

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Marine DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.

458

Press
Mis.

Dated

16 - 9.

18 59

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 10th to 16th September 1859.*

No. 27. Read the following letter from Captain W. F. MARRIOTT, Acting Secretary to Government; to the Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, dated Bombay Castle, 31st August 1859, No. 1097.

I am directed by the Right Honorable the Governor in Council to transmit for submission to your Government the accompanying copy of a letter from the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, dated 19th Instant, No. 818, reporting on the state and condition the Pattamar "Pownah," was in when she was placed at the disposal of the Madras Government for service in the Gulf of Manar

From Commodore G. G. WELLESLEY, Commander-in-Chief, Indian Navy; to the Right Honorable LORD ELPHINSTONE, G. C. H., Governor and President in Council, dated 19th August 1859, No. 818.

MY LORD,

In the "Bombay standard" of the 2nd Instant, a copy of which Newspaper I beg to enclose, there appeared, as copied from the "Cochin Courier," what was stated to be copy of a letter from (I fear I must now call him) the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant of Tuticorin, setting forth the unseaworthy condition of the Pattamar "Pownah;" which, as your Lordship in Council is aware, was sent down to Cochin, and placed at the disposal of the Madras Government for the duty it was understood of watching the Pearl fisheries and banks.

2. On more than one occasion (since the period when, from this Vessel not having been heard of after her departure from Tuticorin, bound to the Pearl Banks, fears have been entertained that she must have foundered, and which there is now too much reason to believe has been her fate) there have been statements in some of the Newspapers that the "Pownah" had been sent from Bombay in an unseaworthy state, and the customary comments upon the conduct of the Naval Department at Bombay, followed as a matter of course; unsupported as these anonymous remarks were by any sort of testimony, I took no notice of them beyond satisfying myself again as to the nature and extent of the repair which the Vessel had undergone in the Dock yard before she was sent away.

3. But when the letter which I have above alluded to appeared, it seemed to me to be necessary, not only in justice to the Bombay Dock yard, but also as a satisfaction to the Government of Madras, and to the relatives of those who have been lost in the Vessel, that the truth should be publicly known, I therefore called the attention of the Master Builder to the statements in the letter of Captain Robertson, and directed him to furnish me with details of the condition of the "Pownah," and of the repairs done to her; and, in now transmitting to your Lordship in Council a copy of the survey report held on her defects, and memorandum from the Master Builder, dated the 9th Instant, accompanied by a statement of the actual expense of materials and workmanship incurred in repairing the "Pownah" in September last, just before she was sent to Cochin, I would request your Lordship in Council to communicate the same to the Madras Government, and to give it such further publicity as may be thought necessary to remove the painful impression that is abroad on the subject.

4. It is not too much to assert that the "Pownah" left Bombay in as seaworthy and sound a condition as the day she was built. The cause of the untimely fate which befel her is without any doubt, I think, (as she cannot have been shipwrecked) to be attributed to the unskillfulness of those on board her, as I have since learned that the Natives South of Cochin, do not understand the management of these Pattamars. The Vessel, however, had been for some years on the Malabar Coast surveying, and had been once to the Laccadives, and it was to be presumed that those who applied for her services were aware of her capabilities for the duties required of her, and of which neither I nor any one attached to the Dock yard could have any information.

*it is submitted that
Captain*

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Marine Department,
from 10th to 16th September 1859.*

No. 28. TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY, dated Fort Saint George,
16th September 1859, No. 458.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, under date the 31st Ultimo, transmitting a copy of one from the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, in which His Excellency reports on the state and condition of the Pattamar "Pownah," when she was placed at the disposal of this Government for service in the Gulf of Manar.

2. With my letter of the 30th July last, I had the honor of forwarding various papers connected with the loss of the "Pownah," and the Proceedings of this Government on the subject. No allusion is made to these papers either in your letter now under acknowledgment, or in that from Commodore Wellesley forming its enclosure.

3. As these papers may possibly have miscarried, I am now instructed to transmit copies, and in so doing to solicit the particular attention of the Bombay Government to the explicit and circumstantial statements, in respect to the condition of the "Pownah," made by the late Captain Robertson in his letter to the Acting Collector of Tinnevely of the 5th March last—as also to the Acting Collector's letter to the Board of Revenue of the 9th Idem—paragraph 4. With these representations before them, the Madras Government find themselves unable to subscribe to the opinion of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Navy, as to the condition of the "Pownah," when she left Bombay.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. A. P. W. Begbie.

N^o 818 of 1859
Marine Department

To,

The Right Honorable

Lord Elphinstone G. C. H.

Governor and President in Council.

My Lord,

In the "Bombay Standard" of the 2nd Instant, a copy of which Newspaper I beg to enclose, there appeared, as copied from the "Cochin Courier", what was stated to be copy of a letter from (I fear I must now call him) the late Captain Robertson, Master Attendant of Tuticorin, setting forth the unseaworthy condition of the Pattamar "Pownah"; which, as your Lordship in Council is aware, was sent down to Cochin, and placed at the disposal of the Madras Government for the duty it was understood of watching the Pearl fisheries and banks.

2. On more than one occasion (since the period when from this Vessel not having been heard of after her departure from Tuticorin bound to the Pearl Banks fears have been entertained that

it is submitted that
Captain

that she must have foundered, and which there is now too much reason to believe has been her fate) there have been Statements in some of the Newspapers that the Pownah had been sent from Bombay in an unseaworthy state, and the customary comments upon the conduct of the Naval Department at Bombay followed as a matter of course; unsupported as these anonymous remarks were by any sort of testimony, I took no notice of them beyond satisfying myself again as to the nature and extent of the repair which the Vessel had undergone in the Dock yard before she was sent away.

3rd But when the letter which I have above alluded to appeared, it seemed to me to be necessary not only in justice to the Bombay Dock yard, but also as a satisfaction to the Government of Madras, and to the relatives of those who have been lost in the Vessel, that the truth should be publicly known, I therefore called the attention of the Master Builder to the Statements in the letter

3
letter of Captain Robertson, and directed him to furnish me with details of the condition of the "Pownah," and of the repairs done to her; and, in now transmitting to your Lordship in Council a copy of the Survey Report held on her defects, and Memo: from the Master Builder dated the 9th Instant, accompanied by a Statement of the actual expense of materials and workmanship incurred in repairing the Pownah in September last, just before she was sent to Cochin, I would request your Lordship in Council to communicate the same to the Madras Government, and to give it such further publicity as may be thought necessary to remove the painful impression that is abroad on the subject.

14th It is not too much to assert that the Pownah left Bombay in as seaworthy and sound a condition as the day she was built. The cause of the untimely fate which befel her is without any doubt I think (as she cannot have been shipwrecked) to be attributed to the unskillfulness of those on board her

it is submitted that
Captain

her, as I have since learned that the
Natives South of Cochin do not under-
stand the management of these Pattamars.
The Vessel, however, had been for some
years on the Malabar Coast surveying,
and had been once to the Laccadives,
and it was to be presumed that those
who applied for her services were aware
of her capabilities for the duties required
of her, and of which neither I nor any
one attached to the Dock-yard could
have any information.

See Deposition
of the Shant Dy-
rang, Abdul Ka-
shimov (put up
in current No 422)
There were men
also in the crew
who had served
at Cochin,
Board of the
Pattamars.

Office of the Comr
in Chief I. N. Bombay } I have the honor to be Sir
19th August 1859. } signed G. G. Wellesley
Comr in Chief I. N.

(True Copy)

W. T. Munro
Captain
Actg. Secy. to Govt.

Marine.

Memo.

I beg to forward two letters
on the same subject.

One is from the Master
Attendant at Cochin,
Captain Castor, vincli-
cating himself from
the charge of having
neglected to assist the
late Captain Robertson
in getting a crew & a
new main yard for
the "Pownah".

The other is from the
Bombay Govt. transmit-
ting a copy of a letter
from the Commander
in Chief of the Indian
Navy, reporting upon
the condition of the
"Pownah" when she left
Bombay.

In respect to the first,
it is submitted that
Captain

Captain Bastar's explanation is sufficient, & that he did what ^{he} could under the circumstance

As respects the second, the Survey Report, the Memo. from the Master Builder, & Statement of Expenses alluded to by the Commodore have not been forwarded — but it seems impossible that any reports or statements from inculpated parties can outweigh the distinct & substantial assertions as to the state of the "Pownah" made by Capt. Robertson & by the ^{Acting} Colbr., Mr. Levinge.

Captain Robertson, it will be seen in his letter of the 5th March last, after describing how the "Pownah" had behaved on the way from Cochin to

5
to Tuticorin, states explicitly that on carefully examining her at this last place —

1st 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 thro' the entire thickness of the plank up to the timbers or lining, which were merely patched up with charcoal, & made presentable to the eye by means of a little black paint.

2nd The seams of the top sides, water ways, & covering boards were so open as to admit of large quantities of water to pass through them down into the hold.

3rd A quantity of old useless coir rope was found on board, but not an inch of new rope

rope to replace many that were constantly giving away, so much was rope required that several coils had to be sent from ^{Put a copper} ~~the~~ to Munna-goody.

4. 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 & towels. With the exception of the square sail, which ^{was} of European canvas, the other sails which ^{did} not appear to be very old, ^{were} in many places quite rotten, & had constantly to be repaired during the passage.

Mr. Sevinge in forwarding this report says - "I have myself seen that her planking above her copper is quite rotten & full of holes."

holes." x x "She must be repaired before being returned, or will go to the bottom before she rounds Cape Comorin."

These & other papers connected with the subject were forwarded to the Bombay Govt. with my letter of the 30th July. - & unless they miscarried, must have been before them, when their present letter was written. But no allusion is made to the papers either in Captain Secretary Marriott's letter or in the letter of Commodore Wellesley.

It has occurred to me therefore in acknowledging the receipt of these communications to forward fresh copies of the papers previously despatched

despatched & to request
attention to those state-
ments of Capt. Robert-
son & Mr. Levinge,
which are so much at
variance with Commo-
dore Wellesley's ideas as
to the state of the "Pow-
nah" when she left
Bombay.

JP

The late
Pattamar
Pownah.

Encls: 1

Marine.

No. 458.

The Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter under date the 31st Uto., transmitting a copy of one from the Commander in Chief of the Indian Navy, in which H. C. reports on the state & condition of the Pattamar Pownah when she was placed at the disposal of this Govt. for service in the Gulf of Manar.

2. With my letter of the 30th July last, I had the honor of forwarding various papers connected with the loss of the "Pownah" & the Proceedings of this Govt. on the subject. No allusion is made to these papers either in
your

your letter now ^{under} acknow-
ledgment, or in that
from Commodore Wel-
lesley forming its enco-
sure.

3. As these papers may
possibly have mis-car-
ried, I am now instre-
ted to transmit copies,
& in so doing to solicit
the particular attention
of the Bombay Govt. to
the explicit & circum-
stantial statements, in
respect to the condition
of the "Pownah", made
by the late Captain Ro-
bertson in his letter to
the ^{Acting} Assistant Collector
of Tinnevely of the 6th Ma-
rch — as also to the Act-
ing Collector's letter to the
Board of Revenue of the
9th idem — para 4. With
these representations be-
fore them, the Madras
Govt.

Letter, 19th Augt. 1859 —
Para 4.

John George
16 September 1859

Govt. find themselves
unable to subscribe to
the opinion of H. C. the
Commander in Chief
of the Indian Navy as
to ^{the} condition of the "Pownah"
when she left
Bombay.

J. G.

W. G.

Case - 10 Sept 1858

Marine 1859 (October)

170458

To the Secy. to the Com. of
the Navy
Washington

27 Sept 1859

Dear Sir,

Enclosed for the
Secretary of the Navy
is a copy of the
report of the
Commissioner of
the General Land
Office, dated
the 10th of
September 1859,
in relation to
the land claims
of the State of
California.

25828