

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 261

Press
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Dated 8. 7.

1857

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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Fort Saint George, Marine Consultation, 14th July 1857.

No. 1. From Colonel P. MELVILL, Secretary to the Government of Bombay; to the Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George, dated Bombay Castle, 23rd June 1857, No. 985.

SIR,

With reference to your despatch, No. 210, dated 20th May last, and in continuation of my letter, No. 723, dated 11th Instant, I am directed by the Right Honorable the Governor in Council to forward for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council at Fort St. George the accompanying copies of a letter from the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, No. 656, dated 27th May, and of the report of Lieut. Fergusson, the Indian Naval Draftsman, therein alluded to, relative to the Survey of the East and West Coasts of the Peninsula of India.

(Signed) P. MELVILL, Colonel,
Secretary to Government.

From His Excellency Rear Admiral Sir H. J. LEEKE, K. H., R. N., Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy; to the Right Honorable LORD ELPHINSTONE, G. C. H., Governor and President in Council, dated Bombay, 27th May 1857, No. 656.

MY LORD,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Secretary Colonel Melvill's letter, dated the 21st Ultimo, No. 593, transmitting for my report copy of a communication from the Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 27th March last, with its enclosures, in original, relative to the dangers to Navigation along the East and West Coasts of the Peninsula and in the Bay of Bengal, and requesting me to name an Officer for the duty therein specified.

2. In reply I beg to observe that if the Eastern sea board of the Peninsula of India from Cape Comorin to Calcutta has been completed by the Grand Trigonometrical Survey of India, the Latitudes and Longitudes of all points therein may be considered conclusively settled, as the correction to the Grand Trigonometrical Survey, if any required, would be simply a uniform one throughout, dependant on the recognized correct Longitude of Madras.

3. On the same principle, the Western sea-board of the Peninsula, from Cape Comorin to Bombay, has already been laid down in a skeleton form on a scale of six inches to a degree by Lieutenant Constable, Indian Navy, intended to mark off the deep-sea soundings on, which owing to the Persian War have not yet been completed. This Chart however is all that is requisite to form the basis of a most correct Chart of the coast, on Mercator's projection, as soon as the entire data to complete it has been received.

4. Captain Biden's letter, (amongst the accompaniments) I beg to say, has once before been fully reported on by Lieutenant Fergusson in his letter to my address, No. 88, dated 22d October 1856.

5. I entirely approve of the report and remarks relative to this subject by Captain Robertson, Officiating Superintendent of Marine at Calcutta, and which were made subsequently to Lieutenant Fergusson's.

6. I have reason to believe that the construction of a correct and large scale Chart of the Coast of Western India, from the most recent Surveys, has been confided to the Honorable Company's Hydrographer in England, I cannot however say when it will be completed, but I trust that the Track Chart of the Coast (on two inches to the degree) compiled by Lieutenant Fergusson and published by Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co., London, with the permission of the Honorable the Court, and now universally used by all Ships of War and Merchant Vessels and Steamers will serve every requisite purpose, and ensure a safe Navigation of the Coast (as it has already for some years done) until the large scale Chart so much desired is published.

7. I would beg to recommend that Lieutenant Stiffe and two Midshipmen be appointed to conduct the Survey in question, being well qualified for the specified duty.

8. The enclosures are herewith returned.

(Signed) HENRY J. LEEKE,
Commander-in-Chief of the I. N.

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From Lieutenant E. F. T. FERGUSSON, I. N., Indian Naval Draftsman; to His Excellency Rear Admiral Sir H. J. LEEKE, K. H., R. N., Commander-in-Chief of the I. N., dated Bombay, 22d October, No. 88 of 1856.

SIR,

In reference to your Secretary's Memorandum, No. 2836, of the 15th Instant, forwarding enclosures (herewith returned) for me to report upon, I have the honor to state that I have carefully perused the letters from the Master Attendant at Madras to the Marine Board at that Presidency, as also the letter from the Marine Board to the Madras Government, and beg to offer the following remarks.

1st. The Survey of the Malabar Coast from Cape Comorin to Kurrachee is finished with the exception of about sixty miles, namely, between Mount Dilly and Calicut, and this is now being Surveyed and will no doubt be completed before the end of the year.

2nd. The Gulf of Mannaar and Palk's Straits including the entire West Coast of Ceylon, from Point Palmyra to Dondra Head, has been Surveyed and a large Chart of the same in two sheets is now available to the public. The only drawback in the Chart is not of great importance; viz., that Palk's Straits was not sounded right across from side to side, nor were the soundings taken out as far in the Gulf of Mannaar, as might have been done, but this is an oversight which can be remedied when the deep Sea-soundings of the Malabar Coast are being made.

3rd. The whole of the East Coast of Ceylon including the great and little Basses required to be carefully Surveyed, I have myself compiled a Chart lately showing the entire Island of Ceylon; the East Coast of which and Basses are laid down at several points from Latitudes and Longitudes; on the authority of Captain Raper, Royal Navy, and Horsburgh, and the configuration of the Coast with the soundings, from the Survey of Captain Heywood, Royal Navy in 1808. The aversion of the Honorable Court to publishing any Chart under their auspices, which is not entirely the result of actual Survey, renders it probable that this Chart will not be published by them; this is to be regretted, because it is doubtless the most correct substitute that the Navigator could have till the East Coast of Ceylon is properly Surveyed.

The Island of Ceylon however not forming any part of the possessions or Territories of the Government of India, but those of Her Majesty, there is no doubt the Survey now so anxiously desired rests with Her Majesty's Government, through which alone it could be achieved.

4th. The Coast of Coromandel from Point Calymere to the Santapilly Rocks, requires to be minutely Surveyed, and all points now marked on the Chart, "doubtful" should be so examined as to render such a remark unnecessary. The Andaman Archipelago and the adjacent Rocks and Islets require also to be re-surveyed.

5th. Captain Biden's remarks about the inaccuracies of Longitude in all Malabar Coast Charts, have been anticipated and acted up to long ago as far as could be done, but the Honorable Court will not publish a Chart of the Coast until the Survey is completed. The Trigonometrical plans of the Coast will, it is expected, be published in an uniform scale of four thousand yards to an inch, and the Mercator's Chart of the Coast, on the scale usually heretofore adopted, a track Chart of the Coast of Western India, compiled by me in supercession of McCluer's old Charts and published at the commencement of this year, has been much patronized by the Mercantile Marine and is also used by the Vessels of the Indian Navy.

6th. The reef off Calicut on which the Honorable Company's Sloop "Coote" and Merchant Ship "Julia" were lost was carefully Surveyed by Commander Montriou in 1844, and is now to be examined by Lieutenant A. D. Taylor, Indian Navy. Captain Biden's suggestion of putting a tripod on it is a very excellent one, and had this been done a while ago after the "Coote" was lost, no doubt the "Julia" would not have been wrecked.

7th. Captain Biden's remarks on the late Commander Fell's Survey of the Coromandel Coast in 3 sheets are very just, as they were far from being finished or in any way replete.

8th. The Charts of the Maldivé and Laccadive groups are as regards the respective positions of the islets and reefs one to another, quite correct, but the Meridians on which they are placed are now a little out, owing to the Standard Meridian on which they were based, having been found

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incorrect and altered since those Surveys were made, but as the difference of Longitude between the standard position and those Meridians is given on the Chart of the Maldivé group, the correction is simply a constant, which any intelligent Navigator can allow. In the last Chart received of the Laccadive group, the Meridians are correctly inserted, supposing Bombay Light House to be in $72^{\circ} 48'$ East, but so long as the Longitudes or the name of the place on which any Meridian is based, are given on any Chart, I contend that it is not worth while re-engraving an expensive work for the mere purpose of altering the Meridian Lines.

9th. I beg to say I perfectly agree with Captain Biden about destroying all old and incorrect Charts as soon as they are replaced by newer and more trustworthy editions, and the rule is now adopted at Bombay with all Charts condemned by a Committee of Survey.

10th. The lights recommended by Captain Biden on the little Coves (Andaman's), also on the Alguada reef, and one on Amherst point (Irrawaddy) and one on either "Oyster Rock" on the "Terribles" (on the Arracan Coast) are all most judiciously selected positions, and if lighted up as proposed, would be all that was necessary to put the navigation of the entire Bay of Bengal on a safe and most efficient footing.

In conclusion I have only to state that the recommendation of the Marine Board at Madras to place Master Attendants or Harbour Masters at all Ports of rising importance appears to be a very wise one, only I would beg to suggest that there be only one Master Attendant at each Presidency, and all subordinates performing similar duties at other Sea-ports, be designated Port Officers or Harbour Masters.

(Signed) E. F. T. FERGUSSON, Lieutenant I. N.
Indian Naval Draftsman.

(True Copy.)

(Signed) H. J. LEEKE,
Commander-in-Chief I. N.

(True Copies.)

(Signed) P. MELVILL, Colonel,
Secretary to Government.

ORDER THEREON, No. 261, dated 8th July 1857.

No. 2.

Ordered to be communicated to the Marine Board, in continuation of the correspondence furnished to them under date 27th April last, No. 159.

Exd. J. A. Wilson.

No 2

No 261

Ordered to be com.
transmitted to the Marine
Board in continuation of the
correspondence furnished to
them under date 9th April
last No 109.

Wm Dillinger,
8th July, 1857.

Wm

To the Marine Board Disp^d 15th