

Public (1897) Department.

ORDINARY MS.

G.O., No. 335

Dated 25-3-97.

INDEXED.

[Despatch Abstract.]

Reading Marine dept proceeding on the
subject of the medical inspection of vessels
in the port of Madras & under the Epi-
demic Diseases Act regulations.

BACK PAPERS:

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

C No 1110 of 1897
for 2112/3-397

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Government { 1897 } of Madras. MARINE.

Recd. 18-3- }
Regd. 19-3- } 1897.

Enclosures

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G.O., No. 225, 11th March 1897.

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this order N. 335 of 25-3-97.
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Inspection of Vessels

Passing orders on certain suggestions regarding the medical — in connection with the regulations framed under the Epidemic Diseases Act for observance in the port of Madras.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

READ—the following papers :—

From Messrs. BINNY AND Co., Agents, British India Steam Navigation Company (Limited), and Messrs. WILSON AND Co., Agents, Asiatic Steam Navigation Company (Limited), to the Secretary to Government, Marine Department, dated Madras, 2nd March 1897.

With reference to a communication received from Government by the Madras Chamber of Commerce, wherein it is proposed to extend the regulations of *Fort St. George Gazette* notification, No. 40 of 23rd ultimo, to all vessels leaving the port of Madras, we, as the representatives of the lines of steamers which will be most affected by this extension of the regulations, have the honour to submit the following suggestions for the consideration of Government. We have taken this independent step entirely to save time and as the further regulations will principally affect coasting steamers.

2. With regard to section 4 of the notification we would point out that, although it can doubtless be arranged for all passengers to be on board by a certain hour, it is almost impossible to arrange for cargo in like manner.

3. No provision having been made for the Health officer to make his inspection after office hours should the steamer require it, a steamer having cargo alongside at 6 P.M. would be forced either to leave such cargo behind or remain till the following day, which in most instances would be impossible.

4. The omission of the words "or cargo" would overcome the difficulty of the Health officer going on board the steamer after office hours, as it could easily be arranged that passengers must be on board by, say, 5 P.M., leaving the steamer to continue working her cargo and sail when ready, as at present.

5. It is not quite clear whether it is intended that the Health officer should examine the cargo; such examination can only be cursory and can hardly serve any useful purpose, at any rate so far as coasting steamers are concerned, as in their case no foreign authorities' regulations require consideration.

6. By the omission of the words "or cargo" in clause 4, the master of the vessel would be enabled to complete the loading of the remainder of his cargo, after obtaining his bill of health, with the batta lascars already on board the steamer, which, we think, would meet, all requirements.

7. The terms of section 5 are calculated to cause further detention to steamers, inasmuch as the bill of health has to be brought ashore and submitted to the customs before port clearance can be obtained, and both these documents have then to be sent on board. It would facilitate matters and save delay where the clearance entrusted to some neutral party, such as the pilot who goes on board to take the vessel out of harbour (as has been done for years at such places as Masulipatam) and who could deliver same to the steamer after the Health officer had granted his certificate.

8. We very much question, if we may be permitted to do so, the necessity of these further regulations, but we quite recognise that Government's action in the matter is in the interests of the community at large, and of the trade of the country in particular, and we shall be glad to contribute all in our power towards the smooth working of the rules. The suggestions we have made cannot do any harm, but will greatly facilitate the working of the steamers we represent, and if they could be applied to all steamers wherever bound without prejudice to the port, we strongly urge the amendment of the original regulations.

No. 146 E.

Referred to the Presidency Port Officer for favour of very early remarks in continuation of endorsement No. 140 E., dated 2nd March 1897.

(Signed) D. McNEIL CAMPBELL, Colonel, R.E.,
3rd March 1897. Secretary to Government.

From Commander H. A. STREET, R.I.M., Presidency Port Officer, Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Marine Department, dated 4th March 1897, No. 949/74 G.

With reference to Marine Department endorsement, No. 146 E. of 3rd March 1897, on a joint letter from Messrs. Binny & Co. and Messrs. Wilson & Co. (herewith returned) drawing attention to certain sections of the notification published with G.O., No. 151, Marine, dated 23rd February 1897, which they state will cause delay in the sailing of vessels from Madras, and making certain suggestions for removing the difficulty they bring to notice, I have the honour to state, for the information of Government, that in my opinion it is unnecessary to omit the words "or cargo" in paragraph 4 of the notification as suggested in the letter under reference, as the paragraph seems to refer solely to a vessel on which a case of plague has occurred, and, I take it, should be read in connection with paragraph 3. The prohibition relating to cargo contained in paragraph 4 evidently is intended to prevent cargo being taken on board until the Health officer has visited a second time a vessel on board of which a case of plague has occurred, and is satisfied as to her sanitary condition. Under ordinary circumstances the certificate of health, it appears to me, would be granted without reference to the description of cargo; for in the certificate to be granted by the Health officer only the passengers, officers and crew of a vessel have to be inspected, and the vessel stated to be in a satisfactory condition—no inspection of cargo is ordered.

2. In paragraph 2 of this office letter, No. 949/72 G., dated 2nd March 1897, I have made a proposal to meet the difficulty connected with paragraph 5 of the notification.

From G. G. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., Chairman, Chamber of Commerce, Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Marine Department, dated 8th March 1897.

I have the honour to inform you, in reply to your letter, No. 138 E., dated the 26th ultimo, that the Chamber sees no objection to the temporary regulations framed under the Epidemic Diseases Act for observance in the port of Madras being applied to all vessels leaving this port, subject to the following amendments.

The regulations generally apply to persons, but in regulation 4 the words "or cargo" appear. The Chamber is very averse to the loading of vessels being interfered with in the manner here indicated. It would point out that it is almost impossible to arrange for cargo being on board by a certain hour—a difficulty which does not arise in the case of passengers, who might be directed to be on board by 5 P.M. at the latest, and that, in its opinion, there can be no objection to cargo, which is alongside when the Health officer grants his certificate, being handled by the lascars then on board. By the omission of the words "or cargo" there would be no necessity for the Health officer to work after office hours, and the steamer could complete its loading expeditiously; for, in the absence of this provision, cargo which was alongside (not on board) would have to be rejected as the steamer could not be expected to defer its departure until the following day in order to comply with the regulation. The amendments suggested would, the Chamber thinks, meet all requirements.

Regulation 5 is open to the objection that it causes needless inconvenience and delay, to obviate which the Chamber would propose that the pilot be charged with the duty of handing the port clearance to the master of a vessel on board, after the

Health officer has granted his certificate. The Chamber is of opinion that the inspection of cargo, especially in the case of coasting steamers, is unnecessary, for it can only be a very superficial one, and so serves no useful purpose.

The above remarks apply to all steamers, though your reference is only in regard to coasting steamers, inasmuch as the regulations are already in force for steamers proceeding to foreign and Burma ports, and the Chamber trusts that Government will approve of the suggested amendments in both cases.

ORDER—No. 225, Marine, dated 11th March 1897.

In the letters printed above, the following suggestions are made in regard to the regulations published as notification No. 40 at page 252 of the *Fort St. George Gazette* of the 23rd February 1897, Part I:—

- (1) that the words "or cargo" be omitted from rule 4, and
- (2) that the port clearance required under rule 5 be entrusted to some neutral party, such as the pilot, for delivery on board, on production by the master of the bill of health.

2. His Excellency the Governor in Council observes in regard to (1) above that the rules provide for cargo as well as passengers, because cargo cannot be shipped without coolies and other persons from the shore being on board, and no inspection of the passengers and crew which is worth having can be made until all the people from the shore have left the vessel. The difficulties brought to notice will, however, be sufficiently met by the orders given in G.O., No. 202, Marine, dated 6th March 1897, under which medical inspection of vessels will, on requisition, be made by the Health officer up to 9 P.M., by which time all cargo would ordinarily be on board. This extension of time will be allowed in the case of all steamers leaving the port, and not only those bound for foreign ports.

3. As regards (2), His Excellency in Council is, on reconsideration, disposed to think that rule 5 should be maintained, and that no port clearance should be granted by the customs officers until the bill of health is produced before them. It should not take more than 20 minutes to bring this document ashore, and as the time of inspection has been extended to 9 P.M., as stated in paragraph 2 above, there need be little or no detention of vessels after that hour. There will be no objection to the pilot taking both the bill of health and port clearance on board, but the responsibility for seeing that the bill of health is in form before port clearance is handed over is, by the rules, fixed on the customs officers, and cannot be shifted to an officer in the position of a pilot.

(True Extract.)

C. H. B. Burton
Under Secretary to Government.

To the Chairman, Chamber of Commerce.
„ Messrs. Binny & Co.
„ Messrs. Wilson & Co.
„ the Surgeon-General with Government.
„ the Presidency Port Officer.
„ the Chairman, Harbour Trust Board.
„ the Local and Municipal Department.
„ the Public Department.
„ the Collector of Sea Customs.

Exd. Shaik Karim.

CHIEF SECRETARY
18 MAR 1897
GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

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READ AGAIN G.O., No.

189

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STATEMENT WITH DITTO.

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