M.R.O. 14—10,000—21-4-32.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 326-327 ~~Press~~ Mis.

Dated September 1860.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

Chamber of Commerce

Madras 31st August 1860

To.

The Secretary to Government

Revenue Department

Fort St George

Sir,

I am desired by the Chamber of Commerce to address you relative to the 3rd Para of the orders of Government No 1473 dated 9th August 1860.

In this order, the Government, considering the present plan of holding money in deposit at the Custom House on account of Merchants and Mercantile Firms, open to serious objections, direct it to be discontinued.

I am desired to represent that the carrying out of this order will be attended with the most serious obstruction to trade, and with the greatest inconvenience both to the Public and the Custom House authorities. The present system so far as the Chamber is acquainted, is to deposit with the Collector a sufficient amount in Government Securities, to guard the Revenue

from loss by the depositor being permitted to clear, and take away immediately, the goods in his application. Were this not the practice, he would have to wait at the Custom House several hours, and in many cases would not obtain his goods within the day. The computation of the duties is frequently a work of time and labor, which would then have to be performed on requisition, and all the business of the day would have to wait for it. Large indents for goods, comprising almost every variety of fancy articles, and accompanied by a number of invoices, would thus entail an amount of immediate work to the establishment, and vexatious delay to the Public, which the Chamber is assured the Government cannot have contemplated. Passengers' baggage, Overland parcels and cargo per Steamer, will be kept on the beach an indefinite time to the great trouble and distress of many private individuals. Under the present system the goods are removeable at once on the signature of a depositor, whose deposit being liable for the duty, the security of Government is complete. Moreover, the Clerks at the Custom House are thus able to compute and check the duties deliberately, and at a convenient time, the bills being paid some days after the goods are cleared. It seems impossible to have devised a system more convenient than this, and the Chamber ventures to hope that Government will on reconsideration rescind this part of the order.

Not having before it the Accountant General's letter, the Chamber is unable to estimate the "serious objections" which have been raised by him to this system. As they may possibly be connected with the question of the removal of the Custom House treasury, and refer also to the responsibility attached to the custody of these deposits, I am further desired to suggest that an arrangement may be made with the Bank of Madras by which such objections may be wholly, or at least in the greater part, removed. The deposits should be invariably in Government Securities, endorsed to the "Collector" and by him they should be placed in the Agency department of the Bank; the depositors paying the small commission which the Bank charges on such business. In this way the trouble and risk may be reduced to the minimum; and the undoubted advantage which is now derived from this system by the saving of time and trouble

both to the Custom House establishment and the trade of the Port, may still be enjoyed. On the other hand the Chamber is convinced that its abolition will necessitate the employment of a much larger Custom House establishment.

Finally the Chamber desires most respectfully, yet earnestly, to protest against changes such as have lately been contemplated in the Custom House arrangements, being put into operation, without any previous consultation with the Mercantile interests, and merely on the recommendation of Public Officers who have no experience of the requirements of trade.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obed.t Servant

A Nelson
Chairman.

Pro: of Govt. for August 60 Nos 1 to 3
103-104-203-204
for July 60 Nos 205-206
303-304
Ab

Revenue 1860 Depart.
Pro: of Govt. for September -
No 1838

From the Chairman of the
Chamber of Commerce -

Dated 31st August 1860.
Rec.

Requesting that the
3d para of the orders of Govt
dated 29th Aug. 1860 directing
the discontinuance of the
present plan of holding
money in deposit at the
Custom House on account
of Merchants & Mercantile
Firms, may be rescinded
for the reasons stated -

From Do. of 15th Sept. 60.
C. No 2007.

Will an order

Mins Nos 326 & 327

No 3

Ordered to be lodged
the order objected to having
been recalled and modified -

Fort St. Geo.
4 September 1860.