

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

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Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 30th July to 5th August 1859.*

Read the following letters:—

No. 1. From J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Madras, 29th June 1859, No. 2572.

Having noticed that rumours were circulating regarding the unseaworthiness of the Patimar "Pownah," I have the honor to inform you that I addressed Lieutenant Taylor of the Indian Navy on the subject believing that as he had commanded that Vessel for some time while engaged on the Survey of the Western Coast, he would be able to say whether she was in a fit condition for Service or not. His reply is herewith forwarded, from which it will be seen that as regards repair, she was in a perfectly efficient state.

2. Lieutenant Taylor, however, observes that a Patimar is not a safe description of Vessel for General Navigation, and more particularly for the Gulf of Manaar; and he attributes her loss to the mismanagement of unskilful hands, an opinion which I have entertained from the first.

3. The Government are aware from my letter of the 30th November last, No. 4819, that until the receipt of their orders dated the 27th of that month, I was not aware that the "Pownah" had been transferred, nor did I know for what Service she was intended. Had the late Mr. Robertson represented his doubts as to the safety of the Vessel to me, they would immediately have received due consideration, but the "Pownah" having been sent by the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy expressly for the Service in the Gulf of Manaar, it appeared to me unnecessary to raise any question as to her suitability.

From Lieutenant A. D. TAYLOR, I. N., Commanding H. M's S. V. "Bheema;" to J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine, dated Poona, 10th June, No. 35 of 1859.

I am in receipt of your letter No. 1908, and hasten to state as much as I can about the "Pownah."

2. I saw the Syrang who took her to Cochin; he informed me that she had been thoroughly repaired and newly Coppered; the Officer who took her to Bombay last year had previously given me the same information; so that, as far as her hull was concerned, she was more seaworthy when sent to Cochin than she had been during the last 3 years, I commanded her: she sprung her main yard on the voyage down, but another might have been procurable at Cochin.

3. I believe then that to all intents and purposes as a Pattimar she was quite seaworthy.

4. But although I have commanded a vessel of this class for 9 years, I do not wish to conceal the fact that of all unsafe vessels the Pattimar is the most unsafe from its peculiar build and rig, and the utmost caution is needed lest they be taken aback in a squall and capsize from the utter impossibility of lowering the yard in that position when the breeze is fresh.

5. Rumour reached me from Cochin that the unfortunate Gentleman who must have gone down with the "Pownah" was disappointed at not finding the Vessel with an Officer and Crew ready to hand, but that he thought her unseaworthy I do not recollect hearing; nor did I think so in the beginning of last year when she was required to take Mr. Thomas to the Laccadives, which service was performed during my absence at Madras by my able Assistants Lieutenant Williams and Mr. Lewis, and before the "Pownah" had undergone the extensive repairs she received previously to being made over to the Madras Government.

6. The Vessel's destination and the service required of her were made known by the Subordinates of Bombay Dockyard to her late Syrang, a man who had served 8 years under me; he was an old servant of Government with nerve quite gone, and dreaded the trip to the treacherous Gulf of Manaar, which he fortunately avoided by taking his Pension: this Syrang, from whom the Master Attendant took the "Pownah," was in the habit of declaiming (as I am free to confess myself and Officers frequently do) against the Pattimar rig, and predicted her sad fate in the event of her going to Tuticorin; this rumour may have got abroad; and now, the prediction being realised, it is easy for people to say that they expected to hear of her loss.

7. That the "Pownah" should be allowed to go to the Gulf of Manaar with a raw Crew, was the subject of much criticism amongst nautical men at Cochin, and I heard that Captain Robertson was about to make application for an Officer of the Indian Navy to take charge of her

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whilst Cruising on the pearl Banks; one of my Officers, Mr. Lewis, was willing to go, and I promised to back up any application that was made for his services but none ever reached me.

8. Looking to the disastrous result of the "Pownah's" Cruise I cannot but regret not having pointed out to the Madras Government how dangerous is a Pattimar in inexperienced hands though such a proceeding was not within any province, and any remark I might have made regarding the absolute necessity of an experienced Officer and men to work the "Pownah" on such dangerous Cruising ground must have appeared like a comment upon the acts of my superiors; there was indeed the alternative of sending you a private communication, but you would not have been justified in acting upon that.

9. To conclude, I have endeavoured to inform you (in terms of the request contained in para: 2 of my letter) whether those rumours are likely to have had any good foundation. Having expressed myself freely at Cochin and elsewhere that there was really danger in trusting a Pattimar to hands which never worked one, I cannot now when called upon officially, but reiterate the sentiments which I uttered privately; but in acknowledging myself guilty of a foolish silence in a matter where human life was concerned, I must leave our rulers to judge whether I, or that silence which Naval discipline is said to demand, be the most to blame.

No. 2. Read Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 4th July 1859, No. 2590.
Read letter from V. H. LEVINGE, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tinnevely, 17th June 1859, No. 242.

At the request of Mrs. Robertson, widow of the late Master Attendant at Tutacurin, I have the honor to enclose, to be forwarded for the favorable consideration of Government, her Memorial to be granted a Pension. Captain Robertson served the Government long and zealously and his loss has, I understand, placed his family in difficulty, the only possibility of relief from which, lies in the bounty of Government, being extended in a Pension to his widow.

2. The British residents of Tutacurin have also requested me to forward their address to Government on the subject. On it all I have to remark is that Captain Robertson's selection of the "Pownah" for his unfortunate voyage, was his own act.

ENC. 2.

To His Excellency the RIGHT HONORABLE SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, K. C. B.,
Governor-in-Council of Fort Saint George.

The respectful Memorial of the undersigned
Merchants and Agents of Tutacurin.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

1st. That nothing but an intimate knowledge of the unhappy circumstances, under which the late Master Attendant of Tutacurin met his death, would justify any movement on the part of your Memorialists in putting themselves forward to urge on your attention the justice of a step which your Government has probably already admitted and resolved on, and though they refrain from going into particulars in this Memorial they would pray your Government to call for information on the subject including the letters of the late Captain Robertson, on the unseaworthiness of the Government Pattimar and his inability to obtain an experienced Crew, a duty which the Bombay Government promised to perform but neglected to carry out.

2nd. That as your Memorialists it would be equally unbecoming in them to attempt to point out on what department of the Madras or Bombay Government the odium rests of supplying so unfit and unseaworthy a craft for immediate active service, but your Memorialists would not be carrying out the duty they have voluntarily taxed themselves with were they to omit to give as their opinion that if your Government had supplied the late Captain Robertson with the Schooner he asked for or any craft equally seaworthy and manageable, this painful Memorial would not have been required at their hands.

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3rd. That your Memorialists have lately heard of a Pension having been granted to the late Captain Biden's widow which allows your Memorialists to address you with the greater confidence, and with this additional remark that the late Captain Robertson's salary* was such as to place it entirely beyond his power to make any provision for his wife and family during life. Your Memorialists earnestly pray your Government to exert its influence in securing to his widow a Pension commensurate with her late husband's long and faithful services, closed as they have been by an untimely death whilst in the discharge of duty.

4th. That your Memorialists are fully aware that their influence with your Government cannot be great, but they are equally assured that on the justice of their Memorial, rather than on their influence with your Government, must your attention and decision be directed.

5th. That your Memorialists could have obtained signatures far in excess of those attached to this Memorial, in fact, they vouch for the general and wide-spread sympathy on this unhappy occasion, but as the personal friends of the late Captain Robertson, with whom your Memorialists, but with one exception, have been in daily communication for many years past and with whose worth and zeal in your service they are well convinced, your Memorialists seize as their privilege the earliest opportunity of addressing your Government on a subject in which they take a painful interest and on one which possesses the strongest claims to your benevolent and liberal consideration, and your Memorialists will ever pray.

(Signed) J. G. REED, M. D.,
" C. KING,
" JOHN KINNEAD,
Agent for A. R. Crowe & Co.
" C. H. R. COCQ & Co.,

(Signed) E. J. BARTER,
" T. HARDY,
" W. H. GRAY,
" T. KERR,
" J. ADDERLEY.

With his letter above recorded the Acting Collector of Tinnevely forwards a Memorial and an Address to His Excellency the Governor in Council, the former from Mrs. Robertson, the widow of the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant at Tuticorin, praying for a Pension in consequence of his death while engaged on Government service, and the latter from certain residents at that Port supporting Mrs. Robertson's application.

2. The Board are of opinion that Mrs. Robertson's Memorial should be submitted to Government by the Superintendent of Marine, in whose department Captain Robertson was employed at the time of his death, as he had been for several years previously; and they resolve to forward it to Captain Franklin for that purpose. Captain Robertson's connection with the Revenue Department was limited to the Pearl Fishery, and the Board have no hesitation in stating that he, on all occasions, evinced the utmost interest in that subject, and exerted himself most willingly, and zealously, in performance of the duties assigned to him. The Government, also, as a mark of their appreciation of his services in connection with the Fishery, presented him with a donation of Rupees 500 in 1857.

*Extract Minutes of Consultation, 28th Sept. in
Consultation, 7th October 1857, Revenue
Department, No. 991.*

3. The Board trust that Captain Franklin will be able, from his knowledge of Captain Robertson's services as Master Attendant at Tuticorin, to join them in advocating the claims of that Officer's widow and family.

4. The second Memorial, the Board resolve to submit direct, as it contains serious allegations against the Officers of Government, and directly attributes Captain Robertson's death to their culpable neglect.

5. The facts of the case are briefly as follows:—

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6. In 1858 application was made to the Bombay Government for a Schooner, but one of the class required not being then available, an armed Pattimar was offered instead. This was at first declined but ultimately accepted, Government being of opinion, that an armed Vessel, with a Commissioned Officer of the Indian Navy in command, would be better adapted for guarding the Pearl Banks, than small Vessels commanded by Natives.

Extract Minutes of Consultation, 31st May 1858, Revenue Department, No. 723, in Consultation, 9th June 1858, No. 2282.

Extract Minutes of Consultation, 15th October 1858, Revenue Department, No. 1409, in Consultation, 18th October 1858, No. 4658.

7. The "Pownah" was accordingly fitted out by the Bombay authorities and sent to Cochin, where she was made over to this Government. No Commissioned Officer was sent with her and even the Native Crew were apparently engaged only to take her to that Port.

8. In her passage the "Pownah" had sprung her main yard. Captain Robertson had the necessary repairs executed at Cochin and Allepee and took the Vessel round to Tuticorin.

9. Nothing was said of the "Pownah" being unseaworthy and neither the Board nor Government had the slightest reason to suppose that she was so: or that the injuries she had sustained in her passage to Cochin were other than accidents which might have befallen a perfectly safe and effective Vessel.

10. The Board received no further intelligence of the "Pownah," until the 14th March, when the Acting Collector's letter of the 9th idem reached them. In this communication the Acting Collector, Mr. Levinge, stated that Captain Robertson was to go over to Ceylon, in the *Henrietta*, a Schooner already taken up by Government for the examination of the Pearl Banks. He enclosed a letter from Captain Robertson, dated 5th March, from Tuticorin, giving a deplorable account of the "Pownah," and recommending that as soon as the repairs then in progress were completed, she should be returned to the Bombay Government.

11. This letter, as already stated, only reached the Board on the 14th March, while Captain Robertson sailed in the "Pownah" on the 12th of that month, on the voyage which had so melancholy a termination.

12. Thus, it will be seen, that the Board had not the slightest reason to suppose the "Pownah" to be unsafe, until two days after she had sailed on her last voyage, and that in the very letter reporting, for the first time, her unseaworthiness, it was distinctly stated that she was being repaired with a view to being sent back to Bombay, and that Captain Robertson was going to Ceylon in another vessel.

13. Further, the Board were not even aware that Captain Robertson had sailed, until they received the Acting Collector's letter of the 18th April, stating that he had left on the 12th March and not been since heard of. The Acting Collector, who had previously informed the Board that Captain Robertson was going in the "Henrietta," seems to have been equally ignorant of his having changed his plans and gone in the "Pownah." In the letter above noted, Mr. Levinge stated that he was "very much astonished at hearing Captain Robertson had gone in her, knowing so well as he did, her unsafe state," and in his letter of the 17th ultimo, above recorded, Mr. Levinge says "Captain Robertson's selection of the "Pownah" for his unfortunate voyage, was his own act."

14. The Board have entered into this detail in order to shew that this lamentable occurrence cannot be attributed to this Government or their Officers, and not with a view to weaken in any way the claims of Captain Robertson's unfortunate family, on the compassionate consideration of Government.

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15. That the "Pownah" was unseaworthy seems to admit of no question. Captain Robertson stated in his letter* of the 5th March that "several planks on both sides, next to the Copper, were found to be perfectly rotten,

* Received by the Board 14th March.

with numerous holes sufficiently large to admit a man to pass his hand, though the entire thickness of the plank up to the Timbers or lining, which were merely patched up with Chunam and made presentable to the eye by means of a little black paint. The seams of the top-sides, water ways and covering boards were so open, as to admit of large quantities of water to pass through them down into the hold." This account is supported by the difficulties Captain Robertson encountered in bringing the Vessel round from Cochin, and is directly corroborated by Mr. Levinge, who writes, "I have myself seen that her planking above her Copper is quite rotten and full of holes." The "Pownah" was also very deficient in necessary stores; there was "not an inch of new Rope" on board; the sails with the exception of the square sail were "very old," and "in many places quite rotten," and there was neither new nor old Canvas to mend them with.

16. The responsibility of all this necessarily rests with the Bombay authorities, and not with those of this Presidency who, as above shewn, were wholly ignorant of the condition of the "Pownah" until too late to prevent the sad results which have ensued.

From V. H. LEVINGE, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tinnevely, 9th March 1859, No. 102.

I have the honor to report that on receipt of the orders of the Board of Revenue conveyed to me on Extract Minutes of Consultation, dated 18th February 1859, I proceeded to Tuticorin to arrange with Captain Robertson the best means of carrying out the orders of Government as expressed in the above minute.

2. Captain Robertson has agreed to go to Ceylon to make himself acquainted with the Pearl Banks Conservancy system in operation under that Government. He will go over in the "Henrietta," a Schooner already taken up by Government for the examination of the Pearl Banks so that the expense of a passage to Ceylon and back will be saved. Captain Robertson expects that he will not be absent more than a week altogether, he says he is Conversant with the system in force there but merely wishes to refresh his memory and notes he made when over at Ceylon in 1858.

3. With reference to para. 3 of the Extract under reply, I have the honor to report that Captain Robertson is confident of being able to fish some of the banks in the beginning of 1860 and the remaining banks in the end of the same year and commencement of 1861.

4. The "Pownah" Pattimar borrowed from the Bombay Government as a guard Vessel is useless, for that purpose. Captain Robertson's report on her is herewith enclosed. I have myself seen that her planking above her copper is quite rotten and full of holes; a handy Vessel for beating about the banks is what is required which the "Pownah" cannot be made to do on account of her rig and build, I agree with Captain Robertson in recommending that she should be partially repaired and returned to Cochin, there to be taken over by the Bombay Government. She has an immensely expensive crew of 20 men, and I believe cannot be worked with a smaller, who should also be discharged. She must be repaired before being returned or will go to the bottom before she rounds Cape Comorin.

5. For present watching the banks Captain Robertson proposes using the Report boat the "Lovely Laura," for her work he would hire another boat at this place; in addition he requires 3 Canoes one has been sanctioned under date the 2nd December 1857, two more should be hired at the same expense as for the one already sanctioned viz., 34½ Rupees each per month; he also requires 4 men called Parmandadies to go with the "Lovely Laura" and the 3 Canoes to show the banks, Monthly pay 7 Rupees per man; this establishment is insufficient but Captain Robertson, and I agree with him, considers that till a proper system of guarding is organized some slight preventive service should be entertained.

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6. After Captain Robertson's return from Ceylon, in Consultation with him I shall be prepared to answer the 13th para. of the Board's Proceedings of the 20th January and to propose an efficient system for guarding the banks.

7. Captain Robertson has no Chart for the Pearl Banks; I beg to recommend that he be furnished with copies of the Charts made by Captain Franklin when in charge of the Manaar Survey.

ENCLOSURE I.

From W. ROBERTSON, Esq., Master Attendant of Tuticorin; to V. H. LEVINGE, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tuticorin, 5th March 1859, No. 8.

On my arrival at Cochin on the 14th January last, I found the "Pownah" had been in the Port upwards of one month, but the necessary repairs required had not been commenced and on the plea of ill health, and unable to attend to the vessel, the Master Attendant at that place who had charge of the "Pownah" threw her entirely on my hands.

As some vessel was urgently required for guarding the Pearl Banks, I saw no alternative but to forward matters as speedily as possible, and for that purpose proceeded without delay to Alleppee, to procure a teak spar to replace the broken main yard which was found to be perfectly rotten about ten feet up the centre.

After a delay of a fortnight in getting the spar to Cochin and the yard finished, I regret to state that shortly after the "Pownah" had anchored in the Roadstead on the 6th Ultimo, the Syrang reported that the new yard had snapped in two about three feet outside the scarf, and the upper part falling on deck knocked the funnel of the cook house over board which was not recovered though a diver was employed to search for it.

Foreseeing that further assistance could not be depended upon at Cochin I considered it advisable to take the "Pownah" to Alleppee, where I arrived on the 8th and applied to Mr. Crawford, the Commercial Agent for the Travancore State, for assistance, which was promptly and cheerfully afforded and I must in justice to that Officer add that a well constructed yard which was put on board on the 14th must be entirely attributed to his exertions.

The "Pownah" left Alleppee on the morning of the 15th ultimo, and about 1 A. M. on the following morning having a strong land wind carrying all sail I suddenly discovered the Vessel appeared very uneasy and dragging very slowly through the water compared to what she had previously been doing, on going down from the poop to the main deck to ascertain the cause, I found a large body of water on the lee side of the deck, nearly half way up to the hatch ways, and the vessel heeling over very much. On taking off the after hatches the water was fully two feet above the Gun room deck, indeed I may confidently say that the vessel was fully half full of water. The main sail was then taken in and all hands put to the pump and bailing with buckets from the after hatch, and it was not until noon on the following day, the water was got under. Being becalmed in the evening, I anchored at 7 P. M. the Crocodile Rock bearing S. E. by E. about 1 mile distant. At 1 A. M. the wind coming off the land I got under weigh and stood to the Eastward but on rounding Cadiapatam point the wind came from the N. Eastward with a strong Easterly current which carried the vessel off the land to the S. Eastward. The wind increasing with a very heavy Sea obliged me to take in the main sail, and shortly after the Jib was split almost entirely to pieces, the wind and Sea still continuing to increase caused the Vessel to labor and plunge to that extent that she took green seas over her bows on to the deck, which with the leaky state of the top sides and water ways, caused a large quantity of water to lodge below, which kept all hands bailing and pumping until noon when the Vessel was anchored at Pullatope. At midnight of the 19th the "Pownah" was again underweigh heading E. N. E. but the wind and current again drove the vessel to S. Eastward as on the previous day, and having the Gulf of Manar open, the vessel was exposed to a stronger wind and heavier sea than what was experienced during the former part of the day. All hands had been kept constantly at the pump and bailing from the time the vessel left Pullatope but finding the

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water increasing, I prepared to veer round and in doing so, a heavy sea struck the Pattimar on the weather side which made her heel over with the lee gunwale settled in the water, and it was fully half an hour before the wretched craft could be got round when she was then nearly two-thirds full of water below, and had it not been for the timber purchased for Buoys and the Light House Oil on board, the consequence might have been serious. At 10 A. M. the vessel was anchored at Managoody where I sent on shore for wood and provisions, having only brought a fortnight's supply from Cochin, but all the Government Officials being absent at that place nothing was obtained.

At midnight of the 21st we passed Cape Comorin and having moderate winds from N. N. W. to E. S. E. the "Pownah" reached this on the 25th ultimo.

On a careful examination of the "Pownah" here, it has been discovered that several planks on both sides next to the copper were found to be perfectly rotten, with numerous holes sufficiently large to admit a man to pass his hand through the entire thickness of the plank up to the timbers or lining which were merely patched up with chunam and made presentable to the eye by means of a little black paint. The seams of the top sides, water ways, and covering boards were so open as to admit of large quantities of water to pass through them down into the hold.

In a letter addressed to the late Acting Collector of Tinnevely under date the 29th June 1858. I mentioned that a Pattimar was not a craft at all adapted for the service required here, and from the sad experience I gained during the time I was on Board of the "Pownah" (the first Pattimar I was ever on board of) I am perfectly convinced I have formed a correct opinion that the old lumbering craft is perfectly worthless for guarding the Pearl Banks. The "Pownah" cannot stay when required to go round, but must be wore, and in doing so she runs to leeward nearly half a mile before she can be got round on the other tack, and as the main yard alone cannot be dipped (particularly if blowing strong) in less than a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes by the present crew, the vessel consequently drifts still further to leeward. On the banks were short tacks are absolutely necessary to be made, the "Pownah" being obliged to veer would never be forthcoming when wanted.

As an instance to show how perfectly useless a Pattimar is for the protection and inspection of the banks, I shall merely mention that when the "Pownah" was off Trichendore on the 24th ultimo, standing to the Eastward, a fishing Canoe was discovered at some distance nearly ahead, fishing on one of the Banks and being hailed upon nearer approach to come alongside, the people immediately pulled across the bows of the "Pownah" to a short distance to windward where they were out of reach, and again commenced fishing, had the vessel been wore round to attempt to reach the Canoe on the other tack the same Manoeuvre would have been repeated by the boatmen. With a smart vessel that could stay, the boat could have been brought to immediately.

As short and quick tacks have to be made on the banks, smart vessels must necessarily be required for the purpose.

The "Pownah" is now having the rotten planks taken out and re-placed by new ones, also being caulked and when repaired, I beg most strongly to recommend that she be returned to Cochin with the present Crew, who from the Serang down to the Cook are the most worthless ill conditioned set of men, and lads, I ever had the ill fortune to sail with. When first on board the Serang, and most of the men really did not understand how to dip the yards when the vessel had to be wore round and when that operation had to be performed all the sails with the exception of the main sail were obliged to be taken in.

The "Pownah," has already cost a large sum and from the condition the hull sails and ropes are now in, she is likely to cost ere long as much as would build a good serviceable craft. The crew is a large and most expensive one and should be discharged as soon as the vessel reaches Cochin a Schooner of the same size as the "Pownah" could be worked with half the number of men and at half the cost.

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In several copies of Extracts from the Minutes of Consultation and Proceedings of the Board of Revenue forwarded to me, the "Pownah" is represented as being an armed Pattimar but I beg to observe that the guns and powder were taken out of the vessel in Bombay; the signal flags and time piece were also removed from the vessel.

A quantity of old useless coir rope was found on board, but not an inch of new rope to replace many that were constantly giving way so much was rope required that several coils had to be sent from this to Managoody.

There being no new or old canvas on board, the jib which from the first was merely a patched up old rag was repaired with table cloths and towels. With the exception of the square sail, which is of Europe canvas, the other sails which do not appear to be very old, are in many places quite rotten, and had constantly to be repaired during the passage.

It was fortunate that an extra quantity of rice was put on board; as the fortnight's supply furnished by the Dubash at Cochin, was exhausted several days before the "Pownah" reached this and as I have already stated nothing would be got at Managoody. Out of the extra quantity of rice above alluded to, five bags were so much damaged by Salt water that the whole was rendered entirely unserviceable. I also regret to state that the chests belonging to the crew were on several occasions floating about the gun room and the contents more or less damaged.

From V. H. LEVINGE, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely, dated Tinnevely, 18th April 1859, No. 171.

I have the honor to request you will bring to the notice of Government that the Master Attendant of Tuticorin, Captain Robertson, has not been heard of since the 12th March, the day he sailed from Tuticorin in the Patimar "Pownah" to make enquiries in Ceylon into that Government's system of guarding Pearl Banks—it is very much feared that the "Pownah" has foundered as there has been very bad weather in the way. The state of that Vessel was reported in my letter of 9th Ultimo, and I am very much astonished at hearing Captain Robertson had gone in her knowing so well as he did her unsafe state. When Captain Robertson sailed it was not expected that he would be absent more than 10 days or a fortnight. As directed in a letter from the Superintendent of Marine, dated 7th March 1859, I wrote to Captain Robertson about arranging for the duties of his Office during his absence, to this I got no answer, the letter arrived at Tuticorin just as he was sailing. The duties have been hitherto performed by his writer under the instructions of the Head Assistant Collector.

2. It is absolutely necessary that some person be appointed to act till something is heard of Captain Robertson, and I beg to recommend that Mr. Barter, Messrs. Line and Co.'s Agent at Tuticorin, be appointed to officiate for Captain Robertson—he is fully competent to fill the post and his application for it is herewith sent.

3. Captain Robertson's family, a wife and two daughters, are in great distress in Tuticorin. I beg to know whether I may disburse Captain Robertson's pay for March to Mrs. Robertson and in the event of Captain Robertson not being heard of up to what day his pay may be granted.

4. I beg to suggest that the Ceylon Government should be applied to, to ascertain whether any thing is known of Captain Robertson on that Coast.

ENC. 1.

From C. J. BARTER, Esq.,

To V. H. LEVINGE, Esq., Acting Collector of Tinnevely.

As it may be deemed advisable to appoint some one to the Acting Master Attendantship of this Port owing to the prolonged absence of Captain Robertson, I write to say I shall be happy to act for and on his behalf.

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No. 3. From J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine; to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort Saint George, dated 12th July 1859, No. 2734.

In connexion with the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue of the 4th Instant, No. 2590, I have the honor to submit for the favorable consideration of Government the accompanying Memorial from Mrs. Charlotte Robertson, widow of the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant at Tuticorin, who lost his life while in the execution of his duty on or about the 30th March last.

2. The Government are aware that this gentleman left Tuticorin for Manaar on the 12th of that month in the Pattimar "Pownah," for the purpose of making inquiries respecting the Aripo Pearl Oyster fishing; that he left that place again on the 28th; and that although the Vessel was seen for two days off the Coast, she was never afterwards heard of. Boisterous weather was prevalent at the time and it is supposed that, being of a rig peculiarly ill adapted for encountering the strong breezes and sudden changes so frequent in the Gulf of Manaar, she must have foundered with all on Board.

3. It is much to be regretted that when doubts existed as to the seaworthiness of the "Pownah," and the difficulties that were anticipated in managing a Vessel of this description on such service, the circumstances should not have been brought to my notice. Captain Robertson, however, appears to have been actuated by an anxious desire to perform the duty assigned to him as well as he could with the means placed at his command, and it was in his eagerness, bearing in mind the present forward state of some of the Tinnevely Pearl Banks—to obtain certain information relative to the Ceylon fisheries, that he was unfortunately induced, notwithstanding his conviction of the unseaworthiness of the "Pownah," to proceed in her on the trip which, has ended so disastrously.

4. Captain Robertson was appointed Master Attendant at Tuticorin on the 31st July 1849 and from that time to the date of his death he has always conducted his duties with zeal and energy. His proceedings in connection with the Pearl Banks were not reported in the Marine Department, but the Revenue Board bear ample testimony of his activity in such matters.

5. Seeing then that the late Captain Robertson lost his life from too great an anxiety to further the service on which he was employed, and that the Vessel in which he was lost was one provided expressly for his use, and that in all human probability one of a different description would not have met with such a fate, I would respectfully submit that his widow and children have strong claims on the favorable consideration of Government, and beg earnestly to recommend that some provision should be made for them.

6. Captain Robertson's salary was 200 Rupees a month.

ENC. 1.

To His Excellency the RIGHT HONORABLE SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, K. C. B.,
Governor-in-Council of Fort Saint George.

The respectful Memorial of Charlotte Robertson, widow of the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant of Tuticorin.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

1st. That your Memorialist trusts she will be excused in entreating the favorable consideration of your Government to the painful subject of her husband's having been suddenly deprived of life whilst employed in the service of Government and on whose exertions herself and family were entirely dependant.

2nd. That your Memorialist feels acutely the sad result of the anxious zeal in your service that prompted her late husband to risk his life in the "Pownah," a Vessel supplied by your Government but condemned by himself, instead of waiting the return of the "Henrietta," engaged at the time in the inspection of the Pearl Banks on the coast, a step which might have spared him to your Memorialist and her family for many years to come.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 30th July to 5th August 1859.*

3rd. That your Memorialist may be permitted to state that her late husband was for many years in the H. E. I. Company's Commercial Marine, but had not been long enough in it when it was broken up to obtain a Pension. That he has been for the last
† Rupees 200 per month. ten years Master Attendant of Tutacurin on a salary† that would not admit of his laying by any provision for his family.

4th. That your Memorialist cannot forbear saying that all the energy and ability her late husband possessed was exerted in the duty he was engaged in at the time he met his death, and that it was appreciated by your Government is shown by its awarding him a donation of £50 about two years ago.

5th. That the family of your Memorialist consists of four Daughters and one Son, that of the former, two are now with your Memorialist, the others being educated in England, to whom your Memorialist is anxious to return as soon as her circumstances will permit.

6th. That your Memorialist, deeply impressed with the belief that your Government has always shown sympathy and made provision for any one placed in her circumstances, respectfully begs that your Government will exert its influence in procuring her a Pension that will prevent her having any anxiety for herself and family for the future.

That your Memorialist will ever pray.

TUTACORIN, }
16th June 1859. }

No. 4. ORDER THEREON, 30th July 1859, No. 347.

With his letter above recorded, the Superintendent of Marine submits a copy of one written by Lieutenant Taylor, I. N., to whom, in consequence of some rumours which had reached him, Mr. Franklin applied for information, as to the state of the Pattamar "Pownah," and whether she was in a fit condition for service. Lieutenant Taylor considers that the "Pownah" was to all intents and purposes quite seaworthy when sent from Bombay. He adds however that from her peculiar build and rig a Pattamar of all unsafe Vessels is the most unsafe, requiring very careful handling, and an experienced Crew.

2. Lieutenant Taylor's opinion of the "Pownah" has been derived from the report of others, and not from personal observation. A letter from Captain Robertson to the Acting Collector of Tinnevely, under date 5th March last, submitted by the Board of Revenue with their Proceedings of the 4th Instant, gives a very different, and it cannot be doubted, a more accurate account of her condition. After describing the difficulty of bringing her round from Cochin to Tuticorin, Captain Robertson states, that, "on a careful examination of her there, several planks "on both sides next to the Copper were found to be perfectly rotten, with numerous holes sufficiently large to admit a man to pass his hand through the entire thickness of the plank up to the Timbers or lining, which were merely patched up with chunam and made presentable to the eye by means of a little black paint." "The seams of the top sides, water ways, and covering boards were so open as to admit of large quantities of water to pass through them down into the hold." "A quantity of old useless Coir Rope was found on board, but not an inch of new Rope to replace many that were constantly giving way, so much was Rope required, that several coils had to be sent for from Manargoody. There being no new or old Canvas on board, the Jib which from the first was merely a patched up old rag, was repaired with Table cloths and towels. With the exception of the square sail, which was of Europe Canvas, the other sails, which did not appear to be very old, were in many places quite rotten, and had constantly to be repaired during the passage." In the same letter he strongly recommended that she be returned to Cochin with the present Crew, "who from the Serang, down to the Cook were the most worthless ill-conditioned set of men and lads he ever had the ill-fortune to sail with."

3. In forwarding this report to the Board of Revenue, Mr. Levinge stated that "he had himself seen that the planking of the "Pownah" above her copper was quite rotten and

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 30th July to 5th August 1859.*

"full of holes." He agreed with Captain Robertson, that she should be returned to Cochin, there to be taken over by the Bombay Government, adding "she must be repaired before being returned or she will go to the bottom before she rounds Cape Comorin."

4. It is as surprising, as it is to be deplored that, with this knowledge of the Pownah, Captain Robertson should have embarked on her to Ceylon, rather than wait for another Vessel. It seems clear however that this was Captain Robertson's own act, and that the Collector of the District was much astonished at hearing of it.

5. The Madras Government now resolve to forward these papers to the Government of Bombay, who, it cannot be doubted, will cause the most rigorous enquiry to be made into the circumstances connected with the so called repair of the "Pownah," and of her being sent to sea in the state described by Captain Robertson.

6. That the loss of that unfortunate Gentleman and of the Crew, twenty in number, who perished with him, is directly to be ascribed to the unseaworthy condition of the "Pownah," does not seem to the Madras Government to admit of question. It will likewise readily occur to the Government of Bombay, that her case is scarcely likely to have been a solitary instance of neglect or fraud on the part of the Dock-yard Officials, whoever they may have been, to whom her repairs were entrusted.

7. The Master Attendant at Cochin will be called on through the Superintendent of Marine for explanation why he failed to afford Captain Robertson any assistance towards procuring a new yard for the Pattamar and providing her with an efficient Crew.

8. These papers will also be reported to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for India, and his favorable consideration solicited to the case of Mrs. Robertson, in advertence to the destitute condition of herself and family, and the melancholy circumstances under which her husband met his death.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 5. TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY, dated Fort Saint George, 30th July 1859, No. 348.

SIR,

In forwarding to you for submission to your Government the accompanying papers connected with the late loss of the Pattamar "Pownah," and the Proceedings of this Government in review of those papers, I am directed to solicit the attention of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council of Bombay to the account given by Captain Robertson, Master Attendant at Tuticoreen, and confirmed by Mr. Levinge, Acting Collector of Tinnevely, of the state of the "Pownah" when received by the former at Cochin from the Bombay Government for Service in the Gulf of Manar.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. A. P. W. Begbie.

In Cox. 21st JUNE 1859, No. 2938.

From V. H. LEVINGE, Esq. Acting Collector of TINNEVELLY,

dated Tinnevely, 17th June 1859, No. 212.

At the request of Mrs. Robertson, widow of the late Master Attendant at Tutacurin, I have the honor to enclose, to be forwarded for the favorable consideration of Government, her Memorial to be granted a pension. Captain Robertson served the Government long and zealously and his loss has, I understand, placed his family in difficulty, the only possibility of relief, from which lies in the bounty of Government, being extended in a pension to his widow.

2. The British residents of Tutacurin have also requested me to forward their address to Government on the subject. On it all I have to remark is that Captain Robertson's selection of the "Powna" for his unfortunate voyage, was his own act.

ENC. 1.

To His Excellency the RIGHT HONORABLE SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, K. C. B.,

&c. &c. &c.

Governor-in-Council of Port Saint George.

The respectful Memorial of Charlotte Robertson, widow of the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant of Tutacurin.

Respectfully Sheweth,

1st. That your Memorialist trusts she will be excused in entreating the favorable consideration of your Government to the painful subject of her husband's having been suddenly deprived of life whilst employed in the service of Government and on whose exertions herself and family were entirely dependant.

2nd. That your Memorialist feels acutely the sad result of the anxious zeal in your service that prompted her late husband to risk his life in the "Powna," a vessel supplied by your Government but condemned by himself, instead of waiting the return of the "Henrietta," engaged at the time in the inspection of the pearl banks on the coast, a step which might have spared him to your Memorialist and her family for many years to come.

3rd. That your Memorialist may be permitted to state that her late husband was for many years in the H. E. I. Company's Commercial Marine, but had not been long enough in it when it was broken up to obtain a pension. That he has been for the last ten years Master Attendant of Tutacurin on a * Rupees 200 per month. salary* that would not admit of his laying by any provision for his family.

4th. That your Memorialist cannot forbear saying that all the energy and ability her late husband possessed was exerted in the duty he was engaged in at the time he met his death, and that it was appreciated by your Government is shown by it awarding him a donation of £50 about two years ago.

5th. That the family of your Memorialist consists of four daughters and one son, that of the former, two are now with your Memorialist, the other being educated in England to whom your Memorialist is anxious to return as soon as her circumstances will permit.

6th. That your Memorialist, deeply impressed with the belief that your Government has always shown sympathy and made provision for any one placed in her circumstances, respectfully begs that your Government will exert its influence in procuring her a pension that will prevent her having any anxiety for herself and family for the future.

That your Memorialist will ever pray.

TUTACORIN, }
16th June 1859. }

Marine Department.

ENC. 2.
To His Excellency the RIGHT HONORABLE SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, K. C. B.,
&c. &c. &c.
Governor-in-Council of Fort Saint George.

The respectful Memorial of the undersigned Merchants and Agents of Tutacurin.

Respectfully Sheweth,

1st. That nothing but an intimate knowledge of the unhappy circumstances, under which the late Master Attendant of Tutacurin met his death, would justify any movement on the part of your Memorialists in putting themselves forward to urge on your attention the justice of a step which your Government has probably already admitted and resolved on, and though they refrain from going into particulars in this Memorial they would pray your Government to call for information on the subject including the letters of the late Captain Robertson, on the unseaworthiness of the Government Patti-mar and his inability to obtain an experienced Crew, a duty which the Bombay Government promised to perform but neglected to carry out.

2nd. That as your Memorialists it would be equally unbefitting in them to attempt to point out on what department of the Madras or Bombay Government the odium rests of supplying so unfit and unseaworthy a craft for immediate active service, but your Memorialists would not be carrying out the duty they have voluntarily taxed themselves with were they to omit to give as their opinion that if your Government had supplied the late Captain Robertson with the Schooner he asked for or any craft equally seaworthy and manageable, this painful Memorial would not have been required at their hands.

3rd. That your Memorialists have lately heard of a pension having been granted to the late Captain Biden's widow which allows your Memorialists to address you with the greater confidence, and such as to place it entirely beyond his power to make any provision for his wife and family during life. Your Memorialists earnestly pray your Government to exert its influence in securing to his widow a pension commensurate with her late husband's long and faithful services, closed as they have been by an untimely death whilst in the discharge of duty.

4th. That your Memorialists are fully aware that their influence with your Government cannot be great, but they are equally assured that on the justice of their Memorial, rather than on their influence with your Government, must your attention and decision be directed.

5th. That your Memorialists could have obtained signatures far in excess of those attached to this memorial, in fact, they vouch for the general and wide-spread sympathy on this unhappy occasion, but as the personal friends of the late Captain Robertson, with whom your Memorialists, but with one exception, have been in daily communication for many years past and with whose worth and zeal in your service they are well convinced, your Memorialists seize as their privilege the earliest opportunity of addressing your Government on a subject in which they take a painful interest and on one which possesses the strongest claims to your benevolent and liberal consideration, and your Memorialists will ever pray.

(Signed) J. G. REED, M. D.,
" C. KING,
" JOHN KINNEAD,
Agent for A. R. Crowe & Co.
" C. H. R. COCQ & CO.,

(Signed) E. J. BARTER,
" T. HARDY,
" W. H. GRAY,
" T. KERR,
" J. ADDERLEY.

Proceedings of the Madras Government.
Read the following papers.

From the Superintendent of Marine. } (Here entered 29th June 1859, No. 25732)
Proceedings of the Board of Revenue. } (" " " 14th July 1859, No. 2590)
From Superintendent of Marine. } (" " " 12th July 1859, No. 2594)
Order thereon 30th July 1859, No. 347.

With his letter above recorded, the Superintendent of Marine submits a copy of one, written by Lieut. Taylor V. N. to whom, in consequence of some rumours which had reached him, Mr. Franklin applied for information, as to the state of the Pannam Ponnah, and whether she was in a fit condition for service - Lieut. Taylor considers that the Ponnah was to all intents and purposes quite seaworthy when sent from Bombay. He adds however that

from

