

Public (1897) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 218

Dated 6.3.97

INDEXED.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Receiving correspondence from India
regarding the free emigration of
Indians from Bombay to Natal.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	D.
<i>J.</i>	<i>115-6</i>	<i>Pub</i>	<i>19-2-97</i>				

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	D.
<i>C</i>	<i>11520697</i>						

Public (1897) Department.

CURRENT No.

*From the Secretary to the Govt
Dept of R & A*

No 218 of 6.3.97.

Recorded.

*No. 176-7
3-14*

4/3/97

*5/3
3/97*

*Dated 9"
Received 14"
Registered 15"* } *February 97.*

Enclosures 3.

Spare copies

SUBJECT.

*Forwarded up for information
Copy of Correspondence
regarding emigration
from Bombay to Natal.*

the Protector of Immigrants

C.A.

*Previous current No 62 of 1897 which
is in the Govt of Natal*

16/2/97

BACK PAPERS.

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FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date

FILE No. 5 of 1897.
SERIAL No. 5.

No. 926, dated Calcutta, the 16th January 1897.

From—ROBERT W. S. MITCHELL, Esq., C.M.G., Government Emigration Agent for Natal,
To—The Secretary to the Government of India.

PURSUANT to instructions received by telegram this morning from the Natal Government, I have the honour to submit, for the consideration of your Government, the accompanying copy of a despatch, No. 729 of 5th December last, which I addressed to the Colonial Secretary of Natal on the subject of the emigration taking place from Bombay.

No. 729, dated Calcutta, the 5th December 1896.

From—ROBERT W. S. MITCHELL, Esq., C.M.G., Government Emigration Agent for Natal,
To—C. BIRD, Esq., Government Secretary, Natal.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, the accompanying extract from the Weekly Edition of the "Natal Mercury" of 23rd October last, page 6627, from which it would appear that emigrants are being recruited here for the colony in a manner not prescribed by the Act.

2. Not long ago I observed in one of the Colonial Papers that some 550 emigrants left Bombay by steamer in September last, paying their own passage to Natal.

3. It is possible that the emigrants referred to, by the writer under the head of "Sugar" and "Tea" above referred to, are the persons described as paying their own passages from Bombay, who are imported and employed afterwards as ordinary labourers in the Colony.

4. I have thought it proper to bring this matter to His Excellency's notice before taking any action here.

5. Should my surmise be correct, the Government of India would, I am sure, at once put a stop to it, in the interests both of the Colony and the individual emigrant.

6. The Indian Emigration Act XXI of 1883, as modified up to the 1st December 1890, at paragraph 6 defines:

(1) "Emigrate" and "Emigration" to denote the departure by sea out of British India of a Native of India under an agreement to labour for hire in some country beyond the limits of India other than the Island of Ceylon or the Straits Settlements: Provided that a domestic servant when accompanying his employer shall not be deemed to emigrate within the meaning of the above definition.

(2) "Emigrant" means any Native of India, who emigrates, or has emigrated within the meaning of the above definition or who has been registered under the Act as an emigrant and includes any dependent of an emigrant.

It might be argued that such persons having left India, without making any specific contract, do not come within the purview of the Act, but I am inclined to think the Government of India would take a much wider view of the interpretation of these clauses, otherwise they would be inoperative in such cases.

7. I need hardly mention the risk of introducing the plague from Bombay through the importation of emigrants, who have not been examined and passed by properly constituted medical authorities.

Extract from "Natal Mercury", Weekly Edition, 23rd October 1896 (page 6627).

* * * While the planter strongly maintains that Indian labour immensely benefits the Colony, he is equally at one with those who object to the importation of the free Indian. This, says the planter, is the man doing the mischief, and from whom no real benefit is derivable, and agrees that, if possible, means should be adopted to check him. He not only competes, but fails to distribute his profits in the Colony. In connection with the free Indian imports, I may mention an important feature which came to my knowledge. Those agents who are importing these men are actually offering them as labourers to the planters, at a less rate and at lower wages than have to be paid for those obtained through the Indian Immigration Department. Thus it will be seen that by private enterprise Indian labourers are being brought to this Colony in competition with the official department. They are offered to the planters on an agreement for a certain number of years, such agreement to be ratified before a magistrate. Of course there is no authority over such men, the Protector would have nothing to do with them, and only the common law of the Colony would affect them or their employers. It is only fair to say that, despite lower wages, the planters are looking askance at these men, but they may be secured by the inexperienced. A question suggests itself in connection with these men. How will they be affected, if at all, by the new Indian Immigration law? That law provides for re-indenture, return to India, or a penalty. How are those conditions to be applied to men introduced independently, and who, as we know, are coming in boat loads of 300 to 500? If there is no application, it is probable there will be demand for amendment of the law to cover all Indian labourers employed on estates, farms, etc. In that way the difficulty may, perhaps, be met, but the alternative may be to drive these men to enter the competing ranks of shop-keepers and small farmers. Any way, this phase of the question is a new and interesting one * * *

CURRENT NO. 6237

Telegram, dated 21st January 1897.

From—London,

To—Calcutta.

From—Secretary of State,

To—Viceroy.

FILE No. 3 of 1897.

SERIAL No. 8.

YOUR telegram of yesterday. Governor of Natal suggests apparently with some reason emigration from India largely in contravention of the Emigration Act, XXI of 1883. It is very important stop pending full enquiry all persons suspected evading that Act. Please issue needful orders with regard to bubonic plague. All shipments emigrants from Bombay should be under rigid sanitary control.

Telegram, No. 118, dated 26th January 1897.

From—Calcutta,

To—Bombay.

From—Revenue Secretary,

To—Secy. to Govt.

SERIAL No. 9.

Secretary of State telegraphs:—*Begins.*—Your telegram of yesterday. Governor of Natal suggests apparently with some reason emigration from India largely in contravention of the Emigration Act, XXI of 1883. It is very important stop pending full enquiry all persons suspected evading that Act. Please issue needful orders with regard to bubonic plague. All shipments emigrants from Bombay should be under rigid sanitary control.—*Ends.* Please carefully watch and prevent all evasion of emigration law, and enforce sanitary provisions most strictly in case of all shipments of emigrants under Act from Bombay or Karachi. Special attention should also be paid to strict medical inspection of all crew and passengers before bill-of-health is given and telegraphic intimation sent to Natal Government in case any ship leaves without crew and passengers being declared to be in satisfactory sanitary condition. Early reply desirable to my letter No. 90 of 20th instant, as to necessity for amending emigration law to prevent evasion.

Telegram, dated 26th January 1897.

From—Calcutta,

To—London.

From—Viceroy,

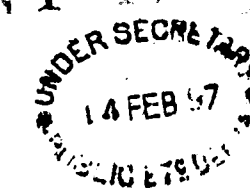
To—Secy. of State.

SERIAL No. 10.

YOUR telegram of 21st January. We are already considering in consultation with Government of Bombay the propriety of amending the Emigration Act (XXI of 1883) to prevent evasion. But Governor of Natal expressly describes the emigrants as paying own passages and making no specific contracts, and has given us no grounds for suspecting evasion. In September last Government of Bombay reported on similar emigration from India to East Coast of Africa, including Natal. 249 coolies and others examined appeared to be genuine free emigrants with money in pockets going to better themselves, and no ground discovered for suspecting evasion of law. We have repeated your telegram to Government of Bombay, and requested them to carefully watch and prevent evasion of law, to enforce sanitary provisions most strictly in case of all shipments of emigrants under Act from Bombay or Karachi, and to see that the medical inspection of emigrants leaving otherwise than under Act is rigidly carried out, and that intimation by telegraph is given to Governor of Natal in case any ship leaves Bombay or Karachi without clean bill-of-health declaring crew and passengers to be in satisfactory sanitary condition.

CURRENT NO. 2344

No. 176
3-14



FROM

DENZIL IBBETSON, Esq., C.S.I.,

Secretary to the Government of India,

TO

The Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

Department of Revenue
and Agriculture.

Calcutta, the 9th February 1897.

SIR,

(Emigration)

With reference to my telegram No. 118 dated the 26th January last, and in continuation of my letter No.

73 dated the 16th idem, I am directed to forward, for

telegram to Secretary of State dated 20th January 1897. } the information
" from " " 21st " " }
" to " " 26th " " } of the Governor
letter from the Emigration Agent for Natal No. 926 dated 16th January 1897 and enclosures. } in Council, the

enclosed correspondence regarding emigration from Bombay to Natal.

2. The emigration of which the Natal Government complains is apparently bona fide free emigration of Indians who are going to the Colony at their own expense in the hope of improving their prospects in life; and this view is confirmed by the papers forwarded with Mr. De Atkins' letter No. 4267 dated the 26th September 1896. With such emigration the Government of India have neither the power nor the wish to interfere, and they do not therefore propose to take power to do so. They desire, however, that all evasion of the existing emigration law should be prevented, and for this purpose a careful watch should be kept upon emigrants sailing from the ports of Bombay and Karachi.

3. The strictest precautions should moreover be taken to prevent any person infected with bubonic plague from

sailing

sailing for Natal. The sanitary provisions of the Emigration Act enable special precautions to be taken in the case of emigrants sailing under that Act, and your telegram dated the 27th January proposed rules, to be made under Act I of 1870, for the medical inspection of all persons leaving Bombay by sea and for preventing any vessels leaving Bombay without a certificate that the officers, crew and passengers are free from any infectious disease dangerous to life. In the telegram from the Home Department No.250 dated the 28th January it was stated that the rules proposed might be acted on, and that they might be formally introduced when the Epidemic Diseases Bill, then under the consideration of Council, passed into law. It was also suggested that similar rules should be issued for Karachi. In the telegram from the Home Department No. 305 dated the 4th instant the Government of Bombay were informed that the Epidemic Diseases Bill had been passed, and that a notification had issued empowering the Government of Bombay to exercise the powers conferred by the Act. The Government of Bombay are therefore now empowered to take all precautions that may be considered necessary both in the case of emigrants sailing under the Act and in the case of emigrants going to the Colony at their own expense, and the Government of India have no doubt that the Government of Bombay will take measures for a strict and effective examination of all emigrants leaving for Natal.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Sd.Denzil Ibbetson.

Secretary.

No.

No. $\frac{177}{3-14}$.

Copy of the correspondence forwarded to the Government of Madras with reference to telegram No. 159 dated 4th February 1897.

466 went
13/2/97

By order etc.,

456

Under-Secretary.

with 3 copies each of the
correspondence. Spare
copies will follow.

216/2/97

Public Department.

11-96.

C. No. 623.

~~THE GOVERNOR.~~

SUBJECT.

HON'BLE MR. BLISS, C.I.E.

HON'BLE MR. GROSE, C.I.E.

Emigration to Natal.

FOR ORDERS.

NOTE
The Govt. having expressed
a wish to see these papers when
received the Office marked them
for their file.
They are submitted to H.M. and
case that they might wish
to see them. There is nothing
in them calling for action.
24/2/97

The papers regarding emigration
to Natal, which the Govt. of India
promised in its telegram of the 4th
instant in ^{the} linked file, have been
received.

It will be seen that they refer
to "free" emigration which the Govt. has
no power to regulate. The extract from
the "Natal Mercury" of 23rd October
last shows that free Indian labour is
obtainable in Natal at a less cost
than indentured labour. The former
apparently ~~is~~ very largely exceeds
the latter and the withdrawal of sta
regulation of indentured emigrants
would apparently neither affect the
people in Natal who require Indi
labour nor ameliorate the condit
of the Indian in Natal.

*5013. The memorial
file relating
to Natal, or*

Entirely with undated
mimicron 15.

The papers are only sent to
this Gov for information.

AK. There is nothing upon which any
action appears necessary.
16/1/97 16.2.97

seen
ASH

17.2.97

BS
25/2/97

This only needed

28/2/97

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D., No.

DATED

o. Q. No.

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