PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Public.

No. 437.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation under date the 7th March 1857.

Read the following.

Extract from a letter from the Honorable the Court of Directors, dated 12th November 1856.

Report and observations of Captain Biden the Master Attendant at Madras on the principal Ports in the Northern Circars, with the Proceedings of Government thereon.

5. Captain Biden's Report which is forwarded with the letter under reply, contains many useful suggestions for the improvement of the harbours of Coringa and Cocanada and other places situate in adjacent Districts.

6. Some of Captain Biden's propositions appear to have been anticipated, for you inform us, that the condition of the harbours of Coringa and Cocanada had previously engaged your attention, and that you had directed a survey to be made of the Bay of Coringa as far as it was effected by the Godavery with the view to the adoption of a comprehensive plan of proceeding to be based upon the result of such examination. In a former letter you mentioned that you had obtained the sanction of the Government of India to two large estimates, amounting to Rupees 62,838-12, and Rupees 84,639-2-11, and it is now explained how these sums were to be expended. The principal improvement provided for in the first of the estimates* was for the straightening of the river above the Port of Coringa, so as to scour effectually the passage through the Bar; for shortening the line of communication with the interior, and for raising the height of the Light House on Hope Island by 20 feet which latter work is one of those recommended in Captain Biden's Report.

Government Marine letter, No. 7, 20th July 1855, paras. 2 at 4.
Court's Marine Despatch No. 8, dated 30th April 1856, paras. 3 at 6.

* Rupees 62,838-12.

7. The other measures suggested by him and which you have resolved to put at once into execution are the following. It is proposed, in addition to the elevation of the Light on Hope Island, to increase its illuminating power, preferring this to the alternative suggested, viz., that a new Light House should be built on Mitchell's screw piles or on a tower close to the Sea. It is likewise proposed to fix a conspicuous Buoy on the northern extremity of the mud bank fronting the port or inner harbour of Coringa, to warn Mariners of their approach to shallow water; and further, as a preliminary measure to more extensive operations proposed by Captain Biden, viz., the substantial embankment of the Coringa river and the construction of a capacious basin for shipping (which have been referred for the consideration of the Department of Public Works) you state that directions have been given to the Officer entrusted with the Survey of Coringa Bay, to report at the same time upon a proposition for defining the limits of the Coringa river by means of stakes.

8. The second of the estimates* provided for extensive works connected with the improvement of Cocanada harbour and river; but

* Rupees 84,639-2-11.

Extract Minutes Consultation in the Marine Department, dated 27th January 1857, No. 43.

2. Ordered that these paras be furnished to the Marine Board and the Public Works Department with reference to Extract Minutes Consultation dated 31st July 1855, No. 174.

3. The Marine Board will report whether the several improvements referred to in para. 11 as appertaining to the Marine Department have been carried out, and if not, what remains to be executed. They will also communicate to the Master Attendants at the Ports the remarks of the Honorable Court with respect to the Buoys being properly fixed and kept in their right positions and in enjoining strict attention to these orders, inform them that Government hold them responsible for this duty.

no provision having been made for a new Custom House, Captain Biden was of opinion that such a building was urgently required, and would be highly advantageous to the shipping interests there. This proposal, you state, has also been referred to the consideration of the Public Works Department. Other measures suggested by him for removing the upper branches of trees that obstructed the view of the Juggarnaickpooram Pagodas, and rendering them more conspicuous as leading marks to the anchorage of Cocanada, are to receive immediate attention.

9. The propositions of Captain Biden as regards the survey of the bar at Nursapoor, and the improvement of that Port are, you inform us, to be carried out as soon as practicable, in the Department of Public Works; and estimates of the probable outlay are to be included in the next Budget.

10. With respect to the remedial measures recommended by Captain Biden for improving the river and roadstead of Masulipatam, you observe that his plan for deepening the river, and considerably shortening its length by cutting a channel through the shore has been referred through the Department of Public Works for the consideration and report of the Civil Engineer of the Godavery Division who has been required to submit estimates for such of the works as he may approve, and which may be carried out with advantage to that Port; whilst other suggestions of a useful but less costly character such as the exhibition of a light on the Flag Staff and the laying down of Buoys to denote the inner roadstead, would be adopted at once under the orders of the Marine Board, if they met with the concurrence of the local authorities. The Master Attendant at Masulipatam had also been directed to use his influence with Boatowners to induce them to provide a better description of boats than those now employed which were ill-suited to the service required of them in the conveyance of Government Troops or stores from shipping lying in the inner or outer roadstead; and as an inducement to the Boatowners to adopt this improvement it was in contemplation to amend the existing scale of boat hire, and to apportion the rate of remuneration according to the distance performed. The Marine Board further recommended that some relief should be conceded to the Boat owners by the permanent abolition or the temporary suspension of tolls levied on boats passing up the Pettah Canal; on which question you had instructed the Collector to report through the Board of Revenue in the Department of Public Works, where the matter would be ultimately disposed of. Finally you decided that more Dredges should be added to the Engineer plant in the Northern Circars; and directed that estimates of the cost of three Dredges should be called for in the Department of Public Works, and entered in the next Budget.

11. We have thus summarily noticed the various projects for improving the Port of Coringa and the other places visited by Captain Biden in his recent tour in the Northern Circars. Of these several appertain to the Marine Department whilst others belong to the Department of Public Works. There can be no question as to the advisableness of heightening the Light House on Hope Island or of executing the other improvements suggested by him, such as the laying down of buoys, the fixing of beacons or floating lights to denote the position of shoals and sand banks and thereby rendering the anchorage and harbours mentioned more easy of access to the shipping employed on the Coromandel Coast. These are operations which are indispensably necessary and should be promptly executed. Great care should however be taken that all the buoys are properly fixed and kept in their right positions; as the shifting of a buoy may render it a serious danger instead of a safeguard to the Navigator. The Master Attendant or the Marine Officer at the Port should be responsible for this duty. The more extensive and costly works treated of in your letter, demand a very careful examination on your part; the more so because the locality has at former times suffered severely from the storms by which the whole coast has been ravaged. We observe it has been suggested that "a number of unserviceable dhonies should be loaded with stones and sunk in the line of each embankment," but in gales of wind, the dhonies within reach of surf may be washed into the channel and obstruct the navigation. We incline to the opinion that all the embankments or groynes ought to be of the most substantial character. This will, however, be a matter for careful consideration by your Engineers; and we think you have taken a prudent course in postponing the execution of the works until you are put in possession of full information, which will enable you to form a correct judgment as to the practicability and advantage of the several schemes of improvement

Mr Cons 27th Jan 7/57. No. 15.

India Office 17th March.
Marine 1857 Departt

Extract Mins: Cons
Public Works Departt
No 437

Dated 7th
Rec'd 9 March 1857

2 Separate copies

No. 90.

Mr Elliot
No 1115
To be recorded &c
11th March 1857

Observing with reference to the Extract from the Hon'ble Court's Despatch in the Marine Departt communicated with Mins: Cons. in that Departt No 43 of 27 January 1857 that full information has been furnished in certain Despatches to the Hon: Court in the Public Works Departt consequent on Capt Biden's suggestions for improvements to the Coringa

No 21 Inland Trade

No 105, dated 11 March 1857

20 – 21

Coconada Harbours and the Masulipatam Roadstead

C 10 March
R 13 " R. K.