

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	213	Press ~~Misc~~
Dated	20.5	1859

Not to be folded or roughly handled

7-3-32

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 18th to 27th May 1859.*

No. 9. Read the following letter from Lieutenant A. D. TAYLOR, Indian Navy, Commanding Her Majesty's Survey Vessel "Bheema" Indian Navy, on special duty under Bombay Government; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Belgaum District, 21st April No. 24 of 1859.

In compliance with order of Government contained in Extract Minutes of Consultation, No. 102, dated 23rd March, I have the honor to offer a few remarks upon the Cochin Steam Tug question; these must for the present be unavoidably imperfect, as I am away from all means of communication with persons of mercantile and nautical experience who might explain what there is in the several points, submitted by the late Marine Board for the consideration of the Chamber, that called for so abrupt an abandonment by that body of Merchants of an important project without (as it appears to me) a sufficient reason.

2. I must confess that I approach the subject with extreme diffidence, failing to perceive what objection the Chamber could have had, either to answering the questions of the Board which appear to me reasonable and worthy of an answer, or to offering any propositions thereon, and thus delay a measure which is conducive to the prosperity of Cochin.

3. Looking impartially at both sides of the question I see much in favor of a Government control, and little for allowing the Pilot system at Cochin to be that of a Monopoly even in the hands of the Local Chamber; and in the absence of any further exposition of the Chamber's wants than that recorded in their Secretary's letter, *viz.*, the right of Pilotage, I am at a loss to know what suggestions to make. Even Merchants sometimes differ in opinion as to the value of a service, and Masters of Vessels frequently demur to the payment of Fees although such be legalised by an Act of the Legislative Council; we cannot then expect otherwise than that frequent disputes may arise about the Pilotage charge.

4. I cannot for my part see how Government shall declare all Pilotage Fees to be payable to the owners of the Tug, and at the same time allow that they have no right of interference whatever: I know very little of the Insurance Laws, but imagine that every Pilot should hold a License, or Certificate of qualification which can only be granted to them by some Naval or nautical man in the employ of Government; perhaps by the Master Attendant of the Port, whose conscientious duty it might occasionally be to reject such candidates for the situation of Pilot as the Chamber should wish to employ, and this might be construed into an interference with settled rights.

5. Then again the Government Engineer must surely supervise the working of the Steam Dredge for the improvement of the Bar, a subject on which differences of opinion may perhaps arise to the detriment of the Port: you may recollect that my report on Coringa Bay mentioned a fact discovered by me that the Dredge had seldom hit upon the right place for cutting at the Coringa Bar, although the Engineer gave proof in the vast heaps deposited along the River banks that he Dredged up a great quantity of mud and sand from some place or other. Such might be the result of the uncontrolled working of a Dredge at Cochin; and here I would remark that my preference of a Dredge to a Rake, as stated in para. 18 of my report upon Cochin was based on the fact that the former method affords positive evidence of its work, and the labor has only to be directed into the proper channel; whereas we must be dependant upon the bare word of the Captain of the Raking Vessel that his best exertions have been used.

6. The letters of Marine Board and Superintendent of Marine evince an anxiety to meet the wishes of the Merchants and desire to hear reason in the interest not only of Government but of the Port itself; but the decision of the Chamber consequent on the assertion of the Government right of control has shelved the project for the present, notwithstanding the declaration that the degree of control contemplated would have been but just sufficient to insure the interests of the Port; I am therefore of opinion that the Chamber were a little too hasty in adopting such a resolution without having first sketched an outline of their probably well matured scheme for the information of Government, and that they should be again requested to reply to the queries of the late Marine Board; or if such a course be opposed to their interests or wishes, that they should at

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least represent the principles on which they had decided to carry out the project of using their Vessel for towing and Piloting Vessels in or out, and of working her when not so employed for the improvement of the Bar.

7. I fear these suggestions may fall short of what Government expected in referring the subject to me, but we must first have some better knowledge of the way the Chamber propose to manage the business; failing this I cannot see how we can advance a step without receiving an answer to the queries of the Marine Board; unless indeed Government should resolve to get the Tug and carry out the scheme on their own account, under the Superintendence of the Master Attendant, a system which does not appear to meet the approval of the Commercial Chamber of Cochin.

8. Should the Chamber be now disposed to reconsider the question (and I cannot but remark that the delay of a measure eminently calculated to improve their Port appears to rest now with them) or should the Madras Government with a view to the great improvement of a most useful Port be disposed to carry out some project entirely under their own control, I shall be found most ready to give the subject further attention if you should do me the honor to refer it again to me.

No. 10.

ORDER THEREON, 20th May 1859, No. 213.

Government concur with Lieut. Taylor that the Cochin Chamber of Commerce should be again requested to reply to the queries of the late Marine Board in their Secretary's letter, 27th July 1858, No. 2978, to the Collector of Malabar, or at least, to represent the principles on which they had decided to carry out the project of employing a Steam Tug for Towing and Piloting Vessels in or out of the Harbor, and of working her, at other times, for the improvement of the Bar.

2. Resolved that the above letter be communicated to the Superintendent of Marine in view to his renewing the correspondence with the Cochin Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the Steam Tug proposed by them, and eliciting the desired information.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 213

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The Superintendent of Marine }
Lieut. A. D. Taylor S.N. } Signed 27th

Exd. A. P. W. Begbie.