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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine **DEPARTMENT.**

G.O. No. 533 Press ~~Mis.~~

Dated 23rd Dec 1857

Not to be folded or roughly handled

21/9/35

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No 533

Ent 23 Dec 57

No 4527

From

John J. Franklin Esqre
Secretary Marine Board

To

J. Pycroft Esqre
Chief Secretary to Government
Fort Saint George

Sir,

21st Dec 57 No 4527
No 4527

I have the honor by desire of the Marine Board to submit to Government the accompanying letter from Captain Biden, representing his failing state of health, and intimating a desire to resign his situation as Master Attendant, but fearing to do so until it had been ascertained

1st On what conditions leave of absence on Medical certificate could be granted; and

2dly Whether in the event of his vacating his appointment he would be entitled to pension.

It

2 It is a melancholy task which the Board have to undertake. No officer ever performed his duty with more zeal or heartfelt anxiety for the public weal than has done Captain Biden. Ever active, ever alert, and ever ready to assist with his counsel and with his indomitable energies those associated with him in his duties, as well as those, whether Members of Firms or Masters of ships, who sought his advice and aid as the principal officer of the Marine Department in the Presidency, his loss cannot but be felt most severely. Whether in stormy or threatening weather calling forth all the resources and energies of his intelligent mind and of his active habits, or on the occasions of embarking or disembarking large bodies of men when his arrangements were pre-eminently successful, or in his constantly evinced anxiety in the improvements for facilitating the navigation of the Coasts of India, Captain Biden was invariably the same, always foremost in his exertions. And it is to these exertions, arduous and unceasing as they have been, imposing much severe exposure to the elements and anxiety of mind, that may be attributed the early decay of this most valuable officer's powers which has reluctantly forced him at last to throw himself on the kind indulgence of Government.

3. The Board feel confident that in consideration of Captain Biden's unwearied efforts as a public officer, to say nothing of his constant and successful endeavours in the cause of humanity, the Government will not hesitate to support his prayer by all the means at their disposal.

4. The case is a special one and must be dealt with accordingly. The first question regarding the conditions under which he would be granted leave of absence on Medical certificate, will

be, the Board have reason to believe, decided by the Civil Auditor admitting the privilege under the section of the Rules for granting leave to uncovenanted servants. By this Captain Biden would be permitted to draw £600 a year while absent from his duties.

para 3 of
Section V

5. This, the Board think, would virtually decide the question regarding pension, if Captain Biden had served the prescribed period to entitle him to one under the Rules affecting uncovenanted officers. The Master Attendant certainly holds a Covenant entered into with the Honorable Court of Directors; but he is in no way looked upon officially as a covenanted Civil servant, nor does he participate in the advantages which such servants enjoy. The rules under which the Military, the Civil servants, the Clergy and the Law officers of the Honorable Company are granted leave of absence and pensions, are clearly defined, but no mention is made of the Marine officers who hold their appointments from home. It is either an unintentional omission, or it must have been contemplated that they should be looked upon as members of the uncovenanted service. The latter is, at any rate, assumed by the Indian authorities, and therefore the Board think that had the full period of 20 years service been accomplished, there would have been no difficulty raised to the grant of a pension under the rules which affect such servants.

6 But unfortunately Captain Biden has only served 18½ years, having joined his appointment as Master Attendant on the 21st June 1839. He has therefore 18 months to complete the period at which he could claim his pension, supposing that the Board's view of his position is correct.

7 It is on these grounds that they would earnestly solicit the Government to put forth the whole weight of their influence towards obtaining, as a special case, for an old and most deserving officer

officer, an annuity for the remainder of his life — a life ever devoted to the benefit of those in whose service it has been passed. They believe that the Government, individually and collectively, are as well aware as are the Board, of Captain Biden's merits and claims for consideration, and they leave the question in their hands in the trustful hope that it will receive that support which long tried and faithful service deserves.

8. In conclusion I am directed to annex a memorandum drawn up by Captain Biden some years back of his previous service. Since this he has, as the Government know, always been foremost in offering himself for active service. In January 1846 he offered to organize and take command of a River flotilla to be employed on the Ganges during the first Punjaub war, and he has ever been ready to undertake any

duty

N° 2

duty which was likely to tend to the good of the public service.—

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most Obedient Servant

Secretary

Madras
Marine Board Office
21st December 1857

L Con: 23d Dec/37.

Marine 1837 Department

From

The Secretary Marine Board

To

The Chief Secretary

to Government

Fort Saint George

1 Enc. 533/57

Dated 21st
Received 22d } December 1837

No 522. Fo 4527

2 Encls:

Marine Letter to Eng. 27/26 Sep. 3

No 2 of 1838

No 17

Submits the accompanying letter from Captain Biden representing his failing state of health, and intimating a desire to resign his situation as Master Attendant with Boards recommendation thereon:-

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6

Statement of the services of Christopher Biden
Master Attendant of Madras

I entered the Honorable Company's Maritime Service on the 23d of November 1802, as a Midshipman on board the H. C. Ship Royal George Commanded by Captain J. F. Timins, and was present at the memorable repulse and pursuit of the French Squadron under Admiral Linois on the 15th of February 1804.

2 During my third voyage in the Royal George and on the 28th of November 1808, when Admiral Drury summoned the Boats of the Honorable Company's Fleet at Whampoa, manned and armed to assist in the attack, His Excellency meditated, on Canton, I volunteered my services, and served with the Flotilla which menaced the Chinese line of defence before that city.

3 On the same voyage, and when in China, on the 29th of January 1809, I was sent from the ship at the second bar in charge of the Yawl, manned with Lascars, to receive from the H. C. S. Antelope then lying at Chucupee the valuable baggage of Colonel, now Sir William Young Bart, the present

Director

Director. On my return, and when near the second bar, I was attacked by a Chinese Boat, which after a smart conflict I beat off. Several of my Boats Crew were slightly wounded, and the Chinese suffered severely; during the encounter, Wm. Ogilvie, a Surgeon of the Bombay Establishment while defending the Bow of the Boat was thrust overboard by the Chinese and narrowly escaped _ this affair was reported to the Select Committee at Canton, and my conduct received their approbation, and was also approved of by my Commander.

4 I served seven successive voyages in the H.C.S. Royal George, including her first and last voyage in the Service, and was sworn into the Command of the H.C. Ship Princess Charlotte of Wales on the 20th of December 1820.

5 When in Command of the Honorable Companys ship Princes Charlotte of Wales at Calcutta, during the Burmese War, I had reason to suppose the state of affairs required the prompt display of a strong Military Force in Ava, and I offered my services to the Government on the 20th of October 1825, pledging myself to have the ship in immediate readiness to receive 800 Troops to convey them to the Coast of Arracan, and to hold myself responsible for the fulfillment of the ulterior objects of the voyage.

6 Soon after I assumed the charge of my office at this Presidency, I volunteered to survey the site projected for the construction of a Pier or Breakwater, and the formation of a Harbour contiguous to Mount Delhi on the Malabar Coast, and received the thanks of Government on my return to the Presidency for my services on that occasion, and for the report which I furnished as to the expediency of improving the Port of Cochin.

"Golconda"
"Minerva"
"Sophia"
"Thetis"

7 During the war with China, when at an untoward season (in July 1840) the Transports as per margin were under oders to convey the 37th M. N. I. to China, I volunteered my services to take charge of the Squadron with a view of enforcing under my Command the expediency of keeping those vessels in Company; whereby in the event of bad weather or accident by running aground or otherwise, mutual assistance might be afforded _ The Right Honorable the Governor Lord Elphinstone, through his Private Secretary, declined my services, as they could not be made available without the sanction of the Governor General

General. One of the ships the Golconda was lost in a Typhoon and all on board perished.

8 On the 15th of September 1841 the Honorable Company's Steam veſsel Enterprize having failed in her attempt to round Ceylon on her voyage to Bombay, put back, and Captain West her Commander having resigned the Command, I volunteered my services, and succeſsfully accomplished the voyage against the Monsoon (touching at Columbo) in 15 days – the Enterprize had on board fifteen lacs of Treasure. For this service I received the thanks of Government and a flattering acknowledgement, thereof from the Honorable the Court of Directors, vide Minutes of Consultation 9th December 1841 and Extract from a letter from the Honorable the Court of Directors dated 25th of January 1843.

9 On the several occasions when Transports were fitted for service to China and whole Regiments were embarked, my services as Master Attendant were reported to Government in such favorable terms by the Marine Board, that I received the thanks of Government in the following flattering terms "To Captain Biden the Master

Attendant

Attendant who has always been conspicuous for zeal and attention, the thanks of Government are due for his unwearied exertions in the Public Service."

10 On the 25th of January 1843, when the Transport "Melekel Behar" was in imminent danger on the Pulicat Shoal, and on the following day when the Gertrude was wrecked a few miles to the northward of that shoal, both veſsels being full of Troops, I did not await orders, but proceeded forthwith to their relief – The Melekel Behar was under my direction extricated from her perilous position and the Troops and Stores were all saved from both veſsels.

11 On the several disastrous occurrences on this Coast which resulted in the wreck of veſsels, my exertions have been duly acknowledged by the public at large, and through my personal endeavours, and with some influence, shipwrecked and destitute Officers and Mariners of every rank have received timely aid and support, and ever since my arrival at this Presidency my exertions have proved so succeſsful both in the management of the Sailor's Home and the dispensation of the Shipwrecked Mariners Fund collected through my

my several appeals to the Public, that neither the Government nor the Honorable the Court of Directors have been called upon to defray such extra expences as had previously been incurred here, and have I believe been charged to the Government at the Presidencies of Calcutta and Bombay - the success of this plan has been acknowledged by the Government and the Honorable the Court of Directors, vide Extract from a letter from the Honorable Court, dated 22d. March 1842.

12 The foregoing record is merely to shew that I have never been wanting in zeal for the good of the Public service and that I have always strived as in duty bound, to promote the welfare and prosperity of the Honorable the East India Company.

Madras April 12th/1845.

True Copy

Secretary Marine Board

Comp/ Sd.

Marine Letter to Engd dated
26th Janry No 2 of 1858.

No 2

2

Statement of
the Services of Captain
C. Biden Master
Attendant of Madras.

M/57. D.
In No 522

Master Attendant's Office
Madras 18th December 1857

From,
Captain C Biden
Master Attendant.

To,
T Pycroft Esqre
Chief Secretary to Government

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council, that on account of my failing health, and advanced age, I feel desirous to retire from the arduous, and anxious duties of my Office; but that before venturing to so, I would most respectfully solicit information on the following important points.

1st In the event of obtaining a Sick Certificate with leave to proceed to England, for what period; and under what Regulation could that leave be granted?

2d In case of vacating my Appointment, would a retiring pension in consideration of my services as Master Attendant be allowed?

As the latter question involves a grant from the Honorable Court of Directors

Under [illegible] – The Govt

11x

ine Department

My dear Rycroft

In the List of Un-
covenanted Servants in the
Employment of Government
forwarded by me to your Office
in November 1856 for trans-
mission to the Court of Direc-
tors you will find that

Marine Letter to Engd. d/26th
January, No. 2 of 1858.

No. 1

In a letter from the Secy:
Marine Board dated 21st
December 1857. No. 4527.

From Captn. C. Biden
Master Attendant

States that on account
of his failing health and
advanced age, he feels
desirous to retire from
the arduous, and anxious
duties of his Office and
before doing so solicits
information on certain
points.–

M/57. D.
In No. 522

which he would have
served 20 years and then
become entitled to a pension
equal to 1/3rd of his salary
or £400 per annum, as that
amount cannot, unless a
special exception be made
in his favor, be exceeded.

24.

Yours truly
A. Cunningham

Thanks for the information contained
in your previous note

No 533 Marine Department

Extract fr Minutes of Consultation

Dd 23d December 1857

From Marine Bd 21 Dec/57

11
9

The Rt Hon the G in C deeply regrets to learn that failing health has induced Capt. Biden to make the inquiries regarding leave of absence on Medical Certificate and retiring pension which are contained in his letter under date the 18 inst. Those points will be referred for the Official Report of the Civil Auditor – The Govt however apprehend that there can be little doubt that Captn. Biden is not admissible to Pension under the ordinary Regulations, but cordially subscribing as they do to every word of the testimony borne by the Marine Bd. to the ~~services~~ merits and claims of this old and valued servant they feel that his is not a case to be treated under ordinary Rules, and they resolve therefore to submit his application for Pension to the Hon. the Court of

164

Directors with their most earnest recommendation that it may receive the most liberal consideration from the Honble Court

Civil Audit with copy of Captn. Biden's letter }
Marine Bd. } Dispd. 23d

JP

(T. E. and (copies))

L E 10
5

C S

Marine Letter to Eng^d. d/26^th. Jan^y. No. 7 of 1858.

Replied to d/27^th. October No. 6 of 1858.

24/11/62

17-18.

In Cons. 23^rd Dec^r/57

Marine 1857 Depart^t.

No. 533

Extract Mins. of Cons.

D/23^d. December/57

Deeply regret to learn that failing health has induced Captain Biden to make the enquiries regarding leave of absence on Medical Certificate and retiring pension those points will be referred for the Official report of the Civil Auditor will submit his application for Pension to the Honorable Court with the most earnest recommendation of this Govt.

F No. 13 of 1858