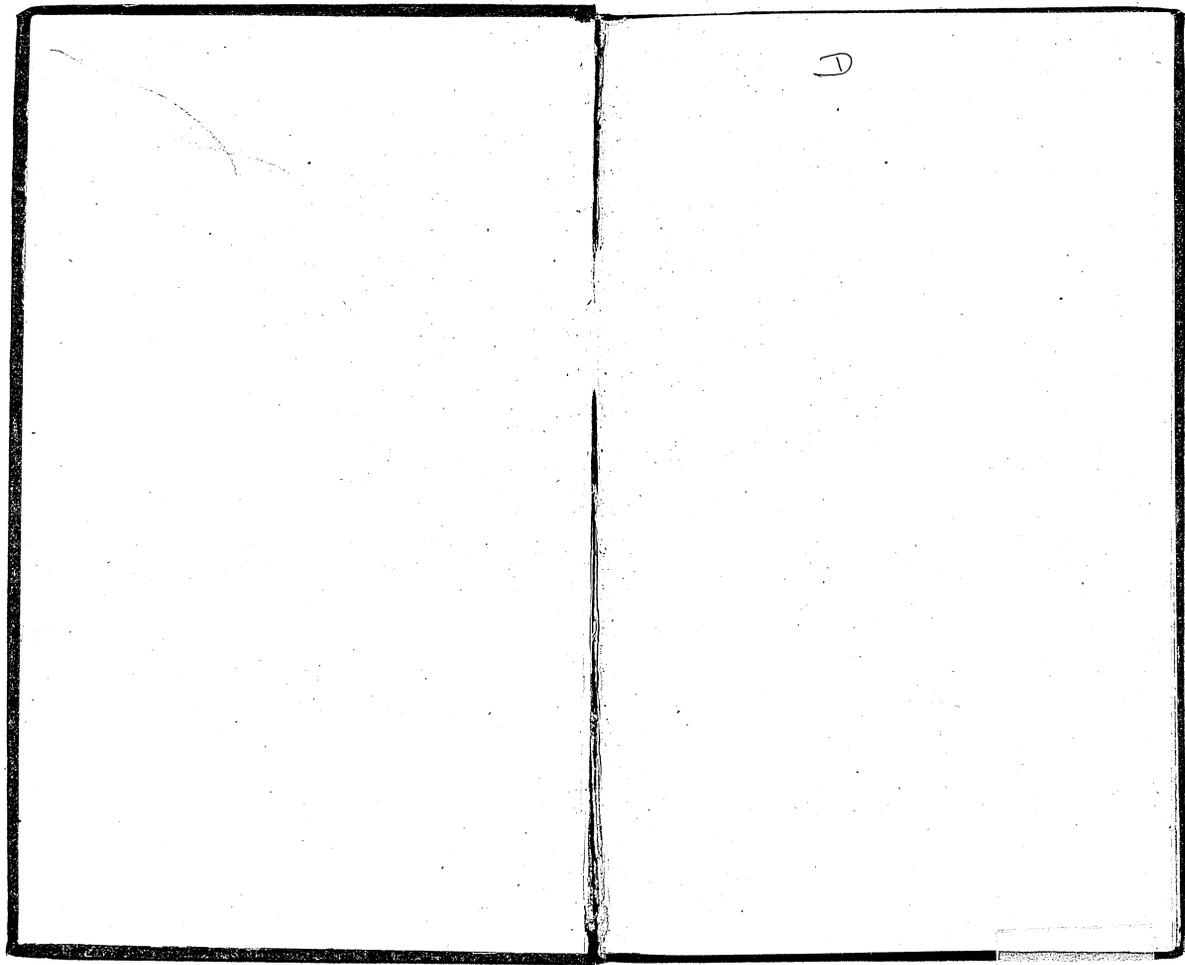


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O F T H E
B E N G A L C H A M B E R O F C O M M E R C E
F R O M 1^{S T} M A Y T O 31^{S T} O C T O B E R 1874



REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

From 1st May to 31st October 1874.

Calcutta:

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1874.

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*Proceedings of the half-yearly General Meeting
of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce held on
Tuesday, the 5th January 1875.*

J. C. MURRAY, *President, in the Chair.*

The President addressed the members as follows :—

GENTLEMEN,—The delay in the issue of our report makes it in some respects out of date, as further subjects have since come before the Committee, and others, touched upon in the report, have advanced a stage or two. I shall mention a few of the new subjects before I proceed to those noticed in the report. The first of these is the opening of the Hooghly, or, as it is now called, the Howrah Bridge. Thanks to the skill and energy of Mr. Bradford Leslie, the bridge, for which the Chamber and the public in general have agitated so long, has become an accomplished fact. The cost of it, however, has exceeded the original estimate, being fully, or very nearly, £220,000; details, we suppose, will be duly furnished by the Government. The management of the Bridge has, under the Act, been vested in the Port Commissioners, but I am sorry to say the Go-

vernment have distinctly refused their consent to the Commissioners' proposition to leave the traffic of both goods and passengers free for at least six months. I am not, I believe, guilty of any breach of official confidence in making these facts public. This interval of free communication between the two banks of the Hooghly would have done much to consolidate the traffic, and the Bridge Trustees would have gained information and knowledge as to the extent of traffic and the cost of maintenance of the Bridge. The consequence of this refusal has been that the highest tolls allowed by the Act have to be enforced, but to this we can hardly object. Tolls may, after some experience, be lowered, but they cannot be increased without great dissatisfaction. A cause of greater dissatisfaction, however, will be found in the enforcing of the clause in the Act by which the Government are empowered to levy tolls on all goods arriving at Howrah Station, whether their ultimate destination takes them across the bridge or not; even coals, consumed principally by steam tugs in the river, and not going anywhere near the bridge, are taxed at the rate of Re. 1 per 100 maunds. This subject was fully gone into and discussed at the time in the Bengal Council, and was carried by "the mere weight of official votes," in the face of the strong arguments against it of the non-official

members and the protests of the Chamber, the Trades, and other public bodies. In their united judgment, the clause was declared to be alike "un-sound in principle, inequitable in its practical application, and certain to give rise to well-founded complaints." This general dissatisfaction and these well-founded complaints will not be lessened when I further mention a fact, which I have been specially asked to notify to you, that an offer of payment of Rs. 150,000 per annum by the Railway Company on condition of the bridge being thrown open, as respects the traffic on the railway free of all charge, has been refused by the Government without any, the slightest, acknowledgment. The amount offered might be insufficient to meet the wants of Government for interest, sinking fund, maintenance, and repairs; but I think the liberality which prompted the offer deserved something more courteous than a simple demand for £10,000 more. The traffic over the bridge, if encouraged and fostered, will, perhaps, be larger than even the most sanguine could expect, and the returns would be more than sufficient to pay for maintenance, interest on capital, and sinking fund. But with such restrictions on it before the people have become accustomed to its use, the returns will be reduced below their legitimate level, a false estimate of the utility of the bridge will be formed, and the only way to supplement the

earnings to the required amount will be, as it has been, to levy an inequitable tax on goods which should not contribute towards the construction and maintenance of the bridge, and the imposition of a burden on one of our largest industries—coal—which it should be the first care of Government to encourage by all the means in their power.

The next subject is one to which my attention and co-operation was requested by the Chairman of the Landholders' Association, and is closely connected with this largely increasing and important part of the trade—the coal trade from Beerbhoom. This coal is, as you are aware, brought down from the pit's mouth by the E. I. Railway, and discharged into boats at the Railway Jetties at Howrah. These Jetties have silted up so much that the greatest possible inconvenience is experienced in the discharge of the waggons and the loading of the boats. The Railway Company here are quite alive to the hardship of the case, and are willing to assist in any endeavour to remedy it. The Committee of the Chamber have asked the Government to refer the matter to the Port Commissioners with the view of ascertaining their opinion, as Conservators of the Port, as to the best means of removing the disadvantages under which this great branch of industry is now placed.

The next subject that has, since the report, come under the notice of your Committee is the fixing of the terminus of the new railway in Eastern Bengal, at Julpigoree, instead of Sili-cooree, a distance of something under 30 miles from the proposed site. The extension of the line for only this short distance will give our large and growing tea-planting interest in Darjeeling and the Terai the benefit of railway communication, from which it would be practically debarred if the present proposed terminus is maintained. This matter has been brought to the notice of your Committee by a communication from tea-planters at Darjeeling; but as it appears to them to belong more to the Landholders' Association, the Committee have referred the matter to them, with an intimation that they are prepared to give them the benefit of their co-operation, if required.

The third subject is the levying of illegal black mail by the native officials on boats passing through the Chitpore Canal. The matter in question was taken up by the police authorities, but for want of sufficient evidence, the case was dismissed. The fact of such illegal cess has thus been prominently brought to the notice of Government, and this of itself will act in some measure as a deterrent in future.

A fourth subject has been the alterations in the present Merchant Shipping Act and the consolidation of the various enactments relating thereto. This has been a heavy business, as the papers connected with it occupy nearly 150 closely-printed pages of foolscap, and embrace some 13 or 14 different points, to say nothing of their subdivisions. Many of the subjects have already formed the bases of former representations from the Chamber; and as the opinion of the present Committee is in perfect accord with those already put before Government, we have simply drawn the attention of Government to what we formerly wrote, adding a few words on such new subjects as were brought forward. On one very important point, however, the survey of shipping, the Committee are surprised to see a letter from them, bearing directly on the subject, omitted from the record now sent round to them. The omission has been brought to the notice of Government, and the suggestions therein contained again pressed on them.

The last subject is, I regret to say, an undue stretching of the Customs law by the Collector. By a wise and very proper provision of the law, the Collector is at liberty in any case where he has reason to believe too low a valuation to have been placed on goods, to take them over on behalf of the

Government, paying to the importer the value thereof at the valuation he may have himself fixed. This is a good and salutary check on any attempt at under-valuations, as the importer may at any time be taken at his word, and his goods find their way into the hands of the Government. But while the Legislature has thus provided a security for the due preservation of the public revenue, they have also given the public an equal safeguard against the arbitrary and unnecessarily frequent exercise of this power, for it is distinctly provided that such goods as may be taken over "shall be sold by public auction." In two instances lately where goods have been so taken over, they have not been *sold* but *bought in*,—a proceeding for which there is not only no provision in the Act; but is, as it appears to the Committee, directly opposed to the very safe and proper positive enactments prescribed for the guidance of Government, and for the protection of the importer. The last instance has only been placed yesterday in its entirety before the Committee, and the Secretary was at once instructed to place himself in communication with the Board of Revenue on the subject.

Having brought you down to the meeting, yesterday, of the Committee, I think I have exhausted all the subjects that have engaged our atten-

tion since the 31st October, and I now turn to the report itself, on which my remarks will be but few, as the different subjects, taken in connection with the correspondence attached to them, speak for themselves. There are one or two, however, which require an additional word or two to bring them up to the present time. The first question of the Customs Tariff revision Committee has been a sore point. As far back as August 1873, when I had the honor of being President, the Chamber addressed a strong remonstrance to the Government on the heavy incidence of the import duties,—an incidence heavier than was contemplated when the Tariff was settled. I shortly afterwards resigned the chair, but having been recalled to it a few months ago, one of the first acts of the new Committee was to take up this question again, and in this they have been ably assisted by the Vice-President, and a second and stronger representation was sent in to Government, backed by the unanswerable argument of figures. Whether it was this second representation, or the agitation at home, which induced the Government to turn their attention to the remedying of the evil, I cannot say. A communication, however, was received by us, which you will find duly set out in the report, stating that a Committee would be formed to take the Tariff into consideration, and naming the

members to sit on it, reserving place for such *officers* as might be subsequently selected after reference to the Governments of Bombay and Madras. You will see clearly from this that the first intention of Government was to have only an *Official Committee*; no mention was made of any member from any of the three Chambers in India being expected. Your Committee, and I confess I myself personally, regarded this as a slight, not only upon ourselves, but also upon our sister Chambers at the other Presidencies. No notice was, therefore, taken of this communication from Government beyond a circular to members, asking them for suggestions as to such alterations in the Tariff as ought, in their opinion, to be made. The Government seem to have altered their mind as to the constitution of the Committee, and have since asked the Committee of the Chamber to nominate a member to sit with those already named. This needed a second reference to Government, and we have been informed, in reply, that the nomination of a mercantile member, by Government, was not intended to anticipate the further appointment of a second mercantile member by the Chamber. I am quite willing to confess the great reluctance with which I have yielded to the request of the Committee to represent the Chamber. I would much rather have allowed the Government to proceed

in their own way, and take the whole responsibility, than have gone on this Committee after this, perhaps unintentional, slight. The interests involved are, however, too large to allow of private feelings, and I have therefore yielded to the wishes of your Committee, and have consented to sit.

X
The next subject in the report refers to the alteration in the forms of the daily returns of imports and exports issued by the Custom House. They are not generally liked, and though the Committee stated this three months ago to the Board, and subsequently to the Collector, and requested a return to the old forms, no notice has been taken of our representation up to the present moment. I must, however, do the Collector the justice to say that his main object in altering the forms was, while ensuring perfect accuracy, to make them more complete and easy for reference. Before he changed these forms, he submitted the import one to me, and I pronounced it preferable to the old one. In this sample form the old classifications were retained; and if he would only go back to such old classification, I would still prefer the new form; but I was never consulted about any alteration in the classifications, and I object as strongly as any one to any change having been made in this respect, as any comparison

of statistics is now impossible. The export list was never submitted to me, and this is the one most generally complained of. I had hoped that, in deference to the feeling of subscribers on the subject, the publication of the old form would have been reverted to with the new year.

The next two items—jute warehouses and the new Port Bill—are now before the Bengal Council, where the representations of the Committee will, I have no doubt, receive full attention.

In the matter of the additional Port Rule for the protection of the bridge, I think I may again say I am guilty of no breach of official confidence when I mention the fact of the Port Commissioners fully recognizing the hardship of their very necessary rule on the ships that may require to use the opening. They have made certain recommendations to Government, which, if accepted, will remove this hardship in whole or in part.

“Telegraph code messages” is the next subject in the report; and on this I would merely observe that we must all be prepared for some change in the present method at the conference at St. Petersburg in May next, and be ready to alter our codes in accordance therewith. What these alterations may be, it is of course impossible to

predict; but Colonel Robinson's experience of the wants of India in this respect is a sufficient guarantee for their being duly taken care of by him as the representative of our Government.

The contract with the P. and O. Company, and the detention of our mails at Brindisi, are the two last subjects on the list, and they are intimately connected. Since the date of the report, the Committee have received a communication from one of the most influential owners of steamers trading to this port, complaining of the mode in which the contract was granted, and the provisions therein. The Committee have sent to England for copies of the existing as well as former contracts with the Company, so that they may be prepared with their remarks before the present contract expires. The detention of our mails at Suez for a whole week was so flagrant a disregard of our interests, that the Committee considered it their duty to protest strongly against it, and in this they have been warmly seconded by the Bombay Chamber. We are now waiting a reply to our letter to the Post Master General, before taking up the subject of subsequent delays in the receipt of our letters. Our representations of delay have not been confined to the shortcomings of the P. and O. Company. The next letter will show

you that the departure of the mail train from Bombay is to be, or has been, by this time, altered, so as to prevent the detention of our letters at Bombay after the arrival of the steamer.

These, gentlemen, are the principal points which have engaged the attention of the Committee; and though I have trespassed upon your patience, I must crave your indulgence for a moment longer. A reference to the state of our finances, as given at page 84 of the report, will show you that the expenses of the Chamber exceed its income. On the 31st October we had a cash balance of only Rs. 20, and we have been obliged to touch our Reserve Fund to the extent of Rs. 2,000 to pay our way since. This was a most unsatisfactory state of things, and I have, therefore, with the assistance of the Vice-President, gone carefully through every item of our expenditure, and we have cut off every thing not absolutely necessary. The monthly deficit is now not large; but there should be no deficit, if those who now keep aloof were to rejoin us. I have heard it said, "We gain no good from the Chamber, and we therefore do not join." Our half-yearly reports (and this one is no exception) show clearly that every class or branch of our trade is benefited by the work which the Chamber does, and this complaint will not bear exa-

mination. The funds are so nearly at an equilibrium now, that we need only a few more members to turn the scale again.

I now move that the report of the Committee for the half-year ending 31st October be received and adopted.

Mr. JAMES MURDOCH said he was sorry to observe that the Chamber had again addressed the Government on the subject of the reduction of the Doorga Pooja holidays. He had, however, much pleasure in seconding the resolution, "that the report of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for the half-year ended 31st October last be received."

The resolution was put and carried.

It was then proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. G. G. Riso, and carried, "that the Committee's conditional election of Messrs. N. J. Valetta and Company, as members of the Chamber of Commerce, be confirmed."

Mr. W. H. CHEETHAM then proposed "that the cordial thanks of the Chamber of Commerce be given to the Committee for their services."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. James Murdoch and carried.

A Special Meeting was then held for the purpose of confirming the alteration of Rule VII. of the Chamber. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Riso, and carried, "that the alteration of Rule VII., as proposed by the Provisional Committee, and adopted at the Meeting held on 5th September last, be confirmed, and that Rule VII. be as follows:—'That the business and funds of the Chamber shall be managed by a Committee of not less than five, nor more than seven members, including the President and Vice-President, to be elected annually at a General Meeting of the Chamber in the month of May; the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President being ex-officio Chairman of the Committee, and, in the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Committee to elect its own Chairman; three to form a quorum.'

The meeting then terminated.

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Report of the Committee for the half-year
ended 31st October 1874.

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

Revision of Customs Tariff.

The question of the unsuitableness of the existing Tariff valuations to the present conditions of the trade of this port was forcibly pointed out by the Committee to the Government as far back as August of last year, and the Government, as evidenced by references to the Chamber on minor articles, have acknowledged the need of a revision, but the consideration of the subject was postponed, matters of greater urgency having, no doubt, engaged the attention of Government. The present excessive valuations of piece goods and yarn have pressed so heavily on importers that the Manchester Chamber took up the subject. Your Committee have again

addressed the Government and have shown by figured statements that for at least 12 months piece goods had been paying 18 per cent above what they should have paid had the Tariff been amended. A Committee for the revision has been appointed at last; their sittings will begin next month and it is hoped that the Financial Member will in his next budget be prepared to re-adjust the valuations, as may be decided by this Committee, and remove the burden which now presses so heavily on this most important portion of our import trade. Other alterations, but of minor importance, will require to be made in the schedule, and these will no doubt have due attention from the Committee of revision.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 23rd September 1874.

In their letter dated the 20th August of last year the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce submitted a representation relative to the revision of the tariff of fixed valuations for assessment of Customs duties, and expressed a hope that the Governor General in Council would be pleased to accept their assurances that the changes which had been gradually introduced into the trade since the valuations were fixed in 1869 were of such a nature as to justify a further revision, consistent alike with the interests of merchants and a right regard for the public revenue.

To that representation the Committee have had no reply, but they learn indirectly from the recent publication of a letter dated 15th May last addressed by the Government of India to Her Majesty's Secretary of State on the subject of a memorial from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce concerning duties levied in India on cotton manufactures and yarn, that the subject had been under consideration, and that possibly a Committee would be convened in the ensuing cold season for the purpose of revising the existing tariffs.

The Committee have not earlier pressed this subject on the attention of Government as they hesitated to do so while graver and more urgent questions were under consideration, but the communication referred to induces them to again place before the Government the application submitted by them a twelve-month ago.

In renewing the request then made the Committee desire me to state that they are prepared to recommend various amendments in the tariff which they believe will be in unison with the changes which the market has undergone, and with the present and probable future range of values.

As Piece Goods and Yarn constitute the bulk of the import trade they are taken for the purpose of comparing the market and tariff values, and the following figured statements will, the Committee think, suffice to satisfy the Government that there are sufficient grounds for such an amendment of the latter as will bring them more in accord with actual values.

In the 12 months ended 30th June 1874 the imports of Grey Shirting cloth and Yarn were as follows :—

CLOTH.	
6 lb Shirtings	— 653,834 pieces=3,923,004 lb.
6½ "	— 280,284 " 1,821,816 "
7 "	— 1,411,828 " 9,882,706 "
7½ "	— 769,930 " 5,774,475 "
8 "	— 181,265 " 1,450,120 "
8½ "	— 2,199,778 " 18,148,108 "
8¾ "	— 505,609 " 4,208,042 "
	<hr/>
	6,002,618 pes.= 45,898,151 lb.
All other weights	— 799,437 "
	<hr/>
Total of all—	6,802,055 pieces.

YARNS.	
No. 20 Twist	— 168,910 lb.
30 "	— 210,840 "
40 "	— 5,540,027 "
50 "	— 857,689 "
60 "	— 485,945 "
70 "	— 154,905 "
80 "	— 127,551 "
90 "	— 71,305 "
100 "	— 72,573 "
Above " "	— 96,902 "
	<hr/>
Total	— 7,786,047 lb.

These figures show 1st,—that of the total imports of

Grey Shirtings 88 per cent. consisted of weights ranging from 6 to 8½ lb., the average weight being 7½ lb. per piece : and 2nd,—that 88½ per cent. of the total imports of Grey Yarn consisted of Nos. 40, 50 and 60—those counts constituting the chief consuming qualities.

For the 12 months ended as above the values of ordinary grey cloth—6 to 8½ lb. per piece—and of grey yarn—10s, 50s and 60s—have been as follows :—

SHIRTINGS.	
	6 lb. 6½ lb. 7 lb. 7½ lb. 8 lb. 8½ lb. 8¾ lb.
July 1873 Rs.	4 2 4 7 4 11 5 11 5 8 5 12 5 15
Aug. " "	4 2 4 7 4 10 5 9 5 8 5 10 5 14
Sep. " "	4 2 4 7 4 10 5 8 5 8 5 10 5 14
Oct. " "	4 3 4 8 4 11 5 8 5 8 5 9 5 14
Nov. " "	4 1 4 6 4 9 5 6 5 5 5 7 5 12
Dec. " "	4 1 4 5 4 8 5 4 5 5 5 6 5 11
Jan. 1874 "	4 1 4 5 4 9 5 4 5 6 5 7 5 11
Feb. " "	4 0 4 5 4 8 5 2 5 5 5 6 5 10
March " "	4 0 4 5 4 8 5 2 5 5 5 5 5 10
April " "	3 14 4 4 4 7 5 2 5 4 5 4 5 11
May " "	3 14 4 4 4 8 5 5 5 6 5 8 5 13
June " "	3 14 4 4 4 7 5 5 5 6 5 8 5 10
	<hr/>
	48 6. 62 3 54 10 64 2 64 10 65 12 69 1
Average of	
12 months...	4-0-6 4-5-7 4-8-10 5-5-6 5-6-2 5-7-8 5 12

At the present time these quotations are respectively—

3 8 3 14 4 0 4 15 5 0 5 0 5 7

MULE TWIST—Medium, Banner Mill, per morah.

			40s.	50s.	60s.
July	1873	Annos	5 9	5 5	5 2
August	"	"	5 8	5 5	5 1
September	"	"	5 6	5 3	4 10
October	"	"	5 8	5 8	5 0
November	"	"	5 5	5 5	5 0
December	"	"	5 5	5 4	4 9
January	1874	"	5 5	5 4	4 10
February	"	"	5 5	5 2	4 9
March	"	"	5 5	5 0	4 8
April	"	"	5 5	4 10	4 6
May	"	"	5 6	4 9	4 6
June	"	"	5 5	4 9	4 5
			<u>66 0</u>	<u>62 4</u>	<u>57 6</u>
Average of 12 months per morah			5 6	5 2½	4 9½
	—, —	lb	11 0	13 0	14 4½
At the present time the quotations are respectively per morah	...As.	5 5	4 8	4 4	
or	.. lb.	10 10	11 8	13 0	

Looking at the general gradual decline in prices which the foregoing figures show, it appears to the Committee unnecessary to do more than to close this reference by the following alternative statements which establish the point they desire to urge on the consideration of Government, viz., that the tariff values are, and have been for some time, and are likely to continue, considerably in excess of actual values, and that the revenue is thereby largely increased at the expense of the trade.

The average gross value of Grey Goods as quoted above for 12 months and at the present time is ... Rs. 4 12 3 per piece. and deducting 5 per cent. for duty ... } 0 5 4 ,, 2 ,, disc't. ... }

the average net value is ... ,, 4 6 11 ,, or, at the average weight of 7½ lb. per piece nearly ... ,, 0 9 6 per lb. against the tariff value of ... ,, 0 11 0 ,,

40s. 50s. 60s.

The average gross value of Grey Yarn is ... As. 0 10 11 0 12 4 0 13 8½ per lb. and deducting 5½ per cent. for duty and discount the net values are ... ,, 0 10 4 0 11 9½ 0 13 1½ ,, against the tariff values of ... ,, 0 11 0 0 12 0 0 14 0 ,,

The quantity of Grey Shirtings 6 to 8½ lb. imported in the year ended 30th June 1874 amounted, as already detailed, to 6,002,618 pieces, the value of which at <i>average of current rates</i> would be	... Rs.	2,73,66,153
deduct duty 5 per cent. and discount 2 per cent.	... ..	19,15,630
would leave as the total net value	... ..	<u>2,54,50,523</u>
yielding 5 per cent. duty	... ..	12,72,526
but a duty of 5 per cent. on the weight of the above 6 millions of pieces—45,298,451 lb.—valued at 11 annas per lb. would come to ...	... ..	<u>15,57,134</u>
being an absolute overcharge of or nearly 18 per cent. in excess of the amount fairly leviable by the Customs.	... ..	2,84,008

The duty on Yarn also realized by the Customs has been, in consequence of high tariff valuations, largely in excess of what should have been paid by importers.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Fort William, 25th November 1874.

In reply to your letter dated 23rd September (received 6th October) calling attention to your letter of the 20th August 1873 and renewing the request then made by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce for a revision

sion of the Customs Tariff valuations, I am directed to forward for the information of the Chamber a copy of a Resolution recorded by the Government of India in this Department No. 6703 of this day's date, from which it will be seen that the Government have sanctioned the formation of a Committee for the revision of the Customs Tariff valuations.

Govt. of India, Financial Department.

Fort William, 25th November 1874.

Read the under-mentioned papers :—

Letter from the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, dated 20th August 1873, proposing a revision of the values on which duties are assessed under the Tariff Act XIII of 1871 and of the rates of duties.

Letter to the Governments of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras, and the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, No. 3073, dated the 18th September 1873, forwarding the above for report.

Letter from the Government of Bombay, No. ⁶⁴⁴³— dated ^{319R.} the 26th November 1873.

Letter from the Government of Bengal, No. 2372, dated 9th September 1873, proposing a revision of the Customs Tariff with the view of placing certain articles named on the free list.

Despatch (Separate Revenue) from the Most Hon'ble

the Secretary of State for India, No. 2, dated 26th March 1874, forwarding for consideration, a memorial from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the duties now levied on yarns and manufactured goods imported into India.

Despatch (Separate Revenue) to the Most Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India, No. 10, dated 15th May 1874, stating that the subject has been under the consideration of the Government of India, and that possibly a Committee for the revision of the Tariff would be convened in the ensuing cold season.

Letter from the Secretary to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, dated 23rd September 1874, (received 8th October,) inviting attention to his previous letter of 20th August 1873, regarding a proposal for the revision of the Tariff of fixed valuations, and stating that the Chamber is prepared to recommend various amendments in the Tariff.

Despatch (Separate Revenue) from the Most Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India, No. 5, dated 8th October 1874, forwarding a further letter from the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, pressing for a revision of the Tariff.

RESOLUTION.—It has been represented to the Government of India, that the values on which customs duties are assessed, as contained in Schedules A and B of the Indian Tariff Act, 1871, are in some instances in excess of the market values of the articles valued.

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in

Council is of opinion that the time has arrived for the revision of the Tariff valuations, and has resolved for this purpose to appoint a Committee to enquire into and report on the subject.

The Committee will be composed of the following Members:—

President:

MR. A. MONEY, C.B., *Member of the Board of Revenue, L.P.*

Members:

THE HON'BLE J. R. BULLEN SMITH.

MR. T. B. LANE, *Offg. Collector of Customs, Calcutta*, and other Members who will be subsequently appointed after communication with the Governments of Bombay and Madras.

The Committee will meet in Calcutta in the first week of January next.

The Government of India would further be glad to consider the opinion of the Committee as to the propriety of removing from the Tariff any articles the retention of which may be thought unimportant in the interest of the public revenue, and the removal of which from the list of dutiable articles would give freedom to trade, or any other cases in which from competition or otherwise the Committee may be of opinion that any of the existing export duties are seriously prejudicial to the trade in the articles subject to them.

Representations have also been made to the Government of India as to the injurious effect of the duties levied on the import of cotton goods and twist manufactured in England. The Government of India would be glad to receive a report of the opinion of the Committee on this point after enquiry into the facts.

In considering this question, the Committee will observe that the Government of India does not impose or maintain customs duties for the purpose of affording protection to any branch or class of industry, but for revenue purposes only.

ORDERED, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to each of the Members of the Committee named therein, to the Government of Bengal, and to the Governments of Bombay and Madras for information, and for communication to the officer that may be selected from each of those Presidencies to be a Member of the Committee.

Custom House Returns of Imports and Exports.

The officiating Collector of Customs has lately altered the old forms of the daily lists of imports and exports issued under his authority, and he has further completely changed the classification. The matter is still, apparently, under consideration as the Committee have had no reply from either the Board of Revenue or the Collector to their representations.

From Secretary Board of Revenue to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 8th October 1874.

Will you be good enough to inform me whether the new form of Custom House daily list of Imports and Exports is approved of or disliked by the Merchants generally?

From Chamber of Commerce to Secretary Board of Revenue.

Calcutta, 12th October 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber desire me to say in reply to your reference on the subject of the Custom House daily Imports and Exports that the change of form to which subscribers had been so long accustomed has given rise to very general disappointment and disapproval.

The old forms are preferred in all respects, as serving all the purposes for which they are published, if they are only free from inaccuracies, and not overloaded with entries of petty items.

The Committee therefore hope that in deference to the feeling of subscribers on the subject the publication of the old form will be reverted to.

Chamber of Commerce to Collector of Customs.

Calcutta, 7th November 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to forward for your information copy of a reply sent, nearly a month ago, to the Secretary of the Board of Revenue on the subject of the alteration of the forms in which the daily Import and Export lists are published; and in placing this communication before you the Committee instruct me to urge upon your consideration the application therein made for a return to the old forms with which the subscribers have been so long familiar and which they desire to see reintroduced.

The Committee beg me draw your attention to the expediency of consolidating in half a dozen lines or less the entries of cargoes of native craft, as the details now given needlessly occupy much space in the publication and impose a deal of labor that may be advantageously avoided. They refer particularly to the entries in your Import List of 30th October.

Jute Warehouses.

The inequality of the law and greater stringency with which it presses on the new screwhouses, in the suburbs, compared with the older ones, within the limits of the town, as regards the drying of wet or damp Jute in the open air, has been again urged on the attention of the Com-

mittee; further references have been made to Government, and the matter has been brought forward in the Bengal Legislative Council, and is now under its consideration.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 15th August 1874.

The Provisional Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to submit for the consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor that the rigorous enforcement of the Act under which Jute warehouses are licensed having been attended with much embarrassing inconvenience to some owners of such premises, representations were made to the Suburban and Howrah Municipalities for relaxation of the provisions of the Act to such an extent as would afford relief to those who suffered from apparently unnecessary restrictions.

The Commissioner of the Presidency Division brought the matter under the notice of Government, by whom he was informed, on the 12th February last, that while warehouses which existed at the time the Act came into operation might be dealt with according to the discretion of the supervising authorities, *new* warehouses were to remain subject to the law as the same question affecting them did not seem to the late Lieutenant-Governor to press for immediate action, and that its consideration would be postponed until the consolidation of the Municipal laws came before the Legislative Council.

This matter having again been urged on the attention of the Chamber, I am instructed to submit that the owners of the new Jute screwhouses complain of the compulsory application of the provisions of the Act in localities where their relaxation may be fairly permitted, and of the invidious distinction drawn between properties existing before the Act and those subsequently built.

While the former are chiefly in the heart of the town of Calcutta, the latter are almost all in the outskirts: and any damage from fire to surrounding property would probably be infinitely greater in the former than it would be in the latter case: and it is therefore obvious that a relaxation of the Act may be permitted with much greater reason in suburban depôts and screwhouses than in those which are situated in the town.

What the suburban screwhouses ask for is permission to dry or work up Jute, in the day time only, in enclosed compounds, or on the open ground where, in the opinion of the officers of the Municipality, there is no danger of fire being communicated to adjacent property.

This seems to the Committee no unreasonable demand, and does not involve any abatement of the Act which may not be fairly conceded.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 25th August 1874.

I am directed by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor

to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 15th instant, representing on behalf of the owners of new Jute screwhouses, lying within the limits of the suburban and Howrah Municipalities, the inconvenience which they feel from the rigorous enforcement of the Jute Warehouse Act II (B.C.) of 1872, and requesting that a relaxation of the provisions thereof may be made so far as to allow the process of drying and working up of Jute to be conducted in open ground instead of in buildings or walled-up compounds.

In reply I am to refer the Chamber to Section 7 of the Act, and to say that while the law remains as laid down in that Section, the Lieutenant-Governor regrets his inability to waive the enforcement of any of the conditions to the grant of a license for *new* Jute warehouses.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 21st September 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to express their hope that the Lieutenant-Governor will pardon their troubling him once more on the subject of their representation of the 15th ultimo.

They notice from your reply No. 2377 of 25th August that His Honor understands the Section of Act II of 1872 allows the drying and working of Jute in "walled-up compounds"; but the Committee do not find that provision.

Were this modification allowed business could be carried on without any infringement of the law; but as things are at present the Committee are informed that the Act is daily violated in every screw-house in Calcutta.

Jute comes to market in a more or less damp condition, and it often gets wet from rain, in this uncertain weather, in transit from the bazar to the screw-house, and it must necessarily be dried before it is screwed or fit to be shipped.

In framing the Act it was supposed that effective drying could be done under cover, but experience proves that this is not practicable, and all damp jute is dried in the sun.

The prohibition to dry and work jute out of doors in new screw-houses and permission to do so in old ones appear to the Committee as a scarcely equitable measure of legislation: the former are all, or nearly all, in the suburbs, and if a fire took place the damage would be confined to the premises where it originated: the latter are chiefly in the town, surrounded by buildings, and a fire there would endanger the safety of a large area of property.

The primary object of the Act appears therefore to be lost sight of, and the Committee fail to see any legitimate reason for the distinction that has been made.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 29th October 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 21st ultimo, submitting a further representation from the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the relaxation of the provisions of the Jute Warehouse Act II (B.C.) of 1872, and in reply to say that the Lieutenant-Governor does not entertain any idea that as regards new jute warehouses the process of drying or working up of jute in walled-up compounds would be permissible under the Act as it now stands. The conditions upon which licenses for new jute warehouses may be granted are fully stated in Section 7 of that Act, and it is not in the power of the Lieutenant-Governor by an executive order to allow any deviation from the provisions thereof; though good reasons may exist from the experience of the past two years for an amendment of the law by a recourse to fresh legislation. His Honor reserves this question for consideration when the session of the Bengal Legislative Council commences.

Ports and Port Dues Bill.

The annexed letter embodies the views of the Committee on the above Bill which is now under consideration in the Legislative Council.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 8th May 1874.

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the "Bill

to consolidate and amend the law relating to Ports and Port dues," and to say that the Lieutenant-Governor will be much obliged by your favouring him with the views of the Chamber of Commerce on the subject.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 14th July 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to forward for submission to the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor the accompanying remarks on some of the provisions of the Bill to consolidate and amend the Law relating to Ports and Port Dues; and, in placing them before His Honor, the Committee beg you will be so good as to express their regret at the delay which circumstances have unavoidably created in the consideration of the Bill.

Section 31.—The Committee recommend that after the word "deposit" the following words be added "*either at time of deposit, or subsequently by or through the Conservator of the Port or other authorised person.*"

It sometimes happens that vessels discharging gunpowder at Moyapore Magazine cannot wait for a formal receipt at time of making the deposit, as the detention may involve loss of tide, additional steam hire, &c. The receipt therefore might be subsequently transmitted to the Conservator or other authorised person for delivery to the depositor.

Section 34.—The Committee recommend that after the word "vessel" the words "*within the limits of the Port*" be added. As the Section now stands it may

apply to a vessel at any part of the river where the law already permits her to carry gunpowder.

Section 40.—The Committee are of opinion that the words "river or channel" should be omitted, and that the prohibition to creep or sweep for lost anchors, cables, &c., should be confined to the Port. Steam tugs and inland steamers frequently meet with accidents involving the parting of chains and loss of anchors, and it seems unreasonable that an endeavour to recover them at once when there is a chance of saving them, instead of waiting for the authority of the Conservator by which time the articles may be irrecoverably lost, should be held to be an offence.

Section 53.—The Committee are of opinion that this Section should be amended to the extent of inserting after the words "has paid" the words "or provided sufficient security for;" because it may happen that the clearance of a vessel may be delayed to so late an hour in the day that an actual cash payment may be impracticable, or may be objected to by the Collector, and under such circumstances the Collector or other officer granting a Port clearance should be authorised to accept a *sufficient security* in lieu of cash. The Committee consider that this may be done with perfect safety in cases where such security is tendered by persons of known respectability. In the recent case of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company the tender of the Superintendent's cheque for the amount of Port dues should—the Committee think—have been accepted without hesitation as a *sufficient security*.

Section 60.—The Committee are of opinion that if the maximum of one anna per ton is absolutely necessary to cover Hospital charges at minor ports the Section should stand in relation to them; but as regards the Port of Calcutta the Committee submit that the Act should limit the rate to *half an anna* per ton as they believe that the present rate of 9 pie per ton exceeds the charges incurred, and that a large surplus has accumulated at credit of Hospital Dues Account.

1st Schedule, Part 2.—The Committee are of opinion that tags and river steamers are liable to be charged twice if dues are leviable as proposed, and that the words "once in six months" should be substituted for the half-yearly dates defined in the schedule.

Survey of the River Hooghly.

The necessity of providing steamers for the service of the survey of the river appeared to a former Committee so obvious that they addressed Government on the subject as far back as October 1872. No steps however have been taken up to this time, and in the annual report of the Marine Department for 1873-74, the surveyor has himself urged the point on the attention of Government. The Committee have therefore taken advantage of this opportunity to press the question again. They have also pointed out that there are no charts of the river Hooghly except on board the surveying brig, and they have accordingly recommended a periodical issue of them to pilots.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 1st October 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to thank you for copies of the annual report of the Marine Department for 1873-74 and of the Resolution passed thereon by the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor.

Two years ago, in their letter dated 23rd October 1872, the Committee drew the attention of Government to the inefficient survey of the river Hooghly, and urged that steamers should be substituted for the sailing vessels employed for that service: but no improvement has been introduced, and the Committee desire to renew their representation in this respect.

The causes then existing which induced the Committee to address the Government are still in operation, and as the river surveyor appreciates the necessity of being provided with more suitable means for his important work the Committee hope that the question now under the consideration of Government of providing proper vessels for the survey of the river will be speedily disposed of.

The Committee would also press upon the attention of Government the expediency of a periodical issue of charts with the latest intimation, for guidance of pilots, of all changes likely to obstruct the free navigation of the river.

Additional Port Rule proposed by the Port Commissioners for the protection of the Hooghly Bridge.

The Port Commissioners' new rule, forcing vessels of over 200 tons to use steam while passing through the opening of the bridge, appeared to the Committee to press with undue severity on ships that required to pass up and down from the docks, and they accordingly addressed the Government on the subject. It appeared to the Committee that the question was one, in the first instance, for the protection of the bridge alone, and that it was inequitable to lay the whole burden of cost on the ship. The Government having, however, replied that the rule was passed for mutual protection of bridge and vessel, the Committee have again urged that a share of the expense should in justice be borne by the bridge. The Committee hope that this representation will result in some portion of the cost being removed from the ships using the opening and in a more equitable distribution of such expense.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 20th August 1874.

The Provisional Committee of the Chamber of Commerce instruct me to submit for the consideration of His

Honor the Lieutenant-Governor that, while they express approval of the recent regulation proposed by the Port Commissioners and sanctioned by Government which makes it compulsory for vessels exceeding 200 tons burthen to use steam while passing the floating bridge, they are of opinion that the expense so incurred should not fall on vessels requiring to pass up and down; for the compulsory measure was introduced for the protection and safety of the bridge itself, and any changes necessitated for that special object should, they think, be borne by those for whose use the bridge is built, and not by owners of vessels to which the bridge, by its position, presents an obstruction to a free passage to docks and moorings situated above it.

In order therefore to place the burden of charges incidental to the proper security of the bridge on those who should rightly bear it, the Committee recommend that all steam hire incurred for the towage of vessels through the opening of the bridge should, in the first instance, be paid by Government or by the Port Commissioners in their behalf; and, when the bridge is thrown open to the public, the tolls leviable should be on a scale sufficient to cover all charges including the past and future probable cost of steam hire.

Government of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 2nd September 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 20th August 1874, suggesting that the expenses incurred by ships of over 200 tons using steam when

passing the bridge should be borne by those for whose use the bridge is built, and in reply to say that the rule was not passed exclusively for the safety of the bridge, but for the mutual protection of the bridge and the vessels which might pass it, at present advised, therefore the Lieutenant-Governor regrets that he is not prepared to assent to the suggestion made by the Chamber.

Chamber of Commerce to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 21st September 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2842 of 2nd instant.

When the additional Port Rule prohibiting vessels from passing through the opening of the floating bridge except under steam was submitted to the Committee, they were of opinion that the rule was of primary importance as far as the safety of the bridge was concerned, and only of secondary consideration as regards the ship.

The extremely probable result of a vessel coming in collision with it would be that the section of the bridge so struck would be carried away; for the pontoons and frame work overhead would in all probability be crushed by the weight of a colliding vessel, as was illustrated on the occasion of the steamer *Egeria*, fouling the bridge six months ago.

The Committee believe that the bridge is so constructed that it could not sufficiently resist the shock of a colli-

sion with a vessel of ordinary tonnage of vessels now frequenting the Port, if carried away by the tide; and if that be so, there can scarcely be a doubt as to which interest needs protection—that of the bridge or of colliding vessels; and the Committee respectfully resubmit for the consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor the recommendation contained in their letter of 20th ultimo.

If, however, His Honor is still of the opinion which he has been good enough to communicate to the Chamber that the rule was passed for the *mutual* protection of the bridge and shipping, the Committee consider that the latter should be saddled with only a portion of steam hire incurred in towing vessels through the opening.

TELEGRAPH CODE MESSAGES.

The following letters close the correspondence, published in the Chamber's last Report, between the Director General of Telegraphs and the Committee, relative to the admissibility of code messages, tendered for transmission under the provisions of the international convention as revised at Rome in 1872 by the representatives of the Contracting States.

As the rejection of messages prepared from codes which had been framed in accordance, as it was believed, with the Convention rules, involved

the most serious inconvenience to the public, and the general question being one of material importance to commercial interests, the Committee were compelled to dissent from the official interpretation placed on the language of the Convention and to press for the withdrawal of the departmental orders which had created great dissatisfaction and occasioned frequent remonstrances against them.

A reference to the correspondence will inform members that the discussion terminated in the decision of the Director General not to disturb existing arrangements and to take no further action until the next conference meets at St. Petersburg.

*From the Director General of Telegraphs in
India to Chamber of Commerce.*

Calcutta, 26th June 1874.

I have carefully considered your letter dated 6th May, and am endeavouring to arrive at some solution that will continue to the mercantile community the solid advantages they derive from being allowed to use conventional languages at the same rate as clear language without, at the same time, imposing upon the Telegraph Administration a burden four times heavier and infinitely more harassing than that for which the tariff has been framed.

This is not a question of Governmental policy. It far more affects private interests, for 90 per cent. of every message transferred at Bombay goes to the proprietors of the Sub-Marine Company, and 50 per cent. of those transferred at Kurrachee to the Indo-European Company. The Indian Government has only a 10 per cent. interest in it.

If the Indian Codes are altered to the model of those used on the Anglo-American lines, or if cypher or secret letters only are employed I see no difficulty in maintaining them, even at the next conference where they are sure to be either suppressed or subjected to much stricter rules. Meanwhile I have directed that all codes be allowed to pass containing *bond fide* proper names, as also of those containing foreign words; the former, because they have the wording not the spirit of the convention on their side, the latter, because they are less troublesome than the former. The Chamber of Commerce has asked for six months, but as this is tantamount to asking that the telegraph be unjustly taxed for all that time I think so long a period is quite unnecessary. If I find the users of codes desirous to save the telegraph unnecessary trouble I shall endeavour to meet their wishes in this respect to the utmost of my ability, but if, as some have already done, every difficulty is placed in our way, if the senders of messages continue as they have done to refuse all assistance in verifying what they are pleased to call proper names, we cannot but oppose the Code altogether.

My instructions regarding the inadmissibility of more than one language into one telegram was issued to the

Superintendents of Divisions as far back as the 23rd of February last, this gave sufficient time for the firms in the country to communicate the fact and to propose amendments to their correspondents in Europe. The Superintendent of the Calcutta Office writes that these instructions were communicated to many enquirers, but I regret to find were not more freely published.

You ask for time for a reference to Berne, but this is hardly a question for reference. It rests with the station of origin to judge what is, or is not, within the rules and the enormous abuse of the liberty given renders the burden so inordinately heavy that any administration would be justified in summarily refusing to allow any more of them to pass over their lines (see Art. 21).

I stated in my former letter that I was mainly instrumental in obtaining the very liberal terms afforded to "Code" telegrams, and that if the Chamber of Commerce were acquainted with the Procès Verbeaux they would not affirm that the convention contemplated such codes as are now used.

I append several extracts from the Procès Verbeaux which will shew you that but for our efforts conventional language would not enjoy its present immunity.

Prior to the convention of Rome, 'dépêches en langage convenu' do not appear on record. I think it possible that they existed in the shape of ordinary language but they were distinctly contrary to law. Indeed at the

* By Code, I mean codes of words, in contra-distinction to codes of figures or letters.

first convention (Brussels) all secret telegrams were absolutely interdicted (see annexure); at the second and third they were permitted to pass in cypher between any two states that permitted this kind of correspondence, but carrying extra charges for repetition and registration. At the third (Vienna) this opening was left purposely to suit India. The station of origin was to be judge if a telegram should be accepted and how much it should pay, once accepted no intermediate state could stop it nor demand additional payment, but the intermediate states might protest against and refuse to pass any more (see para. 8 of Reglement V of Vienna convention.)

This loop-hole was granted to the representatives of India on the plea that these code-messages were composed of ordinary dictionary words that gave little more labor than ordinary language (langage claire) to transmit.

Nevertheless there was a dangerous uncertainty in this quasi toleration that it was desirable to be freed from. Accordingly at the Rome convention India proposed that Art. IX of the Vienna convention should be amended so as "établir une distinction précise entre les dépêches chiffrées qui seraient composées de chiffres ou de lettres, et entre les dépêches en langage conventionnel consistant en mots de dictionnaire." Mark the expression "in dictionary words." The Indo-European Company also submitted the following observation. Les dépêches échangées entre l'Europe et les Indes sont presque toutes composées de mots appartenant aux langues reconnues, mais rédigées de façon à ne pas offrir un sens compréhensible. And the representatives of India thus:—

" Une réglementation distincte devrait être adoptée et rigoureusement observée en ce sens à notre avis, que la recommandation fût obligatoire, sans exception, pour toute dépêche chiffrée, du moment qu'elle serait composée de lettres ou de chiffres, et que les dépêches en langage conventionnel, consistant en mots du dictionnaire reconnus comme tels par l'Administration d'origine, fussent transmises, si l'expéditeur le désirait, sans être astreintes à la recommandation."

With the aid of these extracts from the proceedings all ambiguity is removed, the intention of the conference is clear, *viz*: to assign as closely as was deemed safe, to the class of telegrams defined by us 'en langage convenu' the law laid down for 'langage clair' and in the absence of a new definition I hold that the definition given into the conference, a definition never disputed, must be accepted as correct.

The same extract also exhibits the strong disposition in favor of limiting the language as far as practicable to those understood by the Signallers.

There is also ample evidence to shew that the special relief conceded at Rome to "dépêches en langage convenu" was granted on the understanding that they were to be composed as heretofore of common dictionary words in one language, such as are used in ordinary clear language.

I am glad to find that some of the older firms and banks continue to use short simple familiar words but this is more than counterbalanced. One firm boasts that their vocabulary numbers 30,000 quotations, three times

as numerous as the vocabulary of the English language. They must have searched nearly all the maps of all the countries in the world to provide their codes with such a string of unpronounceable proper names of places and persons. I give a few specimens.

Walkinreed, Agostonfalva, Agathce, Agrianonsi, Agvijador, Agnijonaso, Agujetage, Agyajiborla, Adiaphentic, Aboikna, Abrostola, Abornca, Alberus, Abisares, Acontes, Abiaclum, Adranum.

Another seeks for words in technical books and not to be found in ordinary dictionaries such as 'adiapnusthia,' a word not even in Webster's Imperial Dictionary, certainly more Greek than English, and I heard of one gentleman who on being shewn a botanical dictionary exclaimed with delight "What words for my code."

These intolerable words may suit their codes but they are not familiar to the unfortunate signallers and ought to be expunged. Mr. Ottway (see extract) proposed a short catalogue of proper names to be passed as ordinary. Unfortunately it was not considered of sufficient importance to discuss them at length.

Again, ordinary words are not repeated but it is compulsory to repeat figures and proper names, consequently telegrams wholly composed of words of this nature, which give in fact as much extra trouble as the fully repeated telegram at 50 per cent increased cost, obtain the advantage without payment.

There can be no question that these two latter codes are for all practical purposes foreign to the primary inten-

tion of the rules; they certainly are not part of ordinary language familiar to the signallers, nor do they occur in ordinary conversation. I am of opinion that they might be rejected, but as to some extent they appear to come within the letter of the convention, I am loth at this late hour to contest the point provided merchants will meet me half way, and to do this they must amend their codes.

Conventional language as used in India is a Frankenstein of Indian origin which probably grew out of the rule that obtained up to 1869 that each figure in a number should be written out in full and charged for as one word, thus making cypher exceedingly expensive, but now that five cyphers are charged for at the average length of a word *viz*: five, cypher is as cheap as ordinary language. Consequently if conventional language codes were suppressed the injury inflicted on the mercantile classes would be only nominal, the only question is how much time should be allowed for the change.

I append for your information copies of two letters I have recently addressed to merchants of this city on this subject. Also several extracts from the *procès verbaux* and table shewing how the rules in regard to language and especially secret language have been altered from time to time

In conclusion as I have already written to you by note I shall endeavour to avoid checking codes more than is absolutely demanded, provided I see any evidence of an intention on the part of those who use them to simplify them, but if this is not done within a reasonable time, I shall take such action as may appear necessary here.

and shall oppose their recognition at the next conference, the proposition for which must be submitted within the next six weeks.

From Chamber of Commerce to Director General of Telegraphs in India.

Calcutta, 9th July 1874.

Your letter No. 924 of 26th ultimo has been submitted to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce by whom I am instructed to acknowledge its receipt and to communicate the following reply.

The point at issue between yourself and the mercantile community is—whether what are called code-messages consisting of certain words constituting conventional language for telegraphic purposes, and composed of more than any one of the languages recognised by the Telegraphic Convention, are admissible for transmission and chargeable at no higher rate than messages composed of ordinary words and in one language.

You contend they are not; the mercantile community contend they are.

You support your contention by what you believe to be the proper meaning of the Convention Articles bearing on these points; they, on the other hand, maintain that the accuracy of their view is confirmed by the hitherto undisturbed practical working of a system which has been recognised for many years, and adopted not only in India, but in England, Europe and elsewhere,—

messages precisely in the form and language to which you take exception having been received and transmitted by other administrations without objection.

The Committee cannot avoid laying special stress upon this fact, nor can they consider that it does not over-ride your opinion in the matter: for a system which has been carried out with the knowledge and consent of all the administrations can scarcely be held to have been tacitly permitted, or tolerated, or as having conferred particular privileges or immunities withdrawable at pleasure at the station of origin.

The Committee will not, however, enter into a discussion of the "vexata questio," but simply propose for consideration that, with the view to such an amendment of codes in use by mercantile establishments being made as will render messages prepared from them admissible without challenge, official intimation be given as to *what is* and *what is not* a code-message, and a clear definition thereof authoritatively pronounced, so as to guide the commercial public in so framing their telegrams as to insure their absolute admissibility. For instance:— would all the words contained in Webster's Dictionary of the English Language; and all the geographical nomenclature in Johnston's General Gazetteer and in the Index to Philip's Imperial Library Atlas, or other standard works of a similar character, be accepted as component parts of a code-message in the English language?; and would Standard Dictionaries and similar works in other languages to those just referred to be regarded in the same light, so long as only one language is used in a single telegram?

Without some definite and authoritative statement as to what will be acceptable to the Telegraph Department, the Committee need hardly point out that, with every desire on the part of the framers to avoid the introduction of words that might possibly be objected to, codes may be so drawn up as to render them valueless, and the time and labor spent in amending them of no avail.

To effect necessary changes in consultation with distant correspondents it is obvious that ample opportunity be allowed, and the Committee consider that the time already applied for is not more than sufficient for the purpose.

From the Director General of Telegraphs in India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 20th July 1874.

I am in receipt of your letter of 9th instant.

The only para for which a special reply is asked is para 6.

Words in Webster's dictionary and the geographical nomenclature in Johnston's General Gazetteer and in the Index to Philip's Imperial Atlas are certainly admissible, and have always been admitted as code words, as also have corresponding words in any one of the 27 accepted languages.

More than this any proper names, be they of person, places or things, in England, in India, in China, Japan, in Kamschatka, or any where else in the universe are admissible as code words.

These conditions give compilers a scope which they have not failed to avail themselves for framing codes of words as unfamiliar and as, or more, difficult to transmit or, receive than any ordinary words in any of the 27 languages admissible under the existing convention. It is because of this unreasonable laxity, and because I do not see how it can be controlled until after the meeting of the next conference, that I have decided to let matters stand as they are and to take no further action towards restricting the license hitherto tolerated until the St. Petersburg conference meets. Then doubtless measures will be suggested for making the charges on all classes of telegrams proportionate to the labor they impose and the time they occupy the wires, probably of such an improved and radical nature as renders it almost a waste of time to make at this period any suggestions for the preparations of the codes of the future.

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

Calcutta, 25th July 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1126 of 20th instant.

The correspondence on the subject of code-messages has been concluded by the announcement of your decision not to disturb existing arrangements; and the Committee direct me to express their obligation to you for that satisfactory intimation.

They notice that you consider it inexpedient at present to make any suggestions for the preparation of codes for the future, as at the conference to be held next year at St. Petersburg the provisions of the convention, under the influence of past experience of their practical working, may be materially modified; but the Committee trust that your attendance on that occasion as the representative of the Government of India will enable you to introduce with success such amendments of the convention as may, in your judgment, tend to the convenience of the commercial public and promote the development of general telegraphic communication between this and other countries, and the Committee are confident that your efforts in that respect will add largely to the service already rendered by you as one of the Delegates who concluded the Rome convention of 1872.

**Telegraphic Communication between
Calcutta and Rangoon.**

This subject was referred to in the Committee's last report, which contained their letter of 2nd March to Government on the unsatisfactory working of the line between Calcutta and Burmah, and the following reply will inform members of the result of the Committee's reference.

The objections raised by the Director General of Telegraphs to the use of *code* messages, as one of the reasons for the inefficiency complained of, have been referred to in the previous paragraph, and the views therein expressed were repeated in

the Committee's acknowledgment of the reply from Government.

From Government of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 29th May 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 2nd March last complaining on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce of the unsatisfactory working of the telegraph between Burmah and Calcutta, and to forward in reply for the information of the Chamber extract* Paras 2, 3, 12 and P. 8. tract* from a letter of the Director General of Telegraphs explaining the causes which operate against the efficient maintenance of the line.

2. Colonel Robinson, it will be seen, suggests that the Chamber might help much to remove one of the chief difficulties, by abolishing "Code" messages of long words and using instead "Cipher," which is not more expensive.

3. As regards his proposal to double the line between Calcutta and Chittagong at an expense of Rs. 72,555, I am to request that the Chamber may be informed that it has been approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council and will be carried out next year.

Extract of a letter No. 74 dated 18th May 1874, from the Director General of Telegraphs in India to the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department.

2nd Para: Telegraphy between British Burmah and

India depends on a single thick wire passing, as is well known, through a difficult and inhospitable tract, the portion between Chittagong and Bassein being the worst.

3. The absence of the accessories of civilization *viz.*, roads, bridges and population and the presence of broad rivers, creeks and wild animals including the elephant and rhinoceros must, under any circumstances, militate against rapidity of communication and effective maintenance.

12. I would suggest that the portion of the land line between Calcutta and Chittagong be doubled as also between Promo and Rangoon, which will greatly accelerate the traffic along this route. The Chittagong portion would not cost more than Rs. 72,555, and that between Promo and Rangoon has been already sanctioned for Rs. 29,300.

P. 8.—But irrespective of the difficulties of maintenance there is another cause which has operated to block this line: Most of the telegrams sent over it are in what is vulgarly called "Code." To within the last two years code-messages were charged double and as cipher if the words used were other than ordinary English Dictionary words familiar to the signalers. Unfortunately in view to assimilating our internal to the international rules these restrictions were removed and now codes consist of all the long words and all the long names of all the towns and villages of all the countries in the world. The result is that a modern code-message such as is used by the advanced (in intelligence) firms occupies the wire at least four times as long as an ordinary English message paying the same price.

The Peninsular and Oriental Company.

Contract for conveyance of Mails.

THE capability of the Suez Canal to pass vessels of the largest tonnage from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea has created a great change in the carrying trade between Europe and the East, and the Peninsular and Oriental Company were not insensible to the advantages presented by that channel and to the damage to their interests if they were prevented from making use of it. By the terms of their contract with Her Majesty's Government the Company were excluded from passing their Steamers through the Canal, and to overcome that difficulty they proposed an amendment of the contract which would relieve them from the disadvantages of their position. In consideration of being permitted to send their vessels through the Canal,—an arrangement of great value to them in every respect—they agreed to accelerate by 24 hours the transmission of the mails to India and to reduce by £25,000 the annual subsidy of £450,000 received from Government for their general mail service.

When the conditions of the recently revised contract were reported by telegraph a strong feeling of dissatisfaction was expressed by the

public at the result of the negotiations between Government and the Company; and the prompt action of the Chamber of Commerce at Bombay, protesting against the inadequacy of the return obtained from the Company in consideration of the valuable concession granted by Government, was followed up by a public meeting there, at which a petition to the House of Commons was adopted, praying for the refusal of its sanction to the revised contract.

Your Committee co-operated in that movement by addressing Her Majesty's Post Master General and remonstrating against the failure to obtain from the Company a full measure of obligation for the privilege anxiously desired by them for the furtherance of their traffic arrangements.

But the movement had been too long delayed and was unsuccessful, the provisions of the contract having been approved and affirmed by the House of Commons while the petition from Bombay was in course of transmission.

The Committee's letter to Her Majesty's Post Master General and the reply thereto have already been published and are here recorded for future reference.

From Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Secretary to the Right Hon'ble Lord John Manners, Her Majesty's Post Master General, General Post Office, London.

Calcutta, 21st July 1874.

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce desire me to request you will oblige them by taking the earliest opportunity to submit this representation for the consideration of the Right Honorable Her Majesty's Post Master General.

On the 19th November 1867 a contract was entered into by Her Majesty's Government with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company for a mail service between England and the East Indies, China and Japan: the contract to commence on the 1st February of the following year and to continue in force for 12 years thereafter.

As a subsidy for the performance by the Company of the services thereby contracted Her Majesty's Government agreed to pay the sum of £400,000 per annum.

Under the contract one of the services was to convey the public mails from Marseilles to Alexandria, via Messina, and back from Alexandria to Marseilles; the distance computed at 1,410 miles, and the service to be performed once each way in every week in 141 hours, or at an average rate of 10 miles per hour: and another was to convey the mails from Suez to Bombay, and from Bombay to Suez, calling, on both voyages, at Aden; the

distance computed at 2,972 miles, and the service to be performed once each way in every week in 313 hours, exclusive of stoppage at Aden: or at an average rate of 9½ miles per hour.

This contract remained in force until the 1st April 1869, having been superseded (as on that date) by another agreement dated 6th August 1870, the currency of which was to determine not later than on the date assigned to the annulled contract; and the subsidy payable thereunder to the Company, in consideration of other additional service, was increased to the sum of £450,000 per annum.

By the 12th article of the new contract it was provided—in anticipation of the completion of the Mount Cenis Tunnel and of the railway through it—that, on due notice, the service between Marseilles and Alexandria and *vice versa* should cease, and in lieu thereof the mails should be conveyed from Brindisi to Alexandria, and *vice versa*: computed distance 826 miles, and the service to be performed once each way in every week in 75 hours, or at an average rate of 11 miles per hour.

The substituted service commenced sometime in December 1870, and has continued to the present time.

The said contract also provided for a weekly service from Southampton to Alexandria, calling at Gibraltar and Malta; and by that route the heavy portions of the mails for the East Indies, China and Japan are forwarded; from Alexandria to Suez they are carried by the Egyptian railway, and thence by steam packets to respective ports of destination.

Letterly, however, the attention of the Company has been given to the advantages offered by the Suez Canal in transporting the heavy mails by that channel to the Red Sea, and they have submitted to Her Majesty's Government a proposal to release them from the contract obligation and to permit them to carry the mails to Suez by way of the Canal: and in return for that deviation from the contract they have offered to accelerate by 24 hours the delivery of the lighter portion of the public mail via Brindisi.

The Company's proposal having had the consideration of Her Majesty's Post Master General, a recent telegraphic communication announces its acceptance, and a revision of the contract in accordance therewith.

The reported decision in this important matter has occasioned the gravest disappointment among the community of British India, and the Committee of this Chamber respectfully record their opinion that the extreme leniency which has been exhibited towards the Company amply justifies the strong objections pronounced against the insufficient return which has been accepted as an equivalent for the concession granted.

The Company's proposal to accelerate the mail service via Brindisi by 24-hours is a plausible one, but an attentive examination disposes of its conditions as fallacious and valueless:—1st, because the arrival of the mails from India 24-hours earlier than usual would involve their receipt in London on Saturday night instead of Sunday night, the delivery on Monday remaining unaltered, and practically no advantage derived; and 2nd, because as the Company's mail packets reach Bombay, as a rule,

several hours before contract time—ranging during the past 12 months as high as 73, and averaging nearly 39 hours—an arrival earlier by 24 hours than contract time would be obviously no improvement of the mail service, which is actually already performed in less time than Her Majesty's Post Master General has accepted as a compensating concession for the privilege bestowed on the Company.

The Company's steamers have, on frequent occasions and under no exceptional circumstances, landed the mails at Bombay in considerably less than contract time, and it is therefore no unreasonable inference that a higher rate of speed can be maintained throughout so as to admit of a material reduction of the time now occupied in performing the service in its entirety. If the distance between Brindisi and Alexandria can be run in 75 hours or at an average rate of 11 miles the hour, according to contract, no sufficient reason appears why the same rate should not be continued between Suez and Bombay, and why a uniform average of 11 miles per hour should not be the rate to which the Company should be bound from terminus to terminus.

The capability of the Company to achieve such an accelerated service can scarcely be questioned, for their own performances afford sufficient evidence of their ability to accomplish it.

The Company possess a fleet of almost unsurpassed excellence in all respects, navigated by officers of high professional proficiency with remarkable punctuality and immunity from casualties; and the service, generally, is

conducted with an efficiency which entitles the Company to a cordial recognition of their endeavours, to maintain the position which their enterprise has gradually acquired.

But while the Company's merits are thus frankly acknowledged, it is contended that the public have an undeniable claim to all the advantages which result from modern marine improvements in the working power of machinery, the economy of fuel, and other means applicable to obtaining a rate of speed far higher than that attainable under circumstances which probably justified the low rates contracted for a few years ago: and it is a source of deep regret to the Indian community who are so largely concerned in the rapid conveyance of the mails between this country and England that the opportunity presented by the Company's recent proposal has not been availed of to a fuller extent than that which has been announced.

The magnitude of the interests—social, political and commercial—which connect Great Britain with British India demands a system of intercommunication of the most complete efficiency, but that condition can hardly be held as realised if it fails in the material element of utmost rapidity in performing the postal service between the two countries. The subsidy granted to the Peninsular and Oriental Company is a heavy charge on the public revenue, and it is not unreasonable to require from them in return every provision which can tend to render their service as perfect as the resources of the Company can make it.

In the judgment of this Chamber the reported conces-

sion to the Company has not been accompanied by any compensating advantage to mail service. The inadequacy of the condition to expedite the delivery of the mails 24 hours earlier than contract time has already been exposed: and it is respectfully submitted that any amendment of the Company's contract involving the transmission of mails between Brindisi and Bombay, and *vice versa*, in a longer period than 16 days would be regarded as tantamount to a failure to obtain a full measure of reciprocal obligation, and as a surrender of a valuable privilege to the Peninsular and Oriental Company uninfluenced by that degree of protection to the interests of the public which may be justly claimed at the hands of Her Majesty's Government.

The Bombay Chamber of Commerce—with whom the discussion of the question under review originated—have addressed the Director General of the Post Office in India in a communication which sets forth, in considerable detail, the various points bearing on the paramount necessity of effecting a thorough revision of the mail service: and I am desired to express the concurrence of this Chamber in all that has been advanced in that representation, and their hope that Her Majesty's Post Master General will be pleased to take into his earnest consideration the circumstances which have prompted this appeal to His Lordship.

*From the Secretary, General Post Office, London,
to Bengal Chamber of Commerce.*

8th September, 1874.

I have submitted to the Post Master General your

letter of the 21st July last, in which you express the opinion of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce with regard to the revised contract lately concluded by this Department with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company for the conveyance of the East India, China and Japan mails.

This opinion, which is adverse to the revised contract, appears to be based solely on the telegraphic announcement of the decision come to by Her Majesty's Government, as at the time your letter was written, the revised contract had not been signed, and, consequently, its full import could not have been before the Chamber.

It is true, as pointed out in your letter, that one of the new conditions, namely, that by which the Company are bound to accelerate the delivery of the mails at Bombay by twenty-four hours, (the only one to which your letter refers,) is not itself of great value, inasmuch as the Company's Packets, even under the old arrangement, reached Bombay, as a rule, in advance of their appointed time. But I am to observe that, under the revised contract, the same acceleration is secured for Ceylon, China, Japan, &c., and, incidentally, to the mails for Australia.

As regards the homeward mails from Bombay, no alteration of time is contemplated: but, in order to secure punctuality both in the outward and homeward voyages, the penalties for failing to arrive at the appointed time are quadrupled and made absolute, whatever may be the cause of delay, (except alone those of shipwreck or damage to machinery,) whereas, before, the infliction of penalties for delay was contingent on the

state of the weather encountered during the voyage and other minor circumstances.

Further, Her Majesty's Government have obtained a not inconsiderable reduction in the annual subsidy payable to the Company and other advantages.

It must be remembered that the Government was not negotiating a new contract. Had that been the case, the present competition in trade to the East might have placed them in a very advantageous position.

But, in effect, the Peninsular and Oriental Company's contract, as it stood, could not be terminated for nearly six years: and, consequently, when the Company asked for permission to carry the heavy or Southampton portion of the mails through the Suez Canal and to be relieved from the delay caused by their packets touching at Alexandria (and this was the extent of the concession asked,) the question to be solved was what would be the fair equivalent of that concession.

After a lengthened discussion with the Company, the Post Master General succeeded in obtaining from them such advantages as he considered himself justified in recommending Her Majesty's Government to accept; and he has no reason to think that an insufficient return has been obtained for the concession granted.

The revised contract has been approved by Parliament and the question, therefore, is no longer open to re-consideration during the continuance of the existing contract.

Detention of the Overland Mail at Suez.

When the reply to the Committee's representation relative to the detention, for nearly a week, at Suez, of the London Mail of 16th October via Brindisi is received, the circumstances under which so unusual a proceeding was authorised will probably be made known: at present no other explanation is suggested than that the break-down of the steamer *Surat* with the Southampton mails and passengers and the expediency of forwarding them by first available opportunity was a sufficient reason for the extreme measure adopted.

It appeared to your Committee that the detention was a wrongful and unjustifiable departure from the Company's contract to convey the Brindisi mails with all despatch, and that it called for immediate notice and protest: they therefore at once addressed the following communication to Her Majesty's Post Master General.

*From Chamber of Commerce to Her Majesty's
Post Master General, London.*

Calcutta, 10th November 1874.

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce desire me to express their thanks to Her Majesty's Post

Master General for the reply to their representation regarding the revised contract with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, which you have been good enough to communicate in your letter No. 468Z of the 8th September.

The Committee's object in addressing you on this occasion has reference to the detention at Suez for a week of the London Mails of 16th ultimo forwarded per contract packet from Brindisi to Alexandria.

The reason assigned for this most unusual detention of the express mails is that the *Surat*, with despatches and passengers via Southampton had broken down on her voyage, and that it was therefore expedient to forward them without further delay by the first opportunity, on her arrival at Alexandria, or Suez via the Canal.

That opportunity was apparently presented by the *Ceylon*, which was waiting at Suez to convey the Brindisi mail to Bombay, but the Committee submit that this was a proceeding on the part of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company not justified by the terms or spirit of their contract, and that the detention of the Brindisi Mails on such grounds is indefensible.

The Company are bound by their contract to convey and deliver the mails *with all despatch*; but in this instance they would appear, by an arbitrary exercise of authority, to have ignored its provisions, and by a greater regard for their own arrangement than for the requirements of a special contract service, exposed the public of India to inconvenience which has resulted by their

departure from the strict performance of contract obligations.

On the lesser ground also of the personal disadvantages to passengers by the detained steamer the Committee would invite the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Post Master General to the circumstances under which they have been subjected to a vexatious delay in Egypt: and they desire to submit their emphatic protest against the action of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company in respect of disregard of both public and private interests.

Detention of Overland Mails at Bombay.

Immediately on receipt of advice by telegraph that the Calcutta portion of the London mails of 28th August would not be forwarded till the day after their arrival at Bombay—involving a delay of nearly 20 hours—the Committee applied to the Director General of the Post Office for an explanation of the cause of detention. A prompt reply was given, but it was disappointing and unsatisfactory, the reason assigned being that the interval between the time of receipt of the mails and the latest safe hour at which a special engine should leave Bombay to overtake the ordinary mail then on its way to Jubbulpore was too great to allow of the mails being sent on. It was shewn that the special was timed to arrive at Jubbulpore 11 minutes after the hour advertised for the departure of the Calcutta train from that

station, and it was not unreasonable to assume that no great effort was necessary to make up that time in a run of 600 miles, or that any serious loss of time would be incurred by the Calcutta train being detained at Jubbulpore till the express arrived from Bombay.

The Director General however absolves the authorities at Bombay from blame, as they acted under his orders, and could not be expected to accept the responsibility of a later despatch, or risk the adoption of special arrangements which might or might not have succeeded.

The replies from the Director General are recorded: and the closing paragraph of his last letter conveys the satisfactory announcement that the present inconvenient despatch of the mail train from Bombay in the forenoon will probably be superseded by the mail leaving at 9 p. m.: under that plan the chances of the mails being detained on arrival at Bombay will be greatly reduced, and their receipt in Calcutta in the morning instead of late at night will be an improvement upon present arrangements.

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

Calcutta, 21st September 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your

letter of the 19th September, enquiring as to the cause of the detention at Bombay of the inward overland mail which reached that port on the 15th September.

2. In your second paragraph, the interval between the signalling of the steamer and the delivery of the mail at the General Post Office, Bombay, is estimated at one hour only and on that supposition you conclude that there ought to have been time enough to send on the mails by special train. The interval between signalling and anchoring the steamer necessarily depends on the clearness of the atmosphere and the time taken over, the business of landing is contingent on the state of the sea. It is impossible therefore on the mere signalling of the vessel to estimate accurately the exact hour when the mails will reach the Post Office: the mail is never finally delivered at the Bombay Post Office until two hours, and sometimes not till three hours after the contract packet has been sighted: on the occasion now under notice the process occupied $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

3. A special engine for the conveyance of the overland mail for Bengal is, as the Chamber probably knows, never used beyond Jubbulpore, a distance from Bombay of 616 miles. When the ordinary daily train can be overtaken at or before Jubbulpore a special engine is ordered; when this cannot be done the mail lies over until the following day.

4. The time gained by the use of a special is 3 hours 55 minutes, so that an engine, to reach Jubbulpore before the departure of the East India Railway train, must leave Bombay not later than 2-25 p. m. (Madras Time.) In this instance, however, the mail was not finally delivered

at the General Post Office until 2-30 p. m., and the Bombay postal authorities were therefore right in not employing a special engine.

5. The prohibition, to which the Chamber advert, against crossing the Bombay ghats by night does not affect special engines carrying the mail: and the reason why that prohibition governs the ordinary daily service lies in the fact that the mail train and the fast passenger train are always combined.

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

Calcutta, 22nd October 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, of the 12th October, and in reply to state that your previous communication, of the 28th September, did not seem to me to call for any acknowledgment; and I am sorry now to find that an answer is awaited.

2. While regretting that the Chamber do not concur in the views to which expression has been given by me, I cannot blame the Post Master of Bombay for adhering by my own orders. The time specified (2-25 p. m.) was fixed as the latest safe hour at which a special engine for Bombay could overtake the mail at Jubbulpore: and it is not to be expected that the local postal authorities would accept the responsibility of a later despatch or risk the

adoption of special arrangements which might or might not have succeeded.

3. It must further be borne in mind that a special engine cannot be started at a moment's demand: those on the spot are alone competent to weigh the probabilities of the need, and to decide in each instance whether the required notice should be given or not.

The present forenoon despatch of the mail train from Bombay must always be an inconvenient arrangement in the interests of the postal service; but I am glad to add that by a Time Table now under consideration the mail train for Jubbulpore will quit Bombay at about 9 o'clock at night which will reduce to a minimum the chances of any serious detention of the inward overland mail at that port.

The Chamber's Tonnage Schedule, as regards measurement of Jute and Cotton, &c.

At a special General Meeting of the Chamber held on the 21st February last it was resolved to postpone for 4 months the further consideration of the scheme then submitted, but no action has been taken since; and the only matter in connection with the proceedings of that meeting which has come before the Committee is the following acknowledgment of them by the General Shipowners' Associations of London and Liverpool.

From the Secretary of General Shipowners' Society to Chamber of Commerce.

London, 17th July 1874.

In acknowledging your letter of 29th January and 27th February last, enclosing Abstract of proceedings of your Chamber of Commerce, I have to state that the Committee of this Society delayed replying to your communications until they had an interview with several of the Members of the Chamber who were in London.

This Meeting has taken place and the result is that the Shipowners do not see anything impracticable in their first proposals,—that they are dissatisfied with the resolutions of the Chamber and intend to adhere to the principle of their original resolutions and to do all in their power to bring the same into effect.

I enclose copy of the decision arrived at by the Shipowners' Associations of London and Liverpool.

SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

London and Liverpool, July 1874.

Bengal Tonnage Scale.

The General Shipowners' Society of London and the Liverpool Shipowners' Association regret to have to report that after various communications with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and meetings with different parties interested in the question, they have been unable to come to a satisfactory arrangement for the measurement

of jute and cotton at Calcutta, the proposal made by the latter body not being in the opinion of the representatives of the shipowners of a nature to put a stop to the malpractices from which it is generally admitted they have so long suffered or to satisfy their reasonable demands.

All that shipowners require or wish for is *payment for the space occupied in ships hold* and this can only be ascertained by measurement alongside or on ship's deck. Such a mode by *qualified measurers acting independently of both shipper and shipowner* would be fair to all parties and as no valid objections to its adoption have yet been shown, it is to be hoped that it may ultimately become the custom of Calcutta.

Meantime until some arrangement of an equitable character can be arrived at the following suggestions are offered for the consideration of shipowners when giving instructions to masters and agents.

1st.—To avoid as far as possible taking measurements at the Screw-house and to insist upon measuring either on ship's deck or alongside, or on some public shipping wharf *within the Port Commissioners' enclosure*.

2nd.—With a view to encouraging measurement on board ship, it is suggested that engagements should be made *per 5 bales not exceeding 50 feet measured on the Wharf*, or not exceeding 52 feet at the ship.

3rd.—The ton to be
"per 5 bales not exceeding (50 or 52) cubic feet as

above suggested" and *not* "per 50 cubic feet"(without limit of number of bales.)

GEORGE L. MUNRO,

Chairman, London General Shipowners' Society.

JAS. MACDONALD,

Chairman, Liverpool Shipowners' Association.

Reduction of Doorgah Poojah Holidays.

The question of reducing the authorised number of public holidays at the period of the principal Hindoo festival has advanced a stage since the Committee last referred to it, and the point urged by them has been temporarily conceded by the Custom House having been kept open for business for half of the time allotted for the holidays on the last occasion.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 21st July 1874.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th January 1874, suggesting a reduction in the present authorised number of public holidays allowed during the Doorgah Poojah festival on the ground of the extreme inconvenience caused to trade and the shipping by the closing of the Custom House and the cessation of work for so long a period as twelve days.

2. In reply I am to say that at the instance of the Government of India to whom the subject had been submitted for consideration, some of the most influential native gentlemen were consulted and their replies indicate an unanimous opposition to any proposal for a curtailment of the general holiday during the Doorga Poojah, and as regards the native employés of the Custom House the suggestion which meets with most approval is that if with a view to meet the wishes of the mercantile community the holidays in that office are to be limited to one close week, the work entailed by the opening of the Custom House during the rest of the vacation should be met by relays of workers to be remunerated by extra fees.

3. In consulting the Board of Revenue upon the reports from the native gentlemen, the Government desired to ascertain how the limitation of the holiday to one week so far as the Custom House is concerned, could best be effected without seriously inconveniencing the native officials, and the reply of the Member in charge, with the views expressed in which the Lieutenant-Governor agrees, is submitted for the Chamber's consideration. If the Chamber is prepared to accept the suggestions contained in the Board's letter as regards the compensation to be paid to those upon whom an extra labour is thrown and as to the difficulties in connection with the payment of duty, the Lieutenant-Governor will submit proposals in accordance with those views for the favorable consideration of the Government of India.

*Letter No. 422 B,
dated 8th July 1874.

Board of Revenue, L. P. to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, 8th July 1874.

With advertence to Government order No. 2092 dated 21st May last, I am directed to state that the Member in charge has been in correspondence with the Collector of Customs, Calcutta, and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, relative to the proposal made by the latter to reduce the Doorga Poojah holidays from 12 days to one week on account of the inconvenience caused to trade and shipping by the closing of the Custom House during the holidays. Mr. Money understands the Bengal Government order, and that of the Government of India, to rule that the prayer of the Chamber of Commerce is to be granted so far as to limit the absolute closing of the Custom House to one week, and that the Board is desired to state how this can be done with the least inconvenience to the native officials.

2. Mr. Money is of opinion that no strict rule can be passed for closing the Custom House for seven consecutive days only. The necessity of allowing time for going to and from home, the intervention of Sundays, and the occasional intervention of other strict holidays prevent this. For example, this year the Doorga Poojah begins on the 15th of October next, and lasts till the 26th idem: the strict days of the Poojah are the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th; if, therefore, the first seven days were taken, the Custom House would re-open on the 22nd. But as the 24th is also a strict holiday on account of the Luckhi Poojah falling within the Doorga Poojah holi-

days, and as the 25th is a Sunday, the Custom House must be closed on those two days. Under such circumstances the best plan, it appears, would be to recognize the general principle that the Custom House shall be closed for 7 days only during the Doorga Poojah festival, it being left to the Collector of Customs to determine the days, each year, and to fix them sufficiently early in the year to give long notice to the mercantile community. Thus, this year the Custom House might remain open on the 15th, on the 16th till 2 P. M., on the 22nd, 23rd and 26th October.

3. To curtail, however, the days of their holidays is a serious hardship to the native officials. The Chamber of Commerce writes as if religious considerations were the only ones which have reference to the feelings of natives in connection with those holidays, forgetting that this is the only time in the year when many native officials can spend a few days with their families. The Member in Charge is strongly of opinion that those officials who would be deprived of a portion of their annual indulgence, and placed thereby in a worse position than others, should be compensated at the expense of the persons for whose benefit or convenience they would suffer. Every native subordinate who attends the Custom House during the holidays should, I am to suggest, get an extra day's pay for each day of attendance, the funds for this purpose being levied by fees payable by every firm or merchant using the Custom House during such time. The Collector could regulate the rate of fees, or the mercantile community might, if they preferred it, divide the cost among themselves.

4. There is only one other point which Mr. Money thinks deserves notice. During the holidays, the Bank of Bengal is not open to receive payment of duty, and the Custom House cannot receive it, for it has neither guard nor strong chest for large sums of money. It would therefore be necessary for merchants intending to pass goods, for either export or import, during the holidays, to pay into the Bank before the holidays a sum which would cover the amount of duty, and to produce either the Bank's receipt or a guarantee from the Bank up to a specific amount.

5. The Member in Charge sees no means of avoiding this difficulty about payment of duty, and is inclined to think that such compulsory payment will prove a serious bar to merchants wishing to use the Custom House during the holidays.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 27th July 1874.

I am instructed by the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2932 of 21st instant, accompanied by copy of letter from the Board of Revenue on the subject of the Chamber's representation regarding the Doorga Poojah holidays: and to state for the information of the Lieutenant-Governor that they are willing to accept the arrangement proposed in the Board's letter as to the number of days on which the Custom House should be closed, and those on which business may be transacted there as usual; and also as to the remuneration of Custom House officials by

fees, regulated by the Collector, payable by those whose operations necessitate their attendance.

If ample notice is given of the arrangements to be observed in October, the Committee are of opinion that merchants desirous of carrying on their import and export business during the holidays will have no difficulty in satisfying the Collector with regard to a sufficient provision for the probable amount of duty.

Accommodation for Native Passengers in Steamers.

In reply to the following reference as to the increased space that should be allowed for native passengers on voyages in Indian seas, the Committee stated that in their opinion the provisions of Acts XII of 1870 and 1872 were sufficient and required no extension: but believing that the large experience of the Agents for the British India Steam Navigation Company would be acceptable to the Government in arriving at a decision in the matter the Committee submitted the reference for their opinion. Their reply was forwarded to Government, with the Committee's expression of concurrence that the present state of the law required no further legislation.

From Govt. of Bengal to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 26th September 1874.

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of a letter

from the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce, No. 444, dated 17th July 1874, regarding Rules for defining the space that should be allowed under Clauses 2 and 3 of Section 12 of Act XII of 1870 and Section 3 of Act XII of 1872, (the Native Passenger Ships' Acts), and to request that the Chamber of Commerce may be moved to favor the Lieutenant-Governor with an expression of their opinion on the subject.

From Govt. of India to Government of Bengal.

Calcutta, the 17th July 1874.

The attention of His Excellency the Governor General in Council having been directed to the question of framing rules for defining the space that should be allowed under Clauses 2 and 3 of Section 12 of Act XII of 1870, and Section 3 of Act XII of 1872, (the Native Passenger Ships' Acts) to each passenger for voyages in Indian seas in the monsoon and in fair weather, I am directed to state that it is proposed to make the following rules in regard to coasting voyages, *viz* :—

(1st.) That at all seasons nine feet be allowed for a between deck passenger, with, in the north-eastern monsoon four, and in the south-western monsoon six feet upper deck accommodation for air and exercise.

(2nd.) That for a deck passenger nine feet be allowed in the north-eastern monsoon, and twelve feet in the south-western monsoon.

Any exceptional rules that may be required for Balasore and Dhumrah to be framed by the local Government.

(2nd.) I am to request that His Excellency in Council may be favored with any suggestions His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor may wish in communication with the Chamber of Commerce, to offer on the subject.

*From Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co.,
Managing Agents of British India Steam
Navigation Company to Bengal Chamber of
Commerce.*

Calcutta, 20th. October 1874.

In replying to your letter of 13th instant with enclosures relative to the accommodation proposed to be given to native passengers, it appears necessary to refer to the present state of the law on the subject.

Clauses 2 and 3 of Section 12 of Act XII of 1870 provide for passengers having 12 superficial and 72 cubical feet of space in the between decks and 4 feet on the upper deck, but a perusal of Chapter 2nd of that Act will show that this provision is intended for sailing vessels on long voyages.

Chapter 3rd of same Act states that in the case of coasting steamers certificates shall be granted which "shall state the limits (if any) within which the vessel is to ply, and the number of native passengers which the vessel is permitted to carry such number to be subject to such conditions and variations according to the time

"of the year, the nature of the voyage, and the cargo "carried as the case requires."

Section 3 of Act XII of 1872 amends clauses 243 of Act XII of 1870 and provides that in the case of steamers (i. e., steamers on long voyages because steamers on coasting voyages are otherwise provided for) the space may be reduced to 9 superficial and 54 cubical feet in between decks.

So far therefore as regards sailing vessels and steamers on long voyages the present state of the law is satisfactory, in as far as ample accommodation is given, while a fair and proper distinction is made between steamers and sailing vessels.

To summarise; the present state of the law gives to native passengers by sailing vessels 12 superficial feet and 72 cubical feet in between decks and 4 feet on deck; and by steamers other than coasting steamers, 9 superficial feet and 54 cubical feet in between decks and 4 feet on deck. In coasting steamers the space to be allotted is left "at the discretion of an officer authorized by the local Government."

The letter from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal while making reference only to clauses 2 and 3 of Section 12 of Act XII of 1870 and Section 3 of Act XII of 1872, and taking no notice of Chapter 3 of the 1870 Act which treats specially of coasting steamers, proposes that the between deck accommodation to be given in coasting steamers should be the same as given in steamers on long voyages, say, to the Red Sea or Persian

Gulf. Of this we do not approve because we consider that the distinction recognised in the Acts referred to between a steamer on a long voyage and a coasting steamer a fair and proper distinction, and that it should be upheld. It seems very apparent that what may be necessary for a pilgrim steamer going to Jeddah where a peculiar class of passengers is on board for 20 days, is not necessary for a coasting steamer where the passengers may be on board but a few days, it may be but a few hours. In fine we consider that the present state of the law which provides certain accommodation in sailing vessels, a less accommodation in steamers and a still less accommodation in coasting steamers is satisfactory and not to be improved by further legislation.

Up till two months ago the passenger certificates given by the Master-Attendant here set aside 6.5 feet in between decks and 4 feet on the upper deck for each adult passenger by coasting steamers; being the same accommodation as Government have allotted to native troops on the voyage from Calcutta to Rangoon. This space we consider ample and that a still less space on deck will suffice when the voyage is very short such as from Calcutta to Balasore or Dhumrah. That exceptional rules should be made for Balasore and Dhumrah is recognised in letter from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, but we wish it to be borne in mind that in the system of communications kept up by this company under contract with the Government of India there are many distances as short and shorter than those between Calcutta and Balasore or Dhumrah; under which view of the case it will be observed that the proposal for 9 feet would place our com-

pany under a manifest disadvantage. What we desire therefore is that the accommodation which up till a couple of months ago was allowed by the Marine Department here, *viz*: 6.5 feet in between decks to each adult passenger and 8.5 feet on upper deck when no accommodation is reserved below, may be reverted to, and that any exceptional rules made for Balasore or Dhumrah should hold good for runs of somewhat similar distances performed by our steamers.

The only unsatisfactory result of the present state of the law, under which the accommodation on coasting voyages is left "at the discretion of an Officer authorised by the local Government," is the variety of ways in which that discretion is exercised. For example the steamer *Oriental* belonging to this Company now employed on the mail line between Madras and Rangoon was surveyed by the Rangoon authorities about three months ago and obtained a license to carry 780 passengers, but the Madras authorities have disputed the Rangoon license and granted a new one authorising 398 passengers to be carried between October and December and 515 during the remainder of the year. So here we have the irregularity of the steamer being allowed to carry nearly double the number of passengers between Rangoon and Madras which she is allowed to take between Madras and Rangoon.

We will be glad that your Committee concur in our views, and will recommend them to the Government for adoption at all the ports of British India.

Aden Harbour and Anchorage.

About 4 years ago, in accordance with instructions from the Secretary of State for India to report upon the harbour and anchorage of Aden, Mr. Robertson C. E. expressed his opinion that a certain amount of dredging ought to be done to keep them in a fit state, and recommended that the shoal part near the light-ship should be dealt with in the first instance; but from information placed at the disposal of the Chamber a few weeks ago it would appear that no attempts had been made to improve the condition of the port.

The Committee therefore represented the matter to the Government of India, by whom it has been taken in hand, as indicated by the following reply :—

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 23rd September 1874.

In reply to your letter of the 2nd instant, relative to the Aden Harbour, I am directed to state, for the information of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, that a full report on the subject has been called for from the Government of Bombay, and that on the receipt of a reply you will be informed of the orders that may be passed by the Government of India.

Street Tramways.

Frequent references have already been recorded in the proceedings of the Chamber to the expediency of tramways being constructed in the business parts of the town and the suburbs of Calcutta, and the following reply from the Committee to the latest communication from the Government of Bengal contains their views on the points submitted for their opinion :—

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of Bengal.

Calcutta, 22nd June 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce desire me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 4004 of 12th instant regarding a proposal for giving to a private firm the right of making street tramways in Calcutta for a term of years.

The Committee concur in the opinion expressed in your letter No. 780 of 7th February last to the Chairman of the Justices that a proposal of such a kind should be subjected to public discussion, and that the concession by Government of a special privilege in favor of an individual speculator or a private company should not be made until after ample notice had been given to the public and opportunity afforded to projectors generally of competing for the franchise, which in other countries is generally considered to possess considerable value to the grantees.

The Committee see no reasons why the latter should not be granted to a responsible party or corporation subject to such control on the part of the Government or municipality as will insure to the public the greatest amount of convenience and the least interference with the ordinary traffic of the streets, &c., such concessions have been made to private individuals and corporations in many of the chief cities of Europe and America, and the Committee are not aware that they have been found to work against the interests of the municipalities referred to: on the contrary they believe in most instances the result has proved beneficial to both contracting parties.

The Chairman of the Justices states in his letter of 23rd December last "that the Committee was of opinion that a scheme for extending the Tramway through the town would have a better chance of success if taken up by capitalists of this city, and therefore tenders were not publicly invited," but the Committee of the Chamber do not take that view of the matter; they are of opinion that the interests of the tax-payers demand that before giving away a valuable right like the one in question the widest publicity should be given to their intention and that tenders should be invited 6 months after notice has been given in the leading newspapers. By this means they consider better terms could be got than those which the Tramway Committee of the Justices are anxious to accept: in fact, notwithstanding the limited notice of their intention to dispose of the existing Tramway and the franchise for the town, the Committee are informed that at the meeting held on 22nd of December a tender offering more favorable terms for the privileges

in question than the one which was accepted was actually sent into the Tramway Committee, but, on account of what appears rather an untenable reason, was not opened.

**Proposed official testing and verification of
English Weights.**

This matter was submitted for the consideration of the Government of Bengal last June, but no reply has been received yet.

The expediency of providing for the ultimate adoption of a uniform system of weights throughout British India had been the subject of a long continued discussion which was terminated by the passing of Act XI of 1870, whereby the Indian seer, equal to the French Kilogramme of 2,205 lb. avoirdupois, was declared to be the primary standard of weight.

In the statement of Objects and Reasons which accompanied the introduction of the preliminary Bill the necessity of the measure was urged with the view among other grounds "to facilitate and simplify commercial operations;" and it was also stated that it had not been considered expedient to introduce the weights of Great Britain into India.

The Act was obviously intended to remove the

long existing evil of a large diversity of weights throughout the country, and in that respect it was a measure of great public usefulness.

But in the presidency towns of India the use of English weights is almost as common as the use of Indian weights, and on several articles of imported and exported merchandise customs duties are levied on valuations per lb, cwt, and ton.

Up to 1st November 1860 the customs returns exhibited Indian weights only, but from that date they were, with a few exceptions, displaced by English denominations, and the alterations then made have been since maintained.

The Committee were unable to trace the authority for that alteration, but believed it was given by the late Mr. Wilson in order to assimilate the Indian customs returns as far as possible to those issued by the London Board of Trade.

It appeared from a reply given by the Mint Master to an application for testing the correctness of English weights that he had not the authority or means to adjust any except those in use by the Government, *viz.*, the Indian maund and the tola weight, with their multiples and subdivisions.

As English weights are extensively used by merchants in the purchase and sale of country produce and various articles of imported merchandise, recognised by Government in levying duty, and employed in official records, the Committee recommended that the Warden appointed under Act XI for the purpose of verifying Indian weights be authorised to have the charge of English standards also, and to verify the weights presented to him for a declaration of their accuracy, on payment of a small fee to cover attendant expenses.

The Committee believed this plan had been adopted in Bombay and hoped it might be introduced in Calcutta.

The weights used in the bazar are generally most defective, and the system so long tolerated should be forthwith discountenanced and discontinued, and weights officially recognised and verified should be authoritatively substituted. By their constant use, the weights are considerably reduced, and broken bricks and stones are thrown into the imperfect scales to supplement the loss of the metal weights.

All weights current in the Calcutta bazar and in ordinary commercial use should be tested every six months, and it was suggested, if that ope-

ration threw too much labor on the Mint Master or Warden, that Government should appoint an Inspector of weights, whose report should be accepted by the Warden as a guarantee of the necessity for testing in all cases of proved deficiency, and an official stamp of verification, with date thereof, should be affixed to every certificated weight.

**Trade routes and the prospects of trade between
Burma and Western China.**

Though this is a question that more intimately concerns Burma and our Colonies in China, the Committee have had pleasure in replying to the request made them by the Government of India, and in their annexed letter they have embodied what appeared to be the principal points to which the attention of the Commission should be directed as regards the requirements of trade. The exploring party has already started, and the result of their enquiry will be no doubt duly communicated to the Chamber.

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Calcutta, 14th October 1874.

I am directed by the Viceroy and Governor General in Council to inform you that it is in contemplation by

Government shortly to despatch a party of British officers to Yunnan for the purpose of reporting upon the trade routes and the prospects of trade between Burma and Western China.

2. His Excellency in Council will be glad to be favored with any suggestions which the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce may desire to offer on the subject of the development of trade between the two countries, or on any matters of commercial interest to which the attention of the officers should be devoted.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 25th November 1874.

The Committee of the Chamber of Commerce direct me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2263 of the 14th ultimo which acquaints them of the intention of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council to despatch a party of British officers to Yunnan for the purpose of reporting upon the trade routes and prospects of trade between Burma and Western China, and invites any suggestions which the Chamber may wish to offer on the subject.

The first point on which the Chamber would desire to receive special information is the comparative desirability of the two routes via Bhamo, on the one hand, and Kiang Tung on the other, both as regards safety and facility of transit of goods and travellers, but more especially in view of the ultimate construction of railway and telegraph lines.

The route of the present mission has, the Committee hear, been altered, and if now proceeds, they are informed, by the latter, instead of, as was first intended, by the former, road. This change has been rendered necessary by rumours of disturbances in the Northern part of Burma.

The establishment of a regular trade between British Burma and Western China, or between any one country and another, must have for its foundation not only security for life and property but immunity from all stoppage of intercourse. The Committee would therefore be glad to learn what measures are proposed to be taken to ensure this end. The means necessary for surmounting these geographical and political difficulties have no doubt already engaged the attention of Government.

The Committee would also be glad to receive full and complete information as to the commercial products of the different districts through which the mission will have to pass and their capabilities for consumption of British manufactures.

It would be desirable therefore to get samples of the various article of produce obtainable, with a statement of their available quantities, and the extent to which their production might be increased by the application of European appliances and machinery as well as by the enlarged demand that would necessarily follow the opening out of a new outlet for the trade. If such samples were accompanied by memo. of cost at the place of production, together with charges of transport to port of exportation the importation would be useful, and they should include

all articles, not only of manufacture but of natural productions, metals, minerals, precious stones, &c. in which Yunnan is, the Committee believe, particularly rich.

A further point on which the Committee apply to be furnished with information is about the coinage and currency, of which they would like specimens and the different modes of business, whether transactions are conducted by barter or by payment in coin, a list of the weights and measures in use, with their comparative equivalents in English or Indian currency, is also needed.

A large proportion of the trade of Yunnan at present finds its way down the Yeang Tze River to Shanghai. The relations between these Western States and the ports on the Eastward should be ascertained and reported on, as well as the proportion of the trade that may, on the opening of the shorter route, be diverted to our own provinces.

These appear to be the principal points on which the Committee desire information, but they will be glad of any further report on subjects which may, in the course of the enquiry, appear to the Government of sufficient interest to be communicated to the Chamber.

**Present condition of Commerce between
British India and Annam.**

From Govt. of India to Chamber of Commerce.

Viceroy's Camp, Hazareebagh, 16th October 1874.

I am directed to state that His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council will be much obliged if the Chamber of Commerce will favor the Government of India with any information which they may be in a position to furnish regarding the present condition of the trade between British India and Annam.

From Chamber of Commerce to Govt. of India.

Calcutta, 10th November 1874.

Your letter No. 3 of 16th of last month was submitted to the Committee of the Chamber of Commerce at their first meeting after the Doorga Poojah holidays, and I was directed to state in reply that it is not within their power to furnish any information on the present condition of Commerce between British India and Annam: for as far as they are aware there is no direct trade between this part of India and the Province you refer to, or indeed between it and any of the presidency sea-ports. It is believed that the foreign trade by sea is principally with China, Siam and British ports within the Straits of Malacca, and that the French Settlement at Saigon is one of the principal out-lets for the products of the country.

Reports on Country Produce.

During the half-year the Committee have had references from Government for reports on samples of various country produce, and by the courtesy of Messrs. Ernsthausen and Oesterley they have been able to furnish all available information regarding the following:—

Cotton, from Hinghughat seed grown in Palamow.

„ grown in the Jail at Midnapore.

„ received from the Cotton Commissioner.

Tobacco, grown in Madras from Manila seed.

„ „ Port Blair.

Vanilla, from Mysore.

Sulphur, from Nepal.

Cocoons, produced from Japanese and Cashmere seed.

Tussar Silk Cocoons, from the Central Provinces.

New Members.

Messrs. N. J. Valetta and Co. have been admitted, by the Committee, as Members of the Chamber, subject to the usual confirmation.

Members Retired.

Messrs. Atkinson, Tilton and Co., Messrs. Balmer, Lawrie and Co., Messrs. Wolff, Wilnans and Co., Mr. G. M. Blacker, and Messrs. Hamilton, Brown and Co. of Mirzapore have ceased to be Members.

Funds of the Chamber.

The half-yearly balance of the Funds of the Chamber amounts to Rs. 20-5-0 exclusive of Rs. 12,000 in 4 per cent. Government Securities.

J. C. MURRAY,

President.

PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY, THE 8TH AUGUST 1874.

ANDREW YULE, Esq., in the Chair.

The Chairman opened the proceedings of the meeting by declaring the purpose for which it had been convened, viz., for the appointment of a Provisional Committee to conduct the current business of the Chamber, and specially to revise the rules and regulations now in force, and to report generally on the best means of promoting the efficiency of the Institution.

The Chairman remarked that the position he occupied demanded some explanation, and in giving the reasons which had induced him to remain on the Committee after the other members had retired he said he had been desirous of doing what little he could in the interests of the Chamber and believed that, under existing circumstances, he had best served them by acting as he had done. It was unnecessary for him to enter into any statement of the cause or causes, immediate or remote, of the present state of the Chamber's affairs: that was a matter which would be fully investigated by the Provisional Committee whose appointment was the object of this present meeting.

The Chairman concluded a few other remarks by proposing the following Resolution:—

That the following gentlemen be appointed a Provisional Committee to conduct the current business of the Chamber, and especially to revise the Rules and Regulations now in

proce, and to report on the best means of promoting the efficiency of the Institution :

The Hon'ble J. R. Bullen Smith,
M. Henderson, Esq.,
J. C. Murray, Esq.,
H. Rhodius, Esq.,
J. Flemington, Esq.,
F. Whitney, Esq.,
S. A. Raphael, Esq.,
E. C. Morgan, Esq.,
J. A. Anderson, Esq., and
Andrew Yule, Esq.

Mr. A. B. Inglis seconded the Resolution, which was carried unanimously.

The Hon'ble J. R. Bullen Smith then rose and said—

I beg leave to propose an additional Resolution. It has occurred to some of us that upon this occasion, considering the peculiar circumstances in which the Chamber is placed, members will for once be willing to forego their right of voting for the Executive, and allow the Provisional Committee, just elected, to select such a Committee as they think will be acceptable to the Chamber and likely to advance its efficiency and interests : I mean that the vote of the Chamber shall be taken not as usual by voting cards and individual names, but simply by a resolution of approval of the Committee which the Provisional Executive shall select and recommend. As a rule, I would on no account wish to restrict the elective privileges of members, but at this juncture I believe the course I recommend will save considerable delay in the instalment of a regular

executive and be otherwise attended with advantage. I therefore beg to propose the following resolution :—

That it be an instruction to the Provisional Committee, now appointed, to select and form a permanent Committee for the current half-year, and submit the same for approval and confirmation.

Before sitting down I would say a word as to what fell from the Chairman regarding himself at the beginning of the proceedings. While, in common with others, I much regret the late almost wholesale secession of the Committee, far be it from me to comment upon the action taken by these gentlemen—they doubtless had reasons satisfactory to themselves for the course they adopted, and it is not for us to question them, but I do think our Chairman is entitled to our thanks for remaining at his post and saving the Chamber from being left without President, Vice-President or a single member of Committee. In continuing in office under circumstances very peculiar and not altogether agreeable, Mr. Yule has done all he could to diminish the inconvenience and embarrassment arising from the action of his late colleagues, and I consider the best acknowledgments of the Chamber are due to him.

Mr. R. Macallister seconded the resolution, which the Meeting unanimously adopted.

The Chairmen thanked Mr. Bullen Smith for the manner in which he had expressed approval of the course he—Mr. Yule—had taken, and was gratified to find that the Meeting entertained the same opinion of his conduct.

There being no other business to transact, a vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.

PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY, THE 5TH SEPTEMBER 1874. X

THE HON'BLE J. R. BULLEN SMITH, *President of the Provisional Committee*, in the Chair.

The Chairman said that in presenting the report of the Provisional Committee it would not be necessary for him to trouble the meeting with any lengthy remarks.

Their first care had been to discharge any arrears of business, which had been done, and the file was now clear.

Paragraph 2 of the Report referred to the Rules and Regulations of the Chamber, which, as desired, they had carefully revised, without finding much susceptible of change or improvement, at which, however, he had not been surprised, as the revision undertaken by the Committee some years ago had been very complete and was carried out with the aid of the rules of almost all the principal Chambers of Commerce, including that of New York. By referring to the Report in their hands, Members would observe that a change was however proposed in Rule VII, by which the future Committee might be considered complete with only five Members, President and Vice-President included. He would mention that the Provisional Committee did not consider a Committee of seven at all too large, but experience had shown that there was frequently a difficulty in finding that number, which proved inconvenient, and it seemed desirable therefore to provide for the Committee being complete at the smaller number, while at the same time it was hoped that, as a rule, the old complement of seven Members might generally be found able and willing to serve on the Chamber's executive.

The Chairman next directed the attention of the meeting to the proposed note attached to Rule VIII, and observed that the Provisional Committee had at first contemplated making the substance of this note an integral portion of the Rule, but on reconsideration this, it appeared to them, might be placing too great a burden upon Members; they therefore resolved to propose the addition of the note to the rule, and it was for him to express his hope that, in voting, Members would bear its purport in mind and endeavour, as far as they could, to ascertain the willingness of those to serve for whom they proposed to vote. From the neglect of this much inconvenience and delay was often experienced at the usual periods of election, and he hoped the proposed note would recommend itself to the Members of the Chamber.

Paragraph 3 of the Report gave the names of the gentlemen who had kindly consented to form the regular Committee, and contained a recommendation that they should remain in office till May 1875, when a new election of office-bearers would take place in the usual course. As several Members of the Provisional Committee had agreed to remain in office, the task of forming a new executive had not proved so difficult as he, the Chairman, at one time anticipated, and he only regretted that it had not been found possible to find an American Merchant to occupy one seat, as had generally been the case in former years. It would be seen that Mr. Murray, who had previously occupied the chair of the Chamber with much acceptance, had kindly consented again to take that office, and he had no doubt that the Committee as a whole would commend itself to the Members.

In drawing the attention of the Meeting to the three concluding paragraphs of the Report, the Chairman said he knew that he was approaching a rather burning question, one which had excited a good deal of interest and been the subject of much discussion. He believed he might, without any breach of confidence, mention that some Members of the Provisional Committee, himself included, had been of opinion that the Shellac transactions referred to had not come before the Chamber in a form sufficiently direct to warrant the introduction of the subject in this Report. The majority of the Members, however, thought differently, and this being so, the minority concurred; so that the paragraphs in the Report must be taken to represent the views of the entire Provisional Committee—he deemed it right to state this. Having decided to take up the Shellac question, the Provisional Committee considered that any attempt to enter into its details would be at once difficult and unnecessary: they judged that if after mature consideration of all the knowledge that they possessed, they confined themselves to pointing out where they believed there had been a departure from fair and straightforward dealing, adding the expression of their opinion regarding such procedure, the circumstances of the case would be sufficiently met. In this spirit the concluding paragraphs of the Report had been framed, and he, the Chairman, ventured to hope they would meet with the approbation of the Chamber. His own opinion was that, having decided to touch upon the subject at all, the Provisional Committee could not have said less, nor was it incumbent upon them to say more.

With these remarks, he begged to propose the adoption of the Provisional Committee's Report.

Mr. John Cowie seconded the proposition.

Before putting the proposition to the vote the Chairman invited the meeting to make any remarks they desired on the Report; whereupon

Mr. T. F. Hamilton said it was with reluctance he rose to say anything against the Report, but it seemed to him that the Provisional Committee had gone beyond their powers in tacking on the last three paragraphs. They were a Committee appointed with special instructions to consider certain subjects of which this was not one, and as a matter of form they were not called upon to express any such opinion as they have. He was not well up in the forms of the Chamber, but thought it would have been much better for the Provisional Committee to have left the matter to the new Committee now about to be appointed, leaving them again to take the sense of each individual Member of the Chamber and act upon the result thereof. As it was, they had expressed an opinion without being asked to do so, upon a question which was either important enough to require more decided action, or not sufficiently so as to deserve these remarks of the Provisional Committee. He therefore begged to move that the last three paragraphs be cut out of the Report, and that further action be left to the new Committee should they think it desirable to take any.

Mr. J. C. Murray said he must defend the Provisional Committee from the charge of having exceeded their powers in taking notice of the shellac transaction. One of the positive injunctions laid on them was to propose such measures as might be necessary for promoting the

efficiency of the Chamber. With one exception the whole of the former Committee had resigned, and under such circumstances it could not be said that the Chamber was in an efficient state. And it was necessary therefore for the Committee, on entering on this branch of the enquiry, to ascertain the cause of this resignation. The cause was not far to seek. On the last occasion of cards being sent round for election of a President, only 19 had been returned with names, and six Members had sent back their cards declining to vote, showing that the great body of Members was holding itself aloof from the Chamber. This would not of itself have been sufficient to have warranted action on the part of the Provisional Committee, but when one Member distinctly pointed to this transaction as the reason for his refusal to vote, it appeared to the majority of the Provisional Committee—himself included—that it was no more a matter of choice with them, but that they were bound by their instructions to proceed with the enquiry. Nor could he think a matter which had for the moment brought the Chamber into such an inefficient state a small or trivial one; it was a grave and serious matter, and it had accordingly received grave and serious notice at the hands of the Committee. On such a serious matter it was the duty of any Committee to be careful to take the sense of the Members at large, and in this Mr. Hamilton was quite right. But the very fact of this General Meeting having been called was a proof that the Committee had done what Mr. Hamilton said they should have done; Members were called together in order that the views and opinions of each individual Member might be ascertained. The Provisional Committee had had a most painful duty put on them which they have fulfilled regardless of their own private feelings or friendship. It was the first time in the history of the

Chamber that occasion for censure had arisen, and he (Mr. Murray) sincerely hoped it would be the last.

Mr. Hamilton's motion not being seconded, the original proposition was put to the vote and carried.

The Chairman having intimated that there was no other matter to submit, the meeting separated after a vote of thanks to the Provisional Committee, proposed by Mr. T. A. Apear, seconded by Mr. H. B. H. Turner.

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
Calcutta, 27th August 1874.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE.

The undersigned, who were appointed by the Special General Meeting held on the 8th instant as a Provisional Committee of the Chamber, beg to place before you the result of their proceedings.

Under the 2 Resolutions adopted on that occasion the duties they were requested to discharge were—

- 1st—to conduct the current business of the Chamber;
- 2nd—to revise the rules and regulations now in force;
- 3rd—to select and form a Committee for the current half-year, and to submit the same for approval and confirmation; and
- 4th—to report on the best means of promoting the efficiency of the Institution.

1st.—All the business of the Chamber submitted to the Provisional Committee has received their careful attention, and necessary instructions have been issued for its proper disposal.

2nd.—The rules and regulations of the Chamber were revised by a Special Committee in 1866 and adopted at a Special Meeting held on 10th July, and are now in force as then adopted, except Rule VIII, which was amended at a Meeting on the 30th August 1871, to admit of the Committee themselves filling up vacancies, other than those of President and Vice-President. The Provisional Committee have considered the existing Rules, and are of opinion that they should remain unaltered with the exception of the following amendments.

Rules VII. provides for the management of the affairs of the Chamber by a Committee of seven Members, including the President and Vice-President; and that *four* shall form a quorum.

Having regard however to the frequent changes that take place in the commercial community, to the vacancies often occurring in Committee during the currency of the year for which its Members are elected, and to the difficulty practically experienced in filling them up, the Provisional Committee are of opinion that the Rule may be advantageously amended to the extent of authorising a Committee of *five* Members, including the President and Vice-President, to conduct the business of the Chamber, and that *three* should form a quorum.

They therefore recommend that Rule VII. be amended as follows:—“That the business and funds of the Chamber shall be managed by a Committee of not less than five nor more than seven Members, including the President and Vice-President, to be elected, &c., and that three shall form a quorum.”

Rule VIII.—It has happened in numerous instances that Members have declined to accept office after having been duly elected to serve on the Committee, and fresh elections have been the consequence. This has been attended with much inconvenience, and in order to avoid it for the future, the Provisional Committee recommend that the following note be added to Rule VIII:—“It is specially requested that before a Member is returned to serve on the Committee his nominator shall have ascertained his willingness to accept office in the event of his election by voting cards.”

The Provisional Committee do not consider it expedient to disturb the provisions of the Rule or to press that their suggestion should be of a compulsory character; but they desire to urge upon the attention of Members the desirableness of making the preliminary enquiry recommended by them.

3rd.—The Provisional Committee submit for your approval and confirmation the following as a Committee for the current half-year:—

MR. J. C. MURRAY,	as President,
MR. M. HENDERSON,	” Vice-President.
MR. J. A. ANDERSON,	} ” Members.
MR. J. FLEMINGTON,	
MR. A. B. INGLIS,	
MR. G. G. RISO,	
MR. ANDREW YULE,	

These gentlemen have consented to act as your Executive for the current half-year, the period limited by the Resolution under which we were instructed to select your office bearers; but as the current half-year will expire on the 31st October, and as it is customary to elect a Committee who shall remain in office for a 12-month from date of annual election in the month of May, it is proposed that the gentlemen who have accepted our invitation to conduct your business shall hold office until the next annual election in May 1875.

4th.—In responding to your request to report on the best means of promoting the efficiency of the Chamber, the Provisional Committee have no difficulty in submitting what appear to them most conducive to that purpose.

To maintain an Institution of the character of your Chamber in a position capable of realising the objects for which it was established, and on a scale commensurate with the requirements of its business, it is essential that the vitality and support derived from its numerical strength be supplemented by the cordial and zealous co-operation of its members; by encouraging and helping your representatives in their task of conducting your affairs by useful suggestions in all matters touching the advancement of objects of common benefit and advantage; by responding fully and freely to references which your Committee may see fit to submit for your opinions on points on which it may be desirable to obtain the sense of the Chamber at large; and by a far more general attendance on those periodical occasions when your Committee ask at your hands approval of their proceedings on your behalf.

But nothing can more effectually tend to promote the

efficiency of the Chamber than the existence of harmonious relations among its Members, and the avoidance of all things subversive of interests which it is their common duty to protect and incompatible with a high standard of conduct.

In closing their Report it is incumbent on the Provisional Committee to notice the transactions in shellac which have lately been the subject of such unfavorable comment in mercantile circles, and to which must be mainly ascribed the break-up of the late Committee, one firm—Members of the Chamber—having unmistakably and in writing pointed to these transactions as their ground of refusal to join in the recent election.

The Provisional Committee do not approach this matter in an inquisitorial spirit, nor attempt to indicate the amount of blame and responsibility attaching to each or any of the parties engaged therein; they desire only to look at the broad question involved, and, doing so in the light of all that they have heard and read on the subject, they feel bound to record that in their opinion the seller of the shellac in question had just ground of complaint. In the judgment of the Provisional Committee a combination was formed to obtain in the contract a wording intended to be, and which was, used to violate the spirit of the instrument,—to defeat what the seller in good faith held and stated to be an important condition of the sale.

The Provisional Committee view such a procedure with deep regret; it is one which on behalf of the Chamber they cannot too strongly deprecate, tending as it must to

weaken the springs of honorable dealing, and to substitute distrust and suspicion for the feelings of mutual confidence which ought to exist between merchants.

J. R. BULLEN SMITH,

President of the Provisional Committee.

J. C. MURRAY,
M. HENDERSON,
E. C. MORGAN,
ANDREW YULE,
J. A. ANDERSON,
JOHN FLEMINGTON,
S. A. RAPHAEL,
FREDERICK WHITNEY.

APPENDIX.

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

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

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

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

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

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

SCHEDULE OF COMMISSION CHARGES,

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

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

12. On guaranteeing Bills, Bonds, or other engagements, and on becoming security for administration of Estates, or to Government for the disbursement of public money	... 2½ per cent.
13. On <i>déclarate</i> or guaranteeing the due realization of sales	... 2½ "
14. On the management of Estates for Executors or Administrators	... 2½ "
15. On chartering ships or engaging tonnage for constituents for vessels to proceed to outports for loading	... 2½ "
16. On advertising as the Agents for Owners or Commanders of ships for cabin passengers, on the amount of passage money, whether the same shall pass through the Agent's hands or not	... 2½ "
17. On procuring freight for a ship by a shipping order or charter, or on procuring employment for a ship on monthly hire, or acting as Agents for owners, Captain, or charterers of a vessel upon the gross amount of freight, brokerage inclusive	5 "
18. On engaging Asiatic Emigrants for a ship to the Mauritius, the West Indies, or elsewhere, upon the gross amount of earnings	... 5 "
19. On engaging troops for a ship to Great Britain or elsewhere, on the gross amount of passage money for rank and file	... 2½ "
20. On realising inward freight, inward troop, Emigrant, or Cabin passage money	... 2½ "
21. On landing and re-shipping goods from any vessel in distress, or on landing and selling by auction damaged goods from any such vessel, and acting as Agent for the Master on behalf of all concerned on the declared value of all such goods as may be re-shipped, and on the net proceeds of all such goods as may be publicly sold	... 5 "
If Opium, Indigo, Raw Silk, or Silk Piece Goods	... 2½ "
If Treasure, Precious Stones, or Jewellery	... 1 "

22. On effecting Insurances, whether on Lives or property	... ½ per cent.
23. On settling Insurance claims, losses, and averages of all classes, and on procuring returns of premium	... 2½ "
24. On drawing, purchasing, selling, or negotiating Bills of Exchange	... 1 "
25. On debts or other claims when a process at law or arbitration is incurred in claiming them	... 2½ "
Or if recovered by such means	... 5 "
26. On Bills of Exchange returned dishonored	... 1 "
27. On collecting House Rent	... 2½ "
28. On ship's Disbursements	... 2½ "
29. On realising Bottomry Bonds, or negotiating any loan on <i>respondentia</i>	... 2½ "
30. On granting Letters of Credit	... 1 "
31. On sale or purchase of Government Securities and Bank or other Joint Stock Shares, and on every exchange or transfer not by purchase from one class to another	... ½ "
32. On delivering up Government Securities and Bank or other Joint Stock Shares, on the market value	½ "
33. On all amounts debited and credited within the year (less the balance brought forward) upon which no Commission amounting to 5 per cent. has been charged	... ½ "
43. Brokerage when paid is to be separately charged.	

H. W. I. WOOD,

Secretary.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Agelasto A. and Co.
 Agar and Co.
 Argenti, Schilizzi and Co.
 Ashburner and Co.
 Anderson, Wright and Co.
 Bailors, *J. Off. Agent, Oriental Bank Corporation*
 Barlow and Co.
 Begg, Dunlop and Co.
 Boradale, Schiller and Co.
 Buskin, F. G.
 Carlisle Nephews and Co.
 Chalmers, *J. Manager, National Bank of India*
 Cochran, *S. Manager, Agra Bank, Limited*
 Colvin, Cowie and Co.
 Crooke, Home and Co.
 Cox, Henry S.
 Cohn Brothers and Co.
 DeSouza, Thos. and Co.
 Dewarannah Dutt and Co.
 Ede and Hutson.
 Ernsthansen and Oesterley.
 Ering and Co.
 Elliott, John and Co.
 Ems, E. D. I.
 Ferguson, *J. H. and Co.*
 Finlay, Muir and Co.
 Gibson and Co.
 Graf and Bauginger.
 Graham and Co.
 Grindley and Co.
 Gulbady, Elias S.
 Henderson, George and Co.
 Heilgers, F. W. and Co.
 Hoare, Miller and Co.
 Huber and Co.
 Jardine, Skinner and Co.
 Kettlwell, Bullen and Co.
 Kelly and Co.
 Ker, Dods and Co.
 Kerr, Farrwell and Co.
 Lamoureux and Co.
 Longmaid, *T. Manager, Delhi and London Bank, Limited*
 Lovell, *H. P., Supply, P. & O. Steam Navigation Company.*
 Mackflican, J. and Co.
 Macmillan, R. and Co.
 Mackinnon, Mackenzie and Co.
 Mackenzie, Lyall and Co.
 Meneill and Co.
 Macknight, Anderson and Co.
 Moran, W. and Co.
 Manockjee Rustonjies.
 Morris, *E. Agent, Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.*
 Payfair, Duncan and Co.
 Petrocochino Brothers.
 Prestage, *F., Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company.*
 Prawalkissen Law and Co.
 Ralli Brothers.
 Ralli and Mavrajani.
 Reinhold and Co.
 Robert and Charriol.
 Rentiers and Co.
 Robinson, S. H.
 Reid, *J. M. Agent, Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China.*
 Renaud, *A., Banque, Comptoir D'Escompte de Paris.*
 Segrandi, J. P.
 Ferguson, *J. Agent, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China.*
 Steel, McIntosh and Co.
 Schaeffer, Pate and Co.
 Schroeder, Smith and Co.
 Schoene, Kilburn and Co.
 Sassoon, David and Co.
 Shaw, D. T. and Co.
 Thomas, J. and Co.
 Turner, Morrison and Co.
 Toulmin, L. W. and Co.
 Tauvaco and Co.
 Tambsci, Paul and Co.
 Ullmann, Hirschhorn and Co.
 Valetta N. J. and Co.
 Weinhold Brothers.
 Wilson, H. F.
 Whitney Brothers and Co.
 Williamson Brothers and Co.
 Wiseman, Mitchell, Reid and Co.
 Yule, Andrew and Co.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

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

be elected by the Committee provisionally, such election being subject to confirmation at the next ensuing General Meeting.

Fifth.....That the subscription of firms and banks shall be 16 rupees per mensem, of individual members 10 rupees per mensem, and of mofussil members 32 rupees per annum.

Sixth ... That any member of the Chamber whose subscription shall be three months in arrears shall cease to be a member, and his name shall be removed by the Committee from the list of members after one month's notice of such default.

Seventh... That the business and funds of the Chamber shall be managed by a Committee of not less than five nor more than seven Members, including the President and Vice-President, to be elected annually at a General Meeting of the Chamber in the month of May; the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President, being ex-officio Chairman of the Committee, and in the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Committee to elect its own Chairman. Three to form a quorum.

Eighth.... Annual elections of President, Vice-President, and members of the Com-

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

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

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

- Tenth...* Two members of a firm or representatives of a bank shall not serve on the Committee at the same time.
- Eleventh.* That the Committee shall meet for the purpose of transacting such business as may come within the province of the Chamber at such times as may suit their convenience, and that the record of their proceedings be open to the inspection of members, subject to such regulations as the Committee may deem expedient.
- Twelfth.* That all proceedings of the Committee be subject to approval or otherwise of General Meetings duly convened.
- Thirteenth.* That a half-yearly report of the proceedings of the Committee be prepared, printed, and circulated for information of members three days previous to the General Meeting, at which such report and proceedings of the Committee shall be submitted for approval.
- Fourteenth.* That the Secretary shall be elected by the Committee; such election to be subject to confirmation at the next ensuing General Meeting.
- Fifteenth.* That General Meetings of the Chamber shall be held at such times as the Com-

- mittee may consider convenient for the despatch of business.
- Sixteenth.* That any number of members present shall be held to constitute a General Meeting, called in conformity with the Rules of the Chamber for the despatch of ordinary business.
- Seventeenth.* That on the requisition of any five members of the Chamber, the President, or, in his absence, the Vice-President, or Chairman of Committee, shall call a Special General Meeting, to be held within 15 days subsequent to receipt of such requisition.
- Eighteenth.* That every subscribing firm or bank shall be entitled to one vote only, and that the Chairman of Committee and Chairman of General Meetings and Special General Meetings shall have a casting vote in cases of equality of votes.
- Nineteenth.* That parties holding powers of procurator 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.

