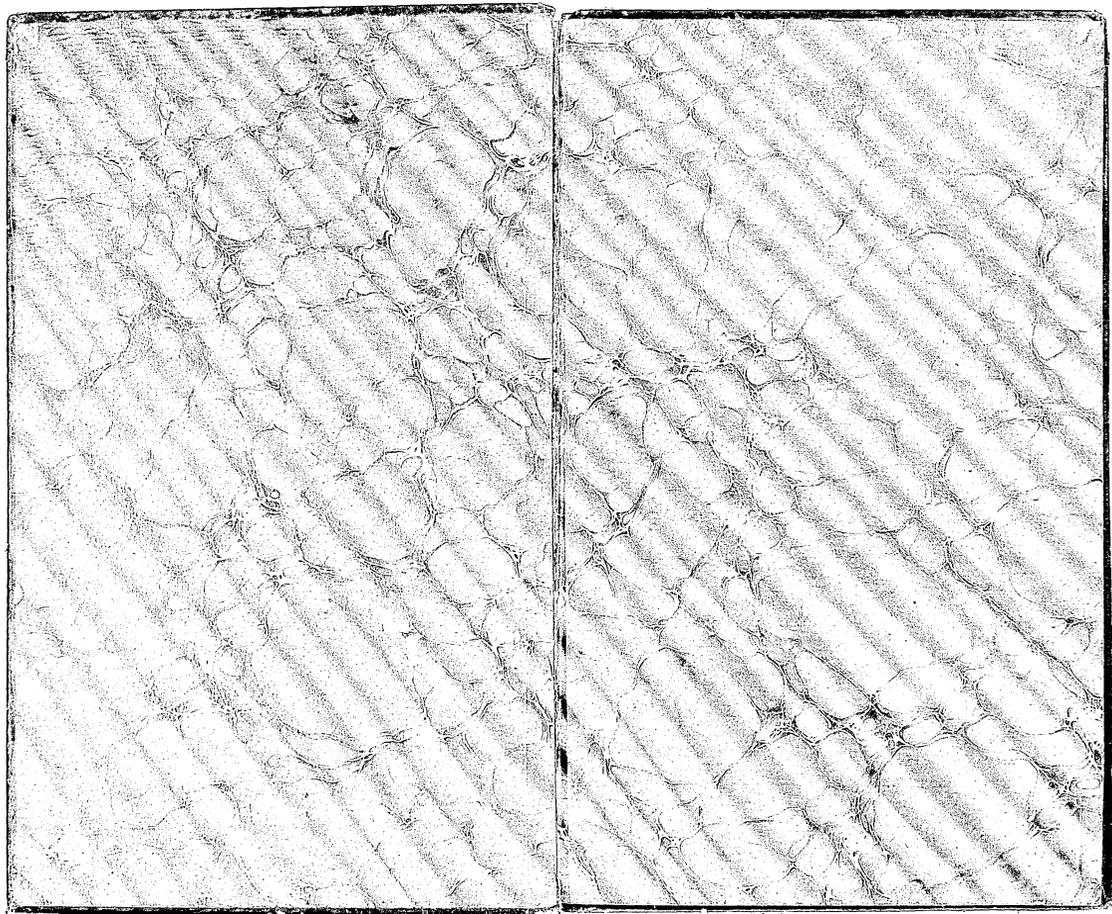
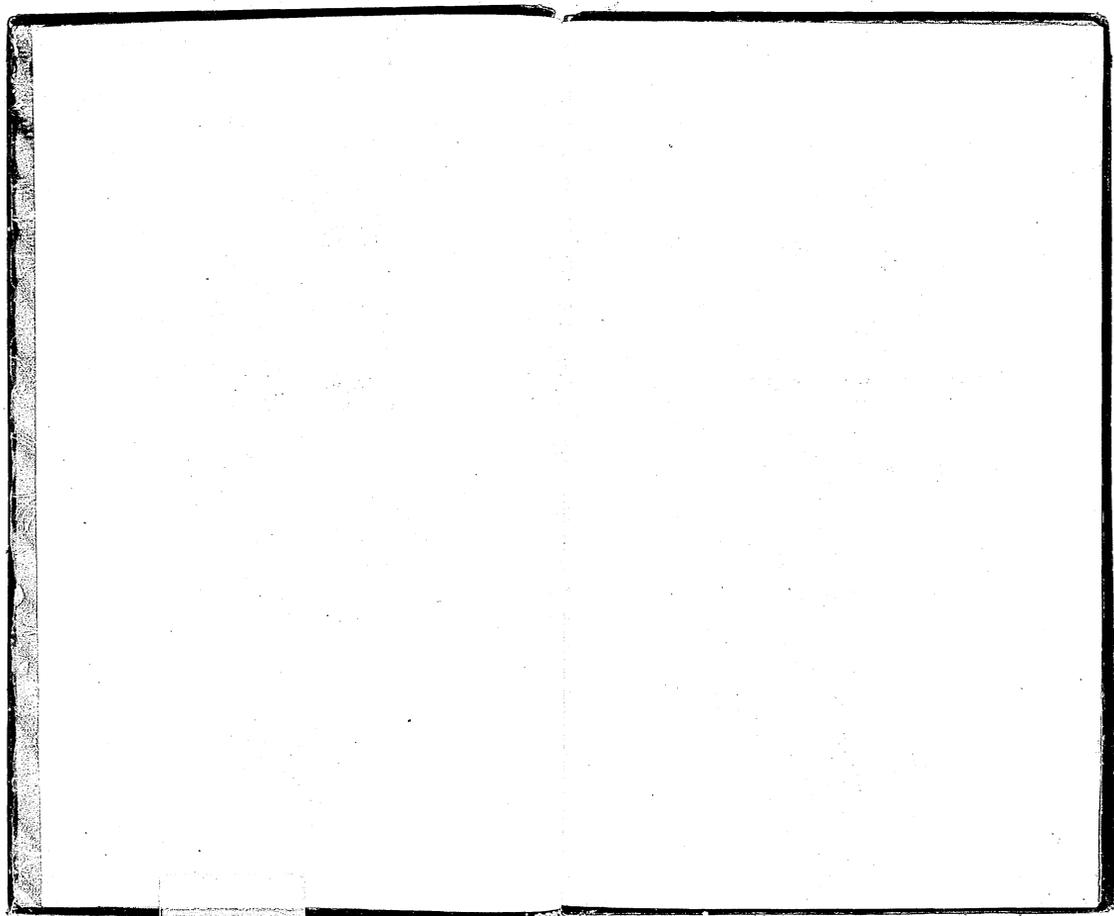


REPORT
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FROM 1ST MAY TO 31ST OCTOBER 1870





REPORT

OF
THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

From 1st May to 31st October 1870.

Calcutta:

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*Proceedings of the Half-yearly General Meeting
of the Chamber of Commerce held on Thursday
the 5th December 1870.*

The President the Hon'ble J. K. BELLEN SMITH, after reading the advertisement convening the meeting, said that the Report of the Committee for the last six months had been in the hands of the members for a few days, and he was afraid it might appear rather meagre as compared with its predecessors; this had not arisen from any want of zeal on the part of the Committee, but simply because a smaller number of subjects than usual had come before them. The first was that of the *Income-tax*. For his part, he would have wished that their meeting could have passed off without allusion to a subject of which they had heard so much. It will be in the recollection of members that when the additional taxation was imposed the Chamber did not take any part in the universal agitation that arose against it. It was discussed in Committee, and it seemed to them that, as an Association established for purely mercantile purposes, it was not necessary

for them, as a Chamber, to move in the matter, the more so that individual members were offered, through other channels, the opportunity of expressing their disapproval. In the month of August last, however, it seemed to them that they might break silence without departing from the objects of this Association. Their reasons for so doing were that the tax was imposed under very peculiar circumstances, which, according to the manifesto made by Government in August, appeared no longer to exist, and that, in view of the lamentable war that was about breaking out between two of the largest States of Europe—States which were among our largest consumers, and with which many members of the Chamber were intimately connected—it seemed to them that this new taxation would press upon many members of the Chamber with excessive severity. They, therefore, addressed the Government in a letter, dated the 10th of August, which has been embodied in the report, as also the reply thereto. Had the Secretary of the Financial Department simply declined to comply with the prayer contained in that letter, he (the Chairman) for one, would have been content to wait the issue of the next financial statement, by which it could be seen on what grounds the refusal

rested. The Financial Secretary, however, went a good deal further than this. He not only refused their request, but he said in effect, although probably not in an adverse spirit, that the Chamber scarcely knew what they were writing about, and that their application had been based on a misapprehension of the Government accounts. The Committee thought it their duty to give a rejoinder to this charge of ignorance, and to state that they perfectly understood the Government accounts, and also the position that each financial year stands on its own basis. They said also that the best guide a financial minister can have for a coming year is, assuming things to have been normal, the result of the year which has just closed. This seemed the course which would be pursued by a practical man who wished to purchase an estate or concern; and the Committee believed there were certain plain principles applicable alike to all finance, whether public or private; but from all he had learned, he (the Chairman) believed the action of the Committee had found approval with every member of the Chamber. The correspondence was closed by only a formal acknowledgment of their last letter.

The second subject mentioned in the report

was connected also with the Income-tax, and related to *appeals against assessment*. The Committee received a representation from an esteemed member of the Chamber with reference to the mode which parties appealing against the Collector's assessment were compelled to adopt. He (the Chairman) wished to guard himself from bringing any general charge against that officer; but a complaint had come before the Committee in such an authenticated form that the conclusion was unavoidable that the law had been misinterpreted. The present Act laid down, or was read to lay down, that if any assessee considers himself aggrieved by the amount of assessment levied upon him it was incumbent upon him to send an appeal to a higher authority from the lower. So far well; but it was also ruled that all the confidential documents that related to this appeal were to be sent up with it, and that no assurance would or could be given that these documents would be treated as confidential. This the gentleman referred to considered to be a grievance:—certainly, it could never have been intended by Government that the balance-sheets and private accounts of houses of business were to be bandied about from one official to another. The Commissioner of Revenue was addressed on this subject, and he decided to

revert to the old practice by which a day of hearing should be fixed, and the private documents should be produced only on that day by the appellant in person, which decision was confirmed by the Board of Revenue.

The next subject was that of the *Port Improvement Trust*, which was now a matter of fact. He had reason to know that this was to the Lieutenant-Governor a matter of great satisfaction; and he knew that His Honor had done his utmost, in nominating the members, to have an efficient Board, and one which would command the confidence of the community. He (the Chairman) believed this had been attained, and that the new Trust would be found resulting in much benefit to the trade of Calcutta, especially when it assumed charge of the entire port.

The next subject was that of the *New Jetties*. From page 23 of the report, it will be noticed that some correspondence took place with the Government of Bengal on the subject of a Small Cause Court decision which seemed unduly to prolong the responsibility of ships as to delivery of cargo. The Government of Bengal did not, however, deem it necessary to pass any special regulation with regard to it, believing the difficulty to

be met by some of the sections of the new Port Trust Bill, then about to pass into law. While on this subject, he may mention that a decision which was given by the First Judge of the Small Cause Court, in May last, in a case for damage to iron landed at one of the new jetties, occasioned very great surprise in this city, and the Committee even had an official letter from the Madras Chamber of Commerce on the subject. The Committee, however, did not address Government on the subject, because the Judge evidently felt that he had gone too far, and subsequently gave modified expression to his views, which were at first entirely opposed to what the mercantile community had always considered law on the matter in question.

In page 29 of the Report members would find some notice taken of *Street Tramways*. They were aware that certain suggestions with regard to this were submitted to the Bengal Government by Mr. Franklin Prestage. Mr. Prestage was kind enough to discuss the proposed measure with the Committee and to explain its general bearing upon the passenger and mercantile traffic of the city, and the Committee were convinced that the tramways, as suggested by him, would be very beneficial to Calcutta. On the main proposal they

entirely agreed with Mr. Prestage, with the exception of a partial change in the direction of one or two of the lines. The matter has gone before the Government of Bengal, but what further has been done in regard to it the Committee were not in a position to say.

The next subject was that of *Enforcement of Government Promissory Notes* for payment of interest in London. The *Gazette of India*, of 28th May last, contained the following notification:—"Notice is hereby given that henceforth all promissory notes of the Government of India, which shall be enfaced for payment of the interest thereon in London by drafts on India, will be enfaced subject to the condition that the amount of any duties which may at any time be chargeable in India, in respect of such interest, shall be deducted therefrom at the place when payment is made by a draft on India, or otherwise, and a draft given for the balance only." Here, again, was one of those matters in which, during the past half-year, the Committee have, with regret, found themselves at direct issue with the Financial Department of the Government of India. The Committee considered that this Resolution would interfere, to a considerable degree, with the freedom of operations in Government Securities, which it

was the chief object of the enfacement system to encourage, and they wrote to Government accordingly. In reply the Committee were told that they were again wrong; that nothing of the kind was intended; and that the notification was intended merely to ensure that, in the event of any new provision being introduced regarding the levy of tax on dividends payable by the State, enfaced paper should occupy the same position as other securities. The Committee received this announcement with satisfaction, but they believed the original notification was read universally in the light in which they interpreted it, and which it undoubtedly seemed to wear.

The next subject was that of *Registration of Government Currency Notes in the Collectorate*. This was a small matter, but it was represented to the Chamber that no register of currency notes was kept in the office of the Collector. It appeared to the Committee that this would effectually prevent the tracing of lost and stolen notes, and they, therefore, wrote to the Head Commissioner of Paper Currency on the subject, and recommended that the Collector be authorised to prepare a register of all notes received by him. The letter had been forwarded to the Board of Revenue, and

it is hoped that the Chamber's reference would be effectual.

The Chairman here briefly referred to the existing arrangements of the Paper Currency of the country, expressing his opinion that the time had now arrived when the restrictions of separate circles might be entirely withdrawn or greatly modified, improved means of communication having greatly done away with the difficulties in view of which a variety of circles was at first established. The minimum size of currency note seemed also now to claim attention, and he (the Chairman) would be glad to see this reduced to five rupees. It seemed to him that if they wished to make their currency what a currency ought to be, they should reduce their note to an amount which passes into the hands of the majority of the people of this country, and is more in proportion to the sums they are accustomed to deal with. It is a matter of fact that one may go into any mart or bazar in Bengal without finding a currency note in any; and so long as this exists, it cannot be said that Government currency has taken hold on the people. It seemed desirable, therefore, to reduce the note to five rupees.

The next subject was the *Telegraph Station*

between Calcutta and Atcheepore, which had formed a topic of report for the last two half-years. He presumed the state of finances had since altered the mind of the Government on this subject, as members would see from the resolution of the Government, contained in the Report, that it did not think itself justified in undertaking a project which would entail considerable loss on the State. The cost of maintenance, however, of an additional station would not exceed Rs. 220 per month, subject to reduction by probable receipts.

The next matter was that of *Postal Cards*, upon which the Committee had a reference made to them by the Director General of the Post Office as to the advisability of introducing them into this country. This would doubtless form a cheap channel of communication, but as Government were not prepared to give up any postal revenue, and as any loss occasioned by the use of these cards at a low rate would be recouped by raising the rate of postage on ordinary correspondence, the Committee decided unanimously that, however advantageous it might be, yet to the greater portion of the members of the Chamber the introduction of this change, accompanied with an increase of postage, was not to be desired.

There were one or two other points of minor importance which were not embodied in the Report, but upon which a word or two might be said. The first was that of the *Hooghly Floating Bridge*. The Committee lately had the satisfaction of hearing from Mr. Bradford Leslie that he is now engaged in elaborating the details of the work, and is full of hope that, if all goes well, the bridge will be ready by end of 1872. Then there was a letter from Mr. Prestage, informing the Committee that the *extension of the Eastern Bengal Railway to Godwado* will be opened on the 1st January 1871—an announcement which will be hailed with satisfaction by all connected with our eastern trade. The Committee also received a very interesting letter from Major Pollock, the *Commissioner of Peshawar*, on the subject of the large fair held there at the close of the year. Major Pollock was one of those Indian officers who threw themselves heart and soul into their work, and thinking it might be useful to the Chamber, as well as tend to promote the success of the fair, he sent down a packet of patterns and musters of the piece-goods usually sold thereat, some of which were European, others were brought from Turkistan, and others were of various native manufacture. Major Pollock also invited to be his guest

any member of the Chamber who could find time to visit Peshawur and see the fair in person ; unfortunately no one was able to avail of this invitation, but he, the Chairman, believed all the members would appreciate the kindly spirit in which it was given.

The CHAIRMAN then said that the Chamber had reason to thank the *East Indian Railway Company*, who, in addition to the usual cotton traffic returns, had furnished them with a statement which gave very useful information. From the day the through-communication was established with Bombay, it became of interest to importers here to know to what extent piece-goods came from Bombay, via Jubbulpore up to Allahabad, and entered on the districts of the north-west, hitherto exclusively supplied from Calcutta. The Railway Company's statement showed that a very small amount of piece-goods had been sent up to this time, but there were signs of increase, and the Committee would continue to watch the further development of this new traffic.

Soon after the death of the late Mr. Wilson, it was felt by the mercantile community that his services in regard to the finances of India ought to be recognised, and a subscription was raised to

provide a statue, which was sent out in 1865, but for want of a suitable building to place it in, had till lately been in the custody of the Secretary of the Chamber. It was now, however, placed in the Dalhousie Institute.

The CHAIRMAN then referred to the new *Insolvency Bill*, regarding which the local Government had asked for an expression of opinion on the part of the Chamber. It was carefully gone over by the Committee, who came to the conclusion that, in the main, it was an immense improvement on any law of Insolvency that had hitherto existed in this country, and ought therefore to be supported by them. A letter was written to Government accordingly, conveying this approval and making a few suggestions which the Committee would be glad to see introduced.

The CHAIRMAN, after this, proposed "That the Report of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for the half-year ending 31st October 1870 be received and adopted."

Mr. H. H. SUTHERLAND, in seconding the proposition, said he was sure he spoke for every member present there when he declared that they were under a debt of gratitude to the Chairman

and to the members of Committee for the careful labors which the interests of commerce had received during their tenure of office. The commercial community of Calcutta were under very great obligation to the Chairman for the interest he took in their work, not only in this Chamber, but also in his capacity as a member of the Vice-regal Council. He would not enter into the subject of the Income-tax, and the other questions that had been so ably brought before them that day, but he would most cordially second the adoption of the Report.

The proposition was put to the vote and carried.

The CHAIRMAN informed the meeting that they had lost one member in Mr. J. P. Schneider, who had left for Europe, but they had also received two additions to their number, viz., Messrs. Tamvaco and Co., and Messrs. Ashburner and Co. They had been admitted by the Committee as members of the Chamber, subject to the usual confirmation, and, in proposing that this be given, he was sure all would be pleased at receiving into the ranks of the Chamber another of the Greek firms whose transactions now bulked so largely in the business of Calcutta, and in welcoming

back Messrs. Ashburner and Co., who had belonged to the Chamber in former days.

The election of these firms having been confirmed,

The CHAIRMAN said this was all the business he had to bring forward to the meeting, and he would now be glad to hear any suggestions from any of the members present.

One of the members here proposed that Government be asked to change the days appointed for the Christmas holidays from Monday and Tuesday, the 26th and 27th instant, to Friday, Saturday, and Monday, on the ground that Tuesday happened to be a day before the mail. A majority of members concurred in the proposal, and the Chairman promised to make the necessary application.

This brought the proceedings to a close, and the meeting separated after a vote of thanks to the chair.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE HALF-YEAR
ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 1870.

The Committee have the pleasure to submit their Report on the principal subjects which have come under their consideration during the last Half-year.

Income Tax.

The Committee trust their action in the matter of the existing rate of Income Tax, as detailed in the accompanying correspondence with Government, may meet with the approval of their fellow members, who will doubtless share their regret at the want of success which has attended their representations. The Committee did not forget that this Chamber exists for the benefit of commerce, not for purposes of political agitation, but in view of the large interests they represent, and of the peculiar circumstances under which this tax was imposed, they deemed it not beyond their province to urge its modification when

the necessities of the State appeared not so urgent as had at one time been supposed.

By the letter from the Commissioner of the Presidency Division given later on, it will be seen that the Committee were more successful in their endeavour to set aside the letter of the present Act in the matter of appeals from assessment, and obtain a reversion to the more private system of hearing such which previously prevailed.

From Chamber of Commerce to Government of India, Financial Department, Simla.

Calcutta, 10th August 1870.

I am directed by the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to forward the following remarks on the subject of the existing rate of Income Tax, with the request that you will be good enough to submit them for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council.

I may mention in the outset that, although the Committee of this Chamber did not send up any remonstrance to Government at the time the Act for increasing the Income Tax was passed, their silence was due not to approval of the measure, but rather to the belief that the members of the Chamber unanimously sympathised with and shared in the more extensive expression of opinion which was then so unmistakably pronounced by

the community in general. The Committee are, however, of opinion, that the time has now arrived when they may with advantage make this important question the subject of special representation to the Government of India.

When submitting to the Legislative Council the usual statement of ways and means for the current financial year, Sir Richard Temple explicitly and emphatically asserted that this new measure of taxation was forced upon the executive by sheer necessity, as an only means of relief from grave financial embarrassment; he declared that without this further increase to the Income Tax—i. e. if he retained the impost at the figure fixed in November last or two per cent—the present year was estimated to close with considerable deficit, which the raising of the duty to six pies in the rupee converted into a probable surplus of £163,440. This estimate was founded, according to Sir Richard Temple's statement, on the assumption that the previous financial year, 1869-70, would close with a large deficiency; but it now appears that a much more prosperous state of affairs actually exists, and that instead of having to meet a deficit Government will be in receipt of a surplus from that year.

The Committee are aware that they cannot in support of this statement yet point to any authoritative document from the Government of India, but they believe the same to be substantially correct; and they have observed with much satisfaction that the Secretary of State in his recent Statement to Parliament announced the probability of the year in question ending thus favorably.

The Committee cannot doubt that a result so happy and unexpected is due in large measure to the vigorous policy of retrenchment so properly set in motion in September last, the effects of which, it is not unreasonable to assume, will fell even more strikingly upon the finance of the year now current, leading up to the belief that the expenditure for the same under various heads will eventually fall considerably under the amount estimated for in the Budget.

In one very important item of revenue, viz., Opium, it appears likely that the receipts will prove largely in excess of the figure at which they were put down in the Budget estimate; nearly half of the current financial year has now expired, and the Drug still stands in the market at a figure which, with all deference, the Committee submit, justifies the Government in assuming a considerable further credit under this head.

In the abundant rains with which the country generally seems lately to have been favored, giving promise of a plentiful autumn harvest, the Committee would also recognise another source of hope for the current financial year. The records of the past few years show, unfortunately only too often, how material have been the calls made on the Government of India when the reverse has been the case; calls entailing not only much extra expenditure but, in addition, loss of revenue to a greater or less extent; and the Committee are encouraged to hope that, should the promise of the present season be realised and security disappear, Government

may find itself in the happy position of being called upon to spend less and receive more than was anticipated.

The above and other considerations, on which the Committee need not dwell, lead directly, in their judgment, to the question whether, in connection with the existing rate of Income Tax, Government can longer maintain the plea of absolute necessity, whether circumstances any longer justify the retention of what is really a War Tax.

With the information at present before them, the Committee venture to think that neither of these questions can be answered in the affirmative; they, on the contrary, consider themselves warranted in believing that a state of things which either did exist, or at least was supposed to exist, has now passed away; and they would respectfully but earnestly express their hope that the subject of this communication may receive the early and favorable consideration of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, with a view to some substantial reduction in the rate at which Income Tax shall be leviable for the half year commencing on 1st October next.

Such a reduction appears to the Committee not only matter of bare justice, but attended also with other most important considerations. It is well known that two additions to the Income Tax within less than a year have given rise to wide spread feelings of irritation and distrust among the masses of the people, feelings hardly

perhaps suggestive of actual political danger, but still such as it is most desirable to modify and subdue. As already mentioned, the Government of India, when imposing the latter and heavier of these additions, stated plainly that it did so with extreme reluctance as a dire necessity, and the Committee are of opinion that nothing would more tend to soothe the feelings already indicated, nothing be more likely to impress upon the people the justice and good faith of the supreme Government, than the voluntary relinquishment of part of what was so reluctantly taken in the hour of need.

From Government of India, Financial Department, to Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 3rd September 1870.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 10th of August, submitting remarks upon the financial circumstances of the country, with the prayer of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce that the rate of the Income Tax may be substantially reduced for the half year beginning on the 1st October next.

It is a matter of satisfaction that this temperate and clear representation affords an opportunity of explanation on certain points regarding which misapprehension appears to exist.

2. In September last year, decisive steps were taken to remedy a financial condition which was most unsatisfactory, and the course then adopted appears to have

commanded general approval. The measures of the present year were a necessary complement to those of the preceding autumn. It is true that the high rate of Income Tax imposed by Act XVI. of 1870 was forced upon the Government as a means of relief from grave financial embarrassment. It is also true that, in explaining the emergency, the Hon'ble Sir Richard Temple alluded to the "actual deficits which have occurred in past years," and to the apprehension that, despite all the exertions that had been made, the year 1869-70 would "close with a substantial deficit instead of the equilibrium that was expected." The series of deficits which had occurred were a cogent additional reason for precaution against any fresh failure of resources. But the deficit of 1869-70 then anticipated had no direct connection with the estimates for 1870-71, the duty of finding sufficient ways and means for which year would have been quite as clear if it had been known that the accounts of 1869-70 had closed favorably.

3. It is necessary to provide that the ways and means shall fully suffice for the services of each year. If, as has too often been the case in India, it turns out, that the expenditure exceeds the income, the result is fraught more or less, with embarrassment; but it has never been suggested that the country should be taxed in any subsequent year to supply the deficiency. It can hardly be seriously argued, nor, it is observed, does the Chamber of Commerce allege, that, when there is a contrary result, and income exceeds expenditure, the Government ought deliberately to remit taxation in order to bring about a

counterbalancing deficit in some later year. Still less can it be contended that because equilibrium has resulted when deficit was expected, the State should purposely allow the income of any later year to fall below its expenditure.

4. The circumstances of each year are considered, beforehand, independently of the out-turn of the accounts of any preceding year, with the sole object of providing sufficient means for current requirements. The arrangements for 1870-71 were made precisely on this principle. The unfortunate "necessity," so "explicitly and emphatically asserted," for the imposition of the present high rate of Income Tax, was the necessity of 1870-71, not of any other year. An argument in support of vigorous measures was naturally drawn from the recent adverse annual balance sheets; but it was the deficiency in the ways and means of 1870-71 alone that justified the fresh taxation imposed.

5. The approximate accounts of 1869-70 this day published are indeed more satisfactory than was supposed in April last. But without the measures taken in September 1869, there must have been a deficit in 1869-70 of about 1½ million sterling; and, moreover, if equilibrium has been attained, that is due, not to those extraordinary measures alone, but also in part to an excess of credit over debit adjustments, which cannot be again expected.

6. The effect of the retrenchments begun in September last was taken into account in framing the estimates

of the present year, and the hopes entertained by the Chamber of Commerce that those measures will tell more favorably upon the finances of 1870-71 than was anticipated, and that the expenditure will be less than the amount estimated, are not likely to be realised. Attention is constantly given to the diminution of expenditure: but measures of reduction, to be efficient and safe, must be, to a certain extent, gradual.

7. The actual accounts of 1869-70, as approximately ascertained, do not support the inference that the estimates of 1870-71 are too unfavorable; nor are any better indications to be found in the experience of the present year hitherto. There is, indeed, promise of a prosperous harvest and of a larger revenue from opium than was anticipated; but, on the other hand, owing to the war in Europe and other causes, there may probably be some failure of revenue and some expenditure in excess of grant. Upon the whole, the general prospects of the year are by no means improved since the financial statement was made.

8. The Chamber of Commerce doubtless admits that the Government was bound to take measures to secure the country against the evil consequences of a deficit in time of peace. While nothing but imperative necessity would have justified the increase of taxation last April, it is right to state that the necessity for what was done is more evident now than it was then. Any sacrifice, therefore, of the resources then provided for the service of the year could only end in serious embarrassment.

9. At the same time, the objections that have been made in many quarters to the present rate of the Income Tax are not regarded with indifference; though a very much larger portion of the people bore a similar burden, some years ago, without serious discontent, and a tax to which incomes of less than Rs. 500 a year are

* Note.—About 477,000 persons not in the service of the State were assessed to Income Tax last year. not liable, and which is paid by only about one in every three hundred* of the population, can hardly be said to affect "the masses of the people."

10. In the discussion which took place in the Legislative Council on the 5th April 1870, Sir Henry Durand stated the case well when he said, "that as a pure necessity he supported the measure," and that "considering the circumstances and difficulties which surround the Financial Member in this instance, and also bearing in mind how very moderate is the amount which he calculates on as a surplus, how he has limited the taxation which he imposes, which is barely enough to cover the deficit, the anxiety which he has evinced not to impose more than what is absolutely necessary is beyond dispute."

11. A high Income Tax in time of peace is, under ordinary circumstances, undesirable. It is a resource which should be kept in reserve, to be used only in periods of political or fiscal emergency. Act XVI. of 1870 will come to be in force on the 31st of March, and unless some unforeseen emergency occurs it is not the intention of the Government of India to renew, next year, the

present rate of Income Tax. Measures for providing otherwise the needful ways and means for the service of the State are under consideration, and will be communicated to the public as soon as they are sufficiently matured.

From Chamber of Commerce to Government of India, Financial Department.

Calcutta, 14th September 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 3263 of the 3rd instant, replying to this Chamber's communication of 10th ultimo, and intimating that the Government do not feel justified in complying with the request therein submitted for a reduction of the Income Tax from the 1st October next, but stating that the tax will not, at the close of the current year, be renewed on its present scale, unless on the occurrence of some unforeseen emergency.

The Committee of this Chamber have learned with much regret this refusal of Government to comply with a prayer which they thought reasonable at the time it was preferred, and which seems still more entitled to favorable consideration when viewed in the light of the final financial figures of the year 1869-70, which accompanied your letter, and have since been made public.

These figures show not only that the year 1869-70 results more favorably by nearly three quarters of a million than was anticipated in the Regular Estimate, but also

that it closes with an actual surplus of revenue over expenditure of £69,872. It is, moreover, observed that the revenue for 1870-71 is under-estimated to the extent of nearly a million sterling as compared with the approximate actuals for 1869-70; while, as pointed out in the Chamber's former communication on this subject, there is every reason to believe that the receipts from certain sources during the current financial year will be largely in excess of those realised in the one immediately preceding.

There is little in your communication now under acknowledgment serving to enlighten the Committee as to the grounds on which Government have come to the adverse decision therein notified; and perhaps more definite information is not to be expected at this stage of the current financial year: but as the bulk of your letter is devoted to the removal of a misapprehension which is presumed to exist, the Committee trust they may be permitted to offer a few remarks thereon.

I am directed to observe that in framing their communication of 10th ultimo, the Committee of this Chamber labored under no misapprehension as to the connection of one financial year with another,—such as is assumed. The Committee are and were perfectly aware that in a book-keeping sense two successive budget statements are altogether distinct and separate, no balances being brought forward from one to the other. The Committee are, however, of the opinion that in other respects, and especially for budget purposes, two

following financial years are intimately and closely connected,—the one indeed forming the principal basis upon which the estimates of the other are framed, and, with all deference, they submit that in your letter now under reply the closeness of this relation is greatly and somewhat unfairly understated. In support of this view the Committee need not go further than the financial statement of Sir Richard Temple delivered in April last, from which it is abundantly manifest that in framing the estimates for 1870-71 the Hon'ble Gentleman had chiefly in view the result of the various heads of revenue and expenditure in 1869-70, the fact that for this purpose he was in possession of 11 months figures having been justly remarked upon as a source of much satisfaction.

Unless, indeed, a Finance Minister is to frame his estimates of revenue altogether at random, it is very evident that the incomes of previous years must be his basis, and, assuming the one last closed to have been not otherwise than normal, its figures will naturally be deemed most reliable, and by them he will be chiefly guided.

No one can read with attention and impartiality the statement of the Finance Minister in April last, and the remarks from various other members of Government by which it was followed, without feeling that the apprehended deficit of 1869-70 led to the inclusion of a 3½ per cent. Income Tax in the estimates of 1870-71, as is indeed proved by the very words then used by Sir Richard Temple, as follows:—“*Considering the actual*

deficits which have occurred in past years and the circumstances that the year just over is expected to close with a substantial deficit, instead of the equilibrium that was expected, and this too despite all the exertions that have been put forth, we regard it as essential to the due administration of the finances and to the maintaining of the financial credit of the country that further exertions should be made." The Committee are therefore much at a loss to understand how it is now stated that the anticipated deficit of last year had no direct connection with the estimates for the one now current. In the opinion of the Committee the connection between the two is direct and close, nearly akin to cause and effect; and it seems neither illogical nor unnatural that the public who were explicitly told in April last that anticipated deficit necessitated new burdens should look for relief now that deficit has proved a surplus.

Paragraph 3 of your letter is so obscurely worded that the Committee have been somewhat at a loss to interpret its real significance. Its chief object is apparently to point out that the Chamber has not ventured to put forward any argument to the effect that in the event of a surplus—of say £500,000—at the end of one year taxation should be sufficiently remitted to produce a deficit of a similar amount the next year. The Committee are glad they have been spared the imputation on their common sense which such an interpretation of any portion of their communication would have implied; but they can point to instances where financiers of recognised ability and political economists of

the greatest reputation have not deemed it inexpedient, when a surplus has been obtained, and taxation bears heavily upon the people, to remit so much of it as will guard against a similar occurrence in the succeeding year; and the Committee confess they see nothing unsound in such a course.

There are various other points in your communication which afford ground for discussion; but the Committee have no wish to trouble Government with unnecessary correspondence and therefore forbear. They have, as already said, received with much disappointment the failure of the representation they deemed it their duty to make, and they deeply regret the expressed determination of Government to carry on the service of the current year with what has been lately termed "the perilous assistance of a war tax in time of peace."

From Government of India, Financial Department, to Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 4th October 1870.

I am directed by His Excellency the Right Hon'ble the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 14th September 1870.

Appeals against Assessment for Income Tax.

The Committee having received several representations from members of the mercantile com-

munity with reference to the mode which parties appealing against the Collector's assessment for income tax were compelled to adopt, and being of opinion that there were good grounds for submitting the matter for the consideration of Government, addressed the Commissioner of Revenue on the subject.

They drew that officer's attention to the provisions of Section 27 of the Income Tax Act which required that every petition against the Collector's assessment should be accompanied by a copy of the petition, of the Collector's orders thereon, and all other documents, if any, connected with the case: and that the remonstrances received by the Committee had special reference to the last requirement, all the more that the Collector absolutely refused to guarantee that the documents would be seen by himself only, or by the Judge of Appeal, or other responsible officer. Objections had been strongly—and, as the Committee believed, fairly—raised against the publicity to which a merchant's transactions might be exposed, and the freedom with which they might be discussed among the employés of the departments through which the documents connected with his appeal might be required to pass; the Committee therefore referred to the

Commissioner on this point, reminding him of the practice in this respect under the old Act—32 of 1860—which they believed was found to work well in the interests alike of the State and of the tax paying community, and requesting the adoption of a procedure which was free from the objections now raised. Section 56 of the old Act provided that "*if, on the day appointed, the person shall appear, he shall be heard before the Collector or Commissioners, sitting with closed doors, and the Assessor shall also, if required, attend. The Collector or Commissioners shall hear the statement of the person and may inspect any books or papers which he shall VOLUNTARILY TENDER, or question any witness whom he shall produce, but they shall not require the person chargeable to produce any books or proofs besides those which he may choose to tender.*"

It will be seen from the above how materially the two acts differed in this essential respect; and the Committee had no hesitation in urging the adoption of a more liberal and conciliatory course, and the expediency of dispensing with the necessity of appellants parting with *copies of balance sheets and other confidential and private documents.*

The result of the Committee's reference was

satisfactory, as the Commissioner, pending the orders of the Board of Revenue, who subsequently confirmed his action, waived the obnoxious provision by not insisting on the necessity of all documents being produced except on the day of hearing.

From Officiating Commissioner of Revenue, Presidency Division, to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 9th July 1870.

In reply to your letter of the 7th instant, I request that you will inform the Chamber of Commerce that a reference has been made by the Board of Revenue to Government on the subject of your letter of the 23rd ultimo. In the meantime, until orders are received, I am prepared to waive the provisions of Section 27, so far as not to insist on the necessity of all documents produced in proof before the Collector accompanying the petition of appeal. A list of the documents must be presented with the petition, the documents themselves being brought on the day of hearing.

Extract from para. 2 of Board's order, No. 288B., dated 26th July 1870.

Para. 2.—You will, however, observe from the accompanying copy of Government Order No. 2786 of the 12th instant, that Government has approved of the Board's suggestions relative to the procedure to be adopted in

reference to production of documents and papers either before the Collector, or in appeal, by persons objecting to the assessments made under the Income Tax Act.

PRESIDENCY DIVISION,
Calcutta, the 3rd August 1870.

Memo. No. 22.

Forwarded to the Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce for information. The procedure sanctioned by Government is that indicated in Mr. Commissioner Cockerell's letter No. 17, dated 9th July.

C. H. CAMPBELL,
Commissioner.

Port Improvement Trust.

The following letter contains the final representations of the Committee on the Bill for this important measure:—

*From Chamber of Commerce to Secy. to Govt.
of Bengal, Legislative Department.*

Calcutta, 9th May 1870.

Before the "Bill to appoint Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta" comes under final consideration in the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant Governor, the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce

request you will have the goodness to place before His Honor the following remarks on some of its provisions :—

Section VII. does not declare the amount of debt to be taken over by the Commissioners; it would have been satisfactory if the several items that are to constitute that debt had been specified, in order that the exact nature and extent of the Commissioners' financial position should be clearly understood.

In this respect the Committee would again urge the point already submitted in their letter of 5th August last, *viz.*, "that the new Trust should start clear of all liabilities except the expenditure incurred upon those works which are now in course of construction, and which were sanctioned as a measure of partial relief to the trade of the port in anticipation of the more comprehensive operations likely to be undertaken by the Trust, and that beyond these charges there should be no retrospective liabilities."

Section VIII. In the absence of the details of Schedule B. the rate of interest is the only point in this section on which the Committee can give a definite opinion, and with this rate they are entirely satisfied. As to the re-payment of principal, the Committee were originally of opinion that it would not be expedient to fix any period for such purpose, but on re-consideration they are disposed to modify the view then taken and agree that it will be as well to provide for the re-payment within a certain limit of time: and the Committee would further be disposed to view with satisfaction a clause

giving definitly to the dates at which within the proposed period of 30 years the various instalments are to be paid.

Section XIII. empowers the Lieutenant-Governor to direct, by an order, under his hand, the removal of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, or Commissioner, whose functions would thereupon cease.

This provision appears at first sight somewhat arbitrary and uncalled for, and unless absolute necessity renders it essential that the Lieutenant-Governor should possess the power conferred by the section the Committee hope it may be omitted.

The Committee think that the wording of Section XXIX. is a little doubtful, but they agree to it if their interpretation is correct that the salaried officer as the working man of the Trust is to have power of himself to do all except what could only be done by the Board of Commissioners in meeting assembled.

Under Section XXXIV. the Commissioners are unable to contract for or execute any new work, the cost of which shall exceed 2,000 Rupees without the sanction of the Lieutenant-Governor.

This appears to confer upon the Commissioners a very limited disbursing authority, and the restriction might be attended with material inconvenience by the possible absence of the Lieutenant-Governor at a time when a work of special urgency and largely exceeding the limit was imperatively necessary.

Section LXIX. The Committee are of opinion that the release of goods on the production of a document purporting to be a receipt for the amount of a formally declared lien or the release of freight is an insufficient protection of the interests of those who give notice of such lien, and that it should be the duty of the Commissioners not only to use reasonable care in respect of the authenticity of such document, but to establish that authenticity beyond all doubt. The responsibility of the Commissioners should not cease until the lien had been removed by unquestionable proof, and not merely on the production of a document which, notwithstanding reasonable care taken to ascertain its validity, may turn out to be a fraudulent representation. The Committee understand that the responsibility of the Dock Companies in England is unlimited and absolute in the above respect.

Section LXX. The Committee think that the two months allowed for recovery of all dues and claims should be extended to three; there is no pressing need for the shorter limit, and as it would barely admit of a possibly necessary reference in some instances to parties in Europe or at a distance elsewhere the time may be fairly extended.

In the Bill as finally passed, some of these suggestions have been acceded to, and the Committee congratulates the Chamber that a Trust, the formation of which they have so long advocated, and which they believe will prove of in-

calculable advantage and benefit to the trade of Calcutta, is now actually in existence, and has commenced operations.

The New Jetties.

Some correspondence passed between the Government of Bengal and the Committee as to the strict definition of the limits of the Custom House arising out of a case for damage to iron landed at one of the new Jetties which was tried in the Small Cause Court in May last, and the decision in which seemed unduly to prolong the responsibility of the ship in the matter of cargo delivered. The Government of Bengal did not however deem it necessary to make any special declaration as, since the above case was tried, the Port Improvement Bill has passed into law, and seems to meet the difficulty by the Sections under which the Commissioners are required to give receipts when such are demanded for all cargo delivered to them at Jetties or other places which have been declared landing places under the Act, and at which they are bound to set apart sufficient accommodation for the operations of the Custom House officers.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 19th May 1870.

The attention of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt been drawn to the judgment of the learned First Judge of the Small Cause Court delivered towards the end of last month in a suit instituted by certain importers against the master of a ship for damages arising out of wrongful and negligent delivery. The suit was dismissed, and as the judgment dwells at considerable length on the difficulty which arose in the use of the term "Custom House" whereas the goods in question had been landed on one of the new jetties, and on the consequent incompleteness of the notification by the Government of Bengal of 27th October 1869 inasmuch as the new jetties were not declared as being within the limits of or as part of the premises of the Custom House, I am desired to submit the matter for such action as the Lieutenant-Governor may consider expedient under the circumstances.

It cannot be doubted that shipmasters will hesitate to resort to the jetties if they are deprived of the protection which they could claim and exposed to the continuance of a responsibility which they believe terminated on delivery of cargo on an authorised landing place.

For convenience of reference I forward a printed copy of the judgment taken from the *Daily Examiner* of the 16th instant.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 22nd June 1870.

In reply to your letter of the 19th ultimo, forwarding copy of a judgment of the First Judge of the Small Cause Court in a suit instituted by certain importers against the master of a ship for damages arising out of wrongful and negligent delivery and representing the inconveniences to which the masters of ships may be exposed in consequence of the undefined relation in which the new jetties stood to the Custom House at Calcutta, I am directed to point out that the requirements of the case are now believed to be sufficiently met by the provisions of the Port Bill, which was recently passed in the Bengal Legislative Council.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 7th July 1870.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your reply to their reference of the 19th May regarding the new Jetties and the Custom House, and to request you will do them the favor of pointing out the sections of the Port Improvement Bill, which provide that the jetties are considered as within the limits of the Custom House.

Section 58 declares that the Commissioners shall set apart any jetty or portion thereof for the use of the officers of Customs, when the Lieutenant-Governor shall appoint such place for the landing of goods, but until such

appointment has been made the difficulty that at present attends the undefined relation of the jetties to the Custom House will not be removed.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 13th July 1870.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant requesting that the sections of the Port Improvement Bill, which provide that the jetties should be considered as within the limits of the Custom House should be pointed out.

In reply I am to state that no such section or sections are contained in the Bill, nor does it seem necessary to His Honor that such provision should be made.

Section 58 of the Bill, as observed by the Chamber, provides that any wharf or jetty may be declared a wharf within the meaning of the Act, and that any portion of such wharf may be set aside for the use of the officer of Customs; Section 60 provides that the Commissioners shall keep and maintain sufficient servants and apparatus for the convenient and expeditious landing and shipment of all goods, which, with certain provisions, they are under that section bound to land; while by Section 61 a receipt for goods landed, if demanded, must be given, and after this all responsibility rests with the Commissioners.

It was with reference to these provisions that in my No 2462, dated 22nd ultimo, I was directed to point out

that the inconveniences to masters of ships which were anticipated in your letter of the 19th May, in consequence of the judgment of the First Judge of the Small Cause Court, in the case of Anstruther and Co. *versus* Captain Spoor, were believed to be sufficiently guarded against in the proposed Port Bill.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 21st July 1870.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2793 of the 13th instant.

The provisions of the sections of the Port Improvement Bill are, no doubt, precisely as you state them; and the Committee's interpretation of them is identical with that which you express.

The point however of their representation is not that those provisions will be insufficient for the purposes intended—indeed the Committee are of opinion that they will be found amply sufficient—but that they are, and will remain, inoperative until effect be given to them—1st, by the Bill as settled by the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal receiving the assent of the Governor General in Council, and 2ndly, by the subsequent exercise of the Lieutenant-Governor's authority to appoint and set apart any particular place for the use of the officers of Customs.

It is clear, therefore, that while these prospective

measures are in abeyance, the interests that may be affected by circumstances similar to those in the case decided by the First Judge of the Small Cause Court will remain unprotected.

As an illustration of the inconvenience attending the present undecided and uncertain state of relations between the jetties and the Custom House, I am to submit the recent case of the steamer "Olinda," whose cargo of iron was not permitted by the Collector to be landed at a jetty, the Collector's refusal being based—as the Committee understand—on the uncertainty of his responsibility in the matter.

This is one of the many instances which might be cited of the practical insufficiency of the existing defective system and the necessity for its prompt removal.

All that the Chamber respectfully call for is that the Bill be passed, and that the limits of the Custom House be authoritatively defined.

Working Hours for Landing and Shipping Cargo.

Under a Notification of the Collector of Customs regulating the receiving, landing and shipping of goods from boats and inland country vessels, and assigning certain limits on the river bank for such purposes, the hours within which such work was permitted were fixed at from 8 A. M. to 5 P. M.; but these were considered too short,

as boats were frequently prevented from loading or discharging, and consequently detained to the disadvantage and inconvenience of the owners of boats and cargo. The Committee therefore applied for an extension of those working hours, and the Collector promptly complied with the request by altering the time so as to allow 12 hours for work, *viz.*, from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. In making this concession the Collector expressed his desire to work the country boat scheme in such a manner as to meet the convenience of the trade of the port and to afford it every facility.

Proposed System of Street Tramways.

In June last the Committee were invited by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor to consider the subject of a proposed system of street tramways for the town of Calcutta, and to express their opinion of the scheme submitted to the Government of Bengal by Mr. Franklin Prestage, Agent for the Eastern Bengal Railway.

The Committee entered into a discussion of this question with much satisfaction, feeling confident that the introduction of a well organised system of tramways would be attended with material advantages; and, after an interview

with Mr. Prestage, who carefully explained the general bearing of the proposed measure upon the passenger and merchandise traffic of the city, they reported their concurrence in the views submitted by him to Government, with the exception of a partial change in the direction of one or two of the proposed lines. The Committee were of opinion that the scheme was well designed to provide greatly improved means for facilitating the transport of passengers, merchandise, and general traffic, and largely promote the convenience and comfort of the public, and confer very appreciable advantages on the commercial operations of the Port.

From Govt. of Bengal, P. W. Dept., Railway Branch, to Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 2nd June 1870.

I am instructed to forward, for the information of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the papers noted on the margin, on the subject of a proposed system of street tramways for the town of Calcutta, and to request that the Chamber will favor the Lieutenant Governor with their views on the proposed scheme.

Letter No. 531R, dated 29th March 1870, from Secretary to Government of India, in the Public Works Department.

Letter dated 27th May 1870, from F. Prestage, Esq.

Note by the Consulting Engineer to the Government for Railways, dated 29th May 1870.

From Government of India, P. W. Dept., to Government of Bengal, P. W. Dept., Railway Branch.

Calcutta, 29th March 1870.

In my letter No. 979R, of the 22nd July 1869, were explained at some length the reasons by which the Government of India were led to the conclusion therein communicated, not to permit the immediate execution of the proposed Branch from the Eastern Bengal Railway to the river bank at Chitpoor.

2. The chief reasons were—

- (1)—The want of data establishing the necessity for the branch, or the inadequacy of the existing accommodation, provided the Municipal line be worked by the Company under proper arrangements.
- (2)—The doubt whether, when the Port Improvement Trust is re-constituted, it might not be found practicable to carry a line of rails down from Chitpoor along the river bank, and establish warehouses there, and so to a great extent, if not entirely, obviate any necessity for a Railway goods yard for this Company on the river bank.
- (3)—The undecided state of the Hooghly Bridge question, and the consequent difficulty of adopting any conclusion as to the best position for a goods station for the Eastern Bengal Railway, if it be in fact needed on the river bank.

3. The Hooghly Bridge question having been decided in favor of a floating bridgenot far from Armenian Ghat, to be made by Government, the Port Improvement Trust being about to be re-constituted, and Mr. Prestage, the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company, for whose return the Lieutenant-Governor desired to wait, *vide* your letter No. 20G, dated 5th January 1870, having returned, the time is opportune for the re-consideration of the relative bearing of the requirements of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company in the matter of river bank accommodation for their goods traffic, and the requirements of the port, city and suburbs of Calcutta for improved means of transport for goods and passengers, and the best way of meeting these several objects.

4. It will be in the Lieutenant-Governor's recollection that, in my letter No. 491R of the 25th April 1868, it was suggested that lines of rails might be laid along the river bank on the level of the ground to connect the stations at Scaldah and Chitpoor with depots in the neighbourhood of private warehouses, whence wagons could, on application, be sent to the points where the owners or agents desired to load them with goods, the whole to be managed by the Port Trust as part of the landing and shipping arrangements. It is observed that in the Bill introduced into His Honor's Council to provide facilities for the landing and shipment of goods in the Port of Calcutta, it is proposed that the works to be constructed and carried out may include tramways warehouses, sheds, engines and other appliances for the conveying, receiving and storing of goods

and merchandize landed, or to be shipped. On this Bill becoming law the power will exist for giving effect to the foregoing scheme so far as it may now commend itself.

5. Since these proposals were made, the Government have taken over the Muttah Railway, and in its stock, buildings and appliances, have at their disposal the means of greatly facilitating the carrying out of a scheme not merely of river bank lines, but of suburban and street lines within and around the city. With such a comprehensive scheme as is here indicated, the Municipal line might be incorporated, and there can be little doubt that, while such a combination of interests would result in great economy in working, it would afford all requisite accommodation to the traffic of the Eastern Bengal Railway, and, in conferring inestimable advantages on the commerce of the Port, add enormously to the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants, not merely of the city, but of the densely peopled suburbs.

6. The Governor-General in Council is of opinion that the time has come for the preparation of some general scheme for providing such further facilities as may be possible for the transport of merchandize from various parts of the river frontage within the Port limits to the Custom House, private warehouses, the canal banks and to the Railway Stations, not confined, however, to the central and most populous parts of the city, but embracing the Municipal Railway on the one side, and extending to Kidderpoor and Garden Reach on the other side, it being considered how far the more dis-

tant traffic may be accommodated by adopting the Mutlah Railway as a base from which lines of rail would pass through the southern and south-eastern suburbs, and, although the transport of goods is the chief point to be provided for, without neglecting the interests of the passenger traffic.

7. Any such scheme could no doubt only be carried out gradually, and to admit of useful progress at an early date, economy must be studied to the utmost. Any system of high-level lines should therefore be regarded as out of the question, and no large passenger or goods stations within the town can be thought of. It must be assumed that any lines of tram or street railway must be on the street level to be worked at slow speed, so as to keep the vehicles properly under control. To attain this end, it may be thought desirable on some of the lines to haul by animal power only during the day time, restricting the use of locomotives to the hours of night, or to particular lines where such means of traction may be unobjectionable in the day time. The practicability of carrying out such street Railways has now been established by the experience of many of the largest cities in America and in Europe, and is at length generally recognized in England. No costly buildings or works could be undertaken, and all that should be aimed at would be to give the greatest facilities for internal transport compatible with simple and comparatively inexpensive lines of railway. These, no doubt, will not supply at first all the conveniences which may be wished for, but they will prove of great value and promote economy in many essential operations of the commerce of the Port. With these

remarks the Governor-General in Council invites His Honor's early consideration of these important questions.

8. In conclusion I am to add that it is the desire of the Government of India, that the taking up of such an enquiry, as is indicated in this despatch, should not be permitted to stand in the way of providing, as soon as is practicable, any really necessary conveniences for the Eastern Bengal Railway in connexion with the goods traffic from and to Scaldah. The Governor-General in Council is still disposed to consider that more might be done to utilize the canal as a means of giving access from Scaldah to the Hooghly, and trusts that in any investigation into the requirements of this Railway this matter may receive careful attention.

From Franklin Prestage, Esq. to Government of Bengal, P. W. D., Railway Branch.

Calcutta, 27th May 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your further communication No. 907G, with enclosure, and in compliance with the request conveyed therein to submit a preliminary report on the subject of Railway communication within the City and Port limits.

2. Having regard to the views expressed generally, and more particularly in paras. 6 and 7 of letter No. 531R, from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, P. W. D.; and the conclusions come to at the

various conferences I have had with you on this subject, I am of opinion the intentions of Government will be best carried out, and the interest of the public in general best served, by constructing the various Street Railways or Tramways shown in Red on the accompanying sketch Map, and which I now enumerate in what appears to me their order of importance.

3. No. 1 is a Tramway proposed to be laid from the West Banks of the Circular Canal near the Ballighatta Bridge, down the Ballighatta Road, across the Circular Road, down Boitakhana, Bow-Bazar, Lall Bazar, along the North side of Dalhousie Square, through the Custom House yard, after which it would bifurcate South and North into Tramways proposed to be laid along the Strand Bank. I would propose to call this the Bow-Bazar Tramway, and it would be connected with the Calcutta and Canning "State," and the Eastern Bengal Railways at Scaldah.

4. No. 2 Tramway I would propose should branch out of No. 1 near the point where the latter crosses the Circular Road, and run North along that Road as far as Beadon Street, down which and Nimtollah Street it should be carried and joined to the North Strand Bank Tramway by branches running North and South.—This I would propose to call the Beadon Street Tramway.

5. No. 3, or the Strand Bank Tramway, should I think start from the foot of the North approach to Kid-

derpore Bridge, run along the Road on the North Bank of Tolly's Nullah (to the South of Hastings) on to the Strand by the Commissariat Stores, and be continued by Fort Point and Chandpaul Ghaut, to the Strand Road by the sheds of the new Jetties, and along the River Bank by Champatoolah Ghaut and Daug Bazar to the South approach of Chitpore Bridge. I would propose to call all that portion of this Tramway, running North from the point at which it is joined by the Bow-Bazar Tramway (the Custom House) the North Strand Tramway.—All that portion running South from the Custom House I would call the South Strand Tramway.—From this latter, a branch could be carried into the Fort by the Cooley Bazar Gate.—Branches could also be carried into the Commissariat Godowns.

6. No. 4 Tramway I would propose should be connected with the Bow-Bazar Tramway at the North-East corner of Dalhousie Square, and be laid along Government Place across the Maidan by the Road leading to Park Street, from which point it would be carried along the Chowringhee Road to the end of Circular Road.—This I would call the Bhowanipore Tramway.

7. Tramways could, I think, with great advantage to the public also be constructed in the undermentioned directions, shown in dotted Red on the accompanying Map, but having regard to the opinion expressed in the 7th para: of Government of India's letter No. 531R, wherein it is said "any such scheme could no doubt "only be carried out gradually, and to admit of useful

"progress at an early date, economy must be studied to the utmost." I now simply indicate their proposed direction as making (I hope it will be thought) the scheme more complete.

8. The *First* I would thus allude to is a continuation of the Tramway running North from Scaldah along the Circular Road from Beadon Street to join the North Strand Tramway at the foot of the Chitpore Bridge.—This I would call the North Circular Road Tramway.

Second.—A Tramway running South from Scaldah along the Circular Road and continued by Lower Circular Road to the South end of the Chowringhee Road, where it would form a Junction with the Bhowanipore Tramway, from which it would be continued further down the Lower Circular Road, passing the foot of the North approach to the Alipore Bridge, and be carried on and joined with the South Strand Tramway at the foot of Kidderpore Bridge.—This I would call the South Circular Road Tramway.

Third.—A Tramway branching out of the South Circular Road Tramway at the top of Dhurruntollah Street, running down that Street and Esplanade Row, forming a Junction with the Bhowanipore Tramway at the South end of Government Place.—This I would call the Dhurruntollah Tramway.

Fourth.—A short Branch between the proposed Dhurruntollah Tramway near the Dhurruntollah Market, along Chowringhee until it formed a Junction with the

Bhowanipore Tramway at the foot of Park Street.—This I would call the Bentinck Street Branch.

Fifth.—I would propose a Branch from the Bhowanipore Tramway at the foot of Park Street, along that Street and by Rawdon Street to a Junction with the proposed South Circular Road Tramway at the Ballygunge Road.—This I would call the Ballygunge Tramway.

9. Apart from the foregoing, numerous Branch Tramways would no doubt be forthwith laid down by various Public and Private Establishments, such as lines connecting the Strand Bank Tramways with the various sheds in the Custom House, the Bonded Warehouse, and the principal Merchandise Warehouses in the City.

10. I advocate the construction of the Dow-Bazar Tramway as affording a means of conveying Passengers of all classes from the Canning, and the Eastern Bengal Railways to Dalhousie Square and the River Bank and *vice versa* more expeditiously and at less cost than at present, also to accommodate the heavy local Passenger traffic flowing each way in the direction of this proposed Tramway; by it also great accommodation would be given to the Railways for collecting and distributing Parcels and the higher classes of Goods; it would also afford considerable accommodation to such portion of the heavy traffic as now exists between the Circular Canal Banks to the North and South of Bahaghatta Bridge, and the heart of the City:—but as I shall hereafter

explain I would reserve this Tramway as much as possible for Passenger traffic.

11. The Beadon Street Tramway should I think be constructed mainly for the purpose of giving the Railways extended communication for Goods traffic between Scaldah and the marts and Godowns at and near Haut Kola, also to give access to the whole face of the River Bank; and ultimately I presume by a Bridge over the Hooghly to connect the East India Railway and the Railways on this side. This Tramway would also afford accommodation to the heaviest portion of the heavy traffic before alluded to, as existing between the Canal Banks North and South of the Baliaghatta Bridge on the Circular Canal, and the principal Grain Godowns in the neighbourhood of Haut Kola. Every endeavour should I think be made to restrict to this line the heavy Goods Traffic that will flow from the River Bank and the Northern part of the town in the direction of Scaldah, and *vice versa*.

12. The North and South Strand Tramway, as well as the two first alluded to, should I think be constructed for the purposes prominently pointed out in para: 6 of the Government of India's letter, *viz.* "for the transport of Merchandize from various parts of the River frontage within the Port limits to the Custom House," &c., &c.,—and further as a means of accommodating the heavy Passenger traffic flowing principally to and from the extreme ends of these Tramways, to the busy parts of the City.

13. The Bhowanipore Tramway should I think be constructed mainly with a view to accommodate the very considerable Passenger traffic existing between the heart of the City, and the South-East Suburbs of Calcutta.

14. The five other projected lines, the direction of which has been indicated, but not recommended for immediate construction, would of course afford increased accommodation for Goods and Passengers, and tend very much to benefit the Railways, they would also, I should think, be particularly useful to the Municipality for conveyance purposes.

15. The question of gauge is of such importance that I think I cannot at this early stage do better than submit the following remarks for consideration.

16. There are some reasons why it would be to the advantage of the Railways that the present Indian gauge of 5' 6" should be that of the Street Railways, in so far that it would enable them to circulate their Main line Rolling stock throughout the Main thoroughfares. It may also be thought that as the Municipality has laid down some length of line on a portion of the Circular Road, also of the Indian gauge, it would be to its advantage to continue the same gauge, but for the following reasons I am of opinion that to neither interests would it be so, further than that Rails of this gauge should I think be laid from the Eastern Bengal Railway

Junction with the Beadon Street Tramway, and along that Tramway and the Strand Bank to the extent shewn in blue on the accompanying map.

17. There can I think be no difference of opinion, but that the gauge that will admit of Lines being laid into, or alongside the greatest number of Produce and Merchandize depôts, will give the Railways and all concerned the greatest facilities for the transport of Goods.

18. The gauge that will also admit of the maximum paying load being carried with the minimum of dead weight moved at low speeds, whether Goods or Passengers, will also I think be admitted to be the best. The same conditions apply equally to the transport of Merchandize to and from the River Bank and Merchandize warehouses, and between such establishments as the Custom House, Bonded Warehouse, and the numerous private warehouses, and I presume they would also allow of the Municipality utilizing such lines for conservancy purposes to the utmost, and at the least cost.

19. To comply with these conditions it is, I think, absolutely necessary the gauge should be much narrower than that of the present Railways 5' 6", and the choice I think rests between one of 2' 9" (half the Indian gauge as suggested by you) or one of 3' 6".

20. The first named has many advantages, amongst others economising materials and space in laying in Turnouts, of which a large number will have to be pro-

vided, and in reducing the cost of maintenance, as wherever rails forming the Indian gauge are laid the third rail would be laid midway between them and vehicles of the Indian gauge would of course travel on the two outer rails, and those of the narrow or 2' 9" gauge would travel on one of the outer and the centre rail, and by keeping the up and down traffic on separate outer rails the traffic, and therefore the wear and tear would be as equally as possible distributed over all three rails.

21. With reference to the position of the proposed Tramways, where practicable, and in all wide thoroughfares such as in the Circular Road and along the Strand Bank, they should I think be laid on the side of the Road and as clear of it as is possible and convenient; in narrow thoroughfares like Bow-Bazaar, they should I think be laid in the centre of the Road so as to divide the up and down ordinary wheel traffic.—This latter arrangement works very well in the crowded and narrow thoroughfares of Liverpool.

22. I may observe that in the only crowded and comparatively narrow thoroughfares proposed to be traversed, *viz.*, Lall Bazar and Nintoloh Street: by covering over the offensive side drains, the available foot and ordinary carriage way would be increased to a greater extent than it would be diminished by the Tramways, even assuming that the space occupied by the Tramway was taken from the Road, which of course would not be the case.

23. As to the Power proposed to be employed, as a

rule I think Steam power should be used to the greatest extent possible for working long distances, but in many cases, and in all short journeys it no doubt will be found more convenient to use Horse, or even Hand-power.

24. In forming an opinion of the extent of obstruction to ordinary wheel traffic the working of such a system of Tramways may cause, it should be remembered by relieving the thoroughfares of the present unwieldy and slow Bullock Hackeries, we should remove the greatest existing cause of obstruction.

25. The Government of India having recognized the practicability and necessity of introducing a system of Street Railways, in initiating this project it is perhaps needless for me to observe, as others must have noticed who have seen the construction and working of such Street Railways or Tramways in Europe, that Calcutta from its thoroughfares being practically level in every direction, offers peculiar facilities both for the construction and working of such Railways, and when it is remembered Tramways are worked in Liverpool with advantage to the general Public, and Parliamentary powers have I believe been obtained to lay them in Towns with such contracted and hilly thoroughfares as Birmingham, there should, and will, I am confident, be no difficulty in working them in this City greatly to the advantage of the Public in general, and more particularly to those directly interested in the development of the trade of the Port.

Note by MAJOR F. S. TAYLOR, R. E., Consulting Engineer to the Government of Bengal, Railway Department, on the subject of a proposed system of Street Tramways for Calcutta.

Agreeably to the arrangement sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Prestage's preliminary report on a general scheme of tramway communication within the city of Calcutta and extending to the port limits in connection with the existing Railways, prepared under instructions from the Governor-General in Council conveyed in Public Works Department Secretary's letter No. 531R, dated 29th March 1870, is herewith submitted for orders.

The proposed system of tramways embraces both goods and passenger traffic, and is designed to distribute the former from a Railway Depot at Sealdah direct into all the large public and private warehouses in the vicinity of the Strand; and to carry the latter from each of the principal suburbs, along the main thoroughfares, into the heart of the city. When communication with Howrah is established by a bridge over the river Hooghly, the proposed system will equally serve the East Indian Railway.

To carry out a scheme so comprehensive in a city so irregularly built as Calcutta, it is obviously essential that the tramway should be designed to traverse the sharpest possible curves, and that the obstruction to the ordinary street traffic should be reduced to a minimum.—It is, in fact, impossible to use ordinary

railway goods wagons on account of their size and weight.—A break of bulk for both passengers and goods being thus inevitable, if a measure of any general utility is to be attempted, I have decided to recommend the adoption of the narrowest possible gauge, and in consultation with Mr. Prestage have fixed on 2 feet 9 inches, or one-half the standard railway gauge, as the most suitable for the purpose in view; while to meet special railway requirements it is proposed to lay a third rail on the main goods tramway, so that railway wagons as well as the new tramway rolling-stock may be moved along it, when necessary, in order to place the Eastern Bengal and Calcutta and South-Eastern Railways in direct communication with the river. It found feasible this arrangement can be extended over the Hooghly bridge, and a through communication with the East Indian Railway also effected.

As the letter of instructions under which I am acting contemplates the incorporation of the Calcutta and South-Eastern State Railway and the Municipal Railway into the tramway system, it will be necessary to consider whether any extension of these two lines is practicable, and then compare the alternative schemes.

After careful consideration the only feasible system of extension that suggests itself to me is that of a continuous line on the 5½ feet gauge round the Circular Road and Strand worked by steam power. By such a circuitous route considerable speed would be necessary if the line is to compete with the direct roads for passen-

ger traffic, and the disadvantages such a line must labour under, to say nothing of the expense of construction, maintenance, and working, are obvious. Where the bulk of the people are so supine, the working of such a railway would be attended with great danger to life (as indeed is found on the present municipal line, which can be only imperfectly utilised in consequence); the rails could not be laid flush with the road surface, so that level crossings to each cross road and house gate would be necessary; stations and sidings at frequent intervals would be indispensable; and cartage to and from the warehouses (more or less) would still be a necessary element, tending to block the most crowded thoroughfares worse than ever.

On the other hand, the system of tramways, worked by horse or manual power, advocated by Mr. Prestage and myself, is on a far more comprehensive scale.

To accommodate the passenger traffic, five distinct lines of omnibuses, lettered respectively A, B, C, D, E, would ply steadily in and out along the roads indicated in the accompanying plan from the Central Depot in the heart of the city to terminal depôts corresponding with each of the suburbs.

To accommodate the goods traffic, the main tramway would start from the Railway Depot at Scudder's and bifurcate along the Strand; while from this main line public or private branches in any number could be run into general depôts or private warehouses.

As the first cost and also the maintenance of these light tramways would be exceedingly moderate, the rates and fares by public conveyances would be proportionally low, and may be taken at a maximum of 1 anna per passenger per trip, or $\frac{1}{4}$ anna per mautnd per trip; while it would also be optional for any merchant to put his own stock on the line and run his goods direct from the railway into his warehouse.

As respects construction, I am inclined to recommend that Government should undertake to lay the main lines and maintain them, charging a mileage rate on all vehicles. The form of rail should doubtless be that recently adopted by the London Tramway Companies, but instead of timber sleepers I should prefer the iron sub-way invented by Mr. G. Sibley, Chief Engineer of the East Indian Railway; the cost could hardly exceed £2,000 per mile, which, for 22 miles of tramway, amounts to £44,000.

For working the tramways, I should propose to rely wholly on private enterprise, as this system is found to answer well in France, and would save many complications. The general control, supervision, and maintenance of the tramways might be vested in the Consulting Engineer's Department, and the Municipal authorities would regulate the traffic and remunerate themselves by a license tax on vehicles. As it may at first sight appear impracticable on a single line to regulate the movement of a number of vehicles working independently, it will be as well to point out that I have purposely

kept each passenger line distinct, instead of adopting the system sketched out by Mr. Prestage in its integrity in order that a separate Company may be organised for each, while on the goods line the three rails will admit of a turn-out (as described by Mr. Prestage) at every 50 yards, where the goods lorries can cross.

The 2 feet 9 inches gauge will admit of a passenger omnibus, 25 feet long by 6 feet wide, to accommodate say 6 first class and 20 second class passengers, and the goods lorries, which should, I think, be also run singly or in pairs, but not in longer trains, may have a floor area of about 7 feet \times 5 feet, to carry say 2 tons both passenger and goods vehicles being fitted with radial axles on the latest improved principles, to enable them to traverse the curves.

The fact that the city of Calcutta is practically level, and therefore offers unusual facilities for the construction of tramways, is strongly urged by Mr. Prestage, and there can, I submit, be little doubt that such a system as is here recommended would relieve the road traffic enormously, and may even be expected, in the more crowded thoroughfares, to induce order out of chaos, besides offering immense facilities to commerce.

F. S. TAYLOR, Major, R. E.

The 29th May 1870.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Government of
Bengal, P. W. Dept., Railway Branch.*

Calcutta, 10th June 1870.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1160 of the 2nd instant, with its enclosures, in which you convey the Lieutenant-Governor's invitation for an expression of their opinion on the subject of a proposed system of Street Tramways for the town of Calcutta.

The Committee have attentively considered the general scheme submitted by Mr. Franklin Prestage to the Government of Bengal, and are of opinion that it is well designed to provide materially improved means for facilitating the transport of merchandise and passengers to and from various points of the city and suburbs, thereby greatly promoting the conveniences and comfort of the public, and conferring very appreciable advantages on the commercial operations of the port.

The proposed lines of Tramway appear to have been suggested with a due regard to the traffic to and from the points indicated in the plan—that is to say, from Balliaghatta Bridge and Scaldah in a direct line to the river bank near the Custom House, branching off North and South to Chitpore, Hastings, and Kidderpore Bridges, and connecting the Circular Road with the Strand Bank and Dalhousie Square with the top of Chowringhee Road.

As main lines these are well designed, but it appears

to the Committee that the large space between Bow-Bazar and Beaden Streets—a thickly populated part of the town—should be divided by a line running east and west, midway and parallel, say down Melchoua Bazar Street, so as to connect it with the river bank, and intersected—north and south—by a line up College and Cornwallis Streets from Bow-Bazar to the Circular Road.

The Committee consider the College Street line of so much importance that if both cannot be at once undertaken, they would prefer this to the one from Baboo's Ghat to Hastings, and even to the one running up Chowringhee Road.

By this means the system of Tramways would have the advantage of tapping the considerable traffic that travels in those directions, and at the same time confer a great boon on the large population of that division of the town.

P. S.—I forward a map upon which the lines proposed by the Committee are shown.

**Enfacement of Government Promissory Notes for
payment of interest in London subject to
deduction of Indian Income Tax.**

The "Gazette of India" of 28th May last contained the following Notification:—

Notice is hereby given that henceforth all Pro-

missory Notes of the Government of India which shall be enforced for payment of the interest thereon in London by drafts on India will be enforced subject to the condition that the amount of any duties which may at any time be chargeable in India in respect of such interest shall be deducted therefrom at the place where payment is made by a draft on India, or otherwise, and a draft given for the balance only.

The Committee regarded this Resolution of the Government of India as one that would be attended with serious drawbacks and materially interfere with that freedom of operations in Government Securities which it was the main object of the enforcement system to encourage; and they promptly addressed the Financial Department on the subject, urging the re-consideration of a question which not only effected the interests of the holders of such securities but also touched the credit of the State, or at least the value of its securities in the market.

It will be seen from the correspondence that the notification was not intended to have the meaning attributed to it by the Committee and which it certainly seemed to wear, but was merely to ensure that in the event of any new provision being at any future time introduced as regards

the levy of tax on dividends payable by the State enforced paper should occupy the same position as other securities.

From Chamber of Commerce to Government of India, Financial Department.

Calcutta, 10th June 1870.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have observed with much surprise and regret the resolution of the Governor-General in Council, published in the *Gazette of India* of 28th ultimo, whereby all promissory notes of the Government of India, which shall be enforced for payment of interest in London, shall be so enforced, subject to the deduction of any duties chargeable in India in respect of such interest;—or in other words, that such interest shall be liable to the Indian income tax.

The Committee respectfully submit, for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, that in their judgment, the resolution will be attended with serious drawbacks and materially interfere with that freedom of operations in Government Securities which it was the main object of the enforcement system to encourage.

The holders of Government Securities, who are in the habit of availing themselves of this system, may be roughly divided into two classes, *viz.*, those who purchase Government Securities as a permanent investment, and to whom it is a matter of much convenience to draw their

interest in England, and those who purchase merely as a medium of remittance.

In regard to the first of these classes, the Committee would remark that, by the resolution under review, they are placed, as regards receipt of their interest, on terms of invidious distinction from the holders of stock in this country. Formerly, the amount of existing income tax was deducted from *all* Government dividends at time of payment. The Committee are not aware of the reasons which led to the change of practice in this respect; but had they been given an opportunity of expressing an opinion, it would have been in favor of the continuance of the previous system, which affected all alike, and enabled Government to levy this tax with accuracy on, at least, a portion of the income of some of the richer classes of this country, whose proper assessment is matter of notorious difficulty. However, the change having been made, the Committee submit that it should be universal in its application; and that any small loss which Government may incur by paying that portion of the dividends receivable in England free of deduction, is far more than counterbalanced by the larger number of investors, who are, by the system of enforcement, attracted to its securities, and its credit thereby materially strengthened.

In reference to the second class, *viz.*, those who purchase Government Securities as a mere means of remittance, the Committee would remind His Excellency in Council that these operations are entirely governed by the prevailing rate of exchange; and they do not hesitate to say that to them may, in no small degree, be

ascribed the high price at which Indian Government stocks have ruled during the last few years, for the greater portion of which remitting rates of exchange have been highly unfavorable.

The Committee would venture to remind His Excellency in Council of the extremely narrow margin on which, owing to competition, exchange operations are now conducted, and would respectfully urge that a measure which tends in any degree, however slight, to turn the scale of calculation against Government Securities, as compared with the ordinary channels of remittance, is simply shutting the door in certain states of the market against many would-be purchasers.

The Government of India has recently announced the satisfactory condition of its credit by pointing to the high values of Government stocks of all denominations, and it would be a matter of much concern to the Chamber of Commerce to find that condition impaired by circumstances militating against the unfettered circulation of securities which have, for some years past, formed a large and important element in the trade operations of this country. Caution in this respect seems doubly necessary, in view of the loans which Government contemplate in the future for State Railways and other purposes, and for which English capital will doubtless be largely called upon.

The Committee notice that the resolution was arrived at after the submission of despatches on the subject to, and from, Her Majesty's Secretary of State, and if those

communications had been simultaneously published, the ground on which the resolution was based would have been understood; but in the absence of the reasons which have influenced the Governor-General in Council and the Secretary of State to the measure in question, the Committee have not the opportunity of appreciating the recommendations of His Excellency or their confirmation by His Grace.

With the information at present before them, the Committee feel it their duty respectfully to urge upon His Excellency in Council a re-consideration of this question.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Simla, 24th June 1870.

In reply to your address, dated 10th June, I am directed by the Governor-General in Council to inform you that the Chamber of Commerce have misapprehended the purport and effect of the Notification, dated the 28th May, by which it is announced that the promissory notes of the Government of India, which shall henceforth be encased for payment of the interest in London by drafts upon India, shall be so encased, subject to the condition that any duties which may be chargeable in India in respect of the interest on Government Promissory Notes, shall be deducted from the amount of interest on such encased notes at the place whence drafts are issued, and drafts given for the balance only.

The existing law does not provide for the levy of

income tax on the interest paid to the holders of Government Promissory Notes, in the manner prescribed by the rules contained in Section 99, Act XXXII of 1860. The tax is levied for income of this character exactly in the same way as it is levied from any other income taxable under Part 4, Act XVI of 1870.

So long as the law remains unchanged, the Notification which has attracted the attention of the Chamber must be inoperative, and the interest, paid by drafts on India delivered in England, must escape income tax altogether.

And the Government are advised that even in case the law be at any future time amended, and the exact procedure of Act XXXII of 1860 be reverted to, as advocated by the Chamber of Commerce, it would be impracticable to levy the duty from the interest paid upon any encased promissory notes, of which the encasement does not contain the condition prescribed by the Notification of the 28th May. The interest upon such notes would, in that case, escape the duty to which interest payable on the other notes would be subject.

The Chamber will, no doubt, agree with His Excellency the Governor-General in Council in thinking that it is only equitable to provide against such an exemption of a portion of the interest on the public debt from any burden which may be imposed upon the rest of that interest.

It will thus be seen that the object of the Notifica-

tion, to which the Chamber of Commerce have in your letter taken exception, is not to impose any exceptional duty upon the interest affected by it, but to provide against the exemption of that interest from any duty which the Legislature may hereafter impose upon the interest on the public debt generally.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Government of
India, Financial Department.*

Calcutta, 29th June 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 1542 of 24th instant, replying to my communication of 10th idem, and stating that the Committee of this Chamber have misapprehended the purport of the Notification which formed the subject of that communication.

For the explanation given in your favor under reply I am directed to thank you; and the Committee observe with pleasure that, read in the light of this explanation, the Notification in question, as to enforced Government Securities, does not involve that immediate operation which they were originally led to suppose would follow its publication.

The Committee, however, believe that the misapprehension into which they have fallen as to the real scope of the Notification of the 28th May, has been shared in by the public generally; and with all deference, they would submit the extreme importance of having all Government Notifications, and especially such as relate to subject

matter so extensive and sensitive as the public securities, couched in terms the most plain, and incapable of being misunderstood.

Many holders of these securities are probably in ignorance of the fact that special legislation is necessary to enable Government to adopt the elsewhere usual custom of deducting income tax at time of payment of dividend, but are rather under the idea that this is a matter of detail, enforceable by a mere order of the executive; to such, the Notification of 28th May would, therefore, not unnaturally appear simply a measure for levying the income tax on such dividends as might be transferred to the home register, and which would otherwise escape.

It must be borne in mind that many, who have been made aware of the original Notification, will not have an opportunity of seeing the full explanation thereof, with which His Excellency the Governor-General in Council has been pleased to favor the Committee.

The Committee feel some difficulty in reconciling the position laid down in paragraph 4 of your communication now under acknowledgment with the two immediately following. These latter state the object of the late Notification to be a provision against the exemption of any one portion of the interest on the public debt from any burden or duty which the Legislature may hereafter impose upon the interest on the public debt generally; but paragraph 4 mentions Government have been advised that, even should the law hereafter be altered so as to

give Government the power to deduct duties on dividends at time of payment, "it would be impracticable to levy the duty from the interest paid upon any enfaced promissory notes of which the enfacement does not contain the condition prescribed by the Notification of the 28th May." As a matter of fact, a very large mass of notes not bearing this condition, representing upwards of 15 millions sterling, are now held in England, and it therefore apparently follows that, in the event of the law being hereafter altered as above, there would exist two classes of enfaced paper—one subject to its operation, the other not. Such a conclusion seems to the Committee in direct opposition to the views of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, as represented in paragraphs 5 and 6 of your communication now replied to.

Registration of Government Currency Notes.

On receipt of a representation made to the Chamber that in consequence of orders issued by the Board of Revenue, the Collector of Calcutta was prohibited from keeping a register of currency notes passing through his office, and that the want of such a record baffled all endeavours to trace such notes to the parties by whom they were paid into the Collectorate, the Committee addressed the Head Commissioner of Paper Currency on the subject. They pointed out that although the usual practice was observed of having missing notes *stopped* at the Currency Office and of notice

being given to that department by the Bank of Bengal that such notes had been received in course of business from the Collector, the ulterior tracing of the notes was completely barred, and the fraudulent passing of property effectually accomplished without the slightest chance of its detection, since the Collector kept no register of notes presented at his office. It appeared to the Committee that with such a temptation and facility for the disposal of lost or stolen notes, the Collector's Office afforded encouraging opportunities for undiscoverable theft, and that measures should be promptly taken to put an effectual stop to the fraudulent practice hitherto carried on with success and impunity. The Committee were of opinion that although currency notes should possess the power and value of unrestrained circulation the public should receive reasonable accommodation and protection in return for the privilege exercised by Government; and on that ground and with the view to assist owners of lost or stolen notes to trace and recover their property, they recommended that the Collector should be authorised to keep a register of all notes received by him.

The Committee's letter has been forwarded by the Currency Department to the Board of Revenue

**Telegraph Station between Calcutta and
Acheepore.**

The Committee have to announce the unfavorable decision arrived at by the Government of India regarding the construction and maintenance of the additional telegraph station referred to in former reports. That decision was conveyed in the following Resolution; and the Committee's acknowledgment closes a correspondence which they regret has thus terminated in disappointment.

On 10th March 1870 the Governor-General in Council authorized, on the understanding that funds could be provided, the purchase of a house at Garden Reach Point for the purpose of a telegraph office between Acheepore and Calcutta; also the construction of a telegraph line to make the necessary connection with existing lines at a cost of Rs. 1,800, and an establishment at a cost of Rs. 180 per annum.

2. The cost of maintenance of the line was estimated at Rs. 475 per annum, which, with the establishment, would make the annual charge Rs. 2,635.

3. It was proposed at the time that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce should guarantee the difference between this last mentioned sum and the aggregate receipts, should they fall short of it; and further, that should the Chamber not agree to this, the subject of a special tariff should be considered.

4. The Chamber of Commerce declined to give the guarantee, and the Director-General of Telegraphs has reported that it would be impossible to frame a special tariff which would secure Government against loss.

5. On a further consideration of the subject, the Governor-General in Council is forced to the conclusion that, under the circumstances above stated, the Government of India would not be justified in undertaking a project which would certainly entail a very considerable loss upon the State.

From Chamber of Commerce to Government of India.

Calcutta, 15th September 1870.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have received from the Government of Bengal a copy of the Resolution passed by the Governor-General in Council relative to the proposed Telegraph Office at Garden Reach Point: and they desire me to express the regret and disappointment with which they learn that their application for the establishment of that additional station—the maintenance of which would not exceed 230 Rupees a month, subject however to reduction by probable receipts—has been rejected by His Excellency as involving a project which would entail a very considerable loss upon the State.

Overland Mail Service between India and Great Britain via Brindisi.

In continuation of the correspondence between

the Chamber and the Postal Department of India regarding the alteration of the dates of departure of overland mail steamers from Bombay and the transmission of the mails *via* Brindisi, the Committee subjoin communications from the Director General of the Post Office and their reply thereto.

If the arrangements proposed by the Director General are adopted by Her Majesty's Government the mails from Calcutta will for the future be closed on *Tuesday evenings* during the monsoon season, and on *Friday evenings* for the rest of the year; but it will be the duty of the Chamber to protest against any plan which may involve the closing of the Calcutta mails on Sundays.

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

Simla, 4th October 1870.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of the Chamber, copy of a letter* recently addressed by me to the Secretary, General Post Office, London, regarding the alteration of the dates of departure of the steamers from Bombay in connection with the general revision of the mail service resulting from the contemplated adoption of the Brindisi route. It is only by some such al-

* No. 2950, dated 20th September 1870.

teration of dates that this department can take advantage of the recent offer of the Peninsular and Oriental Company to reduce the monsoon allowance from four to three days for, if the existing dates be maintained, the Calcutta mail would thereby be thrown on a Sunday afternoon during the monsoon season.

*From Director General of the Post Office of India
to the Secretary, General Post Office, London.*

Simla, 20th September 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 430V, dated 11th August last, relative to inexpediency of at present disturbing existing arrangements in connection with the homeward mail service, as the entire mail service will probably be carried via Brindisi in the summer of next year.

2. I trust that when the new arrangement is made due consideration will be shown to the convenience of this country as respects the days and hour of departure from Bombay. In para. 5 of my letter of the 26th April, No. 323, I stated that there was a prospect of being able to arrange for the arrival of the principal mail trains at Bombay at an hour admitting of an afternoon departure of the steamer, and that in that case the former arrangement of an afternoon departure would be reverted to. This has quite recently been arranged with effect from the 1st November or thereabouts, and the Superintendent of the P. & O. Company will be informed that the mail steamers leaving Bombay subsequent to that

date should leave on Saturday afternoon at 5½ p. m. It has been found impossible to arrange for a departure of the steamer earlier than 5½ p. m., and this should, accordingly, be the hour provided for in the new table.

3. I further explained to you in my previous letter above quoted that the present days of departure from Bombay are extremely inconvenient, and I hope that in the new arrangements it will be found possible to alter them by a postponement of two days. The dates of departure from the three Presidency towns of India will then stand as follows:—

	Monsoon.	Rest of the year.
Steamer leaves Bombay,	Friday 5½ p. m.	Monday 5½ p. m.
Mails closed at Calcutta,	Tuesday evening.	Friday evening.
Mails closed at Madras,	Tuesday morning.	Friday morning.
When Railway communication is complete,	Wednesday evening,	Saturday evening.

In the above it has been assumed that the reduction of monsoon allowance from four to three days already conceded by the P. & O. Company will form part of the new arrangements.

4. I shall be glad to hear as soon as convenient whether these days of departure from Bombay can be adopted: and if it be found impossible to do so, I would beg particularly that no final arrangement be made without previous reference to this office.

5. In drawing out the Time Table for 1871, prior to the introduction of the new arrangements, it should be borne in mind that the reduction of monsoon allowance

conceded by the P. & O. Company cannot be availed of until the dates of departure are altered as above proposed, because it would throw the Calcutta mail-day during the monsoon on a Sunday.

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

Calcutta, 21st October 1870.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, No. 3182, of the 4th instant, giving cover to copy of your letter to the Secretary, General Post Office, London, relative to the mail service between India and Great Britain via Brindisi.

The Committee of the Chamber desire me to thank you for these communications, the substance of which has been duly considered; and they trust that in any plan that may be adopted by Her Majesty's Government for the transmission of the Indian mails, your recommendation as to the dates of departure from Bombay will be practically recognised.

I am further directed to request you will do this Chamber the favor of communicating at the earliest opportunity the result of your reference to London.

Postal Cards.

The Committee had a reference made to them by the Director General of the Post Office as to the advisability of introducing into this country

these cards which have for some time been in use on the Continent, and have more recently been tried in England. Doubtless, these cards would form a cheap and convenient channel for advertisements and other communications, but as the Director General stated that Government were not prepared to give up any postal revenue, and that any loss accruing by the transmission of the cards at a low rate must be recouped by raising the rate of postage on ordinary correspondence, the Committee came to the conclusion that under such circumstances their introduction would not be desired by the mercantile community.

Members.

Messrs. Tamvaco and Co. and Messrs. Ashburner and Co. have been admitted, by the Committee, as Members of the Chamber, subject to the usual confirmation.

Mr. J. P. Schneider has retired from the Chamber on final departure for Europe.

Funds of the Chamber.

The Half-yearly balance of the Funds of the Chamber amounts to Rs. 880-9-1 exclusive of the Reserve of Rs. 12,000 in 4 per cent Government Securities.

J. R. BULLEN SMITH,
President.

APPENDIX.

FUNDS OF THE CHAMBER.
Statement of the Funds of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, from
1st May to 31st October 1870.

	Rs.		
To Office Rent	560 0 0	By Balance of 30th April 1870. Rs. 338 14 3	
" Establishments	7,523 0 6	" Government Paper	12,000 0 0
" Charges General	3,674 14 2	" Subscriptions	5,030 0 0
	13,457 14 2	" Receipts in Public Currency	4,713 5 0
" Balance in hand	880 9 1	" Banknotes for 6 months	290 0 0
" Government Paper	12,000 0 0	" 4 per cent. Govt. Paper for	0 0 0
	12,880 9 1	" Sundry	0 0 0
		13,979 9 0	

CALCUTTA,
 31st October 1870.

Rupees 56,318 7 3

E. E.

H. W. L. WOOD,
 Secretary.

Rupees 23,318 7 3

SCHEDULE OF COMMISSION CHARGES,

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

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 "

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 *del-credere* 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 commitments 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 Agent's 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, Captain, or charterers of a vessel upon the gross amount of freight, brokerage inclusive 5 "
18. On engaging Asiatic Emigrants for a ship to the Mauritius, the West Indies, or elsewhere, upon the gross amount of earnings .. 5 "
19. On engaging troops for a ship to Great Britain or elsewhere, on the gross amount of passage money for rank and file ... 2½ "
20. On realising inward freight, inward troop, 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 ... ½ per cent.
23. On settling Insurance claims, losses, and averages of all classes, and on procuring returns of premium ... 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 Dotmory 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 "

☞ Brokerage when paid is to be separately charged.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic Feet per Ton.
Rum, in Casks	2	hhectons or 4 hhd.
Sailflower, in Bls. p. Ten of 5 Bls. not exd. g.	50	gross.
Sago, in Cases	20	gross.
Sai-anouia, in Bags	20	gross.
Boxes	20	gross.
Saltetre	20	gross.
Salt	20	gross.
Sapan Wood for Dammage	20	gross.
Sealing Wax, in Cases	50	gross.
Seed-lac, in Cases	16	gross.
Bags	20	gross.
Senna	20	gross.
Shells, Rough, in Bags	50	gross.
Shell-lac, in Cases	10	gross.
Bags	14	gross.
Silk Piece Goods	50	gross.
Skirt	15	gross.
Soap, Country, in Cases	20	gross.
Bags	20	gross.
Bar	50	gross.
Stick Lac, in Cases	16	gross.
Bags	20	gross.
Sugar	20	gross.
Tallow, in Cases or Casks	20	gross.
Talc	20	gross.
Tamarinds, in Cases or Casks	20	gross.
Tea	50	gross.
Tea	20	gross.
Teel Seed	40	gross.
Timber, Round	50	gross.
Squared	16	gross.
Tobacco, in Bales	20	gross.
Tortoise Shells, in Chests	16	gross.
Turmeric	20	gross.
Wheat	50	gross.
Wool	50	gross.

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

H. W. I. WOOD,
Secretary.

CALCUTTA,
18th March 1868.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Agelasto and Sagrandi.	Lovell, H. P., <i>Supdt.</i> , P. & O. Stearn
Ajmer and Co.	<i>Navigation Company.</i>
Anstretcher and Co.	Lyall, Reunie and Co.
Argenti, Schilzi and Co.	Macalister, R., <i>Agent, Tuder Company.</i>
Atkinson, Wilson and Co.	Macdougall, Stewart and Co.
Atkinson, John and Co.	Macdonald, Mackenzie and Co.
Ashburner and Co.	Mackenzie, Lyall and Co.
Anderson, D., <i>Manager, National Bank</i>	Macknight, Anderson and Co.
<i>of India.</i>	Moran, W. and Co.
Balmey, Lawrie and Co.	Munockpo Rustonjee.
Bankay and Co.	Pearce, Macrae and Co.
Bege, Dunlop and Co.	Playfair, Duncan and Co.
Blackie, G. M.	Prescodine Brothers.
Borradaile, Schiller and Co.	Peel, Ross and Co.
Bushki, E. G.	Prestage, F., <i>Agent of the Eastern</i>
Canny, Lamoureux and Co.	<i>Tripoli Railway Company.</i>
Carstairs Nephews and Co.	Pravalkissen Law and Co.
Colm, Fellmann and Co.	Preston, Alfred.
Cobrin, Corrie and Co.	Raili Brothers.
Crooks, Rome and Co.	Ralli and Mavorajani.
Crosby, F., <i>Manager, Consignor</i>	Ram Gopal Ghose and Co.
<i>of Economie de Paris.</i>	Robert and Charifol.
Cochrane, S., <i>Manager, Agra Bank,</i>	Reid, J. M., <i>Agent, Chartered Mercan-</i>
<i>Limited.</i>	<i>tile Bank of India, London, and</i>
Cameron, E., <i>Agent, Hong-Kong &</i>	<i>China.</i>
<i>Shanghai Banking Corporation.</i>	Rentiers and Co.
DeSouza, Tios, and Co.	Robinson, S. H.
Darschmidt, Grieb and Co.	Robinson, H. M., <i>Managing Director of</i>
Dwarkanath Dutt and Co.	<i>the Bengal Coal Company.</i>
Idle and Howson.	Ross and Co.
Einsthausen and Osterley.	Schilzi and Co.
Ewing and Co.	Schlesinger, Putz and Co.
Elliott, John and Co.	Schroder, Smith and Co.
Ezer, E. D. J.	Schroder, Smith and Co.
Ferguson, J. H. and Co.	Schroder, Kilburna and Co.
Findlay, Hoyes and Co.	Shand, Fathle and Co.
Fonseca and Hans.	Shaw, Jamieson and Co.
Freck, D., and Co.	Smith, D. A. and Co.
Gibbans and Co.	Smith, Samuel, Sons and Co.
Graf and Banziger.	<i>Shipping and Co., Oriental</i>
Graham and Co.	<i>Bank Corporation.</i>
Grainley and Co.	Thomas, J. and Co.
Gubbay, Elias S.	Turner, Morrison and Co.
Hajee Jackarfaik Mahomed and Co.	Toulmin, L. W. and Co.
Henderson and Co.	Townsend and Co.
Henderson, George and Co.	Ullmann, Harselhan and Co.
Hoare, Miller and Co.	Wattenbach, Heilgers and Co.
Hunter and Co.	Wentzell Brothers.
Jardine, Skinner and Co.	Whyte, G. A., <i>Agent, Chartered Bank</i>
Kendrew, Bailon and Co.	<i>of India, Australia and China.</i>
Kelly and Co.	Whitney Brothers and Co.
Kea, Dods and Co.	Williamson Brothers and Co.
Knowles, H., <i>Agent, Banco Company.</i>	Wiseman, Mitchell, Reid and Co.
Lalapa, E. L., and Co.	Watson, Green and Hart.
	Wolfe, Wilmas and Co.
	Yule, Andrew and Co.

MEMBERS.

Becher, Wm.—*Company, Assam.* | Howard Brothers—*Mirapore.*
Hamilton, Brown and Co.—*Mirapore.* | Todd, Findlay and Co.—*Bombay.*

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Revised and adopted at a Special General Meeting
held on Tuesday, the 10th July, 1866.*

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

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

mittee shall be determined by a majority of votes of members, such votes being given in voting cards to be issued by the Secretary,—numbered and bearing his signature ; and no voting card shall be received for such purpose unless so authenticated : and all vacancies created by the absence of the President, Vice-President, or any of the members of the Committee 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.

Ninth... That parties holding powers of procurator 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.

