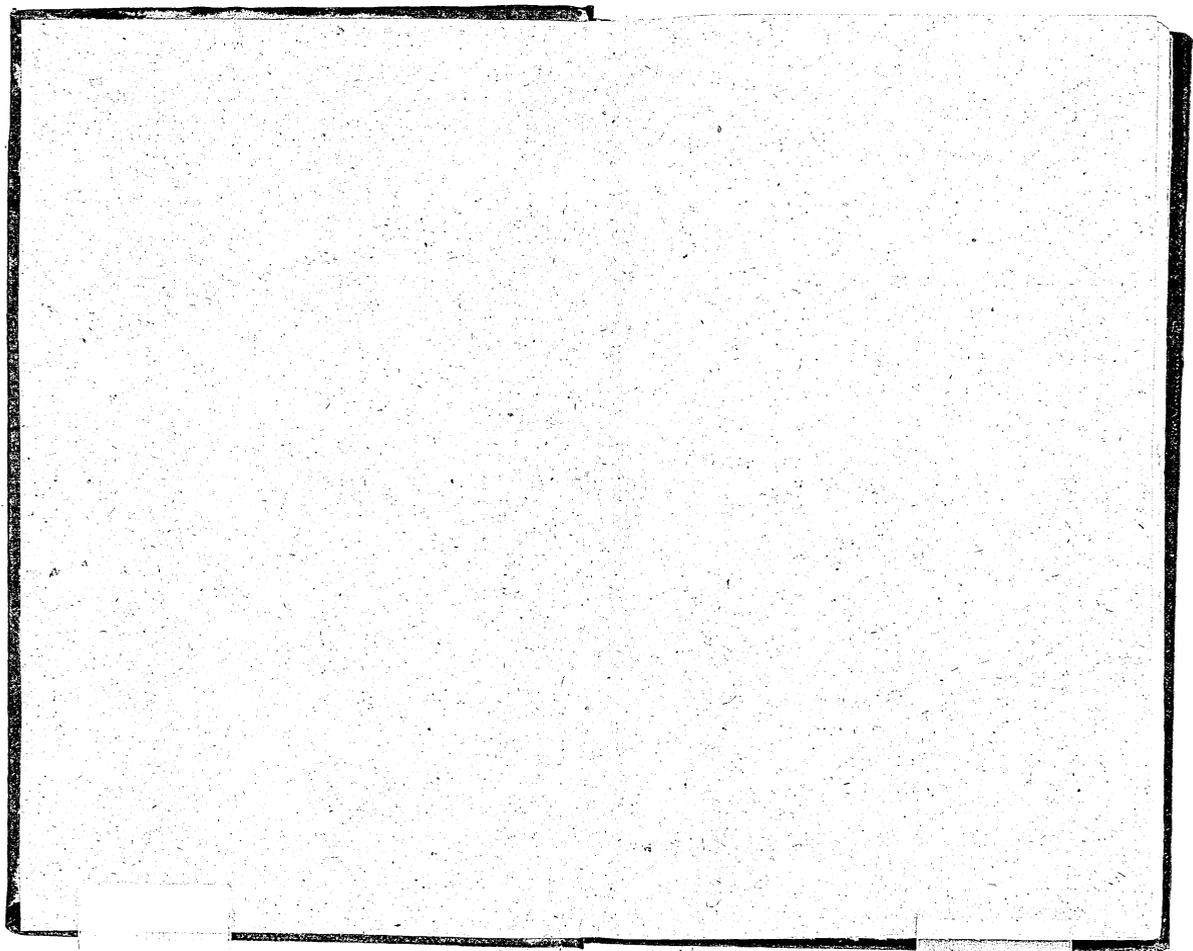
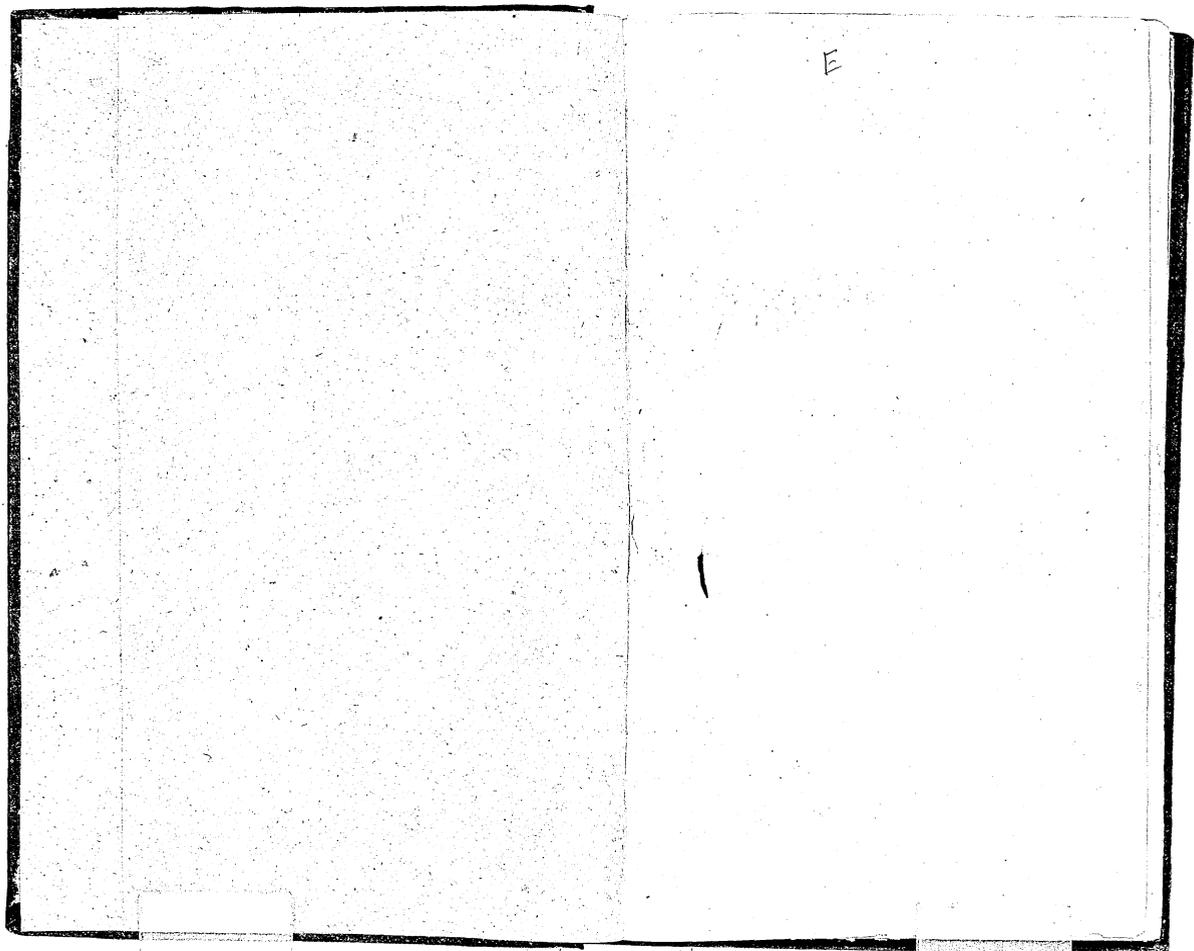


REPORT  
OF THE  
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 1872.





REPORT

OF

THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

---

From 1st May to 31st October 1872.

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Calcutta:

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1872.

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*Proceedings of the Half-yearly General Meeting of  
the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on Wed-  
nesday, the 4th December 1872.*

Mr. J. C. Murray, *President*, in the Chair.

The Chairman addressed the meeting as follows :—The question of *bills of lading via the Suez Canal* is the first topic in the report. This, as well as the proceedings of the special general meetings on the *tonnage schedule*, have been incorporated in the report to keep them on record, and they require no special comment.

While the report was going through the press, the English papers have given us the result of the action brought by the Messageries Maritimes against the Suez Canal. The verdict was strongly in favour of the plaintiff, and I suppose, therefore, the original tariff will be now reverted to. The Messageries receive, under the judgment referred to, the extra dues paid by them, but whether this retrospective effect will be allowed in all other cases I cannot yet say. The judgment is

given in full for the information of members interested in Canal steamers.

#### PILOT SERVICE.

I sat on this Committee, and till the report is considered by Government and published in the *Gazette*, it would perhaps be premature to do more than simply allude to it. The Committee have recommended a large reduction in the numbers of the service, leaving the mode of reduction to be decided on by Government.

On the second point, the Committee were unanimous in their opinion that, in order to secure first-class men, no reduction should be made in the emoluments of the service. The figures of receipts and disbursements put before us by the Master Attendant showed a deficit on both accounts of pilotage and approaches to the port, and it appeared to me that a scrutiny of these figures might show us the means of economising the funds, perhaps wipe out the deficit, bring the balance on the right side, and enable the Government, at no very distant period, to reduce some of this very heavy charge on the shipping of the port. It was decided by the other members of the Committee that such scrutiny was

not permitted to us under our instructions. The report was, therefore, signed by me, with an explanatory note that I should, on the part of the Chamber, apply for full accounts in detail for the purpose of the thorough analysis which was denied me on the Committee. This has been done, and the accounts have been put before us within the last few days, together with a supplementary account, which we did not then see. The figures in this supplementary account and the previous one differ very materially, the pilotage proper showing a considerable surplus instead of a deficit. A large portion of this is due to the sums charged to Government for the use of steamers and stores in the Lushai expedition, but this will not explain the difference sufficiently, and it proves also how necessary the scrutiny is. Your Committee are now engaged in looking into these accounts, and we may, perhaps, ask the assistance of such members as are conversant with dockyards and steamers to ascertain the rates of charges and expenditure. Such assistance, I feel sure, will be readily granted.

#### INDIAN SHIPPING BILLS.

Several alterations have been suggested by

your Committee, as members will find on reference to the report.

Your Committee have been asked by Government for an expression of their opinion, on a reference from Bombay, as to the advisability of allowing a certificate of survey from the Board of Trade or a local Government to pass free of extra survey during the term of its currency. The Government, your Committee felt, were bound to guard the large passenger and goods traffic entrusted to steamers, and they did not think this very necessary precaution should be withdrawn, but they have pointed out that, under ordinary circumstances, the rigid enforcement might be relaxed without in any way weakening the hands of the executive.

*Compulsory examination and certification of engineers.* This is the rule in England, and, though the Committee believe the *practice* here is to call for such certificate, they think this necessary protection to traffic should be made compulsory.

Another alteration proposed has been the enlargement of the number of members of Courts of Enquiry, and that such enquiries should be only preliminary, the proceedings being submit-

ted to a fuller and more competent tribunal at a presidency town. This suggestion has been favorably received by Government. This necessity of increasing the efficacy of Courts of Enquiry has lately become more than ever apparent. The Court assembled at Madras suspended the certificates of some masters whose vessels were lost in the cyclone there; their judgment has been reversed by the Board of Trade, and the certificates restored.

A fourth alteration, intimately connected with the above, is the request from Government to be allowed the power of recalling a colliding ship to Calcutta in case of accident, unless she leaves behind her the principal witnesses, thereby subjecting her, in addition to the dangers attendant on her return, to the expense of detention till the full investigation of the case. You will find in the reply of the Committee that they have not seen it at all necessary to give the executive in this country powers they do not possess at home. That the Government has not only the right, but is bound to institute, a searching enquiry into all cases of serious collision, was fully recognised by your Committee, and the plan they have proposed will, they hope, give the Government

every help in such enquiry at the least possible inconvenience to the ship. The question is a difficult one, as in the case of a ship's officers being to blame, it might be necessary to bring them up to Calcutta to be tried before the tribunal abovementioned. The Committee were, however, of opinion that, as the pilot is the responsible officer on board, the investigation would be virtually into his conduct, and that the removal of any of the ship's officers for this purpose would be of such rare occurrence as scarcely to call for legislative enactment.

Your Committee cannot leave this subject without expressing their thanks to the Hon'ble Mr. Bullen Smith, your late President, for the readiness with which he answered their request to sit on the Commission to enquire into the cause of the collision between the *Khedive* and the *Aral*, and for the time, care, and attention he bestowed on the case during its investigation.

During the discussion of this subject two further defects in the existing law became apparent: 1st, that the Act applies to wrecks or accidents *on or near the coast*, not in pilot-water;

and, 2nd, that enquiries into accidents *elsewhere* are confined to vessels with an *Indian Register*.

These objections have been duly brought to the notice of Government.

The Committee to enquire into the wrecks in the cyclone of June last, and the account of the storm given by the Meteorological Reporter, have shown to your Committee the need of several amendments, the principal being the issue of peremptory orders prohibiting pilots from proceeding to sea in threatening weather, and the supplying of chronometers and other nautical instruments to the brigs.

All these several points will, no doubt, receive the full consideration of Government when the new Indian Shipping Bill comes under discussion in Council. This Bill has, as you are aware, been postponed till Parliament passed the new Act at home. This new Act has lately become law, and I suppose now the requisite improvements and alterations in our own local marine enactments will be carefully gone into and considered.

#### INEFFICIENT SURVEY OF THE RIVER.

Another subject of importance to the shipping

interest of the port has engaged the attention of your Committee during the last half-year, viz., the inefficient survey of the river. Your Committee, on receipt of a representation on the subject from the agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co., lost no time in urging on Government the employment of steamers for the survey instead of the old-fashioned and slow-sailing brigs at present in use. This plan had previously been brought to the notice of Government by Admiral Mends, and your Committee very strongly urged its adoption. You will observe, from the letter closing this portion of the report, that His Honor has taken up the matter with his usual promptitude, and has applied to the Supreme Government for the temporary use of the *Gemini* till suitable steamers for the survey and buoy service can be procured from England.

#### CONCENTRATION OF MARINE OFFICES.

Another Committee, on which I had the honour to sit, was the concentration of all the marine offices under one roof. Our Vice-President was originally nominated by your Committee, but, owing to his illness, I took his place.

The increased convenience to all connected

with the shipping of the port by the proposed concentration is so obvious that your Committee are gratified in being able to report to the Chamber the very favourable manner in which their representation has been received by the Government of Bengal, who have postponed their own wants to the requirements of trade. The question has been referred to the Government of India, and your Committee hope that the main difficulty—funds—may be got over by the grant asked for from Imperial revenue.

The Committee appointed had two sittings, and the site approved of is close on to the Military Accountant's Office in Coilah Ghât, along the river-side, nearly up to the export-gate of the Custom House. This includes the bit of waste land at the corner of the Strand and Coilah Ghât Street. Plans and estimates will be, or have been, submitted to Government, and I hope before long we shall see a building containing the three offices—Master Attendant, Customs, and Port Commissioners—located under one roof. Each department has sent in a report of its requirements, and the site chosen is capable of accommodating them all, and there will also be room

left for extensions hereafter, as may be required. The building will be 3-storied.

#### JUTE GODOWNS ON THE STRAND BANK.

The suggestion of the Port Commissioners for utilizing their reclaimed land in the northern portion of the town, by the erection of jute godowns and screw-houses, has had the support of your Committee, and has met with the approval of Government. The Committee thought, however, that a large and comprehensive plan, embracing the whole area, might be advantageously first made, and that each separate structure, whether put up by the Commissioners or private individuals, should form part and parcel of this plan.

#### JUTE DEPOTS.

This question was referred to in the last report. The correspondence with the Municipality shows that your Committee have failed in the very reasonable request they made.

#### COTTON.

The question of the adulteration of cotton was brought to the notice of your Committee by

Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Co., and it has resulted in a strong measure almost universally adopted by merchants. You will find particulars fully detailed in the report. The Railway Company, whose co-operation was asked, have declined to interfere, and Mr. Colvin has just informed me that his personal interview has not been more successful. Your Committee hope, however, they may still obtain some concession, so as to enable this very desirable measure being carried through.

#### THE FLOATING BRIDGE AND THE TRAMWAY.

The only other point in the report is the floating bridge. Mr. Bradford Leslie has returned to India, but your Committee have not yet had any communication from him; they will probably hear from him as soon as he comes back from the Mofussil. In the meantime I have no doubt the preparations are being rapidly pushed on, and that we shall soon see this great work accomplished. I hope also within a few days we shall have the tramway too fairly at work.

I now move—"That the report of the Committee for the half-year ended 31st October 1872, now submitted, be received and adopted."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Manoojee Rustomjee, and duly put and carried.

Mr. Colvin said he came this morning in order to listen and learn, and not to speak; but as reference had been made in the half-yearly report of the Chamber, as well as by the President, to certain proceedings initiated by his firm in respect to the trade in Bengal cotton, he deemed it desirable to offer a few words of explanation of the principles which guided them in that matter. He trusted he need hardly assure the meeting that no selfish motive had influenced his firm, for their interest in the particular trade was comparatively limited, and he had felt considerable diffidence and hesitation in starting a movement in which others, both by position and extent of transactions, were much better entitled to lead the way. The cause, however, which they (Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Co.) had taken up was undoubtedly one of common complaint and concern. The grievance was admittedly substantial and general; it was, in fact, agreed on all sides that it was time that something should be done. They had felt, therefore, that if they could in any way unite and concentrate the scattered force of opinion on the subject into a movement which

should strike at the root of the complaint, and impel a removal of the grievance, they would be doing something, and adding their mite to the treasury of the general good of the trade. The real cause of the mischief was patent. It was clear that an objectionable system had been allowed to grow up and become established by time and the force of circumstances—a system under which it was impossible to apply the principle of *caveat emptor*, for the buyer was compelled by it to a great extent to take upon trust the quality of the goods he was purchasing—a compliment which was not generally returned by the native to the European trader. Similarly the remedy was not far to seek. It was clear that it consisted in the establishment of a new system, or rather the re-establishment of an old one, by which the buyer would be enabled thoroughly to examine the quality of the whole of his purchases, and to insist upon the exact performance of the seller's contract. The difficulty was in the application of the remedy. They had done their best to ascertain the views of their neighbours, and to elicit suggestions from them on the subject; and here he must thank the President and the Committee of the Chamber for the ready assistance rendered by them by circulating the

correspondence, even though perhaps they were not all of the same opinion upon the matter. The form and manner in which Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Co., had decided, after reference to the members of the Chamber, to endeavour to carry out their object met with general concurrence, and he trusted that the weight of support accorded to the movement at the beginning would be sufficient to carry it through successfully to the end, and that no real difficulty would be experienced in putting into practice the provisions of the public notice. He was aware that objections had been raised, and there were differences of opinion as to the terms of the notice; but it was impossible to secure entire unanimity either of action or opinion in regard to matters affecting the commerce of Calcutta, in which so many countries were concerned, and such varied interests involved; but he trusted that the proceedings of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce would bear record that, on this, as on many other instances, the merchants of Calcutta were ready to act together, notwithstanding differences of nationality and divergences of individual interests, for the honour and stability of all branches of its trade.

After some discussion in regard to the mode of

electing office-bearers, the President moved the following resolution:—"That the Committee's conditional election of Messrs. Paul, Tambaci and Co., and of Messrs. Anderson, Wright and Co., as members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, be confirmed." The resolution was seconded by Mr. T. A. Apar, and duly put and agreed to.

The Hon'ble Bullen Smith then proposed, and the Hon'ble Mr. Colvin seconded, "that the best thanks of the Chamber of Commerce be given to the Committee for their services during the past half-year."

The Chairman thanked the meeting on behalf of himself and the Committee, adding that the work was done with a great deal of pleasure.

The meeting then dispersed.

H. W. I. WOOD,

*Secretary.*

## BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Report of the Committee for the half-year  
ended 31st October 1872.

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

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### Eastern Trade Bills of Lading—via Suez Canal.

A reference to the Chamber's Report for the half-year, ended 30th April 1871, will remind members that the subject of bills of lading for merchandise by steamers passing through the Suez Canal was then submitted for their consideration, and resolutions were unanimously adopted both as to the objectionable character of various clauses which those documents contained, and the expediency of giving the preference to vessels which issued bills of lading free from the objections complained of.

The matter was subsequently taken up in London; and at a meeting of merchants and others interested in the trade with the East, held on 11th July 1871, a Committee of merchants was appointed to consider all the special stipulations introduced into bills of lading for goods shipped on Canal steamers, and to confer thereon with the representatives of the steam ship-owners and underwriters, with the view of drawing up a general form of bill of lading which should be equitable in its conditions to all parties; and of arranging such a method of settling the freight as might remedy existing irregularities. A meeting of ship-owners was accordingly held, and a Committee was appointed to concert terms with the merchants.

The two Committees met, and, after a prolonged discussion, and a series of compromises on both sides, agreed upon the terms of the *Eastern Trade Bill of Lading Outwards*, in three forms suited to meet the circumstances of

- 1.—An ordinary voyage to the East direct, or trading at intermediate ports;
- 2.—A voyage to India, touching at Colombo, Madras, or other open roadsteads on the Malabar or Coromandel Coasts;

- 3.—A voyage involving trans-shipment, the steamer not proceeding to the port for which she accepts cargo, such as Rangoon, Batavia, or Japan.

The advantages of a uniform system were at once recognised by the general adoption of the amended form of bill of lading, which has been pronounced as a useful and successful document.

But, with regard to the bill of lading *inwards*, the two Committees could not come to mutually satisfactory terms: on the clauses respecting delivery of cargo and payment of freight they were essentially at variance, and as they could not agree on these material points, the negotiation was brought to a close.

The foregoing brief abstract has been made from the report of the merchants' Committee, which, as it is desirable to preserve their proceedings for future reference, is given in full at the conclusion of this paragraph.

*REPORT of the Committee of Merchants trading with the East appointed to consider and amend the conditions of Bills of Lading by Steamships passing through the Suez Canal.*

The Committee entered upon its duties in pursuance of the following resolution passed at a meeting of Merchants and other interested in the Trade with the East, which was held at the London Tavern on the 11th July, 1871:—

That a Committee of Merchants be appointed to consider all the special stipulations that have been introduced into Bills of Lading for Steam Vessels, and to confer thereon with the representatives of the Steam Ship-owners and Underwriters, with the view of drawing up a general form of Bill of Lading which shall be equitable in its conditions to all parties; and to arrange such a method of settling the freight as may remedy existing irregularities.

Power was also given to the Committee to add to its numbers, and it was finally constituted as follows:—

Mr. JAMES MACANDREW, <i>Chairman</i> .....	(Messrs. Matheson & Co.)
Mr. G. ARBUTHNOT.....	(Messrs. Arbuthnot, Latham & Co.)
Mr. W. BROUGHALL.....	(Messrs. Broughall & Co.)
Mr. W. H. CRAIK.....	(Messrs. Crawford, Colvin & Co.)
Mr. LANGELOT W. DENT.....	(Messrs. Dent, Palmer & Co.)
Mr. HORACE FARQUHAR.....	(Messrs. Forbes, Forbes & Co.)
Mr. JOHN FLEMING.....	(Messrs. Smith, Fleming & Co.)
Mr. E. HALTON.....	(Messrs. T. A. Gibb & Co.)

Mr. F. W. HEILIGERS.....	(Messrs. Wattenbach, Heilgers & Co.)
Mr. JOHN E. RAHL.....	(Messrs. Rahl Brothers.)
Mr. GEORGE ROSS.....	(Messrs. James Wyllie & Co.)
Mr. S. L. SCHUSTER.....	(Messrs. Schuster, Son & Co.)

The Committee has likewise had the benefit of the valuable advice and assistance of Mr. J. A. W. Harper, Secretary of Lloyd's Salvage Association, who had, on behalf of the Association, devoted much attention to the conditions of Bills of Lading.

As convincing proof of the necessity of their enquiries and of the pressing nature of the evils to be remedied in re-adjusting the freight contract, the Committee need only refer to a sheet published by Lloyd's Salvage Association, and very generally circulated among merchants, in which the exemptions of the ship from liability in various contingencies are classified in a tabular form. There was little difficulty in determining which of these conditions most urgently called for abolition or alteration, and the Committee then lost no time in seeking the co-operation of Steam Ship-owners in arriving at a common understanding upon the subject. A meeting of the latter body was called in London, and a Committee, of which Mr. C. M. Norwood, M. P., was Chairman, was appointed to concert terms with the merchants.

The two Committees addressed themselves in the first instance to the examination of the Bill of Lading Outwards, and after prolonged discussion and a series of compromises on both sides, the "Eastern Trade Bill of Lad-

ing Outwards" was agreed upon, and published in three forms, slightly varied to suit different voyages:—

No. 1.—For an ordinary voyage to the East direct, or trading at intermediate ports.

No. 2.—For a voyage to India, trading at Colombo, Madras, or other open roadsteads on the Malabar or Coromandel Coasts.

No. 3.—For a voyage involving trans-shipment, the steamer not proceeding to the port for which she accepts cargo, such as Rangoon, Batavia, or Japan.

This agreement was promptly announced to merchants in a circular issued by the Chairman of the Committee, dated 20th January, 1873, appended to which were copies of the three revised forms of Bills of Lading. The new form came into immediate use; and it affords the Committee much gratification to testify that it has been very generally accepted, not only in London, but in Liverpool and Glasgow also, and has proved a useful and successful document. One exception to its universal use is the Liverpool line of steamers to the Straits and China, known as Holt's line. The Committee in their circular of 20th January, recommended that as far as practicable shippers should require that the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading be used by any steam vessel in which they engaged to ship goods *via* the Suez Canal. Had this recommendation been more generally acted upon, there is

no doubt that the Managers of Holt's line would have ere now adopted the new form; but if shippers of goods put it in their power by continued support of their steamers to decline compliance with the agreement accepted by all other private steam-ship-owners in the trade, the efforts of the Committee to benefit merchants by the introduction of an improved system are so far frustrated. The Committee believe that the results of the agreement have been beneficial alike to ship-owner and merchant, and that the advantages of uniformity of system have not been too dearly purchased by the compromises acceded to. If shippers entertain the same view, it rests with themselves alone to necessitate compliance by declining to ship in any line of steamers where the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading is not recognised.

With the two great companies controlling the Overland Route, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and the Messageries Maritimes of France, no negotiations have yet been entered into. There are many stipulations in their respective Bills of Lading which seem to the Committee to be very prejudicial to the interests of merchants; but it must be conceded on the other hand that their mail contracts, and the circumstance of their being essentially passenger lines, impose special obligations upon them, and render stringent conditions more necessary than in the case of other steamers. At the same time, when the vessels pass through the Suez Canal, as is now very generally done by the French, and occasionally by the English Company, the Com-

mittee see no good reason why a slight modification of the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading should not meet all the exigencies of the case; and it rests with shippers to take measures for bringing about an alteration in this respect.

Copies of the three forms of the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading Outwards, attested by the Chairmen of the two Committees, have been deposited in the custody of the Committee of Lloyd's, to serve for purposes of reference as the standard text of the Bill of Lading agreed upon.

The Committee regret that in the case of the Bill of Lading Inwards they are unable to report an equally satisfactory result of their labours. It was agreed between the two Committees that the Bill of Lading Outwards should be substantially followed with such verbal alterations as were required by the change of voyage; but that special clauses applicable to the Port of London should be introduced respecting the delivery of cargo and payment of freight. The system of discharging ships at Liverpool and elsewhere is very different, and might require differently worded clauses, which the trade of the various ports interested would have to adjust.

It was soon found that on these clauses the two Committees were essentially at variance. As respects the delivery of cargo, the difference of opinion was not so wide as to preclude the hope of an arrangement, the merchants merely desiring to be protected against a surprise, by which their goods would be warehoused by the Agents

for the ship, before they knew or had the means of knowing of her arrival. The following was the clause proposed by the Committee:—

One clear working day after the day on which the ship reports at the Custom House, and is docked, is to be allowed for applications for delivery; and if thereafter the goods are not removed without delay by the consignee, the master or agent is to be at liberty to land and warehouse the same, or if necessary, to discharge into hired lighters, at the risk and expense of the owners of the goods.

The clause finally proposed by the Shipowners' Committee was as follows:—

Twenty-four hours (Sundays and holidays excepted) after the ship reports at the Custom House, and is docked, are to be allowed for applications for delivery; and if thereafter the goods are not removed by the consignee immediately they come to hand in discharging the ship, the Master or Agent is to be at liberty to land and warehouse the same, or, if necessary, to discharge into hired lighters, at the risk and expense of the owners of the Goods.

As it is not customary or practicable in London to give Consignees notice of the ship's arrival except by publication of her report in the Bill of Entry the morning after it is made, the clause adopted by your Committee seems decidedly the more reasonable of the two, especially as

the hour of the ship's report is a point on which the Consignee of goods cannot possess any evidence. Moreover, the bulk of the warehousing entries would certainly be passed within twenty-four hours, and the steamer's discharge be thus very rarely interrupted, while if she landed the whole of her cargo on the dock quay, as is most usually done, no interruption at all could take place.

On the more difficult question as to the mode of paying freight some explanations are necessary. When the terms of the Bills of Lading now used run "Freight payable in London," "Freight payable on delivery," or even, "Freight payable as customary" the shipowners contend that, according to the usage established by themselves since the introduction of steam vessels into the trade with the East, they are empowered to detain the goods on board, or in the dock or warehouse of their own selection, until the freight is paid in advance of delivery, or, what is practically the same thing, simultaneously with delivery. It will not be forgotten that this is precisely the grievance of which merchants have for years past complained, and to remedy which was one of their principal objects in organizing a Committee of their number. The Shipowners' Committee continue to maintain the above position; and their chief arguments for so doing may be thus expressed:—

I. That payment in advance of delivery is now the established usage of the trade.

II. That it is necessary for their protection against the insolvent or fraudulent consignee of cargo.

III. That it is unreasonable to expect them to follow goods to the wharf or warehouse appointed by the consignee, either for the purpose of collecting the freight upon them or ascertaining the correctness of delivery.

IV. That goods in transit to the wharf or at the wharf may be plundered or damaged by the servants or agents of the consignee, for which, in the absence of distinct proof, the ship would be held liable.

V. That a large proportion of the freight earned is expended in advance on coals, canal dues, and other charges peculiar to steamers, to which, therefore, immediate returns from their earnings are essentially necessary.

VI. That to defer payment of the inward freight for thirty days would render it impossible for steamship owners to carry on their business, owing to the large increase of capital which it would call for.

To these arguments the Merchants reply—

I. That the present usage as to payment is of quite recent introduction, deriving any validity it has from the terms of Bills of Lading drawn up by shipowners themselves, and that so far from being established by common consent, it has been constantly objected to by consignees of goods.

II. That the shipowner has a perfect protection for his freight in what is known as the dock or wharf *stop*

with which there is no intention of interfering, and by which the warehouse-keeper engages not to part with the goods to any one until he receives a release from the shipowner. To meet the rare case of insolvent or fraudulent wharfingers, the Committee were quite willing to concede that the shipowner might object to the goods being delivered into the custody of any such until his freight was paid.

III. That to constitute proper delivery the consignee must have the opportunity of ascertaining that his goods are according to Bill of Lading, while the existing system does not afford this opportunity either on board ship or on the dock quay. The shipowner, therefore, cannot be absolved from following the goods to their final destination, as until they are there examined, weighed, and measured it is quite out of his power to render a freight account.

IV. That this objection merely calls for an improved and less hurried method of taking the delivery account, as between the Dock Company, who are the agents of the ship, and the wharfingers, who are the agents of the Merchants, and that the Merchants' Committee would gladly co-operate in the establishment of such an improved system. Cases of plunder could then be traced without difficulty to the parties guilty of them.

V. & VI. That it is no part of the merchant's functions to provide capital for carrying on the shipowner's business; and that in London there can be no difficulty whatever in procuring money on so excellent a security

as the assignment of a steamer's freight, payable in thirty days.

The Merchants' Committee have likewise to point out, that, as a matter of fact, the larger portion of a steamer's freight is voluntarily paid before her discharge, in order that the merchant may obtain possession of the freight release, especially in the common case of goods sold to arrive. They object, however, to be compelled to pay upon the shipowner's estimate of what the freight may eventually amount to, and before he has completed his share of the contract by the delivery of the goods. The term of thirty days has been fixed as the lowest average period in which the landing account of an ordinary cargo can be looked for, there being no desire on the part of the Committee to delay payment longer than may be requisite to ascertain the precise amount of freight, and the claims (if any) against the steamer for short delivery, ship damage, or other default.

Upon this divergence of views, the negotiation between the two Committees has been broken off. The only concession proposed by the Shipowners' Committee has been that delivery should be made on pre-payment of four-fifths of the estimated freight, instead of the whole. This suggestion, however, seemed to your Committee to be just as objectionable in principle, and inconvenient in practice, as the existing system, and it was not seriously discussed. They subjoin the clause as they have drafted it:—

Freight for the said goods at and after the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ per ton of \_\_\_\_\_ delivered is to be paid subsequent to the landing thereof by cash in London not later than thirty days after the ship's reporting at the Custom House, or upon any earlier day on which a freight release may be required and received by the consignee.

while the wording proposed by the shipowners is as follows:—

Freight for the said goods at and after the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ per ton, is to be paid by cash in London, when the ship is ready to discharge.

The Shipowners' Committee likewise sought to re-introduce into the Bill of Lading Inwards the exemption for damage by vermin, which by mutual consent had been expunged from the Bill of Lading Outwards. They further proposed for your Committee's adoption the following clause:—

The Bill of Lading duly endorsed is to be delivered to the Agent on demand after arrival, in exchange for the Master's copy, and an order for the delivery of the goods.

On this latter it will be sufficient to observe that your Committee obtained a legal opinion, which was to the effect that the shipowner had no right to require the surrender of an endorsed or cancelled Bill of Lading

until he had completed delivery of the goods comprised in it.

The Committee having devoted much care to the drafting of the Bill of Lading herewith, styled the "Eastern Trade Bill of Lading Inwards, No. 4," recommend it for adoption by merchants trading to the East, and would urge that they use their best efforts through their correspondents abroad to have it recognised and brought into use at the ports of shipment; declining, so far as may prove practicable, to allow their goods to be shipped by steamers the owners of which continue to enforce the use of the old forms.

In the Committee's circular of 20th January it was recommended "that to ensure the benefit of a complete protection to sea risks, the policies taken out on voyages "by steamer *via* the Suez Canal should cover the merchandise 'in terms of the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading.'" When this recommendation was brought before Underwriters, the clause suggested was at once objected to as imposing upon them new and undefined liabilities. A meeting was held at Lloyd's on the 21st February, which resulted in the appointment of a Committee, representing both the Insurance Companies and private Underwriters, to consider the question further, and if possible to come to an agreement respecting it. With this Committee the subject has been very fully considered and discussed by your Committee. The intention of your Committee in

their original recommendation was sufficiently evident from their expressing their object to be the more complete protection of the *sea risks* to which the Bill of Lading related; but they are quite willing to admit that the language proposed for the clause was too wide and vague in its terms, and might have been interpreted as involving Underwriters in some of the liabilities from which shipowners had by the revised Bill of Lading been specially exempted. In order to draft a clause more exact in its wording, the first matter to be determined was the precise meaning attached, both by the assurers and the assured, to the risks covered by a policy on goods which had been shipped under the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading. On this point the Committee are happy to state that they have arrived at a satisfactory understanding with the Underwriters' Committee, of which the following is an abstract:—

The Underwriters' risk on the voyage named, calling at the intermediate ports named, is to include—

Coaling at other intermediate ports not named.  
 Taking in and discharging cargo while so coaling.  
 Sailing with or without pilots.  
 Towing and assisting vessels in all situations of distress.

Loss or damage arising from the machinery or boilers.

Dangers and accidents arising from the navigation of the Suez Canal.

Any act, neglect, or default whatsoever of Pilots, Master, or crew in the management or navigation of the ship, provided the expression "management of the ship" shall not be held to include any act connected with the stowage or other dealing with the cargo of the ship not arising out of a sea-peril.

In addition to all risks comprehended and provided for in the body of this policy.

The Underwriter is not to be liable for acts or default of the shipper unconnected with sea-perils, such as insufficient packing, incorrect marking, improper description, absence of declaration for inflammable or dangerous goods, or insufficient declaration of value for specie and valuables.

The Underwriter, however, is to be liable as heretofore for the consequences of sea-damage or sea-perils of any kind, such as leakage, brackage, sweat, rust, decay, when traceable to that origin, but not otherwise. Damage by coal dust when not mixed up with damage by sea-water is to be borne by the merchant.

In case of the goods being placed in quarantine depôt afloat or ashore previous to the final delivery to the consignee the Underwriters' risk will continue until

such final delivery, and will cover risk of boats to and from such depôt.

In case of blockade the Underwriters are understood to cover the voyage to the port of discharge selected by the Captain as fully and effectually as to the port of discharge named in the policy, their liability ending with the landing of the goods at the former destination.

Should the voyage be extended beyond the destination named in the policy, as when the goods cannot be found, or from stress of weather cannot be landed, the Underwriters are to be entitled to receive additional premium for the extra risk incurred.

It was agreed that it was unnecessary to embody the whole of this understanding in the policy, as most of it is universally accepted by Underwriters. It is true that the legal construction of a policy of insurance would not go beyond its expressed conditions; but after a recorded declaration of the meaning attached to it by the representatives of both Merchants and Underwriters, it need hardly be feared that the latter would contest a claim which clearly fell within the scope of the declaration. The efforts of the two Committees were therefore directed to framing a clause which should embody such conditions of the Bill of Lading as were not sufficiently protected by the ordinary practice of Underwriters, and especially a deviation clause which would cover the deviations permitted in the Bill of Lading for coaling purposes, for

towing vessels in distress, and for proceeding to another port in case of blockade. The following is the clause that has been agreed upon by the two Committees to be printed on a slip and attached to the margin of the policy, when so required by the assured:—

The goods hereby insured being shipped under the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading No. \_\_\_\_\_, it is agreed that the terms of this policy shall apply to the following sea-perils therein referred to, in addition to such risks as are already hereby covered:

1. All deviation of voyage provided for in the said Bill of Lading, with any risk of land carriage incidental to the voyage.
2. Sailing with or without pilots; and any act, neglect or default whatsoever of Pilots, Master or Crew in the management or navigation of the ship, improper stowage excepted.
3. All risks attending the goods by reason of their discharge into, retention at, and delivery from any quarantine depôt afloat or ashore.
4. In case of the goods being carried on to a more distant port through stress of weather or because they cannot be found, the marine risk of the additional voyage as well as of the return voyage to their destined port, the assured agreeing to pay for such extra risk such premium as may be agreed upon.

The attention of your Committee has been directed to a discussion originated in the *Times* newspaper, as to the risk of fire on the dock quays, when cargo is landed there by the ship before its final delivery to the consignee. It seems very doubtful whether a claim for loss so caused would attach under the marine policy, the obligations of which are discharged when the goods "are safely landed." It has even been doubted whether a policy "including risk of boats," would cover the lighterage to a wharf, after the vessel had been docked, and the goods placed in the first instance on the quay. The only sufficient remedy is to introduce a special clause into policies on goods destined for London, whether issued at home or abroad, to the effect that the goods are covered, if landed in transit for delivery to the consignee, or while being conveyed by boats or craft to his warehouse. This of course would have to be a matter of special agreement in each case.

It is only requisite to add that the Committee is now dissolved, as its functions terminate with the issue of this Report.

LONDON,  
18th June 1872. }

J. MACANDREW,  
*Chairman of the Committee.*

From the following letter and reply thereto it will be noted that the Chairman of the London Merchants' Committee was good enough to place

himself in direct communication with this Chamber on the Bill of Lading question, and that your Committee expressed their views as to the impracticability of dealing with it in the manner suggested.

It appeared to them that it would be no easy matter to introduce into the disputed form of bill of lading for merchandise shipped from Indian Ports conditions which had been so fully discussed by principals at Home, whose determination regarding them were so diametrically opposite; and your Committee preferred to leave the adjustment of the matter to the ordinary influence of competition.

*From the Chairman of the Committee of Merchants trading with the East to Bengal Chamber of Commerce.*

*London, 18th June 1872.*

I have the honor to send you herewith by Book Post twelve copies of the "Report of the Committee of Merchants, trading with the East, appointed to consider and amend the conditions of Bills of Lading by steamships passing through the Suez Canal" together with twelve copies of the Draft Bill of Lading appended thereto.

The Merchants of London, while desirous to see introduced the amended conditions which have been embodied in this Bill of Lading, rely on the co-operation of Merchants resident in the East, who are no less interested in the matter, to carry their purpose into effect. I request therefore that you will have the kindness to lay the documents herewith before your Chamber; and should they be approved of, to move your Chamber to take measures for practically introducing the Bill of Lading into the trade. The mode of doing so must be left to your own judgment; but the collective declaration of the Chamber adopting the Bill of Lading and recommending its general use at your port would doubtless carry great weight, and perhaps render further steps unnecessary.

In event of continued objections on the part of the Masters or Agents of Steamers, there should be no great difficulty in arranging to lay one or more Steamers on the berth for London with the announcement that the Eastern Trade Bill of Lading would be signed for shipments made by them. If these vessels were generally supported by the members of the Chamber, and supported at the same time withheld from their competitors adhering to the old Bills of Lading, the exclusive use of the former ought to be speedily established. The present seems a favourable time for trying the experiment when the number of Steamers in the East is so great and much competition consequently exists among them.

In the renewed hope that this important matter will be effectually dealt with by your Chamber.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Chairman of the Committee of Merchants trading with the East, London.*

*Calcutta, 30th July 1872.*

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, also 12 copies of the Report of the Committee of Merchants, trading with the East, appointed to consider and amend the conditions of Bills of Lading by steamships passing through the Suez Canal, and 12 copies of Draft Bill of Lading.

The subject of your communication has received the most careful consideration, and the clauses in the Inward, No. 4, Bill of Lading, on which the Merchants' and Ship-owners' Committees were so essentially at variance, have been regarded with all the attention which their importance demanded; and it is a matter of much regret to my Committee that so material a conflict of opinion should have barred the progress which they trusted would be made towards the adoption of a form of Bill of Lading acceptable alike to ship-owners and merchants.

The merits of the question having been fully discussed by both Committees in London, and the principals having contended for their respective views with the result which you have been good enough to announce, it appears to my Committee that the prospect of succeeding with local agents by any action on the part of this Chamber collectively, or of its members individually, is too remote to justify the belief that the Bill of Lading which you advocate can be practically introduced in the Calcutta Trade.

Hereafter, probably, when competition among the canal-steamers is greater than it is at present, the question will gradually be settled; and in the meanwhile the merchants here can only so far aid the movement as to give the preference when they can to vessels that consent to use the Bill of Lading with the clauses which you have endeavoured to introduce.

#### Suez Canal:—Tonnage Dues.

Members of the Chamber, and especially those who are interested in traffic by vessels passing through the Suez Canal, are aware that from the 1st July last the toll levied on shipping has been largely increased, in consequence of the charge,—10 francs per ton—being calculated on *gross tonnage*, instead of on the *net register* only, as provided in the original tariff of August 1869.

This increased taxation is a material addition to the heavy expenses already incurred by the steam shipping trade engaged in commerce with the East through the Canal, but the weight of the burden will ultimately fall on the imports and exports of this country in the shape of higher freights, which shipowners will demand to cover the loss thus imposed.

The course adopted by the Suez Canal Company has created much dissatisfaction, and energetic but unavailing remonstrances have been presented against it.

By the mail of 1st November the Committee are in possession of information on this subject which they consider may be usefully incorporated in their report. They find that a communication from the Foreign Office was lately laid before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to the effect that the question of the recent increase of dues levied by the Canal Company was receiving the attention of the British Government, who were in correspondence with the Porte and other Powers on the subject. They also learn that in the action brought by the *Messageries Maritimes* against the Canal Company, to recover the sums

paid in excess of the original tariff charge, the decision of the Tribunal of Commerce of the Seine was pronounced in favor of the plaintiffs. This important authoritative ruling is given below, and your Committee hope it will remain undisturbed, notwithstanding notice of appeal.

TRIBUNAL OF COMMERCE OF THE SEINE.

(Present : M. Daguin, Oct. 26.)

MESSAGERIES MARITIMES & THE SUEZ CANAL COMPANY.

The question in this case was as to the right of the Suez Canal Company to augment its tariff, as it had done, in virtue of a resolution which took effect on the 1st of July last. The Messageries Maritimes Company had paid the increased charges from this date under protest, and now brought an action against the Suez Canal Company to recover the sums thus disbursed, and to test the power of the Company to impose those charges. The first point considered was a protest by the defendants against the competency of the Court, on the ground that it was an Egyptian Company. That plea, however, was overruled, for the reasons that the undertaking was well known to be French, that the shares had been issued in France, and that the head-quarters of the directors were in Paris. The main point of the matter was then entered into, and the following is an extract from the judgment :—

“Whereas it appears from the documents submitted to the Tribunal that, on the 30th November 1854, His High-

ness Mahommed Said Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, gave to his friend, Ferdinand Lesseps, exclusive power to establish and direct a public Company for the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez, the making of a passage suitable for the navigation of large ships, the foundation or the appropriation of two adequate entrances, one on the Mediterranean and the other on the Red Sea, and the formation of one or two ports; that, on the representations of M. Ferdinand Lesseps for the formation of the above-mentioned company in the manner and on the conditions generally adopted by associations of this nature, His Highness Said Pasha, by a firman, dated January 3rd 1856, stipulated in advance, in a manner more detailed and more complete, on the one hand, the charges and obligations to which this society shall be subjected; and, on the other hand, the concessions, immunities, and advantages the Company shall enjoy, as well as the facilities which shall be accorded to it for its administration: Whereas the Company of the Suez Maritime Canal, when once constituted, had for its first task the cutting of the Canal and putting it into a navigable state; that, this end attained, the Company published on August 17th 1869 a fundamental rule of navigation, of which Article 14 was thus conceived:— ‘The duties payable are calculated on the real tonnage of the vessel; as regards the transit dues, towing and anchorage dues, the levy shall be made in accordance with the ship's official papers: Whereas this rule remained in force until July 1st 1872; that, in fact, on March 4th 1872, the directors of the Suez Canal Company passed the following resolution :— (1) On and after

July 1st 1872, the Suez Canal Company shall levy a special Navigation Duty of 10f. per ton of the real capacity of the vessels; (2) the gross tonnage as inscribed in the ship's papers, gauged after the method actually in use in England, shall serve as a base for this levy; ..... (5) all fixed or temporarily covered spaces not comprised in the ship's official measurement shall be gauged by the Agents of the Company according to the rule actually in force in England, and the tonnage thus obtained shall be subject to the tax. While adopting as a base for the levying of its dues the tonnage resulting from the mode of measurement according to the method indicated, the Suez Canal Company reserves the right in the future to apply any other mode of gauging which may present itself with advantages over the actual mode. Whereas the Company of the Messageries Maritimes see in the application of the new tariff a violation of Art. 17 of the firman of the 3rd January 1856, and demand in consequence the annulment of this tariff, the re-establishment of the levy of 10f. per ton of capacity inscribed in the ship's papers, according to the mode of measurement determined by the Ordinance of 1837; and demand, also, the reimbursement, on a return furnished by the Company, of the excess of tax which the Company has been forced to pay for their ships from the 1st July last to this date... Whereas it appears, from an examination of the tariff of the 4th March 1872, that its object is to materially modify, to the prejudice of ships passing through the Suez Canal, one of the constituent elements of the tax to be levied, and, consequently, the tax itself;... that the

new method of measurement ordered by the Suez Canal Company differs essentially from that laid down in the firman of concession, and that it is calculated to augment considerably the proceeds of the levy: Whereas it is proved that, since the 1st July, the plaintiffs have been forced to pay, under the formal reservation of their rights, the excess of the tax resulting from the new tariff: And whereas, under these circumstances, the Tribunal declares that the plaint of the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes is well founded in its conclusions:—It is therefore the opinion of the Tribunal that the Suez Canal Company, by its resolution of the 4th March 1872, declaring a modification of the tax to be levied as a special Navigation Duty on ships using the Suez Canal, is entirely in the wrong: That in consequence the tax to be paid by the plaintiffs as a special Navigation Duty remains fixed at 10f. per ton of capacity, according to the mode of measurement determined by the Ordinance of 1837. The Tribunal certifies that the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes has declared the new tax only to have been paid, reckoning from the 1st July 1872, under constraint and under protest: the Suez Canal Company is, therefore, condemned to pay and return to the plaintiffs the excess of duty they have been forced to pay on their ships from the 1st July up to the present date, with interest as fixed by law; and, considering the well-known stability of the plaintiffs, must do so at once, and without the delay which might be obtained by appeal, and, further, to pay all the costs."

**Commission to enquire into the present condition  
of the Pilot Service and the rates of pilotage.**

Early in July last the Lieutenant-Governor appointed a Commission to enquire into the above two subjects. The Committee consisted of the Collector of Customs, the Officiating Master Attendant, Mr. Noakes (Branch Pilot) and the President of the Chamber. There were two points submitted to their consideration; 1st, to report upon the number of running pilots required for the service of the Hooghly under the present altered circumstances of the shipping of the port; and 2nd, whether, under these altered circumstances, the pilotage charges settled in 1854 could not fairly be reduced now or at some future time.

The report of the Commission has been sent in to Government and is now under consideration by the Lieutenant-Governor: it will, no doubt, be duly published, with his orders on the subject.

During the discussion of this matter, it appeared to the President of the Chamber as Member of the Committee that no satisfactory decision

could be come to on the second question, without a thorough scrutiny of the accounts. Such scrutiny was held by the majority of the Commission as beyond their province, but the Committee of the Chamber have taken up the matter and obtained from Government sanction for full details being given them. These details have only been received within the last few days and are not yet examined. The Chamber may be assured that these accounts will be subjected to the most searching investigation in the power of the Committee with the view of relieving, if possible, the shipping frequenting the port of some part of the heavy expense to which they are now put.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 29th August 1872.*

The Officiating Master Attendant presented to the Committee, lately appointed to enquire into the question of existing rules of pilotage, the accounts of the *pilotage* and *port* for the past year 1871-72, and I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to ask the favor of a copy of these accounts being furnished to them.

As the figures were simply the totals of each head of

receipt and expenditure, the Committee of the Chamber will be glad if His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will allow them to call for such details as may appear necessary to enable them to arrive at a correct estimate of the working of these two important accounts.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 25th September 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce instruct me to submit their request to be furnished with a copy of the report lately presented to the Government of Bengal by the Committee appointed to inquire into the subject of pilotage; the question is of much interest to the commercial public, and the Chamber will be glad if His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will be pleased to comply with this application.

I am at the same time to renew the request contained in my letter of 29th ultimo for details of the port and pilotage accounts which were laid before the Committee of Enquiry already referred to, as well as for any supplementary accounts that may have reached the Government for the past or current year.

#### **Survey of Steam Vessels.**

Under the provisions of Bengal Council Act V of 1862 steamers are liable to be surveyed

twice in every year, the certificates of survey being in force for six months: the same rule applies under Act II of 1864 of the Government of Bombay: and the Board of Trade, London, also grants certificates limited to the same period.

It appears, however, from a representation made to the Government of Bombay by the owners or agents for steamers visiting that port that notwithstanding the currency of the certificates issued in London or Calcutta vessels are subjected to the delay and expense of fresh surveys and fresh certificates; and against this an appeal has been made by the steam shipping interest there, who are of opinion that during the currency of a six months' certificate, whatever voyages may be made in the interval, no fresh survey should be made, and that the certificates granted in London, Bombay or Calcutta should be allowed to have in any Indian Port their full currency and be officially recognised, thereby avoiding the trouble and expense of unnecessary surveys.

The Government of Bengal having been communicated with on the subject, requested the Chamber to record its opinion, and whether it

would propose to alter the special provision of Act V so as to meet the objections urged by the Bombay firms, and in what manner and to what extent.

From the Committee's reply, given below, it will be seen that they did not think it expedient to withhold from Government the power of insisting on fresh surveys, or to change or amend the Act in question. The points urged by the Bombay firms were fully considered; but the Committee were unable to recommend any departure from the law, which, while it vests the Government with a very proper control, permits the relaxation of its provisions in such cases as may be considered entitled to exemption.

*From Messrs. Stearns, Hobart and Company, Bombay, to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Marine Department, Calcutta.*

*Bombay, 27th August 1872.*

We have the honor to enclose herewith, for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in Council, copy of a letter on the subject of surveys of steamers, which has just been forwarded to the Government of Bombay by the leading shipping firms here.

We would most respectfully, but earnestly, urge upon the attention of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in Council, on the same grounds as are given in the enclosed letter, the expediency of steps being taken by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to relieve steamers visiting Calcutta of the expense and trouble of unnecessary surveys, as required by Act V of 1862, by recognizing officially the survey certificates of the Board of Trade and of the Bombay Government.

We have every reason to believe that His Excellency the Governor of Bombay in Council will be ready to act reciprocally with the Bengal Government in this matter.

Begging that you will place this important matter before His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in Council at an early date.

*From G. F. Henry and other leading Shipping Firms at Bombay, to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay, Marine Department.*

*Bombay, 6th August 1872.*

We, the undersigned owners or agents of steamers visiting this port, beg that you will call the attention of His Excellency in Council to the inconvenience and expense to which steamers are liable under the provisions of Act II of 1864.

At the time the said Act was passed no objection could

reasonably be made to it, as no steamers came here except for the purpose of trading regularly between this and other ports of the east; a periodical survey of such steamers was not only reasonable but necessary for the safety of passengers and cargo.

The opening of the Suez Canal has, however, completely changed the circumstances under which steamers visit Bombay; they arrive here now with a Board of Trade certificate still in force, and can return to England before the expiry of the time for which that certificate was given: it is not impossible for a steamer to make two trips between England and Bombay within the six months during which the Board of Trade certificate remains in force, or to visit and load at Calcutta as well as Bombay and other ports without exceeding the time.

Under Act II of 1864, a steamer leaving Liverpool with a Board of Trade certificate to be in force for six months, and arriving in Bombay in 30 days, can be subjected to the delay and expense of a survey by the Bombay authorities, although returning direct to England,—a round voyage which may not occupy half the time for which the Board of Trade certificate is granted, or if having come from Calcutta, and arriving here with both a Board of Trade certificate and a Calcutta certificate, which is required by the Calcutta authorities under Act V of 1862 of the Legislative Council of Bengal,—she can be subjected, under the provisions of the said Bombay Act, to the expense and delay of a third survey and a

third certificate, and all within a period of two months, though each certificate purports to be in force for six months.

We would respectfully remind His Excellency in Council that a proper survey not only causes a steamer the expense of the survey fees, but also great inconvenience, as it requires not less than six days' time of the whole engine-room staff to prepare the engines and boilers for a proper survey, and afterwards put them again in working order; it therefore deprives the steamer of the services of its men during that time—services which should be employed for the cleaning and repairing which are always necessary to a steamer's machinery during her short stay in port.

We would also respectfully remind His Excellency in Council that what we ask from Government will not deprive the surveyors appointed of any fees, which were anticipated at the time of the passing of the Act; the opening of the canal, and the large quantity of steam tonnage now coming to the port, not having been foreseen.

We beg, therefore, most respectfully to ask that His Excellency in Council will be willing to take the necessary measures by an order of His Excellency in Council, or by passing an Act supplementary to Act II of 1864, or by any other course which may seem best, to give an official recognition to the survey certificates of the Board of Trade and to those of the Government of

Bengal, and to allow such certificates to have the same value and force in the ports and waters of the Presidency of Bombay as is possessed by the certificates furnished by the surveyors appointed by the Bombay Government.

We would respectfully remind His Excellency in Council that such a measure will not in any way restrict His Excellency in Council from guarding the safety of passengers and cargo under the special circumstances provided for by Clause 13 of Act II of 1864.

Begging that you will lay this matter before His Excellency in Council at an early date.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Government  
of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 24th October 1872.*

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3428 of 25th ultimo, handing copies of letters from Bombay regarding the exemption from a fresh survey of steam vessels on their return voyage, and requesting an opinion as to its application to this port and the necessary change in the law.

In reply I am instructed to inform you that in the opinion of the Committee no change or amendment of Act V of 1862 is required; nor do they think that the

power of insisting on fresh survey should be withheld from Government.

It is true that a steam vessel leaving London or Liverpool begins her voyage with a Board of Trade certificate holding good for six months, and that she makes the voyage to Bombay or Calcutta in a few weeks: and under ordinary circumstances it seems hard that she should be subjected to the delay, inconvenience and expense of a second survey within so short a period; and the same remark applies in a stronger degree to vessels proceeding with a Calcutta certificate to Bombay, and *vice versa*.

Giving full weight however to this argument the Committee are not prepared to advise any change in the law, and are of opinion that the power possessed by Government of ordering the survey of any vessel—no matter what previous certificates she holds—cannot be removed without serious risk and danger.

It is quite possible—and the Committee have one pertinent case in view—that a steamer, though leaving England with her machinery in good order and protected by a Board of Trade certificate for six months, may on her voyage to India encounter such weather or meet with such an accident as to render a fresh survey not only a matter of expediency, but of actual duty on the part of Government.

In the majority of cases the Committee are of opinion

that no fresh survey will be needed, but they are unwilling to remove the very wholesome check imposed by the Act of compelling a steamer, under heavy penalty, to have her machinery examined carefully and a fresh certificate granted.

The Act as it now stands (Section 7) gives the Government the right of selecting such steamers as they may choose for survey; and the Committee think that instructions to the marine authorities as to the system of selection would meet all the requirements of the case.

If a steamer has made an ordinary passage from England, or any other port, both as regards weather and time occupied, she might be exempted from fresh survey. If, on the other hand, she has met with exceptionally bad weather, or any entry in her log leads to suspicion of damage to her machinery, she should be surveyed notwithstanding the certificate from the Board of Trade.

Beyond this, which they believe will give all the relief needed to the complaints of hardship, the Committee would not advise further relaxation of what they cannot but consider a very salutary law.

**Examination of Engineers of the Mercantile  
Marine.**

This subject was brought to the notice of the Government of India by the Bombay Govern-

ment, and was sent on to your Committee for an expression of their opinion by the Government of Bengal. It appears that the trade of Bombay is not protected by a local Act as that of Calcutta, and the introduction into the new Indian Shipping Bill of the necessary provisions to secure a legally constituted Court for granting and withdrawing certificates of competency is therefore asked for. The enquiry made of the Chamber by Government was, 1st, as to the working of the recent rules; 2nd, whether we have all that is necessary in the way of legal enactments; and 3rd, their opinion in regard to the proposal from Bombay. The Committee were not able to afford Government any information as to the working of the recent rules, as no instances had been brought to their notice. As regards the second question, however, the Committee noticed several points that appeared to them deficient in our present law on the subject. The local Act provides that a certificate of survey may be withheld and a penalty inflicted if the Engineer in charge of a steamer be not possessed of a certificate of competency, but there is no provision made for cases where certificates of survey are not asked for, or where the Captain elects to pay the fine and to proceed to sea. The practice your Com-

mittee believe is that the survey certificate—which includes certificate of competency of Engineer—is always asked for and registered by the Customs authority at time of clearance; but they think it should be made compulsory by law, so as to afford full and adequate protection to both the passenger and merchandise traffic, and that it should not be left optional to the Master or Agent. There was also, the Committee showed, no section to insist on every ship or steamer being provided with a full and sufficient complement of certificated officers,—and that the Act should be amended so as to include this very necessary provision also. With regard to the third question, the Committee fully recognized the desirability of giving the Bombay trade the same protection enjoyed by us here, with the addition of the improvements above suggested.

These and all other alterations will, now that the new Merchant Shipping Act has been passed in England, soon engage the attention of the Government; and the Committee trust that they will all find place in the new Indian Act which has so long remained in abeyance, but which will now no doubt be brought forward in the Imperial Council.

*From the Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 1st July 1872.*

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the letters noted on the margin, and to request that the Lieutenant-Governor may be favored with the opinion of the Committee of the Chamber on the proposal of the Government of Bombay to provide for the examination of Engineers of the mercantile marine in the shipping bill now under the consideration of the Government of India.

*From the Govt. of Bengal to Officiating Master Attendant.*

*Calcutta, 1st July 1872.*

I am directed to forward herewith copy of a letter No. 568, dated the 27th May 1872, and its enclosure, from the Government of Bombay, in which it is proposed that provision be made for the examination of engineers in the new shipping bill now under the consideration of the Government of India.

2. It will be seen that the Government of Bombay requires—

- (1.) A legally constituted court or authority for granting certificates of competency to engineers.

- (2) A similar authority for withdrawing or cancelling such certificates.

3. The Bengal Act I of 1868 provides for examining and granting certificates to engineers, and recently rules have been issued under the orders of the Lieutenant-Governor as to the subjects of examination and form of certificate. Nothing, however, is said as to who are to be the examiners. The same Act provides for the withdrawal or suspension of our own local certificates, while Act XV of 1863 of the Indian legislature provides for the withdrawal of a certificate issued by the Board of Trade, by a court of law, but not (Section 8) by the local Government.

4. It would thus appear that we are sufficiently provided for so far as enactments go. Before, however, replying to the reference from Bombay, His Honor would wish to be favored with information on the following points—

- (1) How the recent rules work, if action has been taken under them.
- (2) Whether we have already all that we want in the way of legal provisions.
- (3) What you would suggest in regard to the proposal from the Bombay Government.
5. His Honor desires that a reply may be furnished in one month's time.

*Endorsed by the Govt. of India, Marine Department.*

*Calcutta, 18th June 1872.*

Forwarded<sup>e</sup> to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal  
 \* With enclosures. for the early opinion of the Hon'ble the  
 Lieutenant-Governor on the proposal.

Return requested.

*From Secretary to Government of Bombay to the  
 Secretary to the Government of India, Marine  
 Department.*

*Bombay Castle, 27th May 1872.*

In forwarding, with reference to paragraph 3 of your letter

No. 390, dated 15th April  
 1863, the accompanying  
 copy of papers as per mar-  
 gin, on the subject of the  
 examination of engineers  
 of the Mercantile Marine, I am desired to state that His Excel-  
 lency the Governor in Council considers the measure proposed  
 to be urgently needed, and recommends that the necessary pro-  
 visions on the subject may be introduced into the new Indian  
 Shipping Bill, which is now under the consideration of the Legis-  
 tive Council of India.

Letters from the Shipping Master, Nos. 117 and  
 119, dated 23rd and 24th February 1872.  
 Report by the Superintendent of Marine, No.  
 113, dated 8th March 1872.  
 Letter from the Shipping Master, No. 109,  
 dated 24th March 1872.  
 Report by the Government Solicitor, No. 491,  
 dated 16th April 1872.

*From Shipping Master to Secretary to the Government, Marine Department.*

*Bombay, 26th February 1872.*

I have the honor respectfully to request you will be pleased to bring the following subject to the notice of Government for consideration. :—

In view to protect the interests of the mercantile community and the more effectually to provide for the safety of the numerous passengers proceeding in the steam vessels engaged in the coasting trade as also plying between this and other ports in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, &c., &c., (which are yearly increasing in numbers and size), I would strongly urge the necessity that now exists for Government to direct that the provisions of an Act to amend the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, published in the supplement to the *Bombay Government Gazette*, 27th November 1862, relative to the qualifications of engineers serving in the Mercantile Marine, be strictly complied with. I consider this step the more advisable from the fact that latterly steam has become almost the sole propelling power on board vessels, thus necessarily throwing far more responsibility than formerly, and placing greater power in the hands of those in charge of the engines,—a power which if exercised without discretion by an incompetent person would, I submit, be fraught with the most disastrous results.

Should Government be pleased to concur with the opinion I hold relative to Mercantile Marine Engineers, sailing from this port being compelled to possess certificates of competency,

I shall have the honor of taking such steps as may be necessary to give early effect to any instructions issued for my guidance, in terms of the Amendment Act above quoted.

I would, in conclusion, beg respectfully to submit that the Assistant Chief Engineer of H. M.'s Dockyard, Mr. MacArthur, be associated (subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Marine) with the present local Marine Board of Examiners as an extra member, with power to examine and recommend Government to grant certificates of competency to such engineers as may be found qualified.

*From Shipping Master to the Secretary to the Government, Marine Department.*

*Bombay, 28th February 1872.*

In continuation of my letter No. 117, dated 26th February 1872, and in supersession of the last paragraph thereof, I have the honor respectfully to suggest that in terms of clause 10 of Act No. 1 of 1859 of Legislative Council of India (and with the approval of the Superintendent of Marine) the undermentioned officers be appointed a committee to examine engineers touching their qualifications to serve in that capacity on board vessels of the Mercantile Marine.

*President.*—Lieutenant H. Morland, Assistant Resident Transport Officer.

*Member.*—Mr. MacArthur, Assistant Chief Engineer, Her Majesty's Dockyard.

In respectfully submitting this suggestion for the consideration of Government, I may be permitted to observe that, in my opinion, Lieutenant Morland is eminently suited for the office of president of such a committee from the fact that he possesses qualifying certificates in theoretical as well as practical steam engineering.

I would further beg to add that no expense will be entailed on Government in connection with the appointment of the Board referred to, the examiners being remunerated by the fees specified in table B of Amendment Act, dated 29th July 1862, and published in the Supplement to the Bombay Government Gazette of 27th November 1862.

*Report by the Superintendent of Marine, No. 113, dated 8th March 1872.*

Undersigned presents compliments.

The suggestion made by the Shipping Master is a good one, and the measure proposed very necessary.

The gentlemen proposed as the committee are well suited for the duty, and I would extend their functions to such officers of the Mercantile Marine, who desire to take out certificates of competency in steam—as well as to engines—required by the Act.

*From Shipping Master to the Secretary to the Government,  
Marine Department.*

*Bombay, 21st March 1872.*

In reference to memorandum No. 468 by Secretary to

Government, Marine Department, dated 15th March, I have the honor to state in reply that the Board of Examiners appointed for the examination of masters and mates in the Mercantile Marine in terms of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and Acts of 1859 stands at present as follows:—

<i>President.</i>	<i>Vacant.</i>
Examiner in Navigation and Seamanship, Government Member.	} Mr. W. G. Corko.
Examiner in Stowage Bills, Protests, &c., &c., representing the Mercantile interests.	
	} Mr. F. Blackmore.

These gentlemen are, I understand, on calling in to their assistance an engineer, empowered to examine and pass in steam, if found qualified masters and mates in the merchant service, but this examination it must be borne in mind is but a superficial one, confined to simply a practical knowledge of the use and working of the steam engine, and touches but very lightly on the amount of knowledge, ability, and qualifications requiring to be possessed by competent marine engineers.

The question of the appointment of a Board of Examiners on marine engineers appears from correspondence in this office to have arisen as far back as 1863, and on the matter having been referred to the Government of India, it was stated by the Secretary of that Government in his letter No. 390, dated 15th April 1863, set forth in Government Resolution, 5th May 1863, Marine Department, No. 490, "that the suggestion was not adopted by the select committee on the above Bill (Act I of 1859) as it was thought considerable difficulty would at present be experienced in constituting proper or competent Board of Examiners for granting such certificates."

I would beg respectfully to submit that the difficulty above alluded to does not now exist, the necessity for such a Board being much increased since 1863, and further that the Superintendent of Marine having endorsed my opinion relative to the qualifications of the officers whose names I had in my former letter the honor of laying before Government is, I would trust, a sufficient guarantee of their fitness to be entrusted with the duties of examiners.

I would beg respectfully to point out for the consideration of Government that in terms of Clause 10 of part 3 of the Amendment Act, relative to engineers published in Supplement to *Government Gazette* of 27th November 1862, "the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854, with respect to the certificates of competency or service of masters and mates shall apply equally to engineers' certificates, and as Sections 9, 10, 11 and 12 of Act I of 1859 has been copied, or rather abbreviated from the Home Act of 1854. I am of opinion that the clause of the Amendment Act above quoted might be held similarly applicable to the Indian Act of 1859. This is a matter, however, which might be submitted for the opinion of the Government Solicitor, which would also include that other point relative to the fees payable by applicants for examination, which is specified in the table marked (B) in the schedule of the Act to amend the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 published in Supplement to the *Bombay Government Gazette*, dated 27th November 1862.

*Report by the Solicitor to Government No. 405, dated 10th April 1872.*

The proposed examination of engineers can only, in my opinion, be made effectual by legislation.

2. In the United Kingdom provision has been made for the examination of engineers, under the superintendence of the Board of Trade, by the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act 1862 (25 and 26 Vic., cap. 63) sections 5 to 12, which sections are to be construed with and as part of part 3 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and can, if so determined, be adapted to this country by the Legislative Council of India, under section 288 of the last named Act.

3. To make the proposed measure effectual provision should be made for subjecting engineers to the jurisdiction of Marine Courts, and for empowering the latter to cancel or suspend any certificates granted to such engineers by the authority which may be appointed for that purpose.

4. I would suggest that the correspondence should be forwarded to the Government of India with a view to the necessary provisions being introduced into the new Indian Shipping Bill, which I believe is in course of preparation.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 24th July 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2252 of the 1st instant, in which you request their opinion on the proposal of the Government of Bombay to provide for the examination of engineers of the mercantile marine in the Shipping Bill now under the consideration of the Government of India; and the following reply is submitted for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

The Committee apprehend that your inquiry is limited to the three points referred to in your letter to the Officiating Master Attendant.

On the 1st—"how the rules recently issued under the orders of Government as to subjects of examination and form of certificate work"—the Committee are not in a position to inform His Honor, as the subject has not been brought under their notice, and they are not aware of any instances to which they could direct attention as to the operation of the rules in question.

On the 2nd point—"whether the Government of Bengal has already all that is wanted in the way of legal provisions"—the Committee are of opinion that the local Act I of 1868 does not go sufficiently far in respect of competency of engineers and sufficiency of certificated officers. Sections 11 and 12 are stringent enough with regard to the withholding of *Certificates of Survey* and to the penal consequences resulting from an engineer in charge of a steamer not possessing a certificate of competency or a certificate of service; but in cases where certificates of survey are not demanded by the Master or Owner, or where the Master or Owner may elect to bear the penalty, the Act does not afford adequate protection to passenger and merchandise traffic; and for this reason it is submitted that a *compulsory* clause should be added similar in its provisions to Section 112 of the Bill now before the Government of India and which conforms to Section 10 of the Rules in the Merchant Shipping Act Amendment Act 1862, that is to say—that no vessel exceeding a certain tonnage shall be permitted to go to sea unless the survey certificate and competency and service certificates of all her principal officers shall

have been duly registered by the Shipping Master or Collector of Customs at time of application for port clearance. The Committee believe this is the rule in practice, but they submit that it should be made compulsory by legal enactment.

Then as regards insufficiency of certificated officers, the Committee are of opinion that the local Act should contain a clause embodying the provisions of the above-mentioned Section of the Indian Shipping Bill or conditions somewhat similar thereto, and that no ship or steam vessel should be allowed to go to sea without a full and sufficient complement of certificated officers and engineers, the number to be determined by the Master Attendant or some officer authorised by Government to settle this, or in the case of foreign going ships that the rules laid down by the Board of Trade or provisions of Acts of Parliament in force at the time be duly enforced.

In the 3rd paragraph of your letter to the Officiating Master Attendant relating to the same subject it is stated that the Act is silent "as to who are to be the examiners": but it appears to the Committee that the necessary provision in this respect is to be found in the VIII Section which authorises the Lieutenant-Governor or any Board or officer duly authorised by him in that behalf to nominate competent persons for the purpose of examining applicants.

On the 3rd point—"suggestion is regard to the proposal from the Government of Bombay"—the Committee are of opinion that having in view the urgent need of the measure recommended by that Government, it would be desirable to pass a short local Act for that Presidency—similar to Bengal Council Act I of 1868, with the addition of the compulsory

clause already suggested—unless the provisions of Act XV of 1863 (Government of India) are held sufficient for the purpose.

This course is recommended because the Indian Shipping Bill under consideration of the Supreme Government will probably stand over till Parliament has amended the Imperial Statutes relative to Merchant Shipping; and considerable delay is likely to be caused before the Bill passes to the final stage of receiving the assent of the Governor General.

**Amendment of the Indian Shipping Act and change in the constitution of Marine Courts of Enquiry.**

This subject has twice before engaged the attention of the Committee, and has again come before them during the last half-year. The collision between the *Khedive* and the *Aral* was attended with so lamentable loss of property, and at one time it was feared of life also, that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor desired to institute a more than usually searching enquiry into the cause. The Act under which the Government appoints a Committee limits its constitution to *two members only*, one of whom must be a magistrate and the other may be one conversant with maritime affairs; but His Honor, in order to enlarge the efficiency of the Court, wished for

two informal assessors to sit on the Committee and assist in the enquiry, and the Committee of the Chamber were asked to name one member. The late President, the Hon'ble Mr. Bullen Smith, was kind enough to undertake the duty.

The Committee of the Chamber had on previous occasions brought to the notice of the Government the insufficient constitution of the Court, and they took this opportunity of again urging an enlargement of its number and recommending the introduction into the Bengal Council of a short amending Act, giving the Government power to appoint *two or more* members. They also again expressed their opinion that an enquiry on the spot into the cause of any wreck or accident on the Coast should be only preliminary to a fuller and more searching investigation by a tribunal at the nearest Presidency town, composed of competent legal and nautical assessors. To this communication your Committee have as yet received no reply, all alterations in Marine Acts having been kept back till the passing by Parliament of the new Merchant Shipping Act. This Act has now been passed and the Committee will probably soon be informed of the intentions of the Government on the subject.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 24th August 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to submit for the consideration of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor the following remarks relative to a provision of the Indian Shipping Act which in their judgment requires to be amended.

The subject has already been discussed, but special circumstances very recently brought under the Committee's notice render a further communication necessary.

Your letter No. 19 of 4th January last forwarded, for the Chamber's information, correspondence relating to a proposal made by the Madras Chamber for amending the existing law in respect to the constitution of Marine Courts appointed under Section 100 of Act I of 1859 for the purpose of enquiring into wrecks and shipping casualties; and in their reply, dated the 29th idem, the Committee expressed their opinion that it was undoubtedly expedient to amend the said Section and recommended an enlargement of the Court, and that an enquiry by a Court at any sea port or place distant from a Presidency town should be only preliminary to an investigation by a tribunal composed of competent legal and nautical assessors to be held at the latter place. Their reasons for such amendment were recorded on a previous occasion—25th September 1867—and subse-

quently repeated, *viz*: that an investigation by two persons, one a magistrate and the other any person cognizant with maritime affairs, did not constitute an enquiry by a sufficiently competent tribunal, as it would be unequal to the conduct of cases which usually involve difficulties of a peculiar character upon which persons thoroughly conversant with ships and shipping could alone come to any satisfactory decision. The disastrous collision last week between the steamers *Khedive* and *Arat*—the latter vessel being sunk within a quarter of an hour after the accident—forms the subject of investigation by a Court of Enquiry assembled by order of the Lieutenant-Governor; and it is with reference to the peculiar constitution of that Court that the Committee consider it essentially necessary to address the Government a third time.

The Lieutenant-Governor was of opinion that the case demanded the strictest inquiry, and that a Court larger than that which the law sanctions should be held for the purpose. His Honor therefore in addition to the Magistrate and Master Attendant—who alone could legally constitute the Court—invited the attendance of a competent Merchant and a Member of the Port Commission to act in the capacity of informal assessors: and by a tribunal thus constituted the investigation is now being conducted.

In the insufficiency of a Court limited by the 100 Section of Act I of 1859 to two persons only the Committee of the Chamber entirely concur with the Lieutenant-Go-

vornor, and His Honor's desire to enlarge the Court by admitting two informal assessors in order to afford the greatest aid in prosecuting the inquiry confirms the views already expressed by the Chamber as to the expediency of amending the provision of the law which confines the constitution of the Marine Court within such narrow limits.

The position of these informal assessors in the enquiry now pending or in any future similar enquiry is so anomalous, and the defect in the law apparently so easy of remedy, that the Committee beg again to press on the local Government the need of a short enactment, which they think will fully meet this want, viz, that, instead of confining the powers of Government to the appointment of only two members, it shall be lawful for them to nominate "two or more persons." This would enable the Government to regulate the strength of the Court according to the nature or exigency of each case.

The Committee are aware that further alterations in the Act in question have been suggested to the Government, but that all amendments have been postponed pending the passing of the new Merchant Seamen's Act by Parliament. The alteration now suggested appears to the Committee to be so urgently needed that they hope the Lieutenant-Governor may order the introduction into the Bengal Council of a short amending Act accordingly.

*From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 20th September 1872.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th August, and in reply to state, for the information of the Committee of the Chamber, that it has been forwarded to the Government of India for consideration, in connection with the recommendation already made by this Government for such a change in the constitution of Courts of Enquiry under Section 100 of Act I of 1859, as that advocated by the Chamber.

2. The Lieutenant-Governor at the same time desires me to communicate to you his thanks for the letter under acknowledgment.

**Enquiry into cases of collisions and wrecks in Rivers and Pilot-water.**

The report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the cause of the collision between the *Khedive* and *Aral* has already been published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, together with the orders of Government thereon. The Committee were not able fully to arrive at the facts, owing to the absence of material witnesses on board the *Khedive*, who are not expected back in India till January next. In

in this case the *Albatross* proceeded to sea before the investigation began; on a previous occasion however the outgoing steamer was recalled to California, but the owners questioned the power of Government to take the action they did. As there seems to be an absence of specific law on the subject, the Government requested the opinion of the Chamber as to the advisability, in the interests of the port and shipping of California, of involving the Local Government, or some other authority, with summary power to stop a colliding vessel from proceeding to sea, unless she leaves behind her the most important witnesses of the collision.

After a careful consideration of the matter your Committee thought that though a diligent searching enquiry into all cases of collision was not only desirable but also an imperative duty on the part of Government, yet that the same object might be attained without giving such summary authority to the Government here as is not accorded in England, and that no ship should be exposed to the unnecessary risk of returning to California through dangerous and difficult navigation and be subjected to expense by detraction. They have therefore proposed to Government

that as soon as an accident occurs the pilot shall at once report or telegraph it to the Master Attendant and proceed to the nearest safe anchorage, remaining there for 48 hours; a standing Committee, to consist of a stipendiary Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace, Master Attendant or both, shall be appointed to conduct a preliminary investigation on each. On receipt of the pilot's report or telegram the Master Attendant shall at once arrange for the Committee to proceed to the ship, with a net pilot; the Committee shall then take on each all the requisite evidence which shall be admissible at the subsequent and fuller trial to be thereto assembled. This plan your Committee believe will ensure the fullest security into the cause of the accident, with the least possible inconvenience, expense or danger to the ship; and our opinion will also assimilate with that in England.

The subject is still under the consideration of Government.

During the discussion of this matter two objections to the existing Act became apparent. The Act as it now stands has reference only to accidents on or near the coast, and if elsewhere only to vessels bearing an *Indian Register*; and it is not therefore applicable to accidents in

*pilot-water* to vessels with an *English Register*. These objections have been pointed out to Government, and, instead of the amending Act mentioned above, your Committee recommended that an entirely new Act should be passed to meet such cases.

*From Govt. of Bengal to the Chamber of Commerce.*

*Rhodes, 16th September 1872.*

I am directed to request that you will be good enough to favor the Lieutenant-Governor with an expression of your opinion upon the following important question regarding collisions of steamers and vessels in the River Hooghly.

2. During the last few months we have had two very serious collisions, in which two steamers with all their cargo were, more or less, totally lost. In the one case, the out-going steamer was stopped from proceeding to sea until an inquiry had been made into the cause of the collision; but the owners questioned the power of the Government to take the action they did, and there seems to be an absence of specific law on the subject. In the other case, the out-going steamer was carrying the mails and proceeded to sea,—one result being that the inquiry into the collision, though conducted with the aid of specially competent assessors, produced no satisfactory result. The Commissioners conducting the inquiry stating that they

were unable fully to arrive at the facts owing to the absence of the chief factors.

3. It is, perhaps, quite unnecessary for the Lieutenant-Governor to dwell upon the importance of very early inquiry, in the presence of the officers of both vessels, into collisions of this kind. In a river like the Hooghly, where collisions are unhappily not infrequent, and where the out-going steamer generally gets the best of the collision, there must be a very strong temptation to the Captain of the out-going steamer to continue his voyage without waiting for inquiry. As matters at present stand, it seems doubtful whether any authority, except the Admiralty Court (in Calcutta the High Court), has legal power to stop a vessel, though of course a Magistrate's warrant, if duly served, can compel the officers of an out-going steamer to come on shore and attend the inquiry. It is generally impossible to put the Admiralty Court in motion with sufficient promptness to stop the out-going steamer before she leaves the river. The question then is, whether it is advisable, in the interest of the port and shipping of Calcutta, to give to the local Government or to any other authority summary power to stop a vessel which has run down another from going to sea, unless she leaves behind her the most important witnesses of the collision. The Government of India, before moving the legislature to sanction an exceptional power of this kind, wishes that the views of the representatives of the shipping interest in Calcutta should be ascertained. I am, therefore, to ask that, after considering the full bearings

of the question, you will favor this Government with your opinion, whether the interest of the port require that some such power of stopping vessels in the Hooghly be vested in the Lieutenant-Governor or in some other authority; and if so, under what restrictions and conditions ought that power, in your opinion, to be exercised.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 30th October 1872.*

I am directed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 69T. of the 16th ultimo enquiring whether, and under what restrictions, the Committee would recommend power being granted to the Local Government to recall a colliding ship to Calcutta and detain her here pending full judicial enquiry.

The Committee instruct me, in reply, to say that cases of serious collision, where alone any decided interference on the part of Government is needed, are fortunately of rare occurrence, and they do not see any reason in such exceptional cases, and simply for the purpose of enquiry, to grant the executive in this country powers not possessed by the Government at home. It is also a question whether the protection afforded to a ship having an English Register, by the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, would not effectually stop any proceedings that might be at variance with that Act

where there is certainly no mention of recall or detention. Section 288 gives the Indian legislatures power to extend the provisions of part 3 to all British ships "registered at, trading with or being at any place within, their respective jurisdictions"; any acts of the local legislatures must be in accordance with these provisions. The Act of the Bengal Council Act I of 1859 was framed in accordance with this Section, and there is in it no mention of the power now sought

On a previous occasion the Committee had to point out an addition that might with advantage be made to the present Act; and they would now mention an objection, brought to their notice, as to the application of the Act to the late accident between the *Khedive* and *Aral*, and the constitution of the Committee of Enquiry thereon. Section 100 especially limits the action of Government to wrecks and collisions, *on or near the coast, not in rivers or Pilot-water*, and the paragraph, which apparently extends this action to collisions "elsewhere," is strictly confined to accidents to or by vessels bearing an *Indian Register*.

Though the Committee object to the recall of a ship, they think the Government should have the means of obtaining a full enquiry into all serious cases of collision. Instead of correcting the present Act the Committee recommend its being allowed to stand, and to be applicable to the cases to which its original action was intended to be confined, and that a new Act be introduced into the

Council to apply to cases of collision and wrecks in rivers or Pilot-water.

Such enquiry in England is conducted under rules issued by the Trinity House or Board of Trade, many of which, however, they believe could not be conveniently applied to the altered circumstances in this country. They would propose therefore that certain rules of procedure be laid down as closely as possible assimilating to the rule at home, and that these be incorporated in, and form part of, the proposed new Act.

The rule in England is that the Commander or Pilot of a vessel causing, or meeting with, an accident, shall immediately report the same to the Trinity House or Board of Trade, and shall then proceed to the nearest safe anchorage, where duly appointed officers shall at once take evidence as to the circumstances; such evidence to be on oath and be admissible in a Court of Law, or Naval Court, to be afterwards held. In England there are officers duly appointed by these two Bodies at every port and all the anchoring places in Pilot-waters, so that no delay takes place in collecting evidence for the trial, nor is there any necessity to recall a ship to her port of departure.

This exact course cannot be followed here; but there does not seem any reason why a vessel should be exposed to the serious risk of coming back to Calcutta through dangerous navigation and be subjected to heavy expense by the delay of detention.

The Committee of the Chamber propose that for the "duly appointed officers," a standing Committee, say one of the Masters Attendant, or a stipendiary Magistrate or both, be named, who shall at once proceed to the vessel in question and collect the necessary evidence on oath. That in the event of any accident, the Commander or Pilot shall at once telegraph the same to the Master Attendant, and shall then proceed to the nearest safe anchorage in the river, and there remain for not more than 48 hours. The Master Attendant shall, immediately on receipt of this message, send down another Pilot and arrange for this Committee to go at the same time. With two or three idle steamers of Government and several Tugs constantly available, the Committee should not be more than 24 hours after the accident in reaching the ship. The evidence could be taken, the vessel allowed to proceed on her way, and the officer or Pilot in fault be afterwards put on his trial.

That a further Naval Court, on the model of Section 261 of the Merchant Shipping Act, if necessary for the trial of Master or Mate, or a Pilot Court, if for trial of Pilot or Harbour Master, be assembled as soon after as possible, and the case be fully heard; the previous evidence collected being admitted.

These provisions would be in accord with those of the Merchant Shipping Act, and would also, the Committee of the Chamber believe, secure the early, as well as full, investigation desired by Government, without at the same time

inflicting any unnecessary hardship on vessels. This will be the more apparent if the working be applied practically to the two last cases of collision,—the *Thomas Wilson* and *Ocean Chief*, and the *Aral* and *Khedive*.

In the first case the *Thomas Wilson* collided and sunk the *Ocean Chief* about Atochepore, and proceeded to Diamond Harbour, from which place she was recalled to Calcutta, having to incur the extra risk of the passage to and back, as well as the heavy expense of five days' detention here before evidence was taken, a delay which the Committee believe would have been longer, but for the urgent appeals of the Agents for the early hearing of the case. Under the proposed plan the Pilot would, in the natural and proper way that he adopted, have proceeded to Diamond Harbour, previously telegraphing the accident to the Master Attendant. The Committee of Enquiry could easily have been down there with another Pilot within 24 hours of the accident, and all the evidence, that was taken in Calcutta, been obtained at once. The Committee of the Chamber believe some trial was subsequently held, but they have not been able to trace the finding of the Court.

In the case of the *Khedive* and *Aral* the benefit of the plan is still more apparent. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, in his earnest desire to secure a full and searching enquiry into the cause of this distressing loss of property, appointed an additionally strong Committee of Enquiry, who have however separated without being

able to come to any decision, as the important evidence of the officers of the *Khedive* was not then available. The accident occurred on the 13th of August, the *Khedive* remained three days at Diamond Harbour repairing damages, there was time enough for the new Pilot, Lapatourel, replacing the former one, Yates; and there was therefore ample time for a full and complete chain of evidence to be ready for the subsequent Court of Enquiry. Whereas now the further sifting of the case is postponed to the middle of January, and in the meantime both the Pilot of the *Khedive* and the Harbour Master of the *Aral* have been under suspension for six weeks; the former has been lately allowed to return to his duty, only in consequence of his previous high character.

The Committee of the Chamber have named the proper constitution of a Court for the trial of Masters or Mates, but they believe these cases will be so rare as scarcely to call for any legislative enactment; the proposed constitution is put forward simply as a guide to the Government in the event of their holding a different opinion. Commanders and Officers have no control or voice in the management of the ship, which is entirely under the direction of the Pilot, and it is into his conduct that the enquiry will virtually be made. The remark therefore that the Captain of a colliding ship has a strong temptation to proceed to sea without waiting for enquiry will not bear examination. The Captain is in no way responsible for the accident, and has therefore no more than the usual anxiety of every prudent Com-

mander to be clear as soon as possible of a dangerous river. In such rare cases the Merchant Shipping Act Section 265 provides that the report of the Naval Court, signed by the President, shall be received in evidence by the Courts at Home, or the Board of Trade, with whom the final decision rests.

Lastly the Committee think that the enquiry under the existing Act into wrecks "on or near the Coast" might be advantageously brought under the same rule, and that the preliminary enquiry under Section 100 be afterwards submitted to a Court and a legal decision arrived at, as in the case of wrecks while under Pilotage charge.

**Enquiry into the wrecks which occurred during the Cyclone at the Sandheads in June 1872.**

Towards the end of last June the Sandheads were visited by a cyclone which caused disastrous losses among the shipping and lamentable sacrifice of life: and on the 19th of the following month a Commission appointed by the Government of Bengal to inquire into the causes of the wreck of the ships *Omaha*, *Champion*, *Rothsay* and *Solway* proceeded to consider the circumstances which occasioned these casualties, and the result of their investigation was duly submitted to Government.

With reference to the cases of the *Rothsay* and *Champion*, both outward bound, the Commission recorded their opinion that vessels should not leave Saugor for sea in the months of June and July with threatening weather, low barometer, and every indication of an approaching gale at hand; and they recommended that a general order should be given to the officers of the Pilot service warning them against leaving Saugor anchorage at such seasons and in such weather.

The Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to submit that opinion and recommendation for the consideration of your Committee, with an expression of His Honor's own views on the subject; and the following correspondence is recorded for the information of members; who will also find, in continuation, a further reference regarding the cyclone based on the account given by the Meteorological Reporter.

That report is too voluminous to be inserted here; but the extracts which have been largely made from it will sufficiently indicate the nature of Mr. Willson's able and interesting review of the subject.

*From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 1st August 1872.*

I am directed to forward to you a copy of the papers  
Proceedings of a Committee of Inquiry into the wrecks of the *Champion* and *Rothsay*, dated 11th July 1872. noted in the margin, regarding certain wrecks which occurred during the recent cyclone at the Sandheads.

2. In the cases of the *Champion* and *Rothsay*, the Committee of Inquiry found that the barometers of both vessels indicated the approach of the storm, and they were of opinion that in the face of this warning it was imprudent to proceed to sea. They recommend that a general order should be given to the officers of the Pilot service, warning them against proceeding to sea from Sangor anchorage during the months of June or July when the weather is threatening and there is already wind and a low barometer.

3. The Lieutenant-Governor would be glad to be favored with the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce on this recommendation of the Committee. His Honor himself has doubts as to the expediency of issuing such an order for we do not know for certain which are the worst cyclone months; while we believe that cyclones may occur in April, May, September and October, as well as during the months named by the Committee. It would manifestly be inexpedient thus to fetter the discretion

of masters of vessels during half the year. At the same time there is very much to be said for the Committee's view; and whatever be the result of their recommendation, it will be an advantage that the attention of masters, owners and shippers should be directed to the views of the Committee.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 16th August 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have had under consideration the subject of your letter No. 2705 of the 1st instant: and they desire me to state in reply that the recommendation of the Committee of Inquiry, that vessels should not leave Sangor for sea in the months of June and July with threatening weather, a low barometer and every indication of an approaching gale at hand, appears to be based on the assumption that in the event of such threatening weather terminating in a cyclone a vessel would be exposed to less danger if she remained in the well known anchorage at Sangor, more or less sheltered against an easterly gale, than if she proceeded to sea and there encountered the full violence of the hurricane and ran all the additional risks of perilous navigation at the Sandheads in such weather.

The recommendation is undoubtedly on the side of precaution and prudence, and the Committee of the Chamber

are of opinion that while it is confined to the movements of vessels in the months of June and July it might be advantageously applied in all instances of threatening weather at any time of the year.

It raises however the pertinent question whether the general order to Pilots as proposed by the Committee of Inquiry is sufficiently peremptory; a "warning" may be attended to or disregarded, according as a Pilot's judgment may influence him to act in an emergency, and he may offer justifiable reasons for either course: and with this point in view it appears to the Committee that the Pilot's responsibility and duty should be clearly defined, and, under such circumstances, his authority should be superior to that of the Commander of the vessel.

[See the evidence of the Pilot of the *Champion*—

Mr. Lindquist says—"I anticipated a cyclone, and told the Captain so. I only took the ship out in obedience to the Captain's request, and not in accordance with my own discretion; and I think I was bound to do so in obedience to the Government order.

"That order is continued in the 1st para. of Master Attendant's letter and in the words "*and pilot her out to sea whenever he may require you to do so.*"

This may be accomplished by the authoritative action of Government in the Marine Department, positively forbidding Pilots to leave the anchorage at Saugor, or

other safe anchorage,—on the exhibition of danger signals at the several stations, and until such signals were withdrawn by orders from Calcutta.

In communication with the Meteorological Department, which should be required to furnish frequent reports—hourly or even half-hourly if necessary—the Master Attendant, or other authorised person, would have the fullest and most trustworthy information, and the prompt application of such information by that officer would result in the issue of distinct orders to the officers in charge of Telegraph stations for hoisting the necessary weather signals for the guidance of pilots.

The Committee entirely appreciate the Lieutenant-Governor's views as to the inexpediency in ordinary weather of fettering the discretion of masters of vessels; but on the other hand they are persuaded His Honor will share their belief that the risk of getting hurriedly to sea in exceptionally tempestuous weather is scarcely justified when premonitory indications of immediate or even distant danger and a comparatively secure anchorage should influence the most energetic and intrepid commander in the exercise of the responsible power with which he is entrusted. The fury of a cyclone is generally exhausted in a few hours, and a prudent man would, it is presumed, rather sacrifice that short detention of his vessel than attempt to contend with the terrible violence of the hurricane.

**Meteorological Report on the Cyclone of  
June 1872.**

*From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 30th September 1872.*

I am directed to forward for information a copy of a report\* by Mr. W. G. Willson, late Officiating Meteorological Reporter to the Government of Bengal, and with reference to paragraphs 36, 37, 43—51, to request that the Chamber will be so good as to advise this Government as to the best mode of giving full publicity to the deductions and recommendations therein made.

36. *The loss of the Rothesay* furnishes an example of the danger of putting to sea in weather when the Pilot vessels must of necessity be all off their stations and down to the southward. The ship was obliged to beat about the Ridge, apparently in search of a Pilot vessel, instead of getting to sea with all possible despatch and running south out of the way of danger. The cyclone crossed the Ridge on the Sunday night, and the *Rothesay* was lost on Monday morning in Balasore Bay.

37. *The loss of the Omaha* furnishes an example of the danger of pressing northwards, coming up the Bay with a south-westerly gale and a barometer falling rapidly. The only safe course is to keep south until the weather

improves to the northwards and until the barometer rises steadily.

43. It may be well here to draw attention to those indications of the formation of a cyclonic vortex in the north of the Bay and some of the laws of such storms (determined by the researches and experience of Mr. Blanford, Colonel Gastrell and others) which appear to have been specially verified by the experience of the late cyclone. These are all practical rules, and are independent of the various theories which may be set forward by different persons to attempt to account for the formation and course of a cyclone.

44. *Indications of the probable formation of a cyclone in the north of the Bay during the months of May and June:—*

I. The barometer falls steadily for some days round the north of the Bay. The fall occurs first to the south-east at Chittagong and Akyah, and afterwards at Saugor Island, Cuttack and Calcutta. The barometer at Saugor Island ranges lower than the barometer at Calcutta, (normally, at this season, it ranges higher).

II. At Calcutta the winds become light and variable from S.E. round to N.E. As the disturbance increases, masses of clouds drift from E.N.E. or N.E., and as the storm approaches, showers are frequent and the wind blows in gusts.

III. At Saugor Island the winds are at first light and variable, working round from S.E. to N.E. As the disturbance increases, and as the storm approaches, the barometer continues to fall steadily; the wind increases in force with squalls from the N.E., and masses of clouds float rapidly from the same direction. Outside there is a heavy southerly swell.

IV. At Cuttack, or False Point, the winds are at first light and variable from N.N.E., working gradually round through N. to W. and W.S.W. As the storm approaches the wind increases in force with squalls from W. and N.N.W.

V. At Chittagong the winds are light and very variable, mostly from S.E. and N.E.

VI. At Akyab the winds are at first light and saturated with moisture, mostly from S. and S.E. As the disturbance increases, the wind increases in force, and works gradually round from S.E. to S. and S.S.W.

VII. In the Bay, along and south of a line drawn from about False Point to Cheduba Island, south-westerly gales, accompanied with torrents of rain, prevail. Standing northwards the barometer falls, and rises when standing southwards.

45. Under the circumstances above specified (III), it appears unwise for ships in a good anchorage at Saugor

to put to sea. The great danger is that they may be caught in a cyclone before they have got sea room to avoid it. Moreover, the pilot vessels will, under the circumstances, be generally off their stations, and ships will be unable to land their pilots. It should be remembered also that generally the worst part of a cyclone is the heavy cross sea which accompanies it. In the late cyclone it was this tremendous sea, which is reported never to have been equalled in the Bay, which did such damage. It is accounted for by the long-continued gales from the S.W. This danger would be avoided by not putting to sea until the weather improved. From (VII) the following would appear to be a safe rule. *Ships coming up the Bay in the months of May and June with fresh south-westerly gales, accompanied by torrents of rain and a falling barometer, should not press northwards until the weather improves and the barometer rises steadily.*

46. I wish to draw particular attention to the following modern development of the laws of cyclonic storms. Disregard of this law may lead, and has led, to many losses at sea. "The direction of the wind, specially at a distance, is far from being at right angles to the bearing of the centre. The wind does not revolve round the vortex in circles, but along in curving spirals, differing two, three, or more points, from the tangential circular direction." For example, a ship running up the Bay with S.W. gale squalls, torrents of rain, a barometer falling rapidly, and every appearance of a cyclone, has no right to conclude that the centre bears N.W. and

that therefore a N. or N.N.E. course is a safe one. The centre, if at a distance, may bear N. or N.N.E., and a northerly course may run the ship into it, particularly as it may be then almost stationary. "The safest course seems to be to lie to and watch the barometer and wind till the bearing of the centre be known with some certainty." It must be borne in mind that before any vortex is formed, gales blow towards and round a considerable belt of low pressure. The following rule is, I think, a safe one when within the influence of a vortex. To find the bearing of the centre *stand with your face to the wind and measure round to your right hand side about ten points*. In the southern hemisphere the ten points should be measured round to the left.

47. The Meteorological Reporter in Calcutta, with daily telegraphic reports of the state of the weather at Akyab, Chittagong, Saugor Island, and Cuttack (False Point would, I think, be a better station than Cuttack) will always, I think, be able to give ample warning of the probable formation of a cyclone in the north of the Bay, and in most cases some warning of the approach of storms from more southern latitudes. The telegraphic stations do not, however, extend far enough south to afford certain information of the generation of storms about the Andaman Islands. There the cyclones of the greatest violence, and those which travel furthest inland, are generally formed. Telegraphic communication with meteorological observatories at the Alguada Reef and Port Blair would, I think, enable him to give warning of the formation of the latter.

48. The experience of the late cyclone, I think, suggests that more use might be made of the information of the state of the weather from the meteorological stations, as regards warning the shipping at Saugor Island of the probable formation of a cyclone, more particularly when generated in the north of the Bay. According to experience these storms seldom travel far inland (there are some exceptions, for example, the great storm of June 3rd and 5th 1839), but they may cause great disasters to ships outward-bound.

49. I think it would be practicable to make arrangements for the exhibition of warning signals at Saugor light-house, from which they might be signalled to some of the light-ships, if considered necessary. The signals would be hoisted by orders from the Meteorological Reporter at Calcutta by telegraphic communication with Saugor light-house.

(1) *A cautionary signal*, suppose a signal cone in the daytime, to indicate that bad weather is probable. It might then be left optional with masters and pilots whether they would put to sea or not.

(2) *A warning signal*, a double cone in the daytime, to indicate that cyclonic vortex is probably in course of formation in the Bay. It might then be made imperative on masters and pilots not to put to sea.

(3) *A storm signal*, a drum in the daytime, to indicate that a vortex has been formed and is probably approaching.

During the night coloured lights to correspond to these signals should be hoisted.

50. I do not know anything, however, about the safety of the anchorage at Saugor Island. It is a question for those who are qualified to give an opinion to consider whether it would, in all cases, be safer to ride out the storm at Saugor, or put to sea at once, if there was time, especially in the case of the more violent storms which come up from the Andaman Islands, and whether it is expedient to fetter the discretion of masters and pilots at all in the matter. The signals, however, might be hoisted in any case. The ships that put to sea before the late cyclone, and which were lost in it, would have been probably saved had they remained at Saugor; but I cannot say that such would always be the case.

51. Signals corresponding to those which I have recommended for Saugor Island light-house might also be hoisted, under similar circumstances, for the shipping in Calcutta. At all events, before the next cyclone period comes round, it would be well to arrange for night signals for the shipping to correspond to the signals adopted by the Meteorological Committee (No. 296, from the Secretary to the Meteorological Committee to the Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Fort William, the 18th December 1867). There is at present, as I understand, only one night signal, and it corresponds to the *drum*, which is the storm signal, indicating that a cyclone is imminent, while the warning signal, the

double cone, does not indicate the actual approach of a storm, but only that the state of the weather is such that there may be a storm. There seems to be a good deal of misconception about the meanings of these signals.

W. G. WILLSON.

August 15th, 1872.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 30th October 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 3514 of 30th ultimo, forwarding copy of a Meteorological Report on the cyclone of last June.

The Committee have read that valuable report with much interest, and are of opinion that the widest publicity should be given to it by placing *entire* copies in the possession of the Government of all foreign countries whence vessels visit this port, as well as in the hands of the Consular Representatives of Great Britain in those places; of the Trinity House and Board of Trade, London; the authorities at the Cape, Mauritius, China and the Australian Colonies, and all ports and places where British and other shipping resorts for trade with the east.

The report contains an amount of elaborate and carefully considered information which would be largely appre-

cited by ship-masters generally, as well as by those whose duty and interest is to deal with meteorological observations and the study and development of the law of storms and violent atmospheric changes in the Indian seas: and it would be desirable to draw the special attention of the Pilot service of this port to the practical recommendations which the report suggests.

There are some points, however, which have attracted the special consideration of the Committee, regarding which they would make a few remarks.

In the 5th paragraph it is stated that reports were received from Akyab and Chittagong announcing a sudden fall of the barometer, and the weather in the Bay was considered "very threatening."

At this most critical time however, when reports of the weather were anxiously looked for from the sea-face, "the line to Saugor was closed," and "after some delay and difficulty" a report was obtained from Cuttack. This interruption of communication with the furthest river telegraph station, the efficient working of which is of such vital importance at such a juncture, and indeed of essential necessity at all times, suggests the expediency of securing the safety and freedom from all obstructions of a line upon the continuous working of which so much depends. The reason of the line being closed is not given; but the probable cause would be found in the fall of the posts or standards supporting the wires, or the

breaking of the wires. To these accidents the line must always be liable so long as the wires are so conducted, and the only perfect and permanent remedy lies in the line being carried under ground, and constructed in such a manner as to place it beyond the danger of interruption from the earth being washed away and other causes which the Telegraph Department will readily understand and can effectually cope with.

Paragraph 10 discloses a very tardy delivery of telegrams, the 11 and 12 o'clock messages being received in about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours respectively; the consequence was that the warning signals were not hoisted till late in the afternoon, much time being thus lost and the necessary signals materially delayed. In special instances of exceptionally dangerous weather more activity should be exercised, and the attention of the Signalling Department of the Telegraph Office directed to the most expeditious despatch and delivery of such important reports.

Paragraph 22 informs the Committee, greatly to their surprise, that "the Pilot Brigs do not seem to possess chronometers, and, once they leave their stations, which they all did in the late storm and went southwards, have to trust to any stray ship they may come across to give them their latitude and longitude." That Pilot vessels stationed at the Sand Heads for the special purpose of giving ready help to merchant shipping should be unfurnished with such indispensable instruments as Chronometers appears incomprehensible, and involves the

remarkable anomaly of vessels which are anxiously looked for, specially in tempestuous weather, being themselves dependent for a knowledge of their position at sea upon any stray vessel they may fortunately fall in with.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the Committee trust the Government will not fail to notice this material want, and to direct their Pilot vessels being supplied with the means of accurately determining their own true position and thus affording information to vessels in distress and in need of trustworthy data for their guidance.

Paragraph 47 points to the expediency of extending telegraphic communication to the Andaman Islands in order to obtain certain information from that quarter, where, the report affirms, cyclones of the greatest violence are generally formed. Such an extension would be, obviously, of the highest service, and His Honor the Lieut.-Governor will probably take this into consideration when reviewing this important subject.

Paragraphs 48 and 49 refer to the shipping at Saugor being warned of the probable formation of a cyclone, and to the practicability of making arrangements for that purpose: but it is manifest that all attempts would be futile unless uninterrupted communication with Saugor Light House is maintained. The Committee have already touched upon this point in their remarks on paragraph 5, and upon the question of vessels putting to sea from Saugor in threatening weather they have already

expressed their views as communicated in my letter of the 16th August.

5. On the evening of the 25th of June a sudden fall of the barometer was reported from Akyab and Chittagong. At Akyab the fall from 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  of the 24th to 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  of the 25th, was 0.119; at Chittagong, for the same period, 0.133. The telegrams conveying this intelligence reached me between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening. I then considered it advisable to draw the attention of the Master Attendant to the very threatening state of affairs in the Bay, and to suggest the adoption of any precautionary measures with regard to the shipping that he might consider necessary. I also communicated with the Deputy Harbour Master in answer to a letter of his asking for information. I then proceeded to the telegraph office to get reports from Saugor and Cuttack, and to warn the observers there to send hourly reports if any considerable fall of the barometer of increase in the force of the wind took place. *The line to Saugor was closed.* However, after some delay and difficulty, I got a report from Cuttack, which was not unfavorable. The barometer, though very low, was not falling. As before stated, there had been a slight rise up to evening of the 25th.

10. I received the 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  telegrams about 3-30 in the afternoon, and although the probabilities were still against the storm's approaching Calcutta, I determined to hoist the *warning* signals. My reasons for doing so

were these:—The focus of low pressure was evidently unpleasantly near to Saugor Island; a cyclone vortex might be in existence, although not advancing, and if not in existence, the state of affairs showed that it might be formed at any time, and its advance might be sudden and with very little warning. If it did advance, it would do so along the line of least resistance, or lowest pressure, and there were no data sufficient to show that this line did not pass through Calcutta, where appearances had been threatening and the barometer very low and unsteady. It was probable that it lay north of Cuttack, from previous rise of the barometer there. The warning signal at the Asiatic Society's building, in Park Street, was hoisted about 5 o'clock, directions having previously been forwarded to display the same signal (the double cone) at the Sailors Home and the Khiderpore dockyard. Shortly afterwards telegrams were received from Saugor showing a slight improvement, from about 2 P. M., in the state of affairs there. In Calcutta the weather, which had been very threatening all day, cleared up in the evening, and the same change appears to have been experienced all over the Bay. (It is probable that a vortex was formed, or partially formed, on the morning of the 29th, but that it broke up again in the afternoon, without advancing much, if at all.) This, however, was but a treacherous lull. Telegrams showing a fall of the barometer were received from Akyah and Chittagong; the barometer at Calcutta refused to rise; the wind directions had not improved in the least, and things became again threatening at midnight.

22. The following tables give an abstract of the meteorological observations of most of the ships that were in the north of the Bay for some days before and during the storm. The readings of the barometers are reduced for temperature, in all cases where the temperatures were recorded, and the mean of all the readings taken during the day is given. As many of the ship barometers as I could obtain have been compared by me with a standard barometer (Casella's No. 636) at the Meteorological Office, whose error to the Calcutta standard (Newman's No. 86) is known. In such cases the corrections to the Calcutta standard have been applied. In many cases the latitudes and longitudes given are obviously incorrect. In some cases they would place the ship on dry land. Of course these would be merely errors in the copying of the extracts which I received. But more dangerous errors than these occur. For many days, owing to the continued bad weather, the ships were unable to obtain observations, and the latitudes and longitudes had consequently to be reckoned by account. These are not to be trusted. For example on June 29th the *City of Madrid* was by account in Lat. 19°7' N., Long. 89°53' E. By observations obtained the same day, she was in Lat. 17°36' N., Long. 90°28' E. Thus showing her true position to have been much south and east of the position by account. The captain of the *Scimitar* states that from the 25th June to 3rd July no reliable observations could be obtained, and thinks it probable that the ship was much further to the south and east than the latitudes and longitudes by account appeared

to show. The Pilot brigs do not seem to possess chronometers, and once they leave their stations, which they all did in the late storm and went southwards, "have to trust to any stray ship they may come across to give them their latitude and longitude." Hence their observations are of little use in determining the course of the storm.

47. The Meteorological Reporter in Calcutta, with daily telegraphic reports of the state of the weather at Akyab, Chittagong, Saugor Island, and Cuttack (False Point would, I think, be a better station than Cuttack) will always, I think, be able to give ample warning of the probable formation of a cyclone in the north of the Bay, and in most cases some warning of the approach of storms from more southern latitudes. The telegraphic stations do not, however, extend far enough south to afford certain information of the generation of storms about the Andaman Islands. There the cyclones of the greatest violence, and those which travel furthest inland, are generally formed. Telegraphic communication with meteorological observatories at the Alguada Reef and Port Blair would, I think, enable him to give warning of the formation of the latter.

48. The experience of the late cyclone, I think, suggests that more use might be made of the information of the state of the weather from the meteorological stations, as regards warning the shipping at Saugor Island of the probable formation of a cyclone, more particularly when

generated in the north of the Bay. According to experience these storms seldom travel far inland (there are some exceptions, for example, the great storm of June 3rd and 5th, 1839), but they may cause great disasters to ships outward-bound.

49. I think it would be practicable to make arrangements for the exhibition of warning signals at Saugor light-house, from which they might be signalled to some of the light-ships, if considered necessary. The signals would be hoisted by orders from the Meteorological Reporter at Calcutta by telegraphic communication with Saugor light-house.

(1.) *A cautionary signal*, suppose a signal cone in the daytime, to indicate that bad weather is probable. It might then be left optional with masters and pilots whether they would put to sea or not.

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(3.) *A storm signal*, a drum in the daytime, to indicate that a vortex has been formed and is probably approaching.

During the night colored lights to correspond to these signals should be hoisted.

### Inefficient Survey of the River.

The following representation has been made to the Government of Bengal, relative to the inefficient survey of the Hooghly. The subject was brought to the Chamber's notice by the Superintendent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, who hoped that the Committee would urge the imperative necessity of improving the present means of surveying the constantly shifting channels of the river by the introduction of steamers suitable for the purpose instead of the sailing vessels now in use. Captain Lovell gave several instances in which vessels grounded in consequence of rapid changes in the ordinary navigable channels not being quickly enough notified; pilots were consequently unaware of them until they either grounded their vessels or learned from vessels of light draught that there was less water than the Surveyor's latest report indicated. It is obvious that unless the alterations in the channels are promptly ascertained and communicated to pilots without delay, vessels are liable to imminent peril. The navigation of the river at all times requires the utmost skill and intimate knowledge of its dangers on the part of pilots, but at certain sea-

sons when the river suddenly silts up old and as suddenly opens out new channels, the most experienced men need the fullest and promptest information for their guidance. The Surveyor should therefore have at his disposal the readiest means of reporting all changes instead of being hampered in his operations by the tardy movements of the sailing vessels now employed in this work.

The Committee have much satisfaction in closing this paragraph of their report with the following reply from the Government of Bengal by whom their representation has been received with prompt regard for this important subject:—

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 23rd October 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have lately had their attention drawn to the present inefficient survey of the River Hooghly, and I am requested to hand you a copy of a letter on the subject from the Superintendent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

You will observe Captain Lovell attributes the greater number of groundings this year over preceding

ones, to the absence of the usual freshets by which the channels are usually scoured; and he adduces two instances of the steamers of his Company grounding in channels, of the alterations in which no report had been made by the Surveyor, though they were so great and important that one was the next day pronounced not navigable. Six ships had also grounded on the Rungafulla Sands in a single month, and another steamer of the Peninsular and Oriental Company escaped the same fate by the information considerably given by the pilot of an inward bound vessel, of a fall of two feet of water since the last report to Bankshall a few days before.

It appears to the Committee impossible that the Surveyor can, with the means at present at his disposal, report alterations in channels in sufficient time to prevent accidents. The vessels employed on this service are old sailing boats, and the changes in the river are generally so quick and rapid, and the movements of the surveying vessels so slow, that the first intimation of a change is made known by the grounding of a ship, attended with considerable risk of life and valuable property.

The Committee beg therefore to press on the Government the necessity for the adoption of early measures by which this risk may be reduced, and they consider the plan originally proposed by Admiral Mends and seconded by the Marine authorities at Bankshall, recommends itself as of easy and immediate application, as well as unattended with much, if any, extra expense to

Government. The Committee request therefore that one or other of the steamers at the disposal of the Government may be substituted for the present surveying vessels, which are practically useless for some portion at least in the year.

The Committee believe that beyond the occasional conveyance of pilots to the station at the Sandheads, the steamers *Celerity* and *Agitator* are kept unemployed a great part of the year. The latter vessel was originally intended for and has been used as a dredging boat in the Hooghly, but at the worst season of the year, when the freshets are in, there is practically no work for her to do in her own legitimate department, and as these months are just those when quick and early intimation of changes in the channels is most urgently needed, the Committee think her services might with propriety be diverted and utilized for this important work. The *Celerity*, which, the Committee believe, is not capable of going to sea in rough weather, and is therefore retained in the river idle, might, they think, be permanently attached to this survey. Whether these two particular steamers can be spared for this duty or not, is a matter for the decision of the Government, according to their other requirements: if they cannot be spared, the Committee would still urge the necessity of some change being made in the present slow and unsatisfactory mode of notifying alterations in the river. During the last 18 months the large increase of steamers frequenting the Port, the larger tonnage of sailing ships, and the greater

traffic on the river, all point to the need of equal improvement in the machinery for notifying the dangers of, or changes in, the road by which they have to travel.

*From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 7th November 1872.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd October 1872, regarding the inefficient survey of the river Hooghly, and to request that you will be so good as to convey to the Chamber the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor for their proposals. His Honor has addressed

\*No. 3877, dated 7th November 1872. the Government of India on the subject, and a copy of the letter\* is herewith forwarded for the Chamber's information.

*From Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India.*

*Calcutta, 7th November 1872.*

I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to submit, for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, a copy of a letter dated the 23rd October 1872, and of its enclosure, from the Chamber of Commerce, drawing the attention of the Government to the present inefficient survey of the river Hooghly.

2. In his report on the establishment and vessels of

the Indian Marine, Admiral Mends wrote as follows regarding the surveying service of the Hooghly :—

"I would suggest that the *Magna* and *Marie* be replaced by one suitable steam vessel; the *Grappler* by a suitable steam buoy-and-anchor vessel propelled by her own steam; that in the meantime the small steamer *Gemini* be withdrawn from the Torpedo Committee and employed under the surveyor for river work; that the row-boats at stations 2 and 10 be kept up, and that the *Magna*, *Marie*, *Grappler*, *Leadsman*, *Agitator*, and row-boats, at 4, 6, 8, and 11, be abolished."

3. The Lieutenant-Governor would propose that Admiral Mends' suggestion should be gradually carried out. With regard to the Chamber's proposal to employ either the *Celerity* or the *Agitator* for the survey work, I am to say that the *Agitator* has already been disposed of for the purpose of towing troop-ships through the Suez Canal, and it is doubtful whether she would be fit for the survey work. The *Celerity* is the only vessel this Government has for performing odd jobs in the river and for going to sea in favorable weather, and the Lieutenant-Governor could not propose to dispense with her until another vessel were ready to take her place.

4. Under these circumstances His Honor requests that, with the permission of His Excellency the Viceroy, the steamer *Gemini* may at once be made over to the survey service, and recommends that the 250 to 300 ton steamer

and the steam buoy vessel suggested by Admiral Mends be at once ordered. Meanwhile, if these proposals meet with His Excellency's approval, the four surplus brigs, the schooner, and the four surplus row-boats, can gradually be got rid of. One of the brigs would probably be wanted as a buoy vessel at Chittagong.

#### **Concentration of Marine Offices.**

The storage room afforded by the Jetties having rendered comparatively useless a large portion of the present Custom House, your Committee applied to Government to utilize it by the erection of a suitable building large enough to accommodate under one roof all the Marine Offices, *viz.*, Customs Department, Master Attendant's Office and that of the Port Commissioners, thereby greatly facilitating the transaction of business. Though public offices have not yet been built for the requirements of the Bengal Government, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor promised the fullest consideration to the Chamber's recommendation, whatever might be the wants of other departments.

This favorable reply was immediately followed up by the appointment of a Committee to report on the proposal, the President of the Chamber representing commercial interests. The Committee have

sent in their report to Government and it is now under consideration. As His Honor, however, expressed his belief that the question was merely one of money, and would be eventually decided on that ground, the Committee of the Chamber suggested that as Customs and Marine are more or less Imperial departments, and the Port Commissioners' is a department entrusted with the care of an Imperial Port, a grant from Imperial funds might not be unreasonably asked for from the Government of India. The Chamber will observe from the annexed correspondence that His Honor has approved of the suggestion, and will apply to the Government of India for a grant, availing himself of the support given him by your Committee.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 22nd July 1872.*

It has been represented to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce that the Shipping and Commercial business of the Port would be greatly facilitated if the offices of the Collector of Customs, of the Commissioners for improving the Port, and of the Shipping Master were concentrated under one large comprehensive roof capable of affording ample accommodation for the requirements of these establishments.

It would be an obvious advantage to all concerned if the intimate business relations that necessarily exist between the Customs, Commissioners and Shipping Departments could be conducted so as to admit of immediate and consensive inter-communication in the same premises. The principle of concentration has been practically adopted in the Public Works Department under the Government of Bengal, the offices of the Engineers, Irrigation and Canals, and of the Consulting Engineer to Government of India in the Railway Department, which adjoins the offices of the principal officers of the East Indian Railway; and it appears to the Committee of the Chamber that somewhat similar arrangements might be advantageously introduced in the direction to which the attention of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor is now drawn.

The Collector of Customs will no doubt be in a position to confirm the Committee's opinion as to the relief which his department has received from the system of passing goods from the jetties; and that of the large premises within the Custom House walls a very small portion is now required for purposes which formerly demanded the whole of that accommodation.

If some plan could be devised by which the scheme now suggested could be carried out, the Committee believe that the convenience and interests of the commercial public as well as of the Government departments referred to would be materially promoted.

*From the Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 27th July 1872.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 22nd July, submitting a proposal for the concentration of the offices of the Collector of Customs, the Port Commissioners, and the Shipping Master in one building, and in reply to request that you will be good enough to convey to the Chamber the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor for the suggestion made by them.

2. There is no doubt whatever of the advantage of the proposal or of the suitability of the site which the Customs grounds afford. But His Honor apprehends that the question is merely one of money, and will be duly considered in that light when the replies are received from the Board of Revenue, the Master Attendant, and the Port Commissioners, who have been consulted on the subject. Unfortunately the needs of the Bengal Government in the way of concentration of offices are not confined to the Marine Department. Public offices have never been built for the Bengal Government, such as those recently provided for the Bombay and North-Western Provinces Government, and consequently the departments under the Bengal Government are much scattered all over Calcutta.

3. Still whatever may be the wants of other departments, the recommendation of your Chamber in this case will receive the fullest consideration.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 22nd August 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to request you will submit to the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor their acknowledgment of the consideration which His Honor has been pleased to give to their proposal for the concentration of certain public offices, and the prompt action which has been taken in the appointment of a Committee to report upon it.

Your letters of 27th July and 13th instant have afforded the Committee much satisfaction, and if the representation which they ventured to place before the Lieutenant-Governor results in their object being obtained the commercial public will be under obligation to His Honor for material facilities in the despatch of business.

The Committee are informed that the gentlemen appointed to report upon the proposed concentration have held one meeting, and that further proceedings have been postponed until the requirements of each separate department have been ascertained, when the questions of cost and suitability of site will be discussed. In the meantime the Committee of the Chamber submit for consideration with reference to the point of funds being found for the purpose of carrying out the scheme, whether an arrangement of this character has not a fair claim to be liberally

dealt with by the Government of India; the Department of Customs contributes very largely to the imperial revenue, the Marine is also more or less an imperial department, and the Port Commission is closely associated with those branches of the public service; and on these grounds a grant from imperial funds may not unreasonably be asked for if the resources at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor are insufficient to admit of the cost of the work being thereby provided.

*From the Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 5th September 1872.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 22nd August 1872, and with reference to the suggestion of the Committee of the Chamber that the Government of India may be asked to contribute to the cost of the building required for concentrating the Calcutta Port offices, I am to inform you that if the Committee should report in favor of an amalgamated building, the Lieutenant-Governor will ask the Government of India to help in the undertaking, and he will avail himself of the support of the Chamber of Commerce in making the application to the Government of India.

**Jute Godowns on the Strand Bank.**

A proposal by the Port Commissioners for constructing suitable godowns on the Strand bank

for the accommodation of the jute trade of Calcutta having been forwarded by the Government of Bengal for any suggestions your Committee might wish to offer on the subject, the following reply was submitted; and it will be observed, from the correspondence hereto annexed that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor approves generally of the scheme put forward by the Commissioners, and that in the opinion of your Committee the arrangements proposed by the Commissioners will, if sanctioned and carefully conducted, result in affording a large measure of relief to the crowded traffic of the town, promoting the particular interests of one of our most important industries, utilising in the cause of local commerce a valuable but hitherto almost neglected piece of land, and providing for a constantly increasing demand for accommodation for the purposes of our export trade.

*From the Port Commissioners to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 17th July 1872.*

In accordance with the terms of a resolution passed by the Commissioners at a meeting held on the 5th instant, I have the honor to submit, for the consideration and orders of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, a question

which has occupied the attention of the Commissioners for some time past, viz., the utilization of a portion of the Strand Bank land by the construction thereon of godowns suitable for the accommodation of the export trade of Calcutta, and more particularly the jute trade, which, under the provisions of Act II of 1872, will to a great extent be forced out of the localities which it now occupies. The terms on which the Commissioners propose, with the approval of Government, to construct and let such godowns, are stated in the report of the sub-committee appointed by the Commissioners to consider this question, and forwarded herewith.

2. The attention of the Commissioners was some time ago directed to the fact that the land in question, viz., between Ahereetollah Ghât and the Mint, was most suitable for the purposes of the jute trade, and that a great improvement would be effected if the temporary bamboo and tile huts, which at present disfigure this fine site, were replaced by substantially built warehouses designed to meet the requirements of the export trade.

3. In June 1871 a letter was addressed to the Justices, explaining the view of the Commissioners, and soliciting the grant of licenses for the storage of jute in the warehouses proposed to be built. To this letter (a copy of which is annexed) no reply has been received, and the Commissioners are still unaware whether, in the event of the godowns being erected, the Justices

would, under section 7 of Act II of 1872, refuse to grant licenses for the storage of loose jute.

4. The site in question in addition to being free from any objections which might be raised under the Warehouse Licensing Act has positive advantages to offer both to the general public as well as to those directly concerned in the trade. The lands are separated from the town by the Strand Road, and are thus so isolated as to ensure comparative safety to the town building in the event of fire originating in the proposed ware-houses. Having a river frontage, and on the land side, the tramway, which is to be constructed in connection with the whole municipal system and with the Eastern Bengal Railway, there is every facility for the easy conveyance to the site of all raw material brought to Calcutta either by the Eastern Bengal Railway or by river steamers and flats, and for removal of exports when prepared and ready for shipment by the tramway, which will be in direct communication with the jetties.

5. The site has thus many advantages, and from its position is peculiarly adapted to meet the requirements of the export trade, particularly jute, and it appears to the Commissioners therefore most desirable that this branch should be concentrated as much as possible in this locality. If the proposition is sanctioned and carried out, the Commissioners believe it will be a great public improvement, while at the same time every facility will be afforded for carrying on the most impor-

tant branch of the export trade of Calcutta. In the interests of the public generally the restrictions which the new Act imposes upon the trade must no doubt be enforced, but it is nevertheless to the interest of Calcutta as a port, to Government, and to the community at large, that a trade so important should be fostered rather than subjected to any unnecessary disadvantages.

6. In this view of the case the Commissioners entertained and considered two applications received from firms largely interested in the trade of the port, inquiring upon what terms the Commissioners would undertake to construct upon the Strand Bank land godowns suitable for the accommodation of the jute trade. The

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W. D. Deuch, Esq.  
T. H. Vowles, Esq.  
Baboo D. C. Law.  
Lord H. Ulrick Browne.

applications were referred to a sub-committee consisting of the Commissioners marginally noted, and a copy of their report and of the resolution passed by the Com-

missioners thereon is forwarded herewith for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

7. In adopting the report the Commissioners were satisfied that direct action in the manner recommended by the sub-committee was the best means of dealing with the case. Under their supervision godowns could be constructed, which would meet in all particulars the requirements of Act II of 1872, which would be adapted

to accommodate either the jute or any other branch of the export trade; while every precaution would be taken in providing appliances and by a liberal supply of water available in the buildings themselves to secure immunity from loss by fire, the great danger to which the jute trade is exposed. By concentrating the trade as much as possible upon this site, supervision would be rendered easier, and the danger of fire would be to a great extent limited; while in case of a fire actually breaking out, the floating steam fire-engine could be alongside in 15 minutes to assist the municipal fire-brigade, engines and appliances.

8. Under all these circumstances I am directed to solicit for this project the favorable consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor,—a project which is supported by the Commissioners in the belief that it meets one of the great present wants of the port, and meets it in the best possible manner.

9. Should the scheme receive the approval of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, I am to solicit the favor of His Honor applying to the Government of India with a view to granting to the Commissioners the loan of such monies as may be requisite for carrying out the proposition, the sums so advanced to be subject to the conditions applicable to loans made to the Commissioners under Act V (B. C.) of 1870, (*vide* sections 8 to 12.)

10. If the project is approved, plans and estimates

for the ware-houses will hereafter be submitted for the approval of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor for such premises as the Commissioners may determine upon constructing at once.

11. In conclusion I am desired to solicit an early expression of the views of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor on this important question. If the scheme is approved, arrangements ought to be made at once to comply with the applications now before the Commissioners, so that the buildings may be completed before the commencement of the next jute season in July or August 1873.

*Copy of a Resolution passed at the 62nd meeting of the Commissioners, held on the 5th July 1872.*

Considered the following report of the sub-committee appointed at the 61st meeting, in terms of resolution No. 2, to consider two applications from Messrs. Hoare, Miller and Co., and Messrs. Ralli Brothers, inquiring upon what terms the Commissioners would be prepared to construct and lease out suitable godowns on the Straud bank land for the accommodation of the jute trade.

*Resolved I.*—That the report of the sub-committee be adopted and forwarded for the consideration and orders of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, with a request that His Honor will be pleased to move the Government of India to sanction the advance of such

monies as may be required for the construction of warehouses upon plans to be submitted by the Commissioners and approved by His Honor the Lieutenant Governor.

*II.*—That in the letter forwarding the report to Government, the several reasons which have induced the Commissioners to take action in this direction be clearly stated, and the attention of His Honor be invited.

(1)—To the expediency of concentrating the jute trade on the Strand Bank, such concentration being convenient for the trade and calculated to ensure most economically the supervision contemplated in Act II of 1872.

(2)—To the advisability of the Commissioners directly or indirectly constructing suitable godowns, satisfying the requirements of the aforesaid Act, and adapted to meet the wants of a most important branch of the export trade of the port.

(3)—To the fact that the direct action proposed in this matter appears to the Commissioners to be the best and most economical method of obviating the inconvenience to which the operation of Act II of 1872 must subject the trade,—a trade which it should be the aim of the Commissioners, the Municipality, and Government, to foster as much as possible.

*Proceedings of a Sub-Committee held on Wednesday, the 26th June 1872, for the consideration of two applica-*

*tions, one from MESSRS. HOARE, MILLER CO., the other from MESSRS. RALLI BROTHERS, requesting that the Commissioners would state the terms upon which land on the Strand Bank with suitable buildings erected thereon for the sorting and storing of Jute would be let.*

Present :

V. H. SCHALCH, Esq., *Chairman.*  
W. D. BRUCE, Esq., *Vice-Chairman.*  
T. H. WORDIE, Esq.  
BABOO D. C. LAW.  
LORD HENRY ULICK BROWNE.

Messrs. Hoare, Miller & Co. and Messrs. Ralli Brothers were also represented by members of their respective firms who attended upon the requisition of the sub-committee.

*Report.*

We, the undersigned, having had under consideration the applications noted above, and having had regard to the whole question of providing accommodation for the sorting and storage of jute on the Strand Bank lands are of opinion—

I. That it is expedient to concentrate the jute trade as much as possible on the Strand Bank lands, the site being in our opinion the most convenient for the trade, and being at the same time from its detachment from Calcutta and from its contiguity to the river, the best adapted to secure immunity from accidents by fire.

2. We are of opinion that the lands so occupied should be let at such rates as will yield to the Commissioners the same return as is now derived therefrom.

3. We would recommend that suitable buildings be erected by and at the expense of the Commissioners, and that such buildings be let to approved tenants on a rental equal to 10 per cent. clear on the capital expended in construction; the tenants executing all ordinary repairs and keeping the buildings in tenatable order and paying all rates and taxes payable on the building less the amount of such rates and taxes payable hitherto by the Commissioners in respect of the land.

4. We would further recommend that the leases contemplated in the foregoing recommendation should be for no less a period than 20 years, but should be transferable subject to the approval of the Commissioners.

5. Should the Commissioners adopt the foregoing propositions, we are of opinion that an application should be made to Government for a loan of the necessary funds, the amount to be advanced upon the security of the buildings themselves and of the general revenues, and to be subject to the provisions of Act V (B. C.) of 1870.

*From Port Commissioners to the Justices of the Peace.*

*Calcutta, 15th June 1871.*

I have the honor, by desire of the Commissioners, to address you on the subject of establishing jute godowns on the Strand Bank lots, between Ahercettollah and Juggernath Ghats.

2. The storage of jute is a subject which largely occupied the attention of the Justices and other public bodies during the last six months, and efforts have been principally directed to secure the safety and convenience of the public generally, with as little inconvenience as possible to the particular interests involved in carrying on the jute trade,—a trade which though only of recent growth, contributes very largely to the prosperity of Calcutta as a port.

3. With a view to a satisfactory settlement of this important question, the Commissioners are desirous of letting out a few of the Strand Bank lots between the Mint and Ahercettollah Ghat, for the construction thereon of godowns to be licensed for the storage of loose jute, and solicit the sanction of the Justices to the scheme. The proposal if carried out would, in the opinion of the Commissioners, satisfy those who are concerned in protecting the interests of the general public, while at the same time it would exactly meet the wants of those directly concerned in the jute trade.

4. The site in question seems to the Commissioners to present exceptional advantages for the trade, while at the same time not only is it free from the objections which the Justices have raised to carrying on the trade in the heart of the town, but it offers positive advantages to the Municipality, by relieving the ordinary thoroughfares of a cumbersome and heavy traffic, by affording facilities for supervision, and by reducing the risk of danger of fire to a minimum.

5. The site has what may be considered two frontages, viz., one to the river immediately upon the upper strand wharf, and the other to the Strand Road. The river frontage would meet directly the wants of the trade by rendering unnecessary land carriage for jute, either when brought into or when being exported from Calcutta.

6. The loose drums would be taken direct from boats into the godowns, and the screwed bales would, in a similar manner, be shipped over the wharf into boats and sent alongside vessels, without rendering necessary any cartage along the Strand Road or any other thoroughfare of Calcutta. The site will also be connected by the proposed tramway with the Scaldah terminus of the Eastern Bengal Railway, and hence the large quantities of jute brought by this relief of the traffic of the ordinary thoroughfare.

7. The proximity of the godowns to the river side

would be a great advantage to the exporters, and not only would they save largely in the cost of transport, but the jute would not longer be exposed to the injury consequent on heavy rains, which caused so much dissatisfaction in the shipments of last year. Instead of being left on the river bank under heavy showers of rain, the bales would be taken direct from the godowns to the boats, and no exposure would be necessary.

8. The proposed tramway by which the Commissioners intend to connect the Strand Bank lots with the jetties would offer similar advantages to vessels loading at the jetties without the intervention of boats, so that by concentrating the trade upon the site proposed, the whole might be carried on without carting a bale over the ordinary thoroughfares to the relief of general traffic and to the manifest advantage of the shipper.

9. But in addition to the foregoing, the Commissioners believe that the site in question is peculiarly well adapted for jute godowns, and for carrying on a trade which is attended with considerable danger from fire. It is detached completely from the town and from all dwelling houses, and the Commissioners propose, by the construction of proper fire-proof godowns, to limit any fire which might break out, to the particular godown in which it originated. With these precautions, with a proper supply of water laid on to each godown, and with the powerful auxiliary aid of the port fire-engine boat, which could be brought alongside within fifteen minutes

after an alarm of fire was raised, the Commissioners believe that the spread of a fire is absolutely impossible, so that within the limits of the proposed site the fire risk, a charge against the trade, ought to be reduced to the lowest rate.

10. To the Municipality the sanction of this proposition would be indirectly advantageous, inasmuch as supervision would be less expensive and more effective, and altogether for the reasons stated above and others which will suggest themselves to those interested in the question, the Commissioners would most strongly urge upon the Justices the importance of conceding the sanction now asked for. The proposal while proving beneficial to the particular interests of those concerned in a trade which will become, if it is not already, the staple export trade of Calcutta, is at the same time advantageous, as the Commissioners believe, to the interests of the public generally.

*From Government of Bengal to Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta.*

*Calcutta, 29th July 1872.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 706, dated the 17th July 1872, with enclosures, regarding a proposal to utilize a portion of the Strand Bank lands by constructing thereon godowns for the accommodation of the export trade of Calcutta, and more particularly the jute trade of Calcutta.

2. In reply I am to observe that the proposal generally commends itself to the Lieutenant-Governor, subject to this proviso that the proposed buildings should not be of such a character, or so close to one another, as to shut out the air from the town too completely. It will be specially necessary also not to put the proposed jute godowns too close together, in order that a casual fire may not spread into a general conflagration.

3. The Chairman to the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta, and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, will be asked to favor the Lieutenant-Governor with any suggestions they may have to offer in regard to the proposal.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.*

*Calcutta, 23rd August 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce have had under consideration the subject referred to in your letter No. 2650½ of the 29th ultimo, and they desire me to submit the following reply.

The proposal of the Port Commissioners is to utilize a portion of the Strand Bank by constructing thereon godowns or ware-houses suitable for produce generally, and specially for the accommodation of jute—one of the largest and most valuable of our staple exports; the godowns or

ware-houses being leased to approved tenants on conditions which would secure a moderate return for capital expended by the Commissioners.

In the judgment of the Committee the Commissioners have placed before the Government of Bengal a scheme which, if carefully carried out, will unquestionably be attended with considerable advantage to the export trade of Calcutta, and they desire to record their approval generally of the arrangements under which it is proposed to work it.

At the same time the Committee would suggest for the Lieutenant-Governor's consideration whether the Commissioners' proposition might not be so far modified as to admit of individuals having the option of leasing portions of the ground and building thereon according to their own requirements, and on plans approved by the Commissioners, but that each shall be a portion of a large and comprehensive plan to be previously sanctioned by the Government.

From the 3rd paragraph of the Sub-Committee's report it would appear as if the recommendation embraced the entire available ground being built upon by the Commissioners in anticipation of a demand for all the accommodation they could supply; the section may be so interpreted; and if that is the construction, it necessarily follows that the Commissioners may possibly find themselves in the position of having built more pro-

perty than they can get tenants for. If, however, the meaning of the paragraph is that the Commissioners will supply accommodation only on application by parties desirous of occupying it, the objection to which the arrangement is otherwise open would be removed.

#### Jute Depots.

From the accompanying correspondence it will be seen that your Committee were unsuccessful in obtaining from the Chairman of the Municipality an amendment of the conditions under which licenses were granted for jute depôts according to a notice issued by the Special Committee of the Justices. Your Committee were apprehensive that although the proprietor of a jute depôt may have done all that he thought would entitle him to a license, the *subsequent* official inspection might pronounce the necessary conditions as not being complied with according to the Inspectors' interpretation of the provisions of the Act. What the Committee pressed for was that proprietors should be told *beforehand* what was exactly required, so as not to be exposed to the risk of the Inspectors' disapproval and consequent withholding a license: but the Chairman of the Justices was of opinion that this could not be

conveniently complied with, and that the provisions of the Act were sufficiently specific to obviate any misapprehension of what was essential to the issue of a license.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta.*

*Calcutta, 23th May 1872.*

It has been represented to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce that while the notice published by the President of the Special Committee of the Justices relative to the accommodation for storage, the keeping or screwing of Jute and Cotton, enters very fully into the requirements which are considered essential to the issue of a license, it would be only fair to parties interested in ware-houses, screw-houses or depôts if the Committee of the Justices definitely stated in each case what alterations and improvements would—if duly attended to—be held as a compliance with the provisions of the Act; because it may happen that an owner may do all that in his belief and judgment is necessary to entitle him to a license, and yet on the subsequent inspection by the Committee the alterations and improvements may be pronounced insufficient, and license withheld.

The point urged on the attention of the Chamber is that owners should be informed of what is absolutely

required *previous to final inspection*, not in a general way according to the Notice but *specifically* so as to leave no doubt what the Justices require and what the owners would be bound to do in compliance therewith.

The Committee of the Chamber consider this a very reasonable request, and trust that the Chairman of the Justices will be pleased to authorise a survey by a competent person or persons of any screw-houses or ware-houses on a requisition from the owners or occupiers; the surveyor or surveyors to notify the alterations and additions, if any, required to entitle the owner or occupier of the premises to a license; and the said alterations and additions being executed satisfactorily a license to issue.

The Committee recommend this course as they consider it most important that every facility should be given for the unobstructed continuance of the trade in Jute which has become of such enormous value to this country.

The Committee would also feel obliged by the Chairman of the Justices informing them if it is considered necessary under Act 11 of 1872, that ware-houses in which *baled* Jute and Cotton are stored require a license. The Committee would state that as far as the intentions of the Act are concerned such a course would appear quite unnecessary. The object of the Act is to guard the Town against extraordinary risks from fire, which are undoubtedly incurred where *loose* Jute or Cotton is stored in

quantity, but the Committee would point out that *baled* Jute and Cotton do not entail extraordinary risk, being of no more dangerous character than Piece Goods or baled goods of any description. In support of this statement the Committee would beg to refer the Chairman of the Justices to the Schedule of the several Fire Insurance Companies in Calcutta in which *baled* Jute and Cotton are included under the head of *non-hazardous* goods and are charged the minimum rate of premium.

*From the Justices of the Peace to Chamber of  
Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 4th June 1872.*

I have the honor by direction of the Chairman of the Justices of the Peace for the Town of Calcutta to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 28th May 1872, expressing the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the Jute Act of 1872 B. C., and the notice issued by the Special Committee appointed under Section 5 of the Act.

2. The intention of the Special Committee is, the Chairman hopes and thinks, quite in accordance with the views of the Chamber. There is no intention of postponing the inspection till the last day. The labour of inspecting so many Jute houses between this and July 15th will fall so heavily on the special Committee that

they will be glad to spread it over the intervening period. What they hope to do is this; as soon as about 25 Jute houses in the same part of the town are reported by their owners as being in a condition that fulfils the requirements of the Committee as lately notified, the Committee will inspect them and intimate the result to the proprietors, but it is obviously of very little use and a mere waste of time to make an inspection before those requirements have been avowedly attempted to be complied with, as until they have been complied with the Committee have resolved not to recommend the grant of a license.

3. The Committee also consider that nothing they could say or point out on the spot could well be more specific than the first nine requirements in their notice, and that every owner will know at once and without difficulty on comparing the state of his Jute house with those nine paragraphs whether there is a compliance therewith or not. Those nine paragraphs inform owners to use your own words of "what is absolutely required."

To ask the Committee to make an extra inspection before proprietors have even endeavoured to comply, and then reported that they have so complied would be to impose on them extra labour without any possible result, as all the Committee could do on the spot would be for instance to point to apertures and read out the 6th requirement, to point to an open shed and read out the first, and so on. All that the Committee desire is that before they are asked to inspect, an attempt be made to meet the

requirements without meeting which they would most certainly refuse to recommend the grant of a license, and that it be reported that the attempt has been made. Should there be such delay on the part of the majority of proprietors as to render it likely that a few who have done what they think is necessary may suffer, then the inspection will be made without waiting for 20 or 25 houses to be put in order even though that may have the effect of doubling or trebling the labour of inspection.

4. You will observe that under Section 5 of the Act, the duty of inspection cannot be delegated by the Special Committee.

5. With regard to the matter of baled Jute the Chairman does not find any distinction in the Act between Jute that is baled and unbaled. Section 4 is very comprehensive, and the Chairman does not see how warehouses containing Jute or Cotton in any condition whatever could escape the incidence of the Act.

#### **Bengal Cotton.**

*Resolution by purchasers to reserve the right of opening and rescrewing fully pressed bales.*

The Committee place on record the proceedings of members in this important matter, and the correspondence relative thereto. The discussion originated with Messrs. Colvin, Cowie & Co., who

urged upon the attention of all who were interested in the subject the unsatisfactory position and prospects of the trade in Bengal cotton, in consequence of the very large proportion of inferior, seedy, and unginning cotton which had been included in the supplies in the bazar during the past season. They pointed out how greatly the consumption of Bengal cotton—both home and export—had been reduced; the serious depreciation in its value in comparison with other grades; the heavy allowances on inferior quality; deficiency in weight; vexatious difficulties in getting delivery according to contract samples; and the diversion of part of the trade to Bombay.

To remedy these mischievous results it was proposed that buyers should insist upon sellers delivering in loose or half screwed bales, and upon reserving to themselves the right to examine and rescrew every bale at sellers' expense; due notice being given to the trade of this resolution not to accept contracts for Cotton in fully screwed bales without that special condition.

The result of the reference to members of the Chamber and others engaged in the Cotton trade was an almost unanimous approval of the proposal;

and if there is equal unanimity of action on the part of purchasers the proposed remedy can be practically applied, and a system of fraud, involving the character of a large branch of our export trade, effectually and permanently suppressed.

*From Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Co. to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 8th June 1872.*

We beg leave to address you upon a subject of much importance in connection with the commerce of this city, affecting as it does in a greater or less degree the interests of nearly all the Members of the Chamber, *viz.*, the unsatisfactory position and prospects of the trade in Bengal cotton in consequence of the very large proportion of inferior, seedy, and unginned cotton which has been included in the supplies in the bazar during the past season, and much of which has been shipped to the Home markets, and (it is scarcely too much to say) cause the Bengal staple to become a bye-word and a reproach in those markets.

We do not think it necessary for us to enter into much detail on the subject, which regretful experience has made only too well known to many shippers; and it is probably sufficient for our purpose to point to the greatly reduced consumption, both home and export, of Bengal

cotton; the serious depreciation in its value in comparison with other grades; the heavy allowances assessed on inferior quality, and the numerous instances of grave deficiency in weight, as well as the vexatious difficulties experienced in obtaining delivery in the bazar according to contract samples; and the important diversion of the trade in cotton belonging to European balers in the North-western Provinces to Bombay, where their selections do not have to compete with the cheaper (because mixed and inferior) lots of native dealers.

These adverse features in the trade have been growing up for the past two or three years and have culminated during the season now closing into a state of things which we think demands some united action on the part of the buyers and shippers in this city. We are no advocates of a Cotton Frauds Act, and we adhere fully to the excellent principle of "caveat emptor," but it is very difficult for single buyers to protect themselves when they have to contend against a bad system in which sellers are united against them; and we submit that this is the case in the matter under consideration, we refer of course to the system of selling and giving delivery in fully-screwed bales; the right of opening and rescrewing being restricted to a small percentage only, thus rendering a thorough examination of the contents practically impossible, and giving every facility for fraud both in respect of quality and weight.

As the real mischief lies, in our judgment in this system of cotton being sold in fully-screwed bales, so the real remedy lies we consider in a general reversion

to the mode, which was prevalent two or three years ago, of giving delivery in loose or half-screwed bales, which can be examined and re-screwed on the spot; and we therefore think it most desirable that buyers should take the matter into their own hands and insist upon sellers delivering on these terms. Native dealers will not then find it answer their purpose to adulterate their cotton, and European balers will find a fairer field of competition with them.

If the Committee of the Chamber concur in our views, we would beg the favor of their assistance by circulating this letter among the members for the expression of their opinion generally on the subject, and particularly on the point whether they will, as a body, sign a public notice to all brokers and dealers in cotton that, from the commencement of next season, say from the 1st November, the right of opening and rescrowing every bale at seller's expense will be strictly insisted on, and that contracts will not be accepted on any other terms.

A memorandum is now in course of signature by several influential banians and mahajuns signifying their entire concurrence in this suggestion; should it meet with general adoption it may probably become necessary to seek the assistance of the East Indian Railway in carrying it out, by some modification in their present tariff for cotton which greatly favors bales pressed to 10 cubic feet.

We may add that we have written this letter at the

instance of several friends more largely interested in the trade than ourselves, as well as from our own desire to see it re-established on a better footing than at present.

Begging the best consideration of the Committee to the whole matter.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the East Indian  
Railway Company.*

*Calcutta, 29th August 1872.*

I am directed to place before the Board of Agency of the East Indian Railway the accompanying papers exhibiting the result of a representation made to the Chamber of Commerce by Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Co., relative to the trade in Bengal cotton.

The Board will notice how largely the proposition has been supported by the mercantile community, and the Committee will be glad to communicate to them the views the Board entertain upon the point referring to the action which the Railway Company may take, if the Board will favor the Chamber with an expression thereof.

*From East Indian Railway Company to Chamber  
of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 16th September 1872.*

I beg to acknowledge your communication of August 29th with its enclosures including a resolution of certain

members of the Chamber of Commerce to reserve the right of opening and rescrewing at seller's expense all fully screwed bales of cotton, that they may purchase in future, and a remark by Messrs. Colvin, Cowie and Company that it may become necessary to seek the assistance of the East Indian Railway in carrying it out, by some modification in their present tariff for cotton which greatly favors bales pressed to 10 cubic feet.

As you are aware, the object of the differential rate was to get the cotton bales tendered for transport in the smallest possible compass, an object as essentially important to the Railway as it is to the carrier by sea, in view of the lowest rate of freight, and I do not see how the Company can very well abandon the principle.

With deference to the opinion of the Chamber, I venture to think that the result of the resolution will be simply to throw the business of screwing for direct shipment into the hands of European screwers up-country, whose brand or certificate would render examination at the port unnecessary.

#### **Proposed measurement of Cotton at Howrah.**

With reference to the resolution passed at a General Meeting of the Chamber on the 14th June last relative to the measurement of fully screwed bales of cotton, the Committee here introduce the correspondence with the Port

Commissioners, who were requested to promote a proposal for measuring, on some convenient site on the Howrah side of the river, up-country pressed cotton brought down by the East Indian Railway. It will be seen that the question was referred to a Sub-Committee of the Commissioners, who gave their fullest and most careful consideration to the desirableness of concentrating the cotton trade of this port in a place near the Railway terminus, with a good river frontage, where it could be temporarily stored and properly examined, measured and shipped; but after an inspection of all available ground they were unable to fix on any site that would answer the purpose; and, other difficulties having been discussed, the Sub-Committee were obliged to come to the conclusion that the plan of having measuring sheds on the Howrah side must be abandoned.

They saw no objection however to the measurement of fully screwed bales arriving at the Howrah railway station for immediate shipment a licensed measurer with a suitable staff being appointed by the Commissioners.

The report of the Sub-Committee was duly

submitted to Members of the Chamber, but as no movement was made by them in the matter your Committee replied that in their own judgment the plan would not answer unless it was universally adopted by cotton shippers, and that the quantity arriving at Howrah to be shipped direct would not be sufficiently large to meet the expenses.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta.*

*Calcutta, 10th May 1872.*

At a recent meeting of the Chamber of Commerce the question of measurement of cotton was largely discussed, and among other means suggested for removing the difficulties and annoyances which attend that process under existing arrangements, it was proposed that a suitable place on the river bank on the Howrah side might be appropriated for that purpose, and sheds erected thereon for reception of all fully-pressed cotton brought down by the East Indian Railway, and where the measurement of the bales could be taken conveniently and satisfactorily to all concerned.

In placing this proposal before the Commissioners the Committee of the Chamber believe it is in their power to promote the object in view, and thereby confer a great advantage on the trade of the Port in this important

staple: the Committee therefore trust the Commissioners will be pleased to take the proposed arrangement into their consideration, and to sanction the employment, under their own supervision, of a staff of measurers whose services would be adequately paid for by the Commissioners who would reimburse themselves by the levy of a moderate fee per bale.

The Committee do not apprehend any difficulty in the way of such an arrangement; and as it would give general satisfaction and probably be adopted as the rule of the Chamber for the measurement of up-country pressed cotton, they trust the Commissioners will be in a position to give effect to the proposal.

*From the Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 29th May 1872.*

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 10th instant, regarding the measurement of up-country pressed cotton.

In reply I am to inform that the Commissioners have referred the matter to a Sub-Committee to report upon the best mode of carrying out the proposition, and upon receipt of this report a further communication will be sent to you.

*From the Commissioners for making improvements  
in the Port of Calcutta to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 16th August 1872.*

With reference to your letter dated the 10th May, and subsequent reminder dated the 29th May, regarding the measurement of up-country pressed cotton brought down by the East Indian Railway, I have the honor to inform you that the subject was at first considered by the Commissioners at the Meeting held on the 27th May 1872, when it was resolved that the question should be referred to a Sub-Committee for report as to the best way in which the Scheme proposed by the Chamber could be carried out. The report of the Sub-Committee, a copy of which is herewith attached, was considered by the Commissioners at their last Meeting, and it was resolved that before adopting the suggestions therein made or taking any action in the matter, a copy of the report should be forwarded to you with a request that the Chamber of Commerce would favor the Commissioners by expressing their opinion upon the propositions made by the Sub-Committee. I have therefore to request the favor of your obtaining and communicating the views of the Chamber on the subject.

*Report of the Sub-Committee appointed at the 59th  
Meeting of the Commissioners, to consider the best  
means to be adopted for the measurement of up-  
country pressed cotton brought down by East  
Indian Railway.*

*Present:*

T. H. WORDIE, ESQ.  
T. A. VLASTO, ESQ.  
J. F. RUTHERFOORD, ESQ.  
W. D. BRUCE, ESQ.

The Sub-Committee met on two occasions and having given the question their best consideration beg to report as follows:—

1 That it appeared to them most desirable to endeavour to concentrate the cotton trade of Calcutta in one place near the East Indian Railway Station with a good river frontage, and where cotton could be received from up-country either by Railway or boats, could be properly stored and examined by purchasers and where after screwing, if that was necessary or in fully screwed bales if the staple arrived in that condition, it could be passed through the Commissioners' measuring sheds situated on the same ground and shipped for export. The object of the Sub-Committee indeed was to form a cotton green similar in some respects to that in Bombay and thereby to avoid the difficulties which at present exist in dealing with an article which is kept in Godowns and Screw-houses scat-

tered over Howrah, Cossipore and Calcutta. They were also desirous of lessening the risk of fire incurred in present circumstances by having the buildings in which cotton would be stored erected according to a particular plan and placed in such a situation that they would be within reach of the floating fire Engine and near a full supply of water.

2. The Sub-Committee inspected the river bank on the Howrah side from Tellkul Ghat to Goosery with the object of fixing on a site which would meet the requirements named. They cannot say that there is any suitable portion of the river bank at present available. A piece of ground to the south of the proposed new bridge and south of the Railway coal jetties containing about 45 beegahs is in an excellent position, but it has several serious draw-backs. The first of these is that the land is under water at every flood tide, and the cost of reclaiming it would therefore be considerable while cost of foundations for the buildings to be erected on it might be excessive. Another objection is its proximity to the Coal Depôt from which the dust would be driven into the screw-houses and godowns and probably stain the cotton while kept there. The Sub-Committee believe the Railway Company would remove the coal jetties to another situation, but the cost of doing this would be heavy, and that sum added to what would have to be paid for the price of the land has caused the Sub-Committee to refrain from recommending any steps being taken in that direction at present.

3. Nor can they recommend that any large sum should be expended in meeting the wants of a trade like cotton which is of a most fluctuating nature even though the whole of the cotton which passes through Calcutta should be made liable to assessment for the charges incurred. As is well known the demand for Bengal staple is dependent on the failure of the American and China crops, and while this port can never have a monopoly of the trade similar to what it holds with jute, it is at the same time impossible to say, looking to the quantity now produced in America, what number of bales can be relied on as an average annual export.

4. The Sub-Committee endeavoured to arrange with the Railway Company for a shed on the river bank in front of their present cotton shed, but the ground is required by the Company for further extensions.

5. They also considered the expediency of erecting two or three small measuring sheds at different points on the Howrah Bank of the river in proximity to the principal screw-houses, but here again the difficulty has arisen of getting land in a suitable position. A site within any of the screw-house compounds, even if it were offered, is objectionable for several reasons and any position distant from the river bank would prevent the bales being shipped under the eye of the measurers without which any measurement would be futile.

6. The Sub-Committee are therefore reluctantly com-

pelled to give up the idea of measuring sheds at present, but they see no objection to a licensed measurer with proper assistants being appointed by the Commissioners to attend at the Railway Station at Howrah from October next for the purpose of measuring the cotton arriving there for immediate shipment. The duty of the measurer would be to see the cotton put in boats after measurement, and each bale would bear the measurer's stamp clearly marked on it. The fee should not exceed two annas per bale on the whole parcel certified to, and this charge would go towards defraying the measurer's salary and cost of his establishment. The Sub-Committee apprehend that the Railway Company would lend every assistance to this arrangement, and their only fear is that the quantity of cotton for ready shipment may be too small to cover the expenses incurred; but notwithstanding this, the proposal seems worth a trial. The Sub-Committee cannot recommend the measurer being allowed to visit screw-houses to certify to the cotton put forward in them as in course of shipment, and with all cotton arriving at Howrah for storage in Howrah or elsewhere, he would of course have nothing to do.

7. When the export sheds are at work the services of trustworthy measurers will be needed, and meantime the Sub-Committee think it would be well to give the system a trial in the manner above-named.

Sd. T. H. WORDIE,  
 „ J. F. RUTHERFOORD,  
 „ T. A. VLASTO,  
 „ W. D. BRUCE.

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Commissioners for making improvements in the Port of Calcutta.*

*Calcutta, 1st October 1872.*

Your letter No. 964 of 16th August was circulated to the Members of the Chamber under cover of my letter dated the 22nd idem, but up to the present moment the Committee have had no replies which would enable them to submit to the Port Commissioners opinions entertained on the proposition contained in their Sub-Committee's report.

Speaking, however, for themselves the Committee very much doubt of the proposal to measure bales of cotton received at the Railway terminus for immediate shipment would be universally adopted by shippers of cotton especially if the cost of measurement has to be borne by them, and even if it were adopted on condition of the ship bearing cost of measurement, the Committee apprehend that the quantity arriving at Howrah to be shipped direct to the vessel would not be sufficiently large to meet the expenses of an establishment entertained for its measurement.

If the Port Commissioners consider that it would be more satisfactory to be in possession of the views of the Chamber at large, the Committee will again draw the attention of Members to the subject and communicate the result of their reference.

**Stowage of Jute in vessels bound to Dundee.**

The Dundee Chamber of Commerce, in their original recommendations, dated July 1870, as to the shipping and stowage of jute in vessels bound from Calcutta to Dundee, suggested that the cargo should not be stowed close to the deck, but a clear space of at least 6 inches be left between the topmost bales and the deck planks; considering, however, that the word *planks* was somewhat ambiguous they have since resolved that the word *beams* shall be inserted instead. In reply to the Chamber's letter on the subject your Committee said that as the amendment involved so considerable a loss of room in vessels engaged to carry an article in which the merchants of Dundee were largely interested, the proposed plan should be initiated by themselves; that to leave so much space unoccupied for the purpose of improving the ventilation of the cargo would entail a heavy loss to the ship unless it were compensated for by a corresponding advance in the rate of freight; but that if importers of jute were prepared to secure the advantage derived from freer ventilation by paying for it, there would be no difficulty in effecting arrangements on terms satisfactory to shippers and shipowners.

July '72

**Adhesive Stamps for Bills of Lading.**

The expediency of legalising the exclusive use of adhesive stamps for bills of lading has recently been the subject of an interview with the Collector of Customs, by whom it was brought under your Committee's consideration.

The rule at present under the Stamp Act, XVIII of 1869, is that a bill of lading shall bear an adhesive stamp of the value of four annas, which shall be defaced at the stamp office by a cold-steel die; and under ordinary circumstances the plan works fairly well: but in busy times the delay caused by the compulsory application of the die is liable to press heavily on shippers of produce.

The proposed use of the adhesive stamp without the formality of defacement will therefore obviate the inconvenience of such delay, and expedite the despatch of business.

The Committee were of opinion that the proposed change would be attended with considerable convenience and received with the approval of the commercial public.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Collector  
of Customs.*

*Calcutta, 24th October 1872.*

I am requested by the Committee of the Chamber, with reference to their interview with you yesterday regarding stamps on bills of lading, to inform you that the proposed change, from a stamp first fixed as an adhesive one and then struck out with a steel die, to a simple adhesive stamp, is one that will meet with the approval of the commercial community.

The Committee do not at all agree with the original proposal for bills of lading to be on water-marked paper and printed at a Government Press; water-marked paper, as Colonel Tennant says, will not only be too cumbersome and heavy, but as each separate shipowner or shipper has a distinct bill of lading for himself, the printing of so many distinct forms will be an impossibility.

The rule at present is that the bill of lading shall bear an adhesive stamp which shall be destroyed by the die; and under ordinary circumstances the plan works fairly well: but in the busy shipping season the delay entailed by the compulsory application of the die has been found to press heavily on shippers of produce, and more notably so at the close of a mail in the indigo season. The proposed use of the adhesive stamp alone

will obviate that inconvenience, and the Committee gladly advocate its adoption.

One objection has been raised to the suggested alteration, *viz.*, that bills of lading will be taken either in whole sets or in parts without *any* stamps, and that the Government revenue will suffer accordingly: but the Committee are of opinion that this argument will not bear discussion. Bills of lading for goods hypothecated to the purchasers of respective bills of exchange would of necessity be stamped as the hypothecation would be otherwise incomplete. In the same way the Government revenue would be secured as regards bills of lading representing goods sent free or without hypothecation as without those documents duly stamped the contract between the ship and shipper would be incomplete and their conditions could not be enforced. The shipper of such goods would therefore, for his own safety, see that he obtained a legal and fully binding instrument to protect his property.

Customs.

The Committee have been in correspondence with the Board of Revenue on a proposal to re-classify certain cotton goods with the view to a fairer incidence of customs duty. It was represented that many of the T. Cloths now imported are of a class totally different from that which was apparently contemplated by Government

when the valuation was fixed at 9 annas per lb., and that both importers and the customs authorities were at issue regarding the character of these manufactures, the latter contending that T. Cloths woven from fine yarn were of not less value than other descriptions which were assessed for duty at the higher tariff value of 11 annas per lb. It was also proposed to include *Long-cloth* among the articles paying duty at that higher value.

The Committee in reply to the Board said that they did not dispute the equity of the principle that all importers should be able to deal on equal terms, and that no merchant should have advantage over another in respect of any provision in the Customs Tariff; they entirely acknowledged that principle and would always be glad to support its practical adoption and application; but it appeared to the Committee that the present reference involved the consideration of a point which affected not only the interests of importers here but of the merchants of Madras and Bombay and other places as well, and that it would be premature to introduce into the Tariff—since the consolidated Customs Act is applicable to all ports subject to the Government of India—any alteration in the

valuations of articles of imported merchandise until the Board were in possession of opinions which might reach them from all quarters.

The importation into Bombay of finer makes of T. Cloth were, as the Committee believed, on a proportionately larger scale than receipts of similar cloth into this port, and the importers there might shew good cause why the Tariff valuation of that class of goods should not be disturbed: Madras and Rangoon might also be justified in deprecating any change; and under these circumstances the Committee would, for the present, prefer to let the Tariff stand as it was, even though they were of opinion that, in some instances, imports into Calcutta were dealt with with comparative liberality.

As the Import and Export Tariffs have been in force upwards of three years, and as the trade of the country has undergone many changes in that time, the Government might perhaps think it expedient to review their provisions; and in that event the Committee would be happy to render any assistance which their practical knowledge and experience might enable them to render.

**Difference between T. Cloth and 39-inch Grey Shirting.**

*From the Board of Revenue, L. P., to Chamber of Commerce.*

*Calcutta, 16th August 1872.*

A case has recently come before the Board which turns upon the question whether certain cloth is T. Cloth or not. As *Customs.* A. Money, Esq., C. B. the Tariff under the Customs law amended by Act XIII of 1871 does not contain any authoritative definition of T. Cloth, nor is such definition given elsewhere, the Member in charge feels that the present question can only be properly answered by persons who possess a practical knowledge or experience of the cloth. Mr. Money will, therefore, be much obliged if the Chamber would favor him with information as to what in their opinion constitutes T. Cloth, and whether the accompanying sample can claim to be so considered.

The return of the sample is requested

*From Chamber of Commerce to the Board of Revenue, L. P.*

*Calcutta, 23rd August 1872.*

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to state for the information of the Board, in reply to

the reference submitted in your letter No. 506 of the 16th instant, that in the judgment of the Committee and of others qualified to express an opinion on the subject, to whom the sample was submitted, the cloth in question cannot claim to be considered as a T. Cloth, and that it is essentially of a quality and description which should justify its classification as a 39-inch Grey Shirting.

The difference between a fine T. Cloth, wax-finished and glazed, and a square make of Shirtings finished in same manner, is difficult to define, as the yarns from which both are made somewhat similar in quality. The usual distinctions between T. Cloth and Shirtings are:—

*1st.*—The former is a square make having equal number of threads in both reed and pick; shirtings vary.

*2nd.*—Till lately, T. Cloths coming to India have always been 32-inches wide, some have come in within the last few months as much as 72-inches in width, and as narrow as 25-inches, but

*3rd.*—The length is *always* 24 yards; shirting being 39.

*4th.*—T. Cloth generally has a "fad" or fringe, which shirtings have not.

*5th.*—The yarn, as a rule, is coarser in T. Cloth than in shirtings.

The sample received with your letter is returned herewith.

**The Floating Bridge.**

Many inquiries having been made as to what was being done in the matter of the long-talked of floating bridge and no definite information being available on the spot. Mr. Bradford Leslie, who was superintending its construction in England, was written to on the subject, and the following reply was obligingly given by him, and published in the Calcutta papers of 8th August for general information.

Mr. Leslie has returned to India, and rapid progress may now be expected in a work of great public necessity, the postponement of which has been attended with inconvenience to passenger traffic between Calcutta and Howrah and the interests of local commerce generally.

*From Bradford Leslie to Chamber of Commerce.*

8 Victoria Chambers, Westminster, 12th July 1872.

At the present date the actual state of progress with the Hooghly bridge is as follows, viz., contracts have been let for the supply of all the ironwork for the pontoons and girders, delivery in London to commence in August 1872 and to be completed in May 1873.

A fair start has been made with the erection of the pontoons, and the iron for the girders is now being rolled. Tenders are about to be invited for the adjusting gear for moorings and iron work of superstructure. Some surplus anchors belonging to the port of Calcutta will be used for moving the bridge, and the balance of the ground tackle will be provided in England.

The abutments for the bridge will be built in the ensuing cold season, and the timber for the superstructure will be provided, so that it will all be ready by the time the iron work arrives in Calcutta and is erected.

The land approaches will be formed next cold season so as to give them time to consolidate.

If the manufacturers deliver the iron work within the contract time, I trust that the bridge will be completed and opened for traffic by the end of April 1874.

The iron manufacturers here experience great difficulty in obtaining supplies of the raw material; but the contractors who have undertaken the pontoon work make their own iron, and those who are doing the girder work have made arrangements for getting it from a first rate firm in their own immediate neighbourhood, and therefore I hope there will be no hitch in the due performance of these contracts.

**Railway Traffic Returns.**

The Committee desire to record their obligations to the East Indian and Eastern Bengal Rail-

way Companies for the valuable statistics contained in the returns furnished for the use of the Chamber; and it is gratifying to the Committee to testify to the consideration with which their applications have been invariably received, and the prompt attention with which they have been complied.

Members will have noticed that the weekly returns of cotton received by rail at Howrah, and of merchandise despatched from that station, now exhibit the places from which the former is sent for this market, and the destination of piece goods and metals from Calcutta.

To enable the Committee to form an approximate estimate of the amount of merchandise transported from Bombay to the up-country markets ordinarily supplied by Calcutta, they requested the Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company to furnish returns somewhat similar to those issued by the East Indian Line, and the Committee have much pleasure in acknowledging his ready co-operation.

#### **Tonnage Schedule.**

The last half-yearly Report contained the fullest information as to the action taken by the Chamber regarding the Tonnage Schedule.

It recorded the result of the Special General Meeting held on the 12th February, when it was decided to rescind the Schedule passed on the 16th December previous, and to re-adopt that which had been in force since 1859; it also gave the views expressed by the Ship-Owners' Associations of London and Liverpool as to the inexpediency of disturbing the Schedule of December.

On this occasion the Committee find it necessary to revert once more to the same subject by including in their report the further action of the Chamber, which arose under the following circumstances.

The last General Meeting of the Chamber was held on 31st May, at which the Schedule again formed the subject of discussion; and a formal requisition was handed to the Chairman for a Special Meeting, under Rule 17, to consider the matter; in compliance with which a meeting was held on the 14th June, when the following proceedings took place.

*The Chairman*, Mr. Murray, having read the requisition, said that the present movement had arisen from representations against the existing Tonnage Schedule, made by the principal ship-

owners at home. Though he did not personally agree with all that had been said, he thought the matter was sufficiently grave to call for a reconsideration by the Chamber. The objections to the existing Schedule resolved themselves into the four following, viz :—

*1st.*—That Jute and Cotton of *any weight* up to 400 lbs. per bale might be shipped without question as to weight.

*2nd.*—That Jute and Cotton are calculated for freight by the ton of 5 bales not exceeding 52 cubic feet, instead of by the more equitable method of 50 cubic feet, without reference to the number of bales.

*3rd.*—That measurement of Cotton at the *Screw-house* is expressly allowed.

*4th.*—That Linseed and Rapeseed are declared to be dead weight.

With regard to the first objection, only a few words would be requisite. The Schedule of 1859 now in force, when first adopted, simply specified the ton of Jute and Cotton as 5 bales. Subsequently, in 1868, when the practice of screwing

heavier Jute became general, a circular was addressed to the Members, and in accordance therewith, the standard bale was fixed at 300 lbs., and later copies of the Schedule contain this; the ton being there distinctly specified as "5 bales of 300 lbs. each." The foot-note being now simply added as a guide.

As regards the second objection the Chairman considered that the alteration affected large interests, besides ships, and he was against any change being suddenly made in so important a matter. The experiment had been previously made and had failed. Up to 1853 there had been no Schedule, authorized custom being the rule. The custom was that Jute and Cotton were taken at 5 bales to the ton. In 1853 a tonnage Committee was appointed, who framed a Schedule which was adopted by the Chamber. According to that Schedule, the ton was fixed at 20 cwt. and 50 feet. Linseed and Rapeseed occupying more than 50 feet to the 20 cwt. (at which they had previously been taken,) were rated at 18 cwt., and Jute and Cotton at 50 feet without reference to the number of bales. This Schedule was found to be unsuited to the conditions of our port, and the unwritten law of custom, established by long

usage and general consent, was again the almost universally accepted standard; so much so that in 1859 a fresh tonnage Committee was appointed, and the Schedule, now in operation, was the result of their labors, and was accepted by the Chamber. As this Schedule has been virtually in operation for so many years, and as it affects so many different interests, he, the Chairman, was averse to any abrupt change. In the matter of Cotton it was impossible to screw down to 50 feet for 5 bales along side, considering the distance  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Cotton exported had to be carried by railway.

As to the third objection, place of measurement, the Chairman thought the last land touched was the fair and equitable place for the measurement to be taken; the goods would be beyond the control of both the baler and commander of the ship; and he hoped that in a very short time arrangements would be made to give effect to this.

In the fourth objection the Chairman was, individually, in accord with the requisitionists, and for the same reason that he differed from them on another point, viz., that it introduced an abrupt and sudden change in old established customs: Linsced and Rapeseed had never, in his

opinion, been considered *dead weight*, in its strict acceptation, and he thought they should be taken to stand in the tonnage schedule, as they have always stood, as "Seeds".

He would, with these few remarks, call on *Mr. Willcox of Messrs. Turner, Morrison & Co.*, whose name stood at the head of the requisitionists, to move his resolutions, keeping them perfectly distinct as to each separate point.

*Mr. Willcox* introduced his resolutions by submitting to the meeting the following letter embodying his views, which he had previously circulated,

"Owing to constant disputes occasioning numerous references to the Chamber, to say nothing of endless lawsuits, it was last year considered imperative that the then existing Tonnage Schedule should be revised.

"The Committee therefore, assisted by other Members had, after a most careful deliberation, so altered the old schedule as they considered necessary to meet the exigencies of the case, and submitted the amended form at the meeting held.

on 16th December, when the same was passed and adopted. The principal changes that had been made referred to "dead weight" and the measurement ton. With regard to the former, the opinions expressed by the general body of merchants and agents here in the case of the ship "Innocenta," submitted by Messrs. Ralli Brothers, clearly evinced the great necessity that existed for having a clear understanding as to the term "dead weight," which had not in the previous schedules been defined. By a large majority it was decided that the seeds were not "dead weight," and this alone should have been sufficient to settle the question, and determine a rule whereby no possible dispute could in future arise, for it surely is unreasonable to include in the category of "dead weight," which is another term for "ballast," an article which is not so, for iron ships with very rare exceptions cannot stand up when loaded with seeds only as ballast; the question then arises what "seeds" are to be called, and we can see no objection to letting them remain "seeds" for which a separate stipulation in charters and engagements should be made.

"With regard to the measurement ton, considering the vast strides which have been and are

being made in improving the means for screwing bales, it was considered, and we think justly so, that an alteration from the old easy going-system of "5 bales" to that of "actual measurement" would be more equitable and would soon be found to work more satisfactorily. We believe it to be a fact that a great many of the screws are capable, with proper care and by the use of lashing of sufficient strength, of placing 5 bales of jute (300 lbs. each) measuring 50 cubic feet alongside a ship; some proprietors even profess to be able to do so at less than this; the benefit of "actual measurement" in such cases is of course patent. There are doubtless several very old establishments in the Town of Calcutta which cannot accomplish the 50 cubic feet, but as the proprietors of most of these will probably, under the new Jute Act, find that it will be more advantageous for them to build new ones in the suburbs, rather than comply with the terms of the Act, it is reasonable to suppose that the late improvements in machinery will be adopted, and they will thus be in a position to reap the benefit of the "actual measurement" system.

"Our remarks so far apply more especially to *jute* as being our principal staple, for as to *cotton*,

there can be no doubt that a far greater necessity exists for reform. It is urged that the higher rate of freight now usually paid for cotton, under the present system, compensates the ship, but this is not so, for the stowage is so completely disarranged by the bales being of all sizes and shapes that we think a much greater allowance than is currently made is requisite to cover the loss sustained in this manner. From the shipper's point of view, we cannot see that any fair objection to actual measurement can be raised, for their contracts with the screwers will be arranged accordingly, and they will know that freight will have to be paid on their goods as actually shipped, the justness of which cannot be questioned. The other minor alterations in the old schedule do not demand any special notice.

"Now as to the mode to be adopted for taking the actual measurement, it is needless for us to repeat the rascalities which are now practised to the detriment of the ship and to the disgrace of the port; they have been thoroughly exposed and admitted by some screwers and by most of our shippers. Various plans have been suggested for remedying this. The screw-house measurement of cotton, as was carried at the meeting of

12th February, was a retrograde movement entirely, in-so-much that it had hitherto only been established by "custom," that it was usual for cotton to be measured in that manner, whereas the adoption of it as a rule of the Chamber made it absolute, thereby openly encouraging a glaring evil, which, as before said has been admitted by most, but should have been apparent to all engaged in the trade.

"The measurement on a special wharf or at the jetties, if such were possible, has such difficulties attending it that we think the system is almost impracticable. In the first place the whole parcel it is intended to ship should be placed there before measurement is taken, and in the second the labor and expense of transporting it to and from would be excessive. The first objection applies also to measurement at the screw-house or nearest shipping wharf, and in addition to which there arises the undesirableness of exposing the shipments, which would be without cover, to the inclemency of the weather.

"Measurement at the ship by sworn measurers appears to us to be the only feasible solution of the matter, and the only plan by which an equita-

ble adjustment of the difficulties to all parties can be secured; and when it is shewn the easy manner in which it can be accomplished, we trust that the "opposition" will admit the justness of the proposal and vote in its favor.

"During 1871 the export of Jute and Cotton to the United Kingdom alone amounted to one and three quarter millions of bales, which we take as the basis of our calculations, being, we consider, a safe figure, as it may fairly be expected that the quantity will increase, or at all events not decrease, yearly. The comparison *so far* shows a large increase.

"Now a levy of half an anna per bale (to which trifling fee shippers could scarcely offer any objection) on these would amount to Rs. 54,687 yearly or Rs. 4,557 per month.

"This sum would admit of the employment of one Head Measurer at Rs. 500 and eleven others at Rs. 350 per month, totalling Rs. 4,350, leaving a balance of Rs. 207, which would be sufficient for incidental boat hire, &c., (for the ships' dinghees would, as a rule, be in readiness), and we think that such salaries should be sufficient to secure trustworthy men for the work. If the

average export reaches two millions of bales, which is more than probable, it would allow of Rs. 550 being paid to the Head Measurer and Rs. 400 to each of the other eleven, leaving a surplus of Rs. 258 per month. In these calculations we have not taken American and other measurement exports into account, so that the funds available at half an anna per bale will be considerably in *excess* of the sum we have taken.

"The average number of vessels which were loading at one time from 1st January 1870 to May 1872 for London, Liverpool, Dundee and the Clyde was 36, the maximum being 66. The average during the busiest months of the two years, say from September to March inclusive, was 44, and the average number of American ships which were loading at the same period was 7, making in all an average of 51 ships and steamers loading simultaneously, that would, in all probability, at one time or the other require the services of a measurer. The river frontage at which such vessels are principally moored extends over about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 miles.

"For the work to be performed ten measurers in attendance would be quite ample, which would

allow of two being absent at times, and we think that if five per cent. of the bales were retained on the deck of the ship the arrangements could be so made that the measurer should visit a sailing vessel at least twice a day if required, which would not necessitate more than 20 to 25 bales being kept on the deck at one time; in the case of steamers the measurers might be so apportioned that they might attend on board whenever signalled for. In cases when measurers would be required before or after hours, as might sometimes be the case with steamers, special arrangements could be easily made, the vessel paying a certain fee.

“With regard to the selection of the bales, if it is objected to that the mate alone should choose the bales to be measured, which probably would be the only means of at first preventing “dummy” bales being screwed, which would be highly desirable, a system might be adopted by which a certain number should be chosen, and as each bale representing that number appeared it should be set aside, say every thirteenth, seventeenth, twenty-third, or any number out of each boat, the number to be fixed upon by the mate on presentation of the boat note, which would

effectually prevent any packing of the boat. Either plan would soon prove to the screwer the benefit of having small even bales. The bales, as some time ago decided by the Chamber, should be measured at the largest part.

“It is sometimes thought that the ship gains by the amount of screwing that is employed in her stowage, but it only requires a visit to one of them to prove the fallacy of the argument. In the loading of steamers there is little or no attempt made to screw, in the actual sense of the word, and in these days where despatch is the paramount object, the amount of screwing which is practised on board sailing vessels is not much more than sufficient to force a bale into an aperture into which its own weight will not carry it.

“Most of the screw-houses are on or near the banks of the river, and under the Jute Warehouse Act we shall soon doubtless see almost all of them in those positions; the advantage therefore of shipping the bales off to the boats at once to be measured at the ship, must, we think, be admitted. Several screwers, whose opinions have been sought, concur with, and some have shewn their willingness to accept and act upon, the proposition.

"Our resolution therefore is that the revised tonnage schedule as passed at the meeting of the 16th December be re-adopted, and that measurement be taken on board the ship by "sworn measurers,"—both to come into force on 1st January 1873."

TURNER, MORRISON AND CO.

*Mr. Willcox* then submitted the 1st Resolution, which was seconded by *Mr. J. Y. Macknight*, *viz.*

*That the measurement of Jute, Cotton, and other articles similarly packed, be taken at 50 cubic feet per ton, instead of 5 bales per ton not exceeding 52 cubic feet.*

*The Hon'ble Mr. Bullen Smith*, deprecating, as he did, frequent changes in such a matter, would rather the vote of February had been left undisturbed for a time; but as many members thought the question should be re-opened at once and had brought it up, he felt bound to concur in their views and had much pleasure in seconding *Mr. Willcox's* resolution. He pointed out that the alteration proposed had decided practical advantages, among others that of relieving from a disability the owners of jute or cotton screwed at

superior presses into less than 52 feet, but who under the existing schedule had to pay freight on 52 feet notwithstanding; as a secondary advantage, he also pointed out that the proposed alteration would bring the Chamber's schedule as regards cotton into conformity with the scale current at all other Indian and China cotton ports, with the exception of Rangoon, where he understood cotton was shipped by weight. The change would also conform to the Chamber's own schedule for gunnies and gunny cloth in screwed bales which had long been 50 feet, and he could not see any valid reason for the difference. *Mr. Bullen Smith* remarked further that the objections urged against the proposed alteration were of a very vague and general character, that it was new, that it was not liked by many, &c.; but he thought that it was incumbent on those who opposed a proposition of this kind to bring forward definite practical objections, which could be weighed against positive advantages, such as those he had mentioned. For his own part he thought the change to a ton of 50 feet was in every way desirable, and he would strongly support the resolution.

*Mr. VanCutsem* deprecated the frequent re-

opening of this tonnage question, a schedule having been voted as recently as the 12th February by a large majority.

*Mr. Willcox's* proposal as regards the measurement of jute and cotton was no doubt an improvement upon the resolution which *Mr. G. H. Morrison* proposed, and *Mr. Willcox* seconded at the last meeting, and which, it would be remembered, was substantially that the measurement should be taken on board or alongside of the ship; that the Captain or Chief Officer should be at liberty to select the largest bales for measurement.

It was now proposed that the measurement should be ascertained at the ship by a sworn measurer, but *Mr. VanCutsem* thought there were strong objections against any plan involving measurement at the ship, and felt sure that most shippers would be of the same opinion.

Supposing *Mr. Willcox's* proposal was adopted, *Mr. VanCutsem* did not see why the merchant should be called upon to pay the expenses of a system adopted entirely for the ship's benefit; whilst admitting that the present system of measurement was by no means perfect, he thought its evils were a good deal exaggerated, and was

of opinion that it would be a pity to adopt even as a tentative measure a plan which was open to serious objections, considering that there was every reason to believe that, with the extension of the Jetty system, and the co-operation of the Port Commissioners, and the East Indian Railway, we should soon have materials at our disposal for arriving at an arrangement which would be satisfactory to all concerned.

With regard to a general revision of the Tonnage Schedule, *Mr. VanCutsem* thought the one we had been accustomed to for so many years had on the whole worked satisfactorily; but if any change were to be made he would certainly not advocate adopting the Schedule of 16th December, but would recommend that the work should be done thoroughly, and the Committee of the Chamber should, in that case, collect information with the object of framing a Schedule which would have the merit of scientific accuracy.

AMENDMENT—proposed by *Mr. E. VanCutsem*, seconded by *Mr. John Ralli*, viz.

*That no change should be made at present in the ton of Jute or Cotton, but that the present ton*

*should be maintained, together with the whole schedule of the Chamber as voted on the 12th February.*

*That the Committee of the Chamber should, however, be invited to collect full information on the subject by communicating with the Chambers of Commerce of the chief shipping ports in Europe and America, with the object of framing a schedule based upon scientific principles.*

The amendment was put to the vote and lost; and the original proposition was then put and carried.

Mr. Willcox also proposed the 2nd Resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Macknight, viz.

*That measurement be taken on board the ship by sworn measurers on a certain proportion of the bales as suggested by the proposer.*

Mr. Bullen Smith begged to move an amendment in the following terms :

*That no change be made in the present mode of measurement till a final reply be received from the Port Commissioners to the communication made to them by the Chamber on the subject.*

He hoped none would suppose, from the fact of his moving this amendment that he was satisfied with the existing state of things as regards measurement, but he thought that as the Chamber had referred to the Port Commissioners it was only right and reasonable to await any proposition they might have to make before committing ourselves to the new scheme now proposed, and from which we would again have to change back if the Port Commissioners were able to propose a system of still greater benefit. He thought the propriety of the course he proposed was the more obvious, that the Commissioners, he understood, were seeing their way in the matter, and hoped at no distant date to propose the establishment, on a convenient site, of what would correspond to the Bombay Cotton Green, where all cotton would be housed, examined, and measured under proper superintendence. With such a system most of the existing evils and causes of complaint would disappear, and the speaker believed that the advantages would be so apparent that just measurement would soon be brought under similar control with the consent of all concerned.

The amendment, seconded by Mr. W. Douglas, was put to the vote and carried.

THE 3RD RESOLUTION—proposed by *Mr. Temple Willcox*, seconded by *Mr. J. Y. Macknight*,

*That the term "dead weight" shall be understood to mean the following articles:—Sugar, Saltpetre, Rice, Wheat, Gram, Dholl, Peas, and all metals,*  
was put to the vote and lost.

THE 4TH RESOLUTION—proposed by *Mr. W. F. Stutz*, seconded by the *Hon'ble J. R. Bullen Smith*,

*"That the Schedule of 12th February 1872 shall stand as already passed, with the exception that the measurement of Jute, Cotton, and other similarly packed articles, as now proposed and adopted, shall take effect from 1st July 1873,*  
was put to the vote and carried.

THE 5TH RESOLUTION—proposed by the *Hon'ble J. R. Bullen Smith*, seconded by *Mr. Thos. A. Apear*.

*"That from and after the 1st September 1872 the following articles be included in the Chamber's Tonnage Schedule, viz., Aniseed at 12 cwt., Ginger at 12 cwt., Oats at 12 cwt., Turmeric at 12 cwt.,*

*Putchuck at 8 cwt., and Lines and Twines at 14 cwt. to the ton,"*  
was put to the vote and lost.

On the 12th September another General Meeting was held, on receipt of a special requisition, to dispose of the question of measurement of cotton, which stood over from the preceding meeting until the Port Commissioners' reply referred to had been received. The following resolution was put to the meeting—proposed by *Mr. Temple Willcox* and seconded by *Mr. J. Y. Macknight*—and was lost by a large majority;

*"That the measurement of baled cargo, upon which freight is payable by measurement, shall be taken on board the ship by sworn measurers; the head measurer to fix on a certain number daily, which each measurer shall communicate to the vessels on his beat in writing, and as each bale corresponding to that number reaches the deck it shall be set aside for measurement. This system to come into force on 1st July 1873."*

The Schedule as it now stands is annexed.

TONNAGE SCHEDULE for the Port of CALCUTTA, adopted at Special General Meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, held on the 12th February 1872, with effect from 1st September 1872.

But on and after the 1st July 1873 the measurement of Cotton, Hemp, Jute, Jute Cuttings, Rhea, Safflower, and other articles similarly packed, shall be taken at 50 cubic feet per ton instead of 52 cubic feet per ton not exceeding 52 cubic feet. (Resolution of the Chamber adopted 14th June 1873.)

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Aloes, in bags and boxes	20	.....
Alum, in ditto	20	.....
Aniseed, in bags	8	.....
Arrowroot, in cases	50	.....
Arsenic, in bags or cases	20	.....
Asafoetida, in bags and boxes	20	.....
Apparel, in boxes	.....	50
Bark, in bags	8	.....
Bees' Wax	20 gross	.....
Barilla	20	.....
Betel-nut	20	.....
Books	50	.....
Borax	20	.....
Bran	14	.....
Brimstone	20	.....
Bullion	.....	at per cent.
Cake-lac, in bags	16	.....
Camphor, in cases	.....	50
Cardamoms, in robins	8	.....
" boxes	.....	50
Cassia, in boxes	.....	50
" bags	12	.....
Caster Seed	15	.....
Chillies, (dry) in bags	8	.....
China Root, in bags	11	.....
" boxes	.....	50
Churra	.....	50
Churrah	14	.....
Cigars	.....	50

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Cloves, in bags	.....	8
" boxes	.....	50
Coals	.....	20
Cochineal	.....	50
Coffee, in bags	.....	18
" casks	.....	16
Coral, rough	.....	12
Coir, loose and unscrewed	.....	12
Copra, or Coconut Kernel	.....	14
Coriander Seed	.....	12
Cotton, in bales of 300lbs. each, 5 to the ton, not to exceed	.....	52
Cowries	.....	20
Cumin Seed	.....	8
" Black	.....	8
Cuteh, in bags	.....	18
Dates, wet	.....	20
" dry	.....	16
Dholl	.....	20
Elephants' Teeth in bulk	.....	20
Furniture	.....	50
Garlic and Onions	.....	12
Ginger	.....	16
Gram	.....	20
Guns, in cases	.....	50
Gunny Bags and Gunny Cloth	.....	50
Gunjah	.....	50
Hemp, in bales of 300lbs. each, 5 to the ton, not to exceed	.....	52
Hides, Buffalo, or Cow, cured	.....	14
Hoofs, Horn Shavings and Tips	.....	20
Horns, Cow, Buffalo, or Deer	.....	20
India Rubber, in bags	.....	16
" in cases	.....	50
Indigo	.....	50
Iron	.....	20
Jute, in bales of 300lbs. each, 5 to the ton, not to exceed	.....	52
Jute Cuttings, Ditto	.....	52
Lac Dye	.....	50
Lard	.....	20 gross
Linseed	.....	20

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Mace	20	50
Machinery	20	.....
Metals	20	.....
Madia Seed	18	.....
Mirabolans	16	.....
Molasses	2 puncheons or 4 hhds.	.....
Mother of Pearl, in bags	20	.....
" chests	20	.....
Munjeet	20	50
Mustard or Rape Seed	20	.....
Niger Seed	20	.....
Nutmegs, in cases or casks	50	.....
Nux Vomica	16	.....
Oats	16	.....
Oil, in cases	4 hhds.	50
" casks	per chest	.....
Opium	16	.....
Paddy	16	.....
Palmitine, in bags	16	.....
Peas	20	.....
Pepper, Long	12	.....
" Black	14	.....
Planks and Deals	20	50
Poppy Seed	10	.....
Putchuck	10	.....
Rags	20	50
Rare Silk, in bales	10	.....
Rattans for dunnage	20	.....
Red Wood, ditto	20	.....
Rhen, in bales, per ton of 5 bales not exceeding	52	.....
Rice	20	.....
Rope, in coils	50	.....
" Lincs and Twines, in bundles	16	.....
Run, in casks	2 puncheons or 4 hhds.	.....
Safflower, in bales, per ton of 5 bales not exceeding	52	.....
Sago, in cases	20	50
Sai-anoniac, in bags	20	.....
" boxes	20 gross.	.....
Saltpetro	20	.....
Salt	20	.....

ARTICLES.	Cwt. per Ton Nett.	Cubic feet per Ton.
Sapan Wood for dunnage	20	.....
Sanding Wax, in cases	.....	50
Seed-lac, in cases	.....	50
" bags	16	.....
Senna	.....	50
Shells, rough, in bags	.....	.....
Sholl-lac, in cases	20	.....
" bags	16	50
Silk Chussum	.....	50
" Waste	.....	50
Silk Piece Goods	.....	50
Skins	14	.....
Soap, country, in cases	.....	50
" bags	15	.....
" bar	20	.....
Stick Lac, in cases	.....	50
" bags	16	.....
Sugar	20	.....
Tallow, in cases or casks	20	.....
Talc	20	.....
Tamarinds, in cases or casks	20	.....
Tapioca	.....	50
Tea	.....	50
Teel Seed	20	50
Timber, round	.....	40
" squared	.....	50
Tinical	.....	20
Tobacco, in bales	16	.....
Tortoise Shells, in chests	.....	50
Turmeric	16	.....
Wheat	20	.....
Wool	.....	50

1. Goods in Casks or Cases to be calculated gross weight when paying freight by weight; and where freight is made payable on measurement, the measurement be taken on the Custom House wharf, or other shipping wharf within a radius of 5 miles from the Custom House, except in the case of Cotton, the measurement of which shall be taken at a screw-house.

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

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

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

H. W. I. WOOD,

*Secretary.*

CALCUTTA,  
14th June 1872. }

**Portrait of Sir Wm. Grey.**

The Committee have the satisfaction to announce the receipt of a most characteristic likeness of the late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir William Grey, whose portrait now adorns the Hall of the Chamber.

**New Members.**

Messrs. Paul Tambachi & Co. and Messrs. Anderson, Wright & Co. have been admitted by the Committee as Members of the Chamber, subject to the usual confirmation.

**Members retired.**

Messrs. Lyall, Rennie and Co., Messrs. D. Freck and Co., Mr. T. M. Robinson, *Managing Director of the Bengal Coal Company*, and Mr. H. Knowles, *Agent of the Borneo Company*, have ceased to be Members.

**Funds of the Chamber.**

The half-yearly balance of the Funds of the Chamber amounts to Rs. 2,662-11-6, exclusive of the Reserve of Rs. 12,000 in 4 per cent. Government Securities.

J. C. MURRAY,

*President.*

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APPENDIX.

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**RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
OF THE  
**BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.**

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

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

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

*Ninth...* That parties holding powers of procuracy 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.

