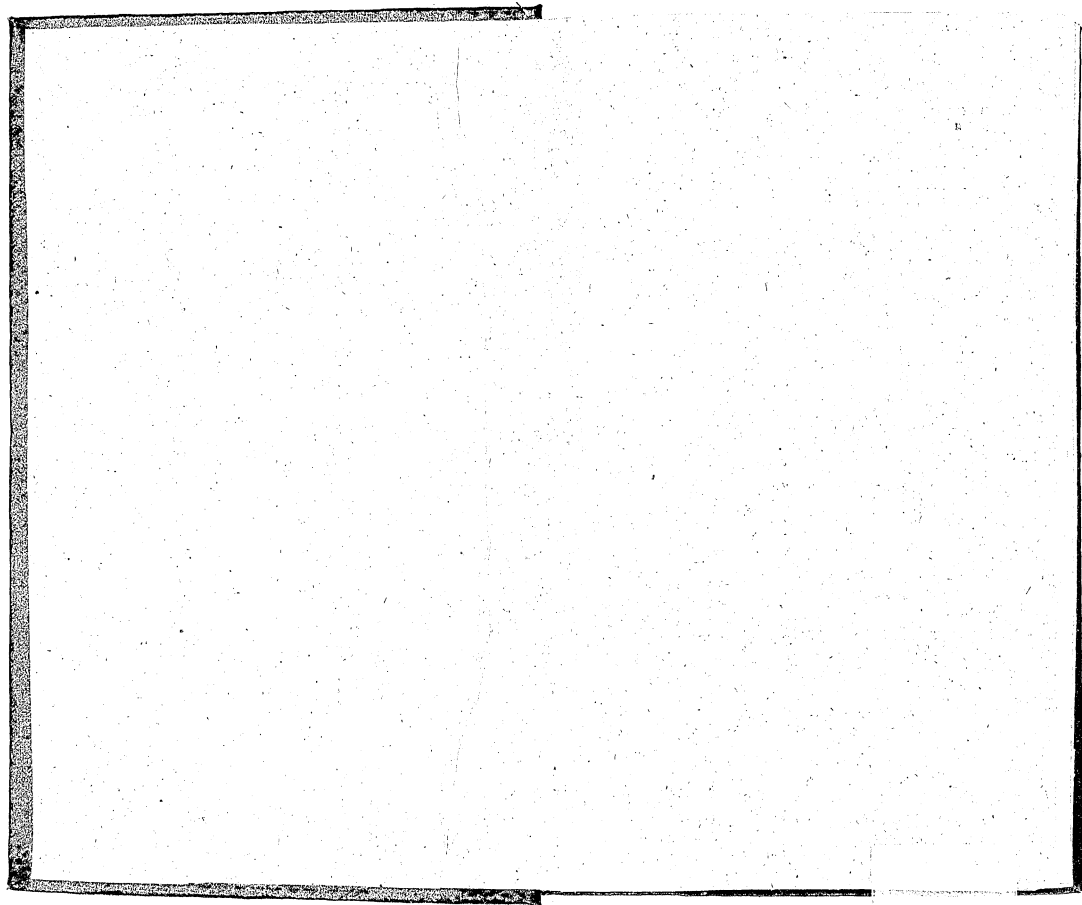
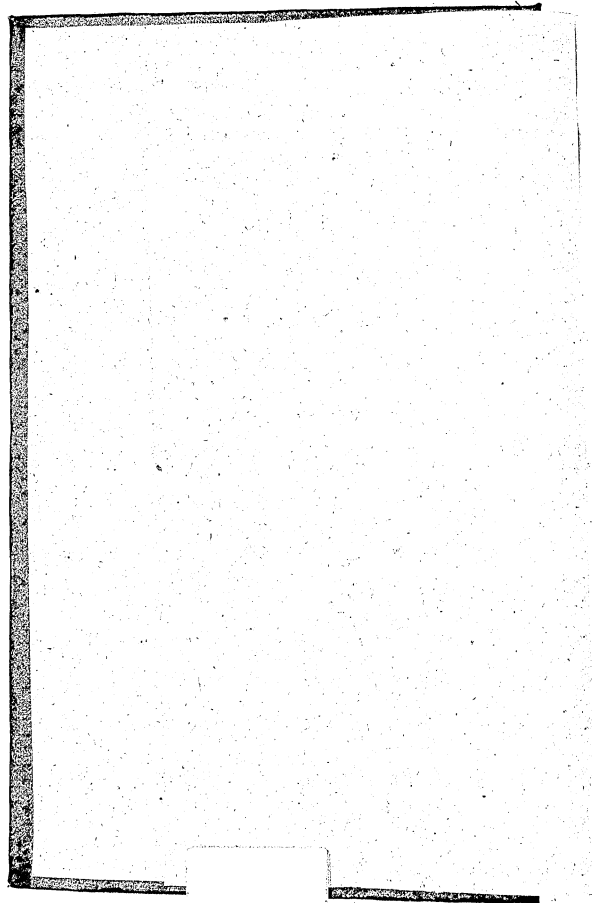


REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1ST JAN 1884 TO 31ST DEC 1884





A

REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

From 1st January to 31st December 1884.

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Proceedings of a General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, held on Saturday the 28th February 1885.

THE Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was held at the Rooms of the Bonded Warehouse, on Saturday last, at noon, Mr. J. J. J. Keswick, President of the Chamber, in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the meeting, spoke as follows:—Gentlemen, the Annual General Meeting of members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce has been convened earlier than usual this year, as the Committee desired that it should be held before the departure of Mr. Wood who, after having so worthily filled the office for 31 years, retires to-day from the Secretaryship. I am sure we are all very sorry to say good-bye to our old and much esteemed friend, and hope that his health will soon be completely restored, and that he will live long to enjoy in the old country his well earned retirement. A resolution in connexion with his long and valuable services to the Chamber will be put before you later.

(2)

The Committee of the Chamber and the Directors of the Bonded Warehouse, after advertising for a successor to Mr. Wood as Secretary, both to the Chamber and the Warehouse, met together on the 13th instant, and out of the 19 applicants for the post elected Mr. John F. Rutherford, who has been well known to many of us while he was a member of the firm of Messrs. Hoare, Miller and Co. and since. You will be asked to-day to confirm his appointment.

The subject of railway extension in India has this year again the first place in our report, and I think its importance entitles it to that position, for, unless there be a determined move to increase and extend commercial lines of railway, the commercial development of the country must continue slow and unsatisfactory. We have all read what the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons have reported regarding railway extension, and have noted their conclusions that larger borrowings for the construction of public works in India may safely be resorted to, and that the bulk of the railways to be made should be self-supporting, and not a burden on the tax-payer. If the conclusions arrived at by the Select Committee be acted up to, a great impetus should be given to railway development in

(3)

this country. The Select Committee recommended that the decision as to larger borrowings should be left in the hands of the Secretary of State, and we must watch and see that more is done in the construction of commercial lines than for some time past, and remonstrate, should satisfactory progress not be made, always provided good and sufficient reasons are not apparent for want of progress. The Bengal and North-Western Railway was opened a month ago, and we learn that a Company is being promoted for the construction of the Bhopal-Jhansi, Gwalior-Cawnpore line, while a section of the system from Cawnpore to Kalpi is in hand. The Jhansi-Manickpore line is at present under construction by Government, or was until a few days ago. A telegram in to-day's paper says work has been suddenly stopped, and we are told that the Kutni-Omeria section of the Bilaspur-Etawah line, which is expected to cheapen coal on the Great Indian Peninsula and Bhopal extension railways, has been provisionally begun as a State line, pending the formation of a Company to take up the entire project. But we are more concerned on this side of India with what will help us here, and I am glad that the Nagpur-Bengal line is in progress, and I would ask those

gentlemen who have not already read the two despatches which appeared in the *Gazette of India* of the 14th instant to read them. There can be no doubt that this line will be of much importance to Calcutta. Some of us had the pleasure of being present on the auspicious occasion when our new Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, opened the Tarkessur Railway, promoted by the enterprise of our late President Mr. Robert Miller and a few friends, and I hope this little line, which is doing so well, is the beginning of a new railway system to Upper India, and will be extended ere long. You may have noticed how strongly the Chairman of the East Indian Railway Company expressed himself at the meeting of the Company, held in London, on 3rd July last, on some remarks made by me at the annual meeting of the members of this Chamber on 29th May 1884. I regret that my further enquiries do not enable me to withdraw what I then said. I would have been very happy to have withdrawn my remarks, had I found that further enquiries did not fully justify them, and would have been glad of the opportunity of showing the Chairman that on this side we can with "grace" and courtesy readily acknowledge a mistake. The Chairman seems still quite ignorant of the fact that the block at Howrah was

largely due to the incapacity of the station for the trade it was asked to accommodate, as those of us know who had to go searching along the line for wagons bringing consignments to us. Surely it was the duty of the Railway Company to have acquired sufficient space for the proper discharge of the goods it carried. I stated in my last address to this Chamber that sanction had been obtained for wet docks to be built at Kidderpur, and that the new bridge over the Hooghly, at Hooghly, would connect the East Indian Railway with them. At the request of the Government, the Chamber appointed two members to the Dock Committee, so that it was represented on the Committee which unanimously recommended docks at Kidderpur. There has been much writing lately against the construction of wet docks. It is said that they are unnecessary, and will be a great burden on the trade of Calcutta. Now I like to see all schemes involving the expenditure of much money fully criticised, and though the delay in the criticism on this occasion is much to be regretted, I am not sorry to see it, even at this late hour. Late we must call it, coming as it does, 16 months after the report of the Dock Committee was issued, and 11 months after the sanction of the Secretary of State was obtained. The Committee of this

Chamber had a copy of the Dock Committee's report before it, on 18th October 1883, and I find that no less than 90 copies of that report were then received by the Chamber from the Port Commissioners for distribution, all of which were distributed among members, while those firms that do not belong to the Chamber were furnished with copies from the Port Commissioners direct. I learn, too, that the daily newspapers, the *Englishman*, *Indian Daily News*, *Statesman* and *Pioneer* were at the same time furnished with copies. Criticism at that time would have been most acceptable and more useful than now, but I do not remember one dissentient voice. Even now, if the arguments against the scheme persuaded me that docks were unnecessary and would become a burden on trade, I would not hesitate to advocate their being stopped, even if the expenditure incurred and involved be not less than 50 lakhs of rupees. I am certain, however, that there is needless alarm. I am not one of those who refuse to believe in the revival of trade, and who consider that because of the forward strides made by Kurrachi and Bombay, Calcutta has entered on a permanent decline. The docks will not, in my opinion, be a burden on trade, but the reverse. They are bound, however, to strike a heavy blow at cargo

boats, and I am sorry that this is inevitable, for I dislike to see any persons' interests injured. Cargo boat owners, however, have had some good times, and are only now feeling the general trade depression which is affecting us all. I am told we cannot count upon the docks being finished under four years, and I have no doubt there will be good times again before then, while if we have the ordinary expansion of trade, there should still be profits to be earned after the dock to be first built has been opened. I expect that the Nagpur Bengal Railway, which will be open before then, will bring a large increase to our exports. The knowledge that a wet dock is under construction will no doubt tend to prevent the present fleet of boats being added to, a circumstance which will also tend to maintain the value of those existing. The number of licensed cargo boats on the Port Commissioners' register, on 31st January last, was 4,951, and you can calculate for yourselves what the up-keep of these boats costs the trade of the port. Allowing for crews and maintenance of boats in repair, I do not suppose the fleet is kept up at a less cost than Rs. 60 per month per boat, or Rs. 720 per boat per annum, which means Rs. 35,64,720 on the trade of the port annually. The interest at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on two crores of rupees to be spent

on one dock will be an annual charge of Rs. 9,00,000, which, examined beside the above, does not look so formidable. I cannot say exactly what proportion of the above Rs. 35,64,720 is chargeable to the export trade, but it cannot be small, and in stating these figures I allow nothing for interest or profit. I have looked at the figures in the memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor, which is now being circulated against the docks, and I believe the shipping charge therein stated will be found about right, while the hire of boats is low, the shipment prompt and circumstances otherwise favourable; but I do not think it will be found right if taken as the average cost per ton of shipping what Calcutta exports in the year. One of the largest exporters here said at the time the Dock Committee was sitting, that he considered a charge of Re. 1 per ton for shipping his goods through the dock sheds and over the quay wall into the ships so moderate that his business would pass that way. He, and others consulted, also said that the advantage of export sheds at docks with large accommodation, where a vessel's cargo could be received, assorted, and made ready for her before she arrived, would be immense, both to shipper and shipowner, and would ensure the docks being made great use of. With docks, people will

always know what their shipping will cost them, and where to send their stuff, and you will find that cargo will be handled less frequently than at present. There seems to be an idea about that any cargo sent into docks for shipment from boats will have to pay Re. 1 per ton also, but this is not so; 2 annas per ton will cover cargo from boats. That the docks will be a great boon to shipowners and make the port popular I have not the shadow of a doubt. Time is money to a shipowner, and when he can send his vessel into dock to discharge and load any class of goods in a few days, you will find that he will wish to do so instead of keeping her lying in the stream as a storehouse for cargo, and when native boats coming through our canals with grain, seeds, &c., from the eastward, can discharge and load without having to enter, and incur the dangers of the Hooghly, you will find, in my opinion, that the trade in salt will be steadier all the year round than it is now. The facilities given for rapid discharge and loading will, in fact, considerably cheapen the port to ships, and I may mention that the charge of one rupee per ton for cargo passed through the sheds and over the dock quay was calculated to cover the cost of putting them into the ship. Not the stowage however. In mentioning stowage I may make another

point in favor of the docks, and that is, that with cargo ready in a shed, the Captain of a ship will be able to take it as best suits his vessel for stowing, instead of taking it as it comes, which he is obliged to do at present, and will thus be able to make his ship carry more to the benefit of his owner. The number of disputes that will be avoided and the paying for shorts that will be saved, through shipping from well arranged sheds, ship agents can calculate. At the present time, when the hire of cargo boats is low, we are inclined to forget the past, when we would have been glad to have had the docks, and when we laid great blame on the Port Commissioners for placing us at the mercy of the cargo boat owners. I find that this Chamber, through Mr. Secretary Wood, on 28th April 1877, addressed the Vice-Chairman of the Port Commissioners as follows :—

"I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to hand you copies of two letters received by them on the subject of the extortion of the boat proprietors.

2. "During the pressure caused by the famine requirements, these boat proprietors were justified in raising their rates of hire; but now that this demand is over, there has been an evident com-

bination among them to continue these exceptionally high rates, preferring to let their boats remain idle to letting them out at a reduction on the former rates. The exporters are either forced to yield to this extortion or allow the goods to remain in the railway station or their own godowns at ruinous loss to them in the shape of rent and interest.

3. "This is a matter that seriously affects the shipping interests of the port, and one, the Committee think, quite within the province of the Port Commissioners to remedy if in their power.

4. "I shall be glad if you will lay this matter before the Port Commissioners at their next meeting, and favour me with their decision for the information of the Committee and members of the Chamber."

I have heard it said that at that time a prominent opposer of the present dock scheme addressed the then Viceroy direct about the neglect of the Port Commissioners in having permitted the trade of the port to be at the mercy of the cargo-boat owners. I think when the dock is completed, we will not be able to lay such a charge against the Port Commissioners. I have reason to believe that by that time, not only will the whole railway system now existing be

connected with the docks, but that all the mills and jute presses on this side of the river will have the opportunity of connecting themselves with that system, and of so being connected with the docks also. The most of the mills and presses on the other side of the river will have similar facilities. Those at and below Howrah, however, are not conveniently situated to get much advantage from such connection with the docks. Then you may depend upon it that much of the canal-borne trade, which is little short of that by the railways, will find its way to the neighbourhood of the docks in the first instance, and that with the revival of trade new jute presses and mills will be built there also. One thing should not be lost sight of, and that is, that the docks, not being in private hands, will not be worked to pay a dividend, but only to return the interest on the money invested and the cost of management, and my belief is that the advantages of docks will be found so great by shippers, that more cargo will be shipped through them than the Dock Committee estimated, thus enabling a smaller tax than one rupee per ton to give an income sufficient to cover all charges. I notice that the Port Trust has come in for a good deal of abuse of late, but we cannot but admit that the Commissioners have done, and are doing, a great deal for Cal-

cutta. I mentioned in May last that Calcutta had become a free port through their management, and that the reduction made in port charges in ten years represented, on the present net tonnage of sea-going vessels entering the port, a saving of about Rs. 7,50,000 per annum. There was a strong feeling against jetties in the port to begin with, yet what excellent service have they done, and the value of having them in the Port Commissioners' instead of in private hands, was very apparent during the Madras famine, when the charges were not increased, notwithstanding the clamour for accommodation and the higher freights which vessels loading at the jetties could at that time command.

Those who are alarmed at the very idea of attempting to construct docks in soil, such as they consider might be expected at Kidderpore, will be interested to hear that the excavations already made for the dock wall there show good hard clay, perfectly dry, at a depth of 30 feet, and justify the expectation that the whole work will be completed without being troubled with water or bad foundation.

Into the sanitary question I need not enter. Suffice it to say, that no less an authority than Dr. Norman Chevers and other medical men are

satisfied, that wet docks at Kidderpur will in no way endanger the health of Calcutta, and by using earth from the excavations for the filling up of old tanks and cess-pools, they think the health of the city and suburbs can be much improved. There appears to be an idea about that the docks will be reservoirs of foul and stagnant water, but the arrangements are such, that the water pumped into the docks will be purer than that in the river, and will be changed to some extent daily. The water will be pumped in at the end next the canal, and discharged into the river at the other end. I notice that some of our friends desire to have docks constructed nearer the sea, and speak of Diamond Harbour and the Mutlah. Have they thought of the inconvenience of keeping up establishments down there? I maintain that docks in these places would either prove great failures, or would prove most injurious to the value of property in Calcutta itself. I may mention that you would not get over the dangers of the Hooghly by going to Diamond Harbour. In going into figures, when on the Committee on Docks at Diamond Harbour, I found that of 26 wrecks in the river in 20 years, only 10 had occurred above, while 16 had occurred below Diamond Harbour.

Some of our Manchester friends here know that Manchester men at home consider that the advantage of being able to load their goods into the steamers at their city instead of having to despatch them to Liverpool by rail would be so great, that they are prepared to construct a canal at enormous cost to bring the vessels inland to their doors.

I say let us concentrate the trade, and it will be conducted cheaper for everybody, and will increase the wealth of this city, and enable it to be made, in sanitation and otherwise, what it should be.

Somebody wants to know where the money is going to be got for the undertaking at four and a half per cent. Well, I hope from the Government. I was on the Dock Committee, and the scheme, which has been commenced, has been entirely based on the belief that money can be got at that rate. Had the Port Commissioners been allowed to borrow in London under Government guarantee, they could have got it for less. Under Government guarantee here, if they could get it at all, it would only be at a rate which would seriously injure the whole scheme. Why Government should think of guaranteeing a loan of about two crores for one dock, or three for two, were the larger scheme of the two gone

on with, and have money raised at, perhaps one per cent. above what they could raise it at themselves, thus depreciating their own paper, and the Port Trust Debentures already issued, as well as making a guarantee necessary for further Port Commissioners' loans, is one of those conundrums which, I understand, the Government here give up, and which can only be answered by the Secretary of State and his Council.

I am sorry to have taken up so much of your time in speaking of docks, but they are a burning question at present, and there is a good deal of misapprehension about them, which I hope, what I have said, may help to remove.

There is general disappointment with the delay which is occurring in providing the depôt at Budge-Budge for the petroleum trade, but I am able to say that the land is now being acquired, and that the buildings will be pushed forward rapidly as soon as possession of it is obtained. I would mention, with reference to the Chamber's circular of 6th instant, relative to the proposed introduction of a rule fixing a minimum number of cases of kerosine oil as a fair daily discharge, that the opinions recorded point to 2,000 cases as the minimum that should be decided on, but in

view of improved appliances for discharge, which will be provided at Budge-Budge, the Committee think it will be better not to introduce a rule until the Budge-Budge depôt be ready.

You will note a good deal in the report about pilots and pilotage account which is not satisfactory, but you will be pleased to know that instructions have been given to the Accountant-General to keep a separate account of receipts and expenditure in connexion with the Pilot Service for 1884-85, and that the Chamber will be furnished with a copy of the account at the end of the year. Nothing more has been heard by the Chamber about the transfer of the service from the Port Office to the Port Commissioners.

A movement was set on foot during the year by the Calcutta Municipality to increase the revenue of the town by levying an octroi tax, the same as in Bombay. It was felt by the mercantile community that such a tax would be found unsuited to Calcutta, and I am happy to hear that, beyond two annas per case on kerosine oil, it is not likely to be imposed. The Chamber was ably represented on the Committee, which sat on the question, by Mr. G. B. Morrison.

The Chamber having been courteously consulted by the Corporation of Calcutta in connexion

with the Municipal Commissioners' comprehensive scheme for the sanitary and structural improvement of the city, your Committee recommended the opening of a new wide street in continuation of the Hooghly Bridge road right through Barra Bazar, and on eastward to Circular Road, and the widening of the Chitpore Road and Bentinck Street, and no doubt you will approve.

You will see copies of further letters in the report about jute warehouse license fees. They explain themselves, and the mercantile community has been badly treated in this matter.

Your Committee, in the interests of private trade, found themselves bound to oppose the proposed extension by the Government of the Valuable Parcel system to parcels booked in London for India. Such extension seems quite unnecessary.

As an International Telegraph Convention will be held in Berlin, in May next, the Chamber addressed the Government of India, in December last, regarding the importance of opposing new restrictions and regulations such as were made in 1879, and which upset all our Mercantile Telegraph Codes and caused us such trouble and expense then. The Chamber has advocated the

reduction of the high rates now charged on Indian messages also. The reply received from the Government is satisfactory.

The Chamber addressed the Government of India in July last, regarding the great block of business in the High Court, and though the letter sent has not yet been acknowledged, I have no doubt it had its weight in procuring the appointment of the three Judges recently added to the strength of the High Court.

The system of authorised measurers continues to give satisfaction, and you will find an interesting report of the Managing Committee at page 170 of the Chamber's report.

There are various other subjects referred to in the report, which do not, however, call for special comment.

I would now say a few words before closing about opening a trade with Tibet, and about putting an end to the anarchy in Upper Burmah. A good deal has been appearing in the papers about trade with Tibet since Mr. Colman Macaulay and a few friends visited the frontier, some months ago, and it seems clear that if a free interchange of trade were permitted, a good deal might be done in tea, tobacco, cotton piece-goods, cutlery, &c., from our, and in wools, skins,

silk piece-goods, and other articles from the Tibetan side. Wool rots in Tibet at present for want of an outlet. We are much in want of further openings for our Indian tea, and if it be true that Tibet already consumes 6,000,000lbs. of tea, as a China paper states, I think there is an opening for some of our Darjeeling production. Probably, our hill teas would soon find favor with the Tibetans. I think it might be possible to secure the relaxation of the present prohibition against British subjects entering Tibet to the extent of allowing our Indian native traders to enter, and that is really all we require. I do not see why our natives should not be put on as favourable a footing as the Nepaulese. What is wanted, I think, is a delegate from the Government of India to Pekin to lay the whole matter before the Government there through her British Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to China, and to obtain permission for a mixed commission from this political, commercial and scientific, to enter Tibet and arrange with the authorities there for our native traders to have as free access to their markets as the Nepaulese have. The Himalayan Railway makes the Darjeeling route the proper one for trade between India and Tibet, and goods from Canton destined for Tibet, already find

their way, *via* Calcutta and Darjeeling, to avoid the 1,300 miles land route. I understand that Darjeeling is just about half way between Calcutta and Lhasa, the capital of Tibet.

The Rangoon Chamber of Commerce asked the support of this Chamber in its appeal to Government to put an end to the anarchy in Upper Burmah, and your Committee had much pleasure in supporting their appeal. The state of matters under King Theebaw has long been disgraceful and a reproach to our Government, which could so easily have put an end to such misgovernment, and in my humble opinion, it would have been justified in putting an end to it long ago, in the interests of our Burmese fellow-subjects and of humanity. You will have seen a telegram in to-day's *Englishman*, stating that a British Expedition starts for Upper Burmah on Monday next, but I have heard no particulars beyond what are stated in the telegram.

Mr. Holt Hallett, the traveller, called on me in the beginning of the month and told me of his scheme for a railway from Moulmein to the Siamese frontier. He says the distance is 50 miles, and estimates the cost at 105 to 110 lakhs of rupees. The Siamese would first make a railway up to our frontier, and are indeed ready to make

500 to 1,000 miles of railway in their own country on our undertaking to complete the connection to Moulmein. Mr. Hallet says such a railway would be a great opening to trade, and I have no doubt it would, and it should be thought over, but I fear our political complications are too numerous to permit of anything being done at present.

The election of the Committee of the Chamber will come on in May as usual. The present members are Mr. J. J. J. Keswick, President; Messrs. C. S. Hoare, W. H. McKevan, J. W. Ziffo, T. F. Hamilton, and A. F. C. Forbes. The Vice-President, Mr. W. Bleck, has just left for Europe.

Messrs. Hamilton and Forbes were invited by the Committee to take the places of Messrs. E. E. Bigge and C. Clemm, who have proceeded home, and your confirmation of their appointment is asked.

You will note that the firm of Messrs. C. Marquardt and Co., has been added to our list of members.

I now propose that the report be received and adopted.

Mr. F. E. Patteson seconded the motion, which was put and carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. W. Pigott, seconded by Mr. D. Cruickshank, the following resolution was then put to the meeting :—

That the retiring donation of Rs. 5,000 and annual allowance for life of £167-10 from the funds and income of the Chamber, voted by the Committee to Mr. H. W. I. Wood, in consideration of his long and faithful service, be, and the same is hereby, authorised and confirmed, and it is hereby resolved to record the Chamber's high appreciation of Mr. Wood's services, and regret that so long and pleasant a connection now terminates.

Carried unanimously.

Mr. Jas. Murdoch then proposed :—

That the Committee's appointment of Mr. John F. Rutherford to the Secretaryship of the Chamber be, and the same is hereby, confirmed.

Mr. Frank Whitney seconded the motion, which was also put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

Next, Mr. J. W. Anderson proposed, and Mr. D. Cruickshank seconded, the following resolution :—

(24)

That the conditional election by the Committee of Messrs. T. F. Hamilton and A. F. C. Forbes, as members of the Committee, be approved and confirmed.

Carried unanimously.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair, the meeting then separated.

J. F. RUTHERFOORD.

Secretary.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Report of the Committee from 1st January
to 31st December 1884.

THE Committee submit their Report on the principal subjects which have had their attention during the past year.

RAILWAY EXTENSION IN INDIA.

The Committee of the Chamber having regard to the enquiry to be conducted by the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons to enquire into and report upon the necessity for more rapid extension of Railway Communication in India, and the means by which the object might be best accomplished, thought it desirable to prepare a memorial to the Viceroy and Governor-General embodying the views of the commercial community here on the subject of railway extension in India. This memorial was adopted at a Special General Meeting of members of the Chamber held on 25th February 1884, and after consideration by the Viceroy in Council was forwarded to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, and made available by

him to the Select Committee, with whom it was not without weight in the conduct of their enquiry.

On the 28th of February 1884 a Special General Meeting of the members of the Chamber of Commerce was held for the purpose of considering a memorial to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General relative to railway extension in India.

In the absence of the President the chair was taken by Mr. H. B. H. Turner, who, in opening the proceedings, said—Gentlemen, I feel much diffidence in speaking this afternoon, as I have only just been asked to place this memorial before you. Mr. Keswick, our President, would have been here, but he has been called away from Calcutta, and I am afraid that I cannot go so fully into the subject as, perhaps, it is desirable. The Committee of the Chamber have already circulated a letter on the subject of railway extension, and the general feeling appears to be that railways ought to be very materially extended throughout India. There is a general consensus of feeling in favour of the proposals which our Chamber has put forward for the consideration of members. The memorial itself has also been circulated, I understand, and is in the hands of all the members of the Chamber. There is very little, I think, to be said beyond what the Sub-Committee have already put forward; but, of course, any suggestions or alterations which the members consider should be made in the memorial we are quite willing to adopt if it is the general feeling of the meeting to do so. There is, no doubt, that wherever railways have been extended in India there has been a large increase of trade, not only in goods which concern us more particularly, but

also in passenger traffic; and in one railway which has been recently opened—the Central Bengal—I understand that already, although the goods traffic has scarcely commenced, the passenger traffic is certainly going a long way towards paying the working expenses. Hitherto a great deal of time has been wasted in discussions of mode of finance, and in considering gauges,—whether the lines should be broad gauge, or narrow, or metre,—and in that way the promoters have been choked off from putting schemes before the Government. They have been sent from one department to another, until there has been a feeling engendered that railway promotion is not desired by those in authority, and in that view the Sub-Committee have ventured to suggest that the Select Committee be requested to consider whether some rules should not be laid down within which the Government of India should have absolute discretion, and without reference to the Home Government, to authorise lines to be carried out; and that with the Government there should be associated men interested in railway extension, suited to advise upon both matters of finance and the advisability of trade prospects of the lines proposed. The question of finance is a very wide one, on which there is immense difference of opinion; but it appears to me to be anything but economical to construct railways only from surplus revenue and the famine insurance fund, and that the Government should rather use those surpluses as a margin, as it were, to enable them to guarantee the interest upon loan capital, and that railways should rather be built out of borrowed money than out of the small surplus which occurs here in that form. But the Government seems to me to be very timid in borrowing money. Whether it is

that they have more information than we are able to obtain or what the reasons might be, they have not enlightened us. Then, again, on the question of borrowing, there seems to be a morbid dread of borrowing money out of India, and that all loans should be rupee loans raised in India. That seems to be anything but economical. One generally goes to where money can be had most cheap; and on the question of borrowing in silver or in gold, the Government must clearly see, or ought to see, that no man is going to take the risk of lending in silver without discounting what the risks are. But if the Government here were to borrow in gold from people who lend in silver, they would also have that fear, and will not only discount all probable losses but very often add something more in the way of profit to those who are sending out silver to those who are lending it to the Government; and, in that way, it appears to me that it would be far cheaper to the Government to raise sterling loans in England, and not pay people the profit of lending to the Government any silver. There is one point in the memorial which, perhaps, it may be as well to notice, and that is, the desirability of keeping railway finance separate from the other finances of the country. These are all matters rather of detail and management, which I think may be left—if the Government are willing to carry out our desires—to be worked out by a Select Committee to be appointed to consider the subject. I think I have touched upon all points deserving of remark, and I now propose that the memorial be adopted and forwarded to the Viceroy as soon as practicable.

The Hon'ble Mr. ROBERT MILLER seconded the proposition. He thought the memorial followed the

right plan in avoiding details, and simply pointing out the general principles which should govern the subject of railway extension in India. If they went into details they would be treading upon a good deal of controversial ground, and the matter would never come to a head. What they were concerned about was, that railways should be extended, and the general plan to be followed could well be left to experts who had made the subject their special study. That was the point endeavoured to be brought forward in the memorial, which he hoped would meet with their unanimous approval.

To

His Excellency the Most Honorable the Marquis of Ripon,
K.C., P.C., G.C.B., G.M.S.I.,
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

The Memorial of the BENGAL CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE, in General Meeting
assembled.

RESPECTFULLY SHERETH,—

THAT, in order to secure the adequate development of the material resources of India, it is essential to take more active measures towards generally improving the means of internal communication throughout the country, and especially by a more rapid extension of railways.

On this point Your Memorialists feel that they need do no more than call Your Excellency's attention to the following statistics published by the Financial Department of your Government; which show conclusively the steady growth of the imports and exports of the country, as the various districts have successively been brought into railway communication with the sea-board.

	1869-70.	1874-75.	1879-80.	1880-81.	1881-82.	1882-83.
Railway luggage open	4,584	6,322	8,772	9,211	9,906	10,144
Imports of piece-goods, yards	938,944,801	1,662,703,516	1,609,773,381	1,802,906,392	1,946,445,353	1,668,301,010
Imports of iron and steel, tons	90,070	778,457	110,256	137,432	131,366	170,686
Total imports—Value	£ 32,927,230	36,322,112	41,169,503	52,110,776	49,113,374	65,093,710
Exports of wheat	78,203	1,073,676	2,291,215	7,144,276	10,901,005	14,103,163
“ seeds	4,370,784	6,974,756	7,246,182	10,593,776	10,482,912	13,147,002
Total exports—Value	£ 62,471,276	66,320,240	67,242,262	74,886,692	81,965,421	84,486,123
State revenue	20,500,000	58,024,000	68,140,000	72,100,000	73,600,000	70,105,600

* This figure is incomplete.

Satisfactory as the progress has been, it is little to what may reasonably be expected in the future;—it must not be forgotten how small a portion of the whole area of the country is at present served by the existing trunk lines, it being a fact that there still exists on the map of India a single block as big in area as the whole of France, within which there does not exist a single mile of railway.

Your Memorialists believe that no matter from what point of view the question of railway extension be considered—whether as regards the enhancement of the State revenue; the general expansion of trade and commerce; the encouragement of manufacturing industries, both in India and England; the protection of the country against famine; the improvement in the social condition of the Indian peasant; or the education, in its broadest sense, of the whole of the natives of the country;—the conclusion arrived at is almost certain to be the same, *viz.*, that the whole community is closely and directly interested in the development of cheap communications in India, and in the expansion of commerce that undoubtedly follows directly additional outlets are afforded to the agricultural products of the country.

On the vexed question of gauge, your Memorialists may at once say that in the abstract they have no objection to the metre or any other gauge. They cannot, however, shut their eyes to the ever-increasing volume of testimony as to the actual inappropriateness of the narrow gauge railways to carry the bulky products of the country in sufficient quantities, and they understand that the statistics which are compiled in the Railway Department

show that, on the average, the cost of carrying a ton of goods, including interest on construction, is materially higher on the narrow gauge lines than on the broad. Both these considerations—the capacity for carrying bulky raw products, and the power of carrying such products at the lowest possible rates—most materially affect the development of the export trade of India,

What your Memorialists are unanimous in condemning is a break of gauge on a through trunk line. Letting alone the actual cost of trans-shipment, which of course has its influence on the rates quoted to the public, there is, on the part of the whole commercial community, a complete consensus of opinion that the vexatious delays at the junction;—the uncertainty that exists as to the date on which the goods may be expected to require sea-freight at the port;—the injury sustained from unnecessary handling;—the loss of weight that invariably occurs during trans-shipment;—and too often, the damage from rain or moisture;—more than counterbalance any advantage the public may derive from the saving in the first cost of the narrow gauge lines. The Chamber of Commerce is strongly of opinion that all trunk lines, or connections of limited length between one broad gauge line and another should be of the broad gauge; narrow gauge lines being confined to self-contained areas of the country in which the traffic for many years to come is not likely to afford sufficient employment for a broad gauge line. It may be noticed that in the only cases in which metre gauge lines have been constructed by Government confessedly for State and not for commercial purposes, the inconveniences of a break of gauge

were immediately recognized, and the Indus Valley and the Punjab Northern State Railways were at a great expense subsequently converted into broad gauge lines. Your Memorialists would wish to see the same evils recognised in the case of the commercial lines, and they therefore desire to express a wish that the question of the gauge to be adopted on the Indian Railways may be brought for decision before the Select Committee of the House of Commons now sitting.

As regards the manner in which the capital required for railway extensions had best be raised, the Chamber of Commerce considers that no useful purpose would be served by their putting forward any definite suggestions. The desires of the Chamber begin and end with an extended system of Railways, worked at the lowest practicable rates.

But generally your Memorialists would be glad to see the Government adhere to the economic principle of borrowing in the cheapest market, rupee loans being floated in India to no greater extent than can be absorbed in the country itself without injury to commercial undertakings. Subject to this general principle, the Chamber of Commerce consider it a matter of indifference where the Railway loans are raised, as they are convinced, that, on the whole, taking the bad lines with the good, the Government incur no real financial danger from investing in railways; the net earnings of the Indian Railways as a whole returning a higher rate of interest than that carried by the Government loans.

In the matter of the most desirable agency to employ for the construction of the additional lines required,

your Memorialists recognize that under purely State management the public reaps the whole benefit of the surplus profits earned by the Railways, and also that on State Railways there should be a greater tendency to try experiments towards reducing rates and fares than in the case of lines that naturally have to be worked more in the interests of the shareholders than of the public at large. But allowing this, there are, on the other hand, all the evils arising from a want of continuity of policy, which practically seem inseparable from the conduct of Government business, and of which the present break of gauge in India is only too deplorable an example.

After careful consideration the Chamber of Commerce is of opinion that for many years to come the field will be large enough for both agencies to work in, side by side. While thus recommending the construction of railways by the agency of private Companies, as well as by the State, the Chamber consider that in all cases where lines are given over to Guaranteed Companies, either for construction or for working, the interests of the public should be carefully guarded:—

1st—By Government retaining in their own hands the right of fixing maxima rates for the carriage of cheap staples,

and 2ndly—In the event of a line earning more than the guaranteed interest, by Government sharing with the Company the surplus profits. As it appears to the Chamber that the tendency of private enterprise will obviously be to select the best paying

lines, leaving the ones not so likely to pay for the direct construction of Government, the division between the Government and the Company of the surplus profits seems an essential condition to the employment of private enterprise, for it is only in this way that the construction of railways can be committed to Guaranteed Companies without the railway system as a whole becoming a burden on the taxation of the country. In all cases Government should secure a share of profits in proportion to the risks entailed by the guarantee.

Subject to these conditions your Memorialists see no objection to private Companies being given a continuous guarantee, and they consider that without such a guarantee sufficient capital for the railway extensions required by the country will not be attainable.

While on the subject of private enterprise, your Memorialists would venture to suggest that the Select Committee be requested to consider whether rules might not be formulated, describing the terms on which Government was prepared to encourage the construction of railways in India by private enterprise; and so avoid the vexatious and avoidable delays to which promoters of railways in India have hitherto been subjected.

Your Memorialists think it is highly advisable that certain general principles and a certain limited scope of railway extension should be sanctioned by the Secretary of State, that within these limits the Government of India should be empowered to deal finally with all railway schemes as proposed, and that selected Members

of the Banking, Commercial and Trading Communities (with mere consultative functions), whose financial experience would be valuable in dealing with railway schemes proposed in different parts of the country should be associated with the Government. The appointment to the Council of the Secretary of State for India of a greater proportion of Members representing the trade and commerce of the country also appears to the Chamber of Commerce to be desirable.

In conclusion, your Memorialists pray that as the questions herein referred to are of the utmost importance to the welfare of Her Majesty's subjects, both in India and in England, they may receive Your Excellency's earnest and careful consideration.

For and on behalf of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

H. B. H. TURNER,
Chairman of a Special General Meeting of the Chamber held on the 28th day of February 1884.

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

From the Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy, to Secretary, Chamber.

1st March 1884.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, forwarding a memorial addressed by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Viceroy, relative to railway extension in India; and to state that I have laid the memorial before His Excellency, who desires me to say that it shall receive the most careful consideration of himself and his colleagues.

From Government of India to Chamber.

No. 247 R. C.—Simla, March 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th February 1884, to the address of the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, and, in reply, to inform you that your memorial on the subject of railway extension in India has been forwarded to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

From Chamber to Government of India.

Calcutta, 13th December 1883.

I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to state that they have reason to believe that a Parliamentary Commission will shortly issue to consider the subject of the extension of Railways in India; and in view of this I am desired to say that the Committee would be glad if the

Government of India would think fit to appoint one of its officers to confer with them in regard to the general question of railway extension.

From Government of India to Chamber.

No. 54 R. C.—Fort William, 19th January 1884.

Referring to your letter of the 13th December 1883, I am directed to inform you that the Government of India is pleased, in furtherance of the wishes of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to depute Major Conway Gordon, who is expected to arrive in Calcutta before the end of this month, to confer with them in connection with the question of railway extension in India shortly to be considered by the Parliamentary Commission appointed by the Home Government.

**TRANSFER TO THE PORT COMMISSIONERS
OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY CO.'S
WHARVES AND RECLAMATION
WORKS AT HOWRAH.**

The Port Commissioners while constructing works on the Howrah foreshore for the accommodation of boats engaged in the export traffic, asked the support of the Committee of the Chamber to an application made by the Commissioners to Government for the transfer of the railway wharves to the Port Trust. But the Committee, while much appreciating the accommodation be-

ing provided by the Port Commissioners for the export trade of the Port and concurring with them in the view that it was desirable to have all the wharves on the Howrah foreshore under one management, could only see their way to support the application on the express understanding that the transfer of the railway wharves to the Port Trust would not entail any extra burden on trade now or in the future.

Ultimately an arrangement was come to between the Port Commissioners and the East Indian Railway Company, by which the former allowed the Railway Company the use of their embankment, road, and wharf along the Howrah foreshore from Ramkrishnapore to Shalima Point—a distance of about two miles—the Railway Company agreeing to connect the Port Commissioners' Shalimar Railway with the East Indian Railway and to connect it in the usual way. Goods brought down by the East Indian Railway will thus be able to be delivered from the Railway wagons into boats at any point along two miles of foreshore instead of being crowded on to the short frontage formerly used by the Railway Company. The Port Commissioners will charge no dues on the foreshore for railway-borne goods, but the present terminal charge of

Rs. 1 per 100 maunds will be continued until the liquidation of the Bridge debt and divided between the Port Commissioners and the Bridge Commissioners, and after liquidation of the Bridge debt the terminal charge will be maintained at the same or such lower rate as may be determined.

From Port Commissioners to Chamber.

No. 3188—The 23rd November 1883.

I AM directed to forward herewith, for the information of your Committee, copy of a letter which the Port Commissioners have recently addressed to Government on the subject of the works for the accommodation of the boat export traffic now under construction on the Howrah foreshore. From this letter it will be seen that the Commissioners are desirous of giving every facility to the trade of the Port; but they deprecate anything like a divided agency for carrying out necessary works, and from actual experience are impressed with the view that such a division will not conduce either to efficiency or to economy. Any unnecessary expenditure whether incurred by the East Indian Railway Company or by the Port Commissioners must fall ultimately as a charge against trade, and for this reason it is advisable that all such expenditure should come under the management of one body, and that body should be the body responsible for the working of the Port as a whole. The Commissioners trust that your Committee will take this view of the question, and that they will address Government in support of the application now made for the transfer of the Railway wharves to the Port Trust.

From Chamber to Port Commissioners.

Calcutta, November 30th, 1883.

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, forwarding copy of a communication recently addressed by the Port Commissioners to the Government of Bengal on the subject of the works for the accommodation of the boat export traffic now under construction on the Howrah foreshore, and expressing a hope that the Committee will agree in the opinion that the wharves now being built by the East Indian Railway Company should be made over to the Port Commissioners as the body responsible for the working of the Port, and that thus the evils which a divided agency must occasion may be avoided.

In reply, I am directed to state that the Committee fully concur in this opinion, and will be glad to support the application of the Commissioners for the transfer of the Railway wharves to the Port Trust, but only on the expressed understanding that such transfer will entail no extra burden to trade, present or prospective.

At present the Bridge toll is levied at the rate of four annas per 25 maunds, and if, as is proposed in the Port Commissioner's letter to Government, this be reduced to 2 annas per 25 maunds, while at the same time an additional 2 annas per ton is to be levied by the Port Commissioners at what is now the railway wharf, and at which no charge is now made, it would seem that a shipper over the wharf, after such transfer of the property, would derive no benefit from the reduction of the Bridge tolls.

As regards many articles of export even this small concession would be welcome, and specially so would this be the case as regards wheat, which is already more than sufficiently burdened with heavy charges.

The Committee then, though fully imbued with the opinion that the whole of the works necessary for the accommodation of the Port should be under one agency only, and that agency the Port Trust, at the same time regret they are unable to advocate the transfer of the works in question if such transfer be attended with any additional charge upon the trade of the Port.

From Port Commissioners to Chamber.

No. 3460—The 18th December 1883.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 30th November 1883, giving expression to the views of the Chamber on the Commissioners' proposal to take over the wharves and reclamation works constructed by the E. I. Railway Company in front of their premises at Howrah. In reply, I beg to forward herewith a copy of the Resolution which was passed upon the subject by the Commissioners at their last meeting.

Copy of a Resolution passed by the Commissioners at the 408th meeting held on the 5th day of December 1883.

Read letter from the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce regarding the Commissioners' proposals to take over the wharves and reclamation works constructed by the East Indian Railway Company in front of their premises at Howrah.

Resolved:—That, in reply to the foregoing letter from the Officiating Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, a further letter be addressed to the Chamber, explaining that the Commissioners' proposals will, at present, add no extra burden to the trade of the Port, inasmuch as the toll charge of 2 annas per ton of 27 maunds to be levied at the wharves will be covered by a corresponding reduction of 2 annas per 25 maunds in the present terminal Bridge charge. It may be argued, however, that this charge on account of the wharf will be a charge which will be continued after the Bridge debt is paid off, and the terminal charge on account of the Bridge is reduced. This is no doubt true; but, on the other hand, the trade of the Port, in return for this payment, will get the use of a wharf extending about two miles along the foreshore instead of being confined to the present short frontage; whereas for the payment at present made on account of the Bridge, it practically gets no benefit whatever. A claim will be made upon Government for a reduction of freight, upon the ground that the Port Commissioners will have relieved the Railway Company of all charges in connection with the foreshore, and the Commissioners trust that on this account some concession will be made. But the proposals of the Commissioners tend to directly reduce the burden on the export trade, inasmuch as by the continuation of the railway terminus along the river bank the point of delivery from wagon to boat is reduced throughout, and the minimum distance between the present outer railway sheds and the river. By this arrangement the cost of labor for removing to boats must be considerably reduced, and the loss by demurrage of boats, caused by overcrowding at a limited frontage,

will be obviated. Merchants will also be able to have their own receiving godowns close to the wharf and in direct communication with the railway, so that all risk of incurring demurrage for detention of railway wagons will be avoided. The extra facilities given will fully compensate merchants for the charge made, while the arrangements, if carried out, practically place the whole of the wharves and the charges levied on them under their own control through their representatives on the Trust.

(Sd.) H. J. REYNOLDS,
Chairman.

From Chamber to Port Commissioners.

Calcutta, 28th December 1883.

I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 3469, dated the 18th instant, referring to the Chamber's letter of the 30th ultimo, which conveyed the views of the Committee upon the Commissioners' proposal to take over the wharves and reclamation works constructed by the East Indian Railway Company in front of their premises at Howrah, and forwarding, in reply, a copy of the Resolution passed on the subject by the Commissioners at their last meeting.

This Resolution, I am directed to state, has had the careful consideration of the Committee of the Chamber, and I am desired to tender their thanks to the Commissioners for so fully pointing out the advantages which it is represented will accrue to the mercantile community if the Commissioners' proposal be carried out.

These advantages are not under-rated by the Committee, but at the same time I am directed to state that beyond the objection taken to the toll charge of 2 annas per ton to be levied at the wharves, a feeling exists amongst shippers of produce generally that such restrictions will be placed by the Commissioners, upon acquiring the property, as to forms, applications and routine of business generally, and specially as regards working hours, as will practically do away with much of the benefit the extra accommodation will afford. Under present arrangements it appears that consignees of goods arriving by the railway can take delivery of the same and load into boats at any hour of the day or night without let or hindrance on the part of the railway officials, and no extra fees for overtime working are levied, while the generally accepted feeling is that such license will not be continued after transfer of the wharves to the Port Commissioners.

Then as regards the proposed toll charge, the Commissioners' proposal, while it will at present add no extra burden to the trade of the Port, will nevertheless continue the present burden for an additional 2 years or so, since this extra time will be required to liquidate the Bridge debt in consequence of the reduction of the terminal charge from one rupee to eight annas per 100 maunds, and will, moreover, burden the trade with a permanent charge of 2 annas per ton after the bridge toll has been abolished.

From Port Commissioners to Chamber

No. 3700—The 9th January 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 28th December 1883, on the subject of the Commis-

sioners taking over the wharves and reclamation works in front of the railway premises at Howrah, and in reply to state that the Commissioners, having taken the representations of the Chamber into consideration at a meeting held on the 2nd instant, are of opinion that the fear expressed, in para 3 of your letter, as to the restrictions which would be placed upon work at the wharves, on the East Indian Railway Company frontage at Howrah upon the acquisition of these wharves by the Port Trust, is one which can easily be removed. If Government agrees to the transfer of the railway wharves to the Commissioners, arrangements can be made by which the Railway Company will collect whatever charge is made, and goods received by railway may then be shipped at any of the Commissioners' wharves by day or night without any interference on the part of the Commissioners' servants.

From Chamber to Port Commissioners.

Calcutta, 8th February 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3760 of the 9th ultimo, in reply to their representation of the 29th of December, on the subject of the Port Commissioners taking over the wharves and reclamation works in front of the East Indian Railway premises at Howrah.

The Committee desire me to say that if the Port Commissioners will but arrange for the Railway Company making a reduction in their rates equivalent to the 2 annas the Commissioners propose to charge per ton on all goods passing over their wharves, the Committee will have

pleasure in supporting the Commissioners in their application to Government to have the wharves and reclamation works placed under them.

The Committee only desire to prevent the trade of the Port being burdened with any extra charge after the Bridge toll is abolished.

ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PETROLEUM TRADE.

The question of providing suitable and adequate accommodation for the petroleum trade is fully discussed in the following reports of the Port Commissioners and in the correspondence between them and the Chamber, as well as in the representation submitted by the Chamber to the Government of Bengal; and it is a matter of satisfaction to your Committee to be able to state that sanction has been given to the formation of a *Dépôt* at Budge-Budge, at a convenient distance from Calcutta.

The destruction of the ship *Aurora* in December 1883, at her moorings at Garden Reach, emphasized the necessity for the speedy establishment of a *dépôt* at a safe distance from Calcutta, and the Committee believe that the Port Commissioners have received the sanction of Government to their making all arrangements to that end.

From Port Commissioners to Chamber.

No. 3509—The 20th December 1883.

I AM directed to inform you that at a meeting held yesterday the Commissioners had before them the report of a Committee appointed to consider the question of providing suitable and adequate accommodation for the petroleum trade of the port. In adopting this report, the Commissioners ordered that a copy should be forwarded for the information of the Chamber, with a request that you would be good enough to favor the Commissioners with an expression of the opinion of the Members of the Chamber upon the proposals and recommendations made in the report.

ACCOMMODATION FOR PETROLEUM TRADE.

Report of the Committee appointed at the 408th Meeting.

WE have carefully considered the papers in regard to the question of providing accommodation especially for the petroleum trade of the port, which have been submitted to the Commissioners and referred by them to us for report.

2. In paragraphs 19 to 25 of the report submitted by the Special Committee appointed by Government in February 1883, recommendations are made regarding the site within port limits which was considered most suitable for the purpose of a petroleum wharf. The ground below Metcalbroj Ghat is recommended as the most convenient site, and rough estimates of the cost of acquiring the land and constructing pontoon landing

stages and sheds for the storage of petroleum are included in these paragraphs. The estimates, however, are put forward by the Committee as "conjectural," and are based on figures prepared in the Port Commissioners' office. These figures were revised as carefully as possible, and, as revised, were submitted to the Commissioners at the four hundred and sixth meeting, in a note by the Vice-Chairman, copy of which we append to this report. The revised estimates contemplate a capital expenditure of Rs. 4,45,550 on the site below Metcalbroj Ghat selected by the Committee. Of this expenditure Rs. 3,39,550 would be spent in providing the necessary landing stages and sheds, leaving Rs. 1,00,000 to be spent in acquiring the land and Rs. 6,000 in filling up tanks on it. With this capital expenditure it is estimated that accommodation would be afforded to about 27 vessels bringing 900,000 cases of petroleum, that is the number of vessels bringing petroleum cargoes and the quantity of oil brought during 1882.

3. On looking more carefully into the subject we have come to the conclusion that the cost of acquiring the necessary land at Metcalbroj has been under-estimated, and that the extent of the accommodation proposed is quite inadequate to the wants of a trade which has so rapidly increased of late years and is likely to still further increase. The landing stages would be sufficient, and the sheds, if used only as transit sheds, extensive enough, to accommodate perhaps double the number of vessels; but in order to work such an increased trade it would be necessary to have large sheds in close proximity to the wharf available for the storage of oil for a consider-

able time. Without such accommodation the transit sheds would be blocked and the work of discharging stopped, to the detention and cost of the vessels.

4. The petroleum trade of Calcutta has increased from 211,516 gallons in 1875-76 to 12,189,679 in 1882-83. The following are the figures for each year since 1878-79 as given in the trade returns. The great bulk of the oil comes from the United States, only a small quantity comparatively coming direct from England:

Year,	From United States.		From England.	
	Gals.		Gals.	
1878-79	...	783,852	293,550	
1879-80	...	3,255,896	440,452	
1880-81	...	3,815,225	402,175	
1881-82	...	5,300,972	475,650	
1882-83	...	12,189,679	727,075	

Every year the oil is getting into more general use among the natives, and while it can be supplied at anything like present low prices the consumption is, in our opinion, certain to go on increasing.

5. In an article on the storage of petroleum in a recent issue of *Engineering*, we observe that it is stated that the use of petroleum in England has advanced steadily and rapidly ever since its introduction, about the year 1850, and even now, so far from having attained its maximum, the annual increment is estimated at 20 per cent. An extract from this article is appended for the information of the Commissioners, from which it will be seen that hitherto dealers in petroleum have been

allowed to deal as they pleased with oil which passed the test. The trade, however, has grown to such enormous proportions that the Board of Trade is anxious to bring all petroleum under new rules, and an Act has been introduced which is opposed by the Metropolitan Board of Works and various local authorities on account of the vast size to which the trade has grown, and the immense sums which have been expended on warehouses and plant by private individuals.

6. The petroleum trade in Bengal is now, comparatively speaking, in its infancy, but it promises in a few years to grow enormously, and arrangements may be made for dealing with the trade now which it would be almost impossible to introduce if action is deferred until after the trade has become thoroughly developed and established. The accommodation that suits the trade now will, we believe, be quite inadequate in a few years, and this fact should be well considered before deciding on erecting appliances for landing or warehouses for storing petroleum in a position where it will be difficult hereafter to acquire land for the extension of the accommodation. We are of opinion that if, in the arrangements which are to be made for the permanent accommodation of the petroleum trade, certain difficulties which have been experienced during the past two or three years in dealing with the importation of petroleum into Bengal can be removed, the trade, relieved from liability to such checks in future, will receive a considerable impetus, and the rate of its development hitherto may be fairly expected to increase rather than diminish. Having regard to this expectation, and looking to the rapid

growth of the trade during the past five years, we are of opinion that the idea of providing the necessary accommodation at Garden Reach should be abandoned. We have come to this conclusion after full consideration of the probable requirements of the trade, and of the fact that the Commissioners have reason to believe that their recommendations in regard to the construction of docks at Garden Reach for the accommodation of the general trade of the port have been accepted by the Governments of Bengal and India. The site selected at Garden Reach by the Committee of last year would in view of the establishment of docks be most undesirable; and it would be impossible to provide upon the selected site suitable accommodation for so large a trade as we have reason to expect. It becomes therefore an absolute necessity to look for a site elsewhere.

7. In paragraph 6 of the letter from the Government of Bengal to the Government of India, No. 934, dated 16th July 1883, which will be found among the papers submitted to us for consideration and report, it is suggested that with the railway completed to Diamond Harbour there is no reason why the petroleum dépôt should not be located there; but there are some objections to this. Ships discharging at Diamond Harbour could not have facilities for landing their cargoes, such as stages or jetties, but would have to land in boats—a process involving tedious detention to the ship and risk of damage to the cargo. If Port Canning could be made the dépôt, this objection would be overcome, and the railway communication between Calcutta and Port Canning is as complete as that to Diamond Harbour. Port Canning

has, moreover, the advantage of being favourably situated for the great bulk of the imported oil which now finds its way by boats into the districts of Eastern Bengal. The situation at Port Canning offers indeed every advantage, complete isolation from the general trade of the port, and cheaper and more rapid communication between place of landing and the market. The chief difficulty at present would be that of finding export cargo for vessels entering the Mutlah and discharging cargoes of petroleum there. Such vessels would not, as a rule, be able to obtain cargoes of rice, the only export cargo procurable at Port Canning itself; and the export cargo would either have to be sent down from Calcutta or the vessels would have to leave in ballast to get cargoes at Calcutta or elsewhere.

8. We are of opinion that, with the assistance of the Commissioners, this difficulty might be overcome; and in consideration of the importance of making thoroughly adequate provision for a large and growing trade which involves so great a risk as petroleum does, and also of the contingent advantages of opening up a subsidiary port like Port Canning, we have to make the following suggestions as to the manner in which the difficulties in regard to export cargo, water, &c., which vessels bringing petroleum and ordered to Port Canning would be likely to experience could be best met and overcome:—

- (1) For the next three years all vessels ordered to Canning to discharge petroleum to be exempt from all charges on account of port dues, and hospital dues, and to be charged for pilotage only half the amount charged in the Hooghly.

- (2) Vessels which may have been ordered to Port Canning to discharge petroleum cargoes, and which in consequence of not being able to procure export cargo at that port leave there and enter the Hooghly in ballast to load at Calcutta, should be exempted from all charges for pilotage up and down the Mutlah River, and placed in the position, so far as port and pilotage charges are concerned, of vessels bound to Calcutta and arriving direct at the eastern channel in ballast.
- (3) Vessels discharging petroleum at Canning to be free from all restrictions now imposed in the port of Calcutta, and to be allowed to land their cargoes without any previous testing of the oil.
- (4) The Commissioners to land all petroleum at their own wharf, and to sample it and obtain the necessary certificates from the Chemical Examiner to Government. But no petroleum to be allowed to leave the Commissioners' premises till certified by a competent examiner as of the proper standard for safe consumption in this climate. The Commissioners to provide warehouses for the storage of petroleum and to undertake the warehousing and delivery upon orders from the importers or consignees of the cargo. Warrants to be issued by the Commissioners for all petroleum stored in their warehouses.

- (5) That export cargo for all petroleum vessels sent to Canning should be received by the Port Commissioners at any point on the line of tramway and conveyed alongside the vessel at Canning for Re. 1 per ton.
- (6) Receipts for such cargo to be given by the Port Commissioners on the goods being tallied into their wagons, and the Port Commissioners to undertake that bills of lading for such goods would be delivered to the shippers in return for the receipts so granted.
- (7) The Port Commissioners to undertake to water all vessels in Port Canning at the same rate that water is now supplied to vessels in the Hooghly, viz., Rs. 8 per 1,000 gallons, and for this purpose to provide water wagons to convey the water by rail to Canning.
- (8) That an application be made to Government to make over to the Port Commissioners the whole of the river frontage at Canning for a width of 300 feet from high water mark. This land has now passed into the hands of Government, and it would be a material assistance in developing Canning as an auxiliary port if Government would make over this frontage without charge to the Commissioners.
- (9) That the existing jetties now the property of the Rice Mills Company be taken over by the Commissioners. There are five jetties, all of which

with slight repairs could be made available for the landing of kerosine or the shipping of exports. Three of these jetties to be kept entirely for the landing of oil and two for landing vessels. The Rice Company has purchased these jetties from the Port Canning Company for Rs. 7,000 each, or Rs. 35,000 in all, and as they can be of no use to them while the foreshore and moorings are the property of the Commissioners, they would no doubt be very willing to get them taken off their hands.

- (10) To facilitate the work at the first opening of the port, the Port Commissioners could be appointed Collectors of Customs at Port Canning, as the Port Officer was during the time when the port was open before. The Commissioners would account to Government for the whole of the import and export cargo, and see that all the provisions of the Customs Act are strictly enforced.
- (11) It has not been necessary for the Commissioners to provide tugs in the Port of Calcutta, but in opening a new port like Canning it may be necessary for them to do so, until such time as private enterprise will do all that is required in that way for the trade of the port. In this matter they might ask for assistance from Government. The steamer *Undaunted* is seldom used by Government. She has no regular work beyond towing a pilot brig up or down and tak-

ing pilots to the cruising station occasionally: on the average, work of this sort does not occupy more than three or four days a month, and the Commissioners might undertake to allow such work to be done by the *Resolute*. The *Undaunted* was brought out to Calcutta originally as a tug steamer, and is a suitable vessel for the work; and in consideration of the advantages, direct and indirect, to be derived from the opening out of the Muthah River, Government might be asked to assist in this matter by allowing the *Undaunted* to work as a tug on the Muthah river until such time as private enterprise provides the necessary vessels.

9. If these arrangements can be carried out, the money which it is proposed to expend in opening up a petroleum wharf at Metiabrooj, only large enough to meet the requirements of a trade slightly in excess of the present trade, would be sufficient to provide sheds for petroleum and export cargo, and to buy the jetties which have already been constructed and are ready for immediate use, open up the port of Canning, and establish permanent accommodation for the petroleum trade in a position where a large development of this trade could be met without causing any inconvenience to the general trade of Calcutta.

10. For the warehousing of kerosine oil it would be necessary to provide large godowns behind the sheds, into which the kerosine oil would be taken direct from the ship. No oil would be put into these warehouses until cleared by the consignee and certified by the Chemical Examiner as of the proper standard. Oil which would

not pass the test would have to be removed some distance from the warehouses, and the cases there opened, and the oil exposed till the flashing point rose to the required temperature. The cases could then be re-soldered, and the oil taken to the warehouses.

11. For the storage of the oil in these warehouses the charge must be made as low as possible. It is estimated that the stocks in Calcutta at present average about 160,000 cases. The warehouse accommodation which we have provided for in the estimates would be sufficient to accommodate about 200,000 cases, or four full ships' cargoes. This, with the accommodation in the transit sheds, would provide accommodation for the cargoes of seven vessels, or about one-sixth of the trade it is estimated we have now to provide for. This would allow on the average two months to clear each vessel's cargo without causing any block or inconvenience, and would relieve importers from the disadvantage at which they are now placed in being, in most cases, compelled for want of proper accommodation to dispose of their cargoes to arrive.

12. We submit herewith estimates of the cost of carrying out the proposed works, and also of the probable income and expenditure which would result from carrying out the recommendations made by us in the foregoing report.

H. J. REYNOLDS, <i>Chairman,</i>	
W. DUFF BRUCE, <i>Vice-Chairman.</i>	
R. MILLER,	} <i>Members of</i>
J. J. J. KESWICK,	
H. B. H. TURNER,	
	} <i>Committee.</i>

From Chamber to Port Commissioners.

Dated Calcutta, the 1st March 1884.

Copies of the report of a Committee of the Port Commissioners appointed to consider the question of providing at Port Canning suitable and adequate accommodation for the petroleum trade of this port, received with your letter No. 3509 of the 20th December, having been circulated among members of the Chamber and others interested in the question, it was considered desirable, before any final recommendation to Government was arrived at, to discuss the matter at a meeting of the representatives of the petroleum trade and of interests likely to be affected by the Port Commissioners' proposal, and the Vice-Chairman was invited to be present on the occasion.

2. A largely attended meeting was accordingly held yesterday at the office of the Chamber, and after a considerable discussion of the general question and of the various points on which the meeting desired information, the following resolution was submitted :—

"That the Port Commissioners be asked to give the Chamber estimate of the cost of a dock to accommodate three or four vessels at Metabrooz, which would be preferable to removing the trade in petroleum to Port Canning if the cost be not too great to be borne by the petroleum trade."

3. This resolution was, however, followed by the following amendment which was adopted by the meeting, *viz* :—

"That in the opinion of the Chamber Budge Budge would be preferable to Port Canning, and also to a dock."

"That the Port Commissioners be asked to lay before the Chamber an estimate for the connection of Budge Budge by railway with the Diamond Harbour line."

4. In accordance, therefore, with the desire of the meeting, I have the honor to request you will be so good as to submit this letter to the Port Commissioners, and to move them to furnish the Chamber with the estimate asked for, for the connection of Budge Budge by railway with the Diamond Harbour line.

From Port Commissioners to Chamber.

No. 227—The 17th April 1884.

In reply to your letter of the 1st March 1884, I have the honor, by desire of the Commissioners, to forward herewith, for the information of the Chamber, a copy of the report of the Committee appointed to consider the best means of dealing with the petroleum trade of the Port. This report which was adopted by the Commissioners at their last meeting contains, as an appendix, an estimate of the cost of connecting Budge Budge with the Calcutta and South Eastern State Railway.

The proposals made by the Committee have been submitted for the approval of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

Report of the Committee appointed in terms of Resolution No. 12, passed at the four hundred and fourteenth Meeting, to confer with the Chamber of Commerce for the consideration of the best means of dealing with the Petroleum Trade of the Port.

The Committee attended a meeting of the Chamber, held on 29th February 1884, and the conclusions arrived at by the Chamber at that meeting are communicated in the following letter—[already given above.]

2. The Committee met at the Commissioners' Office on the 6th and 27th of March 1884, and took the foregoing letter into consideration.

3. From the opinions which were expressed by the members of the Chamber interested in the trade who spoke at the meeting, it was clear that there is a very decided feeling against stopping vessels laden with petroleum at Diamond Harbour on account of the risk and expense incurred in loading the oil by boats, and the double handling of the cases which it involves. They would rather have the vessel sent to Canning, where the cargo could be landed direct, than stopped at Diamond Harbour. But the agents of vessels and the importers of the oil agree in preferring Budge Budge to either Canning or Diamond Harbour. The main difficulty which would be experienced at Budge Budge arises from the want of direct railway communication, and the Chamber suggest that this could be met by the construction of a line of railway to connect Budge Budge with the Calcutta and South Eastern State Railway line.

4. Before proceeding to discuss the question of the railway, we have to consider how far Budge Budge is suitable for the kerosine oil trade. So far as the safety of the Port of Calcutta is concerned, there is no doubt that Canning is in every way preferable, but there is a very strong feeling on the part of those engaged in the trade against moving to Port Canning, and the Committee feel that the success of Canning would be jeopardised by the mere fact of the Commissioners working against so strong a feeling on the part of the ship agents and importers as was shown at the meeting of the Chamber above referred to. There are difficulties at present in loading vessels at Canning, and should it hereafter be found that these difficulties are insuperable, it would become necessary to bring the vessels round to Calcutta at a considerable cost.

5. If kerosine oil vessels discharged at Budge Budge, the difficulties of loading could be minimised, as they could there take in ballast and be towed up to Calcutta. All the facilities necessary for a large and increasing trade could also be provided at Budge Budge as well, and almost as cheaply, as at Port Canning; and if it is admitted that the site is sufficiently far removed from the port of Calcutta to render it improbable that a fire on board a kerosine oil vessel would cause damage to vessels in Calcutta, it appears to the Committee that for the present, in deference to the very strong feeling expressed by those chiefly interested in the trade, Budge Budge should be adopted in preference to Canning. Burning oil from a fire at Budge Budge might on a strong tide reach the shipping at Kidderpore, but it is probable that before it had travelled that distance it would be so broken up that it

would not be likely to cause serious damage. From Metiabroo, where kerosine oil vessels now discharge, it is only one mile to the Dockyard moorings, and the reach being a perfectly straight one, there is nothing to prevent the fire from getting to the shipping as fast as the tide can take it. But from Budge Budge there are three bends to be got round, so with proper management of the appliances available in Calcutta, we are of opinion that burning oil could be prevented from passing these bends and entering the last straight reach, and so risking injury to other vessels in port. At Canning, on the other hand, special appliances would have to be provided as well as a separate wharf at which export cargo could be shipped in safety.

6. At present, however, nothing can be done at Canning; the river is not buoyed nor the port declared open, and during this year, at least no vessel can go there. In the meantime the fire on board the *Amora* shows how imperatively necessary it is to take measures to remove the kerosine oil wharf to a safer distance from the shipping in port. Budge Budge is the nearest point at which such a wharf can be constructed, and it is, we consider, far enough removed to make it improbable that burning oil from a fire on a vessel moored there would injure vessels within port limits. This site also is approved by those interested in the trade, and even if a railway is not at once constructed, the extra cost of bringing the oil to Calcutta by carts or boats would not cause any great increase in the cost of the oil, probably not more than one anna per case. There is a good metalled road to Budge Budge, and the railway is not

therefore an absolute necessity, although it would be a great convenience to those engaged in the trade.

7. The question of removing the kerosine oil wharf to Budge Budge can therefore be considered apart from the question of the railway, and we submit herewith an estimate of the cost of the accommodation we recommend should be provided at Budge Budge. We have had the ground at Budge Budge examined, and find that between the village of Budge Budge on the north and the old fort on the south, there is a piece of ground admirably suited for a kerosine oil wharf, and with a deep water frontage where vessels could be safely moored within a few feet of the bank. Land in this neighbourhood should not cost more than about Rs. 100 per bighah, and if the trade ultimately settles down at Budge Budge, the accommodation can be very much increased at a comparatively small cost. In the meantime we consider that the accommodation to be given should be of the cheapest and most inexpensive kind. The godowns for the storing of oil should be constructed of sal posts with tiled or corrugated iron roofs, and be built inside of enclosures protected by earthen embankments. The landing-stages must of course be substantially constructed. But they will always be useful, and if it is found hereafter that the site now selected is from any cause unsuitable for the trade, they can be removed. For moorings no provision is made in the estimate, as the moorings recently sanctioned for coal vessels can be laid at Budge Budge instead of in Garden Reach, and the present kerosine oil vessels' moorings given up for coal vessels.

8. Estimates of the cost of constructing the kerosine oil wharf and providing sheds, office and officers' quarters

and landing-stages are annexed, and amount, it will be seen, to Rs. 1,70,000—

Estimate A—Wharf, sheds, and landing-stages	...	...	Rs. 1,58,211
Estimate B—Office and officers' quarters	"	"	11,789
Total	...	Rs.	1,70,000

Estimate A. provides for four landing-stages, each 78ft. x 25ft., connected with the bank by bridges 100 feet long and 8 feet wide. The landing-stages are placed in the centre of each berth, and opposite each berth there is an enclosure surrounded by earthen embankments, measuring 350 feet by 350. In each enclosure two sheds measuring 200 feet by 60 feet, and capable of containing about 50,000 cases each, have been provided for, but there is room for a third shed, if found necessary. The sheds in the four enclosures would therefore be sufficient to contain at one time about 400,000 cases, or the cargoes of, say, seven vessels.

9. For the working of this wharf, we find that the feeling of those engaged in the trade is strongly in favour of their being allowed to find all the labour for discharging the vessels themselves, the Commissioners merely providing the accommodation and charging sufficient to cover interest and depreciation and the cost of repairs and supervision. If no labour is provided by the Commissioners, and no receipts given to the vessel, the cost of establishment will be very small, as it will only be necessary to have a Superintendent to regulate the traffic, to arrange for the letting out of space and the berthing of vessels, drawing the samples, and forwarding them to

the Chemical Examiner for testing, and to look after the property generally. The following would, we think, be found sufficient :—

	Rs.	Rs.
One Superintendent at Rs. 250		
to Rs. 350	300	
Two writers at Rs. 30 and		
Rs. 20	50	
Four peons	32	
Four lascars for pontoons ..	36	
		418
Allow for contingencies ..	32	
Total		450 per month.

10. The sheds, if constructed in the cheap manner proposed, would not last more than six or seven years, and to meet the cost of renewal a charge of at least 20 per cent. on their original cost would have to be made for depreciation. This on Rs. 48,000 would amount to Rs. 9,600 per annum. On the pontoons a charge of at least 5 per cent. should be made for depreciation. This on Rs. 66,475 would be Rs. 3,320. For general repairs to sheds, roads and banks, a charge of Rs. 5,000 per annum would be necessary, and for interest on an expenditure of Rs. 1,70,000, the annual charge would be Rs. 7,650. As a heavy rate has been put on for depreciation charge, it will not be necessary to provide for a sinking fund. We have provided Rs. 1,000 as an annual payment to place the wharf in communication with the Port Commissioners' Office by wire.

11. The total annual charges would therefore amount to :—

	Rs.
Establishment	5,400
Depreciation	12,900
Repairs	5,000
Interest	7,650
Communication by telephone ..	1,000
Total	31,970

12. To meet this expenditure, we consider that the best arrangement would be to charge the importer six pie per case on the full cargo brought alongside the wharf. This charge to cover rent in the godowns for one month and the use of the landing-stages. In the opinion of the importers now engaged in the trade, the maximum quantity to be calculated upon with safety is 1,200,000 cases, and from this quantity the revenue at a charge of six pie per case would only amount to Rs. 37,500. If the trade increases beyond this estimate, as we anticipate it will, the charge can be reduced; but for the present it should not be fixed below six pie.

13. Vessels discharging petroleum at Metabrooj are, under the rules now in force, prohibited from landing any portion of their cargo until samples have been tested by the Chemical Examiner and reported as up to a safe standard for consumption in India. We are of opinion that for vessels discharging at Budge Budge this restriction might be removed, and the vessels be allowed to proceed with the discharge of the cargo without waiting for the oil to be tested. Dangerous oil would be safer and less likely to injure other property in a dépôt, such

as we have proposed, than afloat, and the samples for testing would represent the whole of the cargo quite as fairly as they do under the present system. No petroleum will be allowed to leave the depôt until it has been certified by a competent examiner to be of the proper standard for safe consumption in this climate. The Superintendent will draw the samples for testing, one case being taken out of every 10,000 cases landed, and forward them to the Government Examiner, and no deliveries of the oil will be permitted until receipt of the Examiner's report on the samples.

14. So far we have only considered the question of constructing a wharf and providing appliances for landing petroleum at Budge Budge, instead of landing it at Metiabrooj, and the probable receipts and expenditure on such a wharf.

15. With regard to the proposal to connect Budge Budge with Calcutta by a railway, the Chamber of Commerce suggest a line between the proposed petroleum wharf and a point on the South-Eastern State Railway. As already stated, we do not consider the construction of this line absolutely necessary. There is, however, no doubt that it would be a great convenience to those engaged in the kerosine oil trade, and as we are also of opinion that it would be a very paying line, we recommend that Government should be asked whether they would be prepared to undertake its construction, or allow the Port Commissioners to extend their line from the new docks at Kidderpore to the proposed wharf at Budge Budge. We understand that it is now proposed to make a branch line from some point on the Calcutta and South-

Eastern State Railway near Ballygunge to Chetla Haut. If this is done, and Tolly's Nullah bridged, the extension to Budge Budge would not be very expensive. The line should be carried close past the Akra brickfield, so that bricks could be conveyed to town by this route instead of by river. If worked in connection with the Port Commissioners' river-side line, bricks could be conveyed by this direct route to the depôts on the river bank where all Government bricks are now landed.

16. To give some idea of the traffic which the proposed line to Budge Budge would have to accommodate, it may be safely assumed that the kerosine oil trade alone will be about 40,000 tons, and after making an allowance for oil leaving the depôt by boats, we think three-fourths of that quantity may be safely calculated upon for railway transit, and for which one rupee per ton could be got without putting importers to greater expense than they incur at present for cart hire from Metiabrooj. The cost of conveyance of bricks by boat from Akra is now Rs. 2-8 per thousand, or about 12 annas per ton. At the Government brickfields the annual output is about 300 lakhs, and from private brickfields in the same neighbourhood the annual output is about 100 lakhs. With the facilities which the riverside tranway will afford for the delivery of bricks at present depôts on the bank of the river, we believe that a very large proportion of the output would use the tranway line in preference to boats. In addition to these fixed sources of income there would be a certain amount of traffic to the Empress and Budge Budge Mills, and no doubt other sources of income from local traffic would develop. The cost of a line $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles

long, to connect Budge Budge with the South-Eastern Railway, including the cost of bridging Tolly's Nullah, would, as shown in estimate D, be about Rs. 11,50,000. But as it has now been decided to extend the South-Eastern Railway to the docks at Kidderpore, the further extension to Budge Budge would only be nine miles, and the cost of this, as shown in estimate C, would be only Rs. 7,50,000 lakhs. The traffic receipts from produce carried over this extension would of course have to be shared in proportion to the capital contributed either by Government or the Commissioners for the existing lines.

17. After considering carefully the several suggestions which have been made for dealing with the petroleum trade, we have come to the following conclusions :—

(1) The general feeling of those interested in the trade of the port is that if the removal of the petroleum wharf from its present position is considered absolutely necessary for the better security of the general shipping of the port, Budge Budge is the most convenient point at which to establish the new petroleum wharf.

(2) In our opinion it is absolutely necessary to remove the landing of petroleum from its present locality, and arrangements should therefore be made at once to put down moorings and construct the landing-stages, wharf and sheds at Budge Budge, leaving the cargoes for the present to be carted or boated to Calcutta.

(3) Vessels discharging petroleum at Budge Budge should commence their discharge at once without waiting for the Government Examiner's certificate; but no oil

should be allowed to leave the dépôt until it has been certified to be of the proper standard for safe consumption in this climate.

(4) An application should be made to Government to ascertain whether Government would either itself undertake or permit the Port Commissioners to undertake the construction of a line of railway to connect the wharf at Budge Budge with Calcutta.

18. If the foregoing conclusions are approved by the Commissioners in meeting, we would recommend that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, in reply to their letter dated 1st. March 1884, and that they be referred to the estimates appended for information as to the probable cost of the railway line.

H. J. REYNOLDS.
H. B. H. TURNER.
J. SCOBELL ARMSTRONG.
W. DUFF BRUCE.

50

Add contingencies ...

51

Rs.	Rs.
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60,000 90,000

GRAND TOTAL	7,50,000
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Rs.	Rs.
-----	-----

60.000 90.000

GRAND TOTAL	11,50,000
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From Chamber to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 18th September 1884.

In December last the Port Commissioners were good enough to furnish the Chamber of Commerce with copy of a Report of a Committee of their Body appointed to consider the question of providing suitable and adequate accommodation for the petroleum trade of the port of Calcutta, and they requested an expression of opinion upon the proposals and recommendations therein submitted.

Having regard to the considerable proportions which the trade in petroleum had already reached, and to the expectation that its growth would be largely developed, the Commissioners' Committee were of opinion that suitable and adequate accommodation could be easily found at Port Canning, and various reasons were assigned for their recommendation of that place as a fit and proper site for the landing and storage of petroleum cargoes, and for the establishment of a permanent accommodation in a position where a large expansion of the oil trade could always be provided for.

The Commissioners' Committee at the same time recorded their opinion that the construction of a petroleum dépôt at Diamond Harbour, as suggested by the Government of Bengal, was open to various objections, and that considerations were generally in favor of Port Canning in preference to Diamond Harbour.

The Commissioners' proposals were duly considered by members of the Chamber of Commerce and others interested in the petroleum trade, and at a special meeting held to

discuss the scheme with the Vice-Chairman and other members of the Port Commission, opinions were expressed unfavourable to both Diamond Harbour and Port Canning; and it was suggested that a locality in every respect well suited for discharging vessels and for the general convenience of the trade could be found at Budge Budge, on the left bank of the Hooghly, about 12 miles from Calcutta, and that if Budge Budge were connected with Calcutta by a line of Railway for transporting petroleum for consumption in Calcutta or for transmission up-country by the East Indian or Eastern Bengal Railway, the requirements of the trade would be amply provided for.

The views of the meeting were duly communicated to the Port Commissioners in the Chamber's letter of 1st March 1884; and in their reply of the 17th of the following month the Commissioners forwarded for the information of the Chamber copies of a Report by a Committee appointed to consider the best means of dealing with the matter, containing estimates of the cost of connecting Budge Budge with the Calcutta and South Eastern State Railway, and of expenditure on land, earthworks, storing sheds, stages, moorings, &c.

It is not necessary to recapitulate the views and recommendations contained in that Report as they are already in the possession of Government, and the Committee of the Chamber need only briefly state that the conclusions arrived at were, that Budge Budge should be adopted in preference to Canning as being the most convenient point at which to establish the new petroleum wharf, that the present landing place for petroleum at Garden Reach should thereafter be closed, and that arrangements be made

at once to put down moorings and construct landing stages, wharf, and sheds at Budge Budge.

The Commissioners adopted the report of their Committee, and submitted it for the approval of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

Taking into consideration the urgency of the arrangements recommended by the Commissioners, not only for the convenience of the petroleum trade, but also for the security of the port of Calcutta against any risk to its shipping by fire breaking out in any oil-laden vessel discharging at the present wharf—and the destruction of the *Aurora*, which took place about that time, showed how imperatively necessary it is to remove the wharf to a safer distance from the port—the Committee of the Chamber are greatly concerned that up to the present no declaration of the purpose of Government has reached them, and that, apparently, nothing has been done to give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioners in a matter which so closely affects a large and important trade and the security of the shipping and property of Calcutta.

The existing accommodation and arrangements are absolutely inadequate to the requirements of the oil-laden vessels which have been long detained in discharging their cargoes, and as several other ships are on their way from New York, the present difficulties will be much aggravated and great loss and inconvenience sustained by all interests concerned.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce therefore respectfully request that the subject of their reference may

be promptly attended to, so as to admit of the Port Commissioners' recommendations being adopted with as little delay as possible.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 2478^s—*Darjeeling, the 15th October 1884.*

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th September 1884, requesting that the recommendations submitted to the Government by the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta for the construction of a wharf and dépôt at Budge Budge for the landing and storage of petroleum imported into Calcutta, may be adopted with as little delay as possible.

In reply, I am to forward to you, for the information of the Chamber, copy of a memorandum from the Municipal Department of this office No. 1347^I, dated the 4th September 1884, and to say that the Port Commissioners have been asked to revise their plans and estimates in accordance with the views expressed in that memorandum.

No. 1347^T—*M. Darjeeling the 4th September 1884.*

MEMORANDUM.

THE undersigned has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the memorandum from the General Department, No. 60, dated the 23rd July last, forwarding certain papers regarding the proposed construction of a wharf and dépôt at Budge Budge for the landing and storage of petroleum imported into Calcutta, and enquiring whether the Municipal Department has any objection to the scheme.

2. It appears from the correspondence that the details of the scheme have been worked out by a Committee of the Port Commissioners in communication with the Chamber of Commerce and the chief firms in Calcutta interested in the petroleum trade. The Committee have come to the following conclusions :—

- (a).—That the general feeling of those interested in the trade of the port is that, if any change in the position of the petroleum wharf is thought absolutely necessary, Budge Budge is the most convenient site.
- (b).—That it is absolutely necessary to remove the landing of petroleum from its present locality, and that works should therefore be taken in hand at Budge Budge.
- (c).—That vessels should discharge their cargoes at Budge Budge without waiting for the Chemical Examiner's certificate ; but that no oil should leave the depot until it has been properly passed.
- (d).—That arrangements be made, either by Government or the Port Commissioners, to place Budge Budge in direct railway communication with Calcutta.

3. The Municipal Department fully accepts the first three recommendations of the Committee, which appear amply justified by the growing importance of the petroleum trade, and by the occurrences of the last two years, especially those of the cold weather of 1883-84. The third proposal will afford a great convenience to the shipping inter-

est ; and as the amendments which the Government of India have signified their intention of introducing into the existing law will empower the Local Government to deal even more effectively with oil after it has been landed than while it is still afloat, the change recommended by the Chamber and the Port Commissioners will be a great improvement on the existing practice.

4. As regards the fourth proposal, the Municipal Department has no information concerning the proposed construction of a branch line from any point on the South-Eastern State Railway to Chetla Haut, which is referred to in paragraph 15 of the Committee's report. On general grounds, however, it appears desirable, in the absence of any better proposal, to support the Committee's suggestion that the Port Commissioners should continue their tramway system from the Kidderpore Docks to Budge Budge. It is understood that the extension from the Strand Road to the Docks has already been sanctioned.

5. The details of the scheme will no doubt be considered fully in the General Department. There are, however, certain points in which the proposed arrangements seem to be defective, and to these the attention of the General Department is invited—

- (a).—An important part of the procedure to be adopted in the case of petroleum imported into Calcutta, which falls on examination to come up to the prescribed standard, will consist of its rectification by being spread out and exposed to the air, within a suitable enclosure, and under some sort of cover. If, as happened in 1882,

the greater part of a cargo of petroleum should be found to require rectification, this operation would require a large amount of space. No such building or enclosure has, however, been provided in the plan. It is clearly impossible that the exposure of this oil, which would of course be "dangerous" petroleum, could be effected in the sheds where the ordinary cargoes of oil were stored consistently with the safety of the latter. Neither could it be effected in any place to which the general public had access. It is therefore indispensably necessary that a separate enclosure should be provided for this purpose, equipped with suitable sheds, and situated at a safe distance from the sheds for storage.

(b).—Each enclosure, which is shown in the plan as being 350 x 290 feet, would contain two sheds 200 x 60 feet each, and room for a third of equal size. If the third shed were built, it is clear that the space between each shed could not exceed 42 feet, which does not appear to be sufficient for purposes of safety. In the event of one shed catching fire, the intervening space would not save the other buildings to windward of it; and this would be the more certain as the sheds which it is proposed to put up are not walled buildings, but mere open sheds, consisting of sāl-wood posts supporting a tiled roof. This is not the kind of building which was contemplated by the Petroleum Committee appointed in February 1883. This Committee recom-

mended that the oil should be stored in godowns "to be substantially built of brick and corrugated iron," which would thus be unflammable and capable of confining the course of a conflagration.

(c).—One of the other recommendations of the above Committee was that there should be separate godowns for the storage of "dangerous" petroleum. By this expression is meant petroleum which has avowedly a flashing point below that allowed by the law, and is imported under special license for manufacturing purposes. It is perhaps unlikely that any large quantity of such petroleum will be imported, but it seems necessary to make special provision for its storage, as the owners of non-dangerous oil would possibly have a claim to recover damages from the Port Commissioners in case of an accident by fire, if it appeared that "dangerous" petroleum was stored along with non-dangerous oil, and that no special precautions were taken.

6. It is requested that this Department may be favoured with a copy of the orders that may be passed by the General Department in the matter. The original enclosures of the memorandum under reply are returned as requested.

E. N. BAKER,
Offg. Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.
 TO THE GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF THIS OFFICE.

WORKING OF THE BENGAL PILOT SERVICE.

The Committee have again been under the necessity of communicating with the local authorities on the subject of maintaining an adequate number of Pilot Brigs at the Sandheads, and of the insufficient strength of the pilot establishment to meet the requirements of the shipping of the Port.

On these points the Committee have received urgent representation from the Committee of Lloyd's, London, and the Chamber of Commerce of Dundee; and the following correspondence ensued between the Committee and the Government of Bengal, from which it will be noticed that a report on the complaints regarding the working of the Pilot Service has been submitted to the Government of India for transmission to the Secretary of State, to whom shipowners in England had already made representations on the subject.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 4th January 1884.

Under instructions from the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, I had the honor of addressing you on the 19th of February of last year on the subject of the cruising service of the Pilot Brigs,

From the statement prepared by the Port Officer showing how each Brig was employed during 1882, it appeared that of three vessels then in commission, the *Chinsurah* was condemned on the 24th April of that year as unfit for further service, and that consequently the duties of the cruising Brigs were carried on for the remainder of the year by the *Cassandra* and *Coleroon* alternately, as each had to return to Calcutta and remain there several days for repairs, and that practically only one Brig was available at the Pilot station.

A new Brig had been ordered by Government to replace the condemned *Chinsurah*, but that vessel had not arrived when the Chamber's letter was written, and in her absence the Pilot station at the Sandheads was served by one Brig only.

The Committee direct me to request they may be informed of the present strength of the Pilot Brig Establishment, and if any changes are contemplated with regard to the vessels, the *Cassandra* and *Coleroon*, that have been frequently off the station for repairs, refitting, &c., and generally as to the efficiency of those vessels for the duty they have to do.

While making this application the Committee have been moved by a representation from the Committee of Lloyd's, London, to press upon the attention of the Government of Bengal the question of the adequacy of the Pilot Service; and it will be satisfactory to the Chamber to be in a position to place before the Underwriters of London the fullest information on the subject of their reference to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India—

copy of which is annexed for submission to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, whose early attention to it is respectfully requested.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 17th January 1884.

In the concluding paragraph of the Chamber's letter of the 4th instant reference was made to a representation submitted by the Underwriters of London, relative to the insufficient strength of the Bengal Pilot Establishment for the requirements of the shipping of this Port, and other matters in connection therewith.

The Committee of the Chamber have since received a communication on the same subject from the Dundee Chamber of Commerce, and I am directed to send a copy of it for your information.

The Committee desire me to refer also to the proposed superannuation by Government of several of the senior Branch Pilots, now in active service, under the 55 years rule. Besides being impolitic at such a time as this when the adequacy of the pilot establishment is being called in question, the Committee consider that such a measure will be attended with most serious consequences to the commerce of Calcutta, and they strongly deprecate a weakening of the strength of the present by no means strong pilot establishment by the removal of its ablest and most experienced officers.

The qualifications of a pilot for the proper discharge of his duties in the Hooghly and its approaches can be

only acquired by many years' experience of the difficulties of their navigation, and the removal from the service of men who have acquired that experience will create a void which it will be difficult to fill up.

The Committee trust the Government will reconsider this matter and refrain from making any change until they are in an undoubted position of being able to command the services of men equal in all respects to those whom they purpose placing on the retired list.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 345—The 19th February 1884.

WITH reference to your letters noted on the margin, Dated the 4th and 17th and enclosures, I am directed to state, for the information of the

Chamber, that a report on the complaints made regarding the working of the Pilot Service has been submitted to the Government of India for transmission to the Secretary of State for India, to whom also representations have been made on the subject by shipowners in England.

2. Notwithstanding the endeavours made on the part of the Government to keep up a sufficient supply of pilots at the Sandheads it must occasionally happen that the number of pilots actually there is insufficient to meet an unusual demand; and this, as has already been remarked in a previous communication, is a state of things which no increase in the number of brigs could possibly remedy without an increase in the strength of the Pilot Service,

which it is neither necessary nor advisable to make. It does not appear correct to say, as stated in the enclosures of your letters, that the expansion of the trade of the port has rendered the present establishment of pilots inadequate. The number of arrivals and departures of vessels during the years 1882 and 1883 has been as follows:—

Year.	Arrivals.	Departures.
1881-82	1,074	1,058
1882-83	1,167	1,141

As experience has shown that a pilot can, without difficulty, take four vessels a month, the number of arrivals and departures has never been such as to make a service of 63 pilots, exclusive of 26 leadsman, insufficient for the work of the port. Moreover, it is clear, from the fact that the junior grades of the Service scarcely earn a fair remuneration, that the present number of pilots is (unless under very exceptional circumstances) more than sufficient for the work of the shipping. If there has been any delay in supplying pilots, this has been due to special and temporary circumstances which would not justify a permanent increase of the strength of the Pilot Service. Besides, any increase in the numbers of the Service must necessarily lead to extra charges on the shipping, of which the mercantile community already complain.

3. There are now three pilot brigs, the new brig having arrived last July, so that in future two brigs will always be at the pilot station, while the third is refitting or undergoing repairs. The *Cassandra* will be carefully examined when she next returns to town, and, if necessary, another brig will be ordered from England to replace her.

4. As regards the loss of anchors, chains, &c., I am to say that in a dangerous river like the Hooghly this cannot be avoided. The safety of a vessel so often depends on the promptitude with which an anchor is let go that it would be unwise to curtail the pilot's freedom of action in this respect, or hamper him by departmental rules which might interfere with his judgment at a critical time.

5. With reference to the complaints regarding the taking of gratuities by pilots, I am to say that the remedy for this evil lies in the hands of the mercantile community. It is to their unwillingness to complain that the evil is due, because unless complaint is made the Government cannot possibly become aware that such malpractices exist. As the mercantile community have the remedy in their own hands, and yet fail to apply it it does not seem reasonable to blame the Government for a state of things which can only exist through the acquiescence of shipowners or agents. The Government has always set its face against the receipt of gratuities by pilots, and has from time to time issued stringent orders in the matter. It may be that these orders have been ineffectual to check the evil; but if the fact be so, it must be attributed solely and entirely to the want of resolution on the part of the mercantile community to help the Government in a matter in which the Government is powerless to act without their help. It may be added, by way of illustration, that, in the only recent case which has come to notice, the Government, in following up the clue which it accidentally obtained, was not altogether satisfied with the measure of assistance afford-

ed by the firm which had paid the gratuity. The charge however, was brought home to the pilot, who was severely punished.

6. With reference to the protest of the Chamber against the enforcement of the 55-year rule in the case of pilots, I am to observe that only one pilot has been so far required to resign under this rule, the orders regarding the second pilot being for the present in abeyance, and that with these exceptions it will be some years before the rule can be enforced against any member of the Pilot Service. It must, moreover, be remembered that stagnation of promotion has long been a source of discontent in the Pilot Service. Memorials have only recently been received from certain members of the Service again complaining of the slowness of promotion, and making suggestions for its acceleration. The Chamber, in commenting on the inadvisability of removing pilots from the Service under the above rule, on account of the many years' experience required to qualify a Hooghly pilot thoroughly for his work, have overlooked the fact that, beginning, as they do, at a very early age, the members of the Pilot Service, if they possess at all the natural qualities essential to the making of a good pilot, have ample time to acquire all the experience that can be needed for the navigation of any class of ships in the Hooghly long before they reach the grade of Branch Pilots or the age of 55. The last man in the grade of Senior Master pilots has completed 18 years' service, while the majority of the pilots of this grade can point to more than 24 years' service. It is impossible to say that pilots of such standing have not had the requisite

experience for the handling of the largest vessels that visit the Port of Calcutta, and the Lieutenant-Governor cannot doubt that competent men would always be available in this grade to fill up any vacancies which might be caused in the Branch grade by the compulsory retirement of those who have reached the age of 55. It is essential, however, to the preservation of a high standard of competency in the Service that a fair rate of promotion should be secured to all its members. If the present stagnation of promotion were perpetuated—and this would be the result of compliance with the Chamber's suggestion—the general efficiency of the Service could not fail to be impaired by the feeling of disappointment and discontent which must prevail among its members. I am further to observe that neither the Local Government nor the Government of India has the power to prolong the service of pilots attaining the age of 55 years, the Secretary of State for India having reserved such power to himself alone.

PILOT BRIGS AT THE SANDHEADS.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 7th May 1884.

The *Englishman* of the 16th of last month contains an anonymous letter on the subject of Pilot vessels at the mouth of the Hooghly, and which has special reference to the new brig which arrived from England about nine months ago to take the place of the condemned *Chinsoorah*.

Copy of that communication is hereto annexed for convenience of reference; and I am instructed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to draw your attention to it, as the writer appears to have made particular inquiries into the matter, and to have received information regarding the new brig which, if correct, discloses a state of affairs which the Committee of the Chamber deeply regret.

The Committee had hoped that on the arrival of the new Brig the strength of the establishment at the Sandheads would have been sufficient to meet the exigencies of the service, and that no further representation by the Chamber would be necessary: it is therefore with regret that they are compelled to address the Government in continuation of previous correspondence on the subject.

Replying to the Chamber's letters of the 4th and 17th January last, your No. 345 of the 19th of the following month, paragraph 3, stated "there are now three pilot brigs, the new brig having arrived last July, so that in future two brigs will always be at the Pilot Station, while the third is refitting or undergoing repairs. The *Cassandra* will be carefully examined when she returns to town, and, if necessary, another brig will be ordered from England to replace her."

It appears, however, to the Committee of the Chamber, that if the latest addition to the cruising service is unfit or unprepared to take her place at the Sandheads, and if one of the old vessels is under repairs which may detain her for several weeks, the result will be that "the Sta-

tion will be served by one vessel only, and this too at a time of the year when a single brig is totally inadequate to the service required at the Sandheads. The matter is of pressing importance, and the Committee of the Chamber trust that the Lieutenant-Governor will be pleased to issue such orders as His Honor may consider called for under the circumstances now submitted for his consideration.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 4157, *Darjeeling*, the 22nd May 1884.

With reference to your letter of the 7th May 1884, I am directed to state for the information of the Chamber of Commerce, that the anonymous letter on the subject of Pilot vessels at the Sandheads, which appeared in the *Englishman* of the 16th April last, attracted the attention of Government on its publication. Certain portions of the anonymous letter were undeserving of attention, but that portion of it referring to the presence of only one Brig at the Sandheads caused the Lieutenant-Governor to communicate with the Port Officer, who, shortly afterwards, despatched the new Pilot Brig the *Saruti* to reinforce the *Coleroon* at the Sandheads, the *Cassandra* being under the usual periodical repairs. By a telegram just received, the Lieutenant-Governor regrets to learn that the *Coleroon* has met with an accident and is obliged to return to town. Telegraphic orders have already issued to the Port Officer to expedite the repairs of the *Cassandra* and despatch her to reinforce the *Saruti*.

The *Savuti*, I am to add, has been pronounced to be an excellent vessel, some alterations of her internal fittings being alone required. These will be completed when she returns to Calcutta.

In conclusion, I am to intimate that the recent overhauling of the Pilot vessel *Cassandra* has shown that after certain repairs have been completed, she will be fit for service as pilot vessel for the next five years.

PILOTAGE ACCOUNTS.

In continuation of the correspondence contained in their last Report, the Committee submit the further representations made by them on the subject and the reply received from the Government of Bengal. Encouraged by an official return which apparently exhibited a large surplus, after payment of all charges, on account of the pilotage service of the port in 1881-82, the Committee requested to be informed how the surplus for that year, and the annual balance at credit subsequent to that season, had been disposed of. In reply, the Committee were furnished with an account which purported to be a correction of the revised statement previously prepared; and they were informed that the credit balance which was

at first exhibited had been converted into a deficit by the introduction into the finally revised statement of certain charges which had not been entered in the account first rendered; and that even that deficit would be enlarged by other items of expenditure in England, the precise particulars of which had not been received in Calcutta.

Orders having been issued for keeping a separate Account of Receipts and Expenditure for 1884-85, the Committee await the statement promised by Government.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 1726^o, Darjeeling, the 26th August 1884.

IN continuation of Mr. Bolton's letter No. 879^o, dated the 21st September last, I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber of Commerce, a copy of the revised statement showing the receipts and charges on account of pilotage for the year 1881-82, from which it will be seen that the account closed with a credit balance of Rs. 7,552-6-2 on the 31st March 1882.

Certain items which should have been debited to the pilotage account were omitted from the statement enclosed in the letter quoted above. These have now been entered in the present account, which, however,

does not include the charges for pensions paid in England to the retired pilots and to the widows and children of deceased pilots, nor the charge for "depreciation of block." If these items were entered there would assuredly be a debit, instead of a credit, balance against the pilotage account.

REVISED STATEMENT OF THE PILOTAGE RECEIPTS
AND CHARGES FOR THE YEAR 1881-82.

*Statement showing the Receipts and Charges on account of
Pilotage for the Port of Calcutta during the year 1881-82.*

Receipts.		REMARKS.	
Pilotage Receipts	8,08,261 15 0		
Lead Money	13,347 1 0		
Miscellaneous	15,437 11 0		
Hire of the Steamer <i>Undaunted</i>	2,460 0 0		
Contributions by pilots for pensions of their families.	9,142 3 0		
Total Rs.	8,48,638 14 0		

Statement showing the Receipts and Charges on account of

Charges.	REMARKS.		
<i>Port Officer's Department.</i>			
Port Officer	19,354	15	0
Assistant Port Officer	1,840	0	0
Clerks and Servants	15,644	0	0
Rent	6,512	6	0
Contingencies	4,022	11	8
Service Postage Stamps	200	8	6
Value of Mathematical Instruments	132	10	0
Dockyard Service and Supplies	115	16	3
Travelling Allowance	88	0	0
<i>Marine Court.</i>			
Judge	2,400	0	0
<i>Pilotage, Pilot Establishments and Vessels.</i>			
Branch, Master and Mate	53,207	2	3
Pilot's Allowances	20,755	4	2
Volunteer and Leadmen's Allowances	3,212	8	0
Ditto Lead Money	3,17,225	7	8
Pilotage Allowance to Free List Pilots	1,54,032	11	10
Do. Licensed Pilots	46,560	0	4
Pilot Vessels	11,13	11	0
Steamer Undaunted	27,15	11	
Value of Medical Stores			
Carried over Rs.	6,60,635	5	1

Pilotage for the Port of Calcutta during the year 1881-82

Receipts.	REMARKS.		
Brought forward Rs.	8,48,638	14	0
Carried over Rs.	8,48,638	14	0

*Statement showing the Receipts and Charges on account of
Pilots for the Port of Calcutta during the year 1881-82.*

Charges.			REMARKS.
Brought forward Rs. ...	7,53,43	16	0
Harbour Master's fees for Sea- going and Inland vessels ...	1,603	6	0
Fees to Masters of Merchant vessels for sitting on Courts of Enquiry ...	175	0	0
Miscellaneous ...	1,050	0	0
<i>Miscellaneous Boats.</i>			
Port Officer's Gig ...	1,008	0	1
Steam Launch "Calcutta" ...	1,000	0	0
Dockyard services and supplies ...	1,635	2	2
Tidal Sennaphores ...	3,316	8	0
Cost of Telegrams ...	3,530	8	0
Allowance to Port Commis- sioners for collecting Marine dues ...	2,800	0	0
Miscellaneous (Port approaches) ...	3,082	8	5
Cost of Stores from England ...	4,072	11	2
Leave allowances to Pilots paid in England ...	19,352	9	1
Value of Stationery and print- ed forms supplied by the Superintendent of Stationery ...	1,204	4	5
One-third pay of Marine Sur- geon ...	4,220	0	0
Amount paid in Bengal on account of pensions of Pilots and of their families ...	37,825	1	7
Total Rs. ...	8,41,086	7	10

* This amount represents the value of a Whistling Buoy which is now in store for future use.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 18th September 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 17263 of the 26th of last month, forwarding a copy of the revised statement of receipts and charges on account of pilotage for the year 1881-82, closed on 31st March 1882.

The Committee desire me to thank you for this state-
ment, and to offer the following remarks:—

The accounts for 1881-82 submitted with your letter No. 8795 of the 21st September of last year, showed a surplus of receipts over expenditure of Rs. 94,819-13-3; whereas the revised statement exhibits a credit balance of only Rs. 7,552-6-2; and it is stated in a foot-note that if charges on account of pensions paid in England to retired pilots and the widows and children of deceased pilots, and for depreciation of block (*viz.*, wear and tear of pilot brigs) had been included in the account, a deficit would have been shown instead of the credit balance of Rs. 7,552-6-2.

In comparing the figures of the original and revised statements, the Committee notice a remarkable discrepancy between the amount of pilotage receipts as entered in the former and the amount shown in the latter, *viz.*, Rupees 8,41,859-1-0 and Rs. 8,08,231-15-0 respectively, thereby reducing that principal item by Rs. 33,607-2-0.

No explanation of such a material reduction in the receipts is given, and the Committee are unable to recon-
cile the figures in the revised statement with those which

appear in the 57th para. of the Port Commissioners' Administration Report for 1881-1882, and which are stated to be the actual amounts collected for the Government, viz.:-

Inward pilotage	...	...	Rs. 3,39,971
Outward "	...	...	" 5,01,888
			Rs. 8,41,859

a sum which corresponds with that shown in the statement of account furnished to the Chamber in September 1883, and its repetition in the Commissioners' Report for the following year, para 57 in their statement of collections for consecutive years, would appear to confirm its accuracy.

This discrepancy requires to be cleared up, for if the revised statement is correct, that of the Port Commissioners cannot be right, and the Committee of the Chamber are of opinion that the Commissioners should be requested to furnish an explanation of so large an error. With this exception the items of receipts and expenditure as given in the original are reproduced in the revised statement, which, however, contains new entries on both sides of the account, the introduction of which, after an interval of nearly 12 months, places the account in a different light altogether, and materially alters the officially recorded result of the pilotage account for 1881-82 and furnished to the Chamber of Commerce as a statement for their information, and which prompted the inquiries made in their letter of 10th January 1884.

Even in its present form the revised statement is confessedly imperfect, as it does not include the charges

referred to in your letter, and it is a matter of regret and disappointment to the Committee that they cannot arrive at the exact state of the pilotage accounts of the port. The Committee observe also that in the revised statement no balance of the previous year's account is brought forward, and they submit that such an omission renders the statement of still less value.

There are various items on the debit side of the account which the Committee of the Chamber have reason to believe should be transferred to other branches of marine expenditure and the pilotage account accordingly relieved of them, and the Committee are of opinion that the entire account may be usefully referred to the Port Commissioners for inquiry as to the appropriateness of the items which have been debited.

The Committee do not like to press the Government again, but the imperfectness of the statements submitted to the Chamber shows, in their opinion, the importance of having the accounts for the last five years recast, laborious though the work may be.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 25725.—Darjeeling the 20th October 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 18th September 1884, communicating the remarks of the Chamber of Commerce on the revised Statement of Receipts and Charges on account of Pilotage for the year 1881-82, forwarded with my letter No. 17265, dated the 26th August last.

With regard to the discrepancy pointed out by the Chamber between the amount of pilotage receipts as entered in the original statement and that shown in the revised statement, I am to say that the sum of Rs. 8,41,859-1-0 entered in the first statement and shown in the Port Commissioners' Administration Report for 1881-82, represents the total amount of pilotage realised during the year 1881-82 at the former rate up to 31st July, and at the reduced rate from 1st August 1881. Of the fees realised at the full rate, 15 per cent. were levied on account of the Port Fund or approaches, and the remainder only was divided between the Government and the Pilots in accordance with the Government orders of the 10th July 1881, copy enclosed. As all the charges on account of the Port approaches have been excluded from the account on the expenditure side, the 15 per cent. which was included in the total pilotage receipts has therefore been deducted. Hence the difference (Rs. 33,607-0-2) between the total amount of receipt entered in the original statement and that shown in the revised statement.

Regarding the omission of certain charges which have to be met in England, I am to intimate that it was thought undesirable to delay the preparation of the statement until a reference had been made to the Government of India in order to obtain from the Secretary of State for India information regarding the precise sum paid in England on account of pensions of retired pilots and of the widows and families of deceased pilots.

I am also to explain that as no separate account of the pilotage receipts and charges had hitherto been kept,

the Accountant-General was not in a position to show in the accounts prepared for 1881-82 the balance (debit or credit) of the previous year. The account, which is the first of its kind, had to be prepared from the accounts kept of the provincial receipts and expenditure.

In conclusion, I am to say that instructions have been given to the Accountant-General to keep a separate account of receipts and expenditure for 1884-85, and that a copy of this account will be furnished to the Chamber at the close of the year. The recasting the accounts of the last five years would be a most laborious undertaking which could not be satisfactorily performed without an expenditure of time and labor which, the results obtained for one year indicate, would probably be incommensurate with the advantage to be expected.

SYSTEM OF SPECIAL PILOTS.

The Chamber was asked by the Government of Bengal to nominate one of its members to be of the Committee appointed to enquire into and report on the system of Special Pilots in force on the Hooghly, and the Committee nominated Mr. Stevenson of Messrs. Graham & Co., and on his leaving for England, Mr. H. B. H. Turner, of Messrs. Turner, Morrison & Co., who kindly consented to act. The following is the Government Resolution on the Report by the Committee, but the system of Special Pilots obtains much as

before the Committee were appointed, the one practical result being dissatisfaction on the part of the Companies that carry the China Mails free, that their steamers should have been singled out to be deprived of Special Pilots, while others, that under subsidy carry not more important mails, are permitted to retain them.

RESOLUTION.

Darjeeling, the 15th August 1884.

READ—

Resolution of this Government, dated 21st December 1883, appointing a Committee to enquire into and report on the system of Special Pilots in force on the Hooghly.

Report of the Committee, dated 30th April 1884, and correspondence annexed to it.

A letter No. 2185, dated 18th June 1884, from the Port Officer of Calcutta, submitting his opinion upon the Report.

The practice of attaching particular pilots to certain lines of steamers, and allowing the pilot of the out-going vessel to go as far as the nearest port of call, and there await the arrival of the in-coming vessel of the same line, originated some 30 years ago in an accident to a pilot which disabled him from boarding vessels at the Sandheads in rough weather. As a

matter of favour, this pilot was, at the request of the Agent permanently attached to the steamers of the Messageries Maritimes Company, and from time to time the same privilege has been extended to other lines. At the beginning of the present year, ten officers of the service were employed as special pilots, and were thus not available for employment on general duty.

2. The system came under the consideration of Government in 1877, in connection with the practice of applications. It was then decided to leave it untouched. In 1879 the matter was again brought forward by several pilots, who urged that it operated unfairly towards those members of the service who were employed on ordinary work. This view was not accepted; but it was ruled that the employment of special pilots should be confined strictly to mail lines of steamers, under the express sanction of Government in each case, and that no pilot below the grade of senior master should be allowed to run as a special except on vessels of the tonnage allotted to his grade. A rule was subsequently added to the effect that when the cruising station was short of pilots the special pilot of an out-going steamer might be taken out for general duty. In July 1883 the Agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company complained that the Rangoon mail steamer had been detained by reason of this rule, and suggested that vessels belonging to that line should be exempted from its operation. In submitting their letter to Government, the Officiating Port Officer referred to the possible extension of the system by applications for special pilots from lines

of steamers not now employing them, and took occasion to examine its effect upon the trade of the port and the efficiency of the Pilot Service. In consequence

Mr. W. H. Grimley, Magistrate of Howrah, Captain J. Brebner, Officiating Port Officer, Calcutta, Mr. J. Stevenson, of Messrs. Grimley and Company, Mr. R. C. Rutherford, Branch Pilot.

President.

Members

of Captain Brebner's representations, it was decided, in December 1883, to appoint a Committee, consisting of the

gentlemen noted on the margin, to enquire into and report on the system of special pilots. While the Committee was sitting, Mr. Stevenson left Calcutta, and Mr. Turner, of Messrs. Turner, Morrison and Company, was nominated by the Chamber of Commerce to take his place.

3. The Committee held seven meetings, in the course of which they took the evidence of several representatives of ship-owning and mercantile firms, and of a number of pilots. Other firms communicated their views in writing. On the whole, the Committee have collected from all classes of persons interested in the subject a full expression of opinion, not only regarding special pilots, which was the question submitted to their consideration, but also on other matters connected with the port. The thanks of Government are due to the Committee for the full enquiry they have made and for the Report they have submitted. The Committee's Report shows that the supporters of the system of special pilots claim for it the following advantages:—

- (a)—It saves vessels from detention at the Sandheads in putting in and taking out a pilot.

- (b)—It enables the Agents of large steamers to get early information as to the draughts up to which they can be loaded with safety, and the most suitable dates for departure.

- (c)—It gives confidence to persons interested in a steamer carrying a valuable cargo to know that she is in charge of a man accustomed to handle her.

- (d)—The special pilots form a reserve force, which can be utilized in times of pressure.

On the other hand, it is alleged—

- (a)—That the shipping is deprived of the services of the special officers during the time they are absent from the port.

- (b)—That in times of occasional pressure, ships are liable to be detained at the Sandheads owing to dearth of pilots.

When the Committee's Report was submitted, the lines employing special pilots and the number of officers employed were the following:—

	Pilots.
British India Steam Navigation Company's Western Mail steamers ...	2
ditto ditto Eastern ditto ...	4
Messrs. Jardine, Skinner and Company's China Mail steamers ...	1
Messrs. Apcar and Company's China Mail steamers ...	1
Messageries Maritimes French Mail steamers ...	1
P. and O. Company's Mail steamer...	1
Total	10

With reference to these lines the Committee recommend—

- (i)—The abolition of the special pilots on the Chittagong line.

(ii)—Their retention on the Rangoon line, subject to a change of officers every six months, the appointments being offered in rotation to branch and master pilots.

(iii) a—Their abolition on the other lines, or

b—Their retention during the south-west monsoon, subject to the change suggested under (ii).

4. The two special pilots employed on the British India Western Mail steamers have already been withdrawn at the request of the Company, and it appears, from Mr. Wylie's statement at page 3 of the evidence recorded by the Committee, that there are no special grounds for maintaining special pilots on the Eastern Mail steamers running to Chittagong. These pilots, therefore, as well as those employed on the two China lines, may at once be withdrawn. The Committee have clearly shown that their retention is no longer necessary. The case of the Rangoon Mail steamers is different. These steamers occasionally find difficulty in catching the out-going English mail from Calcutta, and they run under a regular contract with the Indian Post Office. The steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company and of the Messageries Maritimes are also mail boats, though not under regular contract. They have long enjoyed the privilege of employing special pilots; and as the withdrawal of the privilege is not at present necessary in the interests of the port, the Lieutenant-Governor has decided to continue the privilege for the present to these lines under existing conditions. In future, then, there will be only four special pilots on the Hooghly—two for the British

India steamers running to Rangoon, and one for the Peninsular and Oriental Company and the Messageries Maritimes respectively. The Committee's proposal to change these officers every six months, and to offer the appointments in rotation to all branch and master pilots, need not, it seems to the Lieutenant-Governor, be insisted upon. The owners of the mail steamers, to which the privilege of employing special pilots has now been continued, attach weight to the right of selecting their men, and this condition forms an essential part of the system of special pilots.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Port Commissioners; to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce; to the Port Officer, Calcutta; to the members of the Committee mentioned above, for information. It is also ordered that copies be sent to the Editors of the Calcutta newspapers for publication.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

A. P. MACDONNELL,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

No. 1533T—G.

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

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,

H. H. RISLEY,

Offg. Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

DARJEELING,
The 15th August 1884. }

From Government of Bengal to Port Officer.

No. 2197_C—*Darjeeling the 18th September 1884.*

With reference to your letter No. 3309, dated the 2nd September 1884, I am directed to say that, under the circumstances now reported, which were not known to the Special Pilot Committee, the Lieutenant-Governor authorizes, in modification of the orders conveyed in this Government Resolution of the 15th August last, the retention by the British India Steam Navigation Company's Chittagong Mail Steamers of their special pilots.

No. 2181_C.

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

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

(Sd.) H. H. RISLEY,

Offg. Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

DARJEELING,
The 18th September 1884 }

**PROPOSED LEVY OF OCTROI FOR SUPPLEMENTING THE MUNICIPAL REVENUES,
AND APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO REPORT THEREON.**

The Government of Bengal having requested your Committee to nominate a delegate to represent the Chamber upon the Committee formed to consider whether octroi taxes could be imposed

in Calcutta for the benefit of the Municipality without any injury to trade, the duty was accepted by Mr. G. H. Morrison.

The Octroi Committee have forwarded this report to the Government of Bengal with whom the matter still rests. Your Committee, however, have no reason to fear that any commercial interest is likely to be affected.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 782,—*Calcutta the 18th July 1884.*

I AM directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, a copy of a letter *

* No. 952_C, dated the 28th June 1884, addressed by Government to the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, on the subject of increasing the Municipal revenues of the town with a view to place the Commissioners in funds for the execution of a comprehensive scheme for the sanitary and structural improvement of the town. It will be seen that the Commissioners have now submitted a proposal to increase their revenues by resorting to indirect taxation in the form of an octroi, like that levied in Bombay. As all the classes principally interested in this matter are not proportionately represented on the Municipal Board, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to refer the question to a Committee consisting of two members to be nominated by the Corporation, and one each by the Port Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades' Association. The Com-

mittee will be presided over by the Chairman of the Corporation and will contain another gentleman to be nominated by Government, as Member and Secretary, to represent its interests on the Board. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that such a Committee, consisting of experts with local knowledge and experience, sitting in Calcutta itself, and in constant communication with the Associations whom they represent, would have exceptional facilities for dealing with the entire subject and for arriving at a correct decision upon it. I am therefore desired to request that you will be good enough to invite the Chamber to nominate, at an early date, one of their number to represent their views, as it is necessary that the Committee should commence its sittings with the least possible delay, in order that any legislation that may be necessary may be initiated during the ensuing session of the Bengal Legislative Council.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 30th July 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have had before them your letter No. 782 of the 18th instant, with annexure, relative to a proposal for increasing the revenues of the Calcutta Municipality by resorting to indirect taxation in the form of an octroi, like that levied in Bombay; a scheme which the Honorable the Lieutenant-Governor desires to be fully considered by a special Committee.

The Committee desire me to acknowledge His Honor's invitation to nominate a member of the Chamber to

represent its interests, and to state for His Honor's information that Mr. G. H. Morrison, of Messrs. Turner, Morrison & Co., will be happy to serve as the Chamber's representative.

From Government of Bengal to the Chamber.

No. 840,—4th August 1884.

I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, a copy of a Resolution this day recorded by the Lieutenant-Governor, appointing a Committee to report upon the proposal to levy an octroi in Calcutta, and to request that it may be communicated to the gentleman who has been nominated by the Chamber to represent their views on the Committee.

Calcutta, the 4th August 1884.

RESOLUTION.

READ AGAIN—

Letter from the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, No. 4044, dated the 31st March 1884, in which attention was invited to the various Resolutions of the Government of India and the Local Government accepting the principle that municipalities should, as far as possible, be relieved of police charges over which they could exercise no control. It was at the same time pointed out that it was scarcely practicable in Calcutta to substitute for those charges the

expenditure on, and control over, the hospitals, colleges and schools which were supported by Government, and which in the mofussil had, in many cases, been made over to the municipalities. It was accordingly proposed that the municipality of Calcutta might be relieved of the police charges, and that the amount spent on this account might be devoted to the execution of a comprehensive scheme for the sanitary and structural improvement of the town, such as that referred to in the Government Resolution on the Administration Report of the Calcutta Municipality for the year 1882-83.

Letter to the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, No. 421T.—M., dated the 1st May 1884, in which, after a careful review of the financial condition of the Province, and of the previous decision of the Commissioners to set aside Rs. 1,50,000 a year for five years for bustee improvement, the Lieutenant-Governor proposed to increase the Government contribution on account of the Calcutta police from one-fourth to one-half of the total expenditure, thus relieving the rate-payers of taxation amounting to about Rs. 1,00,000 a year, on condition that the Commissioners undertook to set apart annually from their general fund a sum of not less than Rs. 2,50,000 for expenditure on sanitary works and on town improvements of a large and comprehensive character. It was at the same time pointed out that this sum could be provided without difficulty by raising the house-rate by one

per cent. simultaneously with the decrease in the police rate.

Letter from the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, No. 651, dated the 21st June 1884, in which exception was taken to the condition with which the offer of Government to increase its contribution on account of the police was coupled. The Commissioners demurred to the suggestion that the reduction of the police rate consequent on the transfer to Government of a part of the police charges should be made good by an equivalent increase of the house-rate. It was stated that the Commissioners were prepared to submit proposals for augmenting the revenues of the Corporation by having recourse to indirect taxation in the form of an octroi, like that levied in Bombay.

Letter to the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, No. 952T.—M., dated the 28th June 1884, communicating the observations of the Lieutenant-Governor on the proposal of the Committee to introduce an octroi in Calcutta, and proposing to refer the questions to a Committee containing representatives of all the classes principally interested.

Letter to the Commissioners for the Improvement of the Port of Calcutta to the Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades' Association, Nos. 781-S3, dated the 18th July 1884, inviting them each to nominate one of their members to represent their respective views on the Committee.

Letter from the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, dated the 16th July 1884.

Letter from the Secretary to the Calcutta Trades' Association, dated the 23rd July 1884.

Letter from the Vice-Chairman of the Port Commissioners, No. 1695, dated the 30th July 1884.

Letter from the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, dated the 30th July 1884.

In the letter to the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, No. 952T—M., dated the 28th June 1884, recited in the preamble, it was observed that the question of levying town duties in Calcutta was attended with difficulties, and that the Lieutenant-Governor would be unwilling to take any steps for the establishment of an octroi unless it were clearly shown that this could be done without causing undue harassment to the trade and commerce of the town. He was of opinion that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the proposals of the Commissioners was to refer the question to a Committee containing representatives of all the classes principally interested. He therefore asked the Port Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades' Association each to nominate a member, while the Chairman of the Corporation (who would be the President of the Committee) and two other members of the Corporation would be taken as the exponents of the views of the general public. It was also proposed to nominate one gentleman as Member and Secretary to the Committee to represent the interests of the Government. The replies from the Corporation, the Port Commissioners, the Chamber of

Commerce, and the Trades' Association have all been received, and in accordance with their recommendations the Lieutenant-Governor is pleased to appoint a Committee composed of the following gentlemen:—

Mr. William Craik.	Baboo Kally Nath Mitter.
Baboo Jadu Lal Mullick.	Mr. G. H. Morrison.
	Mr. A. H. Wallis.

Mr. H. L. Harrison, Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, will be the President; and Mr. C. E. Bucklaud will be a Member and Secretary to the Committee.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be forwarded to the Chairman of the Corporation; to the Vice-Chairman of the Port Commissioners; to the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce; to the Secretary to the Trades' Association, and to Mr. C. E. Bucklaud for information.

By order of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal,
COLMAN MACAULAY,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

SCHEME FOR SANITARY AND STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THE TOWN OF CALCUTTA.

The Chamber having been considerably consulted by the Corporation of Calcutta regarding structural improvements in the Town, the Committee recommended the opening of a new wide

street in continuation of the Hooghly Bridge Road, eastward, through Burra Bazar and on to Circular Road, and the widening of Bentinck Street (late Cossitollah Street) and the Chitpore Road. These recommendations appear to have met the approval of the Municipal Commissioners, and if carried out will facilitate traffic in the city and improve the health of the Native business-quarters.

From Corporation of Calcutta to Chamber.

No. 892,—Calcutta, 17th July 1884.

I AM requested to inform you that at a meeting held on the 15th instant, the Commissioners of the Town of Calcutta appointed a Committee for the purpose of considering the sanitary and structural needs of Calcutta, in order to prepare a comprehensive scheme for satisfying them in the order in which they are most pressing.

The Commissioners hope next year to be in a position not only to carry out the reforms which may be requisite to improve the sanitation of the town, but also to set to work upon some of the great structural improvements in the streets which are needed for the benefit of the traffic of the city.

The Chairman, therefore, hopes that the Chamber will favour him with their opinion on this question. If any new street is needed, what direction should it take? If widening existing streets is of more importance, what streets should be first widened?

I am specially requested to ask the opinion of the Chamber on this question whether relief, or, in other words, the provision of new or wider thoroughfares is most needed in the direction, north and south, or in regard to streets running east and west.

From Chamber to Corporation of Calcutta.

Calcutta, 24th July 1884.

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 892 of the 17th instant.

The Committee are glad to learn that the Municipal Commissioners have it in contemplation to prepare a comprehensive scheme for sanitary and structural improvements of this city, and they trust that the Commissioners will be able to accomplish the important ends they have in view.

In answer to the questions put to the Chamber by the Chairman of the Corporation in the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of your letter, I am desired to state that, in the opinion of the Committee:—

1. *A new wide street is much needed in continuation of the Hooghly Bridge Road, eastward, right through Burra Bazar across the Chitpore Road and on to Circular Road.* No part of the city is more in want of a good road through it than Burra Bazar, and the opening up of that densely populated district would be attended with very beneficial results to the health and traffic of the city.

2. *The Chitpore Road is much in want of widening, and so also is*

3. *Cossitollah-street ;*

but a new road through Burra Bazar is almost of more importance than these two last improvements would be, both in a sanitary and structural sense.

The Committee think that the city is fairly well accommodated with streets to the north and south, and that the great need is for streets east and west of the town. With Cossitollah and Chitpore widened and a broad road running into the latter from the Hooghly Bridge the native quarter of the town would be conveniently and completely reached, and a great deal of traffic would be taken off the Strand Road, and off the streets south of the Bridge ; and the Committee believe that if a good deal of land were taken up under the Land Acquisition Act in connection with the construction of a road eastward from the Bridge, it could be resold to almost pay for the improvement which the new road would prove, for the value of property along the road would increase immensely.

JUTE WAREHOUSE LICENSE FEES.

After a long and exhaustive correspondence with the Government of Bengal, regarding the appropriation of surplus funds realised by license fees levied under the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Act to purposes totally foreign to the

objects for which such fees were levied, the Committee regret that they have not succeeded in obtaining for the owners and occupiers of licensed warehouses a refund of the very large sums which they have paid in excess of what was necessary for maintaining the efficiency of the Fire-Brigade, and the application of which to other objects has been sanctioned by the local authorities. A perusal of the correspondence will disclose the circumstances under which the payers of the fees have been mulcted in a considerable amount which has been spent in improving parts of the town and in other illegitimate ways at their expense.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 8th January 1884

THE Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have had frequent occasion to address the Government of Bengal regarding the results of the working of the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Acts and the application of surplus funds realised by license fees levied under them ; and they have emphatically declared against the application of such funds to objects which had no connection with those contemplated by the Acts.

In writing to the Calcutta Municipality on the 15th of February 1878, the Lieutenant-Governor condemned a system which not only enforced the levy of fees greatly

in excess of what was required to defray all expenses incidental to the working of the Acts, but permitted the disposal of a considerable surplus to entirely foreign purposes.

In para. 5 of that letter it was stated—

"But from the accounts of 1876 it appears that in that year the receipts from the single item of Jute and Cotton Warehouse licenses amounted to a sum which not only defrayed the entire cost of inspection, &c., in working the Act, and the whole expense of the fire-brigade, but also yielded a surplus which allowed of a grant of Rs. 16,552 being made to the Alipore Lock Hospital, and also of a grant of Rs. 10,000 being made in aid of the general funds of the Suburban Municipality. The total cost of the fire-brigade is entered at Rs. 15,698; while the fees on warehouses in Calcutta were Rs. 29,291 and in the suburbs Rs. 20,794, or Rs. 50,085 in all."

And in the following para. it is written—

"But His Honor is of opinion that the fees charged under the Act should be fixed in such a manner as not to yield more than the sum required to render the fire-brigade self-supporting; and he would invite the Commissioners to keep this principle in view in dealing with all applications which may be made to them for reductions of the present assessment or for the issue of fresh licenses."

When the Jute Warehouse and Fire Brigade Acts of 1872 and 1875 were about to be amended, the Committee

of the Chamber protested against a provision in the amending Bill which altogether ignored the principle impressed upon the attention of the Municipality, and the Bill was modified in accordance with the intention already expressed, namely, of so regulating the fees that the income shall be just sufficient to meet the cost of collection, of superintendence and inspection of warehouses, and of the maintenance of the fire-brigades.

The Committee of the Chamber desire to remind the Government of this matter, as they have been informed that it is in contemplation to appropriate to purposes other than that to which any surplus may be properly applicable a portion of the funds in the hands of the Suburban Municipality, and they trust the Lieutenant-Governor will be pleased to direct a strict observance of the instructions which have been issued to guide the Municipality in dealing with any surplus they may have acquired.

In bringing this subject again to His Honor's notice, the Committee respectfully request they may be furnished with a statement showing how the funds raised from the Jute Warehouse License and Fire-Brigade fees have been disposed of.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 301—30th January 1884.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 8th instant, regarding the application of the fees realised in the Suburban Municipality under the Licensed Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Act.

2. In reply, I am directed to say that the Suburban Municipality have no surplus in their hands which might be diverted, as the Committee of the Chamber apprehend, to purposes other than those contemplated by the law. Under Section 16 of Act IV (B.C.) of 1883, the Municipal Commissioners are empowered to apply only 20 per cent. of the receipts to the expenses incurred in connection with inspection and the granting of licenses in respect of warehouses; and under section 17 the remaining 80 per cent. has to be paid over to the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, to whom the entire control and management of the Fire-Brigade for the Town and Suburbs of Calcutta and the Municipality of Bowrah has been transferred.

3. The new Act came into operation on the 16th May 1883, on which date the Calcutta fund had a deficit which was made good by the Calcutta Corporation, and the Suburban fund had a surplus of Rs. 23,603-2-11. Under Section 27 of the Act, the Lieutenant-Governor has directed that this surplus balance be made over to the Commissioner of Police for improving and renewing the plant of the Fire-Brigade.

4. With regard to your request to be furnished with a statement showing how the funds raised have been disposed of, I am desired to refer the Committee of the Chamber to the pages of the *Calcutta Gazette*,* noted in the margin, in which the annual reports of the funds for the town and suburbs of Calcutta for the year 1882-83 were published.

* *Calcutta Gazette* Supplement, June 15th, 1883, page 727; and August 15th, 1883, page 1212.

From Chamber to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 15th May 1884.

THE Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to address you again on the subject of the application of fees realised in the Calcutta and Suburban Municipalities under the Licensed Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Act.

In acknowledging the receipt of your reply No. 301 of the 30th January last, to their reference of the 8th idem, the Committee desire me to say that it does not sufficiently inform them on the special point which, in the interests of those who pay the fees in question, they are bound to press upon the attention of Government, and they are, therefore, under the necessity of making this further representation.

It is satisfactory to learn that the Committee's apprehension as to the disposal of a surplus in the hands of the Suburban Municipality to purposes other than those sanctioned by the law was based on imperfect information; but they venture to submit that their experience of the past justified them in considering it not improbable that some such appropriation was in contemplation.

The Committee direct me to thank you for having drawn their attention to the Government Gazettes in which the annual Reports on the working of the Jute Warehouse Act and Statements of the Funds for the Town and Suburbs of Calcutta for 1882-83 are published.

They there find account of receipts and expenditure, and they note that certain proportions have been contributed to the Fire-Brigade Fund.

It would appear that under section 17 of Act. IV of 1883, 80 per cent. of the fees levied under the Jute Warehouse Act are payable to the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, to whom the entire control and management of the Fire-Brigade for the town and suburbs of Calcutta and the Municipality of Howrah has been transferred: that the new Act came into operation on the 16th May 1883, on which date the Calcutta Fund had a deficit (the amount, however, is not stated) which was made good by the Calcutta Corporation, and the Suburban Fund had a surplus of Rs. 23,603-2-11, which, by direction of the Lieutenant-Governor, was made over to the Commissioner of Police for improving and renewing the plant of the Fire-Brigade.

It is with special reference to these contributions that the Committee desire to have all the information that can be given, and consequently it is necessary to trouble you again.

To the frequent representations that have been made by the Chamber of Commerce regarding the scale of fees payable by the owners or occupiers of Jute, Cotton or other Warehouses licensed for purposes recognised by the Jute Warehouse Act, assurances have been given that the Government will so regulate the fees that the income shall be just sufficient to meet the cost of collection, of superintendence, and inspection of warehouses, and of the maintenance of the Fire-Brigade in a due state of efficiency. The Government letters of 31st December 1878 and 1st March 1879, and the Chamber's of 24th February 1879, relative to the Bill to amend the Acts then in force, go fully into this question, and the following ex-

tracts are here given for convenience of immediate reference:—

From Government of Bengal, 31st December 1878.

"The Lieutenant-Governor agrees with the Committee of the Chamber in the opinion that it is unreasonable to make Jute and Cotton Warehouses pay, and more than pay, for the Fire-Brigade required for Calcutta and the suburbs, and the obvious remedy for the present state of things would be to increase the area of taxation, and to levy fees on all warehouses, buildings or places used for storing any dangerously inflammable material. The existing law does not, however, allow of any fee below a high minimum, and if the area of taxation be increased, the result would be to swell the present large income of the Fire-Brigade Fund, and to impose burdens on other trades besides the jute and cotton trades.

"A Bill has accordingly been drafted to amend the law, and I am desired by His Honor to forward herewith a copy thereof for the information of the Committee of the Chamber, and for any remarks or suggestions they may wish to make. It will be seen that it is proposed that the scale of fees should be one to be fixed and altered from time to time by Government, on the recommendation of the Municipalities concerned, and that Insurance Companies should be exempted from the tax which they at present pay."

From the Chamber, 24th February 1879.

"The Committee are glad to find that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor agrees with them in the unreasonableness of making only Jute and Cotton Warehouses pay,

and more than pay, for the Fire Brigade required for Calcutta and the suburbs, and that the purpose of the amending Bill is to relieve the trade in those articles from the heavy taxation which it at present bears.

"It has been declared by the Lieutenant-Governor that the maintenance of a Fire-Brigade is an object in which all classes of the community are interested and to which all ought to contribute, and that such contribution should be limited to the sum required to defray the actual expenditure incurred for the protection of the public.

"That, no doubt, is the true principle upon which such taxation should be levied, and the Committee hope it will always be acted upon in determining the scale of fees payable by the owners or occupiers of Jute, Cotton, or other Warehouses licensed for purposes recognised by the Bill.

"The Committee consider that these fees should be no higher than would be necessary to cover the expenses connected with the survey and license of such premises, and their opinion in this respect is supported by that of the Lieutenant-Governor, whose instructions to the Calcutta Municipality were conveyed in Government of Bengal letter, dated 15th February 1878, in the following words:—"*But His Honor is of opinion that the fees charged under the Act should be fixed in such a manner as not to yield more than the sum required to render the Fire-Brigade self-supporting; and he would invite the Commissioners to keep this principle in view in dealing with all applications which may be made to them for reductions of the present assessment or for the issue of fresh licenses.*"

"The justice and propriety of this instruction to the Municipality are so unquestionable, that the Committee cannot but express their astonishment and regret that the Bill should contain provisions which involve a positive departure from the direction laid down in the above extract, for the 27th section of the Bill is entirely at variance, inasmuch as it contemplates the creation of a fund which may present a surplus after payment of all expenses, and the application of such surplus to purposes other than that for which the fund is avowedly established.

"The Committee respectfully protest against provisions which completely ignore the principle which His Honor has forcibly impressed upon the attention of the Municipality, and desire to urge the application of any surplus of the Fire-Brigade Fund to the reduction of the scale of fees and penalties—the only legitimate purpose to which it can be applied."

From the Government of Bengal, 1st March 1879.

With reference to para. 6 of your letter, I am to say that the provision in section 27 of the Bill regarding the disposal of the surplus of the receipts, to which the Committee of the Chamber take exception, is merely a reproduction of a portion of the existing law, and that the Government will carry out the intention already expressed of so regulating the fees that the income shall be just sufficient to meet the cost of collection, of superintendence and inspection of warehouses, and of the maintenance of the fire-brigades. The Lieutenant-Governor

therefore has no objection to the Bill being modified in accordance with this intention."

It is, therefore, a matter of extreme surprise and regret to the Committee of the Chamber that they find the following paragraphs in the Administration Report of the Commissioners of the Town of Calcutta for 1880.

JUTE AND FIRE-BRIGADE FUND.

"This fund owes its origin to several disastrous fires which broke out in Jute Warehouses in 1871. It was then proposed to license such warehouses and take a fee for the license. The income was devoted to maintain a more efficient Fire-Brigade, to which the suburbs should contribute an equitable proportion. These discussions led to the enactment of Act 2 (B. C.) of 1872 and to the formation of the old Fire-Brigade Fund under section 25 of that Act. The Brigade was placed under the control of the Justices, and the fund accumulated a balance of Rs. 64,583. This fund has since been closed, and the Lieutenant-Governor has bestowed Rs. 60,000 out of the balance to the improvement of the town.

"Under the new Jute Warehouse Act V. (B. C.) of 1879, a new fund has been formed, the receipts of which from licenses and miscellaneous aggregated Rs. 28,531. The disbursements within the year were only Rs. 22,417, but Rs. 3,849 were still owing to the Fire-Brigade for the quarter ending December 1880. Under the new Act the Fire-Brigade is placed under the orders of the Commissioner of Police instead of under the Municipality.

And as the Police year runs from April to March instead of from January to December, five quarters' expenditure will have to be met in 1881-82 from four quarters' income. This will convert the present surplus of the fund into a deficit, which the declining income from Jute licenses threatens to make chronic. The question of equalising receipts and expenditure is therefore under consideration."

Notwithstanding the representations of the Chamber and the assurance of Government that every endeavour would be made to lighten, as much as possible, the burden of a special local taxation upon a trade that needs all the relief that can possibly be given to it, a surplus of upwards of Rs. 64,000 had accumulated by the process of excessive charges, and instead of being refunded to the tax-payers, or applied in reduction of future assessments, or carried to credit of the new fund, no less than Rs. 60,000 were, at the instance of the Chairman of the Municipality, and with the sanction of the Lieutenant-Governor, handed over to the Corporation of Calcutta to be set apart, with a special vote by the Commissioners of a like sum, for the improvement of the Town, by widening the Chitpore Road.

And this appropriation has been suggested and sanctioned in direct contravention of Act 5 of 1879, the 24th section of which enacts as follows :—

"The Commissioners and Municipal Commissioners of the Suburbs and Howrah, respectively, shall apply the moneys derived from the fees and penalties levied under this Act within their respective jurisdictions.

Application of moneys received under Act.

- (1). "In payment of the expenses of a fire-brigade ;
- (2). "In payment of all expenses incurred by them respectively in or about the inspection and superintendence of jute warehouses, and the granting of licenses in respect thereof.

"Any balance which may remain after payment of such expenses shall be applied in reduction of the fees levied on licenses for jute warehouses under this Act."

The Committee of the Chamber greatly regret the necessity for a renewed remonstrance against diverting these fees to purposes not contemplated by the Act ; but they consider it their duty to bring the matter to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor : and they trust that His Honor will be pleased to direct that accounts of receipt and expenditure of both the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Funds be rendered from the date the license fees were first levied to the present time, in order that the tax-payers may have a right apprehension of the manner in which the fees levied from them have been disposed of ; and the Committee are confident that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will take early steps for repairing the grave injustice that has been done, and ordering the Fire-Brigade Fund to be at once credited with the amount by which the town has been benefited at the expense of the owners and occupiers of licensed warehouses.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 789 T M, the 6th June 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 15th ultimo, containing a further representation from the Chamber on the subject of the application of the fees realized in the Calcutta and Suburban Municipalities, under the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Act. Reference is made to the correspondence of 1878 and 1879, which preceded the passing of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879, regarding the scale of fees payable by the owners or occupiers of jute, cotton, or other warehouses licensed for purposes recognized by the Act, and the manner in which these should be regulated ; and in view of the principle then recognized by Government, the Chamber take exception to the grant made in 1881 from the balance of the old Fire-Brigade Fund to the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta for widening the Chittpore Road. They consider that the grant was made in violation of section 24 of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879, which prescribes that any balance which may remain, after payment of the expenses of the Fire-Brigade and of the inspection, &c., of warehouses, "shall be applied in reduction of the fees levied on licenses for Jute warehouses under this Act." They accordingly ask that accounts of receipts and expenditure of both the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Funds may be furnished to them from the date the license fees were first levied down to the present time ; and they "are confident that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will take early steps for repairing the grave injustice that has been

done, and ordering the Fire-Brigade Fund to be at once credited with the amount by which the town has been benefited at the expense of the owners and occupiers of licensed warehouses."

2. In reply, I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, the accompanying copies of the accounts, receipts and expenditure of the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Funds from the year 1875. I am at the same time directed to explain that the Chamber are under a misapprehension regarding the grant of Rs. 60,000 made by Government to the Calcutta Corporation. It is true that the grant was made out of the balance (Rs. 64,519) of the old Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Fund. This, however, was done advisedly, and in making the grant Government in no way overstepped the law. The balance, Rs. 64,519, was the balance that had accumulated under the old Act II. (B.C.) of 1872, which was amended by Act II. (B.C.) of 1875. It will be seen that by section 7 of the latter Act, read in connection with section 25 of the former Act, the Justices were empowered to apply any balance that might accrue, after payment of all necessary expenses, "for the benefit of the Town of Calcutta and the Suburbs thereof in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal may direct." The provision contained in section 24 of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879, that any balance should be applied in reduction of license fees, was introduced into the law at the instance of the Chamber for the first time, on the enactment of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879. Manifestly, therefore, that provision has no application to any surplus that might have accrued prior to the passing of

that Act. It would no doubt have been open to the Lieutenant-Governor to have transferred the balance of the old Fund to the credit of the new Fund (i. e., the Fund formed under Act V. (B.C.) of 1879,) had he thought fit. There was, however, no legal obligation upon him to do so, and the Act of 1875 distinctly contemplated that the surplus that might accrue under it should be spent for the general improvement of the town and suburbs. The late Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Ashley Eden, considered that it was unadvisable to transfer the surplus to the credit of the new Fund, for the reason that, were this done, it would be necessary under the new law to apply the surplus to the reduction of the fees levied under the Act. The Town and Suburbs would have benefited very little, while the jute warehouse owners would have been freed from the payment of fees for nearly two years. As this was not in accordance with the provisions of the law under which the surplus had accumulated, Sir Ashley Eden directed, under section 7, Act II. (B.C.) of 1875, that the bulk of the surplus, Rs. 60,000, should be paid over to the Calcutta Corporation to be expended in widening the Chitpore Road for the general improvement of the town, and he transferred to the credit of the new Fund only a small working balance of Rs. 4,519. The reason why the money was allotted to the widening of the Chitpore Road will be found in the accompanying copy of a letter,* which was addressed

* No. 288, dated the 6th April 1881.

at the time to the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation.

3. Besides the above grant of Rs. 60,000 to the Calcutta Corporation, the only payments that have been

made from the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Funds, other than the ordinary expenditure on the Fire-Brigade, and on the inspection and licensing of warehouses, have been the following :—

- (1) Rs. 35,000, paid in August 1875, to the Justices for widening a narrow lane on the east of the Municipal Office.
- (2) Rs. 5,000, paid in January 1876, for the same object.
- (3) Rs. 16,352, paid in November 1875, for providing additional accommodation at the Alipore Lock Hospital.
- (4) Rs. 10,000, paid in January 1876, to the Surtalbau Municipality, to be spent at their discretion on the improvement of the Municipality.

These grants, it will be seen, were all made prior to the passing of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879, and in pursuance of the policy embodied in section 7 of Act II. (B.C.) of 1875. No injustice, therefore, has been done to any one by these grants, and no refunds are necessary. Since the enactment of Act V. (B.C.) of 1879, in which it was, for the first time, provided that the balance, after payment of the necessary expenses, should be applied in reduction of fees, no such grants have been made for purposes foreign to the Act.

From COLMAN MACADAM, Esq., Offg. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Chairman of the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta.—No. 288, Calcutta, the 5th April 1881.

THE report of the Commissioner of Police on the work, ing of the old Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Acts for the period ending 31st March 1880, showed a large balance to the credit of the Fund. Under the law this balance must be expended for the benefit of the Town and Suburbs, and the Lieutenant-Governor has for some time had under his consideration the question of disposing of it in the manner most advantageous to the Jute trade, as well as to the public generally. Sir Ashley Eden is satisfied that the money should be spent on some definite work of permanent improvement, and not frittered away in contributions to the support of the Fire-Brigade under the new Act; and there is probably no work to which it could be more appropriately devoted, than the opening out and improvement of communications in the northern part of the Town. Throughout a large portion of the busiest part of the native town the means of communication are altogether insufficient, and the public convenience and health are injuriously affected. Considerable areas are closed to all but foot-passengers, and the thoroughfares are too narrow to accommodate the cart traffic. The Chitpore Road has for many years failed to afford proper passage to the traffic of the town as it has now grown up, especially to the Jute traffic. Between Cornwallis Street and the Chitpore Road, there is a large block of houses which is hardly open at present to carriage traffic. The completion of Beadon Street is one of the most important works which could be under-

taken. The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that if the Municipality would make an annual grant for widening streets they could in the course of a few years do much towards opening up the native town.

2. The balance of the old Fire-Brigade Fund now available for expenditure, after allowing for the grant towards the expenses under the new Act applied for in your letter No. 11, dated 2nd ultimo, is about Rs. 60,000, and this sum, as suggested by your predecessor last September, might most advantageously be employed for the improvement of the Chitpore Road and the relief of the Jute and general traffic. The Lieutenant-Governor has accordingly directed the Commissioner of Police to place the amount at the disposal of the Municipality for this purpose. Much may be done gradually to improve this important thoroughfare, and as the Municipality can make funds available they should endeavour to take the matter up systematically, opening out the narrowest places first. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that the grant now made will induce the Corporation to address themselves vigorously to the work of improving communications throughout the northern part of the town.

From Chamber to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 30th June 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 789 T.M. of the 6th instant, in reply to their representation relative to the application of the fees realised in the Calcutta and

Suburban Municipalities under the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Acts.

Your letter informs the Committee—

(1.) That they are under a misapprehension regarding the grant of Rs. 60,000 made by Government to the Calcutta Corporation: that although the grant was made out of the balance of Rs. 64,519 of the old Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Fund, it was done advisedly, and that the Government in no way overstepped the law, since the Justices were empowered to apply any balance that might accrue, after payment of all necessary expenses, for the benefit of the town of Calcutta and the suburbs thereof in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor might direct.

(2.) That the provision of Act V. of 1879, that any balance should be applied in reduction of license fees, has no application to any surplus that might have accrued prior to the passing of that Act.

(3.) That although the late Lieutenant-Governor might, if he thought fit to do so, have transferred the balance of the old fund to the credit of the new fund created under the Act of 1879, there was no legal obligation upon him to do so, and that Act of 1875 distinctly contemplated that the surplus that might accrue under it should be spent for the general improvement of the town and suburbs.

(4.) That the Lieutenant-Governor did not consider it advisable to transfer the surplus to the credit of the new fund for the reason that, were that done, it would be necessary under the new law to apply the surplus to the

reduction of the fees levied under the Act : that the town and suburbs would have benefited very little, while the owners of Jute Warehouses would have been freed from the payment of fees for nearly two years.

(5.) That, as this was not in accordance with the provisions of the law under which the surplus had accumulated, Sir Ashley Eden directed, under section 7 of the Act of 1875, that the bulk of the surplus, Rs. 60,000, should be transferred to the Calcutta Corporation, to be expended in widening the Chitpore Road for the general improvement of the town, and he transferred to the credit of the new fund only a small working balance of Rs. 4,519.

(6.) That the reasons for selecting the Chitpore Road as a part of the town which required opening out, and to the improvement of which the Rs. 60,000 might most advantageously be applied, are given in the letter of 5th April 1881, from the Government of Bengal to the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation.

(7.) That besides this grant of Rs. 60,000, the following sums have been taken from the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Fund and appropriated to the following objects :—

Rs. 35,000 in August, 1875	} for widening a narrow lane on the east of the Municipal Office ;
Rs. 5,000 in January 1876	
Rs. 16,552 in November 1875, for additional accommodation in the Alipore Lock-hospital ; and	
Rs. 10,000 in January 1876, for improvement of the Suburban Municipality.	

(8.) That all these grants, aggregating Rs. 1,26,562 were made prior to the passing of Act V. of 1879, that no injustice has been done to any one by these grants, and that no refunds are necessary.

(9.) That since the enactment of Act V. of 1879 which provided that the balance, after payment of necessary expenses, should be applied in reduction of fees, no such grants have been made for purposes foreign to the Act.

The Committee desire me to say that while they are indebted to the Lieutenant-Governor for the reply which has been given to their representation, they cannot abstain from expressing the very great disappointment with which they receive His Honor's justification of his predecessor's action in this matter, and his inability to respond favorably to the very reasonable request submitted by them in behalf of the interests which it is their duty to endeavour to protect.

It is therefore incumbent on the Committee to renew their application, and to support it by the following remarks, which they trust will serve to satisfy His Honor that they have sufficient grounds for this further appeal to his consideration.

The expediency of providing for the organization and maintenance of a Fire-Brigade was the primary and substantive object of legislation, as declared in the preamble to Act II of 1872 ; all the provisions of that enactment had reference to the special purposes for which the law was made ; and the 25th section provides, as follows, for the

application of all monies derived from the sources sanctioned by the Act.

The Justices and Municipal Commissioners respectively shall apply the monies derived from the fees and penalties levied under this Act within their respective jurisdictions in payment of all expenses incurred by them respectively in or about the inspection and superintendence of Jute Warehouses and the granting of licences in respect thereof. *In the case of Calcutta and the Suburbs, the balance of such monies after payment of the said expenses shall be paid to the credit of an account in the books of the Justices to be called the Fire-Brigade Account."*

In January 1875, a bill was introduced into the Bengal Council by the Hon'ble Stuart Hogg, the then Chairman of the Municipality, which had for its object the amendment of the Act of 1872, especially with the view to modify the restrictive clauses which unduly and unnecessarily prejudiced the Jute trade: and after various amendments in Select Committee and in Council the Bill was passed in March following and became Act V. of 1875.

Now a very material amendment had been introduced into this Bill, which unaccountably escaped the notice of the Chamber at the time, and the Committee cannot, after so long an interval, say how the amending section went unchallenged by any Member of the Council.

The section is as follows:—

"To section twenty-five of the Jute Warehouse and Fire-

Addition to Section 25 of Bengal Act II. of 1872.

Brigade Act 1872, the following words shall be added, (namely):—

"And shall be applied by the Justices for the benefit of the town of Calcutta and the suburbs thereof in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal may direct;

"and in the case of the Municipality of Howrah, the balance of such monies, after payment of the said expenses shall be paid to the credit of the Municipal Commissioners of Howrah, and shall be applied by them for the purposes of a Fire-Brigade, or for such other purposes for the benefit of the Municipality of Howrah as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal may direct."

The Committee of the Chamber greatly regret that an amendment of this character should have been passed by the Council, for it rested in the Lieutenant-Governor and the Justices a power to divert the funds raised for a special purpose to objects totally foreign to the primary subject which the original legislation was intended to promote, viz., *the establishment of an efficient Fire-Brigade,—and nothing else.*

But by the light which subsequent proceedings threw on the matter, there was unquestionably a particular object to be gained by the introduction of this clause, and the balance which had accumulated at credit of the Fire-Brigade Fund was at once swept away by improving, at a cost of Rupees 40,000, the immediate neighbourhood of the office of the Municipal Commissioners, and by large grants to the Alipore Lock Hospital and the Suburban Municipality.

The Committee respectfully question if this disposition of the surplus contributed by a severely-taxed industry is, in His Honor's judgment, a fair and equitable method of

supplementing the general funds of the Calcutta and Suburban Municipalities. And this, too, notwithstanding repeated complaints and assurances that the rates of charges for licences were unduly high, and that a necessity for large reductions was evidenced by the fact that, over and above the actual expenditure incurred for the Fire-Brigade, there was a considerable surplus in the hands of the Justices at the time when the Act of 1875 was passed.

The Committee of the Chamber must perforce acknowledge that the law was not overstepped in making the earlier grants in question, for the Act conveyed the power to deal with the surplus in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor might direct, and that there was no legal obligation to transfer so much of the surplus to the new Funds created under the Act of 1879: but it appears to the Committee that it would have been more just to have permitted such surplus to be absorbed in time by the legitimate charges of the Fire-Brigade, or distributed *pro-rata* among those who contributed towards it, or to have so reduced the fees as to lighten the burden borne by those who were liable to pay the tax.

With regard, however, to the sum of Rs. 60,000 appropriated to improving the Chitpore Road, the Committee have taken legal opinion, and are informed that such expenditure was altogether *ultra vires*, as the Act under which the late Lieutenant-Governor had power to sanction such disposal of the funds had been expressly repealed by Act V. of 1879.

That a grave injustice has been done the Committee respectfully regret; a disclaimer is contained in the con-

cluding paragraph of your letter, but it is obviously inconsistent with what is admitted in the second paragraph, for it is there written:—"The Town and Suburbs would have benefited very little, while the Jute Warehouse owners would have been freed from the payment of fees for nearly 2 years;" and this freedom from taxation would have been prolonged for nearly 2 years more if the 60,000 Rs. appropriated to the Chitpore Road had been held at credit of the Fund. Or, if the surplus had been refunded to those who had contributed to it, the amount would not have been "frittered away," but a substantial relief afforded especially to those who can ill spare the license fees.

But the Committee go further, and desire to bring to His Honor's notice a fact which, in their judgment, completely establishes the position they have ventured to occupy in this correspondence.

When it was proposed to alter Act V of 1875, the Committee of the Chamber did not fail to look closely into the amending Bill; they at once protested against the 27th Section being incorporated in the new Act, and the abandonment of the objectionable clause and the modification of the Bill in accordance with the views submitted by the Chamber bear emphatic testimony to the impropriety of the legislation in 1875.

The following extracts from the Chamber's letter of 24th February 1879, and Government of Bengal reply of 1st March 1879, bearing on this point, are here given:—

"The Committee consider that these fees should be no higher than would be necessary to cover the expenses

connected with the survey and license of such premises, and their opinion in this respect is supported by that of the Lieutenant-Governor, whose instructions to the Calcutta Municipality were conveyed in Government of Bengal letter, dated 15th February 1878, in the following words:—"But His Honor is of opinion that the fees charged under the Act should be fixed in such a manner as not to yield more than the sum required to render the Fire-Brigade self-supporting; and he would invite the Commissioners to keep this principle in view in dealing with all applications which may be made to them for reductions of the present assessment or for the issue of fresh licenses."

"The justice and propriety of this instruction to the Municipality are so unquestionable, that the Committee cannot but express their astonishment and regret that the Bill should contain provisions which involve positive departure from the direction laid down in the above extract, for the 27th section of the Bill is entirely at variance, inasmuch as it contemplates the creation of a Fund which may present a surplus after payment of all expenses, and the application of such surplus to purposes other than that for which the fund is avowedly established. The Committee respectfully protest against provisions which completely ignore the principle which His Honor has forcibly impressed upon the attention of the Municipality, and desire to urge the application of any surplus of the Fire-Brigade Fund to the reduction of the scale of fees and penalties—the only legitimate purpose to which it can be applied."

From the Government of Bengal to Chamber.

Calcutta, 1st March 1879.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 24th ultimo, on the subject of the amendment of the existing law relating to Jute Warehouses and Fire-Brigades in the town and suburbs of Calcutta and Howrah: With reference to para. 6 of your letter, I am to say that the provision in section 27 of the Bill regarding the disposal of the surplus of the receipts to which the Committee of the Chamber take exception, is merely a reproduction of a portion of the existing law, and that the Government will carry out the intention already expressed of so regulating the fees that the income shall be just sufficient to meet the cost of collection, of superintendence, and inspection of warehouses, and of the maintenance of the fire-brigades. The Lieutenant-Governor therefore has no objection to the Bill being modified in accordance with this intention."

The Committee submit that the mere reproduction of that portion of the law to which the Chamber took exception would have been a perpetuation of a power the exercise of which has resulted in the grievance of which the Chamber has felt constrained to complain. If the clause was held by the Chamber, and admitted by the Lieutenant-Governor, to be objectionable in 1879, it must have been equally so in 1875; and its incorporation into the Act of 1875, for a purpose which subsequent transactions clearly shew to have been preconceived, was, in the Committee's judgment, an error in the early administration of Sir Richard Temple

which has resulted in hardship to the owners and occupiers of jute warehouses: and the Committee cannot but deprecate the action of Sir Ashley Eden in sanctioning, in 1831, a measure so entirely at variance with his official instructions to the Municipality in 1878, and the views recorded by him a year later in the letter above quoted.

In conclusion, I am desired to say that the accounts which you have been so good as to forward for information do not serve the Chamber's purpose, as they are not only imperfectly rendered, but accompanied by an Office Memorandum stating that the Fire-Brigade Budgets from 1875 to 1879 are wanting.

Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 808—Calcutta, the 30th July 1884.

With reference to the last paragraph of your letter dated the 30th ultimo I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, the accompanying copies of the Budget Estimates of the Jute Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Funds for the years 1875 to 1879 (both years inclusive), and to say that the office memo., stating that the budgets for these years were wanting, was issued through an oversight. I am to add that a further communication will be made to the Chamber on the points raised in your letter referred to above.

From the Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 1515 TM—23rd September 1884.

In your letter dated the 30th June last, the Chamber of Commerce represented that they had been advised that the grant of Rs. 60,000 to the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, sanctioned by the late Lieutenant-Governor from the surplus receipts of the old Fire-Brigade Fund, was *ultra vires*, as the Jute Warehouse Act of 1875, under which Government had authority to sanction such disposal of the funds, had been expressly repealed by Act V (B. C.) of 1879.

2. I am now directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber, a copy of the Hon'ble the Advocate-General's opinion on the subject. It will be seen that the Advocate-General is of opinion that, far from the law having been contravened in making the grant of Rs. 60,000 for the improvement of the town, it would not have been consistent with its provisions to have devoted the balance at credit of the old fund to any other purpose. This balance was the property by law of the Corporation under Act II (B. C.) of 1872, and Act II (B. C.) of 1875 were repealed, and the late Lieutenant-Governor would not have been justified in applying it in the reduction of the license-fee under the subsequent Act of 1879.

OPINION.

SECTION 25 of Act II (B. C.) of 1872 provided that, after payment of certain expenses, the balance of the moneys levied under that Act in Calcutta and the Suburbs, save

Howrah, should be credited to an account in the books of the Commissioners (*i. e.*, the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta) to be called the "Fire-Brigade Account."

No provision was made in that Act for the disposal of the surplus standing to the credit of the "Fire-Brigade Account."

By section 7 of Act II (B. C.) of 1875 it was provided that the last-mentioned surplus should be by the Commissioners (*i. e.*, the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta) applied for the benefit of the Town of Calcutta and the Suburbs in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal might direct.

These two Acts were repealed by Act V (B. C.) of 1879. This latter Act does not deal with the fund of the "Fire-Brigade Account;" nor does it create a Fire-Brigade Fund. It provides independently (*i. e.*, out of the moneys to be derived from the fees and penalties levied thereunder) for the following payments:—

1st—the expenses of the Fire-Brigade;

2nd—for inspection and superintendence of jute warehouses, &c., &c., and it further provides for the disposal of any balance in reduction of fees to be levied on licenses (*see* section 24); and by section 25, provision is made for contribution by the Commissioners for the Town of Calcutta and the Suburban Commissioners in respect of certain expenses therein mentioned. This last provision casts a burden on the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta which would appear not to have existed before.

Under the above circumstances, I am of opinion that in dealing with the sum of Rs. 60,000, part of the surplus standing to the credit of the Fire-Brigade Account, the late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal did not contravene the provisions of section 24 of Act V (B. C.) of 1879.

Secondly, that at the time the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal dealt with the sum of Rs. 60,000, part of the fund above adverted to, he had no power of disposal over it, the power under section 7 of Act II of 1875 having been repealed by Act V of 1879, and not having been at such time in existence.

The power of disposition conferred by section 7 of Act II of 1875 having been taken away, the amount at credit of the Fire-Brigade Account at the time of the repeal of Act II (B. C.) of 1872 and Act II (B. C.) of 1875 in point of law belonged to the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta, and remained no longer subject to any such trust or control as was imposed by section 7 of Act II of 1875. That being so, the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta could deal with it as they liked. The order of the late Lieutenant-Governor, placing the disposal of the sum of Rs. 60,000, part of the Fire-Brigade Account, towards the improvement of the Chitpore Road, merely pointed the direction in which that sum of money was to be expended. The Corporation of the Town of Calcutta might, independently of such direction, have applied the sum of Rs. 60,000 to the improvement of the Chitpore Road.

G. C. PAUL.

The 30th August 1881.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 20th October 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1315 T. M. of the 23rd of last month forwarding, for their information, a copy of opinion by the Honorable the Advocate-General on the subject of the grant of Rs. 60,000 to the Corporation of Calcutta for the improvement of the Town as sanctioned by the late Lieutenant-Governor from the surplus receipts of Jute Warehouse licence fees.

The Committee note that the Advocate-General has recorded the opinion that the law has not been contravened in making such grant, and that it would not have been consistent with its provisions to have devoted to any other purpose the balance at credit of the old Fire-Brigade Fund.

The Committee instruct me to express their thanks for this opinion, but as it is at variance with that received by the Chamber and which guided them in addressing you on the 30th of June last, it will be satisfactory to the Committee if His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will permit them to be furnished with copy of the case upon which the Advocate-General's opinion was given.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 1208—Calcutta the 28th November 1884.

In compliance with the request contained in your letter dated the 20th ultimo, I am directed to forward for the information of the Chamber, a copy of a letter* addressed to the Soli-

* No. 12455, dated the 18th August 1884.

citor to the Government of India in which he was asked to obtain the opinion of the Advocate-General as regards the legality of the grant of Rs. 60,000 to the Corporation of the Town of Calcutta sanctioned by the late Lieutenant-Governor from the surplus receipts of the old Fire Brigade Fund.

From Govt. of Bengal to Solicitor to Govt. of India.

No. 1248T—M, Darjeeling the 18th August 1884.

I am directed to forward copies of the correspondence noted in the margin, which has taken place between the

Government of Bengal and the Chamber of Commerce, on the subject of the disposal of the receipts under the Jute-Warehouse and Fire-Brigade Act, 1875, and to request

Letter from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, dated 8th January 1884.
Letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, No. 301, dated 30th January 1884.
Letter from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, dated 15th May 1884.
Letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, No. 7591—M, dated 6th June 1884.
Letter from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, dated 30th June 1884.

that you will be good enough to obtain and submit, for the information of Government, an expression of the

opinion of the Hon'ble the Advocate-General on the point raised therein.

2. Section 25 of Act II (B.C.) of 1872, while providing for the application of funds raised under the Act, empowered the Justices in the case of Calcutta, and the Municipal Commissioners in the case of the Suburbs, to pay to the credit of an account, to be called the Fire-Brigade Account, the unexpended balance of all sums realized under the Act. The Act, however, contained no provision for the disposal of this unexpended balance. This omission was remedied by subsequent legislation and section 7 of Act II (B.C.) of 1875 accordingly provided that the balance should be applied by the Justices for the benefit of the Town of Calcutta and the Suburbs in such manner as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal might direct. In 1878, when the question of amending and consolidating the law relating to the Fire-Brigade was under consideration, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce raised objections to the re-enactment of these clauses, and represented the injustice of applying any surplus receipts that might accrue for purposes foreign to the objects of the Act. This view was accepted by the Government and the Legislature, and it was accordingly provided by section 24 of the new Act V (B.C.) of 1879 that any balance which might remain after payment of expenses should be applied in reduction of the fees levied on licenses for jute-warehouses under the Act. This clause clearly governs the disposal of all surplus receipts which might accrue after the Act became law; but there is no specific provision regarding the surplus which had already accumulated under the operation of the old Act. Some

delay occurred in reporting what was the precise balance which stood to the credit of the Fire-Brigade Fund on the date when the new Act came into force, and it was not till June 1880 that the amount of this balance was finally ascertained to be Rs. 64,519. The whole of this sum consisted of accumulations of fees, fines, &c., under the old Act, and should, under the operation of that Act, have been expended, under the instructions of the Lieutenant-Governor, for the benefit of the Town and Suburbs. It appeared to Sir Ashley Eden that, as the law stood, it was open to him either to expend it in this manner, or to transfer it to the credit of the new Fund to be formed under Act V (B.C.) of 1879. After mature consideration and communication with the Commissioner of Police, the Lieutenant-Governor decided that the money might most advantageously be spent in widening the Chittpore Road, and thereby afford further facilities for the jute traffic which was gradually increasing. The sum of Rs. 60,000 was accordingly placed at the disposal of the Calcutta Municipality, on the 5th April 1884, for the improvement of the Chittpore Road.

3. It will be seen from their letters of the 15th May and 30th June last, that the Chamber of Commerce held that the above grant was made in contravention of section 24 of Act V (B.C.) of 1879. I am to enquire if, in the opinion of the Hon'ble the Advocate-General, the grant was, under the circumstances, *ultra vires*. It may be noted that if the contention of the Chamber of Commerce is correct [*i.e.*, that the repeal of the Act II (B.C.) of 1875 barred the Lieutenant-Governor from disposing of the surplus under that Act in accordance

with its provisions the claim to have the balance devoted to the reduction of fees under Act V (B.C.) of 1879 would equally appear to fall to the ground, as this Act only provides for the disposal of "the moneys derived from the fees, and penalties levied under this Act."

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

COLMAN MACAULAY,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

PAYMENT OF HOSPITAL CHARGES FOR SICK SAILORS OUT OF PORT FUNDS.

An expression of opinion having been invited on a proposition that in consideration of a lump sum paid to them annually out of Port Funds the Government shall provide for the maintenance in hospital of sick sailors from vessels arriving at the port of any Presidency, and that the Indian Ports Act of 1875 be amended so as to cover that provision, the Committee replied that it would be a great improvement to do away with the present system of levying hospital dues if arrangements could be made to defray the necessary charges in the manner proposed, care being taken not to throw too heavy a burden upon the port in connection with the care of sick seamen.

From the Government of India, to the Government of Bengal,—

No. 631, Calcutta, the 31st January 1884.

I AM desired to forward copy of a Resolution of the Government of Bombay, No. 476, dated the 11th October 1883, proposing that section 59 of the Indian Ports Act, 1875, be amended in such manner as to enable the Trustees for the Port of Bombay to pay Government annually out of the Port Fund a lump sum in consideration of the Government providing for the maintenance in hospital of sick sailors from ships arriving at the port.

2. The Government of India agree with the Trustees that it is desirable not to levy any dues on shipping that can possibly be avoided, and, as at present advised, the President in Council is of opinion that the proposed amendments of the law might expediently be carried further than is proposed and made general, so as to enable other large ports, such as Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon, to dispense with the levy of hospital dues, and pay the hospital charges of sick seamen from port funds, where the funds are in a position to pay them.

3. Legislation to this effect would necessarily involve the amendment of section 47 of the Act, hospital charges not being specially included in the expenses therein specified as chargeable to the Port Fund account; while they cannot be held to come under the definition of "all other works maintained chiefly for the benefit of vessels," &c. I am to request that, after consultation with the Port authorities, the President in Council may be favoured with the views of the Local Government upon this question, and that any objection to the amendments suggested in the

Indian Ports Act may be stated at the earliest date possible.

BOMBAY CASTLE.

No. 476.—*The 11th October 1883.*

Transfer from the General Department, No. 1346, dated 19th April 1883—

Of a memorandum from the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bombay, No. 1799, dated 14th April 1883, who submits a correspondence from the Surgeon-Major in medical charge of the European General Hospital, Bombay, bringing to notice that at present seamen admitted into hospital pay, whilst their ship is in harbour, Rs. 1 per diem, but as soon as the ship leaves no more payment, in the majority of cases, is made; hence a great loss falls upon Government in many instances; and suggesting that the rules as applied to the Calcutta shipping with respect to tonnage fees being charged to ships to cover expenses of seamen when sent to hospital should be made applicable to Bombay.

Letter from the Secretary, Bombay Port Trust, No. 1234, dated 26th April 1883 :—

"Before making any remarks on the principle involved in the question raised by the Medical Department in the papers forwarded with your No. 152—S., dated 21st instant, the Trustees, I am directed to state, would like to be informed :—

- (1)—What number of seamen have been cared for in the European General Hospital during, say,

last year, showing the number of days paid for and the number of days not paid for.

- (2)—The total number of patients treated at the European General Hospital during the same period, so that it may be seen what proportion the sailors bear to the whole number of patients. Also the number of such patients who pay and of those who do not pay.

- (3)—The net expenditure on the European General Hospital for the same period."

Transfer to the General Department, No. 59—P.T., dated 28th April 1883—

Of the above, with a request that the information asked for by the Port Trustees may be furnished.

Retransfer from the General Department, No. 2033 dated 13th June 1883 :—

Of the above, together with a statement furnished by the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bombay, giving the information required by the Port Trustees.

Letter from the Secretary, Bombay Port Trust, No. 2031, dated 9th July 1883.

"In reply to the reference made in your No. 232—S.,*

dated 14th ultimo, I am directed to observe that the statement furnished by the medical officer in charge of the European General Hospital shows that the expenses of that institution were, during the year 1882, Rs. 66,564; that the total number of patients treated was 25,899, of whom only 7,418 were sailors; and that the sailors

* Original papers returned herewith.

contributed Rs. 5,565 towards cost of their maintenance and treatment. The average cost of maintenance and treatment is (Rs. 66,564÷25,899) Rs. 2:57, and this rate applied to 7,418 sailors gives Rs. 19,064. But from this amount has to be deducted the payments made by sailors, Rs. 5,565, thus leaving as expenditure incurred on their behalf Rs. 13,499 for the year.

"2. The Trustees are of opinion, and they hope that Government will agree with them, that it is not desirable to add either to the number or amount of the charges already levied against shipping. Owing to the increased trade of the port, the Trustees have submitted to Government a proposal to reduce the ordinary port dues by half an anna per ton, and an amendment of the Indian Ports Act by the Government of India is being passed to enable the reduction to be given effect to. It would, therefore, the Trustees consider, be a pity to take off half an anna with one hand only to impose some other charge with the other, and what they would therefore propose is to make an annual payment of Rs. 13,500 to Government to be applied towards maintenance of the European General Hospital, the amount to be subject to revision on the basis of the hospital returns, say, every three or five years.

"3. The Port Fund can, I am to state, bear a contribution to this extent and still allow the proposed reduction to be made in the port dues.

"4. It is not quite clear that the Indian Ports Act as it stands will allow of a lump sum being paid, but, if not, the necessary amendment will be very simple. The

levy of 'hospital' dues from certain vessels, and the exemption of certain others who might be able to satisfy Government that they have already made suitable medical provision for their crews, would be a somewhat troublesome and complicated proceeding, and the amount of revenue to be derived from any rate that might be fixed would, at the beginning at any rate, be matter of conjecture: whereas the proposal made by the Trustees will ensure that a payment equivalent to, and neither more nor less than, the expense incurred on behalf of the sailors is made in a lump sum to Government without trouble or friction of any kind."

Report by the Government Solicitor, No. 949, dated 24th September 1883.

RESOLUTION.—With memorandum No. 1346, dated 19th April 1883, the General Department transfers, for consideration and orders, one from the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bombay, No. 1799, dated 14th idem, who forwards a letter from Surgeon Major H. J. Blanc, M.D., Surgeon, European General Hospital, Bombay, No. 137, dated 9th idem, submitting correspondence relating to the levy of hospital port dues at Calcutta on vessels entering that port, towards meeting the expenses of seamen sent to the European General Hospital under the provisions of sections 59 and 60 of the Indian Ports Act, 1875, and requesting that such hospital port dues may be levied on vessels entering the port of Bombay, and remarking that at present seamen admitted into hospital pay, whilst their ship is in harbour, Re. 1 per diem, but as soon as the ship leaves no more payment in the

majority of cases is made, hence a great loss falls upon Government in many instances.

2. Section 59 of the Indian Ports Act, 1875, empowers the local Government to impose hospital port dues not exceeding one anna per ton on every ship entering any port subject to this Act, within a reasonable distance of which there may be a public hospital suitable for the reception of seamen requiring medical aid. Ships making proper provision for giving medical aid to the seamen employed on board are exempted from any payment under the section quoted above.

3. Section 60 of the Act directs that such hospital port dues shall be applied to the support of any such hospital as aforesaid.

4. The papers were referred to the Chairman, Bombay Port Trust, who in reply* requested to be informed :—

* Letter No. 1234, dated 23rd April 1882.

- (1)—What number of seamen have been cared for in the European General Hospital during, say, last year, showing the number of days paid for and the number of days not paid for.
- (2)—The total number of patients treated at the European General Hospital during the same period, so that it may be seen what proportion the sailors bear to the whole number of patients. Also the number of such patients who pay and of those who do not pay.
- (3)—The net expenditure on the European General Hospital for the same period.

5. Dr. Blauc, in forwarding a statement embodying the information required by the Port Trustees, states that "the return only shows the expenditure under the present system; whilst if port dues were paid by all vessels entering Bombay Harbour, all cases of sickness would be sent to this hospital, and the necessity of Captains entertaining private practitioners would no longer be required. This would be to the advantage of the seamen, who are only sent to the hospital in serious cases, the captain in many cases objecting to these men leaving the ship when a private practitioner is engaged."

6. The papers were again referred to the Chairman Bombay Port Trust, who observes* that the statement furnished by the Medical Officer in charge of the European General Hospital shows that the expenses

* Letter No. 2631, dated 9th July 1882.

of that institution were, during the year 1882, Rs. 66,564; that the total number of patients treated was 25,899, of whom only 7,418 were sailors; that the sailors contributed Rs. 5,565 towards the cost of their maintenance and treatment; that the average cost of maintenance and treatment is (Rs. 66,564 ÷ 25,899) Rs. 2-57, and that this rate applied to 7,418 sailors gives Rs. 19,064, from which should be deducted the payments made by sailors, Rs. 5,565, leaving as expenditure incurred on their behalf Rs. 13,499 for the year.

7. The Trustees are of opinion that it is not desirable to add either to the number or amount of the charges already levied against shipping, and state that, owing to the increased trade of the port, they have submitted to Government a proposal to reduce the ordinary port

dues by half an anna per ton, and an amendment of the Indian Ports Act by the Government of India has been

[†] *Gazette of India*,
dated 4th August 1883,
Part IV, page 127.

passed.† It would therefore, the Trustees consider, be a pity to take off half an anna with one hand only to impose some other charge with the other.

8. Under the circumstances, the Trustees propose to make an annual payment of Rs. 13,500 to Government to be applied towards the maintenance of the European General Hospital, the amount to be subject to revision on the basis of the hospital returns, say, every three or five years. The Port Fund can, it is stated, bear a contribution of this extent, and still allow the proposed reduction to be made in the port dues.

9. The Trustees state that it is not quite clear that the Indian Ports Act, as it stands, will allow of a lump sum being paid, but if not the necessary amendment will be very simple; and observe that the levy of hospital dues from certain vessels, and the exemption of certain others satisfying Government they have already made suitable medical provision for their crew, would be a somewhat troublesome and complicated proceeding, and the amount of revenue to be derived from any rate that might be fixed would, at the beginning at any rate, be matter of conjecture; whereas the proposal made by them will ensure that a payment equivalent to, and neither more nor less than, the expense incurred on behalf of the sailors is made in a lump sum to Government without trouble or friction of any kind.

10. The proposal of the Port Trustees to pay a lump sum annually towards the expenses of the European

General Hospital was referred to the Government Solicitor in view to ascertaining whether it could be carried out, and that officer now submits the opinion of the Hon'ble the Advocate-General, who states that this cannot be done under the provisions of sections 59 and 60 of the Indian Ports Act of 1875, because section 59 only empowers a Local Government to impose hospital port dues. The Hon'ble the Advocate-General further states that should the proposal of the Port Trustees be approved by Government section 59 of the Indian Ports Act will require amendment, or a new section added, to the following effect:—

“Provided that this section shall not apply to the Port of Bombay, and that it shall be lawful for the Government of Bombay, in lieu of imposing hospital port dues on ships entering that port, to receive payment from the Trustees of that Port of such annual sum as such Government and the said Trustees shall agree upon, and that such sum shall be applied as hospital port dues under section 60 of this Act.”

11. His Excellency the Governor in Council is of opinion that the proposal of the Port Trustees to pay annually towards the maintenance of the European General Hospital the sum of Rs. 13,500 (subject to revision on the basis of the hospital returns, say, every three or five years), instead of levying hospital port dues, will satisfactorily meet the case brought to notice, and will therefore recommend to the Government of India that, in order to give effect to the proposal, the suggestion of the Hon'ble the Advocate General be adopted.

B. H. POTTINGER, Colonel,
Acting Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

No. 476.

SUBMITTED to the Government of India in the Legislative Department, with reference to paragraph 11 of the foregoing Resolution.

B. H. POTTINGER, Colonel,
Acting Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

No. 308.

COPY forwarded to the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, with the request that the Lieutenant-Governor may be favoured with an expression of the Chamber's opinion on the proposal.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal,

C. W. BOLTON,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

CALCUTTA ;
General Dept.—(Marine),
The 9th February 1884.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 18th March 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your official No. 308 of the 9th of last month forwarding, for an expression of the Chamber's opinion on the proposal it contains, copy of letter No. 631 of 31st January from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, with correspondence annexed.

It is proposed by a Resolution of the Government of Bombay that section 59 of the Indian Ports Act, 1875,

be amended in such manner as to enable the Trustees of the Port of Bombay to pay Government annually out of the Port Fund a lump sum in consideration of the Government providing for the maintenance in hospital of sick sailors from ships arriving at the Port.

The Government of India agree with the Trustees that it is desirable not to levy any dues on shipping that can possibly be avoided, and are of opinion that the proposed amendment of the law might expediently be carried further than is proposed and made general, so as to enable the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon to dispense with the levy of hospital dues and pay the hospital charges of sick seamen from port funds where the funds are in a position to pay them.

In reply to this reference, I am desired to say that it would be a great improvement to do away with hospital dues, if arrangements can be made to pay hospital charges from port funds, and that the proposal to amend the present system has the Chamber's approval.

The Committee believe that the port funds can afford to bear a contribution to the extent of the hospital charges hitherto levied on the shipping; but it is essential that care be taken not to throw too heavy a burden upon the port in connection with the care of sick seamen, and the Port Commissioners will no doubt take steps to ascertain what the actual cost of each patient has been to the hospitals before they commit themselves to the payment of a lump sum annually for the maintenance of the hospitals as an equivalent to the hospital port dues hitherto levied.

**AMALGAMATION OF THE PORT OFFICER'S
DEPARTMENT WITH THAT OF THE
PORT COMMISSIONERS.**

On the important changes proposed under the scheme for amalgamating the Department of the Port Officer with that of the Port Commissioners, the views of the Committee and Members of the Chamber generally will be ascertained on reference to the following correspondence; but it may be stated, briefly, that the proposed arrangement has been favourably recognised by them as tending to secure for the port of Calcutta the advantages arising from unity of control, and the more economical and efficient conduct of the public service.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 8357, *Darjeeling*, the 21st June 1884.

I am directed to request you to be good enough to lay
 * Mr. Reynold's note, before the Chamber of Commerce
 dated the 21st March 1884. the enclosed notes* on the subject
 Captain Stille's note, of the proposed amalgamation of
 dated the 31st May 1884. the Port Officer's Department with
 that of the Port Commissioners.

A copy of each of the notes has been supplied to Mr. Keswick unofficially, who, it is understood, proposes to bring the question under the Chamber's notice. The

Lieutenant-Governor desires me to say that he would be glad if the question were thoroughly discussed, and an official reply, conveying the Chamber's opinion, made to the Government.

Amalgamation of Port Officer's Department with that of the Port Commissioners.

A scheme is understood to be now under the consideration of Government for building a new office for the Port Officer on the Strand Road to the north of the Port Commissioners' Office. At present the Port Officer holds his office in the Port Commissioners' building, and the Shipping Office, which is also under his charge, is located in the Sailors' Home. Before it is finally determined to erect the proposed new office, it may be worth while to consider whether the expenditure is really required, and whether the Government of Bengal could not dispense with the services of a Port Officer altogether.

This note is not intended to be an historical *précis*, and it need not therefore contain a detail of the steps by which the duties formerly performed by the Master Attendant have come to be divided among the Deputy Superintendent of Marine, the Port Commissioners, and the Port Officer. It will be sufficient to say that the Port Officer has been relieved of the charge of the dockyard, of the duties of Conservator of the Port, of the charge of port approaches, of the survey and buoyage of the Hooghly, of the charge of the light-ships, and of False Point light-house. On the other hand, the duties of the Shipping Office have been transferred to him from the Collector of Sea Customs.

The present duties of the Port Officer may be stated as follows:—

1. He is *ex-officio* Shipping Master of Calcutta.
2. He is President of the Examiners in Seamanship on the Board appointed for the examination of masters, mates and engineers.
3. He is Registrar of Shipping and Wrecks.
4. He is Superintendent of the Pilot Service, and has charge of the pilot brigs and of the steamer *Undaunted*.
5. He is Inspecting Officer for the out-ports, *i. e.*, the Orissa Ports and Chittagong.
6. He is the adviser of the Local Government on marine questions.

His salary is Rs. 1,400 a month, and the cost of his office establishment, contingencies, rent, &c., is about Rs. 2,000 a month.

The question of the complete amalgamation of the Port Officer's duties and establishment with those of the Port Commissioners has been under consideration since 1863, or seven years before the present Port Trust was established. The main difficulty has always been the objections alleged to the transfer of the Pilot Service to the charge of the Port Commissioners. This question was very carefully considered in 1880, and it was then determined (principally in consequence of the strong opposition expressed by the pilots themselves to the transfer) to leave the pilots under the Port Officer.

Putting this question of the Pilot Service for the moment aside, let us consider whether there is any other

of the Port Officer's duties which the Port Commissioners would be unable to undertake. The answer to this must be, that the Port Commissioners could not undertake any duties connected with the out-ports. It would be entirely beyond their province to attempt any supervision of Chandbally or Chittagong. But for the remaining duties they could be responsible. They could undertake the working of the Shipping Office, unless it were thought advisable to re-transfer this duty to the Collector of Customs. They could advise the Government on marine questions, as the Deputy Superintendent of Marine is a permanent member of the Port Trust.

With regard to the out-ports, the time has probably come for giving Chittagong a Port Trust of its own. Such a measure will certainly be necessary when the railway is completed. There remain the Orissa ports, and there is no doubt some difficulty about dealing with these.

But it may be taken for granted that the amalgamation of the Port Officer's establishment and duties with those of the Port Commissioners would have been effected in 1880 if it had not been for the question of the Pilot Service. If the Pilot Service had been put under the charge of the Port Commissioners, a separate Port Officer would certainly not have been kept up in order to supervise the Orissa ports, or to perform any other of the Port Officer's duties.

The question, therefore, resolves itself into one of the transfer of the Pilot Service; and on this it is to be observed that the pilots (or many of them) are inclined now to take a different view from that which they took in

1880. Some of them have distinctly stated that they have no objection to be placed under the Port Commissioners, and it is believed that this is the feeling of a great majority of the service. They have, they consider, some grievance at present in the matter of pensions, and if Government would concede something on this point, the pilots would make no difficulty about being placed under the Port Commissioners.

Besides, there is no reason why the change should be treated as a formal transfer of the pilots from direct service under Government to service under a body independent of the Government. The Port Trust is nothing more than a department of the Government; the pilots could appeal to Government against an order of the Port Commissioners just as they now can against an order of the Port Officer. The Conservator of the Port Approaches is the natural (indeed almost the necessary) head of the Pilot Service. It was as Conservator of the Port Approaches that the Master Attendant was formerly Superintendent of the Pilot Service. The Port Commissioners have now succeeded the Master Attendant as Conservator, and they ought to take over his duties in connection with the pilots as well as with the approaches of the port.

It should be clearly understood that the proposed change is in the highest degree desirable in the interests of the Port of Calcutta. It will enable the Port Commissioners to carry out a number of reforms which cannot be introduced so long as the present system continues.

While the port approaches were under the Master Attendant the receipts did not cover the expenditure, and so far from the port dues being reduced it was proposed to raise them from four to six annas per ton. Since the Port Commissioners have had charge of the approaches they have been able to do away with port dues entirely. They have done this by treating the port as a whole, and making contributions from jetties, inland vessels' wharves, &c., to meet the deficit in port approaches. In the budget of 1884-85 the estimated income under port approaches is only Rs. 10,575 while the expenditure is Rs. 4,66,698, a sum of Rs. 4,60,000 being taken as contribution from Parts I, II, IV and VI.

It is expected that this abolition of port dues will have a great effect in increasing the popularity of the port: but even when these dues are abolished the port will still be an expensive one, and the heaviest of the remaining items is pilotage. From the return sent to the Port Commissioners with the Government endorsement No. 200, dated 5th February 1884, it appears that the amount paid in 1881-82 for pilotage and lead money was Rs. 8,55,206. The gross tonnage of the year was—

18,08,905...inward.
17,74,084...outward.
<hr/> 35,82,989...in all.

This made a pilotage rate of as nearly as possible four annas a ton, or as much as the old port due: and this was levied, not (like the port due) once on each visit

to the port, but once for going up the river and again for going down.

It is right that the Government should know that great dissatisfaction is felt at present both with the amount of charges for pilotage and with the way in which the pilotage receipts are expended. There is an impression that not only is there much waste and extravagance, but that there remains a large surplus which is credited to general provincial revenues. As to the first point, extravagant expenditure, it would seem from the return above referred to, that the whole of the cost of the Port Officer's Department is charged against pilotage, and that this cost is Rs. 56,870. The Port Commissioners believe that they could do the work for Rs. 20,000.

The steps which the Port Commissioners would take, if the Pilot Service were put under their charge, would probably be as follows:—

1. They would put a steamer or two steamers at the Sandheads instead of the brigs.
2. They would reduce pilotage rates at least 50 per cent., but would make up the loss to the pilots either by giving them a larger percentage, or by direct payments to them.
3. They would get rid of the *Udaxanted*, which is of no use in the Hooghly. She might perhaps be turned to good account as tug-steamers in the Mutlah.

The Port Commissioners would require the services of an officer under Captain Petley, on a salary of (say)

Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,000 a month. But they want this assistance whether the Pilot Service is made over to them or not. If Captain Petley were to fall ill, or to go away on leave, there is no one to take his place.

This note is merely a rough outline, and is not intended to go into particulars. The orders under which I was invited to prepare it expressly stated that the Lieutenant-Governor, as at present advised, was not inclined to transfer the Pilot Service to the charge of the Port Commissioners, nor even to re-open the question of doing so. The object of the note is therefore only to put forward general facts and arguments which may perhaps incline the Government to reconsider the decision, and to look fully into the merits of the case. If this were done, I believe that the result would be to establish the following conclusions:—

- 1st.—That the Pilot service might be managed by the Government through the agency of the Port Commissioners quite as efficiently as it is at present managed through the Port Officer, and far more economically.
- 2nd.—That so far from its being desirable for Government to incur the expense of building a new office for the Port Officer, the services of the Port Officer could, without much inconvenience, be dispensed with altogether.

As to the former of these points, the Port Commissioners would effect a large saving in establishments, and they would treat the pilotage dues as they have already treated

the port dues, *i.e.*, they would amalgamate them with the general receipts and expenditure of the port, and would apply surplus funds from other branches of revenue towards the reduction of pilotage dues.

As to the second point. The periodical inspection of the out-ports is very nearly, if not quite, the only part of the Port Officer's present duties which the Port Commissioners could not undertake to perform. It is for the Government to decide whether this duty is of sufficient importance to justify the retention of a highly-paid official and a costly establishment. It is also to be remarked that the title of Port Officer of Calcutta is singularly unsuitable to an officer who has nothing to do with the Port of Calcutta. As the present Port Officer was appointed in August 1879, his five years' tenure of office will terminate in a few months, and the present seems therefore a suitable opportunity for raising the question whether any successor need be appointed.

H. R.

21-3-84.

NOTE.

I HAVE numbered the paragraphs in the minute, and propose to remark *seriatim* on such of them as appear to me to require it. I would, however, in the first place, say that in the main I agree with the matter of the minute, although not with the manner, on the principle that a body of people are likely to manage their own affairs if not better than, at least more to their liking than any Government department. But if the Port Commissioners are held to be a department of Govern-

ment, then I do not see why one department should do better than another. The gist of the proposal put forward is that the Port Commissioners should take over the remainder of the Port Officer's duties, which would then be under an officer and assistant to be appointed by the Commissioners. These officers would perform almost exactly the duties held by the Port Officer and his assistant before November 1881. I may perhaps observe that the Government of India has reserved the appointments of Port Officer and Assistant Port Officer for officers of their own Marine. Whether that Government will be disposed to waive this right is a question which I would only indicate.

The advantages of the proposed transfer are undoubtedly great, *viz.*—

(1) *Unity of control.*—The necessity for this, which I did not fail to point out when my post was at a previous period dismembered, I fully admit, and have much felt since the transfer of a portion of my duties.

(2) *Economy.*—This, which was one of the reasons assigned for breaking up the Port Officer's duties, ought, in my opinion, to result from the reunion of the broken office. I shall offer some remarks, further on, on this subject.

(3) *The power to carry into effect improvements.*—This is undoubtedly a gain, and would be possessed by the proposed management to a great extent; the present has not the same facility.

(4) *Facilities for maintaining vessels.*—To the above I would add that as the only Government docks

able to take our brigs, &c., are about to be transferred to the Commissioners, they would probably be able to arrange more cheaply for the future repairs and maintenance of the pilot vessels than Government could do if it had to go into the market.

Paragraph 1.—I would most respectfully remark that a Shipping Office will be wanted whether the Port Commissioners take over the duties of Shipping-master or not, and I presume that additional office room will also be required by them, as only two or three months ago the Commissioners proposed, on the ground of want of space for their present requirements, to turn me out of the greater part of the premises which I now rent from them, and which are insufficient and ill-adapted for the wants of my present office. An extension of office accommodation is then urgent.

Paragraph 3.—There are various other duties * at present attached to my post besides those enumerated, any or all of which, however, could probably be discharged by the Port Commissioners.

Paragraph 4.—The sanctioned salary of the appointment of Port Officer is only Rs. 1,000, the additional Rs. 400 being a personal allowance, granted, on special grounds, to the present incumbent.

* Issue and registration of certificates, Examiner in Navigation, President Examiner of pilots, boatmen, tug-pilots, and inland commanders, Passenger Act certificates, Compilation of various returns of vessels under Bengal, Reports of casualties to Government, and sitting as member of Marine Courts.

Paragraph 6.—The inspection of the Orissa ports is a minor matter, and could probably be carried out by arrangement by an officer of the Marine Department of India. But, in view of the large shipping interests existing in Calcutta and of the growing importance of the ports of Chittagong and Chandbally, it seems to me to be a question, demanding very serious consideration, whether it is well that the Bengal Government should have no officer of their own to advise them or to whom they can refer in marine matters, and should have to depend entirely for advice and assistance on an unpaid body of gentlemen, of which, however able and willing they may be, the composition must necessarily be continually changing and whose responsibility cannot be enforced.

Paragraph 7.—Representation as to the advisability of a Port Trust at Chittagong was made by me some time since, and has been again put forward by Captain Brebner.

Paragraphs 8 to 10.—Since my return to India I have had no opportunity of taking the sense of the pilot service regarding the proposed transfer; nor should I think it right or consistent with discipline to do so, unless specially ordered by Government. I may perhaps mention that one representative senior pilot has recently spoken to me on the subject, and he certainly seemed opposed to the transfer as decidedly as ever. The feeling expressed to me by him is substantially this.—We see that practically the will and ideas of Port Commissioners mean the will and ideas of one man, which are given irresistible effect to by appearing under the name and high sanction of the eminent Government

official who acts as the Chairman, and of a body of influential men. It is, moreover, impossible for the Commissioners, all of the members of whom have their hands full of work, either official or mercantile, to exercise any real control, and we are afraid the power might, under altered circumstances or in different hands, be used to our detriment.

But assuming the transfer were considered by Government expedient, I think that if, as a condition, some concessions were made in the pending pension question, no opposition would be raised, and it is of course a question which I should personally be disposed to answer in the negative, for Government to decide whether the pilots have in any case any *locus standi* in opposition to any officer or officers who it may be proposed should be placed at their head by Government.

Paragraph 10.—I would observe with regard to this paragraph that the separation of the duties of Conservator of the river from the pilot service was three years ago represented as highly desirable by a large committee.

Paragraphs 12 and 13.—The arguments in these paragraphs seem to me to show that a larger sum is now being raised from the public than is necessary. In 1880-81, the last complete year under this department, the actual expenditure on port approaches was given by the Accountant-General as Rs. 3,68,000; it is now stated in the minute to amount now to Rs. 4,67,000. In 1882-83 it was Rs. 4,36,000. As the whole of this large expenditure has been met out of various charges in the port (as jetty and warehouse, moorings, &c.), which for brevity I will call jetty receipts, it appears that previously to having to meet the above charges

on port approaches, the charges might have been largely reduced with advantage to the public. But this is not all; the pilotage receipts in 1882-83 were Rs. 8,86,000, of which Rs. 5,21,000 were disbursed to the pilots. It is now proposed to reduce this charge by one-half, and meet the further expense of Rs. 4,43,000 thus caused from the still overflowing jetty receipts. In other words, since November 1881, the Commissioners will have been able to pay yearly extraneous charges amounting to Rs. 4,67,000 + Rs. 4,43,000 out of jetty receipts. I am willing to concede that to reduce port dues and pilotage is probably a more tangible and popular way of reducing the expenses of ships than to lower the jetty charges, but if this is so, would it not be better to abolish pilotage altogether? This would be more logical than to levy only half the amount required to meet the expenses and call it pilotage.

The old system of levying separate dues sufficient to cover, as far as possible, each head of expenditure had, at any rate, the advantage of being quite intelligible, and enabled charges to be more readily apportioned than under the proposed and partially introduced system by which the ship, *master* is relieved of expenses fairly falling on the ship at the expense of the *shipper* or *consignee* of goods, who in reality pays port dues under the name of jetty charges. It is, however, quite possible this system may tend to the benefit of the port by inducing more ships to visit it.

What, however, I most respectfully protest against is that this reduction of pilotage or the reduction of port

dues should be represented to Government, as the result of economy or "saving" in expenditure. In the case of the port dues I have pointed out from the minute itself that this is not only not the case, but that the expenditure appears higher than formerly. It is not easy to understand the mercantile public is content to accept the surplus in jetty charges while objecting to a merely nominal one in the pilotage fund.

Paragraph 14.—This paragraph, which gives currency to charges of "waste" and "extravagance," and implies the writer's concurrence in the charges brought against this department, I own to have read with feelings of pain. Government is, I think, aware that this is unfounded. Every item of expenditure is fixed by Government, and no repairs or stores are sanctioned for the ships without authority. But until such charges are put forward by a responsible person in a tangible manner it is vain to attempt to grapple with them. The impression of an existing surplus is not less erroneous, especially since the reduction of the pilotage to the public in 1881, to which no reference is made, but which involved a decrease in the Government share of the receipts annually of Rs. 1,50,000, the whole of which has gone to benefit the mercantile public. The unreality of the outcry raised about the high pilotage is indicated by the fact that every line of steamers that possibly can do so, gets a special pilot, to whom more is paid than even the prescribed pilotage; and, further, there is too much reason to believe that the practice of paying, in addition, illicit *douceurs* to the pilots prevails on a very extensive scale.

The cost of the Port Office is stated as Rs. 56,870, but this was prior to the large reductions made in 1882. The present scale sanctioned is as follows:—

	Rs.
Salaries—Port Office (including my personal allowance.)	29,532
House-rent and contingencies	9,211
	<hr/>
	38,773

There is in addition a wreck department clerk paid by the Government of India.

Paragraph 15.—The proposal to put a steamer on pilotage duty at the Sandheads has been long ago raised by this office, and is now under consideration. To the reduction of the pilotage question I have referred above. As regards the steamer *Undaunted*, I respectfully differ entirely from the view propounded. It is not stated what the duties of that vessel in the deserted Muthah are to be, and I confess that I am quite unable to guess. In the Hooghly some steamer is required to be ready to take pilots at an hour's notice to the Sandheads, and if the *Undaunted* is not used for the purpose another sea-going steamer of the same size will be required. A smaller vessel, even of the size of the steamer *Celerity*, has not been found suitable. Whether the *Undaunted* is exactly the vessel that would be bought or built

now for the purpose is not necessary to discuss. She is over 10 years old, and endless improvements have

Troch ashore in the Channel.

The steamer *Duke of Westminster*, of 400 tons for London from Liverpool, with passengers and a general cargo, went ashore at Athlone, late of Wick, at about 6 o'clock on Thursday night. Twenty passengers were landed at Athlone by lifeboat, and reported that she was lying very awkwardly, head-to-astern, with no power gone and making a little water, and two Government tugs left Portsmouth in the afternoon to give assistance to the vessel. A telegram from Newport last evening stated that tugs have been at work endeavouring to move the steamer, which they found lying upright on a ledge which is the most dangerous point of Athlone. As yet she has not moved, but the tugs would resume work when the tide again serves; and as she was apparently intact and the sea calm, there was good hope of getting her off. All the passengers had been easily landed by lifeboat, but the captain and crew had refused to leave the ship. The *Duke of Westminster* is a steel steamer of 3,750 gross tons, was built at Harrow in 1882, and is owned by the Eastern Steamship Company (Limited). A Lloyd's telegram from Athlone, 7:50 p.m. last night, said:—"The *Duke of Westminster*, more or less, will make no water. One Government tug comes here; Schooner *Lejordan*. An attempt will be made to tow her off at 2 A.M. to-morrow."

The italics are mine. The *Undaunted* is the only vessel of her class that this Government possesses for service over its whole coast. Perhaps, however, I am going out of the way to defend what is not seriously attacked, for no reason is given why the *Undaunted* is considered useless in the Houghly.

Paragraph 16.—The loss of Captain Petley's services would no doubt be serious, but I may perhaps venture on the remark that if he should go away, as supposed, his department would still have the able assistant, Mr. Reed, who was transferred from this department, having for many years carried on the work under this office, and who no doubt would afford as efficient aid to the officer temporarily succeeding Captain Petley, as he did to that officer himself when the latter first joined.

Paragraph 17.—(1). I admit that it is possible the Commissioners would manage the work as efficiently as at present, but I do not believe they would do it more economically. If we take the river survey for example, in two years two steamers have been added to the service, and a large increase of "personnel" made, I would not say unnecessarily.

Paragraph 17.—(2). As I have already stated, I feel sure that, whether the pilot service is made over to the Port Commissioners or not, a new office must soon be built for the Shipping Office. Any one interested in the matter can satisfy himself on this point by a visit to the Strand Road at 11 or 12 in the day and by looking at the crowd of men, Native and European, standing about in the sun or rain in the street, or in the "gully" leading to the present office, for want of any shelter or waiting-room.

With regard to myself personally, it will be observed that I have said nothing in this note, as I understand that in any arrangement which may be made my own position and emoluments will not be in any way affected. As His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is aware, my

tenure of my present office has been extended by the Government of India to November 1886. Should circumstances render any change in the intentions of Government with respect to myself necessary, I feel confident that Government will give me an opportunity of urging what I may wish to advance in my own behalf before any decision is arrived at.

As regards the title of "Port Officer," I have more than once expressed my opinion. The old and time-honoured name of Master Attendant appears to me preferable in every way; and I see no reason why the old name should not be resuscitated. There are many petty objections to the present designation besides its unmeaningness.

A. W. STEIFFE,
Port Officer of Calcutta.

Calcutta, the 31st May 1884.

From Chamber to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 21st August 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 8355 of the 21st June, forwarding Notes by the Chairman of the Port Commissioners and by the Port Officer on the subject of the proposed amalgamation of the Department of the latter officer with that of the Port Commissioners.

The Committee instruct me to say in reply, that they have furnished members of the Chamber generally with copies of these Notes in order to obtain from them a careful consideration of, and report upon, the several points contained in them; and from the replies which they have received, the Committee are in a position to state that there is a general consensus of opinion that the amalgamation would result in the undoubted advantages of (1), unity of control in large and increasing administrative interests, of (2), greater economy in conducting the Pilot Service, of (3), the power to effect future improvements, and of (4), facilities for the efficient repairing and maintenance of Pilot Brigs and other vessels that may be placed under the Commissioners management.

Upon these broad and important grounds the proposed amalgamation has been favourably recognised by members of the Chamber, and it is satisfactory to find that the Port Officer himself frankly concedes the advantages that would result from the measure.

On the special question whether it is expedient to transfer to the Port Commissioners the control of the Pilot Service, which is now vested in the Port Officer, there is an almost unanimous opinion that the transfer of the controlling authority should be made; and that any objections that may have been raised, or sentimental scruples entertained or expressed by the Pilots themselves, as to any change in the administration under which their services would be continued, can be removed without difficulty by a fair scale of remuneration for present duties and a liberal

provision for the future ; for the proposed change would not in any way affect their status as Government officers, and if their service was superintended by one of their own body selected for his professional experience and intimate knowledge of the character and qualifications of its members, the efficiency and interests of the Service would be carefully protected and promoted.

Some members of the Chamber, however, have been struck by the following assertion in Mr. Reynolds' memorandum: "Since the Port Commissioners have had charge of the approaches they have been able to do away with port dues entirely. They have done this by treating the Port as a whole and making contributions from jetties, inland vessels' wharves, &c., to meet the deficit in port approaches. In the Budget of 1884-85 the estimated income under port approaches is only Rs. 10,575, while the expenditure is Rs. 4,66,698, a sum of Rs. 4,60,000 being taken as contribution from Parts I, II, IV and VI."

And they find in the Port Commissioners' Administration Report for 1882-83 the following :—"The reduction of Port dues from 3 annas to 1 anna per ton came into operation from the 1st April 1882, leaving the Commissioners to make up from other sources the revenue what was lost by the abatement in the Port due charges levied upon the shipping."

The Committee of the Chamber are aware that the remaining one anna has since been taken off also, and fully recognise that it would be impossible to do justice to the Port as a whole by insisting on such rigid adherence

to the distinct and separate working of each department as would prevent reciprocal assistance ; but the opinion of some members of the Chamber is that, in working the affairs of the Port already under their control, the Commissioners have heretofore shewn a disposition to cheapen and make the Port popular with the shipping interest without always sufficient consideration for the merchant and others concerned ; and in illustration of this, it is pointed out that since the reduction of Port dues from 3 annas to 1 anna per ton came into force on 1st April 1882, the funds required to meet the expenditure of Rs. 4,36,369 under the heading of "*Port Approaches Account*" have had to be made up by contributions of Rs. 1,19,500 from Jetties, Rs. 90,000 from Inland Vessels' Wharves, and Rs. 98,000 from Strand Bank Lands, or a total contribution of Rs. 3,07,500.

These funds, it is argued by some, might more properly have been applied to the reduction of the charges levied under these various headings, upon imports, &c ; and in the future great care should be taken to avoid any abuse of the system of working the Port as a whole, such as might lead to the undue subordination of one interest to the undue amelioration of others.

**THE JUTE MEASUREMENT SCHEME :
REPORT OF THE MANAGING
COMMITTEE.**

In their last Report the Committee expressed a confident belief that the expectations of all who were interested in the scheme for the mea-

surement of jute and other baled cargo shipped from this port would not be disappointed; and they have now the satisfaction of placing on record a complete confirmation of their views in this important respect. The following Report of the Managing Committee will inform members of the Chamber how successfully the measure has been carried through; and your Committee regard the results that have been attained as a practical removal of the difficulties to which the trade of the Port had been long exposed, and for which all interests concerned are under great obligations to the gentlemen who have placed the measurement system upon a firm and permanent basis.

Calcutta, 29th November 1884.

TO THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE term of service for which we were elected as Managing Committee of the Jute Measurement Scheme having expired, we have the honor to resign into your hands the trust which we were requested to undertake, viz., the organisation of, and giving practical effect to, a comprehensive scheme for the measurement of baled and other cargo exported from Calcutta, the introduction of which had been so long advocated by the Chamber and the commercial community of this port.

In now tendering the resignation of the office which we have held, we submit for the information of the Chamber of Commerce a brief record of our operations and of the results that have been realised.

Our first meeting was held on the 9th of August 1883, and at frequent subsequent meetings our attention was specially given to various preliminary arrangements necessary for securing a staff of competent measurers and to matters of detail in connection with the future working of the scheme.

As the adoption of the proposed system of measurement would necessarily involve some material amendment of the Chamber's rules and practice which formed part of the tonnage schedule of the Port, and as such amendment could not be made without previous notice required by the Chamber's regulations, the introduction of the new system, for which all preliminary arrangements had been carefully prepared, could not come into force until the Chamber's amended schedule had effect. That, however, was completed on the 4th of October, on which date it was unanimously resolved that the measurement rules should be incorporated with the Chamber's schedule.

In the interval, however, and in anticipation of sanction under the new system, a Circular was issued by us giving notice that we considered it advisable, in view of the beginning of the Jute season, to appoint measurers and to begin work on the 1st of September, and our readiness to commence operations was responded to by applications from shippers, and during that month 55,000 bales were passed by the measurers.

This preliminary step led to an active expansion of the system so soon as its general introduction, as a rule of the Port, was authorised, and in the month of October 117,000 packages were registered. So well did the system work, that up to the end of May of this year, or in nine months from the first measurement, the usefulness and popularity of the scheme were attested by the certificated measurement of one million of packages, and including the work done during the three following slack months of the year, the total on the 31st of August amounted to 1,173,200 packages by sea-going vessels and 6,730 tons of cargo by inland steamers.

The advantages of the new system have been so generally recognised and its supervision and application so carefully conducted, that we have had to meet large demands for the employment of measurers in unexpected branches of shipping business.

While formerly ships took less than 7½ bales to the registered ton, they now frequently take over 8 bales to the ton. It is to be hoped that these results will tend to remove the opposition that still exists in certain quarters to the universal employment of measurers.

Thus far, therefore, we may congratulate the Chamber, and all whose interests have been protected by the introduction of a scheme which has tended, in a considerable degree, to promote the convenience of the port generally, and especially of the trade of one of the largest and most important industries of Bengal; and we are confident that our successors in the office we now vacate will do all in their power to insure the satis-

factory continuation of the measurement scheme of the Port.

The accounts and books have been examined by Messrs. Browne and Lovelock, whose audit of Receipts and Expenditure to the 31st of August is submitted for your information.

We remain,
Gentlemen,

Your obedient servants,
WM BLEECK,
JOHN CROFT,
A. M. SYROTT,
GEO. EVANS GORDON,
J. A. ANDERSON.

SWORN MEASURERS' FUND.

ABSTRACT of Receipts and Disbursements from 17th September 1883 to 31st August 1884.

RECEIPTS.		P.		P.		P.	
To Cash received for Measurement of Jute and Linen	Rs.	As.	P.	By Cash Paid	Rs.	As.	P.
...	40,084	13	7	" Office Furniture	...	1,619	1
				" Establishment	...	3,547	8
				" Charges General	...	1,476	14
				" Cash at Bank	...	9,000	6
				" In hand	...	833	2
					...	3,782	8
Total Rs. ...	40,084	13	7	Total Rs. ...	40,084	13	7
Outstanding for work done prior to 31st August—							
Ind. Navigation Co. ...	6,000	8	3				
Five Steam Navigation Co. ...	...					
Less paid on Accounts ...	3,000	0	0				
Sundry Shippers	...			Liabilities, 31st August 1884—			
				Establishment	...	5,305	7
				Rent	...	1,138	14
				Charges General	...	138	0
Total Rs. ...	5,737	5	9	Total Rs. ...	5,579	6	0

CALCUTTA, 19th November 1884.

BROWN & LOVELACE,
Auditors.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce,

Calcutta, 22nd December 1884.

MESSRS. W. BLEECK.

JOHN CROFT.

A. M. SYRIOTT.

GEORGE EVANS GORDON.

J. A. ANDERSON.

The Managing Committee of the

Jute Measurement Scheme.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM desired by the President and Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th of last month, in which you tender the resignation of your office as Managing Committee of the Jute Measurement Scheme, and submit a record of your operations and of the results that have been realised.

The President and Committee cannot receive your resignation without expressing their sense of the great service you have rendered to the Port of Calcutta by the successful introduction and practical application of a system which has thus far resulted in material benefit to all interests concerned; and they most cordially acknowledge the obligations under which you have laid the Chamber of Commerce, and thank you for the very efficient performance of the duties which have so long engaged your attention.

The results of your operations appear to the President and Committee of high value and much in the interests

to the shipping business of this port, and they are obviously due to the persevering efforts which you have made for placing the measurement system upon a firm and permanent basis.

I am,
Gentlemen, Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) H. W. I. Wood,
Secretary.

**PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE VALUE-
PAYABLE PARCEL SYSTEM TO PARCELS
BOOKED IN LONDON FOR INDIA.**

The Chamber was consulted by Government on the proposed extension of the value-payable parcel system to parcels booked in London for India, and the Committee finding that their views did not agree with those expressed by a former Committee so far back as 1878, on the same subject, considered it desirable to consult the members of the Chamber generally. The result of the consultation was a small majority against the proposed extension, but many members expressed no opinion at all. The Committee felt that Government interference in any shape with private trade, except under the most urgent necessity, should be discouraged. They considered that the facilities afforded by the Parcel Post and Money Order Office to the public wishing

to obtain small articles from home-tradesmen were already so great that further wants might safely be left to be met by private enterprise, and they hope the reply sent in to Government will have the general approval of members.

RESOLUTION.

No. 2979.—*Simla, the 22nd August, 1884.*

Read again—

Resolution by the Government of India in the Department of Finance, No. 3164, dated 8th October 1878.

Read also—

Letter from Director General of Post Offices, No. 9335, dated 6th January 1879, and enclosure.

Letter from Director General of Post Offices, No. 10641, dated 10th February 1879, and enclosures.

Letter from Madras Chamber of Commerce, dated 16th November 1878.

Letter from Calcutta Trades' Association, dated 10th January 1879.

Letter from Calcutta Trades' Association, dated 3rd March 1879, and enclosure.

Letter from Madras Trades' Association, dated 13th February 1879, and enclosure.

RESOLUTION.—In the Notification published by the Director General of Post Offices, on 1st November 1877,

in which the introduction of the "value-payable" system in respect of inland parcels was announced, it was intimated "the system of 'value-payable' parcels would shortly be extended to 'overland parcels' booked in London for India."

2. This intimation called forth a protest from the Calcutta Trades' Association contained in a letter from the Secretary to the Association addressed to the Director General of Post Offices, dated 8th December 1877, in which objections to the intended extension of the system to overland parcels were set forth, and it was stated that the Association would prefer to "see the entire scheme abandoned rather than it should be adopted in its present objectionable form." This letter was laid before the Government of India by the Director General of Post Offices.

3. The Secretary, Calcutta Trades' Association, then addressed a letter, dated 23rd February 1878, to the Government of India. In this it was stated that the Committee of the Association were of opinion that the requirements of the general public were fully met, so far as Government is justified in providing for them, by the facilities of procuring goods from England by the overland parcel post, and of paying for them by money orders; that it is not a part of the duty of the Government of India to collect bills for traders either within or without the country; that a consideration of the broad principles involved had led the Committee to alter the opinion previously expressed in favour of the introduction of the scheme as regards inland parcels; and that the Committee would now prefer to see the scheme abandon-

ed in its entirety. It was also stated that serious injury would be caused to the interests of those engaged in trade in India.

4. The opinions of other representative bodies were then obtained on the question whether the extension of the system to overland parcels would or would not be a boon to the public.

5. The results of this enquiry were announced, and the opinion of the Government of India on the whole question was stated in the Resolution read in the preamble, which was published in the *Gazette of India*, dated 12th October 1878. With the exception of the Chamber of Commerce, Madras, and the Trades Associations of Madras and Bombay, which supported the view of the Trades' Association, Calcutta, all the representative bodies consulted, including the Chambers of Commerce of Bengal and Bombay, approved of the proposed extension. The remarks of the several Trades' Associations and Chambers of Commerce were invited on the Resolution, with special reference to the opinion expressed by the Bombay Trades' Association that they would be inclined to look with favour on the proposed extension, if the scheme were also extended to parcels booked in India for England as well as to parcels booked in London for India.

6. The Chamber of Commerce, Madras, and the Trades' Associations of Calcutta and Madras replied to this Resolution by intimating that their former views were adhered to, and advancing further arguments in

support of those views. The Calcutta Trades' Association also intimated that their views were shared by 177 Mofussil firms whom they had consulted. The Bombay Trades' Association did not reply.

7. The Government of India believed the idea to be unfounded that Indian tradesmen who dealt in foreign goods would be injured by the extension of the value-payable system to overland parcels. But the whole value-payable scheme, both inland and foreign, being at that time new, it was thought better to drop for the time being the foreign branch of it, to which objection was taken.

8. Since that decision further experience has been gained in the inland value-payable system. The following table shows the number and value of articles transmitted by value-payable post since the introduction of the system:—

Year.				Number.	Value.
					Rs.
1877-78	...	...	...	413	6,721
1878-79	...	...	...	7,408	1,32,109
1879-80	...	...	...	25,589	3,40,457
1880-81	...	...	...	49,389	2,76,574
1881-82	...	...	...	95,416	10,80,543
1882-83	...	...	...	1,74,301	16,85,698
1883-84	...	...	...	2,04,266	21,07,549

9. These figures conclusively prove the growing appreciation of the value-payable post, both by the general public and by tradesmen. The Governor-General in Council is disposed to think that the opposition for-

merly shown to the scheme may prove to have been modified by the experience which has been gained of the working of the inland value-payable system, and that, in so far as the extension of the system to the overland parcel post would facilitate the importation of small objects of European manufacture into India, the measure, while not injurious to tradesmen, would be of great advantage and convenience to the general public. It is believed that the German Post Office now exchanges annually more than a million value-payable articles with other countries, and that it also has an Agency in England. There seems to be no reason why similar facilities should not exist between India and England.

10. Before, however, proceeding further in the matter, the Governor-General in Council desires to ascertain the present state of public opinion on the subject.

11. He therefore directs that this Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India*, and that it be communicated—

- (a) to all Local Governments and Administrations, with the request that they will consult representative bodies and individuals in their respective jurisdictions, and send copies of the replies, together with their own opinion, on the proposal;
- (b) to the Chambers of Commerce and Trades' Associations of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, with the request that they will communicate their opinion on the proposal; and

(c) to the Director General of the Post Offices of India.

J. F. FINLAY,

Offy. Under-Secy. to the Govt. of India.

From Chamber to the Government of India.

Calcutta, 13th November 1884.

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to inform you that the Resolution No. 2997, dated the 22nd August 1884, of the Government of India in the Department of Finance and Commerce, on the subject of the extension of the system of "value-payable parcels" to Overland parcels booked in London for India has had their most careful consideration.

In April 1878 this Chamber was invited to give an expression of opinion on the point whether the extension of the "value-payable system to overland parcels would or would not be a boon to the public, especially to European residents in the interior of the country;" and the Chamber replied that it thought the extension would be a boon to the public.

Later on the same year being again referred to, the then Committee expressed an opinion that the proposed action of Government might perhaps in some measure affect the interests of Indian tradesmen, but that they questioned very much whether the injury likely to result had not been considerably over-estimated by the Calcutta

Trades' Association, or whether it would be of such magnitude as to justify the abandonment of a scheme which appeared capable of being materially useful to the general public.

The present Committee of the Chamber having been unable to agree with the views of their predecessors in office on this subject, have consulted the members of the Chamber generally on it (hence the delay which has taken place in replying to the Government reference), and they find the numbers of those who have expressed opinions for and against pretty equally divided, the number against showing a small majority only, while many have not expressed any opinion at all on the question.

The Committee who are unanimous in considering that the contemplated measure should not be introduced, cannot help thinking that the Government of India in bringing the matter forward in 1878 should not have asked merely whether "the extension of the value-payable system to overland parcels would or would not be a boon to the public." There are many things, the Committee submit, which would be a boon to the public which it would not be the province of Government to undertake, and yet if the question were put, "would or would they not be a boon to the public?" it would be impossible to answer it in the negative.

That the extension of the system of "value-payable parcels" to overland parcels booked in London for India might prove, to some extent, a boon to a portion of the public the Committee do not deny; but they consider that

the boon will not be such as to justify a breach of the principle of non-interference with private trade on the part of Government. They believe, in fact, that the Overland Parcel Post and Money-order offices already afford ample facilities to those wishing to order small articles from England, and though the introduction of this new measure may be calculated to increase the Government revenue, they would deprecate its introduction to increase the revenue at the expense of the Indian and to the advantage of the Home tradesmen.

The means of communication and transit in this country are daily improving and the number of tradesmen, European and Indian, steadily increasing, and Government may, the Committee believe, rest assured that the wants of the public, both European and Native, in European goods will be amply met without its intervention.

To begin with, the value and weight of parcels by the overland value-payable system are to be limited to £10 and lbs. 6, but there is no guarantee that if the proposed measure be once introduced and a way seen to increase the revenue by raising the value and the weight that Government will not raise them. And it should not be overlooked that in many trades an article worth £10 cannot be considered as of small value: many transactions in retail business in articles of such value very soon aggregate a large sum.

Any new departure by Government calculated to affect private trade in this country may well be viewed with alarm when the great extent to which manufactures in jails

have grown, by the aid of machinery which Government has imported to enable it to compete with private manufacturers, is considered.

This Chamber has already expressed its appreciation of the attempt which the present Government made to entirely remove the competition with private enterprise in jails, but the continuance of that competition shows how difficult it is to stop a wrong course, and how soon small beginnings, which in their nature are opposed to the principle of non-interference with private trade, grow into abuses.

INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH CONVENTION OF 1885.

In view of the Telegraph convention to be held in Berlin in May 1885, the Committee of the Chamber have deemed it advisable to address the Government of India as follows, and it is satisfactory to learn from the reply received that the Government recognise the objections to changes in the regulations affecting Code messages. It is to be hoped that the Committee's remarks regarding the high rates now charged for messages to and from India may meet with the recognition they merit.

From Chamber to the Government of India.

Calcutta, 29th December 1884.

I AM directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to address you with regard to the Telegraph Convention to be held at an early date at Berlin.

So recently as June 1879 merchants in the Eastern trade were put to immense inconvenience and expense by the restrictions and regulations in regard to "Code" words adopted by the Conference then held in London, and my Committee feel bound to give early expression to the strong opinions which are held by the mercantile community upon this subject.

In 1879 Eastern merchants were compelled, owing to the new regulations which then came into force limiting the number of languages to be used in Code messages, interdicting certain words in the languages allowed, and otherwise curtailing the limits of cipher messages, to set aside the Codes upon which much time, thought and money had been expended, and to which they had just become accustomed, and to incur the great trouble and expense of constructing new Codes and familiarising themselves with their use.

I am now to point out that any fresh regulations of a restrictive nature which may be brought forward at the approaching Conference will lead to a further disturbance of trade and a recurrence of all the evils before enumerated; and it is with a view to averting any such result that my Committee have instructed me to address you, and to urge upon the Government of India the necessity of their so instructing their representatives at the approaching Conference, that the interests of the mercantile community may be not only protected by a stout resistance to the imposition of any new and restrictive measures, but, if possible, advanced by the establishment of more liberal regulations than those at present in force in regard to the use of Code words generally.

The whole of the enormous trade of India is now carried on by telegraph. Indian merchants are the Telegraph Companies' best customers, and the mercantile community holds that the Government of India, standing as they do in some measure as telegraph proprietors, are doubly bound to make every possible effort to protect mercantile interests.

I am also directed to take this opportunity to draw attention to the very high rates now charged for Indian messages, and request that the representatives of the Government of India may be instructed to advocate an appreciable reduction in the tariff. So long as there was only one line in existence, the charge was Rs. 2 per word, but since the laying down of the Eastern Company's Cable Rs. 2-12 has been demanded, the result of competition in this instance having thus been to raise instead of decrease cost. A feeling has long been growing in mercantile circles that a new line laid down upon the most economical principles and receiving the full support of the trading classes could be worked on terms much more favorable to the customer; and it is hoped that such a reduction will be made in the present tariff rates and such care for their interests be shown at the approaching Conference as will render any new line unnecessary.

From Government of India to Chamber.

No. 10 T. Fort William, 13th January 1885.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 29th December 1884, to the address of the Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Finance and Commerce, requesting Government to offer a firm opposition, in the interests

of the mercantile community, to any proposal that may be brought forward at the next Telegraph Conference for changing the condition upon which Code telegrams are accepted under existing rules, &c.

2. In reply, I am to state that Government is not yet in possession of the proposal to be brought forward at the Conference, but when these are received, the representations of the Chamber shall receive the fullest consideration. I am to add that Government recognizes the objections to changes in the regulations, affecting Code messages being introduced without good cause and after due notice.

SYSTEM OF STAMPING COTTON PIECE GOODS.

This matter came prominently before the Chamber in January 1881, and in the report of the Committee for that year will be found copies of correspondence between the Calcutta and the Manchester Chambers of Commerce. It was then thought that the best course to check the evil complained of was by publishing the correspondence in the Manchester and Indian newspapers, and this was done. The expected result, however, was not attained, for the practice of stamping on goods certain lengths which did not accurately represent the actual number of yards of 36 inches in the piece has since then rather increased than diminished. The matter was again brought before the Committee in Novem-

ber last, when the annexed petition, signed by most of the influential Native piece goods dealers in Calcutta was submitted. The Committee thought that the best means of giving effect to the wishes of the dealers was by calling a meeting of importing firms and inviting such dealers as might wish to be present to attend also. This was done, and the reports of the proceedings of the two meetings held are annexed. The Committee earnestly hope that the agreement entered into by the dealers will be effectively carried out.

At a Special Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on Friday, the 5th of December 1884, for the purpose of taking into consideration a representation from Native Dealers relative to the present system of stamping Cotton Piece Goods of British manufacture, copy of which is hereto annexed for convenience of reference—

Present.—The Hon'ble ROBERT MILLER (of Messrs. HOARE, MILLER & Co.), in the Chair.

MESSRS. G. MARCHETTI, of MESSRS. PETROCCHIO BROTHERS.

"	G. C. SCARAMANGA	"	RALLI BROTHERS.
"	F. SOOGLUDI	"	Ditto.
"	WILLIAM ELLIS	"	A. AGEIATO & Co.
"	W. J. M. McCAW	"	KETTLEWELL, BULLEN & Co.
"	T. F. HAMILTON	"	EWING & Co.
"	F. OSMUND	"	HOARE, MILLER & Co.
"	DORRIS CHURCH LAW	"	FRANKISSON LAW & Co.
"	JOHN CROFT	"	GRAHAM & Co.
"	C. H. WILKIE	"	Ditto.

Messrs. T. G. H. MONCRIEFFE of	Messrs. FINLAY, MUIR & Co.
" R. M. HAINING	" Ditto.
" S. K. DOUGLAS	" CARLISLES NETHREWS & Co.
" H. SIMPSON	" Ditto.
" W. THOMPSON	" ANDERSON, WRIGHT & Co.
" J. W. KIBBLE	" SCHROENE, KILBURN & Co.
" W. R. T. AITKEN	" JOHN ELLIOTT & Co.
" W. OBERILL	" BARLOW & Co.

The Meeting was also attended by a Deputation from the Native Dealers consisting of the following:—

GOORDOTAL BEHARILAL.	MOOLCHAND BOYTER.
MOHUN LOLL.	MOCKUMRAM.
MOORLY.	SEOLOLL.
RAMCHUNDER GOENKA.	GOLATCHAND.
BISEN DOTAL.	RICKNATH DOGREE.
RAMCHUNDRA.	HUSMOHAN DAS MAHTA.
GONESH DASS.	SOORNI MULL.
BULLUB DASS KHETTRY.	SHILAL.

The Chairman having, at some length, referred to the object for which the meeting had been convened, and remarked generally on the question which the Native dealers wished to be brought to a final settlement, invited an expression of opinion with the view to the meeting coming to some common agreement: and after a general discussion of the subject the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1st Resolution—

Proposed by MR. G. C. SCARAMANGA, of Messrs. RALLI BROTHERS,

Seconded by Baboo DOORGA CHURN LAW.

That the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce be requested to ascertain from all importing houses whether they are in favor of a combination

amongst importers to adopt and support a system of length stamping of all piece-goods in yards of 36 inches.

2nd Resolution—

Proposed by MR. T. F. HAMILTON, of Messrs. EWING & Co.,

Seconded by MR. W. ELLIS, of Messrs. A. AGELASTO & Co.

That the Dealers who have addressed the Bengal Chamber of Commerce be communicated with and requested to form amongst themselves a combination binding themselves to confine their purchases to goods bearing the length stamped in yards of 36 inches; and that Baboo Doorga Churn Law be requested to communicate on the subject with the Bazar, and to report the result to this meeting, which is adjourned to this day fortnight.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

To

THE MOST HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT AND
MEMBERS OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

A meeting of the Bazar dealers in Piece-Goods was held on the 9th November 1884, at the premises No. 24 Burtollah Street.

The object of the meeting was that formerly the goods that used to be imported always bore the stamp representing exact lengths of the pieces, but within the last few years the Bombay merchants first commenced reducing

the usual lengths, and thus violated the rule. Afterwards, considering that it would destroy their trade if this practice was continued longer, they held a meeting and came to the conclusion that whatever the lengths may be such lengths should be correctly stamped, and they have been ever since following this course.

In the same way the merchants of Calcutta have been bringing out goods of shorter lengths than before, but up to date there has been no rule to control this shortening process. The lengths of a large description of Piece Goods have been coming in shortened, and the process of shortening is still going on.

We have all considered the subject, and say that if this style of business continued the trade of this Port will be ruined in a short time. On this account we have come to the conclusion that the European merchants should stamp the correct lengths on the pieces, and there should be no delay in doing so, as we find that this system of short lengths has benefited neither the importers nor the dealers, only the small shop-keepers and poor consumers get imposed upon, and if the present system continues there will be a great want of confidence, and, on this account, it is necessary that the lengths should be correctly inserted on the pieces, and no pieces should be imported without the yards marked. A yard should always consist of 36 inches, and it is necessary the pieces should bear the width stamp also.

The earnest prayer of the Calcutta dealers is that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce will bring this question to a final settlement as soon as possible.

At a Special Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on Friday the 19th of December 1884.

Present:—Mr. T. F. HAMILTON, of MESSRS. EWING & Co., in the Chair.

MESSRS. P. SCOULOUDI of MESSRS. RALLI BROTHERS.

"	F. SCOULOUDI	"	DILLO.
"	G. MARCHETTI	"	PETROCOCHINO BROTHERS.
"	W. J. M. McCAW	"	KETTLEWELL, BULLEN & Co.
"	J. W. KIBBLE	"	SCHOENE, KILBURN & Co.
"	J. D. MAXWELL	"	CROOKE, ROME & Co.
"	J. R. HERBURN	"	KER, DODS & Co.
"	A. F. C. FORBES	"	F. W. HEILGERS & Co.
"	W. PARSONS	"	PEEL JACOB & Co.
"	F. ORMEROD	"	HOARE, MILLER & Co.
"	E. A. GOWARD	"	GIBSON & Co.
"	H. SIMPSON	"	CARLISLES, NEPHEWS & Co.
"	W. THOMSON	"	ANDERSON, WRIGHT & Co.
"	J. HORNE	"	BARRY & Co.
"	R. M. HAINING	"	FINLAY, MUIR & Co.
"	W. ELLIS	"	A. AGELASTO & Co.
"	J. CROFT	"	GRAHAM & Co.
"	J. KHUSNAH	"	SULLOGRAM KHUSNAH & Co.
"	DWARAKANATH DUTT	"	DWARAKANATH DUTT & Co.

The Chairman, having referred to the Resolutions which were passed at the Special Meeting held on Friday the 5th instant and adjourned to this day, reads a letter from Baboo Doorgachurn Law, who had been requested to communicate with the Native Dealers in Piece-Goods, and who now forwards copy of an Agreement arrived at amongst them, which the Chairman also reads.

The replies from members of the Chamber were also read; and the question before the meeting having been generally considered, the following Resolution was adopted:—

Proposed by Mr. T. F. HAMILTON,

Seconded by Mr. J. R. HEPBURN.

"That this Meeting having heard the replies received from several firms to the Circular of 8th instant, considers that the combination amongst importers therein suggested is impracticable at present. Having also been informed of the steps already taken by the Dealers to combine amongst themselves to purchase henceforward only such goods as are correctly stamped, this Meeting highly approves of such action, believing it to be the only efficient way of accomplishing the desired end."

The Chamber's Circular of the 8th instant and the translation of the Agreement arrived at among the Calcutta Piece-Goods Dealers are here recorded.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce,

Calcutta, 8th December 1884.

CIRCULAR.

"In submitting at foot the two Resolutions which were passed at the Special Meeting of the Chamber held on the 5th instant, I am desired by the Committee to request you will be so good as to state whether you are in favor of the combination referred to in the 1st Resolution."

1st Resolution—

Proposed by Mr. G. C. SCARAMANGA, of MESSRS.

RALLI BROTHERS,

Seconded by Baboo DOORGA CHURN LAW.

That the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce be requested to ascertain from all importing houses whether they are in favor of a combination amongst importers to adopt and support a system of length stamping of all piece-goods in yards of 36 inches.

2nd Resolution—

Proposed by Mr. T. F. HAMILTON, of MESSRS.

EWING & Co.,

Seconded by Mr. W. ELLIS, of MESSRS. A. AGELASTO & Co.

That the Dealers who have addressed the Bengal Chamber of Commerce be communicated with and requested to form amongst themselves a combination binding themselves to confine their purchases to goods bearing the length stamped in yards of 36 inches; and that Baboo Doorga Churn Law be requested to communicate on the subject with the Bazar, and to report the result to this meeting, which is adjourned to this day fortnight.

*Translation of the Agreement amongst Calcutta
Piece-Goods Dealers.**

We, all dealers in Piece-Goods of all classes, have combined and come to the determination that all goods imported from Europe bearing only correct stamp of actual length on the standard of 36 inches to the yard we shall buy.

We further make the following rules on this subject :—

- (1.) That from the 1st of January 1885 we shall make purchases for arrival of only such goods as would bear the correct stamp of length.
- (2.) That goods which have been bought in Europe by the importers before the 1st of January 1885, shall be taken by us without objection for six months after that date from their Calcutta godowns, and shipments of such purchases on the way, made within that time, will be treated similarly, whatever may be the character of their stamps and numbers.
- (3.) That from the 1st of July 1885, we shall buy nothing either on the spot or for arrival, unless they bore the correct stamp of length.

We agree to be bound by the above rules, and whoever shall violate them shall have to pay a fine of Rs 101, to be applied to some religious or charitable object, If it is found necessary hereafter to alter the foregoing rules in any way, such alteration can only be made with

* Signed by 290 dealers, and in course of circulation for further signatures.

the consent of all parties. But if, notwithstanding this, any dealer breaks these rules, it is our firm resolution that he should be held liable for damages according to law, for the losses which his action may entail upon others

**BLOCK OF BUSINESS IN THE HIGH COURT:
APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL JUDGES.**

Members will not fail to notice that the Committee have not been unmindful of the necessity for providing a speedy remedy for the great delays which had for sometime prevailed in the despatch of public business in the High Court; and the following representation to the Government of India sets forth the grounds upon which the Committee urged that the maintenance of the administration of justice at the highest point of efficiency was of paramount importance, and that it was essentially necessary to strengthen the Court by the appointment of additional Judges for the proper discharge of the increasing amount of work to which the then staff of Judges was numerically unequal.

Although no reply has been received to their communication, the recent additions to the Judicial Bench amply justify the Committee's application; and it is to be hoped that this accession

of strength to the High Court will enable the Judges to cope successfully with the most pressing demands upon their time and attention.

From Chamber to the Government of India.

Calcutta, 3rd July 1884.

The delays which have for sometime prevailed in the High Court of Calcutta have now reached a point when the earnest attention of Government has become essential, and the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce are therefore desirous of urging on His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General the necessity of taking such measures as His Excellency may be advised to adopt with a view to providing a speedy remedy for the present condition of affairs, which, while most prejudicial to the interests of the mercantile community, is also fraught with danger to the community at large, as engendering a spirit of contempt for, and distrust in, the administration of the law.

If the Committee are rightly informed, it would appear that in consequence of a large accumulation of arrears in the past, a suit instituted at the present time cannot, in all probability, be heard before two years have elapsed, during which time justice is practically denied to those who are obliged to have recourse to the Courts of law to vindicate their just claims, while witnesses must either be retained in this country until trial or their evidence taken by commission, with the result that the costs of a suit are thereby materially, but unavoidably, enhanced

To merchants the evils thus entailed are most serious, for they are driven either to accept large losses rather than encounter the ruinous expenditure of time and money that is now inseparable from a suit in the High Court, or to reduce their just claims so as to bring them within the Jurisdiction of the Court of Small Causes that they may be decided with some degree of expedition.

By the provisions of 24 and 25 Vic., C. 104, the Statute under which High Courts of Judicature in India were established, it was provided that the High Court of Fort William in Bengal should consist of a Chief Justice and as many Judges, not exceeding 15, as Her Majesty might from time to time appoint.

The High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal was established under Letters Patent, dated the 14th day of May 1862, which ordered that such Court should consist of a Chief Justice and 13 Judges.

These Letters Patent were revoked by the Letters Patent of the 28th December 1865, which, however, provided that the High Court of Judicature, called the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, should be, and continue as from the time of the original erection and establishment thereof, the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal for the Bengal Division of the Presidency.

With the immense development of commerce that has taken place since the establishment of that High Court in 1862, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of cases which, from the magnitude of the

interest at stake and the intricacies both of law and fact with which they are surrounded, require both prolonged investigation and the highest degree of judicial talent and experience for their due determination.

From these considerations it would appear that the present is most emphatically a time when the Bench should be kept up to its full strength both in numbers and judicial capacity, and when nothing should be done whereby its status may be in any way impaired.

It is with apprehension, therefore, that the Committee observe that the staff of Judges is deficient in point of numbers at the present, while it is within their knowledge that during the last few years a reduction has been made in the salaries of the Judges which they fear must inevitably result in inability to secure high class judicial talents for the simple reason that the emoluments offered will not, as a rule, be found sufficient to induce Barristers in large practice at the Indian Bar to take Judgeships, or to tempt men of learning and experience to sacrifice position and prospects in England to encounter the hard work and risk to health that are inseparable from the career of an Indian Judge.

The Committee find on enquiry that with the present reduced number of Judges, it is impossible, having regard to the pressure of business on the Appellate Side of the Court, which has more than doubled since the Court was established, to spare more than two Judges to deal with the mass of work that has to be got through on the Original Side, whether in Chambers or in Court.

Of these two Judges, one has on Mondays and Thursdays to dispose of motions and other interlocutory applications which, as a rule, consume the whole day, and on the 1st Wednesday in the month has to preside in the Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors, to which additional days have not unfrequently to be devoted in consequence of the pressure of the business in that Court.

This Judge in consequence is only able, as a rule, to sit on Tuesdays and Fridays to hear the suits that may be set down for trial before him, as Saturdays are devoted to the hearing of references.

Practically, therefore, there is only one Judge who can devote his time continuously to the disposal of suits on the Original Side of the High Court, and of necessity the list of arrears must increase with rapidity as time goes on, for it is impossible for one Judge, even if he is endowed with the very highest attainments, to cope single-handed with the cause list on that side.

It appears to the Committee, from the careful enquiries they have made, that if the business of the High Court is once more to be conducted with that expedition which suitors have a right to expect, four Judges should be permanently assigned to the Original Side, so that suits may be heard continuously without the interruptions which at present are unavoidable and which materially increase the cost of litigation.

Before submitting to His Excellency any suggestions for increasing the judicial staff, the Committee have

deemed it incumbent on them to ascertain if any further expense will be entailed on this country thereby, and they find that the surplus revenue arising from the administration of justice is so large that there can be no ground for objecting to the very reasonable proposal to raise the judicial staff to the strength contemplated by the Letters Patent of the 14th day of May 1862, on the score of economy.

The maintenance of the administration of justice at the highest point of efficiency is a matter of paramount importance, and any retrenchment that in any way impairs it must stand self-condemned. To show that such was the view taken in former years, it is only necessary to direct His Excellency's attention to the fact that, from the establishment of the late Supreme Court in 1774 to the 31st December 1887, the Government while receiving nothing whatever from the revenues of the Court defrayed its annual expenses, which amounted to £26,000 for the salaries of the Judges, and Sicca Rupees 1,36,184 for the salaries of its officers, who at the same time drew the fees of their offices; while at the present day, as evidenced by the Budget returns, the Government of Bengal receives an annual revenue from the tax levied on justice of eighty-six lakhs of Rupees, or a surplus of 12 lakhs of Rupees after defraying the whole of the State's expenditure for Civil and Criminal Courts, the costs of law-officers, the Jails, and the Penal Settlement of the Andamans.

That the administration of justice should be a source of profit to the State appears to the Committee to be altogether wrong in principle, but when, as a corollary

to such profit, the highest tribunal in India is found to be within a measurable distance of inefficiency in consequence of ill-judged economy, both as regards the numbers of Judges and the salaries paid to them, it seems clear that an anomaly exists which calls for instant reform, as being contrary to all principles of good government, and from every point of view illogical and indefensible.

THE BENCAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 499 M. P. I. dated Calcutta, 26th February 1884.

WITH reference to your letter dated 20th August last, I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to request the favor of the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce as to whether the working of the telephone service by the Oriental Telephone Company has improved during the last six months, and whether it is now considered by the mercantile community to be satisfactory in all respects.

A reply at your early convenience is requested

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta 15th March 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 499 of the 26th ultimo, in which you inquire whether the working of the Telephone service by the Oriental

Telephone Company has improved during the last six months, and whether it is now considered by the mercantile community to be satisfactory in all respects.

The reply, which I am instructed to give to this reference, is necessarily limited to an expression of opinion by the members of the Chamber who employ the agency of the Oriental Telephone Company, and from the answers which have been returned to the Chamber's circular on the subject, it would appear that during the last six months the service has improved, and that, on the whole, it works satisfactorily, and has been of good service in commercial business; at the same time it is considered that there is still room for further improvements in the general working and in the instruments employed.

In submitting this reply, I am directed to give the following extract from a letter from Messrs. Carlisles Nephews and Co., Secretaries and Treasurers to the Bengal Telephone Company:

"1st.—That the returns only give a right or proper idea of the service of about one third, of the subscribers to the Exchange.

2nd.—That, besides the Exchange Service, the Company have a number of private lines running, of which no returns are sent in.

3rd.—That the service is as yet in its infancy, that it is generally found that a complaint is more often the fault of the operator than of the instruments, or construction of service.

4th.—The number of subscribers to the Exchange are 166, and that out of this number only 53 are members of the Chamber, and that from these only have the Chamber obtained returns.

"For the information of the Chamber we append the list of calls at the Exchange for the past month:—

Total Calls	Calls per week.	Subscribers to the Exchange.	Calls per week per subscriber.	Total Complaints.
13919	3498	166	21.07	17

"The service of the Company has, in our opinion, very much improved since August, and, so far as we are able to give an unbiassed judgment, is at present as good as, if it is not better than, many an Exchange we have tried in England, and we consider its working satisfactory in all respects."

BILL TO AMEND THE TELEGRAPH ACT.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 1119 I., Dated Darjeeling, 11th September 1884.

I AM directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to request that you will favor him with the opinion of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce as to the provisions of the accompanying draft of a Bill to facilitate the construction of Telegraphs and to amend the Telegraph Act of 1876.

The Government of India has requested that the reply of this Government may be sent in not later than 1st October,

I am therefore to request that your reply may be sent to Darjeeling by the 24th instant.

If the opinion of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce has been already asked for and sent direct to the Government of India, I am to request that a copy of it may be sent to this office.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 23rd September 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1119 Z., of the 11th instant, relative to a Bill to facilitate the construction of Telegraphs and to amend the Telegraph Act I of 1876.

The Committee notice from the Statement of Objects and Reasons that it is considered desirable to introduce this Bill mainly in order to give authority to the Government of India (which it does not at present possess), and to any Company or person licensed and specially empowered in this behalf, to place telegraph lines under or over property belonging either to private persons or public bodies.

It is also proposed, *inter alia*, to amend the definition of "telegraph" so as to include telephonic or other communications by means of electricity.

Having duly considered the provisions of the Bill, the Committee of the Chamber desire me to say that in their judgment the rights and interests of owners of private property are not sufficiently protected, and that

the operation of section 10 will press rather hard upon house-owners in requiring them to defray all charges incurred in the removal or alteration of any telegraph line placed upon their property for the convenience of other persons or of the public. I am at the same time to ask the Government to consider whether, for the better security and protection of life and the general convenience of the traffic of a large city like Calcutta, all lines, apparatus, and appliances, for transmitting or making telegraphic, telephonic or other communications by means of electricity should not be placed underground instead of overhead as at present.

If it is believed that both in America and in Europe public opinion is now adverse to the overhead system, which is widely recognised as a source of public danger, and it is understood that steps are being taken in some of the principal cities to have all wires crossing streets laid underground. If such precautions be necessary in Europe and America, how much more are they necessary in large cities in this country, which are subject at certain periods of the year to such sudden and severe gales.

INDIAN STEAM-SHIPS' ACT.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 475 T. G.—26th May 1884.

I AM directed to enquire whether the Chamber of Commerce desire, under section 25 of Act VII of 1884 (the Indian Steam-ships' Act), which was published in

Part IV, pages 89 to 95 of the *Gazette of India* of the 8th March 1884, to recommend the exemption of any class of steam-vessels from the operation of the Act.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 31st July 1884.

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to state in reply to your letter No. 475 T. G. of the 26th May, that they do not recommend the exemption of any class of steam-vessels from the operation of Act VII of 1884, as they do not perceive any good reason why any class of sea-going vessels carrying more than 12 passengers should be exempt from the survey provided for by Chapter 2 of the Act.

Section 33 of Chapter 3 of the Act exempts inland steam-vessels, steam-launches, &c., which are specially dealt with by Act VI of 1884.

NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS' ACT OF 1881.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 1019—12 Mis. R., 21st March 1884.

I AM directed to forward a copy of the Bill to amend the Negotiable Instruments Act of 1881, and of the Statement of Objects and Reasons, and to request that you will move the Chamber to favour the Lieutenant-Governor, as soon as possible, with any remarks that they may have to offer on the provisions of the Bill.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS.

SECTIONS 108 and 109 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, make it essential to the validity of an acceptance for honour that the person accepting shall go through certain formalities in the presence of a notary.

It appears that the English Bills of Exchange Bill which became law in 1882 originally contained similar provisions, but they were cut out in Committee.

Two of the leading banks in India brought to the notice of the Government some time ago that the imposition of such a condition led to serious inconvenience in the case of certain classes of bills, inasmuch as persons who were willing to become responsible for them as acceptors refused to go before a notary.

2. Section 113 of the Negotiable Instruments Act makes a notarial act essential to a payment for honour, as section 68 of the English Bills of Exchange Act does, but with this difference, that while the English Act allows of the requisite declaration before the notary being made either by the payer for honour or his agent in that behalf, the Indian Act may be construed as allowing it to be made only by the payer himself. This also is likely to give rise to difficulty.

3. A number of banks and other commercial authorities throughout British India, having been consulted on these points, are almost unanimous in thinking that an amendment of the Act is required, and accordingly the present Bill has been prepared with a view to bringing the law of India in the particulars referred to as nearly as may be into conformity with the law of England.

4. The opportunity has been taken to supply certain defects in the Negotiable Instruments Act regarding the appointment and control of notaries public, and to make it clear that a person may be appointed a notary by name or by virtue of an office held by him; that he may be appointed for a limited area and may be removed from his office; and further that rules may be made for the guidance and control of notaries appointed under the Act and may, among other matters, fix the fees payable to such notaries.

C. P. LEBERT.

The 29th February 1884.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 16th May 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1019 of the 21st March relative to the Bill to amend the Negotiable Instruments Act of 1881, and to state, in reply, that the proposed alterations of the law, as explained in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, have the Chamber's approval, since they will be the means of removing the difficulties which have, it is believed, attended the working of the Act now in force.

PERIM AS A COALING STATION.

The annexed correspondence regarding Perim as a coaling station will shew that in reply to

an enquiry made by the Government of India the Committee have, after consulting those members of the Chamber principally interested in shipping matters, expressed the opinion that Perim will be found to be convenient for that purpose. The memoranda sent in by the members consulted are placed among the records of the Chamber, and may be referred to by any one desiring information.

From Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal.

No. 21M—Port William, 12th January 1884.

I AM directed to request that the Government of India may be favored with the views of the chief mercantile firms in Calcutta as to the probability of Perim becoming a convenient coaling station for large vessels.

No. 193 M. P. J.

Forwarded to the General Department of this Government for disposal.

(Sd). W. B. BESTIE,
Under-Secretary.

Bengal, P. W. Department, }
The 18th of January 1884. }

No. 218.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce with the request that the Lieu-

tenant-Governor may be favored with an expression of the views of the Chamber on the subject.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

(Sd). C. W. BOLTON,

Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

CALCUTTA;
General Department (Marine,) }
The 26th January 1884.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 15th February 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Office No. 218 of the 26th of last month, forwarding copy of letter No. 21 of the 12th idem, from the Government of India, as to the probability of Perim becoming a convenient coaling station for large vessels.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that the inquiry has been submitted to the principal mercantile firms of Calcutta and the Superintendent of the P. and O. Company, and that the several minutes recorded thereon—copies of which are annexed—go to show that the Island of Perim would be found a convenient coaling station.

THE BASSES AND MINICOY LIGHT DUES.

The following papers complete the series which appeared in the Chamber's last Report, and it will be observed that the Light on Minicoy Island was expected to be exhibited early in 1885.

From Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal.

No. 358—Calcutta, the 19th January 1884.

REFERRING to your letter No. 530T-G., dated the 20th August 1883, I am directed to forward, for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, copy of a Despatch from the Secretary of State No. 208 (Statistics and Commerce), dated the 6th December last, regarding the rates of Basses and Minicoy Light Dues. I am to add that the further representations on the subject made by the Port Commissioners of Calcutta and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and received with your letter No. 1056T-G., dated the 20th September 1883, were transmitted to the Secretary of State on the 1st instant.

*From the Secretary of State to H. E.
The Governor-General of India.*

No. 208—India Office, London, 6th December 1883.

With reference to your letter, dated the 21st September, No. 55 (Separate Revenue), forwarding a copy of a letter from the Calcutta Port Commissioners on the subject of the Basses and Minicoy Light Dues, and adding

your opinion that the dues should be fixed at a rate just sufficient to cover expenditure, I have to point out to you that this opinion apparently agrees with that expressed in the letter from the Board of Trade communicated to you with my Despatch No. 60 of 19th April 1883, and there is nothing at present to show that this principle is departed from.

A copy of a further letter from the Board on the subject is transmitted herewith.

From Board of Trade to Under-Secy. of State.

R. S. & C. 2622—Whitehall Gardens,

13th November 1883.

I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th ultimo, forwarding, for the observations of this department, copy of a letter (R. S. & C. 2379) from the Government of India, covering one from the Calcutta Port Commissioners, on the subject of the dues to be levied for the Basses and Minicoy Lights.

In reply, I am to request that you will state to the Earl of Kimberley that, with regard to these dues, the Board of Trade can only refer to their letter of the 30th March last (H. 2176) in which they expressed their entire concurrence in the view that the dues should not exceed what is necessary for the service, and should, so far as possible, be based on actually ascertained expenditure.

From the Secy. of State to H. E. The Governor-General of India in Council.

No. 48—India Office, London, 3rd April 1884.

In continuation of my despatch, dated the 6th December 1883, No. 208, and with reference to your letter of 1st January 1884, No. 1 (Separate Revenue), I forward herewith, for communication to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, a copy of a letter from the Board of Trade explaining the payment of £2,194-9-7 to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

From Board of Trade to the Under-Secy. of State.

H1272—Whitehall Gardens, 19th March 1884.

I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th ultimo (R. S. & C. 167), in which you transmit copy of a letter from the Government of India, enclosing further protests against the enhanced rates levied or proposed to be levied in respect of the Basses and Minicoy Lights.

In reply, I am to request that you will state to the Earl of Kimberley that the payment of £2,194-9-7 to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, information with regard to which is asked for in the concluding paragraph of the letter from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce forwarded by you, did not arise out of any indulgence to that Company, but was merely a repayment to them of certain dues for the Great and Little Basses Lights which had been levied in error in respect of voyages between the United

Kingdom and Australia through the Suez Canal for which dues were not properly payable. This repayment having been made once for all, no similar charge in respect of them can occur in future.

*From Government of India to Department of
Finance & Commerce.*

No. 920—Simla, the 12th May 1884.

Copy forwarded to the Government of Bengal (General Department) in continuation of the letter from this Department No. 358, dated the 19th January last, for information and for communication to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

By order, &c.,
(Sd.) J. E. O'CONNOR,
Asst. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 484 T-G.

Copy—with copy of the letter of the Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce, No. 358, dated the 19th January 1884, and enclosure, forwarded to the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, for information, in continuation of Mr. Bolton's letter No. 1053T-G, dated the 29th September 1883.

By order of the Lieut.-Govr. of Bengal.

(Sd.) H. H. RISLEY,
Offg. Under-Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.
DARJELLING,
General Department (Marine). }
The 26th May 1884.

From the Offg. Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Finance and Commerce, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department,—No. 2265, dated Calcutta the 16th December 1884.

In continuation of the notification of this Department No. 2286, dated the 27th July 1883, I am directed to forward herewith copy of a despatch from the Secretary of State, No. 153 (Statistics and Commerce,) dated the 20th November 1884, and of the enclosed letter from the Board of Trade, relative to the approaching exhibition of a light from the Minicoy Light-house, and the mode of accounting for the amounts that may be collected as dues on account of that light.

2. I am to request that the Collectors of Customs, and other officers who collect Besses light dues in Bengal, may, with the permission of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, be instructed as suggested by the Board of Trade, and be desired to hold themselves in readiness to collect the dues on account of the Minicoy light on receiving telegraphic instructions on the subject.

From the Right Hon'ble the Earl of Kimberley, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Most Hon'ble the Governor-General of India in Council,—No. 163, dated India Office, London the 20th November 1884.

I forward herewith, for your information and guidance a copy of a letter from the Board of Trade relative to the approaching exhibition of the Minicoy light.

1. I request that preparatory steps may be at once taken with a view to immediate instructions being conveyed by

telegraph to the several Collectors of Customs under your jurisdiction, so soon as you receive information of the actual exhibition of the light, to commence the collection of dues in accordance with the Order in Council of 22nd May 1883.

From C. CECIL TRIVOR, Esq., Secretary, Board of Trade (Harbour Department), to the Under-Secretary of State, India Office,—No. 868411, dated Whitehall Gardens, S.-W., the 4th November 1884.

With reference to previous correspondence on the subject of Minicoy Light-house, and in view of the approaching exhibition (about January next) of a light therefrom, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state that they would be glad if the Secretary of State for India would request the Indian Government, so soon as they receive information of the exhibition of the light, to give the Collectors of Customs at ports in India immediate instructions to commence the collection of Minicoy light dues as authorised by the Imperial Order in Council of the 22nd May 1883, with the consent of the Indian Government.

With regard to the issue of light dues receipts, and the mode of accounting for the amounts collected, I am to state that, until the existing supply of forms is exhausted, Collectors of Customs may, by making a manuscript alteration, adopt them for both Basses and Minicoy light dues, one receipt for both dues on Form L. V. 7 being issued for each ship for the same voyage, the amount received being entered on one account (Form L. V. 9) without distinguishing the Basses from the Minicoy dues.

I am to add, that 5 per cent. commission for collection will be allowed on the dues collected for Minicoy Light

house, as in the case of the Great and Little Basses dues.

No. 1846.

Copy, with copy of enclosures, forwarded to the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for information, in continuation of this Office endorsement No. 1814, dated the 6th August 1883.

By order of the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal,

H. H. RISLEY,

Offg. Under-Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

CALCUTTA,

General Department—(Marine.) }
The 22nd December 1884.

✂ The Secretary of State has telegraphed that the Minicoy Light was exhibited on the 7th February 1885.

DRAFT RULES UNDER THE GENERAL PASS SYSTEM.

The Chamber's last Report contained the Committee's reply to the Board of Revenue relative to the revised regulations for the guidance of vessels engaged in the coasting trade of the Bengal Presidency; and on this occasion the Committee have again to submit their report upon the General Pass system as revised by the Customs authorities at Bombay.

The Committee are not aware of what has been definitely settled, but they apprehend that

no objection can be taken to the reasonable amendments proposed by them.

From the Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 1125, dated the 1st April 1884.

I HAVE the honor to forward herewith copies of the correspondence* marginally noted, regarding the introduction of the General Pass System and, as directed, to request that the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce will be good enough to favor me with their views on the different points raised.

From Government of India to Governr. of Bengal.

No. 63, Calcutta, the 15th January 1884.

With reference to the correspondence ending with Mr. C. S. Bayley's letter, Miscellaneous Revenue No. 2331C, dated the 26th September 1882, I am directed to forward

* No. 7280, dated 29th copy of a letter* from the Government of Bombay, enclosing a joint Report by the Collector of Customs and the Collector of Salt Revenue, Bombay, on the subject of the practicability of carrying out the provisions of sections 155-160 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878, and the adoption, in that Presidency, of the forms of General Pass under section 164 of the Act approved by the Government of Bengal.

I am to request that the Government of India may be favored with the views of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor on the Report generally and on the modified forms of General Pass, Cargo-book, and Shipping bills, which the Government of Bombay proposes for adoption in all the Presidencies in place of those forwarded with your letter under reference.

From Government of Bombay to Governr. of India.

No. 7280 of 1883, Bombay Castle, 29th September 1883.

With reference to Mr. Officiating Assistant Secretary * No. 518, dated the 17th March 1882, Hamilton's letters* quoted in the margin, No. 4770, dated the 2nd November 1882, margin, and subsequent communications on the subject, I am directed to forward, for submission to the Government of India, the accompanying copy of a joint Report with accompaniments by the Collector of Customs, Bombay, and the Collector of Salt Revenue, and to state that the Governor-in-Council concurs in the conclusions arrived at by those officers regarding the extent to which, and the manner in which, the procedure enjoined in sections 155-160 of the Sea Customs Act should be enforced in this Presidency, inclusive of Sindh, with a view to secure accurate statistics of the coasting trade, and would recommend for general adoption the form of General Pass under section 164 of the Act proposed by them, subject to the conditions embodied in the draft rules, as also the forms of cargo-book and shipping bills in lieu of the forms proposed by the Government of Bengal.

I am to add that, in the opinion of the Governor-in-Council, the suggestion contained in paragraph 13 of the Report, that shipping bills whenever necessary in respect of goods intended for export to other Presidencies should be prepared in English, and that contained in paragraph 36—that a limited deposit in Government paper should be taken as security for the due discharge of the conditions of the General Pass—should likewise be adopted.

From Chamber to the Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 11th August 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to submit the following remarks on the subject of the proposed draft rules for a General Pass system referred to in your letter No. 1135 of the 1st of April last, and upon which a joint Report by the Collector of Customs and Opium, Bombay, and the Acting Collector of Salt Revenue, Bombay, has been recorded, as per copy attached to your letter.

Rule 3.—By accepting a General Pass the Agents of a vessel are considered to bind themselves to be responsible—

"That no goods shall be carried by her in contravention of any law for the time being in force."

The Committee suggest that the word "knowingly" be inserted before "carried"; and they do so for the

* The Joint Report and Draft Rules referred to in this letter are too lengthy for reproduction here.

reason that false declarations of the contents of packages are occasionally made by shippers, and an agent has no means of checking this.

The rule further provides—

"That they shall deposit with the Collector of Customs such sum in cash or Government Promissory Notes not less than Rs. 500 nor more than Rs. 1,000 per each vessel as he may, under the circumstances of the case, decide to be reasonable," &c.

On this point the Committee would observe that the Chamber has already dissented from a similar clause, and they fail to see any necessity for the deposit. The regular coasting trade is carried on by Companies against whom any penalty could readily be enforced; and even the occasional trader, if he took out a Pass, which is not very probable, would have to be vouched for by some responsible local agent.

The rule provides that no Line or Company be called on to deposit more than Rs. 5,000, but this does not seem to the Committee of the Chamber to be a very equitable arrangement. Taking, for instance, the British India and Asiatic Companies, the former having about seventy vessels engaged in the coasting service, and the latter five such boats, the latter might have to deposit Rs. 1,000 per steamer, whereas the deposit of the former would not exceed about Rs. 70 for each vessel of their fleet.

If the deposit is to be enforced at all there should be no such maximum, but if all were treated alike, then

the unreasonableness of the suggestion to demand deposits would be demonstrated by the fact, that a Company like the *British India* would not be trusted to conform to regulations unless it lodged Rs. 25,000 or Rs. 70,000 in cash or Government Securities.

The Committee deprecate the tendency at the Customs to demand deposits as a price for giving reasonable facilities to trade. The money retained under various pretexts by Customs authorities must, at any given time, represent a very large amount of private capital withdrawn from reproductive employment.

Rule 4, which provides for the keeping of cargo books, does not present anything to which exception can be taken; but it is suggested that, as a matter of detail, it would be more convenient to introduce a column for a vessel's destination in lieu of writing across the document in red ink.

Rule 6 provides that "*vessels sailing under a General Pass may be entered outwards, and shipping bills granted in anticipation of arrival, provided that at terminal ports this shall not be done except with the special sanction of the Collector.*"

With reference to this the Committee of the Chamber desire me to say that they do not understand why terminal ports should be excluded, for facilities are often as necessary there as elsewhere. Moreover, it may sometimes be difficult to say what is a terminal; for instance, it may be supposed that Calcutta would be reckoned such a port for a vessel arriving here from

Rangoon; but the vessel might have on board goods for Bombay, and, if so, it may be supposed that Calcutta would not be a terminal in respect of such a vessel. This is merely instanced as one case in which misunderstanding might arise, but it is not the only such case; and the Committee think it would be better not to make any exceptions to the concession granted under this rule.

Rule 8 provides that "*Free cargo may be shipped at any time, day or night, except on Sundays or holidays, without special permission or supervision; provided that no goods shall be shipped at night without supervision, except such as have been water-borne for shipment during ordinary working hours.*"

The Committee fail to see how a vessel's officers are to know whether the contents of any given boat coming alongside by night have or have not been "water-borne for shipment during ordinary working hours;" such a rule might in an especial degree hamper work at the Coast Ports: neither can they see what possible objection there can be to a vessel taking in *free goods* at any time, night or day, holiday or no holiday, no matter when they may have been put into boat.

Rule 11 provides for making application for Port Clearance, and in respect of this the Committee are of opinion that it should be distinctly understood that the Master's attendance at the office of the Chief Customs Officer is not to be required.

Rule 12 requires that the Export Manifest shall be put in by the Agents within five clear working days from

date of sailing; but it has been represented to the Committee that five days will often prove too short, and that the time allowed should be seven days.

Rule 14 grants 24 hours, after arrival in any port, for the presentation at the Custom House of duly authenticated extracts from the Cargo Book and of the other documents referred to. It has been pointed out to the Committee that the time should be extended to 48 hours. At some ports it occasionally takes several hours to get papers ashore, and some oversight may necessitate references between ship and shore.

Rule 16 permits the discharge and landing of cargo, dutiable or free, at any time, day or night, except on Sundays and holidays.

The Committee would urge that this Rule (as also Rule 8) imposes an unnecessary restriction. They are unable to see why a steamer should not be allowed to work on holidays, and on Sundays too in case of need, the Agents of course being responsible for irregularities. If night work be allowed without permission or supervision, the Committee fail to see any objection to work in like manner on holidays; and if it be intended to forbid work on all the numerous official holidays serious loss and hardship would be caused.

Rule 21 provides as follows :—

The Agents shall further be bound to undertake that when the vessel touches at any Foreign port in course of any coasting voyage, a certificate under the signature of the Chief Officer of Customs at such port, shall be des-

patched, within 24 hours of her departure, to the Customs Collector of every Customs port for which she has taken in cargo at such Foreign port, giving number and description of packages, numbers and marks they bear, and a general description of their contents.

This provision is considered objectionable, for it will often not be possible to do what is required within 24 hours. For her own protection the steamer will take care that she puts out her cargo at the ports of destination; and as there are already the cargo-book, the manifest, and the shipping bills, it is hard to perceive any sufficient object to be gained by further multiplying forms and work.

Appendix A sets out the form of General Pass, and contains the following :—“ *Provided that this Pass shall not be valid for any voyage or voyages which the said S.S. ——— may make otherwise than as a regular coasting vessel during the period of its currency.*”

This appears objectionable. What is to be the definition of a “regular coasting vessel?” For instance, is a vessel proceeding direct from Calcutta to Bombay a coaster? If not, would touching at one port make her one? Again, if a vessel touching at three ports is a coaster, why should a vessel be excluded from the benefits of the Pass because she happens to touch at only two ports; and so on. No adequate object appears to be served by stopping a vessel's privileges in the manner proposed. If the Bond is good at all, it should be good at all times and for all voyages within Indian waters during the period of its currency.

NOTARIAL CHARGES.

The scale of notarial charges in force at Madras having been submitted to your Committee by the Chamber of Commerce there for an expression of opinion, the matter was made the subject of reference to the Solicitors and Notaries Public as well as to Managers of Banks in Calcutta, and the Committee's enquiry resulted in a record of divergent views as to the rates that should be charged; and they were not prepared to advocate any change.

From Madras Chamber to Chamber.

Madras, 9th February 1884.

I HAVE been desired to bring to your notice that this Chamber has recently been in communication with the Madras Government on the subject of the rate of fees now levied by Notaries Public in Madras. The Chamber is informed that in Ceylon the fee charged by Notaries is Re. 1-4, while in Madras it is Rs. 9-8, exclusive of mileage charges. A representation has been made to the chief firm of Notaries in Madras, who, in reply to the enquiry whether they would be disposed to accept the fees laid down in the Negotiable Instruments Act, have stated that they are not prepared to do so, as in their judgment the Government has no authority to lay down any scale of fees under the Act; that the fees mentioned

in the scale are obviously insufficient to remunerate any Notary for the work and responsibility incurred in noting and protesting bills, and that they see no reason why they should themselves depart from the legal scale of fees settled by an order of the late Supreme Court of Madras, dated 5th August 1847, which was sanctioned by the Governor in Council.

The Government, in reply to the Chamber's communication, has observed that the rate of fees now levied by Notaries Public in Madras has not been altered since 1847, and it does not now see reason to move in the matter. It has, however, forwarded the correspondence for the information of the Government of India.

I am directed to ask you to be so good as to favor this Chamber with an expression of your Chamber's views on this subject. The argument that a rate which was presumably reasonable 37 years ago, when commerce in India was on a comparatively small scale, is fairly applicable to the condition of things prevailing at this date, seems to this Chamber untenable. The Government of India has intimated to the local Governments that they should not appoint persons as Notaries Public in places where a sufficient number of professional Notaries Public is already to be found. Consequently the relief that the levying of the scale of fees which Notaries appointed under the Negotiable Instruments Act are authorized to charge is not applicable to a large town like Madras.

*From Madras Chamber to Chamber.**Madras, 1st May 1884.*

I beg to remind you that this Chamber has not yet had the advantage of receiving a reply from your Chamber to its letter of the 9th February regarding fees levied by Notaries Public.

I may take this opportunity of handing you the enclosed copy of the reply that has been received from the Bombay Chamber to the reference that this Chamber made on the same subject.

*From Bombay Chamber to Madras Chamber.**Bombay, 23rd February, 1884.*

I am directed by the Committee of this Chamber to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 9th instant, regarding the rate of fees levied by Notaries Public in Madras, and requesting an expression of the views of this Chamber on the subject.

In reply, the Committee desire me to say that in their opinion the rate of fees charged in Madras, *viz.*, Rs. 9-8, exclusive of mileage charges is too high, if the time labor and competency required to do notary work is considered, and they think that your Chamber is quite justified in moving for a reduction.

The fees levied in Bombay are as follows :—

FOR NOTING BILLS.

<i>Within the Fort.</i>		<i>Without the Fort.</i>	
Notary's Fee, Rs.	4	Notary's Fee, Rs.	8
Stamp " "	1	Stamp " "	1
		Carriage hire "	1
Total Rs.	5	Total Rs.	10

PROTESTING CHARGES.

Notary's Fee, Rs.	20
Stamp " "	1
Total Rs.	21

This charge is made both within and without the Fort.

*From Chamber to Madras Chamber.**Calcutta, 28th May 1884.*

The Committee of this Chamber are now in a position to reply to your letter of the 9th of February on the subject of Notarial Fees, and I am instructed to say that, immediately on its coming before them, your letter was forwarded to Messrs. Sunderson & Co., the Chamber's Solicitors, for an expression of opinion of the profession on the question ; and that so soon as the Committee were in possession of their replies they were circulated to all the local Banks (except the Bank of Bengal) for information and expression of their views. On receipt of the latter the Committee again communicated with their Solicitors and the other gentlemen interested, whose answer brings the matter to a present conclusion.

The views expressed by the Solicitors and Notaries Public of Calcutta will be found in the annexed copies of their several minutes, and in that of Messrs. Sanderson & Co.'s last letter of the 17th instant, which conveys their unanimous opinion against any change in the present practice.

The Bank managers, on the other hand, are also unanimous, but in an opposite direction, as they consider that the fees charged for noting and protesting are excessive and should be largely reduced, a reduction which would probably be followed by an increase of business, as it is stated that a large proportion of dishonored bills are returned unprotected, the drawer in consequence of the heavy notarial charges preferring to take the word of the holder that the bills have been duly presented.

With these conflicting views before them, and the reply to your reference to the chief firm of notaries in your city who are opposed to any reduction, my Committee are not prepared to advocate any change in the rates charged here, more especially as the fees levied in Bombay appear to be on a scale which very nearly approaches the Calcutta scale: the protesting charge, indeed, is the same, viz., 21 Rs., (including stamp) and the fees for noting within and without the fort are Rs. 5 and 10 respectively, or an average of Rs. 7-8 or only 8 annas less than Calcutta on the business of this kind transacted in Bombay.

CHARGE FOR PORT COMMISSIONERS' FLOATING 30-TON CRANE.

From Chamber to the Port Commissioners.

Calcutta, 2nd April 1884.

A REPRESENTATION has been submitted by Messrs. Graham & Co., Agents for the "Anchor" Line of steamers, to the Chamber of Commerce, relative to the very high rates charged for the use of the Commissioners' 30-Ton Floating Crane in discharging heavy cargo, and the following extract is given by them from a letter from their Home Correspondents, Messrs. Henderson Brothers of Glasgow:—

"Locomotives.—The expenses connected with these exceed our calculation. Surely it is possible to make some other arrangement by which the expense will be materially reduced.

"It only costs 5s. a ton to ship heavy machinery here, and it is therefore outrageous that we had to pay so much for discharging at Calcutta. We should either be allowed to use our own tackle, or the charges for the floating derrick should be materially reduced. In New York, which is probably the most expensive port in the world, labor being very dear, we only pay 4s. per ton for the use of a floating derrick to discharge marble in blocks up to 20 tons, including lighterage to the marble wharf, which is about 2 miles distant from the discharging berth of our vessels. The charges at Calcutta should be less instead of more, and we shall not rest satisfied until they have been very considerably reduced."

The rates charged by the Commissioners are, it is believed, as follows :—

For each lift not exceeding 2 tons ...	Rs. 0 1 6	per cwt.
" exceeding 2 but not 4 " ...	" 0 2 0	"
" exceeding 4 but not 10 " ...	" 0 4 0	"
" exceeding 10 " ...	" 0 8 0	"

and upon this scale the Commissioners appear to have realised a profitable annual return from the use of their crane.

The following figures, taken from the Commissioners' Annual Reports, show that the original expenditure was Rs. 1,46,619-9-7.

The first hoists were made in June 1877, and the crane was steadily employed, but no returns of earnings or charges for maintenance appear to be given in the Report for the year 1877-78.

In 1878-79 the earnings were Rs.	17,051,	and the expenses Rs.	10,773
1879-80 " "	15,126	" "	18,612
1880-81 " "	19,453	" "	12,091
1881-82 " "	26,465	" "	11,787
1882-83 " "	21,256	" "	12,661
	—		—

Total earnings in 5 years, Rs. 96,314, and expenses Rs. 63,954

The excess of earnings over all charges for maintaining the crane, including salaries, expenses, and repairs being Rs. 32,390; and if the first year's net working be taken at an estimate of Rs. 5,000, one-fourth of the original cost has already been recouped.

This being so, it appears only proper that the crane charges should be sensibly reduced, and not only on the ground of the present rates being in excess of what are

absolutely necessary to cover all charges, but also for the reason that the rule of the Commissioners prevents consignees of heavy cargo using their own appliances, which would enable them to do the work at a very much lower expense than they incur by the compulsory employment of the Commissioners' crane.

It is fully admitted that the Commissioners provided a very useful addition to their general appliances for facilitating the traffic of the port, and the floating crane has no doubt proved a great convenience to vessels bringing out heavy machinery, &c., as well as to the consignees of such cargo; at the same time, as the original cost has been materially reduced and earnings will go on increasing—heavy machinery being more and more imported—the Committee are of opinion that the time has now arrived when a substantial reduction may be granted.

Port Commissioners to Chamber.

No. 268, the 18th April 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 2nd instant, regarding the rates charged for the use of the 30-Ton Floating Crane, and in reply to point out that the figures abstracted as the expenses do not include the charges for interest and sinking fund at $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, nor for depreciation, which should be at least at 3 per cent. per annum. Had these charges been included, it would be apparent that the crane, instead of working at a profit, has not paid her expenses. The Commissioners would also point out that, under the provisions of their Act, the charges for handling by the 30 ton crane,

like all other landing charges, are payable by the consignees, not by the vessels, except by special agreement as between shipper and shipowner or master. By having the use of a floating crane vessels are saved from mooring to a berth under a fixed crane, and the charges levied at Glasgow, as quoted by Messrs. Henderson Brothers, do not therefore include all the cost of making the lifts.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, the Commissioners are of opinion that the schedule of rates charged for the use of the crane is not excessive, and they cannot therefore recommend any reduction.

TAXATION IN ENGLAND OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

Your Committee were glad of the opportunity of addressing the Government of India in support of the movement at home for the repeal of the tax on gold and silver plate, the removal of which would give a considerable impetus to the manufacturing industries of India, which are at present deterred from entering the English market in consequence of heavy duties and the restrictions imposed by the hall-marking system.

From the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Free Trade Association to Chamber.

London, January 10th, 1884.

TAXATION OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

I AM requested to express a hope that the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce will take every possible opportunity of pressing this subject upon the attention of the Government of India, in order that the duties may be abolished in April next.

From Chamber to the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Free Trade Association, London.

Calcutta, 7th March 1884.

In compliance with the request conveyed in your letter of the 10th of January, relative to the taxation of gold and silver plate, the Committee of this Chamber have addressed His Excellency the Governor-General in Council on the subject, and I have the pleasure to forward herewith a copy of their representation, together with a copy of the Memorial from the Calcutta Trades' Association referred to.

From Chamber to Government of India.

Calcutta, 7th March 1884.

The attention of the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce having been directed to the question of the duty levied in England on gold and silver plate and to the law relating to hall-marking, I am desired to

submit for the consideration of Government that the industries of this country engaged in the manufacture of gold and silver ware are prejudicially affected by the restrictions which prevail at home and which prevent the importation into the United Kingdom of the artistic productions of India. A considerable trade would undoubtedly follow if the duty were abolished, and if the hall-marking laws were so reformed as to permit manufacturers in this country obtaining an unfettered admission of their industries into England, thereby leading to a considerable development of a trade which at present is almost entirely shut out of the English market.

The duty of 18 pence per ounce of silver, or upwards of 30 per cent. on its current value, is of itself a practically prohibitive imposition, and the hall-marking system is so oppressive, that the manufacturers of Indian silver ware are deterred from entering the English market and offering for sale the beautiful and highly ornamental work which they can produce.

On these grounds the Committee of this Chamber desire respectfully to urge upon the attention of the Government of India the expediency of removing the difficulties and restrictions referred to, and they trust the Governor-General in Council will be pleased to give their representation any support in His Excellency's power.

The Committee have had an opportunity of perusing the Trades' Association's Memorial to Government on this subject, and they entirely concur in what is therein advanced.

APPLICATION TO COMPLETE THE LOADING OF EXPORT CARCOES AT DIAMOND HARBOUR.

The following correspondence has reference to the question of permitting vessels to complete the loading of their export cargoes at Diamond Harbour, when the state of the tides renders it necessary for them to leave the Port of Calcutta in anticipation of their intended day of departure. The matter was brought to the Chamber's notice by the Collector of Customs in connection with one of the P. and O. Steamers, which was obliged to proceed to Diamond Harbour five days earlier than her appointed time, and as under the Custom's Act the Collector was unable to sanction the shipment at that place of the remainder of the cargo, although it had been duly passed through the Custom House, she had to leave with about 1,200 tons short shipped.

It will be seen that while the Board of Revenue and the Committee of the Chamber strongly urged a relaxation of the rule which prohibits shipment of cargo at any river station out of the limits of the port of Calcutta, the Government of Bengal declined to authorise a procedure which was held to be contrary to the law.

The Committee trust, however, that some change may be made in this respect and that the law may be amended so as to admit of vessels completing their loading out of the limits of the port if unavoidable circumstances render it necessary for them to do so.

From Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 3305, dated the 26th September 1883.

I HAVE the honor to request that I may be favored with the opinion of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce on the point raised below :

The P. & O. Company's Steamer *Ganges*, which should have left Calcutta on the 15th June last, was obliged to go down to Diamond Harbour five days earlier owing to the unusually low tide, and consequently had not time to take in a certain portion of her cargo. Application was made to me by the Agent of the Company to be allowed to take in the remainder at Diamond Harbour, but this concession I was obliged, under existing rules, to refuse. With reference to this case I would ask the Chamber of Commerce for their opinion as to whether similar instances of steamers being absolutely obliged to sail without a complete cargo are likely to, or do, occur often, and as to whether there is any necessity, keeping in view the general advantage of the trade of the Port, for any concession or change of rule in this respect.

From Chamber to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 18th October 1883.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your letter No. 3305, dated 26th ultimo, in which you advise your having been compelled under the existing rules of the Custom House to refuse permission for a portion of the cargo of the P. & O. Company's steamer *Ganges* to be received on board at Diamond Harbour—whither the vessel, owing to the unusually low state of the tide, had been obliged to proceed five days earlier than her advertised date of departure, and further request the opinion of the Chamber whether similar instances of steamers being absolutely obliged to leave without a complete cargo are likely to, or do, occur often, and whether there is any necessity, keeping in view the general advantage to the trade of the port, for any concession or change in the rules in this respect.

In reply, the Committee desire me to state that instances of the nature described do occur occasionally with steamers, but the likelihood of being able to fill up advantageously at an intermediate port, say Madras or Colombo, is probably the reason why applications of the kind in question are of unfrequent occurrence.

But with the present inclination to build steamers of increasingly large tonnage, and with a river such as the Hooghly to navigate, the Committee consider that cases like that of the *Ganges* may in future occur not unfrequently, and they are strongly of opinion that if the present rules do absolutely prohibit the granting of

applications similar to that preferred in the case of the *Ganges*, they should be relaxed without delay.

The Committee understand that the reason stated for refusing the *Ganges* application was that Diamond Harbour is not recognised by the Government of Bengal as a port for export. They, however, fail to see how this could reasonably have been made a plea for refusing the application in question, since they learn that it was arranged that the cargo wanting to complete the *Ganges* was to be taken by boat to Diamond Harbour after passing through the Custom House here in the usual way; and therefore it seems to the Committee that the question as to whether Diamond Harbour is or is not a port need not have been considered, and the Committee would instance the practice that prevails of vessels taking in cargo while in the act of proceeding down the river, and when beyond the limits of the port of Calcutta, and applications being conceded for this, or not being necessary at all, it is not easy to understand why the application of the *Ganges* for permission to do quite the same thing was refused. The Committee understand that so much as 1,200 tons were wanting to complete this vessel's cargo, and not only was the shutting out of this a serious loss to the Company, but the absence of so much freight might, had adverse weather been encountered, have imperilled the safety of the vessel and the lives and property on board.

From Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 847, dated the 10th March 1884.

In continuation of my letter No. 3865, dated 26th September 1883, I have the honor to state that the views conveyed in your letter of the 18th October 1883, were submitted by me to the Board with such remarks and recommendations as I have to make, and that as it has been held desirable that the larger aspects in the case, or, in other words, the question whether it is advisable to make Diamond Harbour a port, or so to alter the Sea Customs Act as to admit of goods being shipped there in the manner desired without any infringement of the law, should be considered, I am directed to ask for an expression of the views of the Chamber of Commerce on these points.

From Chamber to Collector.

Calcutta, 8th April 1884.

I AM directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 847 of the 10th of last month.

The Committee desire me to state, in reply, that in their judgment it is not expedient to make Diamond Harbour a port nor advisable to alter the Sea Customs Act.

It appears to the Committee that there is no sufficient reason for disturbing existing arrangements, and that any necessity that may arise for vessels which may be obliged, by the state of the tides or other circumstances, to proceed to Diamond Harbour in anticipation of their intended day

of departure from Calcutta, and to complete their lading at that station, may be easily provided for by posting Preventive Officers on board, whose duty it would be to see that no cargo was shipped except what had been passed in Calcutta.

The Chamber's letter of 18th October, dealing with the case of the P. & O. Steamer *Ganges*, went fully into the circumstances that should influence a relaxation of the Customs Act under special circumstances, and the Committee submit that with the precautionary measure suggested the requirements of the Act will be sufficiently met, and that there can be no infringement of the law so long as no cargo other than that covered by passes from the Calcutta Custom House is shipped at Diamond Harbour in completion of a vessel's loading.

From Board of Revenue to Chamber.

No. 668B.

With reference to your letter dated 8th April 1884, to the address of the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, I am directed to forward herewith for the information of the Chamber, a copy of the correspondence noted on the margin,* regarding the proposal to allow vessels to take in export cargo beyond the limits of the Port as far down as Diamond Harbour. It will be seen from these papers that the proposal has not been approved by the Government.

1. Board's letter to Government, No. 325B, dated 23rd May 1884.

2. Government Order No. 805 T.R., dated 14th June 1884.

From Board of Revenue, L.P. to Govt. of Bengal.

No. 325B. Dated Calcutta the 23rd May 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 430—16C, dated 31st January last, communicating the orders of Government on the proposal to allow a vessel to take in export cargo beyond the limits of the Port as far down as Diamond Harbour, and requesting the Board, after consulting the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Commissioners, to report their views on the question whether it is advisable to make Diamond Harbour a port, or so to alter the Sea Customs Act as to permit of the proposal being carried out without infringement of the Sea Customs Act.

2. In reply, I am to submit for the information of Government, the correspondence noted in the margin, from which it will be seen that both the Chamber and the Port Commissioners are of opinion that under the existing conditions of the trade of this Port, there is no necessity to declare Diamond Harbour a port under section 11 of Act VIII of 1878. Having regard to the views of these bodies and to the difficulty experienced by the legal advisers of Government in framing any rules consistent with the Act to meet the acknowledged demand for a relaxation of the existing shipping rules, the Board would solicit a reconsideration of the opinion

Letter from the Secretary to the Port Commissioners, No. 4934, dated 27th March 1884.

Letter from the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, No. 126, dated 21st April 1884, and the letter dated 8th April 1884 therein enclosed from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Letter from the Superintendent and Benchmanbracer of Legal Affairs, No. 142, dated 2nd May 1884.

expressed in your letter under reply, and the adoption of the suggestion put forward by Mr. Beverley which has the Board's concurrence. The difficulty may, the Board think, be got over by giving the Collector of Customs authority by an executive order not to enforce any penalties in cases of breaches of the Rules on this point, provided that such cases are limited to those in which, owing to the state of the tides, vessels are unable to complete their loading in Calcutta, and that shipping bills have been taken out for such cargo to be put on boardship, and provided also that the goods are put on board from boats accompanying the ship, and are not shipped from the shore beyond the limits of the Port.

From Govt. of Bengal to Board of Revenue.

The 14th June 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No 325B, dated the 23rd May 1884, with enclosures, regarding the proposal to allow a vessel to take in export cargo beyond the limits of the Port of Calcutta as far as Diamond Harbour, and in reply to communicate the following observations of the Lieutenant-Governor.

2. From the correspondence submitted with your present letter, it appears that both the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Commissioners, Calcutta, are of opinion that, under the existing conditions of the trade of Calcutta, there is no necessity to declare Diamond Harbour a port under section 11 of the Sea

Customs Act, VIII of 1878. Having regard to this opinion, and to the difficulty of framing any rules consistent with the Act which would admit of the shipping of cargo outside the limits of the port, the Board recommend that the Collector of Customs be authorized by an executive order not to enforce any penalties in cases in which, owing to the state of the tides, vessels are unable to complete their loading in Calcutta. There can, however, be no doubt that such an authorization would amount to a general permission to break the law in certain classes of cases. In respect of these cases its effect would be to nullify the provisions of section 167 of the Act. The Lieutenant-Governor cannot consent to the adoption of a procedure so clearly contrary to the law. He is prepared, if the mercantile community desire it, to legalize the shipping of cargo outside the limits of the port by making Diamond Harbour a port under the Act; or, if that community, as represented by the Chamber of Commerce, desire it, he will bring the question to the notice of the Government of India, with a view to its being taken into consideration in the Legislative Department if possible. But while the law remains as at present the Lieutenant-Governor is clearly of opinion that the practice must be conformable to it.

From Chamber to Board of Revenue.

Calcutta, 14th July 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 668 B,

without date, forwarding for their information copies of the Board's letter, No. 325 B of the 23rd May 1884, to the Government of Bengal, and of the reply thereto, No. 805 T. R. of the 14th June 1884, regarding the Chamber's proposal to allow vessels to take in export cargo beyond the limits of the Port of Calcutta as far as Diamond Harbour.

The Committee of the Chamber desire me to convey to the Board their thanks for having suggested an arrangement by which the object had in view by the Chamber might have been accomplished; but the proposed procedure is no doubt open to the objection that has been raised to it on the ground stated in the Government reply.

The Committee, however, are of opinion that it is essential in the interests of the shipping of the port that vessels should be permitted to complete their loading at Diamond Harbour—under the conditions stated in the Board's letter to Government—if circumstances should necessitate such a course; and they are therefore glad that the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor is pleased to present them with the opportunity of having the matter brought under the consideration of the Government of India with the view to an amendment of the Customs Act, and they trust that the object which the Chamber advocates may be obtained by the means contemplated by His Honor,

**TRANSHIPMENTS AND RE-EXPORTS OF
RICE WITHOUT FRESH PAYMENT
OF DUTY.**

CERTAIN of the Customs regulations with regard to shipments of rice having appeared to the Committee of the Chamber to be needlessly vexatious and harassing to shippers, the Collector of Customs was addressed on the subject in December 1883.

The Collector, in reply, promised to do all in his power to mitigate the inconveniences complained of, and the Committee understand that he placed himself in communication with some of the chief shipping houses with the view of devising means to meet the wishes of the Trade.

In the meantime the rules as to taking out passes on transhipments and re-exports, which the Committee believed to be unnecessarily strict, remained unaltered, and a further representation was made to the Collector on the subject.

From the correspondence given below, it will be seen that a concession is promised, which will be a certain amount of relief to shippers.

From Chamber to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 3rd November 1884.

ON the 11th of December last year the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce brought to your notice certain complaints which had reached them in respect of the seizure of boats laden with rice in course of shipment and of others carrying grain to merchants' godowns, in consequence of Customs formalities not having been duly observed; and while they expressed the opinion that in the two cases cited by them, the action of the Custom House officials was vexatious and opposed to the spirit of the Customs regulations, they trusted that orders would be issued to prevent a recurrence of such interference with the rice traffic of the Port, inasmuch as it tended to throw unnecessary trouble and expense on shippers without affording greater security to the revenue than might be attained by simpler means.

The Committee of the Chamber were glad to receive the explanation you were good enough to give in your letter No. 4316 of the 31st December, and your assurance that you would do all in your power, without prejudice to Government interests, to obviate the inconveniences which were admittedly involved in the procedure attending the export trade in rice.

While the Committee learn that your efforts have been attended with some measure of relief to Rice importers and exporters, they are informed that there is considerable room for improvement in the system which prevails; and it has been represented to them that

the following points urgently demand consideration at your hands as they are harassing to the trade and unnecessary in the interests of Government.

Under the present rules should it become necessary for a shipper either to

1. Transfer a shipment from one vessel to another.
2. Ship a different description of rice from that described in the original pass.
3. Ship 2 maunds in each bag instead of 2½ maunds (or *vice versa*) as described in the original pass, the procedure is as follows:—

1. Alteration of Vessel's name. To take out a pass to reland the rice, and take out a fresh export pass, paying duty a second time.

2. Alteration of quality. To make a stamped application for permission to alter the quality from one description to another, paying a penalty for the alteration.

3. Alteration of weight per bag. To take out a pass to reland the original shipment, and take out a fresh export pass for the altered weights per bag, paying duty a second time.

It is submitted that, provided fraud were guarded against by the authorities insisting on the return to them of the original passes for alteration or exchange, the whole of the above vexatious proceedings including the second payment of duty could be replaced by the simple expedient of an alteration in the body

of the passes or by the immediate substitution of fresh ones, thereby obviating considerable trouble and loss of time to all concerned.

The Committee trust these matters will have your attention, and that it will be in your power either to amend the present procedure on your own responsibility if you have the power to do so, or to recommend the suggestions for adoption by the Board of Revenue or the Government of Bengal.

From Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 4294, dated the 31st December 1884.

I have the honor to state that the suggestions made by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce in your letter of the 3rd ultimo have received my careful attention, and all the previous correspondence which has been frequent on the subject of rice shipments examined.

What I understand to be principally desired is the allowing of transshipments and re-exports of quantities of rice short shipped without payment of duty afresh. This practice was in force before 1877, and was changed because it was found to be abused to the great inconvenience of this office, and all applications for its revival in any shape have hitherto been refused. I am sensible, however, that the present procedure of fresh payments of duty, though it works well as far as this office is concerned, is irksome to rice exporters and to a certain extent a hardship; and I am therefore

willing partially to revert to the old system, that is to say, I will allow transshipments and re-exports of quantities short shipped without payment of duty afresh under an endorsement by this office on the original pass with the proviso that no application for a re-export will be entertained after one month from the date on which export clearance is granted to the vessel for which the original pass was taken out. This proviso will prevent the utilizing of a single pass for innumerable transshipments and re-exports extending over a period of several months, and sometimes years, which formerly caused so much inconvenience. A notice of the change of rule will be published, and I propose to give it effect from the 1st February.

With regard to the alteration of the quality of rice shown in a shipping bill from one description to another, I would observe that no penalty is imposed on this, but a fee of Re. 1 is charged for the trouble involved to this office of correcting various documents and records accordingly. The requirement of an application and this fee for the alteration is, I think, reasonable, and I am not prepared to forego it.

With regard to the procedure when an alteration is required in the weights per bag, for example, when each bag is to contain $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds instead of 2 maunds and *vice versa*, I would point out that these cases have not hitherto occurred that I am aware of, and that if I were to allow shipments to be made in the manner I understand to be desired, it would cause infinite trouble and confusion, and that I am therefore unable to do so.

From Chamber to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 12th January 1885.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 4294 of the 31st of last month.

The Committee are pleased to learn that their representation as to the inconvenience and hardship merchants have experienced by being required to pay duty afresh on each transshipment and re-export of rice has received your attention, and that you are willing to amend the present procedure by partially reverting to the old system, and thereby relieving the shippers of rice from the inconveniences complained of.

This concession will be a boon to the trade, and the Committee are much obliged to you for making it.

PROPOSED REDUCTION OF SALT WASTAGE ALLOWANCE FROM 8 TO 3 PER CENT.

From Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 58—Dated the 7th January 1884.

I HAVE been directed by the Board to obtain the views of the Chamber of Commerce on a proposal to reduce the wastage allowance in respect of salt imported from 8 per cent. to 3 per cent. with a view of securing a more careful weighing in of the salt at the port of lading, and I therefore request the favor of your laying this before the Chamber and communicating to me their views on this

point. I may mention that the average of wastage for the past four years has been 2·83 per cent.

From Chamber to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 26th January 1884.

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 58 of the 7th instant, relative to a proposal by the Board of Revenue to reduce the wastage allowance in respect of imported salt from 8 to 3 per cent. with the view of securing a more careful weighing in at the port of loading: and you add that the average wastage for the past four years has been 2·83 per cent.

The proposal submitted by you having been referred to the principal importers of salt for an expression of their views, the Committee direct me to inform you that importers unanimously object to any reduction of the wastage allowance, and say that although the average wastage for the past four years may have been under three per cent., several cargoes have shown large deficiencies, in some cases quite up to the maximum allowed.

In putting forward the Board's proposal for the reduction of wastage, the Committee observe that you do not point out that the penalty imposed upon vessels showing wastage in excess of 8 per cent. is payment of the duty—2 rupees per maund—on such excess, and if 3 be substituted for 8, the claims are likely to be numerous.

The restrictions on salt-laden vessels are already quite severe enough, and it is feared that a reduction in the wastage will mean trouble and further detention of ships, and perhaps a further heavy fine in the way of duty.

On all these grounds importers strongly protest against the proposed reduction.

WORKING HOURS AT SALT COLAHS.

From Collector of Customs to Chamber.

No. 550—Dated the 13th February 1884.

I REQUEST the favor of your laying the following matter before the Chamber of Commerce and obtaining for me an expression of their wishes and views on the point. The working hours at the Sulkea Golahs used to be, during the cold season months, from 6 A.M. to 2 P.M., but in the cold season of 1882-83 a change was made in them, and they stand now at from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. This has not been found to work satisfactorily; at the end of last cold season it was necessary for my predecessor to apply to the Board for permission to return to the old hours, and this season again the change of the hours extending them to 3 o'clock in the afternoon is giving trouble. The same amount of work that used to be done by two is, I am informed, dawdled over till three, and between three and sunset there is not time, when there is a press of work, to clear off the stocks weighed during the day, the result being that there are broken consignments, part in

the Railway, and part in the Golahs, and that consignments are detained, as the Railway authorities require each consignment to be complete. Besides interfering with our office work, this leads to complaints on the part of the Salt dealers, and I wish to be informed whether, under the circumstances, the Chamber would object to the old hours (from 6 A.M. to 2 P.M.) which worked well, being returned to in future during the cold weather months. I would point out that more work can be got through from 6 A.M. to 2 P.M. during the cold weather months than in the hot, as the coolies can work harder.

From Chamber to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 24th April 1884.

I regret that unavoidable circumstances have prevented an earlier acknowledgment of your letter No. 550 of the 13th February, relative to the working hours at the Sulkea Salt Golahs.

The Committee of the Chamber now desire me to say that from inquiries made, the present hours 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. for working are found by Salt dealers to be much more convenient than the earlier hours, 6 A.M. to 2 P.M., to which it is proposed to revert during the cold weather months; and that even in the hot season the later hours would be preferred by the trade generally.

In replying to the Board of Revenue's letter No. 1177 B, of the 9th November 1881, it was stated by the Chamber, in their letter of 15th of the following month, that the regulations on the point of working hours were

somewhat contradictory, for whereas they were said to be from 6 A.M. to 2 P.M. it was ruled that no work was to be done *before sunrise*, which in the cold season was as late at $\frac{1}{2}$ to 7, and that as a matter of experience it was seldom in the cold weather months that work was fairly commenced before 7 o'clock; and that even in the hot weather it was difficult to collect natives and get them at work so early as 6 A.M.

The Committee are therefore constrained to recommend that present arrangements should not be disturbed: and it appears to them that if the work is commenced with punctuality and the working hours economically employed, under regulations which should be strictly enforced, there would be ample time for completing the day's transactions within convenient limits.

PROPOSED CHANGE IN METHOD OF LEVYING PORT DUES AT MADRAS.

The letter from the Government of Bengal, which for the present closes the correspondence on this subject, refers to the creation of a Port Trust at Madras, and until that point has been determined the question of modifying the method of levying port dues there remains in abeyance.

From Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal.

No. 397—Calcutta, the 21st January 1884.

It has been proposed to the Government of India by the Government of Madras that a change should be made

in the method of levying Port Dues at Madras. Under section 45 of the Indian Ports' Act, 1875, as amended by Act IV of 1881, such port dues, not exceeding 8 annas per ton, as the local Government from time to time directs, are to be levied on vessels (other than coasting vessels) entering the port of Madras, but not oftener than once in 90 days. The rate which is actually levied is 6 annas a ton. The Government of Madras proposes to reduce the rate to 3 annas, but make it payable on each occasion of the vessel's entry instead of once in 90 days.

Legislation must be resorted to if this change is made, but the Governor-General in Council desires, before undertaking to legislate, to receive the opinion of other local Governments on the proposal, as it seems possible that if the change were made in Madras, a similar change in the law might have to be made for other ports. And His Excellency in Council is doubtful whether it would be advisable generally to limit the restriction of time now prescribed by law in respect to the levy of dues a second time.

I am accordingly desired to request that the Government of India may be favored with an expression of the views of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor on the proposal as it would affect Ports in Bengal.

No. 200.

Copy forwarded to the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce with the request that the Lieutenant-Governor

may be favoured with an expression of the Chamber's opinion on the proposal.

By order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

C. W. BOLTON,
Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

CALCUTTA,
General Department (Marine.) }
The 26th January 1884. }

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 18th March 1884.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your official No. 220 of the 26th of January, forwarding copy of letter No. 397 of 21st idem from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, relative to a proposal by the Government of Madras that a change should be made in the method of levying port dues at Madras.

Under the Indian Ports Act which authorizes the levy of port dues at Madras of a rate not exceeding 8 annas per ton on vessels (other than coasting vessels) entering that port not oftener than once in 90 days, the rate actually levied is 6 annas a ton, and the Government of Madras proposes to reduce the rate to 3 annas, but to make it payable on each occasion of a vessel's entry instead of once in 90 days.

As the proposed amendment is, as the Committee understand, intended to apply only to vessels other than coasting vessels, coasting steamers from Calcutta would

not be affected by the change, and as regards sailing ships a ship once loaded scarcely ever returns within the 90 days to her port of loading; this latter appears, therefore, to be a question for consideration by those Madras firms who may be owners, agents or consignees of such vessels.

At the same time I am directed to remark that the Government of Madras does not put forward any reasons for the proposed change, and to suggest for the consideration of the Government of India that a reference should be made to the Government of Madras with the view of ascertaining the grounds on which such change has been recommended.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 298—Darjeeling the 13th May 1884.

With reference to the last paragraph of your letter, dated the 18th March 1884, I am directed to forward, for the information of the Chamber of Commerce, copies

of the papers* noted on the margin, setting forth the reasons for the proposed change in the method of levying Port Dues at Madras, and to request that the Lieutenant-Governor may be

From the Government of Madras, No. 305, dated the 14th July 1883 and enclosure, Telegram to the Government of Madras No. 570, dated the 6th August 1883.
From the Government of Madras, No. 262, dated the 21st November 1883 (para) and enclosure.

favoured with any further remarks the Chamber may wish to offer on the subject.

The papers forwarded should be returned with your reply.

From Chamber to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 16th June 1884.

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter No. 298⁵, of the 13th of last month, and returning the papers which you were good enough to forward for the information of the Chamber, relative to the proposed amendment of the method of levying port dues at Madras, I am directed by the Committee to submit the following remarks:

By Act IV of 1881 the Madras Port Dues Act amending portions of the Indian Ports Act 12 of 1875, the Madras Government was authorized to levy port dues at Madras at any rate not exceeding 8 annas per ton on all vessels other than sailing ships employed in coasting on which the rate could not be more than 4 annas. Coasting vessels propelled by sail were to be chargeable not more than once in 60 days and coasting steam vessels were to be chargeable not more than once in every 30 days, whilst foreign going vessels were made chargeable once every 90 days.

The actual rates at Madras under this authority have been 6 annas on foreign vessels and on all steamers, and 3 annas on coasting sailing ships.

The Committee of the Chamber gather that it is now proposed to make the rate of Madras Port Dues 3 annas per ton in case of foreign vessels, and 1½ anna per ton on all coasting vessels irrespective of the mode of propulsion. This is not quite in accordance with what was put in Government of India letter No. 397 of 21st January; but the Committee cannot make the notification read otherwise. On another point the Madras proposals are not

clear. Thus, it is said that the rate of Port Dues will be reduced to "3 annas per ton payable on each time of entry, half such rate being charged in the case of vessels employed in the Coasting Trade." That is, 1½ anna for coasters; but the Committee would inquire if this 1½ anna on coasters is to be paid each time of entry or not? The proposed revision of the Schedule to the Ports' Acts would argue that the 1½ anna on coasting steamers is to be paid only once in 30 days: but the Committee would be glad to have this stated without ambiguity.

There is a class of vessel which, in a certain sense, will lose a privilege, *viz.*, the foreign going long voyage ship, whether sailer or steamer.

This class has hitherto been charged port dues only once in 90 days. It will now pay each time of entry, but to set against this drawback there is the reduction of the rate from 6 annas to 3 annas. Altogether if the Committee's reading be correct, they do not know that the proposal so far can be objected to.

The Government of India in their letter to Government of Bengal No. 397 referred to already, have raised further issues; as they say that legislation is necessary in order to comply with the proposal of the Government of Madras, and that if a new Act is to be passed, a similar change in the law might have to be made for other ports. The Committee do not quite understand what change in the law is meant, and they would be glad to be assured on this point as to the real character of the change.

In preparation for a fresh Ports' Act, the Government of Madras has been asked to submit additional recommenda-

tions, and it has accordingly forwarded documents with reference to Port Dues at grouped ports setting forth that the Madras Marine Department advises that foreign steamers should pay 3 annas at the first group of a port and $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna of every subsequent port in the group. The Madras Harbour Committee, on the other hand, recommend that the rate on foreign steamers shall be 3 annas for one port only, but $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas if any two or more ports in the same group be visited.

It does not appear to the Committee which of the two proposals has the support of the Madras Government.

As to Coasting vessels, if the Madras proposals are correctly understood they are to be left as at present.

The old rate was 3 annas at each port on foreign going vessels, $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna at each port on Coasting vessels other than steamers and $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas for one or more ports for coasting steamers.

If the Committee interpret the proposals correctly it would seem that the Coasting steamer is to be placed comparatively at some disadvantage; but really the whole reference is so much mixed up, that the Committee would suggest a further reference to the Government of Madras for a clearer statement of what it is they propose to do.

It has been suggested to the Committee—by whom the point is submitted for consideration—that Madras would do much better to adopt the Colombo plan and levy dues on the quantity of cargo landed or shipped and not on the tonnage of vessels, as it seldom happens that a full cargo is discharged or loaded in Madras, and the levy

of dues on the ship's total tonnage forms a heavy and prohibitive burden. Were the Colombo plan adopted all restrictions on steamers and sailing vessels calling at Madras would be removed, and the result would not fail to benefit the port and its trade most materially.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 22785—Duxjeeling, the 25th September 1884.

With reference to your letter dated the 16th June 1884, I am directed to say that intimation has been received from the Government of India that the question of effecting a change in the method of levying Port Dues at Madras is in abeyance pending the creation of a Port Trust, and that the opinion of the Chamber on the subject is not therefore required at present.

BALASORE PORT DUES.

The following correspondence is the outcome of a visit of inspection paid to the Port of Chandbally by Captain Stille in the cold weather of 1882-83. In his report he stated that the Port Dues should be raised from 1 anna 8 pie to four annas per ton per month on vessels visiting the Balasore Ports in order to ensure receipts coming up to expenditure. It is contended, on the other hand, that as little or nothing has ever been done for vessels frequenting

these ports, the heavy yearly expenditure ought rather to be curtailed by the abolition of the appointment of a settled Port Officer, whose pay in the published accounts alone amounts to Rs. 2,880.

The Government not having yet replied to the Chamber's letter of the 12th August, the matter may be looked upon as being in abeyance.

From Government of Bengal to Chamber.

No. 336 I, Darjeeling, the 15th May 1884.

In forwarding the enclosed copy of a letter from the Commissioner of the Orissa Division, No. 991½, dated the 3rd July 1883 and enclosures, I am directed to state that as the Port Dues levied in the Balasore ports do not cover the expenses, some increase of the dues will be needed if the ports are to be made safe and to be well buoyed and lighted. The Lieutenant-Governor would, however, be glad to be furnished with an early expression of the Chamber's opinion on the subject.

From A. SUTTER, Esq., Commissioner of the Orissa Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, No. 991½, dated Cuttack, the 3rd July 1883.

With reference to paragraph 2 (b) of the Government Resolution of the 1st May last, a copy of which was sent with your 1601—G of that date for report, I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of a letter No. 633 of

the 28th June 1883, from the Collector of Balasore, and its annexures, on the subject.

2. The necessity for increasing the port dues to 4 annas a ton has been shown in detail by the Collector, and I have nothing more to add. It is desirable that the levy of port dues at this rate should be made at all the ports in Balasore.

From T. J. C. GRANT, Esq., Officiating Collector of Sea Customs, to the Commissioner of the Orissa Division.—No. 633, dated, Balasore, the 28th June 1883.

In reply to your No. 644, dated the 9th May 1883, I have the honour to forward a copy of an office note that I have made upon the subject.

Office Note.

In paragraph 4 of Lieutenant Stiffe's report on Chandbally Port, after his inspection in the cold weather of 1882-83, he pointed out that vessels visiting the Dhamrah and Chandbally Ports paid an average of only Rs. 6 per trip, although they were exempt from pilotage on the Hooghly.

2. The port dues are at present 6 annas per 100 maunds, or about 1 anna 8 pie per ton paid once a month. Lieutenant Stiffe proposed to raise the dues to at least 4 annas a ton to be paid once a month. His reasons given in the report are that the vessels to the Dhamrah river pay no pilotage fees for the Hooghly, and therefore can afford to pay higher dues than those visiting False Point; that vessels to False Point stay but a few hours

and have but little done for them by the Port, and yet the dues levied at False Point (paid on each visit and not merely once a month) amount to Rs. 10,000 against only Rs. 1,300 levied in the Dhamrah. In the meanwhile the buoying of the Dhamrah was very heavy, and the port expenses were about to be increased by expenditure on the lighthouse.

3. At present, dues at 6 annas per 100 maunds are levied uniformly at all places in the Balasore district at which vessels call, *viz.*, at—

Churamun.	The Subarnarekha—	The Dhamra—
Lychunpur.	Channa and Sartha,	Chandbally
	Balasore.	

4. I am of opinion that Lieutenant Stiffe's proposal to raise the fees to 4 annas a ton should not be confined only to the Dhamrah and Chandbally, but should apply uniformly, as does the present rate.

5. My predecessor, in his No. 243, dated the 10th March 1883, gave his opinion that the trade in Balasore had sufficiently increased to warrant levy of port dues at the rate of 4 annas per ton per mensem, and the Commissioner was inclined to the same opinion, adding that the present rates do not suffice to pay the port charges. The Lieutenant-Governor desires to be furnished with a separate report stating fully the necessity for increasing the dues.

6. The only good reason for raising the dues must be a financial one. I find a certain difficulty in the way of giving a very precise view of the financial position of the Balasore Ports; but it is easy to show that the receipts fall seriously below the expenditure.

7. I will take the year 1882-83. I enclose a table of receipts and expenditure for that year. The receipts altogether amounted to only Rs. 3,491-12-10. These receipts are actuals and are precisely stated. The expenditure for the items shown in the accompanying statement amount to Rs. 5,789-10-7, and are the actual disbursements made as yet; but to this must be added Rs. 2,753-8-2 charged in the marine accounts for February and March 1882 on account of stores supplied from and work done in the India Government Dockyard at Kidderpore for the Balasore Port Fund, and Rs. 900 on account of Port Officer's pay paid in Calcutta and not yet adjusted. The total expenditure thus becomes Rs. 9,443-2-0, and the year shows a total deficit of Rs. 5,951-5-11.

8. The main body of the receipts comes from port dues, which amounted to Rs. 2,988 in 1882-83. Now, if we had taken 4 annas every time we took 1 anna and 8 pie, the total receipts for port dues would have been Rs. 7,171, and the total revenues of the Port Fund would have been Rs. 7,674 against an expenditure of Rs. 9,443, leaving a deficit still, but a deficit of only Rs. 1,769.

9. Such is an accurate account of the financial results, actual and possible, of the year 1882-83. After carefully looking at the accounts of previous years, I think that it would be fairly safe to call the Port Fund's receipts Rs. 4,000 a year with the present rate of port dues. As regards the disbursements, we must count on an expenditure of not less than Rs. 6,000 on such items as are in the accompanying statement. The dockyard bills of the past five years give an average expenditure of Rs. 2,666 per

annure, so that, with an annual expenditure of Rs. 8,666 against an annual income of Rs. 4,000, we are left with an annual deficit of Rs. 4,666, and to this must be added any future expenditure to be incurred in building, maintaining, and working the lighthouse.

10. But if we raise the port dues to 4 annas per ton per mensem, we may fairly count on its adding Rs. 4,000 (it would this year have added Rs. 4,182) to our income, and raising it to Rs. 8,000 against an annual expenditure of Rs. 8,666, and so reducing the annual deficit to Rs. 666, *plus* any extra expenditure incurred for the lighthouse.

11. It seems to me that these figures fairly establish the necessity of raising the port dues to 4 annas per ton per mensem, where we at present take only 1 anna and 6 pie. If we keep to the present rate, we must prepare to meet an annual deficit of (say) Rs. 5,000. If we take the proposed rate the deficit is reduced to, say, Rs. 1,000, and (if the port prospers and increases), there is a prospect of at last arriving at equilibrium between receipts and expenditure. A deficit of Rs. 5,000 seems to me a crushing deficit in the case of a port with a total income of only Rs. 4,000. The rate of 4 annas per ton per mensem is not a heavy rate in itself, and can certainly be very well afforded by the vessels that are relieved of pilotage fees in the Hooghly, and that cause us an expenditure that will still be greater than our receipts. I am assured by those local officers who have the experience I lack as yet that the increased dues will not reduce the number of vessels calling at any of our ports.

PART I.
Statement showing the Collections on account of Port Fund at Balasore during the year 1882-83.

PARTICULARS.	RECEIPTS.					Total.
	Balasore.	Sub-rentals.	Channa and Sarkha.	Churmann and Luchampore.	Chaudhally and Dhanish.	
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Port dues	...	1,681 14 9	164 11 0	367 5 9	1,302 3 9	2,988 7 4
Registration fee	...	50 2 0	...	...	30 2 0	80 2 0
Port dues	130 0 0	130 0 0
Buy dues	270 0 0	270 0 0
Sale proceeds of unclaimed	...	1 0 0	29 1 6	...	...	30 1 6
Sale proceeds of land-book.	...	4 0 0	1 0 0	...	...	5 0 0
Total	1,137 0 0	104 12 6	305 7 5	12 4 1	1,623 3 9	3,402 12 0

BALASORE SURVEILLANCE OFFICE.
The 25th June 1883.

PART II.

Statement showing the Disbursements of Port Fund at Balasore during the year 1882-83.

DISBURSEMENTS.		
PARTICULARS.		
		Rs. a. p.
Permanent establishment	Port Officer's pay	175 0 0
	Pilot	175 0 0
	Pilot establishment	175 0 0
House allowance	Port Officer	32 0 0
	Pilot	24 0 0
Travelling allowance	Port Officer	156 10 0
	Revolving oil for lighting signal lantern at Chandipur ..	73 2 2
	Price of one pair of scissors	1 0 0
	Service postage stamps	20 0 0
	Telegram expenses	18 0 0
	Hire of a cart for sending tidal gauge to Chandili ..	5 15 0
	Purchase of iron safe for Port Officer	20 0 0
	Charge for removal of lightkeeper's shed	20 10 0
	Repair of wooden jetty at Balasore	17 10 0
	Excess charge on account of construction of flagstaff ..	132 8 0
	Repair of Phantah house	132 8 0
	Charge incurred in letting a mooring buoy at Chandipur ..	4 15 0
	Charge for widening the shackle of the new buoy ..	0 5 0
	Advance for the construction of new tent for salt-stalls ..	45 0 0
	Remittance of sale proceeds of hand-book to Government Printing	3 0 0
	Amount of percentage on disbursement from 1st April 1882 to 31st March 1883	47 15 7
	Print of two time-records	9 10 0
	Wages of Gauge tender	21 10 0
	Construction of two tidal gauges	48 0 0
	Wages of Marine officers for survey work	51 0 0
	Total	5279 10 7

T. GRANT,

Offg. Collector of Sea Customs.

From Chamber to the Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 12th August 1884.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 336 of 15th May last, regarding a contemplated increase of the dues now levied in the Balasore ports, and to submit the following remarks in reply:

It has been represented to the Committee that while an increase in the port dues seems to be necessary to raise the receipts to a level with the disbursements, the rates should not be more than doubled all at once as proposed.

The two heavy items in the statement of the Port Fund at Balasore are Rs. 2,880 and Rs. 1,860, being the Port Officer's pay and Pilot Establishment, respectively; and as these two together make up four-fifths of the whole disbursements, it is not unreasonable to ask if an earning of only Rs. 120 justifies the keeping up of such a heavy establishment.

The Committee understand that in former years the Balasore ports used to be regularly visited by the Port Officer of False Point, whose salary was distributed over all; but that for the last six or seven years each of the ports has been controlled by an officer of its own, whose salary and pilotage establishment, by reason of small earnings, fall heavily on the Port Funds.

The Committee are informed that a survey of the entrance to, and of, the river Dhamrah was promised when the said visiting officer was first appointed, but

that the promise remains unfulfilled, owing perhaps to the circumstance of the present incumbent not being a surveyor professionally; and it is submitted that if the dues are to be increased some return should be made in the way of an early survey being undertaken, instead of the Port Officer's occupation being limited, as it is at present, to the collection of port dues.

The Committee are informed by the Agents of the Steamer *Sir John Lawrence* that should the dues be raised to 4 annas a ton as proposed, they will have to pay Rs. 116-8-0 against Rs. 46 per mensem as at present; and that considering that the trade is greatly overdone, and that restrictions have been recently put upon it in the carriage of kerosine oil, they consider the increase as approaching a hardship.

In conclusion, I am desired by the Committee to request that they may be furnished with a statement of the Port Fund accounts of False Point and Pooree if the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor will be so good as to comply with their application.

**INTER-COLONIAL EXHIBITION FOR SUGARS
AT PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS.**

From Govt. of India to Chamber.

No. 419 Ec.—Simla, the 10th April 1884.

I AM directed to forward, for information and any action you may think desirable, the accompanying copy

of a letter, dated the 11th February last, from the Secretary to the Exhibition Committee, Port Louis, Mauritius, on the subject of an Inter-colonial Exhibition for Sugars to be held at that port in the course of next December.

*From Exhibition Committee, Port Louis, Mauritius
to Govt. of India.*

11th February 1884.

I have the honor to inform you that an Inter-colonial Exhibition for Sugars will be held at Port Louis between the 1st and 10th of next December, under the auspices of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius. The Exhibition Committee beg to express the hope that the Colony of Calcutta will have no objection to take part in the said Exhibition.

Sugars of all kinds will be admitted, viz., Cane, Btee, Maple, Sorghum, &c.

After due receipt of your favorable reply, I will forward to you the necessary notes as to any information you may require.

AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION OF 1883.

Circular No. 85 Ex.

Extract from the proceedings of the Government of India in the Revenue and Agricultural Department (Exhibitions),—dated Simla the 11th July 1884.

READ—

Report on the Indian Department of the Amsterdam Exhibition of 1883, by J. R. Royle, Esq., Executive Commissioner of India.

Read also—

Circular No. 76Ex., dated the 24th June 1884, from Revenue and Agricultural Department to Local Governments and Administrations, forwarding copies of the Report.

RESOLUTION.

THE report above cited describes the share taken by the Government of India in the Amsterdam Exhibition of 1883, and contains an interesting account of some of the commercial results that have attended the Exhibition. These are recorded at paragraphs 29 to 49 of the report, and the Government of India hopes that the measures taken to further the interests of India will have an important bearing on the future development of trade between India and the Continent of Europe. The Government of India also notes with satisfaction that the steps taken by the Calcutta Tea Syndicate for bringing Indian tea prominently to notice at the Exhibition are likely to lead to a wide extension of the trade in this commodity, both in Holland and on the Continent. The thanks of the Government of India are due to the officers and private gentlemen named in the appended list, who rendered important assistance in the work connected with the contribution of samples, &c., to the Exhibition.

More particularly the Government of India would desire to acknowledge the services of the following gentlemen:—

Babu Mohendra Nath Bhattacharjya, Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector, Bogra.

H. W. I. Wood, Esq., Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta.

J. S. Gamble, Esq., Conservator of Forests.

F. Duthie, Esq., Superintendent, Saharanpur Botanical Gardens.

Babu L. P. Barman, Superintendent, Government Farm, Cawnpore.

Surgeon-Major G. Bidie, Curator, Government Central Museum, Madras.

Major J. C. Walker, Conservator of Forests, Madras and all other Madras Forest Officers.

The Government of India has already acknowledged, through the Secretary of State, its sense of the great zeal and ability displayed by Mr. J. R. Royle as Executive Commissioner for India at the Amsterdam Exhibition.

ORDER.—Ordered, that a copy of this Resolution be printed and distributed to the Local Governments and Administrations noted on the margin, and be published in the *Gazette of India*, for general information.
(True Extract.)
E. C. BUCK,
Secretary to the Government of India.

Government of Madras.
" Bombay.
" Bengal.
" North-Western Provinces
and Oudh.
" Punjab.
Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces.
" British Borneo.
" Assam.

FUNDS OF THE CHAMBER.

J. J. J. KESWICK,
President.

FUNDS OF THE CHAMBER.

*Statement of the Funds of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce,
from 1st January to 31st December 1884.*

[illegible]

APPENDIX.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Agelasto, A., and Co.
 Apear and Co.
 Andersen, Wright and Co.
 Ascherhof, F., and Co.
 Barlow and Co.
 Berg, Buslop and Co.
 Brown and Lovelock.
 Burn and Co.
 Blackwood, Blackwood and Co.
 Barry and Co.
 Bahner, Lewis and Co.
 Carlisle, Nephews and Co.
 Carritt and Co.
 Groat, Bone and Co.
 Cohn Brothers and Fuchs.
 Duncan Brothers and Co.
 Iwerakiansh Dutt and Nephew.
 Ernsthausen and Co.
 Ewing and Co.
 Elliott, John and Co.
 Ezra, E. D. J., Esq.
 Finley, Muir and Co.
 Forrest, W., Esq., *Agent, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China.*
 Gishorne and Co.
 Graham and Co.
 Guthrie and Co.
 Gubbey, Elias S., Esq.
 Henderson, George and Co.
 Heiliger, F. W. and Co.
 Heine, Miller and Co.
 Huber and Co.
 Hodgson, J. G., Esq., *Agent, Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.*
 Harry Dutt and Co.
 Jardine, Skinner and Co.
 Jefferson, W. E. S., Esq., *General Manager, The Finest's Stores and Agency Company, Limited.*
 Keithwell, Bullen and Co.
 Kelly and Co.
 Ker, Dots and Co.
 King, Hamilton and Co.
 King, W. Vale and Co.

Landsale and Morgan.
 Longmuir, Thos., Esq., *Manager, Delhi & London Bank, Limited.*
 Murray, R., Esq., *Agent, Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China.*
 Mitchell, Leith and Co.
 Mackintosh, J. and Co.
 Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co.
 Mackenzie, Leith and Co.
 Macneil and Co.
 Macknight, Anderson and Co.
 C. Maynard and Co.
 McIntosh, A. R. and Co.
 Mitchell and Walker.
 Moran, W. and Co.
 Oldmeyer and Hasenfeldt.
 Payer, T., Esq., *Manager, Comptoir d'Escompte de Paris.*
 Petrocchino Brothers.
 Frawkinson Law and Co.
 Pigott, Chapman and Co.
 Pullachi, F. C. and Co.
 Ralli Brothers.
 Reinhold and Co.
 Reintjes and Co.
 Schroder, Smith and Co.
 Schoene, Kilburn and Co.
 Seesoo, David and Co.
 Sallugram Khannah and Co.
 Steel, Octavus and Co.
 Stralberg and Co.
 Thomas, J., and Co.
 Turner, J. A., Esq., *Manager, National Bank of India.*
 Turner, Morrison and Co.
 Ullmann, Hirschhorn and Co.
 Uloth, H. W., Esq., *Superintendent, P. & O. Company.*
 Whitney, Brothers and Co.
 Williamson, Mager and Co.
 Wood, W., Esq., *Manager, Agra Bank.*
 Yale, Andrew and Co.

Honorary Members:

J. A. Crawford, Esq., C. S., *late Collector of Customs,*
 Major L. Conway Gordon, R. R.

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.

827 *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

Committee may consider convenient for the despatch of business.

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

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

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

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

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

Twenty-first.... That the Chamber reserves to itself the right of expelling any of its members;

such expulsion to be decided by the votes of three-fourths of members present, in person or by proxy, at any Special General Meeting of the Chamber convened for the consideration of such expulsion.

Twenty-second.... That strangers visiting the Presidency may be admitted by the Committee as honorary members for a period not exceeding two months.

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

x **SCHEDULE OF COMMISSION CHARGES.**

Revised and adopted by a Special General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, held on the 18th June 1891,—with effect from 1st January 1892.

1. On the sale, purchase, or shipment of Bullion, Gold Dust or Coin ... 1 per cent.
2. On the purchase when in funds) or sale of Indigo, Raw Silk, Silk Piece-Goods, Opium, Pearls, Precious Stones, or Jewellery ... 2½ "
3. On purchasing ditto when funds are provided by the Agent ... 5 "
4. On the sale or purchase of all other goods—the commission in all cases to be charged upon the gross amount of sales, and in regard to purchases upon both cost and charges ... 5 "
5. On returns for Consignments if made in produce ... 2½ "
6. On returns of Consignments if in Bills, Bullion, or Treasure ... 1 "
7. On accepting Bills against Consignments ... 1 "
8. On the sale or purchase of Ships, Factories, Houses, Lands, and all property of a like description ... 2½ "
9. 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.
10. On making advances or procuring loans of money for commercial purposes, when the aggregate commission does not exceed 5 per cent. ... 2½ per cent.
11. 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 "

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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 ... 2½ per cent.
13. On *ad valorem*, or guaranteeing the due realization of sales ... 2½ "
14. On the management of Estates for Executors or Administrators ... 2½ "
15. On chartering ships or engaging tonnage for constituents for vessels to proceed to outports for loading ... 2½ "
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 Agents' hands or not ... 2½ "
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, Captains, 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 ... 2½ "
20. On realising inward freight, inward troops, Emigrant, or Cabin passage money ... 2½ "
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 ... 2½ "
- If Treasure, Precious Stones, or Jewellery ... 1 "

22. On effecting Insurances, whether on lives or property ... 2½ per cent
23. On settling Insurance claims, losses, and averages of all classes, and on procuring returns of premiums ... 2½ "
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 ... 2½ "
- Or, if recovered by such means ... 5 "
26. On Bills of Exchange returned dishonored ... 1 "
27. On collecting House Rent ... 2½ "
28. On ship's Disbursements ... 2½ "
29. On realising Bottomry Bonds, or negotiating any loan on *respondentia* ... 2½ "
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 ... ½ "
32. On delivering up Government Securities and Bank or other Joint Stock Shares, on the market value, ½ "
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 ... ½ "
34. Brokerage when paid is to be separately charged.

J. F. RUTHERFORD,
Secretary.

Tonnage Schedule and Measurement Rules for the
Port of Calcutta.

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic Feet per Ton.
Aloes, in bags and boxes	20	.....
Alum, in ditto	20	.....
Antiseul, in bags	8	.....
Arrowroot, in cases	30	.....
Arsenic, in bags or cases	20	.....
Asafetida, in bags and boxes	20	.....
Avoyel, in boxes	.....	50
Bark, in bags	8	.....
Bees' Wax	20 gross.	.....
Bavilla	20	.....
Betel-nut	20	.....
Books	.....	50
Borax	20	.....
Bran	14	.....
Brimstone	20	.....
Bullion	.....	at per cent.
Cake-lac, in bags	16	.....
Camphor, in cases	8	.....
Cardamoms, in robins	.....	50
" boxes	.....	50
Cassia, in boxes	.....	50
" bags	12	.....
Castor Seed	15	.....
Chillies (dry), in bags	8	.....
China Root, in bags	11	.....
" boxes	.....	50
Chiretta	.....	50
Churrah	14	.....
Cigars	.....	50
Cloves, in bags	8	.....
" boxes	.....	50
Coads	20	.....
Cochineal	.....	50
Coffee, in bags	16	.....
" casks	16	.....
Coral, rough	20	.....
Coir, loose and unscrewed	12	.....
Copra, or Coconut Kernel	14	.....
Coriander Seed	12	.....
Cotton	.....	50
Cowries	.....	2 hnds with shellings.
Cumin Seed	8	.....
" Black	8	.....
Cutch, in bags	18	.....

ARTICLES.		Cwt. per Ton Net.	Cable Feet per Ton.
Dates, wet	...	29	...
" dry	...	16	...
Plum	...	20	...
Elephant's Tooth in bulk	...	29	...
Paraffine	...	32	...
Garlic and Onions	...	2	...
Ginger	...	16	...
Gram	...	20	...
Gum, in cases	...	50	...
Gunny Bags and Gunny Cloth	...	50	Net, according to 20 lbs. and over
Gunjah	...	50	3 inches and over
Hemp	...	14	...
Horn, Buffalo or Cow, cured	...	20	...
Horns, Horn Shavings and Tips	...	20	...
Horn, Cow, Buffalo, or Deer	...	16	...
India Rubber, in bags	...	50	...
" iron	...	50	...
Indigo	...	20	...
Jute	...	50	2 1/2 lbs. and over
Jute Cuttings	...	32	2 1/2 lbs. and over
Lax Dye	...	50	Net, according to 20 lbs.
Lard	...	30 gross.	...
Linned	...	29	...
Mace	...	50	...
Machinery	...	50	...
Metals	...	20	...
Melale Seed	...	18	...
Muskolams	...	16	...
Molasses	...	2 puccoons or 4 hids.	...
Mother of Pearl, in bags	...	20	...
" cheats	...	29	...
Mumjet	...	50	...
Mustard or Rape Seed	...	20	...
Nuts Seed	...	20	...
Nutmegs, in cases or casks	...	50	...
Nux Vomica	...	16	...
Oats	...	16	...
Oil, in cases	...	4 hids.	...
Opium	...	per che.	...
Paddy	...	16	...
Palmitine, in bags	...	16	...
Peas Seed	...	29	...
Pepper, Long	...	12	...
" Black	...	14	...
Plants and Deals	...	50	...

ARTICLES.		Cwt. per Ton Net.	Cubic Feet per Ton.
Puppy Seed	...	20	...
Purified	...	10	...
Rags	...	50	...
Raw Silk, in bales	...	10	...
Rattans, for damage	...	20	...
Red Wood, ditto	...	20	...
Rice	...	3 1/2 bushels per cwt.	68
Rope	...	20	...
Ropes, in coils	...	50	...
Ropes and Twines, in bundles	...	16	...
Rum, in casks	...	2 punchons or 4 hds.	...
Saffron	...	20	...
Sago, in cases	...	20	...
Sal-ammoniac, in bags	...	20	...
Saltpetre	...	20 gross.	...
in boxes	...	20	...
Salt	...	20	...
Salt Water, for damage	...	20	...
Sealskin, in cases	...	20	...
Seed-lin, in cases	...	50	...
in bags	...	16	...
Seams	...	20	...
Shells, rough, in bags	...	20	...
Shell-lin, in cases	...	50	...
in bags	...	16	...
Silk Chinsoom	...	50	...
in Ware	...	50	...
Silk Piece-Goods	...	50	...
Skins	...	14	...
Skins, country, in cases	...	6 1/2	...
in bags	...	13	...
Stick Lin, in hat	...	20	...
in bags	...	16	...
Sugars	...	20	...
Talens, in cases or casks	...	20	...
Tale	...	20	...
Tamarinds, in cases or casks	...	20	...
Travincas	...	50	...
Tea	...	20	...
Teel Seed	...	20	...
Telins, in round	...	20	...
in squared	...	20	...
Tinial	...	16	...
Tolans, in bales	...	20	...
Tortoise Shells, in chests	...	50	...
Turneric	...	16	...
When	...	20	...
Wood	...	50	...

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

Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

At a Special General Meeting of the Chamber, held on the 4th of October 1883, the following Resolution was adopted:—

"That Rule 1 under the Chamber's Tonnage Schedule be altered as follows, in accordance with the Resolutions proposed and adopted by the mercantile community at their meeting on the 3rd July 1883, and in accordance with the notice issued by the Chamber of Commerce on the 14th July 1883, under Rule 23 of the Chamber's" VII.—

- 1.—That where freight is payable by measurement, measurement be by sworn measurers, to be placed under the direction of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
- 2.—That measurement be taken at place of shipment, i. e., exporting wharf, pier or pier-head where adjacent to place of shipment, at measuring Superintendent's direction, not any wharf the boats are actually being removed in course of shipment.
- 3.—That such measurement be final.
- 4.—That in case of amount cargo, or cargo transferred from one vessel to another, original measurement to be re-measured.
- 5.—That any cargo retained to be re-measured.
- 6.—That measurement be taken at the largest part of the bale, inside the lashing on the one side, and outside on the other.
- 7.—That the measurement of jute shipped without measurement shall be at the risk of shipper's risk, and that measurement be a matter of special arrangement between the shipper and ship. Further, that all expenses connected with the measurement thereof be payable by the shippers.
- 8.—That all cotton and other kind cargo arriving at the East India Railway Company's terminus at Howrah for shipment direct by boat be measured by the sworn measurers in the Railway Company's docks, while being removed in actual course of shipment.
- 9.—That all cargo passed at, or exported from, any of the press-houses to which a sworn measurer may be attached, be treated in the manner as jute, and as provided for in the said resolution.
- 10.—That gunny bales packed at, or exported from, mills within the limits of the port be also measured as described in the said resolution.
- 11.—That gunny bales or other kind cargo exported by boat direct from outside the limits of the port, be measured at the sworn measurers on the deck of the ship or alongside, but it shall be actual with outside mills and press-houses to make arrangements with the Managing Committee, on such terms as may be mutually agreed on, for the attendance of sworn measurers, at their ordinary shipping wharves for measurement in accordance with Rule 2.
- 12.—That all baled, cased, or other cargo, not provided for in any of the foregoing resolutions, and which at present is measured on this side, require to be measured on this side, by a special arrangement made between shippers and ship, that all such cargo be measured on the Canton House wharf (if for export by boat) or in the pier sheds (if for shipment through the jetties) by the sworn measurers.
- 13.—That for the present the sworn measurers to be appointed to carry out this scheme be placed under the direction of a representative committee to be nominated by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.
- 14.—That the charge for measurement be defrayed by the ship.
- 15.—That goods in casks or cases be calculated at gross weight when paying freight by weight.

At a Special General Meeting of the Chamber, held on the 29th November 1883, it was resolved—

- That for Gunny Bags and Gunny Cloth the ton shall be 50 cubic feet, not exceeding 2,240 lbs., "gross".
- That the term "Dead Weight" shall be understood to mean the following articles only:—Sugar, Salt-petre, Rice, Wheat, Gram, Mool, Peas and all Metals.

1st January 1884.

J. F. RUTHERFORD,
Secretary.

Forms of Bill of Lading and Boat Note as adopted at a General Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, on the 17th January 1880.

Shipped in good order and well-conditioned, by _____ in and upon the good Ship or Vessel called the _____ whereof is Master for this present Voyage _____ and now lying in the Port of Calcutta and bound for _____

being marked and numbered as in the margin, and to be delivered, in the like good order and well-conditioned, at the aforesaid Port of _____

(The Act of God, the Queen's Enemies, fire, and all and every other dangers and accidents of the Seas, Rivers, and Navigation of whatever nature and kind sever excepted)

unto _____ or to _____ Assigns, Freight for the said Goods being payable as customary _____

with Average accustomed. In Witness whereof, the Master or Agents of the said Ship hath affirmed to _____ Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date, one of which being accomplished, the others to stand void.

Dated in CALCUTTA, this _____ day of _____ 18 _____
Weight and Contents unknown.

To
THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE
Ship
SIR.

Please receive on board the undernoted Goods
from Messrs.....

and grant a clean receipt for the same.

N.B.—This cargo is only shipped on the special understanding that the Chief Officer will sign for all counter or quality marks and numbers, and the Bales or Packages are not to be taken on board except on these terms, and also when a Sircar is in attendance to check the tally.

In case of any dispute, the Shippers request prompt information in writing from one of the Officers of the ship.

Marks and Numbers.	Number of Packages.	Description of Goods	

Received on board the ship.....
in good order and condition, the undermen-
tioned Goods from Messrs.....

N.B.—The Chief Officer is requested not to take in any package unless he is prepared to sign for all the qualifying marks and numbers.
All packages in bad order must be returned.

Marks and Numbers.	Number of Packages	Description of Goods.

Arrived alongside

Discharged

Returned.....

Remarks

(Signature).....

Chief Officer.

Ship

Moorings

CONVERSION OF STERLING FREIGHT INTO INDIAN CURRENCY.

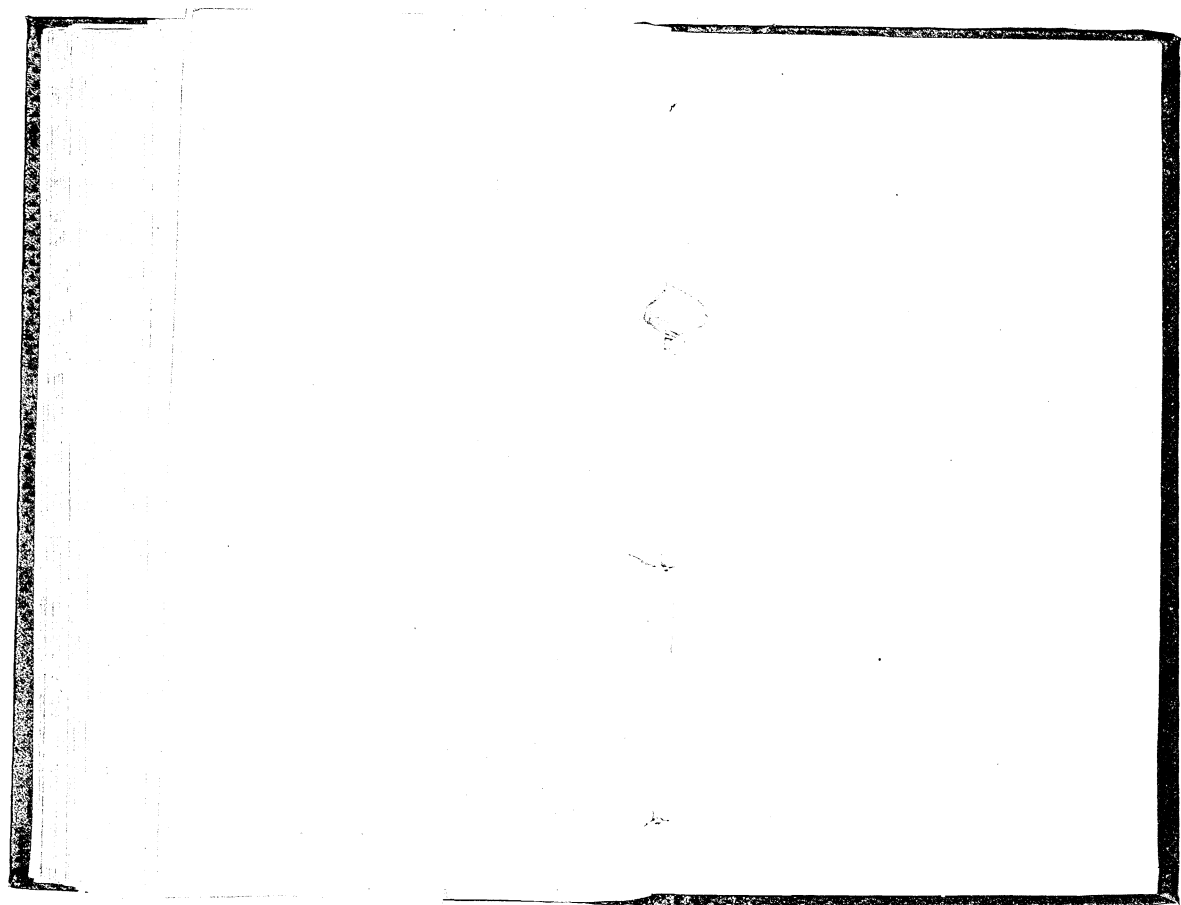
*The following Resolutions were adopted at a General Meeting of
the Chamber, held on the 17th January 1882.*

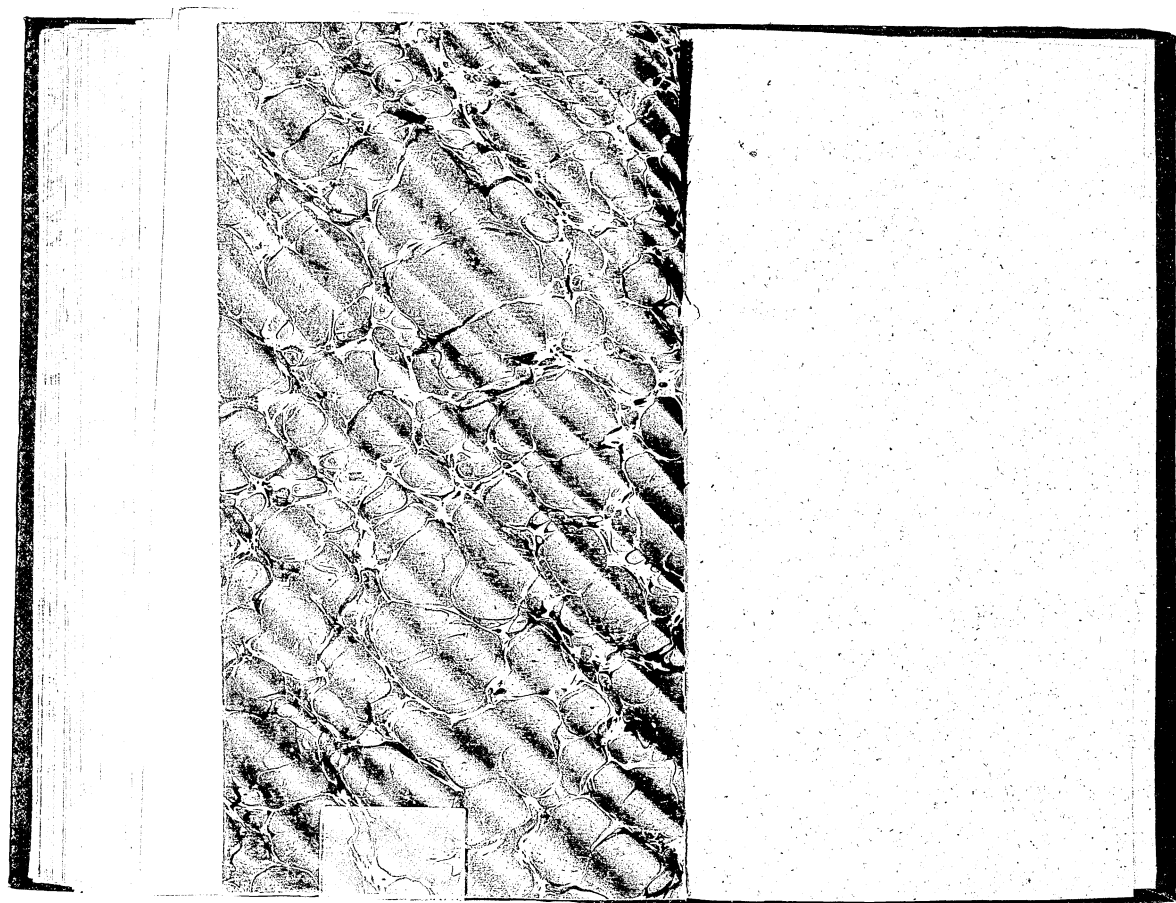
"That the Resolutions adopted, 31st May 1876, respecting
"conversion into Indian currency of sterling freight
"and commission thereon be hereby rescinded, and
"that the following Resolutions be substituted in
"their stead, with immediate effect, viz :—

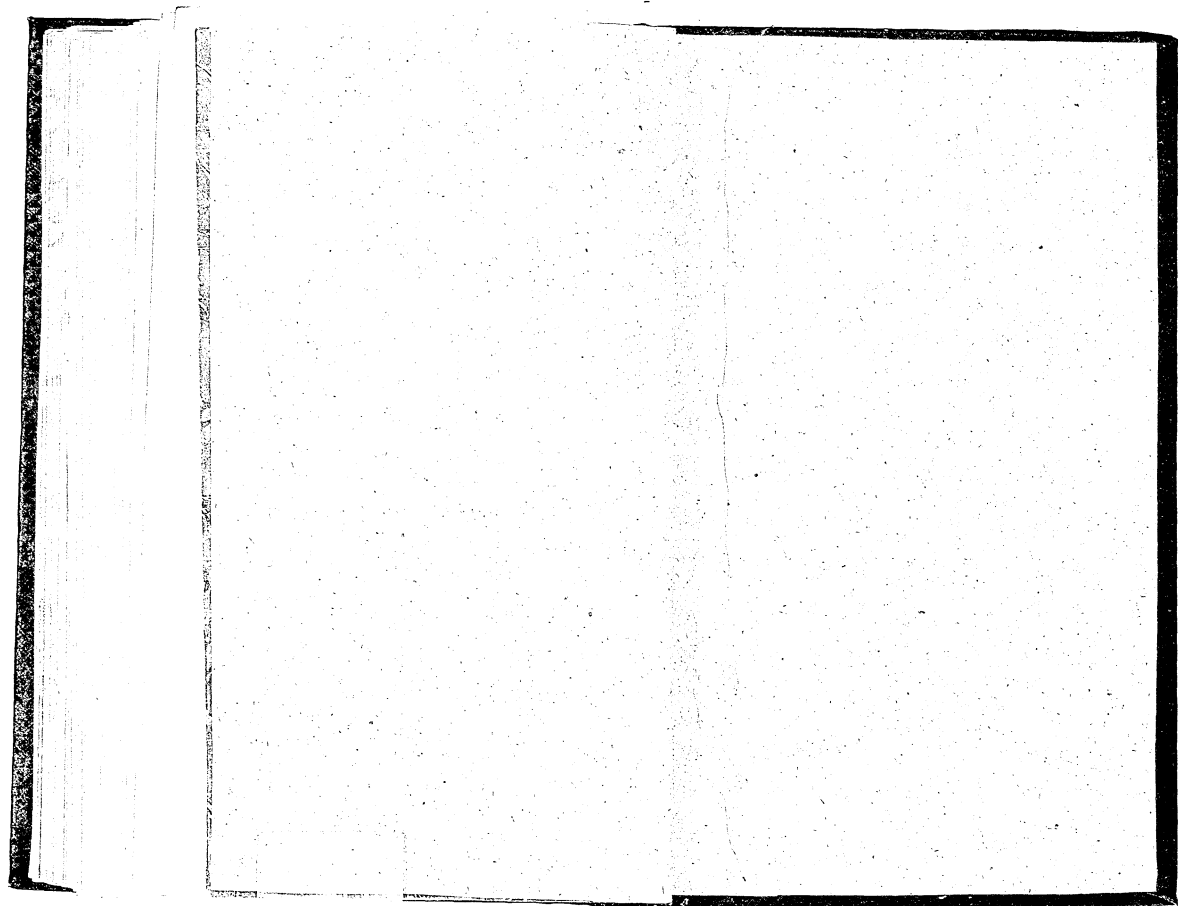
1. "That, in the absence of any stipulation to the
"contrary, sterling freight payable in Calcutta, in-
"cluding differences of freight adjusted in Calcutta,
"and all commissions on sterling freight made pay-
"able at Calcutta or there brought into account,
"shall be reduced into Indian money at the rate of
"exchange for Bank Bills on London on demand
"which shall have been current on the mail-day
"next preceding the day when the amount to be
"dealt with shall be ascertained.
2. "That, in the absence of anything to the contrary ex-
"pressed, the words 'current rate of exchange' shall
"be held to mean the rate current for Bank Bills on
"London payable on demand.
3. "That, for the purpose of charging commission or
"adjusting differences, freight expressed in dollars
"(American) shall be converted into sterling at a
"uniform rate of fifty pence per dollar."

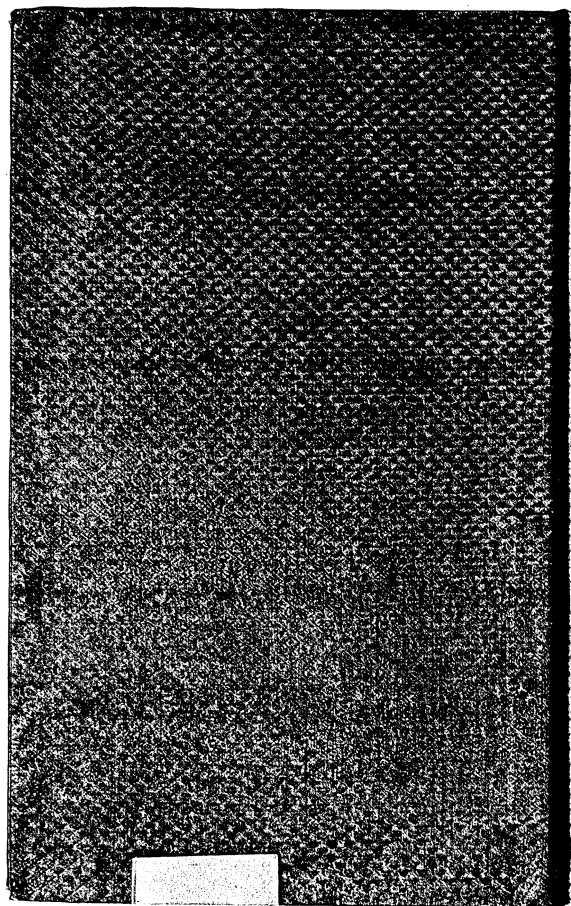
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1884
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1884