

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	<i>211</i>	Press ~~Mis.~~
Dated	<i>2.6.</i>	18 <i>58</i>

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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211-21-51

Fort Saint George, Marine Consultation, 8th June 1858.

No. 2. From W. E. UNDERWOOD, Esq., Collector Sea Customs, Madras; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 13th May 1858, No. 141.

SIR,

The manner in which the Trade and Commerce of the Port is affected by the present condition of the Boat Department induces me to take the liberty of addressing Government on the subject. The Boat Act, No. IV of 1842, has become for all practical purposes a dead letter, its penal clauses having fallen into disuse, for no party can be induced, except on rare occasions, to enforce its provisions. The result is that the Boatmen have completely obtained the upper hand and set the Boat-owners and all other parties at defiance. When there is a press of business in the Port they charge what they please. They receive the money themselves and divide it according to their will and pleasure. They are numerous and are under little or no control, are fully aware of this, and long impunity has led them to know and exercise their power. In illustration of the facts set forth above I may mention that a few days since a Merchant had 8 Boat loads of Hides to ship, they laid on the Beach several days and he was obliged to get them off, eventually, to pay 3½, 4 and 6 Rupees a Boat.

2. It is the ordinary practice of the Port in fine weather to put as much as a double Boat load in a Boat for which the Boatmen charge a corresponding hire. A party informed me he was present, on more than one occasion, when a double Boat load was put in a Boat, the Boatmen charged 6 Rupees, which was divided thus:

The Boat owner's Superintendent,	Rupees 1-0-0
The Merchant's Conicopoly,	„ 1-0-0
The Boatmen,	„ 2-8-0
The Boat owner, (according to Act,) „	1-8-0,

of which he will give 1 Rupee to the Boatmen who will thus divide Rupees 3-8-0 for the Trip among themselves. Three (3) Commanders of Vessels desiring to proceed to their Vessels in ordinary weather were obliged to pay in Cash 9 Rupees and went in the same Boat. The accompanying Petition* from Natives proves that they, as well Europeans, are subject to the same imposition and that unless they pay the sum demanded the Cargo will not be landed from their Vessels. The Boat owners are not parties for the most part to these transactions, though fully aware they are the ordinary practice of the Port; varying in amount in accordance with the demand for Boats.

3 I have brought this subject to the notice not so much with the view of remedying the present state of affairs by Government interference, as to press upon the consideration of Government that the really effectual remedy for the pressing evil is a Pier, and that its immediate erection is not a matter which is advisable but I respectfully submit on imperative necessity; for, even if order could be restored, and the Boats placed in the most satisfactory working condition, men are not to be found to man a sufficient number of Boats to meet the wants and the increasing Trade of the Port.

4. I do not think it advisable to comment on the observations contained in the Petition respecting the embargo laid on Boats by the Government Officials, further than to observe the statement of these parties can be corroborated by others, whose testimony is above suspicion.

To the Collector of Sea Customs, Madras, dated 27th April 1858.

SIR,

We beg to inform you that, with reference to our Petition addressed to your honor on the 24th Instant, requesting to pass our Grain bags now detained in the Custom House which were landed by the boat people out of the boundage, contrary to the Rules of the Port, and to adopt necessary measures to prevent such irregularity practiced by them, and as we are informed that the explanation therein given being sufficient to ascertain the fact as to the landing of Goods in an

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unauthorized place of the Port, we by the express on the subject that, although the standard rate of boat hire for an ordinary Northward trip is 15 Annas according to the Rules, yet they (the Owners of boats, receive from us without any respect to the above Rule, from Rupees 1 to 3 per trip at times when boats are in great demand for the importation or exportation of Goods and English Vessels and Government Steamers, and they want even these high and unjust rates before they employ the boats and in case no money is paid to them beforehand they withhold letting boats in the roads under pretence of having no sufficient boat men or some other cause. Consequently we are obliged to pay what they demand, as we do not like to detain our vessels in the roadstead at a season when they are able to sail from Port to Port.

In the present instance we beg to state that in this month we seldom get sufficient number of boats to land our Goods owing to the great demand or engagements of boats for public services sometimes. If any boat was found afloat on Sea, the Boat Authorities detain it and take it for Government service, such as for landing and shipping Coal, Stores, and Troops, &c., &c., whereby they take advantage of bargaining with us for higher rates and land the Goods out of the boundage for fear of the boat Authorities, and we also beg to inform your honor that by landing our Goods out of the boundage we suffer considerable loss, as the bags reach our Godown with great deficiency and sometimes only half the bag.

This being the truth of the case we beg to impress upon your honor's mind that we are not at all concerned with the boat people in landing the Goods out of the boundage, contrary to the Rules of the Port.

Under these circumstances we earnestly solicit your honor will be kind enough to pass our Goods now detained in the Custom House.

(Signed) OSMAN, Serang,
and other Merchants.

No. 3. From JOHN VANS AGNEW, Esq., Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 22nd May 1858.

SIR,

I have the honor by desire of the Chamber of Commerce, with reference to the Honorable Court's Despatch, dated 24th June 1857, to request you will be so good as to inform me what progress has been made in carrying out the contract with Messrs. Saunders and Mitchell for construction of a Pier at this Port, therein stated to have received their sanction.

No. 4. ORDER THEREON, No. 211; dated 2nd June 1858.

It is observed that subsequently to their Despatch of the 24th June, No. 14 of 1857, authorising the construction of an Iron Screw Pile Pier at Madras with the modifications of the Plan suggested by the Committee in their report on the project, the Honorable the Court of Directors forwarded a correspondence with Messrs: Saunders and Mitchell regarding the additional cost of the alterations recommended by the Committee and on other points connected with it for their final observation, and that a copy of the report furnished by the Committee on the subject was transmitted to the Honorable Court with a Despatch from this Government under date the 27th February last. This second Report of the Committee on the project will now be communicated to the Collector of Sea Customs at Madras and to the Chamber of Commerce, for their information and in reference to their letters as per margin.

13th May 1858, No. 141.
22nd May 1858.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. A. Wilson.

Marine Department

No. 211

*Extract from the Minutes of Consultation
Under date 2nd June 1858.*

Read the following

letters:

*From the Collector of Sea Customs
at Madras*

(Dated 15th May 1858 No. 141)

*From the Chairman of the Chamber
of Commerce*

(Dated 22nd May 1858)

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of the 24th June No. 14 of 1857,
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report furnished by the Com-
mittee on the subject was trans-
mitted to the Honble Court
with a Despatch from this
Government under date
the 27 February last. It is

now resolved to communicate
this second report of the
Committee on the project to
the Collector of Sea Customs
at Madras and to the
Chamber of Commerce, with
an expression of the hope
of

3.
for their information & of Government that ar-
rangements will speedily
be concluded with Messrs
Saunders and Mitchell for
the execution of this important
work.

213. May 1858. No 111
22 May " 116.

JF

To the Collector of Sea Customs
at Madras }
with Printed C. N. C. 27 Feb 1858 N 94 } Signed 8/5
" Chamber of Commerce - }
with S. - }

Marine Settlement Aug. 21/26 July. 1874
of 1858.

Dec. 13.

Replied to from the
Secy of State for India
d/24th July 1874

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Cous & Love

No. 211

Abstract Minis. of Home

Marine 1858

204