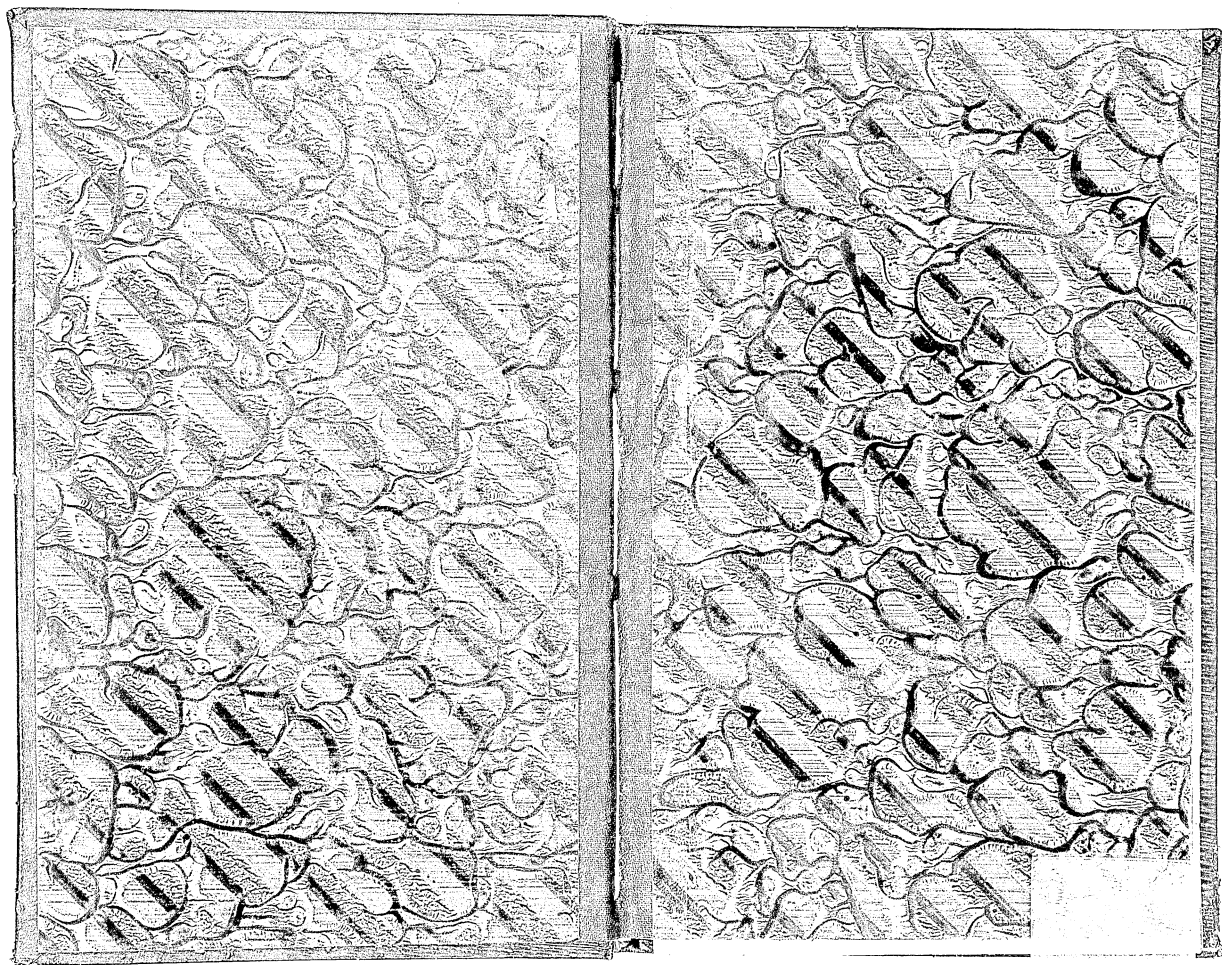
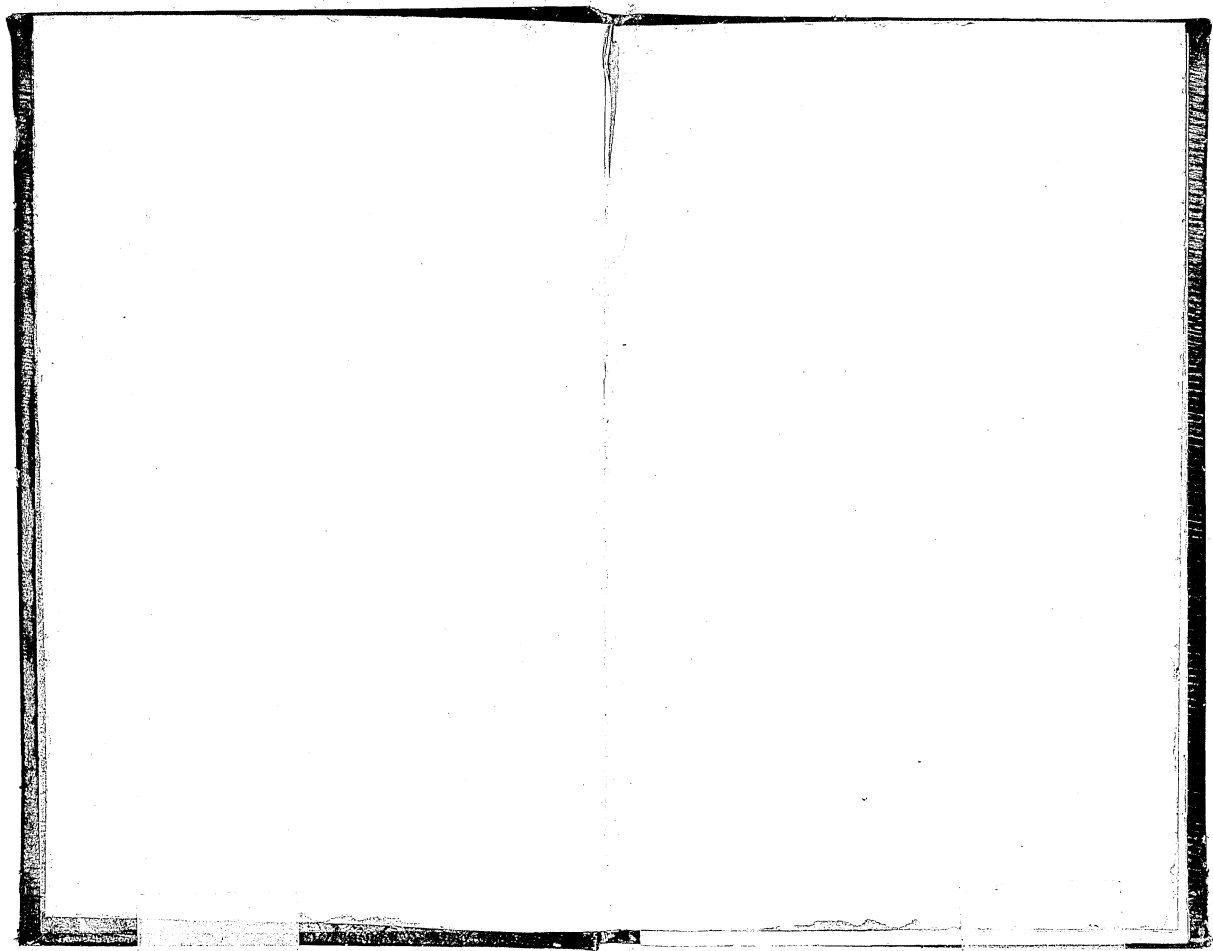


REPORT
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FROM 1ST NOVEMBER 1875 TO 30TH APRIL 1876





44
REPORT

OF

THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

From 1st November 1875 to 30th April 1876.

Calcutta:

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*Proceedings of the half-yearly General Meeting of
the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, held on
Wednesday, the 31st May 1876.*

J. MORISON, ESQUIRE, *Vice-President*,
in the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN, in opening the meeting said :—
Gentlemen, this usual half-yearly meeting has been
called for the purpose of receiving the Report of our
proceedings for the past six months, the election of
a Committee for the current year, and for any other
business that may be brought forward. As copies
of the Report have been circulated among mem-
bers, I think it may be taken as read. Your
President, Mr. E. C. Morgan, having left this
country in March last, the members of the Cham-
ber were unanimously agreed that there was no
necessity to elect a successor for the short space
of two months ; and, in consequence of that deter-
mination, it is now my duty to present the
Report.

The first subject which appears therein is the
important one of the annual Financial State-
ment. It is very satisfactory to see how elastic
the revenues continue to be ; and but for that

great sink of money, the Department of Public Works, we might confidently reckon on a considerable surplus annually.

The Customs revenue, notwithstanding the remissions of duty under the Tariff Act of last year, shows a satisfactory increase; and Excise gives a large surplus, attributable, doubtless, to greater vigilance in the collection; while in nearly every other item the healthy state of the revenue is thoroughly established. On the other side of the account, it is evident that an effort is being made to reduce expenditure; and it is satisfactory to have the assurance of the Financial Member that the outlay on extraordinary Public Works will be curtailed as far as possible. These efforts at reduction, however, will not, I hope, interfere with the opening up of the country by light railways and canals; for it is to the increase of our exports, mainly, that we must look for such a restoration of the balance of trade in our favour as will more than counterbalance the effects of the enormously increased drawings on India by the Secretary of State.

The one great item on the debit side of the Budget which more immediately affects us, as merchants, is the loss by exchange on the Council Drafts; and you will see that the subject has largely engaged the attention of your Committee.

All of us, I presume, must have had painful experience of the great losses sustained by trade during the past four months, caused by the extreme and rapid fluctuations of the exchanges, and the utter impossibility of making any calculations on them. This uncertainty, I take it, is largely attributable to the irresolute policy pursued by the Secretary of State in financing for his Home requirements. We have all heard and read a good deal of nonsense about the Exchange Banks combining not to pay more than a certain price for the Council Bills; but, leaving out of the question the extreme unlikelihood of any such combination among competing institutions whose wants at any one moment vary so much, it seems to be forgotten that the value of these Bills is entirely ruled by the price of silver in the London market.

To me it seems that the Secretary of State does not stand in the same position as a merchant with a certain commodity to sell; for the amount he has to dispose of is so enormous, and influences so largely the general conditions of trade, as to give him complete command of the money market, while he can at any moment stop selling, and at the same time lock up in the treasuries here the money that would otherwise pass into circulation, thus creating an artificial scarcity of the ordinary currency of the country. Having such

unlimited power, the Secretary of State, in my opinion, has not the right to rig the money market for his own gain, and to the loss and ruin of the tax paying community; and, yet, in spite of the urgent remonstrances of the mercantile community, such a course, so marked in its contrast to the policy of the English Government in its dealings in a crisis with the Bank of England, has been pursued by him. Even for his own interests, I look upon his policy as a mistake; for, by keeping the Banks and the public in the dark, he aggravated the uncertainty, and made it a matter of the greatest risk to buy silver for remittance.

The pith of the whole matter is not far to seek. With the enormous decrease in the value of the Bombay cotton crop, and a general depreciation in nearly every article of Indian production, the balance of trade, after adding the Council Drafts to the total value of imports, is against India. There is, therefore, no margin left for the importation of bullion, and hence the excessive influence of even a small supply of silver on the London market.

The cure for the evil, short of a change of standard, will, I fear, be of slow growth, though I think it will come eventually in the shape of increased exports, or decreased imports, or both

combined. The lower values of Indian produce in London, caused by over-supplies, will naturally tend to increase the consumption; and when trade has been relieved from the incubus of large stocks and has resumed a healthy tone, the enhanced prices which the exporter can give, when exchange is low, will also tend to increase the production. On the other hand, the contraction of credit in England and the unremunerative nature of the import trade are gradually, but surely, bringing about a decrease in the total value of this branch of business.

As regards the larger question of a change of standard, I confess the subject is one on which I am not prepared to give a very decided opinion; but it seems to me that Government is imperatively called upon to protect its own currency, and not to allow India to become the sink of what is now a comparatively debased metal. There is a Committee of the House of Commons now considering the question of the production of silver, and if their report shows, what I think there is no doubt it will, that there is no limit to the quantity which can be produced, then the sooner the problem of a gold standard is faced the better, and the less will be the loss to the country by such a conversion. The probable cost of that conversion is a very difficult point, and opinions thereon differ greatly; but the example of Hol-

land seems to point to the conclusion that it may not be so very costly after all, and that it can be done without much of a jar to trade.

The advantages which India possesses for a change of standard seem to me to be these—that the transactions of the country, though in the aggregate very large, are individually small, and not suited for gold coins; and that, with the conservative habits of the people and their dislike for change, the rupee would remain the principal medium for daily transactions, the limit of the legal tender being fixed at a high figure. I am open to conviction on the point, but it seems to me that there is no special virtue in fixing the limit of tender for token money at a low figure, such as 40s. in England. The Government taking the coining of rupees entirely into its own hands, and keeping them up at their present weight and standard of purity, they would continue to be, as heretofore, the principal medium for internal commerce; while the gold coin would rule the foreign exchanges, and keep them steady. The knowledge that Government had a certain supply of gold coins in hand, which they were prepared to exchange for rupees at a certain rate, would of itself tend to stop any demand for them, as the Banks, no longer able to import silver, would find it suit their purposes best to draw at nearly the equivalent value of the gold coin in England, and so pro-

vide the means of remittance. I quite admit that these are crude ideas, and that I may be mistaken in my views; but, so far, I have not heard any arguments against them which had much weight to my mind.

The next subject I have to refer to is the much debated one of the duties on imported cotton goods; and you will see from the correspondence that your Committee have given forth no uncertain sound on this matter.

Manchester has been accused of selfishness and of a desire that India should be ruled for her benefit. We have had the duty of the Indian Government to nourish an infant industry, and to protect India from the rapacity of Lancashire, unceasingly dinned into our ears. Through all this clamour, it seems to be forgotten that Manchester is not asking for any benefit to herself, or demanding anything which will increase the sale of her productions at the expense of other people. All that she wants is to be allowed to compete on equal terms with the local mills, and, in opposing that demand, local agitators seem to forget the first principles of free trade; for in advocating protection they are only putting the case of the local manufacturers, to the exclusion of that of the consumer. At present, the duty merely helps to

swell the profits of the local mills, and comes in reality out of the pockets of the Indian public.

The talk, too, of helping an infant industry is childish in the extreme ; for if that infant industry cannot compete with Manchester alone, how is it likely to flourish when, in an adult state, the local mills have, in addition, to compete with each other.

The figures given in the Committee's letter of the 13th instant show how formidable is the competition with which imported yarns have to contend ; and I have since learned that our figures are under the mark, there being over one million of spindles at work in the Bombay presidency, which, at 50lbs. per spindle per annum, would give 50,000,000lbs. production, against a total import of less than half that quantity. I trust that such a reasonable request as we have preferred will not be refused us by a Government pledged to the abolition of all import duties on cotton goods. The Committee would be glad to see such an abolition ; but, as the country can hardly afford the relief all at once, we felt that a gradual process would be most suitable, and we consequently took up the article which feels the competition most keenly, and when there would be no difficulty in making the change. At the same time, I contend that all our imports are

suffering, especially the lower qualities of grey goods, and that we must not rest until the whole of the trade is relieved.

I would take this opportunity of referring to an impression prevailing extensively among those not personally acquainted with the Manchester trade, and which has been maliciously fostered by interested parties, that the cotton goods of Lancashire are all heavily weighted with deleterious substances. That belief I utterly repudiate. If a buyer wants an honest cloth, he can get it by paying the price for it ; if he wants a filled cloth, it is there for him to buy at the lower price ; but there is no attempt at concealment, nor can there be any, as the most ignorant can see at a glance the difference.

On the subject of the Tariff Act of last year, it cannot but be gratifying to the Chamber that the position the Committee took up regarding the passing of the Act at Simla, and the levying an import duty on long stapled cotton, has been so emphatically endorsed by the Secretary of State ; and we may now hope that such hole and corner legislation will not be again resorted to.

On the subject of the New Telegraph Rules I think we have great cause of complaint. Not only were we left in the dark as to what changes

were intended, but we had been led to believe that figures would be preferred to words ; and, under that impression, a great many figure codes were drawn up at great trouble and expense, both of which are now lost, as the 50 per cent. extra charged on them is practically prohibitory. Then, the limiting the length of words to 10 letters necessitated an entire overhauling of all the word codes. Changes in such an important means of communication should not be made without consulting those whose business forms the greater part of the work done ; and we might, at least, have expected that the Indian representative, at whose instance all the changes were made, would have told us what he proposed to do, in time for us to communicate our opinions thereon to Government. The Director General's assumption that all the codes are made in England is not warranted by facts, and he forgets that, even if they were, communications have to pass to and fro about any proposed alterations before they can be used. I understand also that it was proposed at the conference, and nearly carried, that no code words would be allowed at all, and that all messages would have to be written in ordinary colloquial language. Such a change would be equivalent to abolishing the Penny Post in England, and substituting a six-penny one, and I leave you to guess what would have been the result.

I would greatly deprecate the spirit of antagonism which runs through all the communications of the Director General to those who are the best friends of the Department, and I venture to assert that a liberal policy would redound to the advantage of every one, and to increased receipts at the Telegraph Office.

On the question of Marine Surveys the Committee have nothing satisfactory to report. The matter remains in abeyance, pending the consolidation and amendment of the Merchant Seamen's Act ; and a communication from the Chamber urging immediate legislation has met with no response. Looking to the importance of the subject, this reticence is greatly to be regretted, more especially as there seems to be no immediate connection between a marine surveyor and a merchant seaman, or why legislation for the one should wait for legislation for the other. Having so competent an authority as the Port Commissioners willing to undertake the duty, there was no reason why surveyors should not have been placed under them.

Regarding the proposed Merchant Seamen's Act itself, it is another instance of the recklessness of amateur legislation ; and the Committee, while offering their opinion on the various sections, felt constrained to record their belief that there was

no need for legislation at all, and that the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 was sufficient for all practical purposes.

To me it seems as if the sole object of the proposed legislation were to get rid of the loafers which is now such a crying evil, at the expense of the shipping. Now, although it is quite right that seamen who have been shipwrecked, discharged, or left behind, or what is commonly called distressed seamen, should be properly cared for, and a homeward passage provided for them; yet that ships should be bound to take any destitute European, who by hook or by crook got a certificate that he was a distressed seaman, is carrying the liberality of Government, at the expense of other people, rather too far. Then, the provision to fine or imprison the agent of a ship if he does not give notice of the desertion of a seaman, within 48 hours thereof, is absurd; for he has nothing to do with the crew, and the captain would be the first to resent any interference of his with the men. Equally opposed to common sense is clause No. 8, which holds out a direct premium to insubordination among the seamen, by offering them the chance of getting home as passengers at the expense of their late ship, if they only make themselves obnoxious enough to their captain.

With these few remarks, I beg to propose that the Report be adopted.

Mr. J. C. MURRAY seconded the Resolution, which was put, and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN then called attention to a proposition which had already been submitted to members in the Committee's circular of 17th January last, and which he hoped would now be accepted by the Meeting. The Committee had recommended that, for the purpose of converting sterling freight payable in Calcutta, the rate of 2 shillings per rupee, which had been adopted some 15 years ago, should be altered to a rate in conformity with the established fall in exchange; and a large majority of members were of opinion that the proposition should be adopted. He therefore submitted the following resolution:—
 "That the resolution adopted at a special General Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce held on the 18th June 1861, is hereby superseded; that the conversion into Indian currency of sterling freight payable in Calcutta on goods from Great Britain or any port or place where the freight is expressed in sterling money shall be made payable by an approved Bank Bill on demand, or at the rate for Bank Bills on London payable on demand, unless otherwise stipulated; that the rate ruling at the close of a mail shall

be the rate applicable for such purpose during the week next ensuing ; and that this resolution shall have effect from the 1st January 1877."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Macfie and carried.

The CHAIRMAN said there was another resolution in connection with the previous one, which he would put. It was "that the words *current rate of Exchange* shall be held to mean the rate current for Bank Bills on London payable on demand, unless otherwise stipulated."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. H. B. H. Turner, and carried.

The CHAIRMAN said that, in connection with the same subject, there was yet another resolution necessary, with reference to the coast trade which had been dealt with by the Chamber in 1862. The resolution was as follows :—"That the rate for Bank Bills on London payable on demand shall be taken for reducing sterling into Indian money in all cases of commission payable in Calcutta on effecting charters for, or at, the ports of Akyab, Bassein, Rangoon, and Moulmein for rice or timber ; as well as in all cases of difference of freight payable at the said ports on re-charter or relet of tonnage ; unless otherwise stipulated."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. J. C. Murray, and carried.

On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Mr. Turner, Messrs. Burn & Co., were elected members of the Chamber.

The result of the election of office bearers for the current year was then declared by the scrutineers :—Mr. J. C. Murray, *President* ; Mr. J. Morison, *Vice-President* ; Messrs. J. A. Anderson, W. Craik, D. Mackinnon, S. A. Miculachi, and H. B. H. Turner, *Members of Committee*.*

Mr. Murray returned thanks for the honor done him in being elected President of the Chamber a third time.

Mr. H. H. SUTHERLAND said that, before the meeting closed, he desired to offer a vote of thanks to the Vice-President and the members of the retiring Committee, and he was sure they all desired to include in the vote their late President, though he was not here with them during the whole of the year ; for they all knew the zeal and good judgment which Mr. Morgan and the mem-

* Mr. W. Craik being unable to serve, Mr. J. Nicol Fleming has been elected as a member of the Committee.

bers of the Committee brought to bear upon their duties, and the admirable report they had just adopted was excellent evidence of the labors of the Committee during the past year.

MR. MURRAY seconded the resolution, which was put and carried with acclamation.

The meeting then broke up.

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Report of the Committee for the half-year
ended 30th April 1876.

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

THE BUDGET FOR 1876-77.

The annual financial statement was published on the 31st March, and the most important information and conclusions are given in the following extract :—

For 1874-75 the regular estimate shewed an expected surplus of £1,889,000 ; the actual amount shews a surplus of £2,536,990.

For 1875-76 we last year estimated for a surplus of £506,000 : we now expect the surplus under the regular estimate to be £1,903,000.

The above figures are exclusive of expenditure on the famine and on reproductive works.

In the budget of 1876-77 we estimate for an income of £50,480,000 ; and for an expenditure of £50,336,000 ; thus providing for a surplus of £144,000.

The cost of the famine—aggregating $6\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling—having been discharged in full, that item of expenditure, which has pressed so heavily on the resources of the country for the last 3 years, disappears from this year's budget ; but the reproductive public works already in course of construction and completion involve an enormous outlay, estimated at 14 millions sterling, and to provide for this year's portion of that expenditure 3 millions will be required ; of that amount £360,000 will be borrowed in India and the remainder in England.

By that operation, which only moderately increases the imperial debt, the necessity for fresh taxation has been obviated for the present.

The Finance Minister closes his review of estimated income for 1876-77 with the following encouraging remarks :—“ *As most of the improvement is the outcome of a progressive advance in the leading branches of the revenue, it may be safely concluded that the sources of imperial income are in a sound condition, and indeed that they never gave better promise of prosperity.*”

And with reference to estimated expenditure he remarks that, “ *apart from the question of exchange, the estimates are upon the whole not less satisfactory than those of the revenue.*”

This authoritative declaration is of the highest value, for on a continued progressive advance of the revenue and a safe and satisfactory condition of the finances depends this country's ability to cope successfully with a difficulty which threatens results of the gravest character.

That difficulty has been created by the unprecedented fall in the value of silver which has taken place within the last few months, the effects of which on the general commerce of the country and on the financial position of Government, which has to provide 15 millions sterling for its Home charges, are most disastrous and embarrassing ; and the apprehension that a still further depreciation will follow tends to intensify the disturbing influences which are already inflicting heavy losses on public and private interests.

The following paragraph from the Budget Statement is here reproduced in order to record the view taken by Government of this most serious and perplexing matter.

The sudden depreciation of silver, and the consequent enhancement of charge to the Government of India in laying down yearly the sum required in England of about Fifteen millions sterling, without doubt cast a grave shadow on the future. In truth, it may be said that the danger, from whatever point of view considered, is the gravest which has yet threatened the finances of India. War, famine, and drought have often inflicted losses on the Exchequer far greater than the charge which threatens us in the present year. But such calamities pass away; the loss is known and limited; and when it has been provided for, the finances again stand on sure and stable ground. This is not the case with the present cause of anxiety. Its immediate effects are serious enough, as has been already shewn. But that which adds significance to it is that the end cannot be seen; the future is involved in uncertainty. It may be that in the course of time the difficulty will be lessened or removed; it may be that the depreciation will continue, and involve the Government of India in embarrassments more serious even than those it now contemplates. It would at the present moment be unwise to speculate on either of these alternatives.

Foreign Exchanges and the Money Market.

The all important subject of the foreign exchanges and the condition of the money market has engaged the attention of your Committee, and their correspondence with Government is given below. They regret that the proposal to appoint a local Committee to inquire into these questions was not accepted, as they think great good might have resulted from their deliberations: at least some assistance might have been rendered to the Committee of the House of Commons who are now investigating the matter. The subject itself is no doubt one of great difficulty, and the utmost care will have to be taken to guard the public against any violent changes. When the Committee of the House of Commons have issued their report, it is to be hoped that Government will see their way to some definite policy, but in the meantime the least that could have been done with justice to those whose operations are so dependent upon the exchanges, was to have a declaration from the Secretary of State fixing a minimum for the Council Drafts, or that he would sell them at market price. The irresolution and want of policy shown by the Secretary of State have made the operations of bankers and merchants matters of pure chance, and your Committee therefore regret that their

urgent appeal to Government has led to no result and that the present unsettled and unsatisfactory state of the money market promises to be continued indefinitely.

DEPRECIATION OF SILVER.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 4th April 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to address you regarding the very serious decline which has lately taken place in the price of silver and the depreciation in the sterling value of the Rupee which has consequently followed.

Owing to the very great uncertainty which exists as to the future value of silver, trade, in many of its departments, is prejudicially affected; and as the present state of matters must also prove most embarrassing to the country at large, the Committee venture to think that some decided action on the part of the Government is called for.

Should there be reason to believe that the decline in the price of silver is merely temporary and the result of exceptional causes, the Committee are of opinion that the difficulty might be successfully met by the Government financing, for a time, by sterling loans for their Home requirements.

Should there be reason, however, to fear that the depreciation arises from causes of a permanent character,

and that the evil is likely to increase, then, as it seems to the Committee, the Government must be prepared to protect the currency of the country against a continuing depreciation of the metal of which it is composed.

The Committee respectfully suggest that, in view of the very great importance of this question both to the State and to private interests, the Government should appoint a Commission consisting of members of the Financial Department and also of European and Native bankers and mercantile men, as they believe that much good may arise from an interchange of opinions as to the steps it is most desirable to take in this most serious crisis.

The Committee would further take the liberty of asking that the Government should give the mercantile community the very earliest information possible regarding any action they may take in order that private interests may be affected as little as possible by the policy pursued.

The gravity of the crisis and the probable embarrassments that may arise therefrom are frankly admitted in the brief paragraph of the Financial Budget just published, but no remedial measures are proposed and no policy is disclosed with the view to avert disastrous results to the finances of the State and the commercial and social circumstances of the country; and therefore the Committee are constrained to apply to His Excellency the Governor General in Council for the prompt appointment of a local Commission to take into consideration a subject that presses so urgently for immediate investigation and for the discovery of means adequate to meet and overcome the difficulties of a most critical position.

No. 2074.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Financial Department.

I am directed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 4th April, suggesting, on behalf of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, that the Government should appoint a Commission consisting of members of the Financial Department and also of European and Native bankers and mercantile men, to enquire what steps it is most desirable for the Government to take in consequence of the very serious decline which has lately taken place in the price of silver and the depreciation in the sterling value of the Rupee which has followed thereon.

2nd.—The Committee will have observed from the Financial Statement of the Hon'ble Sir William Muir, that the Governor General in Council regards with much concern the phenomena to which the Committee now invite his special attention. His Excellency in Council is aware that the present depreciation of silver must be a source of as great anxiety to those interested in the foreign trade of India as it is to the Government itself.

3rd.—But it is not apparent that there are any special facilities in India for the investigation of the causes and probable results of the fall in the price of silver, and inasmuch as the House of Commons has appointed a Select Committee "to consider and report upon the causes of the depreciation of the price of silver and the effects of such depreciation upon the Exchange between India

"and England," the Governor General in Council thinks that there is no present necessity for the measure which you recommend.

The Secretary of State's Drafts on India.*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.**Calcutta, 19th April 1876.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to submit the following representation for the consideration of the Right Hon'ble the Governor General in Council; and as their reference involves issues of the greatest moment to commercial interests the Committee respectfully request that it may receive the earliest attention His Excellency may find it convenient to devote to the subject.

The condition of the money market is such as to occasion the gravest apprehensions, and the recent rapid advances in the rates charged by local banks for ordinary business accommodation indicate not only extreme stringency and pressure, but also a comparatively insufficient supply of means to satisfy the current demands of the general trade of the country.

In the judgment of the Committee that condition is mainly attributable to the suspension of the usual bi-monthly drawings on the Indian treasuries; and the uncertainty of the financial measures that may be adopted by the Secretary of State intensifies the mischievous effects which have already resulted from the depreciated value of silver.

The system under which the Secretary of State is furnished with funds to meet the Home charges of the Government of India has been the well understood basis on which a large portion of the imperial expenditure is provided, and on which the banking and mercantile establishments connected with the Eastern trade depend, in a great measure, for their periodical remittances to this country.

Any material departure, therefore, from such a system obviously involves serious obstacles to the business operations of bankers and merchants, whose financial arrangements are thereby disturbed to such a degree as may occasion very embarrassing consequences.

The uncertainty which attends the action of the Secretary of State in respect of his requirements forbids calculations being made with any degree of safety, obstructs the ordinary course of business, and creates incalculable mischief to all interests.

In the Budget Statement the Financial Member estimated that the drafts on India would realize only 1-8½, and that even a lower rate might have to be accepted, thereby leading the public to believe that at such figures the Secretary of State would sell his Bills. Acting on such belief the Exchange Banks took no measures for the purchase of silver or other remittances, though their wants were so pressing; instead however of adopting the Budget rate, the Secretary of State arbitrarily adheres to a higher exchange, causing thereby greater stringency than ever.

To some extent, no doubt, the suspension of a long continued practice has been justified by exceptional cir-

cumstances; but it appears to the Committee that the unfavorable conditions under which the Secretary of State must negotiate his drafts on India cannot be improved by a temporising policy, and that it is due to those who have hitherto enabled him to finance with ease and facility, and to the merchants of India whose operations contribute a considerable share of the public revenue, that they should be protected by the immediate declaration of a definite purpose, and freed from an irresolute and fluctuating procedure.

The insufficiency of money is creating severe distress, the extent and duration of which may not be measured unless relief be promptly afforded by the resumption of Council Bills, or by the Government of India releasing its treasury balances to an extent commensurate with the absolute requirements of commerce which would have been otherwise satisfied had the ordinary means of supplying them not been withheld.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, 22nd April 1876.

Financial Department.

I have the honor by direction of His Excellency the Governor General in Council to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th instant.

2. Since your letter was written information has been received by telegraph of the allotment of Rs. 50,00,000 on the Calcutta and Bombay treasuries; the greater part of this amount has already been paid under advice by telegraph and this circumstance cannot fail to have sensibly affected the position for the better.

3. With reference to the suggestion of the Chamber of Commerce that the Government should "release its treasury balances," I am desired to point out that the Government has steadily maintained a large balance with the Bank of Bengal.

4. The last statement of the affairs of the Bank published in the *Calcutta Gazette* is for the week ending the 13th April, on which date the treasury balances held by the Bank of Bengal amounted to Rs. 3,60,69,878-7.

5. That this large amount was actively employed by the bank and thus enabled the bank to maintain a lower scale of charges than would otherwise have been necessary, may be inferred from the total amount of cash balance on the same date which was Rs. 2,61,38,329-4-6.

6. A large balance has also been maintained by the Government of India at Bombay, where the position is not materially different from that observable in Calcutta, and at both places bullion tendered for coinage has been paid for out of the treasury balances, in anticipation of the time required for coining it.

7. I am authorised to acquaint you that since the 13th April a cash payment of Rs. 10,00,000 has been made to the Government Account with the Bank of Bengal from Revenue treasuries in Bengal, and that directions have been given for a further similar payment of Rs. 30,00,000.

8. Your letter will be forwarded for the information of the Most Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 25th April 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to express their obligations to the Right Hon'ble the Governor General in Council for the immediate reply His Excellency was pleased to give to their representation of the 19th instant.

The announcement that the greater part of the 50 lacs drawn last week on the Calcutta and Bombay treasuries had already been paid under advice by telegraph, and that the resources of the Bank of Bengal had been and would be largely aided by the Government, has been received with much satisfaction, since by these measures the money market will unquestionably be much improved and the difficulties which surround its position greatly diminished.

But the pressure, though thus abated, cannot be considered as removed until either a continued resumption of the system of bi-monthly bills on India, to which the trade of India has been accustomed, takes place, or until a settled policy on the part of the Secretary of State enables the Banks with safety to resume shipments of silver; and with that view and in the hope that Her Majesty's Secretary of State may be moved to declare his financial arrangements for the future, the Committee venture respectfully to request that His Excellency the Governor General in Council will communicate by telegraph the expediency of obtaining, by same channel, an absolute declaration on this most important point.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 2nd May 1876.

I am directed by His Excellency the Governor General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 25th April, and in reply to request that you will inform the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that it has been ascertained that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India in Council does not think it convenient to announce to the public his financial arrangements in respect of the future more definitely than he has recently done.

A copy of this correspondence will be forwarded to Her Majesty's Secretary of State.

Import Duties on Cotton Goods and Yarn.

The important subject of import duties on cotton goods and yarn has been taken up by your Committee and a communication was made to Government offering the services of merchants engaged in the trade to arrange a plan for their gradual abolition. The offer, however, has not been accepted, but the Committee have felt that it was too important a subject to be allowed to drop. They have, therefore, again addressed Government proposing, as a first instalment of relief, that the duties on imported yarn should be done away with altogether. There can be no doubt that

these are acting emphatically as a protection to local spun yarns, for in spite of a large decrease in the import of English yarns prices have steadily declined, and it is known as a fact that in districts where up till lately imported 40s were almost exclusively used, Bombay and local spinnings of 20s have taken their place.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 29th February 1876.

With reference to the telegraphic announcement on the 26th instant that the Government of India had been instructed by Her Majesty's Secretary of State to prepare the way for the gradual abolition of the present import duties on manufactured cotton goods and yarns and also to fix period for their final entire abolition, the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce believe that, under the circumstances, the Government may desire to avail themselves of the knowledge and experience possessed by mercantile men on the subject with the view to arranging the plan by which a gradual abolition of the duties may be best attained, and specially to desire detailed information regarding those articles upon which an entire removal of the duty is peremptorily and immediately called for.

The Committee therefore tender their services in these respects; and if the Governor General in Council is pleased to accept the assistance they are willing to render, they will be prepared to lay before His Excellency such information in regard to trade in manufactured cotton

goods and yarn as may be useful in enabling the Government to carry out the recommendation of the Home authorities.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, 8th March 1876.

Financial Department.

I am directed by the Governor General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 29th February 1876, and to request that you will convey to the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the thanks of His Excellency in Council for their offer to assist the Government of India in devising measures for the removal of the present import duty on manufactures of cotton goods and yarns.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. India.

Calcutta, 13th May 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have read with satisfaction the various speeches made by Her Majesty's Secretary of State on the question of the import duties on British manufactured cotton goods and yarn, and they have also noted with interest the views on the same subject expressed by His Excellency the Viceroy.

The Committee look forward to the time when those duties will be entirely removed, but they have heretofore abstained from pressing the matter, so long as the

expenditure on Extraordinary Public Works more than counterbalanced the surpluses in the ordinary Budgets. The last Budget however shewed very satisfactorily how elastic the revenues continue to be, and with the promise by the Financial Member that the expenditure on Extraordinary Public Works would be curtailed as far as possible, and that a strict watchfulness would be exercised on the Department of Public Works generally, the Committee venture to anticipate a very prosperous statement at the end of the current financial year.

Under these circumstances and looking to the promise of the Secretary of State that the import duties would be removed as soon as the country could afford it, the Committee think the time has come when some measure of relief should be given to a trade which is heavily weighted with those charges.

The duties on cotton yarns are most onerous and form emphatically a protection to local spinnings, for it is found that local made yarns are gradually and surely displacing those imported, the sale of which is becoming daily more difficult to effect. This is not owing to any inherent superiority in the former—indeed the latter are admitted to have fully maintained their good name—but to the price at which local spinnings can be sold to a profit,—prices with which imported yarns, burdened with a duty, cannot compete.

To illustrate the serious nature of the competition with which the latter have to contend the following figures are submitted:—

In Bombay there are now 672,000

spindles at work which are estimated to produce yearly ...	33,415,800lb.
In Calcutta there are 60,000 spindles which produce yearly ...	3,738,900 "
Total ...	<u>37,154,700lb.</u>

The export of Mule Twist from England for 1875 was for Calcutta ...	9,985,996lb.
Bombay ...	4,120,455 "
Madras ...	8,741,545 "
or a total of ...	<u>22,847,996lb.</u>

which shows that the production of local yarns is more than 50 per cent. greater than the total import from England.

To prove further to His Excellency the Viceroy how very seriously the large outturn of yarn now spun in the Bombay mills, as shewn by the above figures, is interfering with the imports into Calcutta of English spinnings, the Committee would draw attention to the fact that up to date of the present year 844,500lb. of native spun yarn has been received into Calcutta by steamer from Bombay; whereas during the same period of last year the amount received was only 209,500lb. These imports consisted, it is true, entirely of No. 20, but to show that in consequence of their relative cheapness they have to a large extent taken the place of English spun 40s. (which is the count of yarn principally imported from England), the Committee would point to the fact that whereas the imports of English spun 40s. for the first 4 months of 1875 reached a total of 3,600,000lb. they have this year fallen to 2,166,500 lb. for the same

period, with, at the same time, a decidedly lower range of prices now ruling.

The Committee need scarcely point out to His Excellency that but for this competition against which English yarn has now to contend, a much higher range of prices would have followed so great a falling off in imports.

The duty in 1875 on *all* imported twist amounted, in round numbers, to 8½ lacs, and as a first instalment of relief the amount is not large.

The Committee therefore confidently anticipate a favorable consideration of the matter.

In approaching His Excellency on this subject the Committee are conscious that there are many technical questions involved which it is difficult clearly to explain by letter, and they should have been glad had the Government availed themselves of the assistance offered by the Committee in their letter of 29th February last, as they believe that the statistics and samples of cloth which those intimately acquainted with the trade could have placed before the Government, would have been of much use in making them understand clearly the effect of the duty now levied on English manufactures. They desire, however, very earnestly to impress upon the Government the unquestionable fact that not only as regards yarn, with which article this letter chiefly deals, but also as regards the large staple trade of the country, the duty which is levied on English imported fabrics is every day acting more and more as a protection to the

local manufactures, and that unless early relief is promised importers will be compelled to restrict their operations within much smaller compass than they now do. Up to the present they have relied upon the assurance of the Secretary of State that the Government would not pursue a protective policy, and the Committee trust that His Excellency may, in addition to the immediate relief now asked for, be able to fix a period for the total abolition of these duties.

THE CUSTOMS TARIFF ACT OF 1875.

The Chamber's Report for the last half-year placed members fully in possession of the Committee's representations to the Government of India regarding the Customs Tariff Act of last year; and as that legislative measure has given rise to communications of greatest interest and importance between the Secretary of State and the Supreme Government, the Committee have reproduced them in this Report for record and convenience of reference

The only provision of the Act that did not commend itself to the Committee's judgment was the levy of a tax on imported cotton, an imposition against which they considered it their duty to pray the Government to accept their protest; and it will be seen from the final reply of the Secretary of State that, apprehensive of the injurious effects of that duty on the growth of the cotton

manufacturing industry of this country, he has been unable to sanction the action of the Government of India in that respect.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable the Governor-General of India in Council.

India Office, London, 15th July 1875.

MY LORD,

1. I have considered in Council, in the Revenue Department, the conclusion to which you have come in respect to the import duty on cotton manufactured goods, so far as this year's Budget is concerned.

2. The present state of your finances would not justify any material reduction of taxation. The slight modification, therefore, which you have introduced into the rules by which the duty on cotton manufactures is calculated is the only change which the fiscal condition of the country will at present permit; but I think it right to take this opportunity of drawing your attention to some results of the duty which are not of a purely fiscal character, and which make its abolition desirable, whenever the condition of your revenue shall enable you to part with it.

3. It appears probable that the supply of the coarser fabrics which can be advantageously constructed of Indian cotton, and which find a ready sale in India, will at no distant period pass entirely into the hands of the Indian manufacturer. The fact that the fields in which the raw material is grown, the market in which the finished fabric is sold, and the coal beds from which the motive power of

the production is drawn, lie in close proximity to each other, will give to the Indian manufacturer an advantage with which no other advantages can permanently compete. The industry cannot grow to its full development until the resources and skill of English capitalists have been more freely drawn to it. Undoubtedly it will be less attractive to an English investor so long as it appears to him not to flourish by its own strength, but to be warmed into an artificial life by protective duties. But the movement of capital towards this field of enterprise is in progress, and has lately become more rapid, and it may be expected to increase with accelerated speed in proportion as railway communication with the coal fields of the Central Provinces becomes more complete.

4. In the presence of influences so powerful, the effect of the 5 per cent. duty is probably insignificant. An importance, however, which I think exaggerated, has been attached to it by the cotton manufacturers, both in England and Bombay. The former attribute to it the declining profits of their Indian trade, and the latter are in their turn alarmed at the possible loss of what their rivals have taught them to believe is a material condition of their prosperity.

5. If it were true that this duty is the means of excluding English competition, and thereby raising the price of a necessary of life to the vast mass of Indian consumers, it is unnecessary for me to remark that it would be open to economical objections of the gravest kind. I do not attribute to it any such effect; but I cannot be insensible to the political evils which arise from the prevalent belief upon this matter. The gradual transfer of the

Indian trade from the English to the Indian manufacturer, which appears likely to take place, will be attended with much bitterness of feeling on the one side, and with keen anxiety for the security of an unexpected success upon the other. The English manufacturer will press with increasing earnestness for the abandonment of the duty to which he will impute his losses; and in proportion to his urgency the Indian manufacturer will learn to value it.

6. It is impossible to believe that under these conditions the duty can be permanently maintained. The entire acceptance of the system of free trade by England is incompatible with the continuance of an exception apparently so marked. Parliament, when its attention is drawn to the matter, will not allow the only remnant of protection within the direct jurisdiction of the English Government to be a protective duty which, so far as it operates at all, is hostile to English manufacturers.

7. But though the duty will not be permanent, its prolonged existence cannot fail to have serious effects. During the agitation which will precede its abolition feelings of animosity on both sides will be aroused. It will be represented in India, however mistakenly, as a direct conflict between Indian and English interests in which Parliament is being moved to prefer the latter. This excitement will prevail more or less widely in proportion to the strength of the interests which are assumed to be affected by it; and if the prosperity of this industry corresponds to its present promise, the strength of these interests will grow steadily with the lapse of time.

8. These considerations will, I doubt not, commend to

your Excellency's mind the policy of removing, at as early a period as the state of your finances permits, this subject of dangerous contention. The precaution has, indeed, been delayed too long. Some soreness even now will be felt, and more will be expressed, by persons who will trace such a policy to a preference of English over Indian claims. But the irritation will only extend over a wider surface if action is delayed, and may, if the delay be too far prolonged, become a serious public danger.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) SALISBURY.

Telegram from the Viceroy, dated 5th August 1875.

Act for revision of customs duties passed this day.

Export duties abolished except those on Indigo, paddy, rice, and lac, which are unchanged.

General rate of import duty reduced from $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. Valuations revised.

No alteration considered necessary in import duty on cotton goods, but their valuation reduced, which diminishes duty by 88,000*l*.

Five per cent. import duty imposed on long staple raw cotton.

Duty on spirits raised from 3 to 4 rupees a gallon, London proof.

Duty on sparkling wines raised from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees,

and on other wines, except claret and burgundy, from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ rupees a gallon.

Financial result as compared with customs revenue of 1874-75, as follows :—

Losses—

	£
Remission of export duties	... 173,000
Reduction of general rate of import duties	... 173,000
Revision of valuation	... 62,000
Total loss	... £408,000

Gains—

	£
On spirits	... 64,000
On wine	... 28,000
Miscellaneous	... 8,000
Total gain	... £100,000

Net loss, 308,000*l*.

Of this we estimate to lose in the remainder of this year 200,000*l*.; but the customs revenue is otherwise so flourishing, that we do not expect it to be more than 70,000*l*. below our estimate, and this may probably be covered by improvement in the salt revenue, which is also prosperous, so that finance of year will not be disturbed.

Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, dated 7th August 1875.

Yours 5th.

Provisions of Act very important. Some objectionable.

Please explain, by mail, grounds on which you have withdrawn it from operation of Legislative Despatch 9 of 1874.*

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

No. 26 of 1875.

To the Secretary of State for India.

9th August 1875.

In conformity with the provisions of Section XXI of the Indian Councils' Act, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship an authentic copy of the Law noted on the margin, which has been passed by the Council of the Governor General of India for making Laws and Regulations, and to which I have signified my assent.

Act No. XVI. of 1875. An Act to amend the law relating to Customs duties, and for other purposes.

2. The proceedings relating to the Act are voluminous, and have not yet been completely printed. They will follow by the next mail. The explanation requested in your Lordship's telegram of the 7th instant, will also be furnished.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) NORTHBROOK.

* See page 68.

No. 48 of 1875.

HOME DEPARTMENT.—PUBLIC.

To the Secretary of State for India.

16th August 1875.

We have the honour to acknowledge your Lordship's telegram of the 7th instant, in which we are requested to explain the grounds upon which we have withdrawn Act XVI. of 1875, from the operation of the Legislative Despatch, No. 9, of the 31st March 1874.

2. In that Despatch the degree of importance which would necessitate the reference of a measure to the Secretary of State before its introduction into our Legislative Council, and the degree of urgency which would withdraw a measure from the necessity of such reference, was left to be determined by our judgment.

3. We did not consider that the Act in question should be so referred.

4. The Act was passed for the purpose, first, of revising the valuations of the Customs tariff, and secondly, of making certain alterations in the Customs duties. The revision of the valuations necessarily followed from the report of the Committee appointed to consider the tariff, of the appointment of which your Lordship had been previously informed, and was not a matter of sufficient importance to be referred to Her Majesty's Government. The Tariff Committee were also directed to express their opinion upon the rates of duty imposed under the exist-

ing law, and they made certain recommendations on the subject which required our careful consideration.

5. Our deliberations were not concluded until shortly before the introduction and passing of the Act. We considered the changes in the duties to be urgent, because it was expedient to include them in the same Act with the revision of the valuations, and the introduction of a fresh classification of articles which your Lordship had directed. The commercial community were anxiously awaiting the decision of the Government, and we had received two strong representations from the Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta deprecating any further delay. The season of the year was the most convenient for the abolition of export duties, and the condition of trade made it, in our opinion, of importance that the relief given by the Bill should not be delayed.

6. It is obvious that prolonged discussions pending a reference to Her Majesty's Government with regard to measures involving alterations of Customs duties could not be carried on without a disclosure of the intentions of the Government which would be productive of considerable inconvenience to trade. In England such measures are habitually kept secret until the Resolution of the House of Commons is moved which authorises the collection of the new duty.

7. We believed that the measures included in the Act were in accordance with the expressions of the policy of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Customs duties which had been received by the Government of India, and that they would occasion no disturbance to the stability

of the finances of India. Moreover, it has not been the practice, on former occasions, to refer alterations of Customs duties for the opinion of Her Majesty's Government previously to their being introduced and passed in the Legislative Council; and we consider that in exercising the discretion which is placed in our hands by your Lordship's Despatch we should be guided to a considerable extent by former practice, to which indeed reference is particularly made in that Despatch.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) NORTHBROOK.
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.
H. W. NORMAN.
A. HOBHOUSE.
W. MUIR.
A. J. ARBUTHNOT.
A. CLARKE.
A. EDEN.

To the Governor General of India in Council.

London, 31st March 1874.

"MY LORD,

"Para. 1. My attention has been drawn to the great number and importance of the measures recently passed by the Council of the Governor General for making laws and regulations, which have been brought for the first time to the official knowledge of the Secretary of State for India through enactments sent hither for Her Majesty's approval or disallowance, under Section 21 of the Indian Council's Act. The Government of India appears to have

taken upon itself the entire responsibility for nearly the whole of these measures throughout their course. The policy embodied in them was, no doubt, maturely considered in the first instance by the Governor General in his executive capacity and in Executive Council. When this policy was determined upon, Bills to give effect to it were drafted in your Legislative Department, and were subsequently introduced into the Legislative Council by the Law Member, or by some other Member of Council, or by some gentleman who acted as the organ of the Government. In their passage through the Legislature they appear to have remained in charge of some representative of the Governor General in Council up to the time of their final enactment. There is no question that if measures of equally great moment to the fortunes and interests of the Indian Empire had been adopted by the Governor General, not in the Council for making laws and regulations, but in the Executive Council, they would have been reported to me in full detail at a much earlier stage; and I see no sufficient reason why the circumstance, often quite accidental, that your Excellency's orders take a legislative form should deprive me of all official information concerning them until a period at which it becomes peculiarly difficult to deal with them. Among many inconveniences which attend the present course of proceeding it may be pointed out that if the Secretary of State advises Her Majesty to disallow an enactment, under Section 21 of the Indian Council Act, he may be annulling, on the score of a single objectionable provision, the results of much conscientious labour on the part of the Legislature, and of much technical skill bestowed by the Legislative Department; and further, that unless a measure is reserved, under Section 20 of the above Act, for Her

Majesty's pleasure (a course which appears to be very rarely followed), its disallowance may cause great difficulty and confusion by rendering useless courses of administrative action which have been entered upon on the footing of the law. It adds to the force of these observations that of late there has been a considerable increase in the number of petitions and representations addressed to the Secretary of State by natives of India and others on the subject of intended legislative measures, concerning which his information is at best imperfect.

"2. The present practice appears to be a departure from older precedents. I observe that, as recently as 1868, despatches were addressed by the then Government of India to Sir Stafford Northcote (Home Department, Legislative, 30th June 1868; Home Department Public, 6th November 1868), in which full information was given to him respecting important legislation which was at that time contemplated, and in which his opinion on its policy was invited. I consider that a return to this method of proceeding would be attended with advantage, and I request, therefore, that your Excellency in Council will observe in future the following rules with reference to all intended legislative measures which are at the same time of importance and are not urgent.

"3. Whenever the Governor General in (Executive) Council has affirmed the policy and expediency of a particular measure, and has decided on submitting it to the Council for making laws and regulations, I desire that a despatch may be addressed to me stating at length the reasons which are thought to justify the step intended to be taken, and the mode in which the intention is to be

carried out. This despatch should be accompanied by a copy of the Bill drafted in your Legislative Department, or should be followed by such copy with as brief delay as possible. I do not propose to reply at once in all cases to this communication, but I request that your Excellency will mention in it the date at which it is intended that the Bill referred to shall be submitted to the Legislative Council, and that this date may be so fixed as to afford me sufficient time to address you on the contemplated measure such observations as I may deem proper, if I should desire to observe upon it.

"4. I have excepted from the above directions measures of slight importance (of which I am aware that a considerable number pass the Legislative Council annually), and measures urgently requiring speedy enactment. I leave your Excellency to judge of the degree of importance which will bring a given case within the rule I have laid down, and of the degree of urgency which will withdraw another case from it. In the event, however, of your omitting to give me previous information of an intended enactment on the ground that it is urgently required, I request you to communicate to me subsequently the grounds of the opinion on which you have acted.

"5. It is, of course, conceivable that a Bill of which I have approved, or which has been modified in conformity with my desire, may be materially changed during its passage through the Legislative Council. It appears to me that, as a fact, that body rarely alters Government measures on points of principle, but if the case to which I am referring should happen, I do not apprehend that your Excellency would have any practical difficulty in

delaying the progress of the Bill until I have a fresh opportunity of expressing my opinion.

"6. In making these observations I have not failed to bear in mind the correspondence which took place in 1870 between my predecessor and the Government of Lord Mayo respecting the powers of the Council for making laws and regulations, but it does not appear to me that the questions discussed in that correspondence are raised by the rules which I have requested your Excellency to observe.

"7. It is my intention to send a copy of this despatch (omitting the last two paragraphs) to the Governors in Council of Madras and Bombay for their guidance in matters of legislation, and I request you to transmit a copy (with the like omission) to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to whose legislative measures I wish my directions, *mutatis mutandis*, to apply.

"I have, &c.,

"(Signed) SALISBURY."

LEGISLATIVE, No. 51.

*To His Excellency the Right Honorable the
Governor General of India in Council.*

"India Office,"

London, 11th November 1875.

MY LORD,

1. I have received and considered in Council your Excellency's Despatch* of the 16th August, No. 15 of 1875, enclosing your Resolution in Council in respect to the Cus-

* Separate Revenue.

toms Tariff; and a copy of an Act passed on the 5th of August, effecting important changes in the existing duties, and the proceedings of your Legislative Council thereon. I have also considered your Public Despatch of the same date, giving your reasons for withdrawing this Act from the operation of my Legislative Despatch of the 31st March 1874, upon the ground of urgency.

2. In that Despatch I instructed you to communicate to me copies of all Bills which you had resolved to introduce into your Legislative Council, in order that Her Majesty's Government might have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon any provisions in them to which they entertained objection, and which might, if included in the Act, render the disallowance of the whole Act necessary. From this instruction I excepted "measures of slight importance, and measures urgently requiring speedy enactment." You did not communicate to me the Tariff Bill, nor did I receive any intimation of the changes upon which you had resolved, until the Act was passed, when I was apprised of the result by telegraph; and the reason stated for your silence in the Despatch under reply is that, in your opinion, the only important portion of the measure was one urgently requiring speedy enactment.

3. The same impression of the urgency of this measure appears to have led you to pass it in an unusual manner. Some months had elapsed since the financial statement had been published, at the period at which financial discussions usually take place; and your Government was still at a distance from the capital. These circumstances, combined perhaps, with an impression that

no proposals of large financial change were likely to be entertained, account for the entire absence of the unofficial members from the Legislative Council. In addition to the eight members of the Government of India by whose direction the proposal was made, and Mr. Hope, by whom it was introduced, there was only present Sir Douglas Forsyth, a civil servant of the Crown. The rules for the conduct of business, under which some delay would have been necessary, were suspended, and the Bill was then introduced and became law without opposition in a single sitting.

4. It could obviously have only been a deep sense of the urgency of the measure which led your Excellency to adopt this form of proceeding. In providing that laws for India should be passed at a Council consisting not only of the ordinary members of the Executive Government but of additional members specially added for the purpose (of whom some have always been unofficial), it was the clear intention of Parliament that in the task of legislation the Government should, in addition to the sources of information usually open to it, be enlightened by the advice and knowledge of persons possessing other than official experience. Of these you were unfortunately deprived in discussing a subject in respect to which the assistance of mercantile councillors is of especial value. The rapidity of your procedure prevented you from receiving, from external sources and in an informal shape, the counsels which, in consequence of the time and place of legislation, could not be tendered in debate.

5. I am aware that there are precedents for the prac-

tice of introducing and passing financial measures in a single sitting. But this practice has hitherto been pursued only at Calcutta and in presence of the unofficial members, and, under those conditions, any objections to it apply only in a mitigated degree.

6. I cannot concur with your Excellency in thinking that the urgency of the case was such as to justify either your failure to inform me of your intentions to legislate upon this subject, or the sudden action by which your proposals have been converted into law. By "urgency" it was not my intention to express the state of things in which an earlier is preferable to a later passage of a proposed measure; for such a condition exists in respect to all measures which are improvements. I rather intended to indicate those measures which could not be delayed without serious public evil. In order, however, to avoid any misapprehension due to the ambiguity of the word, I request that in future, when you contemplate withdrawing a measure from the operation of the Legislative Despatch of 31st March 1874, on the ground of urgency, you will, without delay, communicate your intention to me by telegraph.

7. You urge as an additional reason for immediate action that "it is obvious that prolonged discussions pending a reference to Her Majesty's Government with regard to measures involving alterations of Customs duties could not be carried out without a disclosure of the intentions of Government, which would be productive of considerable inconvenience to trade." I cannot but hope that your Excellency overrates the difficulty of keeping an official secret. The number of persons to

whom your final recommendation need be made known is very small, and in case of any betrayal of confidence the offender could hardly fail to be detected. It would be little less than a scandal, if your Excellency were unable to refer for instructions to Her Majesty's Government for fear of the subject-matter of the reference leaking out.

8. The measure which has thus passed your Excellency's Council deals, in considerable detail, with most of the import and export duties upon the Indian tariff. Some of its provisions, especially those which diminish the burden of export duties, appear to me judicious. I am unable to accord a similar approval to some parts of the measure which apply to the import duties; but I am unwilling, on this account, to advise the disallowance of the whole measure, and so postpone the benefits which a portion of it is calculated to confer. I prefer to request your Excellency to reconsider your legislation, especially upon two points of importance, to which I will presently call your attention. Financial arrangements must be adjusted to exigencies always complex, and often conflicting; and confusion might be caused by any attempt on my part to prescribe to your Excellency the mode in which the policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government should be carried out. Looking at the great difficulty of the subject, and the necessity of considering it by the light of English as well as of Indian experience, I have requested the Under Secretary of State for India, Sir Louis Mallet, who is fully in possession of the views of Her Majesty's Government on these subjects, to proceed to India, in order to confer with your Government in regard to your fiscal legislation. His varied experience and great authority on economical and financial questions will

render an assistance to your deliberations which your Excellency will not undervalue.

9. In my Despatches noted in the margin,* your Excellency has already been in-

* 15th July 1875, No. 6
(Separate Revenue), and No.
364, (Financial), para. 102.

formed that the import duty on cotton manufactures should, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, be removed whenever the conditions of your revenues shall enable you to part with it. On general principle it is liable to objection, as impeding the importation of an article of first necessity, and as tending to operate as a protective duty in favour of a native manufacture. It is thus inconsistent with the policy which Parliament, after very mature deliberation, has sanctioned, and which, on that account, it is not open to Her Majesty's Government to allow to be set aside, without special cause, in any part of the empire under their direct control. Financial exigency may be a just ground for maintaining a duty which cannot be reconciled with the general policy of this country; but the large remissions you have made in other import duties, affecting articles of a less primary importance, have impaired the validity of this plea.

10. In the presence of other causes operating more powerfully upon the cotton trade, the effect of the duty at the present moment in artificially raising the price of cotton goods cannot be accurately estimated. But it has other effects, of which the evil is palpable, and tends to increase. It offers a false encouragement to the Indian manufacturer, which tends to divert him from the efforts by which his success can alone permanently be secured; and it places two manufacturing communities, upon whose

well-being the prosperity of the empire largely depends, in a position not only of competition, but of political hostility to each other. The Indian industry is growing in strength by the help of resources which fiscal legislation cannot affect. The abolition or reduction of the duty will not injure it, though passing apprehensions may be excited by such a measure. The impost is too much at variance with the declared policy of this country to be permanently upheld; but if the task of dealing with it be long postponed it will be the subject of controversy between interests far more powerful and embittered than those that are contending over it at the present time. On these grounds I am of opinion that the recent opportunity, when you had resources available for the reduction of import duties, should have been taken for reducing this duty, with a view to its ultimate abolition.

11. The Act of the 5th of August contains a provision the object of which is not perfectly clear, but which appears to have been introduced in some sense as a substitute for the reduction of the duty on cotton goods. The import duty of 5 per cent. upon raw cotton is intended apparently as a protection to the English industry against competition in the finer articles of manufacture. Undoubtedly it is one of the inconveniences of the impost on cotton goods that it appears to give to the English manufacturer a claim for a compensating duty on raw material. But the advantage thus given to him would be purchased at the cost of great and unjust detriment to the prospects of the native manufacturer.

12. It is true, as your Excellency notices, that at present the competition of the Indian industry with the English is principally felt in respect to the coarser fabrics.

This is a characteristic which might be expected to mark an undeveloped industry. It is probable that, as time goes on, the capital and skill of the Indian manufacturer will increase, and that he will employ it in attempts to widen the field of his enterprise. How far his proximity to his market, and the cheapness of his labour, will enable him to work with a foreign cotton in competition to the English manufacturer can only be ascertained by experience. But he will not venture on the investments in machinery necessary for making the experiment if his raw material is weighted with a duty, and if he believes that the policy of imposing fresh duties on raw material is one to which the Government may at any time have recourse. I should be apprehensive that the effect of this duty may be to retard, and perhaps to prevent, the growth of an important branch of Indian industry; and therefore I am unable to sanction it.

13. It appears to me that the claims of the English manufacturer will be more legitimately met by dealing with the duty on cotton goods, the speedy removal of which I regard, for reasons upon which I have already dwelt, as a matter of serious importance both to Indian and Imperial interests. This abolition should be gradual, and, in deciding upon the mode in which it should be effected, the period which will be necessary for its completion, and the accompanying measures which may be requisite, the paramount importance of guarding the Indian Treasury from financial embarrassment must be borne in mind. The entire removal of the duty should, however, not be adjourned for an indefinite period, but provision should be made for it within a fixed term of years.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) SALISBURY.

REVISION OF THE CUSTOMS ACT.

The Committee have again addressed the Government of Bengal on the subject of bringing the provisions of the Customs Act more in harmony with the present state of trade, and suggested the appointment of a Commission to take the whole question into consideration in order to arrive at some satisfactory amendment of the law as it now stands: but they regret they are unable to communicate the purpose of Government as no reply has been given to their representation.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 7th February 1876.

On the 20th January 1863 His Excellency the Governor General in Council gave his assent to a Bill for consolidating and amending the laws relating to the administration of the Department of Sea Customs in India, and the provisions of the Act then passed, as No. VI of 1863, have been in force since that date, with the exception of one or two of the sections which have been repealed by later enactments.

Various causes however have of late years conspired to render many of the provisions of the Act inapplicable to present circumstances, but specially the altered condition of a large proportion of the carrying trade of the day, which has been effected by the Suez Canal route of com-

munication with Europe; and the considerable steamer tonnage entering and clearing from British Indian Ports renders it absolutely expedient that the Act be so modified as to meet the requirements of that class of vessels.

This subject was under discussion by the Chamber early in 1872, when several proposed amendments were submitted for the consideration of the Board of Revenue, but no steps appear to have been taken to give effect to the Chamber's recommendations: and I am instructed to bring the matter to the notice of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor with the view to the appointment of a Committee to consider in what respects the Act is capable of modification and to its being brought more in harmony with the existing state of trade.

Work at the Custom House during the Doorga Poojah Holidays.

The Committee have for years contended that the Custom House should be kept open for the transaction of public business during the Doorga Poojah vacation on as many days as possible, consistent with a proper regard for the time required by the Hindoo community for their religious observances during their annual national festival.

The subject has been frequently pressed upon the attention of Government, and the Committee have now the satisfaction to record in the following reply from the Govern-

ment of India to the Government of Bengal, that the closing of the Custom House for 5 days only, instead of 7 as formerly sanctioned, has been ordered for the future.

From Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal.

Fort William, 26th January 1876.

In reply to your letter No. 3446, dated 26th November 1875, I am directed to state that the Governor-General in Council is pleased to sanction the proposal of the Government of Bengal, that in future the Custom House at Calcutta shall remain closed during the Doorga Poojah holidays for the five days only which are required for religious observances, instead of for seven days as sanctioned in the orders conveyed in my letter No. 3133, dated 4th September 1875.

No. 361.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce, for information.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 9th February 1876.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Memo: No. 361. of the 2nd instant and to express the satisfaction with which the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce receive the announcement contained in the Government of India letter that during the Doorga Poojah vacation the Custom House shall be closed for the

five days only which are required for Hindoo religious observances instead of seven days as previously sanctioned.

Summaries of Bills of Entry and Shipping Bills.

The Committee have another satisfactory concession to record in connection with business at the Custom House.

Members are aware that by orders of the Supreme Government, communicated by the Collector on the 8th March 1875, importers and exporters were compelled to furnish in addition to their bills of entry and shipping bills *summaries* of those documents,—already prepared in duplicate. Against that most vexatious requirement, which added largely to the sufficiently heavy labor and trouble incurred in passing goods through the Custom House, the Committee emphatically protested in their letter of 2nd July 1875 to the Government of Bengal. To that representation no answer has been given; but the following notice in the *Gazette* informed the commercial public that the objectionable burden had been removed after 12 months' unnecessary imposition.

From Calcutta Gazette dated the 22nd March 1876.

NOTICE.

It is hereby notified that from this date Importers and

Exporters will not be required to put in summaries with their Bills of Entry or Shipping Bills; but full particulars as required by the Schedules issued on the 17th February 1875 must still be given.

By order of the Member in charge of Customs, Board of Revenue, L. P.

T. B. LANE, *Offg. Collector of Customs.*

CALCUTTA CUSTOM HOUSE, }
The 16th March 1876. }

Rate of Exchange for adjusting Sterling freight payable at Calcutta.

At a Special General Meeting of the Chamber held on 18th June 1861 the following resolution was adopted :—

That the rate of exchange for the adjustment of freight on goods from Great Britain or any port or place where the freight is expressed in pounds sterling be at the par of two shillings per rupee, unless otherwise positively stipulated; and that this modification of the present system commence on all vessels arriving after the 1st day of January 1862.

The rule established by that resolution has been generally observed, and the Committee believe that in its application to the adjustment of freight

payable in Calcutta it has been found convenient and, on the whole, satisfactory to all interests.

It is obvious however that the altered condition of exchange, which has been gradually following the greatly depreciated value of silver, renders it expedient that the rate hitherto adopted should be abandoned and displaced by as near an approximation as possible to the current exchange applicable to ordinary transactions.

The Committee therefore recommended, in a circular dated 17th January last, that the conversion into Indian currency of sterling freight payable in Calcutta should, unless otherwise stipulated, be made at the rate for *Bank Bills on London payable on demand*; and that the rate ruling at the close of a mail should be the rate applicable to such purpose during the subsequent week.

The majority of opinions recorded by members confirms the Committee's view as to the necessity for introducing an amendment of the rule, and the question is now brought forward in order that it may be decided by a formal vote of the Chamber.

TELEGRAPH RULES.

The subject of the new Telegraph Rules has again come before the Committee and a somewhat lengthy correspondence has taken place, with, however, no better result than in the previous half-year. The Committee felt bound to protest against the way in which the interests of the commercial community were sacrificed by the Indian representative at the St. Petersburg Conference and their wishes completely ignored; and they regret to see a continuance of that hostile spirit shown in former correspondence by the Director General of Telegraphs. They are convinced that the interests both of the Telegraph Department and the mercantile community are identical, and that a liberal policy on the part of the former would not only conduce to smoother relations, but would also lead to an increase of business in the Telegraph office.

The Committee addressed Government in support of the letter given below from the Madras Chamber of Commerce, in which it is pointed out that, under the new Rules, repetitions of telegrams in consequence of mistakes had to be paid for by the receiver of the message though the error may have occurred in transit. The new Rule is so contrary to common fairness and justice that the Committee hope it will be altered.

They have also drawn attention to the anomaly of one rate being charged on messages outwards, whilst on identically the same message 50 per cent extra is charged homewards. No replies have yet been received from Government on these two points.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 9th December 1875.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letters Nos. 405 and 412 of the 11th and 19th ultimo respectively, and to express their obligations to the Hon'ble President in Council for his prompt compliance with their request to communicate with H. M.'s Secretary of State, and for the reply to his message on the subject of the new telegraph regulations.

The Committee have received with much regret the announcement that the operation of the St. Petersburg Convention cannot be delayed beyond the 1st January, for they are persuaded that the early introduction of the new rules will be attended with the greatest inconvenience to the commercial public, who have not up to this moment been officially advised of the precise changes that are to come into force. Their application for the suspension of those changes until the 1st May was, they think, fully justified, and the Committee repeat their regret and disappointment that so reasonable a request has been denied.

If the conclusions arrived at by the St. Petersburg Convention had been of interest only to the countries where intercommunication is so rapid that matters of mutual concern can be adjusted without delay, the introduction of changes at short notice would be immaterial; but it is submitted that to the commercial communities of this country, who have business relations with distant correspondents in all parts of the world to which telegraphic communication extends, such short notice is most seriously inconvenient and detrimental; and the Committee cannot but regret that with the knowledge that the new rules would come into force on 1st January next the representative of the British Government, in his place at the Conference, did not urge this point for the consideration of the other delegates; or that he did not, at all events, anticipate the requirements of British merchants in India by the earliest possible announcement of contemplated amendments, so as to afford them the opportunity of being prepared to adopt those amendments from date of operation.

In their letter dated the 6th March 1875, which was forwarded by the Government of India for the consideration of H. M.'s Secretary of State, the Committee submitted special points which they were requested to indicate; but not only have those points not been conceded, but, as the Committee understand, messages are to be subject to a higher rate for transmission, and restricted to words consisting of such a limited number of letters as to render thousands of ordinary words in the English language inadmissible for transmission except at a double charge.

These amendments of a system to which the commercial public of India have been so long accustomed have been pronounced by all the Chambers in this country as exceedingly detrimental to the interests of those who contribute the largest share of the telegraph business, and complaints have been received from Associations in England connected with the Indian trade against the introduction of such changes as directly prejudicial to the development of telegraphic intercourse, and calculated to seriously diminish the revenue hitherto derived by the State from the employment of that agency by the commercial public.

It is therefore the duty of this Chamber to enter their protest against proceedings of this character, and to accompany it with a request that the Government of India will be pleased to communicate to Her Majesty's Secretary of State their hope that on future occasions measures will be taken to give the commercial public of India the earliest intimation of probable changes to be submitted for adoption by international conventions, in order that they may have an opportunity of protecting their interests.

No. 111 T.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, 11th March 1876.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th December 1875, expressing regret that the operation of the St. Petersburg Telegraph Convention could not be delayed beyond the 1st January last, and that

earlier notice could not have been given to the mercantile community of the changes necessitated by that Convention in the rules for the transmission of foreign telegraphic

* Despatch from Secretary of State, No. 2, dated 6th January 1876, and enclosure (joint note by Colonel Robinson and Major Champain).

messages, and in reply to forward copy of a Despatch* from the Secretary of State with enclosures on the subject.

2. I have however further to state that the Government of India will, in the case of any changes or new arrangements affecting the mercantile community and public generally, in communication, when necessary, with the Secretary of State, take care that the earliest official intimation possible shall be given of what is in contemplation or determined.

Enclosure to P. W. D. letter No. 111 T of 1876.

Despatch from Secretary of State, No. 2T, dated 6th January 1876.

PARA. 1. Your Excellency's telegrams of 10th November and 7th December 1875, and your letters Nos. 50 and 51 of 11th and 25th November last, requesting that the provisions of the St. Petersburg Conference should not be introduced in India until 1st May next, were duly received, and were answered by telegraph to the effect that compliance with the request was impossible.

2. In amplification of this reply it may suffice to point out that the operation of the Convention Rules could not be delayed beyond the prescribed date of 1st January without the consent of each of the 21 States

which, together with India, are parties to the Convention; that such general consent to a change, which at almost the last moment would have utterly disconcerted departmental arrangements, would almost certainly not have been given at all, and could not assuredly have been given until some weeks after the commencement of the new year; and that, if India, acting independently, had deferred for a while the enforcement of the rules within her own limits, she would nevertheless have been bound to pay out of the rates leviable under the Rome Convention the larger sums due to other States under the St. Petersburg Convention.

3. In a note* on the subject submitted to me by Colonel Robinson and Major Champain, copy of which is enclosed herewith, will be found some additional objections to the course suggested by you.

Enclosure to above.

Note by Colonel Robinson and Major Bateman-Champain,
No. 476, dated 8th December 1875.

The Chamber of Commerce (Bengal) in para. 3 of their letter admit that, on 22nd October last, they were in possession of general information respecting the new rules and regulations, and in para. 5 they ask for time to communicate with their Home correspondents, overlooking the fact that their Home correspondents had been still longer aware of the new Rules, and that the codes are made in England.

As far back as 13th March last, the Chamber of Com-

merce knew that propositions would be submitted to the Conference to limit the length of code words, and to put an end to those abuses of the Rome Conference Rules of which the telegraph administrations had so much reason to complain, and they were further warned by the Indian Director General (in the early part of 1874) that, if these codes were tolerated up to the meeting at St. Petersburg, they would certainly have to be radically altered afterwards, as no State would consent to continue to submit to such mal-application of the rules formulated to meet the demands of ordinary language.

It would come with a very bad grace for India (the very State on whose recommendation the new rules were framed) to ask every State in and out of Europe to postpone the introduction of the rules to the 1st May, after all have arranged to put them in force on the 1st January. Nothing short of unavoidable department necessity could justify such an application or secure its acceptance

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 13th March 1876.

In their letter of 9th December last the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce submitted a representation regarding the Telegraph service under the St. Petersburg Convention which came into operation on the 1st January; and in continuation of their remarks on that subject they desire me to place the following reference before the Right Hon'ble the Governor General in Council and respectfully request it may receive His Excellency's consideration.

Under the telegraph rules published by the Government of India it is provided—by Rule 22—that collation or repetition is compulsory in the case of private cipher messages composed of figures, at a charge equal to half the charge for the message itself: and under that rule all such messages—composed of numerals conveying hidden meanings—tendered for transmission from Calcutta to London have been subject to the repetition charge.

But while the senders of such messages have had to pay the compulsory additional rate they have been receiving messages, identical both in symbolical construction and in preconceived meaning, transmitted from London to Calcutta at ordinary rates, free from the repetition charge.

The following messages received from London sent to London from Calcutta illustrate the anomaly involved in the opposite construction which the telegraph departments here and at home place on identical symbols conveying code messages of concealed meaning:—

*Messages received from
London at ordinary rates.*

"30871, 30872, 30873,
Recommend Canal 06225,
06225, 05066,"

"48404, 49454, 50424
wheat,"

"Viceroy 77547, 33127,
53440, 37010."

*Messages sent to London from
Calcutta for which 50 per
cent. extra has been paid.*

"30824, 29992, 06224,
67040,"

"31246,"

"05072, 05073, 07278,
07279, 17797, 30824,
30012, 06225, 32189,
31337, 73086,"

*Messages received from
London at ordinary rates.*

"South 81000, Russia more
81192 to 81194."

"Gideoni 50004 reptile
April shipment 93107,
95152."

"Orion 24465, 25623,
57594, 21316, 25244,
61719, 4259 warmth."

"Orion 5352, 5819, ac-
count 2355, 1769, 250."

"30794, 30876, 31161
92831."

"Season 56170, 00660,
56042, 00,130."

"81000 Brandy 4348 cwt.
349 80,000 Buffalo 5420
London 5038, 20880,
30900, 93860."

"50004 reptile 60007 re-
probate May 89213,
91606."

"Probable 2,007, specimen
20029, atrocious 15027
at one emphasis 10,055,

*Messages sent to London from
Calcutta for which 50 per
cent. extra has been paid.*

"00491, 05041, 17781,
21893, 45206."

"30551."

"05153, 07231, 07758,
21861, 22587, 25475,
28343, 30808, 23600,
23601, 96417."

"29369, 29370."

"30807, 07423, 23632,
23633, 30819, 05421,
21735."

"Scarf's 29548, 29549,
25312, 29542, 30821,
07620, 22242, 22243,
96877."

"50058, 37626, 01244,
57256, 53300, 54543,
34532, 78556, 82115,
04121, 65125."

"07949, 07986, 18537,
16832, 31153, 82457."

"30810, 18403, 18404,
30823, 04699, 08147,

*Messages received from
London at ordinary rates.*

average 10041, audacious,
10047, austere
10043."

"51099, 20543, 51010,
77359, 51231, 50344,
51084, 09950, 24000."

Under these circumstances it is submitted for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General in Council that there should be a uniformity of practice based on the broader and more liberal construction with which the Convention rule is evidently read at home, and that the local Telegraph Department should conform thereto.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 7th March 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to forward for submission to the Right Honourable the Governor General in Council the accompanying copy of a letter addressed to the Director General of Telegraphs by the Chamber of Commerce at Madras, with the expression of their hope that His Excellency will be pleased to approve of the views therein recorded.

The President of the Madras Chamber has stated the case so clearly and precisely that my Committee do not

*Messages sent to London from
Calcutta for which 50 per
cent. extra has been paid.*

other 11888, 31153,
54327."

venture to do more than signify their entire concurrence in his representation.

Madras, 17th February 1876.

I am directed to hand you a copy of a letter that this Chamber has addressed to the Director General of Telegraphs soliciting a reconsideration of No. 35 of the new Indo-European Telegraph Rules, which relieves the Telegraph Department from its former liability to bear the cost of repeating a non-collated message that is proved to have been mutilated in transit by the Department. This Chamber is of opinion that the new rule operates unfavorably not only as regards the public at large, but also in connection with the morals of the service, since signallers are now rather encouraged than otherwise to be negligent, and the Department profits by its own wrong. I am to express the hope of this Chamber that your Chamber will deem it desirable to support the present representation.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Director General
of Telegraphs.*

Madras, 17th February 1876.

I am desired to bring to your notice, with a view to a re-consideration of the rule adopted by the International Telegraph Convention for the repetition of messages by the Indo-European Telegraph. According to the rules that were superseded on the 1st ultimo, it was provided that (XVIII) "the receiver of any message can request the correction of passages which appear to him to be doubtful."

ful: he deposits for this purpose the price of the message for the demand, and the price of a message calculated according to the length of the passage to be repeated for the reply; these charges are returned if the repetition shows that the mutilation of the sense of the message was made by the telegraph."

By the new rule (35) it is provided that the addressee can, within 24 hours of the delivery of the telegram, have it corrected by paying the price of the message for the demand, and the price of a return message calculated according to the length of the passage to be repeated; but the charges thus made are not returned even although the telegraph may have been in fault, unless the message was a collated one, and in such case the Check Office makes the refund.

I am to point out that the new rule is not just to the senders and receivers of messages that are not collated. A person hands a message to the Telegraph and enters into a contract with the Telegraph for the transmission of the whole of such message; he pays the required amount for the service; he obtains a receipt; the Telegraph takes charge of and contracts to forward and deliver the message; and when the message is delivered in a mutilated form the sender and recipient have no remedy. Several instances have been brought to the notice of this Chamber of messages being delivered without the name of the sender—an omission that may often cause great loss and embarrassment. This mutilation of the message is solely due to the neglect of the Telegraph, yet the receiver must all the same bear the expense of repairing the Department's wrong by asking for a repetition of the message;

and the Department is the gainer, not the sufferer, by its own default. The wholesome check of requiring negligent officials to pay the penalty of their irregularity, which, it is assumed, was easily exercised under the old rules, does not now operate, and signallers are not prompted any longer by regard for their own purses to prevent, as far as possible, the mutilation of non-collated messages.

The Chamber imagine that this result of relieving the Telegraph from responsibility must have been overlooked by the Convention; and I have the honor, therefore, to solicit you to take the requisite steps for obtaining a return to the former rule regarding the repetition of mutilated ordinary messages.

MARINE SURVEYS.

On this subject the Chamber's last Report contained a correspondence between the Port Commissioners and the Committee, also a letter from the Government of Bengal announcing that the Government of India had under consideration the whole question of consolidating and amending the existing law relating to merchant seamen, of which the survey of ships naturally forms a part.

On this occasion the Committee present further references made by them to the Government of Bengal; and it will be noticed that they have again pressed upon the attention of His Honor

the Lieutenant-Governor the expediency of early local legislation without waiting for the issue of the Merchant Shipping Bill which has been under the consideration of Parliament.

This point was strongly urged at the last General Meeting of the Chamber, and the Committee lost no time in communicating with Government, from whom however no reply has been received.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 15th January 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to submit for the consideration of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor the expediency of making legislative provision applicable to the Marine Surveys of this Port.

If His Honor will be pleased to refer to what has already been recorded on this subject it will be observed how anxious the late Lieutenant-Governor was that some system should be introduced by which sea going ships of the Indian trade should be properly certificated, in order to avert, as far as experience and proper precautions could command such a result, the repetition of those disastrous occurrences which had so forcibly impressed Sir George Campbell with the necessity for guarding against their recurrence; and that the modes, rules, and practice of Marine Surveys, and the responsibilities of surveyors, should be authoritatively determined: and one of his

latest executive proceedings was to lay before the Government of India his reiterated recommendations and opinions regarding this matter.

Unfortunately the course then taken has not led to the adoption of any legislative measure, the question having been held to be a part of a comprehensive scheme for consolidating and amending the law relating to merchant seamen; the proceeding with which has been stayed until the Merchant Shipping Bill for the United Kingdom has received the sanction of Parliament.

But the Committee are of opinion that the subject under notice requires immediate and separate legislation, and that there is no reason why its consideration should be postponed until the English law, or the Indian Shipping Bill which awaits it, is passed, as any enactment of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor can hereafter be incorporated with the latter, should that be found necessary.

In their letter dated the 5th November 1873, the Committee entered fully into the subject when replying to Government of Bengal letter No. 3608 of 16th September; and I am directed to repeat the recommendation therein submitted that the Port Commissioners should be legally authorised to exercise all necessary powers for the conduct of surveys, the examination and licensing of surveyors, and generally for the proper protection of all interests involved in so important a service.

The necessity for a tribunal of the character suggested by the Port Commissioners was forcibly demonstrated a few months ago by circumstances which disclosed a remarkable variance of facts as stated by the Master of a

merchant ship and a surveyor whom he publicly charged with a gross dereliction of duty.

The alleged misconduct would have properly formed the subject of enquiry entirely within the province of such a tribunal whose impartial investigation of the charges and counter statements would have resulted in a decision commanding the attention and respect of the commercial public.

In consequence however of the non-existence of a legally constituted authority to take cognizance of such matters the case referred to remains unrelieved of the grave imputations cast on a public surveyor.

Extract from a letter from A. O. HUME, Esq., c. b., Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 429, dated Calcutta, the 28th December 1875.

PARA. 1.—In forwarding the accompanying letters* from the Government of Bombay, representing the necessity for legislation for giving Indian port authorities power

to survey vessels suspected to be unseaworthy otherwise than on the application of the crews, and submitting the record of an enquiry into the foundering of the ship *Wideawake*, owned by an Arab merchant of Calcutta, I am directed to invite the attention of the Government of Bengal to the Home legislation† of last session on the subject of the sur-

* No. 1218, dated 16th October 1875, and enclosures.
" 1219, " 22nd " " "

† 38 and 39 Vic., cap 88 (re-published in the *Gazette of India* of the 13th November 1875.)

vey of unseaworthy ships, and to request that, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the Government of India may be favoured at an early date with an expression of the opinion of the Government of Bengal as to which, if any, of the provisions embodied therein should be adopted in India and with what modifications.

No. 120.

FORWARDED to the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, with a request that the Lieutenant-Governor may be favoured with an expression of his opinion on the subject. The Act referred to will be found in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 17th November 1875.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,
J. A. BOURDILLON,
Acting Asst. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

CALCUTTA ;
GENERAL DEPT.—*Marine*,
The 17th January 1876.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 8th February 1876.

General Department,—*Marine*.

Your official Memorandum No. 120 of the 17th ultimo has been submitted to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, by whom I am desired to acknowledge its receipt with the following expression of their opinion.

On the 15th of last month I had the honor to submit for the consideration of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor

the Committee's views as to the expediency of placing the Marine Surveyors of this Port under the provisions of some legislative enactment applicable to local circumstances; and the representation by the Government of Bombay, based on the foundering of the native owned vessel the *Wide-awake*, presents itself opportunely, since it furnishes an additional proof of the necessity for the measure recommended by the Chamber.

That His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has not been unmindful of this subject is shown by the 10th paragraph of Resolution, dated 20th July last, on Report of the Police Administration for 1874, which, for convenience of reference, is here introduced.

10. *Shipping Act.*—The Lieutenant-Governor observes with the greatest regret that the Magistrate of the Southern Division reports that the seamen of the merchant service are becoming more troublesome than formerly, and that cases of refusal of duty and absences without leave are common. He admits, however, that, in one case, the allegation of the men that the vessel was not in a fit state to proceed to sea was well founded. The Lieutenant-Governor fears that in other cases allegations to this effect have been made by the offenders, and though not accepted by the Magistrate, they might have been true for all that, inasmuch as there are not sufficient means of testing them. A copy of the Magistrate's remarks, pointing out that in the absence of a survey prior to leaving port the seamen have no guarantee that the vessels they ship in are good and seaworthy, will be forwarded to the General Department (Marine) of this Government for immediate consideration, inasmuch as the matter is, in the Lieutenant-Governor's estimation, one of grave and urgent importance.

The Committee will hail with satisfaction the early action of Government resulting in legislation that may more effectually protect the interests which marine surveys are intended to guard against aught that may endanger life and property; and that object will, they believe, be materially served by introducing into an enactment applicable to British India the provisions of the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act of 1875, with such modifications as local circumstances may necessitate.

To adapt the Act to the Port of Calcutta the Committee suggest the following amendment :—

That the words *Commissioners for the Improvement of the Port of Calcutta* shall be substituted for the words *Board of Trade*, wherever the latter occur.

That the appointment and remuneration of fit and proper persons having authority to detain unseaworthy ships shall be made by the said Commissioners who shall have power to revoke such appointment, from time to time, as they may think fit.

That a ship shall be detained not only on complaint by one-fourth of the crew, but also upon the authority of the said Commissioners, if in their judgment detention was justifiable under circumstances other than complaint or application by any of the crew. There should, however, be a penalty applicable to cases of proved conspiracy or wrongful detention, in order that wilful or malicious detention may be adequately punished.

As the Imperial Act applies solely to *British* ships, and can reach them in any of Her Majesty's Possessions abroad, the only local legislation necessary is to extend

its provisions so as to cover vessels belonging to British Indian Ports, including all native owned seagoing craft, as it is almost exclusively among vessels owned by natives and manned by native crews that casualties of the character already noticed take place.

THE MERCHANT SEAMEN'S ACT.

A reference having been made by the Lieutenant-Governor for an expression of opinion on the provisions of the proposed Bill on the above subject the following remarks were submitted.

As stated in the Committee's letter it appears that the law as at present existing is fully sufficient for the relief of seamen who are really distressed : and, therefore, as the whole subject of ships and seamen is being considered at Home, there is not the urgency for the proposals being passed into law which Government wish to claim for them.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Dated Darjeeling, 16th October 1875.

I am directed to send the accompanying copy of a letter No. 524 of the 29th September 1875, with enclosures, from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Legislative Department, and to request that the Lieutenant-Governor may be favored with an early expression

of the Chamber's opinion on the provisions of the "Bill to amend the law relating to Merchant Seamen" which has been introduced into the Council of the Governor General.

From Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal.

Dated Simla, 29th September 1875.

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the Bill to amend the law relating to Merchant Seamen (together with its annexure), which has been introduced this day into the Council of the Governor General, and has been referred to a Select Committee with instructions to report in three months ; and I am to request that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will favor the Government of India in this Department with an expression of his opinion on the provisions of the Bill.

2. I am also to request that the Bill and statement of objects and reasons may be published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and that the dates of such publication may be communicated in your reply.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 27th November 1875.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce instruct me to submit for the consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor the following observations on the provisions of the Bill to amend the Law relating to mer-

chant seamen received with your letter No. 34 of 16th ultimo.

But before proceeding to record their opinions of the separate sections of the Bill, the Committee direct me to say that in their judgment the stringency of the law as it already exists (Merchant Shipping Act of 1854) and the precautions taken under it against seamen being illegally discharged or improperly left behind at foreign places reduce to a minimum the evil which the Bill is supposed to deal with, and that the expediency of the proposed enactment in these respects does not appear to be called for by the circumstances of the Port of Calcutta.

A great public nuisance, offensive in every respect, no doubt exists in the number of vagrants and loafers who abound in this city, and the Committee's apprehension is that the Bill may be made the means of affording to this class of destitute Europeans the relief which it is proposed to extend only to the legitimate objects of its protection, viz., seamen who have been *shipwrecked, discharged, or left behind on the ground of inability to proceed on the voyage.*

Section 2.—The Committee are of opinion that the term *owner* should not be held to include *agent*. The proposed interpretation or definition appears to them to be objectionable and based on a misapprehension of the real position of a so-called agent in India. In many cases a ship's agent is the agent of a charterer rather than of the owner, and in such cases the agent's and owner's interests are to some extent antagonistic. In very rare instances

has an agent power over a master, who entirely represents the owner in matters affecting the seamen.

Therefore to render an agent—a temporary consignee of a vessel—liable to fine and imprisonment for default in matters in which he has no interest and over which he has no possible control is an unreasonable provision of the Bill.

Section 3.—1. The Committee are of opinion that the certificate that a seaman is a "distressed seaman" within the meaning of the Act should be signed by a Magistrate or the Commissioner of Police and not by any subordinate officer appointed by the local Government. If, however, it be found more convenient that a subordinate officer, such as the Deputy Shipping Master, should be employed to examine into cases of distressed seamen, the Committee are of opinion that that officer should not have power to grant a certificate which would be conclusive evidence of a seaman's distress, but there should be an appeal to a Magistrate.

But whoever may be the authority to determine this most material point, the Committee are of opinion that the term "distressed seaman" should be defined for his guidance. Section 211 of the Imperial Act of 1854 refers to distressed seamen as those who have been *shipwrecked, discharged, or left behind*; the last condition meaning (as per instructions to officers in British possessions abroad) *left behind on the ground of inability to proceed on the voyage.*

2. The Committee are of opinion that when distressed

seamen are to be provided with a passage at the public expense the ship should have reasonable notice (of not less than a week previous to her departure) of the number of men allotted to her: that, with the view to guard against contagious disease being carried on board, every seaman so shipped should be required to present a health certificate signed by the Port Surgeon that the man is fit for the voyage, and that every such seaman should be placed on the ship's articles in order to render him amenable to the same rules of discipline as the crew, short of actual service.

Sections 4 and 5.—The object of these 2 sections appears to be the very desirable one of preventing the accumulation of vagrants in Calcutta, which, as already remarked, is a public nuisance of no small magnitude, and in that respect the sections are approved: but at the same time their provisions involve the important issue of interference with agreements between Master and Seamen. In many cases men are shipped for the voyage only, and the Committee apprehend that the local Government has not the power to set aside such special contracts.

Seamen thus paid off can always be sent home as distressed seamen in case of there being no regular employment for them, but as a rule there is always a demand in this port for able-bodied men.

The refusal to allow ships to take native crews in the place of Europeans is in the Committee's opinion indefensible on the broad principle of interference with freedom of trade, and would be especially unjust in cases where vessels or steamers come to India with the object of re-

gularly trading to and in the East. It is true that, under these sections, with the sanction of Government, seamen may be discharged and native crews engaged; but if the seamen agree to take their discharge and lascars are willing to take their place, it should be an obligation on the part of Government both to grant the discharge and to sanction the engagement.

In the judgment of the Committee the penalty of imprisonment is far too severe for the contemplated offence under these 2 sections; and for a master of a ship to be incarcerated in an Indian gaol, especially in the hot weather, is a punishment commensurate to a far greater misdemeanour than that committed under these provisions. The money penalty would be amply sufficient, if even that be necessary—the Customs authorities having full power already to bring a refractory master to his senses by refusing his port clearance.

Section 6.—The Committee are of opinion that the money penalty provided for in this section is sufficient; that the penalty of imprisonment should be struck out for the reasons already recorded; and that the former should be applicable only to the master of a vessel and not to the owner or agent, who cannot possess the information as to a seaman's desertion or absence, and consequently cannot comply with the provision of the section. To throw on an owner or agent the responsibility of a duty which is a master's special care is most unreasonable.

Sections 7 and 8.—The Committee have no objection to offer to the former of these sections except in so far as it is applicable in connection with the section following. The provisions contained in Section 8 are, in the judgment of

the Committee, most unjust and prejudicial to the ship, while at the same time it offers to the seaman inducements to commit offences so as to bring him under its operation. It seems to be overlooked that a ship has to take away another man in the place of the prisoner if she refuses him; and the Committee cannot see why the prisoner so refused should not work his way home in another vessel. The provisions of the section are tantamount to giving the man, at the expense of his late ship, a 3 months' holiday after his imprisonment; and if his offence has been such as to compel the master to refuse to receive the prisoner, the law should rather protect the master than a refractory seaman, who may at sea repeat the offence for which he was punished ashore, and be a troublesome and unwelcome member of the crew on the return voyage. It should be *optional* with the master, and *not compulsory* on him, to take back a seaman after his imprisonment.

Sections 9 and 10.—The Committee see no objection to the provisions of these 2 sections.

Rules for the Examination of Masters, Mates, and Engineers.

The Government proposals on this subject appear to the Committee desirable and, as far as they can ascertain in accordance with Home practice. It is to be hoped that no recurrence of a case such as has been brought to the notice of the Local Government by the Board of Trade will be possible under the Rules now proposed.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 16th March 1876.

I am directed to forward copy of a correspondence noted on the margin regarding the examination in this country of masters, mates, and engineers of the mercantile marine, and to request that the Government may be favored with an expression of the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the question of the appointment of examiners.

From Govt. of Bengal to the Govt. of India.

Dated the 1st December 1875.

In continuation of my letter No. 2917, dated 10th September 1874, I am directed to submit, for the purpose of being laid before the Board of Trade, London, copy of a letter No. 6924, dated 9th November 1875, with enclosures, from the Officiating Master Attendant, submitting rules for the examination, in this country, of Masters, Mates, and Engineers, revised in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Trade.

2. With regard to the question of domicile raised in paragraph 2 of the Officiating Master Attendant's letter, I am to say that although it is regarded by the Board of Trade as a *sine qua non* to their recognition of the certificates granted at Calcutta, still it does not appear to the

Lieutenant-Governor that, under this rule, the Calcutta examiners will be precluded from granting, in the cases to which Captain Baker refers in his letter, certificates which will enable the officers to obtain promotion as at present, but their retention of promotion will depend on their again passing the examination of the Board of Trade. I am to observe that His Honor does not understand that the want of domicile will necessarily debar a candidate from passing the examination, but only that it will disqualify him for receiving a certificate which the Board of Trade will be able to recognize. Sir Richard Temple does not therefore desire to press for any relaxation of the rule.

3. The Officiating Master Attendant has submitted a set of blank certificates on parchment, which are at present in use in Calcutta, and I am to say that, if approved by the Board of Trade, they will be printed in the form, size, and color used by the Board; and that separate certificates will be printed for 2nd Mates and only Mates.

4. In regard to the form of examination papers, the Officiating Master Attendant has selected, with slight alterations, the Board of Trade's forms No. 1 to 7, and 10 to 17 and 23; and I am to request that if they are approved by the Board, a complete set of them as altered may be supplied for that officer's guidance.

5. The remarks made in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Officiating Master Attendant's letter appear to the Lieutenant-Governor to be worthy of consideration when an opportunity offers for the amendment of Act I of 1859.

6. With regard to Captain Baker's 7th paragraph, I

am to say that His Honor does not see the necessity for amending the scale of fees, as it is not to be supposed that the Board of Trade will require the practice in this matter to be uniform. The fees can, however, be assimilated to those paid in England if the Board desire that this should be done.

7. On the question of the appointment of examiners and testing their qualifications, I am to say that Sir Richard Temple desires to adhere to the views expressed in Mr. Cotton's letter No. 49, dated 11th January 1875.

8. I am to represent that His Honor considers that the question discussed in this correspondence is one of much importance to the Indian Mercantile Marine, and to express a hope that the Board of Trade will be pleased, under the explanations now offered, and with the guarantee of the rules now adopted, to advise Her Majesty to issue the necessary orders in Council for extending to Calcutta the provisions of section 8 of the Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act of 1869.

9. The original enclosures of your office letter No. 59, dated 18th May 1874 are herewith returned.

From Government of India to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 2nd February 1876.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3415, (Marine), dated the 1st December last, submitting, with reference to previous correspondence, rules for the examination in this country of masters, mates, and

engineers of the mercantile marine, revised in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Trade.

2. In reply, I am directed to state that the papers will be transmitted to the Secretary of State, with a request that it may be ascertained from the Board whether the rules meet with their approval, and that they may be urged to accept all certificates that may be granted under the new system.

3. In the meantime I am directed to request that, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, arrangements may at once be made for the appointment of a qualified Examination Board to be constituted as follows:—

(a.)—An officer of the navigating branch of the Royal Navy, of not lower rank than a Staff Lieutenant, as examiner in navigation, the senior Royal Navy officer (not being below the rank indicated) present for the time being at the headquarters of the Marine Survey Department being *ex-officio* examiners in that branch.

(b.)—Three experienced masters, who have been recently in successful command of merchant vessels, as examiners in seamanship, &c.

(c.)—Three engineers as examiners in steam.

A suitable person should be chosen as permanent president of the seamanship examiners, and the chief engineer examiners.

4. It should be determined by His Honor where, at what intervals, quarterly or half-yearly, and on or about what dates the examinations should be held; and also who should be the president of the seamanship examiners, in what manner and under what rules the three masters and the three engineers are to be selected and appointed for each examination, and what fees it is proposed they should receive for their attendance on this duty. The foregoing details should be carefully worked out at as early a date as possible, and I am to request that when they have been settled the Government of India may be informed of the result, and also of the date on which it is proposed to hold the first examination.

5. Referring to paragraph 2 of your letter, His Excellency the Governor-General in Council agrees with His Honor in the opinion that the rule requiring persons in India to be domiciled for three years previous to examination will not debar a candidate from being examined, the only effect being that it will disqualify him from receiving a certificate which the Board of Trade can recognize.

6. His Excellency in Council also agrees with His Honor's view that there is no special reason for assimilating the examination fees in India to those in force in England.

7. The suggestion in paragraph 5, that the Act (I of 1859) should be amended so as to make false declarations punishable, and the question of the declaration referred to in paragraph 6, will be taken into consideration.

8. I am to take this opportunity of forwarding copy

of a despatch from the Secretary of State, No. 532 (Financial), dated the 28th of October last, with enclosure, from the Board of Trade, relative to the proposed extension to India of section 8 of the Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869, and to the failure of Mr. Richard William Meade to pass an examination in England for a second mate's certificate, notwithstanding the fact that such a certificate had been granted to him in Bengal in June 1874. It will be observed from these papers that the appointment of a duly qualified Board of Examiners is essentially necessary, and I am to request that the circumstances of the case now brought to notice may receive due consideration in the arrangements to be made by the Government of Bengal under the orders contained in this letter. I am also to request that a separate report in the case of Mr. Meade may be furnished for the information of the Government of India and for transmission to the Secretary of State.

From Secretary of State for India to Governor-General of India in Council.

London, 28th October 1875.

In continuation of my Financial despatch, dated this day, No. 538, I forward herewith, for your serious consideration and report, copy of a further letter from the Board of Trade, dated the 13th instant, relative to the extension to India of section 8 of the Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869, and to the failure of Mr. Richard William Meade in passing an examination in this country for a second mate's certificate, notwithstanding such a certificate had been granted to him by the authorities in

Bengal after an examination passed at Calcutta in June 1874.

From Thomas Gray, Esq., to Under-Secretary of State, India Office.

CERTIFICATES.

I am directed by the Board of Trade to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for India in Council, that the chief examiner of candidates for masters' and mates' certificates in the United Kingdom reports that Mr. Richard William Meade, who passed at Calcutta in June 1874 for a second mate's certificate, recently applied for permission to present himself for examination for a certificate of the same grade in London.

The required permission was accorded to him, and he was examined on the 27th ultimo, the result being that he has not merely failed, but his examination papers are so very bad, and show so much ignorance, that this Board cannot understand how he contrived to succeed in passing the examination at Calcutta.

The only conclusion to which this Board can come is either that the standard of examination in India was at the date very much below the standard in the United Kingdom, or that the examinations were very inefficiently conducted.

The Board are led to make these observations in consequence of the recent application by the Government of India that the provisions of section 8 of the "Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869," may be extended to certificates of competency issued by that Government.

It must be remembered that the effect of the extension, if granted, will be to place these certificates on an equality with the like certificates issued by this Board, and to give them equal advantages in every respect. But one of the chief conditions imposed by the Act upon which these privileges may be granted is, that this Board must be "satisfied that the examinations are so conducted as to be equally efficient as the examinations for the same purpose in the United Kingdom under the Acts relating to merchant shipping."

As a matter also of justice towards those candidates who present themselves for examination in the United Kingdom, it is important that candidates for equivalent certificates in British possessions should not be able to obtain them with greater facility than in the United Kingdom, in consequence of the examinations being conducted with less efficiency than in this country.

It is possible that the case of Richard Meade may be exceptional, and that, from some cause which does not appear, his ability to pass in London for the same grade for which he passed twelve months previously in Calcutta entirely failed him at the time; but to judge from his papers it is difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that already mentioned.

Looking, however, to the importance of an efficient system of examination being secured in India, now that it is proposed to extend the provisions of section 8 of the "Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869," to Bengal, I am to request you to be good enough to direct the attention of Lord Salisbury to the subject of this letter, and to

move his lordship, should he see no objection, to cause enquiries to be made of the Government of India in regard to the case of Richard W. Meade.

No. 40, dated Fort William, the 5th Jan. 1876.

Endorsed by the Government of India, Financial Dept.

Transferred to the Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce for disposal, in continuation of the communication from this Department, No. 39 of this date.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 4th April 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to state in reply to your letter No. 742 of the 16th ultimo that, in their judgment, a Board constituted as proposed by the Government of India for the examination, in this country, of masters, mates and engineers of the mercantile marine would be a sufficient tribunal for testing the qualifications of candidates; and they will be glad to see it established, in order that certificates of competency may be granted only after such a full and searching examination as shall entitle the recipients thereof to be held equal to any standard of efficiency in the United Kingdom.

The case of Mr. Meade which was specially referred by the Board of Trade to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India would appear to justify the conclusion that his

examination in Calcutta must have been very inefficiently conducted, or that the local standard was greatly below that observed at home; and the Committee believe and hope that under the proposed system a repetition of a similar case will be impossible.

The Committee are of opinion that the Board of Examiners would be greatly strengthened by the proposed appointment of three experienced masters of merchant vessels, but as that service would involve the loss to them of considerable time which would otherwise be devoted to their legitimate duties, the Committee suggest that they should receive moderate remuneration for their attendance at the Board.

Detention of Overland Mails in the London and Bombay Post Offices.

The detention of a portion of the Overland Mail for India which should have been transmitted by the Brindisi route on 24th December last was the subject of a prompt remonstrance by the Committee, and the following correspondence ensued.

Members will also observe that the Committee have lately drawn attention to the detention at Bombay of Mails arriving there early in the morning and kept for the evening train; but, from the reply of the Director General of the Post Office, it will be seen that the delay

cannot be obviated except by a special train all the way to Calcutta, and that the cost of such a service would not be warranted by the circumstances or sanctioned by the Government.

From Chamber of Commerce to Director General of the Post Office.

Calcutta, 18th January 1876.

The *Englishman* of the 14th instant contained a special telegram from Allahabad, dated the previous day, to the following effect:—"Intimation has been received by the Bombay Post Office, that owing to the enormous pressure of business in London when the mail of the 24th ultimo was despatched, many letters for India were 'left behind,'—and a memorandum by the Post Master of Bombay published in the *Bombay Gazette* of the 14th confirms that announcement, and adds that many letters for the Colonies and for China had been similarly dealt with.

With reference to such an unprecedented proceeding on the part of the London Post Office the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to draw your attention to the very serious inconvenience it may occasion the commercial community whose letters had not been despatched; for not only will the advice of the purchase or shipment of goods be delayed a whole week and the market to that extent be lost, but great embarrassment may be caused to merchants if consignments of goods from England by Canal steamers arrive in the absence

of advices for their guidance, but they will also be exposed to the greatest difficulty in transacting their business at the Customs, and to heavy charges for goods regarding which they have no information.

The Committee are of opinion that the detention of any portion of the Overland mails to the East, which are despatched only once a week, would be most unjustifiable except under circumstances which were absolutely unavoidable; but that it should have occurred, as it is believed it did, under the pressure of an unusually heavy and accumulated Christmas correspondence for distribution in the United Kingdom, discloses a singular disregard for the proper performance of an important foreign service; and the Committee trust you will submit a strong and urgent remonstrance to Her Majesty's Post Master General against the manner in which that service has been neglected on this occasion.

From Post Office of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 28th January 1876.

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter dated 18th January I have the honor to enclose copy of a telegram dated 30th December from the British Post Office to the British Packet Agent at Suez, that formed the warrant for the announcement to which you allude as respects the detention of numerous letters posted in time for despatch by the mail from London of the 24th December last.

2. On first reading the telegram I did not believe that any letters for India had been left behind on the occasion

in question, and this view has been confirmed both by the absence of specific complaint from the public and by the fact that no communication on the subject has reached me from Her Majesty's Post Master General.

3. There can, however, be no doubt that owing to "enormous pressure of business" on Xmas eve very many letters for places in the East other than India were kept back: this course was not in my opinion consistent with the proper performance of the weekly Overland service, and efforts should be made to prevent the recurrence of what has been correctly characterised by you as neglect.

4. I have therefore forwarded your letter for submission to Her Majesty's Post Master General with a communication No. 7338 dated 28th January 1876 of which a copy is enclosed.

Telegram.

To The British Packet Agent, Suez.

London, 30th December 1875.

Will you write by to-morrow's packet to Post Master General, Ceylon, Hong-Kong, Singapore and each Australian Colony informing them that enormous pressure of business on night of twenty-fourth caused many letters for those Colonies and for China and Japan to be left behind; this will explain failure if complained of; inform Sorting Officers on board packet for Bombay to like effect for communication to Post Master General Bombay.

From Post Office of India to Post Office, London.

Calcutta, 28th January 1876.

I have the honor to forward for your information the enclosed copy of a letter dated 18th January from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce directing attention to the very serious inconvenience that may result to the mercantile community from the detention for one week of letters for the East, posted in time for despatch by the mail which left London on the 24th December, and praying that an urgent remonstrance may be submitted to Her Majesty's Post Master General, against the manner in which the weekly overland service to the East was neglected on the occasion in question.

2. The sole official intimation that has reached me consists of the copy of a telegram (transcript enclosed) from your office to the British Packet Agent, Suez, dated, 30th December, which states that letters for Ceylon, Hong-kong, Singapore, the Australian Colonies, China and Japan had been left behind "through enormous pressure of business," it is not stated that any letters for India had been detained and the fact that no communication from your office on the subject has reached this office favors my first impression that no such detention took place.

3. I would however state my concurrence with the view expressed by the Committee to the effect that "the detention of any portion of the overland mails to the East which are despatched only once a week would be most unjustifiable except under circumstances which

"were absolutely unavoidable." And I do not regard an enormous pressure of business on Christmas eve as a sufficient warrant for such a detention. A postponement of the departure of the steamer to the extent of even 24 hours would obviously have been a lesser evil than delaying the despatch of a large mass of correspondence for one whole week.

4. I trust that you will be good enough to lay these views before Her Majesty's Post Master General in the hope that they may be recognised as governing any future case of like emergency.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Director
General of the Post Office.*

Calcutta, 2nd February 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 7339 of the 28th ultimo, and to thank you for the promptitude with which you have addressed Her Majesty's Post Master General on the subject of their reference.

It is within the knowledge of the Committee that important covers for Calcutta posted for transmission by the 24th December mail were not forwarded; and the absence of specific complaints from the public may be attributed to the timely announcement that letters had been detained and to the consequent necessity of submitting to the disappointment and awaiting the arrival of the following mail for the missing correspondence.

From Post Office of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 20th March 1876.

In continuation of my letter No. 7339, dated 28th January, relative to the detention of letters posted in time for despatch by the mail from London of the 24th December, I have the honor to transmit, for the information of the Chamber, copy of reply No. 65B, dated 25th February, from the British Post Office.

2. It will be seen that Her Majesty's Post Master General exceedingly regrets the delay and has promised to endeavour to anticipate future pressures of the kind.

From General Post Office.

London, 25th February 1876.

The Post Master General has had before him your letter, No. 7338, of the 28th ultimo, with copy of one from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, relative to the inconvenience caused by the detention in London of a portion of the correspondence for the East intended for despatch by the mail, via Brindisi, of the 24th December last.

As you appear already to have learned, the cause of the delay was the extraordinary pressure of work in this office on Christmas eve. On that occasion there was an unfortunate conjuncture of difficulties, owing partly to the late arrival in London of some of the principal mails from the Provinces, the Railway trains being behind

time, and partly to the accidental circumstance of an unusual number of Foreign and Colonial mails being despatched on the 24th December.

The Post Master General exceedingly regrets the delay which unfortunately occurred, and his Lordship will endeavour to anticipate, so far as the Post Office can, any future pressure of the same kind.

From Chamber of Commerce to Post Office of India

Calcutta, 29th March 1876.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of letter No. 8549 of 20th instant, and to thank you for communicating the result of your reference to Her Majesty's Post Master General regarding the detention of portion of the overland mail of 24th December last.

DETENTION OF MAILS AT BOMBAY.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Director
General of the Post Office of India.*

Calcutta, 25th April 1876.

The frequent arrival of the overland mail steamers at Bombay at an early hour in the morning and the detention of the mails until the departure of the ordinary train at 6 in the evening induce the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to inquire if it is not possible to obviate

that detention and to accelerate the delivery of letters for distant destinations?

On two occasions during the current month—the 6th and 20th instant—the mail packets were signalled before 6 A. M., and as the mails did not leave till 6 P. M., they were kept waiting in the Bombay Post office for nearly 12 hours : and the Committee desire me to request you will favor them with the expression of your opinion whether the mails could not be transmitted under special arrangements so as to overtake the previous night's train at Jubbulpore or Allahabad : and whether the Government of India would sanction such acceleration and the cost thereof, if the saving of the time otherwise lost at Bombay could be so accomplished.

*From Director General of the Post Office of India
to Chamber of Commerce.*

Simla, 5th May 1876.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo and in reply to state, for the information of the Chamber, that, under existing regulations, a special train is employed for the conveyance of the overland mails from Bombay on all occasions when it is possible to catch up the ordinary train before the latter leaves Jubbulpore.

2. To overtake the ordinary train before or at Jubbulpore it is necessary to start the special train before or at midnight, so that it is only in the event of a late afternoon or evening arrival of the mails that the employment of a

special train is of any advantage. The rule prescribed for the Bombay Post office is that a special train should be used when the last batch of overland mails reaches the Bombay Post office between 6-15 and 11-30 P. M. If this period were extended by 2 hours the special train starting at say 1-30 A. M. would not overtake the ordinary train before Allahabad.

3. The use under present rules of a special train as far as Jubbulpore involves a cost of Rupees 1,848, and the use of a similar train as far as Allahabad (although this has not been sanctioned by the Government) would cost at the same rate about Rupees 2,535.

4. To provide for the prompt transmission of overland mails arriving at Bombay (as in the cases referred to by you) early in the morning, nothing short of a special train all the way to Calcutta would do : and the cost of such a service would not in my opinion be warranted by the circumstances or sanctioned by the Government.

THE PIDDINGTON FUND.

Early in 1870 the Chamber ventured to enlist the sympathy and aid of the mercantile and general community in favor of Mrs. Piddington, the aged widow of Mr. Henry Piddington, author of the *Law of Storms*, and for some years the Coroner for Calcutta and President of the Marine Court.

A liberal subscription was raised which enabled

the Chamber to improve the widow's slender circumstances by adding 100 rupees a month to her income: and that provision was continued up to the time of Mrs. Piddington's death, which took place last September.

After payment of funeral expenses and cost of a monument in the cemetery of Chandernagore, the Chamber held a surplus which admitted of a refund of a moiety of subscriptions; and the Committee have therefore closed the Fund by returning 50 per cent. of the contributions.

THE COMMITTEE.

The following members having been appointed by the Committee as their colleagues during the half-year under the provisions of Rule 8, you are requested to confirm their elections:—

Mr. W. Craik, Mr. J. A. Anderson, Mr. Duncan Mackinnon, and Mr. S. A. Micrulachi.

The vacancies in Committee filled up by these members were created by the appointment of Mr. J. Morison as Vice-President and by the resignation of Messrs. Negroponte, Macmichael, and Flemingington, proceeded to Europe.

MEMBERS RETIRED.

Messrs. Argenti Schilizzi and Co., Messrs. Kerr Taruck and Co., Messrs. Schlapfer Putz and Co., and Manockjee Rustomjee, Esq.

FUNDS OF THE CHAMBER.

The Chamber's balance on 30th April amounted to Rs. 1,114-5-0, exclusive of Rs. 10,000 in 4 per cent. Government Securities.

JOHN MORISON,

Vice-President.

APPENDIX.

*Statement of the Funds of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce
from 1st November 1875 to 30th April 1876.*

CALCUTTA, }
30th April 1876. }

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

TONNAGE SCHEDULE for the Port of CALCUTTA, adopted at the 10th Annual Meeting of the Corporation of Calcutta, 1901.

a Special General Meeting of the Bangla Chamber of Commerce, held on the 12th February 1872, with effect from 1st September 1872, except as regards the measurement of Cotton, Hemp, Jute, Jute Cuttings, Rice, Safflower, and other articles similarly packed, which, under the Chamber's Resolution of 14th June 1872 had effect from 1st July 1872.

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Net.	Cwt. per Ton.
Alum, in bags and boxes	50	50
Asshet, in bags	20	20
Arrowroot, in cases	8	50
Asphalt, in bags or cases	50	50
Asphalt, in bags and boxes	50	50
Bark, in bags	50	50
Bees' Wax	8	50 gross
Berilla	50	50
Bottle	50	50
Bottle	50	50
Bran	14	50
Brimstone	14	50
Colicite, in bags	16	50
Cumplin, in cases	6	50
Cardamum, in volume	8	50
Chest, in boxes	12	50
" " bags	15	50
Castor Seed	11	50
Chillice (dry) in bags	11	50
China Wood, in boxes	14	50
Chitchea	14	50
Chutrah	8	50
Cigars	50	50
Coffee, in bags	50	50
" " in boxes	50	50
Coals	18	50
Coconut, bare	18	50
Coffee, in casks	16	50

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Coral, rough	20	.....
Coir, loose and unscrewed	12	.....
Copras, or Coconut Kernel	14	.....
Coriander Seed	12	.....
Cotton	.....	50
Cowries	20	.....
Cummin Seed	8	.....
" Black	8	.....
Cutch, in bags	18	.....
Dates, wet	20	.....
" dry	16	.....
Dholl	20	.....
Elephants' Teeth in bulk	20	.....
Furniture	.....	50
Garlic and Onions	12	.....
Ginger	16	.....
Gram	20	.....
Gums, in cases	50	.....
Gunny Bags and Gunny Cloth	50	.....
Gunjah	50	.....
Hemp	50	.....
Hides, Buffalo, or Cow, cured	14	.....
Horns, Horn Sharvings and Tips	20	.....
Horns, Cow, Buffalo, or Deer	20	.....
India Rubber, in bags	16	.....
" in cases	50	.....
Indigo	50	.....
Iron	20	.....
Jute	50	.....
Jute Cuttings	50	.....
Lac Dye	50	.....
Lard	20 gross	.....
Linsced	20	.....
Mace	50	.....
Machinery	20	.....
Metals	20	.....
Mathie Seed	18	.....
Mirabolams	16	.....
Molasses	2 puncheons or 4 hhds.	.....
Mother o' Pearl, in bags	20	.....
" chests	20	.....
Munjeet	50	.....
Mustard or Rape Seed	20	.....
Niger Seed	20	.....
Nutmegs, in cases or casks	50	.....

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Nux Vomica	16	.....
Oats	16	.....
Oil, in cases	.....	4 hhds. 50
" casks	.....	per chest
Opium	16	.....
Paddy	16	.....
Palmitine, in bags	20	.....
Peas	12	.....
Pepper, Long	14	.....
" Black	.....	50
Planks and Deals	20	.....
Poppy Seed	19	.....
Putchuck	.....	50
Rags	10	.....
Raw Silk, in bales	20	.....
Rattans for dunnage	20	.....
Red Wood, ditto	20	.....
Rhea	20	.....
Rice	16	.....
Rope, in coils	2 puncheons or 4 hhds.	.....
" Lines and Twines, in bundles	.....	50
Rum, in casks	.....	50
Safflower	20	.....
Sago, in cases	20	.....
Sal-amoniag, in bags	20	gross
" boxes	20	.....
Saltpetre	20	.....
Salt	20	.....
Sapan Wood for dunnage	20	.....
Sealing Wax, in cases	.....	50
Seed-lie, in cases	16	.....
" bags	.....	50
Senna	20	.....
Shells, rough, in bags	16	.....
Shell-lie, in cases	.....	50
" bags	.....	50
Silk Chussum	.....	50
" Waste	.....	50
Silk Piece Goods	14	.....
Skins	.....	50
Soap, country, in cases	15	.....
" bags	20	.....
" tar	.....	50
Stick Lac, in cases	16	.....
" bags	.....	.....

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Sugar	20	.....
Tallow, in cases or casks	20	.....
Talc	20	.....
Tamarinds, in cases or casks	20	.....
Tapioca	.....	50
Tea	.....	50
Teel Seed	20	.....
Timber, round	.....	40
" squared	.....	50
Tinical	20	.....
Tobacco, in bales	16	.....
Tortoise Shells, in chests	.....	50
Turmeric	16	.....
Wheat	20	.....
Wool	.....	50

1. 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, except in the case of Cotton, the measurement of which shall be taken at the Screw-house.

2. Measurement to be taken at largest part of the bale,—inside the lashing on one side and outside on the other.

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

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

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

SCHEDULE OF COMMISSION CHARGES,

Revised and adopted by a Special General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on the 18th June 1861,—with effect from 1st January 1862.

- On the sale, purchase, or shipment of Bullion, Gold Dust or Coin ... 1 per cent.
- On the purchase (when in funds) or sale of Indigo, Raw Silk, Silk Piece Goods, Opium, Pearls, Precious Stones, or Jewellery ... 2½ "
- On purchasing ditto when funds are provided by the Agent ... 5 "
- 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 purchases upon both cost and charges ... 5 "
- On returns for Consignments if made in produce ... 2½ "
- On returns of Consignments if in Bills, Bullion, or Treasure ... 1 "
- On accepting Bills against Consignments ... 1 "
- On the sale or purchase of Ships, Factories, Houses, Lands, and all property of a like description ... 2½ "
- On goods and treasure consigned, and all other property of any description referred to Agency for sale, whether advanced upon or otherwise, which shall afterwards be withdrawn; and on goods consigned for conditional delivery to others and so delivered, on invoice amount at 2s. per rupee. half com.
- On making advances or procuring loans of money for commercial purposes, when the aggregate commission does not exceed 5 per cent ... 2½ per cent.
- On ordering, or receiving and delivering goods, or superintending the fulfilment of contracts, or on the shipment of goods, where no other Commission is derived ... 2½ "

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 landing 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 ... $\frac{1}{2}$ "

425 Brokerage when paid is to be separately charged.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Agostino A. and Co.
Aper and Co.
Ashburner and Co.
Anderson, Wright and Co.
Balfour, J., *Off. Agent, Oriental Bank Corporation*
Barlow and Co.
Begg, Dunlop and Co.
Blech, J., *Off. Manager, Comptoir D'Escompte de Paris*
Borradaile, Schiller and Co.
Buskin, E. G.
Burn and Co.
Caldar, G. L., *Off. Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company.*
Camillos Nephews and Co.
Cochrane, S., *Manager, Agra Bank, Limited.*
Cohn, Cordis and Co.
Crooke, Rome and Co.
Cox, Henry S.
Cohn Brothers and Co.
DeSouza, Theo. and Co.
Duncan Brothers and Co.
Dwarkanath Dutt and Co.
Edie and Hobson.
Einschansen and Oesterley.
Ewing and Co.
Elliot, John and Co.
Erra, E. D. J.
Fergusson, J. H. and Co.
Finlay, Blair and Co.
Gibson and Co.
Graf and Danciger.
Graham and Co.
Grindley and Co.
Guthrie, Elias S.
Henderson, George and Co.
Holgers, F. W. and Co.
Hovey, Miller and Co.
Huber and Co.
Jardine, Skinner and Co.
Keller, H., Bullen and Co.
Kelly and Co.
Ker, Dods and Co.
King, Hamilton and Co.
Longman, F., *Manager, Delhi and London Bank, Limited.*

Lovell, H. P., *Super., P. & O. Steam Navigation Company.*
MacKillop, J. and Co.
Macmillan, H. and Co.
MacKinnon, MacKenzie and Co.
MacKenzie, Lyall and Co.
Macneil and Co.
MacKnight, Anderson and Co.
Moran, W. and Co.
Morriss, E., *Agent, Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.*
Nicol, Fleming and Co.
Petrocchino Brothers.
Pravukissen Law and Co.
Ralli Brothers.
Ralli and Mavrojani.
Reinhold and Co.
Robert and Charriol.
Rentiers and Co.
Robinson, S. H., *Secretary Goosery Cotton Mills Co.*
Reid, J. M., *Agent, Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China.*
Sagrandi, J. P.
Simpson J., *Agent, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China.*
Steel, McIntosh and Co.
Schroeder, Smith and Co.
Schoone, Kilbass and Co.
Sassoon, David and Co.
Shaw, Finlayson and Co.
Thomas, J. and Co.
Turner, Morrison and Co.
Toulmin, L. W. and Co.
Tanvaco and Co.
Tambori, Paul and Co.
Ullmann, Hirschhorn and Co.
Valetta N. J. and Co.
Weinhold Brothers.
Wilson, H. F.
Windram, J., *Manager, National Bank of India.*
Whitney Brothers and Co.
Williamson Brothers and Co.
Whisman, Mitchell, Reid and Co.
Yule, Andrew and Co.

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 not less than five nor more than seven Members, including the President and Vice-President, 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. Three 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.

 *It is specially requested that before a Member is returned to serve on the Committee his nominator shall have ascertained his willingness to accept office in the event of his election by voting cards.*

Ninth... That parties holding powers of procuration 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 Com-

mittee 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 Chairman of 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.

