cash; and as it appeared immaterial to Government whether the Collector kept his entire balance in his personal custody, or a portion of it, for a specific purpose, at the Bank, the Committee considered

it inexpedient to disturb an arrangement which might at any time be found of much practical convenience to those having occasion to receive money from the Collector.

Government of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, the 2nd May 1871.

I am directed to forward to you the accompanying copy of a letter* from the officiating Accountant-General, proposing the discontinuance of the practice at present observed by the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, of retaining a small portion of his cash balance in a separate drawing account in his own name at the Bank of Bengal for the purpose of paying the amounts of refunds and drawbacks by cheques. As this arrangement was originally sanctioned on the recommendation of the Chamber of Commerce, with a view to the prevention of frauds in the payment of drawbacks and refunds, I am directed to invite the opinion of the Chamber on the expediency of adopting the Accountant-General's present suggestion.

From Deputy Accountant-General, Bengal, to the Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Department, (7974T, dated Fort William, the 15th February 1871.)

I have the honor to request that you will favor me with the orders of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in reference to the continuance of a practice which is ob-

served by the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, of retaining a small portion of his cash balance in a separate drawing account in his name on the private books of the Bank of Bengal, instead of holding the entire cash balance, for which he is responsible, in his personal custody.

The practice appears to have been originally sanctioned in orders of the Government of Bengal No. 604 dated 4th December 1855 (of which I have recently been furnished with a copy), to meet the convenience of merchants who might prefer to receive a cheque on the bank in payment of claims for drawbacks or refunds instead of drawing the amount in coin. But the mode of conducting the business of the

| | | Rs. | As. | P. |
|-----------|------|-----|-----|-------|
| April | 1870 | ... | 870 | 14 11 |
| May | " | ... | 423 | 6 10 |
| June | " | ... | 483 | 7 10 |
| July | " | ... | 418 | 3 4 |
| August | " | ... | 312 | 5 7 |
| September | " | ... | 316 | 5 0 |
| October | " | ... | 363 | 0 2 |
| November | " | ... | 320 | 8 2 |
| December | " | ... | 100 | 6 2 |

custom house has been considerably altered since the date of the orders; and as I observe moreover from the monthly accounts that only a nominal sum remains in the bank

at credit of this separate account at the end of each month, as shewn in the margin, there seems little, if any, necessity for retaining this exceptional procedure, and I would recommend accordingly that it may be discontinued.

No. 700.

Copy forwarded to the Board of Revenue for their opinion as well as that of the Collector of Customs.

Classification of Dhooties in Bills of Entry.

It having been represented to the Collector that, looking to the large trade which had sprung up in Dhooties, it was desirable that the different qualities—*Shirting, Jacconet, and Mull*—should be accurately described by importers, the Committee concurred in the Collector's purpose to require the right specification of this class of grey goods, which would at the same time be uniform with the returns exhibited in the Chamber's Price Current.

Export Manifests.

The Collector brought to the Committee's notice some irregularities on the part of shippers of cargo by substituting in ships' manifests the names of parties other than those which appeared in the shipping bills. As this was against orders the Collector brought the matter before the Chamber, and the Committee were of opinion that he was right in insisting upon the names of the ostensible shippers, according to bills of entry, appearing in the manifests.

Subsidiary marks in shipping-bills.

The Committee also supported the Collector in his requiring shippers to enter in their challans the subsidiary marks of packages; they con-

sidered it proper this should be done not only for the correct preparation of the detailed manifests, but with the view to afford necessary checks against erroneous entries, to prevent confusion in the tally of different marks, and to facilitate the check of refunds payable in cases of short shipments or relands.

Weight of Grey Cotton Goods for Customs Duty.

As the most convenient means of reconciling possible differences between Custom House appraisers and importers of grey cotton goods regarding the weight at which these articles should be assessed for duty, the Committee originally recommended that when the difference between invoice weight and the actual weight ascertained at time of importation was $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or under, that difference should be disregarded and duty levied on invoice weight; and when that difference exceeded $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent the ascertained weight should be the basis for duty. Subsequently however the Committee modified that recommendation by suggesting a variation of 2 instead of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the case of *Shirtings, T. Cloths, Drills, Sheetings, Domestics*, and other heavy goods, but applying the larger margin to *Madapollams, Jacconets, Mulls, Dhooties*, and other light grey fabrics.

Duty on imported Flour.

The following correspondence having been submitted by the Government of Bengal for an expression of the Chamber's opinion with regard to the propriety of retaining the present tariff valuation and the rate of duty levied on the importation of flour, the Committee replied that they concurred in the view taken of the question by Messrs. Rennie, Scovell and Co., of Bombay, at whose instance it had been brought to notice; and that in the case submitted those gentlemen shewed good grounds for reduction of valuation and duty to a point which would not interfere with the free importation of the article. They therefore recommended that the levy of duty should be at the lowest rate—say 1 per cent.—on a valuation not exceeding the average net market value for the last 2 or 3 years. Indeed the Committee were not indisposed to suggest that the importation of flour was entitled to the most liberal consideration, and that if no objection could be advanced against the removal of that item from the schedule of dutiable merchandise they would be glad to see that course taken.

The result of this reference has not yet been communicated to the Chamber.

From Government of India, Financial Department, to Government of Bengal, Revenue Department,—(No. 2473, dated Simla, the 31st July 1871.)

I am directed to forward a copy of the papers noted on the margin, received from the Government of Bombay, relative to a representation against the existing tariff valuation and the rate of duty levied on importation of flour, and to request that the Government of India may be favoured with the views of the local Government on the subject after consultation with the Chamber of Commerce and the chief customs authority.

From Government of Bombay, to Government of India, Financial Department,—(No. 3414, Dated Bombay Castle, the 14th July 1871.)

I am directed by the Right Hon'ble the Governor in Council to forward to you, for submission to the Government of India, the accompanying copies of communications from Messrs. Rennie, Scovell and Company, relative to the rate of duty levied upon flour imported into Bombay; and in doing so, I am desired to state that, under the circumstances brought to notice by them, it appears to His Excellency the Governor in Council that both the tariff valuation and the rate of duty on the article in question urgently require reconsideration.

From Messrs. Rennie, Scovell and Co., to the Govt., Bombay, Revenue Department,—(dated Bombay, the 27th September 1870.)

We have the honor to state that having lately received from Australia a consignment of 1,246 bags of wheaten flour of 200 lbs. per bag, we thereby had our attention called to the very excessive rate of customs duty levied upon that article.

The rate of duty is $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon a tariff valuation of Rs. 25 per bag of 200 lbs., while the market value for the article is Rs. 15 per bag of 200 lbs.; (we sold at Rs. 15-4 per bag, the flour being of very excellent quality.)

We therefore respectfully submit that on such an article as flour the rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty is even, under a proper valuation, very excessive, as flour is much more a necessity, and a staff of life, than, for instance, iron, which is admitted at a duty of 1 per cent only. It is further well known that the native flour is of a very inferior quality. Owing, however, to the excellent American and Continental flour, as well as that of Australia, being kept out of the market by the protective duty imposed, consumers are obliged to pay an exorbitant price for an inferior article, while the customs revenue is not benefited, as the rate of duty simply puts a stop to importation, and renders a duty levied for the benefit of the revenue but a prohibitory and protective impost.

By a reference to the latest annual statement of the trade, &c., of Bombay, published for Government and at page 36, it will be seen that the declared value of flour imported from all foreign countries only amounted to Rs. 1,03,708, or a gross revenue to Government of Rs. 7,785. The market value of the flour imported, however, (in the proportion of Rs. 15 to Rs. 25) would only amount to Rs. 62,230.

In other words, a duty of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—for that is what it comes to—upon one of the principal articles of food puts a stop to imports in it, and gives a revenue to Government so small as not to be worth the trouble of collecting.

We beg therefore respectively to submit that—

1st.—The tariff valuation upon flour ought to be reduced.

2nd.—The rate of duty ought also to be reduced to, say, 1 per cent.

Were these points permitted, we believe Government would be no losers, and the country generally considerable gainers.

P. S.—We believe that the present is a suitable opportunity for bringing this matter to the attention of Government, as we believe a Committee for revising the existing tariff is at present sitting in Calcutta

From Messrs. Rennie, Scovell and Co., to the Govt., Bombay, Revenue Department—(dated Bombay, the 30th June 1871.)

On the 27th of September last, we had the honor of addressing your department, relative to the rate of duty levied upon flour imported into Bombay, as per copy of our letter, which, for convenience of reference, we beg to hand you herein.

We have not been favored with any reply to that communication, and we therefore beg leave to solicit your attention to it.

We may further state that since then addressing you, we have had communications from Australia, pointing out that the very excessive scale of charge in Bombay completely debars business between that country and this port, but that a modification to some such duty as that levied upon iron would enable business to be done.

Publication of periodical Statements of Prices of Grain in the Upper Provinces.

This subject was referred to in the Committee's last Report : since then it has been brought to a close by orders issued by the Governor-General in Council who, having regard to the opinion expressed by the Governments of Bengal and the

North-Western Provinces and the Chief Commissioners of Oudh and the Central Provinces, has authorised the discontinuance of the publication of the weekly statements of prices current ; the *monthly* returns however will be continued as heretofore, and probably the commercial public will find these sufficient for their purpose.

The Jetties.

THE Port Commissioners having communicated to the Committee that the non-working days at the jetties would be restricted to *New Year's Day, Good Friday, the Queen's Birth-day and Christmas Day*—exclusive of Sundays—they were informed that this limitation would not be acceptable to the Chamber and the commercial community generally.

The Committee pointed out that in addition to the days on which the Commissioners proposed to suspend work there were numerous native holidays, recognised by Government, on which the Treasury, Custom House, and other public offices were closed, and on which, as a rule, native establishments were privileged to be absent ; that it would therefore be scarcely possible for con-

signees of goods to clear their packages on such days in the absence of their servants and other servants; that during the *Doorgah Poojah* vacation the difficulty would exist in a greater, and on other close holidays in a lesser, degree. The Committee therefore recommended that the non-working days at the jetties should assimilate to the days observed by Government; that if any work was done it should be permissive only; and that if a master of a vessel wished to get despatch by discharging cargo on those days when consignees could not take delivery he should do so at his own expense for any wharf-rent levied by the Commissioners on such discharged and undelivered cargo.

From the following reply it will be seen that the Commissioners have adopted the Committee's recommendation to a considerable extent; and it is hoped the arrangement arrived at in respect of non-working days will be satisfactory to the public. The Commissioners have not however noticed the point of charging to vessels the wharf-rent due on packages of which consignees are unable to obtain delivery.

Calcutta, June 12th 1871.

In continuation of my letter No. 812 of the 22nd

ultimo, I have the honor to inform you that the Commissioners have adopted the following list of holidays to be observed at their jetties and wharves in substitution of the list hitherto in force:—

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----------|
| New Year's Day ... | ... | 1 day. |
| Sree Panchomy ... | ... | 1 „ |
| Good Friday ... | ... | 1 „ |
| Queen's Brith-Day ... | ... | 1 „ |
| Doorga and Luckhee Poojah ... | ... | 12 „ |
| Kally Poojah ... | ... | 1 „ |
| Juggodhatree Poojah ... | ... | 1 „ |
| Christmas ... | ... | 2 „ |
| | | 20 days. |

The addition made to the number of holidays allowed under the former rules is sixteen.

It has been decided that consignees shall not be charged wharf-rent during any of the above holidays when they fall within the first 48 hours after the goods have been landed from the vessel, that is to say, two clear working days will always be allowed before a charge for wharf-rent is incurred. In order to facilitate discharge of the vessels, they will be allowed to work on holidays, so long as accommodation can be conveniently provided for cargo in the jetty sheds, on payment of double the jetty hire and the usual overtime fees to establishments. By these arrangements, the Commissioners believe that the views of the Chamber of

Commerce and consignees will be met, and at the same time as little delay occasioned in the despatch of vessels as is possible under the circumstances.

**Schedule of charges for shipping goods
at the Jetties.**

The Port Commissioners having submitted for the Chamber's opinion a schedule of charges and wharf rent on goods *shipped* at the jetties the Committee circulated copies of it to members, whose replies were forwarded to the Commissioners with an expression of the Committee's opinion that the proposed rates largely exceeded those to which exported produce had been subject under a long continued system, and of their hope that due weight would be given to the views contained in the several communications placed before them.

The Commissioners having carefully considered the various suggestions offered by members and the Committee, endeavoured to meet their wishes as far as possible by a material reduction of the rates originally proposed; and the Committee believe that the amended schedule has been accepted as fair and reasonable.

Street Tramways.

The Committee's report for the half-year ended 31st October 1870 contained all the correspondence that had passed up to that date between the Government of Bengal and the Chamber relative to the scheme of street tramways proposed by Mr. Prestage, Agent for the Eastern Bengal Railway; and on the present occasion the Committee submit a continuation of the discussion of that subject.

The scheme having been forwarded by the Government of Bengal for the consideration of the Justices of the Peace, a special Committee, representing the Justices and the Port Commissioners, was appointed to report upon it, and their recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Justices, who expressed their desire to construct a line of tramway from Circular Road—up Boito-khanah, Bow Bazar, and Lall Bazar—to the Strand Road, and from that point northward along the Strand to Chitpore Bridge. Should these experimental lines prove successful, the Justices will endeavour to extend the tramway system in such other directions as may be found useful for development of traffic and convenient for the public generally.

Government of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce,

Calcutta, 6th June 1871.

I am directed to forward for the information of the Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta the papers noted in the margin relating to a proposal for establishing Street Tramways in Calcutta, and to solicit an expression of their views on the proposed scheme.

No. 574 dated 11th May 1871 from Chairman of the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta.
Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Justices.
Map of Calcutta showing the lines of Tramways recommended for construction.
No. 1044 G. dated 20th May 1871 to the Chairman of the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta.
No. 1286 dated 5th May 1871 to the Vice-Chairman to the Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta.
Memorandum by Lieut-Col. F. S. Taylor, R. E., dated 5th June 1871.
Memorandum by P. Prestage, Esq., dated 5th June 1871.

*Chamber of Commerce to Government
of Bengal.*

Calcutta, 16th June 1871.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1183 of the 6th instant, and to submit for the consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor the following remarks on the subject of your reference.

It is just a year since the Committee were invited by the Government of Bengal to consider a proposal for

constructing street tramways for the town of Calcutta and to express their opinion of the scheme submitted by Mr. Prestage, Agent for the Eastern Bengal Railway.

After a consultation with that gentleman as to the bearing of the proposed measure on the passenger and goods traffic of the city, the Committee reported their general concurrence in the plan and expressed their opinion that it would confer very appreciable advantages.

The scheme now before the Committee is, with the exception of certain extensions which it is not proposed now to carry out, very similar to that already referred to.

There can be no question as to the material benefits derivable from a tramway running down from the Circular Road in a direct line to the Strand, and thence from a point near the Custom House—say Fairlie Place—towards Chitpore Bridge, to some point which can be easily reached, say—Ahoreetollah Ghât, or Ruth Ghât a little higher up. The Strand Road terminates at or near the latter place, and the question arises whether the tramway should branch off to the right, up Shobah Bazar Street, and thence enter the Chitpore Road, or whether it should be continued in a direct line from Ruth Ghât to Bang Bazar parallel with the river bank, by means of a viaduct as proposed by Mr. Prestage.

Entirely sharing the doubts expressed by the Lieutenant-Governor regarding the line from Ruth Ghât up Shobah Bazar Street and thence up the Chitpore Road,

and being of opinion that that route is altogether impracticable for tramway purposes, the Committee do not hesitate to pronounce their belief that the continuous line, running parallel from Ruth Ghât to Bang Bazar Ghât, over a well constructed viaduct, would be the most efficient plan for maintaining an uninterrupted communication between the southern and northern terminal points of the tramway, and an unbroken connection with the starting point at Scaldah.

The Committee duly note the views expressed by the Justices on the question of gauge and their recommendation in favor of the narrow gauge of 3 feet 3 inches which has been recently adopted by Government for State Railways: but they are unable to concur in the opinion of the Justices in this respect.

If, as the Justices rightly apprehend, "as far as goods traffic is concerned, the tramway would probably be chiefly used for the removal of country produce—such as seeds and jute—from the Scaldah Railway Station to the godowns in town where they are stored by wholesale merchants," and those godowns are nearly all situated in the vicinity of the northern portion of the Strand Road and near Sholah Bazar Street, it appears to the Committee very essential to the proper working of the tramway system that the gauge should assimilate to that of the Eastern Bengal Railway, whence by one uniform breadth of rail produce could be transported without break of bulk, a process involving material loss of time and considerable loss by breakage and wastage, and which, the Committee think, should be obviated if possible.

Government of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, 22nd June 1871.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 16th instant, communicating the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the proposed system of street tramways for Calcutta. It appears that the Committee, whilst entirely agreeing with the Lieutenant-Governor as to the route to be followed, are in favor of the standard gauge, to enable the wagons of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company to transport produce over the tramway to the river-side without break of bulk.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor desires me to state that the question of the extension of the Eastern Bengal Railway from Scaldah to Nimtollah has been dealt with as distinct from that of the tramways, and a copy of my letter No. 1189G, dated 7th June 1871, to the address of the Agent, Eastern Bengal Railway, is enclosed for the information of the Chamber.

3. The Lieutenant-Governor will be glad to know if the Committee are of opinion that it would be practicable to carry the broad gauge through the city by the line proposed by the Justices of the Peace, and I am to add that, as the line is to be constructed by the Justices from Municipal Funds, the matter rests with them to decide; but His Honor has no doubt that they would much respect the opinion of the Chamber.

Govt. of Bengal to Eastern Bengal Railway Coy.

Your letter No. 1932, dated 17th ultimo, forwarding

a copy of Mr. Hawkshaw's report on the proposed extension of the railway through the city and the formation of a goods station on the river-side at Hantkolah, having been laid before the Lieutenant-Governor, I am directed to state in reply that His Honor is strongly impressed with the belief that it will not be possible to allow traffic to be worked by locomotive power over a broad gauge line through the heart of the city to Hantkolah.

2. The orders of the Government of India on the subject were communicated to you with my docket No. 631G, dated 29th March 1871, and there is now no ground for the expectation that Government will bear a portion of the expense of widening Nimtollah Street. His Honor is, however, inclined to think that the only mode of obtaining the object in view, would be by the Municipal Railway to the river and thence along the Strand Bank to the Port Jetties, if the plan which has been suggested to the Commissioners for making improvements to the Port of Calcutta in the enclosed letter No. 1286, dated 5th May, issued from the General Department of this Government, could be carried out by the co-operation of the Commissioners, the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta, and the Eastern Bengal Railway Company.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 29th June 1871.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire

me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1299 of the 22nd instant, and to state in reply to the 3rd paragraph that they recommended the gauge corresponding with that of the Eastern Bengal Railway under the impression that it would be practicable to adopt it on the lines proposed for the tramway. If, however, it is *not* practicable to adopt that gauge the Justices will no doubt construct the line on such principles as they may deem best suited to the requirements of the scheme and the preservation of the ordinary traffic of the city.

Testimonial to Sir William Grey.

The subscriptions—limited to 2 gold mohurs each—amounted to Rs. 3,072—and of this sum, after meeting the charges incurred here, £180 has been remitted and placed at the disposal of Messrs. J. Skinner, D. Cowie, J. N. Bullen and Seth Apar, who cordially consented to act as a Committee in London for the purpose of carrying out the wishes of the Chamber in obtaining the portrait of Sir William Grey.

Members.

Messrs. E. D. Latapie and Co., and Messrs. Todd, Findlay and Co., of Moulmein, have ceased to be Members.

Funds of the Chamber.

The half-yearly balance of the Funds of the Chamber amounts to Rs. 960-3-7, exclusive of the Reserve of Rs. 12,000 in 4 per cent. Government Securities.

J. R. BULLEN SMITH,

President.

APPENDIX.

*Statement of the Funds of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce from
1st May to 31st October 1871.*

CALCUTTA, }
31st October 1871. }

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

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Revised and adopted by a Special General Meeting of the Deutscher
Chamber of Commerce held on the 15th June 1861,—with effect from
1st January 1862.

1. On the sale, purchase, or shipment of Bullion, Gold
Dust or Coin. ... 1 per cent.
2. On the purchase (when in family) or sale of Indigo,
Teaz-Silk, Silk, Pease Goods, Opium, Potash, Tree
Skins, or Jaconet. ... 5½ "
3. On purchasing alto when funds are provided by
the Agent. ... 5 "
4. On the sale or purchase of all other goods—the
commission in all cases to be charged upon the
gross amount of sales, and in regard to pur-
chases upon both cost and charges. ... 5 "
5. On returns for Consignments if made in person. ... 5½ "
6. On returns of Consignments if by Bill, Ballion, or
... 1 "
7. On receiving Bills against Consignments. ... 1 "
8. On the sale or purchase of Ships, Vessels, Houses,
Land, and all property of a like description. ... 5½ "
9. On goods and their consignment, and all other por-
perty of any description referred to Agency for
sale, whether at auction or otherwise, which
shall hereinafter be withdrawn; and on goods
consigned on consignment delivery to others and
so delivered on invoice amount, per ryce,
10. On making advances or procuring loans of money
for commercial purps, when the agents
commission does not exceed 1 per cent. ... 5½ per cent.
11. On receiving, or receiving, and delivering, goods, or
any other property, the full value of contracts, or on
the shipment of goods, whether to other Commis-
sion is charged. ... 5½ "

12. On guaranteeing Bills, Bonds, or other engagements, and on becoming security for administration of Estates, or to Government for the disbursement of public money ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
13. On *del-credere* or guaranteeing the due realization of sales ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
14. On the management of Estates for Executors or Administrators ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
15. On chartering ships or engaging tonnage for constituents for vessels to proceed to outports for loading ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
16. On advertising as the Agents for Owners or Commanders of ships for cabin passengers, on the amount of passage money, whether the same shall pass through the Agent's hands or not ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
17. On procuring freight for a ship by a shipping order or charter, or on procuring employment for a ship on monthly hire, or acting as Agents for owners, Captain, or charterers of a vessel upon the gross amount of freight, brokerage inclusive ... 5 "
18. On engaging Asiatic Emigrants for a ship to the Mauritius, the West Indies, or elsewhere, upon the gross amount of earnings... 5 "
19. On engaging troops for a ship to Great Britain or elsewhere, on the gross amount of passage money for rank and file ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
20. On realising inward freight, inward troop, Emigrant, or Cabin passage money ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
21. On landing and re-shipping goods from any vessel in distress, or on loading and selling by auction damaged goods from any such vessel, and acting as Agent for the Master on behalf of all concerned on the declared value of all such goods as may be re-shipped, and on the net proceeds of all such goods as may be publicly sold ... 5 "
- If Opium, Indigo, Raw Silk, or Silk Piece Goods... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
- If Treasure, Precious Stones, or Jewellery ... 1 "

22. On effecting Insurances, whether on lives or property ... $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
23. On settling Insurance claims, losses, and averages of all classes, and on procuring returns of premium ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
24. On drawing, purchasing, selling, or negotiating Bills of Exchange ... 1 "
25. On debts or other claims when a process at law or arbitration is incurred in claiming them ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
- Or if recovered by such means ... 5 "
26. On Bills of Exchange returned dishonored ... 1 "
27. On collecting House Rent ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
28. On ship's Disbursements ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
29. On realising Bottomry Bonds, or negotiating any loan on *respondentia* ... $2\frac{1}{2}$ "
30. On granting Letters of Credit ... 1 "
31. On sale or purchase of Government Securities and Bank or other Joint Stock Shares, and on every exchange or transfer not by purchase from one class to another ... $\frac{1}{2}$ "
32. On delivering up Government Securities and Bank or other Joint Stock Shares, on the market value ... $\frac{1}{2}$ "
33. On all amounts debited and credited within the year (less the balance brought forward) upon which no Commission amounting to 5 per cent. has been charged ... $\frac{1}{2}$ "

⚡ Brokerage when paid is to be separately charged.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

TONNAGE SCHEDULE for the PORT of CALCUTTA, adopted at the General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, on the 25th May 1859. The Schedule came into operation from 1st January 1860.

| ARTICLES. | Cwt. per Ton Nett. | Cubic feet per Ton. |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Aloes in Bags and Boxes ... | 20 | ... |
| Alum, in Ditto ... | 20 | ... |
| Aniseed, in Bags ... | 8 | ... |
| Arrowroot, in Cases ... | ... | 50 |
| Asafoetida, in Bags and Boxes ... | ... | ... |
| Apparel, in Boxes ... | ... | 50 |
| Dark, in Bags ... | 8 | ... |
| Bees' Wax ... | 20 cwt. | gross. |
| Barilla ... | 20 | ... |
| Betel-nut ... | 20 | ... |
| Books ... | ... | 50 |
| Borax or Tincal ... | 20 | ... |
| Brimstone ... | 20 | ... |
| Bullion ... | at per cent. | ... |
| Cake-lao, in Bags ... | 16 | 50 |
| Campilor, in Cases ... | ... | ... |
| Cardamoms in Robins ... | 8 | ... |
| " Boxes ... | ... | 50 |
| Cassia, in Boxes ... | ... | ... |
| " Bags ... | 12 | ... |
| China Root, in Bags ... | 11 | ... |
| " Boxes ... | ... | 50 |
| Chiretia ... | ... | 50 |
| Cigars ... | ... | 50 |
| Gloves, in Bags ... | 8 | ... |
| " Boxes ... | ... | 50 |
| Coals ... | 20 | ... |
| Cochineal ... | ... | 50 |
| Coffee, in Bags ... | 18 | ... |
| " Casks ... | 16 | ... |
| Coral, Rough ... | 20 | ... |
| Cotton, in Bales of 300 lbs. each, 5 to the } ton, not to exceed ... } | ... | 52 |
| Courtes ... | 20 | ... |
| Cutch, in Bags ... | 18 | ... |
| Dates, Wet ... | 20 | ... |
| " Dry ... | 16 | ... |
| Dhoil ... | 20 | ... |
| Elephants' Teeth in Bulk ... | 20 | ... |
| Furniture ... | ... | 50 |

| ARTICLES. | Cwt. per Ton Nett. | Cubic Feet per Ton. |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Garlic and Onions ... | 12 | ... |
| Ginger ... | 16 | ... |
| Gram ... | 20 | ... |
| Gums, in Cases ... | ... | 50 |
| Gunny Bags and Gunny Cloth ... | ... | 50 |
| Gunjah ... | ... | 50 |
| Hemp, in Bales of 300 lbs. each, 5 to the } ton, not to exceed ... } | ... | 52 |
| Hides, Buffalo, or Cow, Curcd ... | 14 | ... |
| Horns, Buffalo, or Cow, Curcd ... | 20 | ... |
| Horns, Cow, Buffalo, or Deer ... | 20 | ... |
| Indigo ... | ... | 50 |
| Jute, in Bales of 300 lbs. each, 5 to the ton, } not to exceed ... } | ... | 52 |
| Lac Dye ... | ... | 50 |
| Lard ... | 20 cwt. | gross. |
| Linseed ... | 20 | ... |
| Mues ... | ... | 50 |
| Machinery ... | 20 | ... |
| Metals ... | 16 | ... |
| Mischolams ... | 2 punchoons or 4 hids. | ... |
| Molasses ... | 20 | ... |
| Mother o'Pearl, in Bags ... | 20 | ... |
| " Chests ... | ... | 50 |
| Munjeet ... | 20 | ... |
| Mustard or Rape Seed ... | ... | 50 |
| Nutmegs, in Cases or Casks... | 16 | ... |
| Nux Vomica ... | 16 | ... |
| Onyx ... | ... | 50 |
| Oil, in Cases ... | 4 hogalheads. | ... |
| " Casks ... | per chest. | ... |
| Opium ... | 16 | ... |
| Paddy ... | 20 | ... |
| Peas ... | 12 | ... |
| Pepper, Long ... | 14 | ... |
| " Black ... | ... | 50 |
| Planks and Deals ... | 20 | ... |
| Poppy Seed ... | 10 | ... |
| Putchuck ... | 10 | ... |
| Raw Silk, in Bales ... | 20 | ... |
| Rattans for Dunnage ... | 20 | ... |
| Red Wood Ditto ... | ... | 52 |
| Rhes, in Bales, per Ton of 5 Bls. not exgd. ... | 20 | ... |
| Rice ... | ... | 50 |
| Roping in Coils ... | 16 | ... |
| " Lines and Twines, in Bundles ... | ... | ... |

| ARTICLES. | Cwt. per Ton Nett. | Cubic Feet per Ton. |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rum, in Casks | 2 puncheons or 4 hlds. | |
| Safflower, in Dis. p. Ton of 5 Dis. not exdgd. | 52 | |
| Sago, in Cases | 50 | |
| Salt-camelac, in Bags | 20 | |
| " Boxes | 20 cwt. gross. | |
| Saltpetre | 20 | |
| Salt | 20 | |
| Sapan Wood for Dummage | 20 | |
| Sealing Wax, in Cases | 50 | |
| Seed-lac, in Cases | 50 | |
| " Bags | 10 | |
| Senna | 50 | |
| Shells, Rough, in Bags | 20 | |
| Shell-lac, in Cases | 50 | |
| " Bags | 10 | |
| Silk Piece Goods | 50 | |
| Skins | 14 | |
| Soap, Country, in Cases | 50 | |
| " Bags | 15 | |
| " Bar | 20 | |
| Stick Lac, in Cases | 50 | |
| " Bags | 16 | |
| Sugar | 20 | |
| Tallow, in Cases or Casks | 20 | |
| Tale | 20 | |
| Tamarinds, in Cases or Casks | 20 | |
| Tapioca | 50 | |
| Tea | 50 | |
| Teel Seed | 20 | |
| Timber, Round | 40 | |
| " Squared | 50 | |
| Tobacco, in Bales | 16 | |
| Tortoise Shells, in Chests | 50 | |
| Turneric | 16 | |
| Wheat | 20 | |
| Wool | 50 | |

N. B.—Goods in Casks or Cases to be calculated gross weight when paying freight by weight; and where freight is made payable on measurement, the measurement to be taken on the Custom House wharf, or other shipping wharf within the limits of the Port of Calcutta.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

CALCUTTA.
18th March 1868.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Agelasto and Sagrandi.
Apar and Co.
Austrieller and Co.
Argenti, Schilzi and Co.
Atkinson, Tilton and Co.
Atkinson, John and Co.
Ashburner and Co.
Baltzer, Lawrie and Co.
Barlow and Co.
Begg, Dunlop and Co.
Bicker, G. M.
Borradale, Schiller and Co.
Buxton, E. G.
Cann, Lemonroux and Co.
Carliates Nephews and Co.
Colvin, Corrie and Co.
Crooks, Rennie and Co.
Cochrane, S., *Manager, Agra Bank, Limited.*
Cameron, E., *Agent, Hong-Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation.*
Chalmers, J., *Manager, National Bank of India.*
Cox, Henry S.
DeSouza, Thos. and Co.
Dunsmuir, Grob and Co.
Dwarkanath Dutt and Co.
Dale and Holman.
Husken and Oesterley.
Young and Co.
Dillhoff, John and Co.
Evers, E. D. I.
Ferguson, J. H. and Co.
Findlay, Hayes and Co.
Fleming, Maurice and Co.
Finlay, Muir and Co.
Frack, D. and Co.
Finlayson, D., *Offy. Agent, Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China.*
Gibson and Co.
Gird and Baugier.
Graham and Co.
Grimley and Co.
Graham, Elias S.
Henderson and Co.
Henderson, George and Co.
Hesse, Miller and Co.
Huber and Co.
Jardine, Skinner and Co.
Kiddell, Bullen and Co.
Kelly and Co.
Ker, Dode and Co.
Knowles, H., *Agent, Baracca Company.*

Longmuir, Thos., *Manager, Delhi and Ludlow Bank, Limited.*
Lovell, H. P., *Supt., P. & O. Steam Navigation Company.*
Loyal, Rennie and Co.
Macallister, R., *Agent, Taitor Company.*
Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co.
Mackenzie, Lyall and Co.
Macnaght, Anderson and Co.
Moss, W. and Co.
Manokjee Rostomjee.
Pearce, Nicolson and Co.
Playfair, Duncan and Co.
Petrovich Brothers.
Peel, Rose and Co.
Prestage, P., *Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company.*
Pramission Law and Co.
Preston, Alfred.
Ralli Brothers.
Ralli and Mavorchini.
Robert and Charriot.
Rentiers and Co.
Robinson, S. H.
Robinson, T. M., *Managing Director of the Bengal Coal Company.*
Rose and Co.
Renard, A., *Manager, Compagnie D'Exploitation de Paris.*
Schilzi and Co.
Schlegel, Patz and Co.
Schroder, Smith and Co.
Schroder, Kilburn and Co.
Shand, Farlie and Co.
Shaw, Jameson and Co.
Smith, D. A. and Co.
Smith, Samuel, Sons and Co.
Seymour, J., *Agent, Oriental Bank Corporation.*
Thomas, J. and Co.
Turner, Morrison and Co.
Toulmin, L. W. and Co.
Toussaint and Co.
Ullmann, Hirschhorn and Co.
Wattenbach, Heligson and Co.
Wendell Brothers.
Whyte, G. A., *Agent, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China.*
Whitney Brothers and Co.
Williamson Brothers and Co.
Wiseman, Mitchell, Reid and Co.
Wills, Edmunds and Co.
Wolff, Wilhelm and Co.
Yule, Andrew and Co.

MOFUSSIL MEMBERS.

Decher, Wm.—*Gowhatti, Assam.*
Hamilton, Brown and Co.—*Mirzapore.*

Howard Brothers.—*Mirapore.*

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

- First* That the Society shall be styled "THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE."
- Second*.... That the object and duty of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce shall be to watch over and protect the general commercial interests of the Presidency of Bengal and specially those of the port of Calcutta; to employ all means within its power for the removal of evils, the redress of grievances, and the promotion of the common good; and, with that view, to communicate with Government, public authorities, associations, and individuals; to receive references from, and to arbitrate between, parties willing to abide by the judgment and decision of the Chamber; and to form a code of practice to simplify and facilitate transaction of business.
- Third*.... That merchants, bankers, ship-owners, and brokers shall alone be admissible as members of the Chamber.
- Fourth*.... That candidates for admission as members of the Chamber shall be proposed

- and seconded by two members, and may be elected by the Committee provisionally, such election being subject to confirmation at the next ensuing General Meeting.
- Fifth*..... That the subscription of firms and banks shall be 16 rupees per mensem, of individual members 10 rupees per mensem, and of mofussil members 32 rupees per annum.
- Sixth* ... That any member of the Chamber whose subscription shall be three months in arrears shall cease to be a member, and his name shall be removed by the Committee from the list of members after one month's notice of such default.
- Seventh*... That the business and funds of the Chamber shall be managed by a Committee of seven Members, consisting of a 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.
- Eighth*.... Annual elections of President, Vice-President, and members of the Com-

mittee shall be determined by a majority of votes of members, such votes being given in voting cards to be issued by the Secretary,—numbered and bearing his signature ; and no voting card shall be received for such purpose unless so authenticated. All vacancies created by the absence of the President, or Vice-President, from the Presidency for three months or by departure for Europe, or by death, shall be forthwith filled up, and the election determined by votes to be taken as above and declared by the Committee. \All vacancies created as above by the absence, departure, or death of any of the Members of the Committee shall be forthwith filled up by selection by the Committee subject to approval at first ordinary general meeting thereafter. \

Ninth... That parties holding powers of procurance shall, in the absence of their principals, be eligible to serve as members of the Committee.

Tenth... Two members of a firm or representatives of a bank shall not serve on the Committee at the same time.

Eleventh. That the Committee shall meet for the purpose of transacting such business as may come within the province of the

Chamber at such times as may suit their convenience, and that the record of their proceedings be open to the inspection of members, subject to such regulations as the Committee may deem expedient.

Twelfth. That all proceedings of the Committee be subject to approval or otherwise of General Meetings duly convened.

Thirteenth. That a half-yearly report of the proceedings of the Committee be prepared, printed, and circulated for information of members three days previous to the General Meeting, at which such report and proceedings of the Committee shall be submitted for approval.

Fourteenth. That the Secretary shall be elected by the Committee ; such election to be subject to confirmation at the next ensuing General Meeting.

Fifteenth. That General Meetings of the Chamber shall be held at such times as the Committee may consider convenient for the despatch of business.

Sixteenth. That any number of members present shall be held to constitute a General Meeting, called in conformity with the Rules of the Chamber for the despatch of ordinary business.

Seventeenth. That on the requisition of any five members of the Chamber, the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President, or Chairman of Committee, shall call a Special General Meeting to be held within 15 days subsequent to receipt of such requisition.

Eighteenth. That every subscribing firm or bank shall be entitled to one vote only, and that the Chairman of Committee and Chairman of General Meetings and Special General Meetings shall have a casting vote in cases of equality of votes.

Nineteenth. That parties holding powers of procuration shall, in the absence of their principals, be entitled to vote.

Twentieth. That voting by proxy shall be allowed; provided proxies are in favour of members of the Chamber.

Twenty-first. 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 members present in person or by proxy at any Special General Meeting of the Chamber convened for the consideration of such expulsion.

Twenty-second. That strangers visiting the Presidency may be admitted by the Committee

as honorary members for a period not exceeding two months.

Twenty-third. That no change in the rules and regulations of the Chamber shall be made except by the votes of a majority of the members of the Chamber present in person or by proxy at a Special General Meeting to be held after previous notice of three months.

