

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	392	Press Mis.
¹⁰⁻¹³ Dated	16. 8.	18 57

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 13th to 19th August 1859.*

Read again the following letters :

From the Collector of Malabar, dated 14th June 1859, No. 51, and recorded in Proceedings of 2nd July 1859, No. 295.

From the Cochin Chamber of Commerce, dated 11th June 1859, and recorded in Proceedings of 2nd July 1859.

Read also the following letters :

No. 10. From P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Malabar ; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Calicut, 5th July 1859, No. 60.

With reference to my letter, No. 51 of the 14th Ultimo, I beg to

Dated 30th June 1859. enclose an original communication from Captain Castor, in explanation of the reflections made on matters connected with his Department, by the Cochin Chamber of Commerce, in their letter of the 11th idem to your address.

From JOHN CASTOR, Esq., Master Attendant, Cochin ; to P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Malabar, dated Calicut, 30th June 1859.

The Officer in charge of my Department having forwarded your letter, No. 1419, dated 14th Instant, to me, with an Extract of a letter from the Cochin Chamber of Commerce, to the Chief Secretary to Government, I do myself the honor, though absent from the records of my Office, to furnish you with the report therein called for, I shall now proceed to meet *seriatim*, the charges raised by the Chamber ; but for what purpose and on what grounds these are made at this period of the existence of the sailing and Anchor Boats, is not very clear.

2. In para: 2, of the Chamber's letter it is alleged that two Boats were built " both of which have proved but of little use." The Boat which was intended for the Master Attendant's use, was freely employed whenever her services were needed. But I beg to submit a question whether the members of the Chamber are competent judges on this matter? The Boat was meant to be used, and is used, entirely and solely by my Department ; who alone can know the extent of the service she has rendered. The Chamber, I think, have travelled a little out of their way, to put forth a statement of which they cannot be the proper judges.

3. The other Boat is the Buoy or Anchor Boat, built for the Port. Whether or not this Boat has proved of service and essential service too, and whether the Chamber's statement is to be relied on, let the following figures prove.

The Anchor Boat was launched, I believe, in March 1857 ; her cost to Government from that period to 31st May 1859, has been about 1,000 Rupees, while the receipts have been 1,600 Rupees gross, sent to the Cochin Treasury ; she has, then, not only maintained herself, but further cleared a small portion of her original cost. Besides these results, I beg to draw your particular attention to the Government work she has performed during these two years past, *free of charge* to the State ; which work previously entailed an annual expense on Government. This boat is freely brought into requisition for all Government purposes ; she lands and embarks Troops whenever such work is demanded of the Port. When her services were required the other day, I placed her at the disposal of the Electric Telegraph Department, which service was acknowledged by the Head of that Department. In face of all this, the Chamber is pleased to commit itself to such an unfounded statement as that the Boat has " proved but of little service." I must be permitted to doubt whether two common Cargo Boats would weigh an Anchor and chain in the roads as cheaply, and with such facility, as the Anchor Boat. Even if this could be done at one season of the year, there is a time when no two common Cargo Boats could lay at Anchor there, lashed together as they must be.

4. It is further alleged that the Anchor Boat " when most wanted to render assistance in taking off an Anchor to a Ship in distress has not been available and been refused." To this

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charge I must simply, but respectfully reply, that it is opposed to facts and should it please yourself, the Superintendent of Marine, or Government, to call upon the Chamber to state the time and the Vessel to which such assistance was refused, I am prepared, to substantiate by documentary proof my emphatic denial, and to show how gratuitously the Chamber maligns a Public Officer by statements opposed to truth. I am aware that such an unfounded statement was made in a Public Paper, by an anonymous writer, some two years ago, and I recur to that circumstance because it will shew the animus, which pervades that body called the Chamber at Cochin.

5. Regarding the hauling up of the Anchor Boat, which is described in the Chamber's letter, I must respectfully remark that, the Chamber has neither experience nor knowledge of such matters, nor could my intentions be so known to them, as to warrant the Chamber in commenting on the act. It is, I beg to submit, quite out of their province to animadvert on a simple professional duty of mine. The Boat, since she was first launched had never been hauled up, nor her bottom examined, and to prove the correctness of my measures, timely carried out, when she was hauled up, the Boat was found to have lost her copper in several places, and the Marine worm had just began to adhere to the surface of the plank at all such places where the copper was off. I took advantage of the only period of the season when the Boat could be hauled up, without prejudice to any work, when no Vessels are likely to approach, or visit the Port, and this simple act of mine has given rise to the Chamber's self-established idea that, the "Boat seems not to be intended for giving assistance to the Vessels in distress." The fall of the Boat House rests more with the Engineer's Department than with mine.

6. I now come to para: 3 of the Chamber's letter, with reference to the screw moorings, I apprehend, that the Chamber knows very little about the matter. Regarding the removal of the Buoys, I cannot but plead your permission to allow me to place my experience against that of the Chamber, knowing, as I do, the composition of that body, it is alleged that the Buoys would be a safe guide to Vessels obliged to run into the inner harbour in stress of weather. If Buoys are so moored as to indicate a deep clear channel between them, where no breakers prevail, it is then they become beacons to guide Vessels in, and mariners would venture to steer in between them, for the absence of breakers, would at once, indicate a safe and deep channel; but, when Buoys are moored in a position, as they are on the Cochin Bar, where a perfect barrier of surging waves break, and in this broken water, the Buoys are scarcely discernible from any distance; no Commander, I am of opinion, would venture to run in by them. On the contrary, the Buoys, surrounded as they will be by tremendous breakers in bad weather, would shew to the mind of the navigator, instead of safe guards, that they were placed there to caution him against some hidden danger, from the fact of their being surrounded by breakers. I beg to remark again that in my opinion, no Commander would venture over a Bar, unless with an insignificant craft, being ignorant of the depth of water on it, and seeing a barrier of breakers, without the least opening of a channel to the inner harbour, and knowing the send or plunge of his Vessel must be very great when crossing a ridge of sand where heavy breakers prevail. I must again beg premission to remark that, no Vessel of any size, could cross the Cochin Bar while breakers prevail on it without suffering very serious injury, and this alone will deter Commanders from risking the chance of entering. In addition to all this, it must be considered that the Buoys are liable to drag their moorings in breakers, and prove false guides to such Vessels as may wish to run in by them. One large Buoy was always moored on the Bar, but the chain, though one of great size, having parted as the season was closing, I deemed it unnecessary to replace it in position until the opening of the next. Notwithstanding all I have advanced on economical considerations, should it be decided that the Buoys are to remain in position throughout the year, it could be done, but at a constant risk of losing Anchors, for the Buoys left out during the monsoon have hitherto parted from their moorings, and with little or no advantage to the Port or the shipping. The Chamber of Commerce, I believe, have lately dilated much on the advantages afforded by the neighbouring Port of Alleppee, during the South West monsoon, surely Vessel in stress of weather only, would rather prefer running to that Port, being situated to leeward of Cochin in the monsoon, than hazard their safety by attempting to cross the Bar at the entrance of Cochin Harbour.

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7. Not having the records of my Office at hand, I have trusted to my memory, for my statements and figures in the foregoing pages, which may not be strictly correct, but I shall rectify any trifling error (though I do not suppose any material mistakes exist in this letter) the moment, I resume my Office.

Resolved that the letter from the Master Attendant of Cochin, in original to be returned, be referred to the Superintendent of Marine for his remarks.

FORT SAINT GEORGE, }
25th July 1859.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

No. 11. From J. J. FRANKLIN, Esq., Superintendent of Marine; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 30th July 1859, No. 2967.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the Order of Government of the 25th Instant, referring for my observations certain correspondence that has taken place on a representation from the Cochin Chamber of Commerce that a large amount of money has been expended during the past five years on suggested improvements which have all proved total failures, while the one great desideratum—the deepening of the bar—has been left in abeyance.

2. The Chamber's representations embrace the following subjects, and I perfectly concur with the Master Attendant at Cochin in thinking that they have touched on matters with which they had little concern, and of which they were not in a position to form a just opinion.

3. They premise by wishing it to be understood that the attention of Government is called to the expenditure during the past five years for improvements which have been of no benefit, because they fear that the large amount to the debit of the port will prove an obstacle to future grants. The Chamber should attentively peruse Acts XXII of 1855 and VII of 1858, when they will perceive that the former Act came into operation on the 1st May 1858, and that therefore expenditure before that time will not stand to the debit of the port, any more than will the dues be carried to its credit.

4. They next remark on the falling of the new column erected for the light at a cost of Rupees 7,000, and observe that a few hundred Rupees expended on the old light-house would have been sufficient for all wants.

5. This is a point on which they cannot be expected to form a sound judgment. It is a professional question which can only be satisfactorily decided by professional Officers. The Civil Engineer of the District reported that the old flag-staff was too much decayed to admit of its being longer used, and that a new one would cost nearly 800 Rupees, besides requiring frequent repair: he therefore recommended that a column should be erected at an estimated cost of Rupees 4,484, which was sanctioned. That it fell, is to be regretted; but this in no way shews that it ought not to have been raised.

6. They then animadvert on the building of an Anchor Boat and a sailing Boat, which have proved but of little service. These were established under the orders of Government marginally noted: the first for the purpose of keeping the roadstead clear of abandoned anchors, which interfere with safe anchorage of Ships: the second as a Port Boat to enable the Master Attendant to communicate freely with the shipping, and enforce order or afford assistance as necessary. The Chamber seem to admit that the Anchor Boat has been employed in recovering Anchors in the Roads, but they treat it as a trifling matter, evidently not aware of the importance of the service.

7. With regard to the Boat having been refused when applied for to carry an Anchor to a Ship in distress, I have too much confidence in Captain Castor not to believe that the Chamber are mistaken. Something may have occurred to give rise to the impression on their minds that

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such was the case, but I have no doubt it will bear the investigation which the Master Attendant courts.

8. Referring now to their remark that the Boat seems not to be intended for giving assistance to vessels in distress, because it was hauled up on the approach of bad weather, I consider Captain Castor's explanation perfectly satisfactory. He took the most convenient season for its examination when there was little likelihood of its being required; and the Chamber must have known this to be the case.

9. The fall of the boat house has yet to be investigated. No report has yet reached me on the subject.

10. Regarding the iron buoys and screw moorings; they were not intended originally for Cochin but for Madras. By some mistake however, while I was in England, they were sent to Cochin, and being there, they were put to use by placing the buoys in position on the bar, but not secured by the screw moorings, which are inappropriate where the sands shift. One of the buoys was carried away at the commencement of the stormy season, and the other brought in to save it from a similar fate. I believe that Captain Castor is perfectly right in his opinion that no Ship would attempt to run in over the bar during heavy weather while the buoys were down, unless under the guidance of a pilot; and if he were on board, the buoys could be dispensed with. It is in the fine weather when the banks on either side of the channel have become stationery after the freshes, that the buoys are most serviceable.

11. Their final reference to Captain Selby's experiment for deepening the bar requires little notice. It was supposed by that Officer, who had been surveying the coast, that by placing cocoanut piles on each side of the channel, a bank would be formed behind them which would become permanent. He was strongly impressed with the certainty of success, and at the recommendation of the late Marine Board, the Government granted a thousand Rupees to test its practicability. It failed, as have many other projects when reduced to practice, but I think that the object in view, the deepening of the channel, was important enough to warrant the outlay.

No. 12 From P. GRANT, Esq., Collector of Malabar; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated Calicut, 16th July, No. 63 of 1859.

With reference to para. 4 of my letter, dated 14th Ultimo, I deem it right to submit a report to Government as to the cause of the fall of the Boat House at Cochin; and with this view, beg to append Extract of a letter received from the Fiscal at that Station on the subject.

No. 51.

"The cause of the accident as far as I can discover was owing to the peculiar situation of the building, and the precarious nature of the ground and not to any defect in the construction, for the materials employed were not only good, but the work was executed with care under my personal superintendence.

"It will be observed that the ground was reclaimed from the river of late years, and perhaps sufficient time may not have elapsed to impart to the soil, the stability necessary to sustain the weight of a stone building with a tiled roof.

"The Boat House was moreover continually exposed to the action of the tides at its base; whilst its open and unsheltered position exposed it to the full force of the South Western Gales. The Gale with which Cochin was lately visited, and which was one of unprecedented violence, must have shaken the building considerably, and rendered it an easy prey, to subsequent influence of a less degree."

2. The District Engineer who sent one of the members of his Department to report on the subject under consideration, states that "the cause of the fall of the Boat House as given by the Fiscal, is correct, and that the hurricane blew the building down."

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No. 13.

ORDER THEREON, 16th August 1859, No. 392.

The Government having carefully perused the letters from the Master Attendant at Cochin and the Superintendent of Marine, are quite satisfied with the explanations therein contained on the several matters noticed in the letter from the Cochin Chamber of Commerce of the 11th June last, except in one particular, and think it unnecessary to pursue the subject.

2. The point, on which the Government have reserved their opinion, is that of the alleged refusal of the Anchor Boat when required to take an Anchor off to a Ship in distress. The Collector of Malabar will ascertain from the Chamber what is the instance to which they allude, and call upon Captain Castor for his explanation which will be submitted to Government.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

List

Resolved that the letter from the
Maine Abundant of Collections —
in original to be returned to
Superintendent of the Department
of Marine Fisheries —

W. H. C. George
25 July 1859

J. P.
Chapman

Sup of Marine

with Capt. Castor's letter

and a copy of Geo. Peck's

2 July no 295 —

dept 35 to W. H. C. George 1 Aug 1859

J. P.

51
Marine Department.

Proceedings of the Madras Government.

Read again the following letters:

From the Collector of Malabar, dated 14th June 1859, No. 51.
and recorded in Proceedings, of
2^d July 1859, No. 295.

" Cochin Chamber of }
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Read also the following letters:

From the Collector of Malabar. (Here entered 5th July 1859, No. 60.)
" Superintendent of Marine. (—" 30th " " " 296.)
" Collector of Malabar. (—" 16th " " " 63.)

Order thereon, 16th August 1859, No. 372.

The Government having carefully perused the letters from the Master Attendant at Cochin and the Superintendent of Marine are quite satisfied with the explanations therein contained on the several matters noticed in the letter from the Cochin Chamber

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JF.

To the Collector of Malabar.
" Superintendent of Marine. } Disf 22
" Public Works Department }
Copy to the Chamber of Commerce at Cochin. }
W. K. Maresca

to the Collector of Malabar
with order of 16 Mar 1859

Proc of Genl 19 Aug.
Merrine 1859 Defunct

No 392

Proceeding of Genl A

at 16: August 1859

7M:506

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Prised the calls
of a scholar to ascertain
on what occasions the
Quaker took was refused
to take any Quaker off
to a ship in distress and
could upon Captain's calls
for this explanation