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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

Revenue DEPARTMENT

G.O. No.
B.P. No.

1712

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Dated 21-7-1876 196

Not to be folded or roughly handled

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

MARINE DEPARTMENT.

3rd July 1876. No. 244.

SHIPS' REGISTERS.

Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 12th November 1875, No. 3100:—

Read again Board's Proceedings, dated 19th November 1874, Miscellaneous No. 8059.

Read also the following letters:—

From the Acting Collector of Ganjam,	dated 11th Jan.	1875, No.	58.
" " " of Vizagapatam,	" 2nd Dec.	1874, "	1823.
" " " of Godavery,	" 10th "	" "	456.
" " " of Kistna,	" 15th "	" "	2047.
" " " of Nellore,	" 26th Nov.	" "	2823.
" " " of Chingleput,	" 26th "	" "	660.
" " " of South Arcot,	" 19th Jan.	1875, "	33.
" " " of Tanjore,	" 25th Feb.	" "	99.
" " " of Madura,	" 9th Jan.	" "	12.
" " " of Tinnevely,	" 12th Dec.	1874, "	653.
" " " of South Canara,	" 11th Oct.	1875, "	1949.
" " " of Malabar,	" 20th May	" "	166.
" " " of Sea Customs, Madras,	" 25th Jan.	" "	114.

The Master Attendant, Madras, having reported in his letter, recorded in G.O., dated 20th October 1874, No. 385, that there is reason to fear that Ships' Registers are changed, borrowed, or misused whenever interest demands, and that the Sea Customs and Marine Offices are too distinct to expect a careful supervision so as to prevent fraud of this description, all Collectors of Coast Districts and the Collector of Sea Customs were requested to report on the subject, and the letters above recorded are their replies.

2. From these reports it appears that, although but few frauds have been detected, there is reason to believe that irregularities do prevail as regards the small native craft. The Collector of the Kistna District mentions the discovery of three cases of dhonies running for several years under incorrect certificates of measurement. In two instances, the tonnage entered in the certificate was deficient; in the third, the certificate was in excess of the real measurement, the reason being that she was a passenger-ship and was thus enabled to carry more passengers.

The only other instance of fraud mentioned as having been detected is a case of false personation which occurred in the Tanjore District in 1870, when the offender was sentenced to a fine of Rupees 500, and in default to simple imprisonment for four months.

3. There is reason for thinking that the paucity of detected cases is due to laxity in regard to supervision rather than to the rareness of occurrences such as those described. In the Nellore District, for instance, the Customs Officers are satisfied if the name given by the Master of the vessel on her arrival at any port in the district corresponds with the name entered in the Port

Clearance obtained at the last port, but it does not appear that any proof of identity is required, and, indeed, it is stated that changes of Masters are by no means infrequent, and that it is not usual to take notice of them. Reliance is, in fact, placed entirely on the completeness of the inquiry at the port of departure.

4. The Collector of Vizagapatam suggests that a descriptive roll of the Master should be inserted in the Certificate of Registry, and that he be required to appear in person before the Master Attendant or Sea Customs Superintendent on the arrival and departure of the vessel. This would facilitate the detection of cases of false personation, and the Board support the recommendation.

5. The Master Attendant, Tuticorin, states as the result of his experience that the register is valued as a title-deed, especially in the case of schooners and brigs carrying cargo or licensed to take passengers; and that no delay is allowed to occur in making application for registration in respect of vessels of that description; but that in the case of dhonies there is a reason to suspect fraud as they are easily rebuilt at some small port where there is no supervision, and afterwards go on trading under the same register as before. He suggests that, with the view of preventing such frauds, Masters Attendant at outports should be directed to remeasure any vessels about which they may entertain doubt, or which are sailing with registers more than ten years old, to see whether they approximately correspond with the dimensions specified in the register. Any doubt which may have existed in regard to the powers of Masters Attendant in this respect has been removed by Act XII of 1875, Section 51 of which confers the power to remeasure.

6. The Collector of South Canara reports that it has been the practice in that district to allow the small vessels trading on the coast to navigate under a system of temporary passes, which are renewed every year. The irregularity has been recently pointed out, and a separate report is promised on the subject.

7. The Collector of Kistna considers that the amalgamation of the offices of Sea Customs Superintendent and Master Attendant will facilitate the supervision of the registers. The question has been disposed of in G.O., dated 20th July 1875, No. 259, and the amalgamation of the appointments sanctioned in the case of the port of Masulipatam. The Collector of Tanjore deprecates divided responsibility, and considers that the scrutiny of registers should be the duty of the Master Attendant. The Board, however, are of opinion that both the Marine and Sea Customs Authorities should exercise supervision in this matter, as numerous opportunities of discovering fraud are afforded to both in the discharge of their duties, and it is not advisable to dispense with the double check. The endorsement on the certificate of registry required on the occurrence of a change of Masters must, of course, be made by the Registrar of Shipping. The Board have recently pointed out that every Collector of a Maritime District is a Registrar under Section 3, Act X of 1841, a fact of which some Collectors were apparently unaware.

Board's Proc., dated 16th Sept. 1875, No. 2611.

(A true Extract.)

(Signed) C. A. GALTON,
Acting Sub-Secretary.

Transferred to the Marine Department.

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Secretary to Government.

No. 737.

Referred to the Master Attendant for his remarks.

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Chief Secretary.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
30th November 1875.

FORT ST. GEORGE,
1st December 1875.

From J. H. TAYLOR, Esq., Lieutenant, R.N.R., Registrar of Shipping, Madras,
to the Hon. W. HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St.
George, dated Madras, 28th June 1876, No. 95.

I have the honor to return, herewith, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, together with the enclosures marginally noted, bearing date 12th November 1875, No. 3100, referred to me for report under your endorsement, dated 1st December 1875, No. 737, and to regret that references to the outports and press of other work prevented me from replying to the same at an earlier date.

From Ag. Collr. of Ganjam,	11th Jan. 1875, No. 88.
" " " of Vizagapatam,	2nd Dec. 1874, " 1823.
" " " of Godavery,	10th " " " 456.
" " " of Kistna,	15th " " " 2047.
" " " of Nellore,	26th Nov. " " 2823.
" " " of Chingleput,	26th " " " 660.
" " " of South Arcot,	19th Jan. 1875, " 33.
" " " of Tanjore,	26th Feb. " " 89.
" " " of Madras,	9th Jan. " " 12.
" " " of Tinnevely,	12th Dec. 1874, " 653.
" " " of South Canara,	11th Oct. 1875, " 1949.
" " " of Malabar,	20th May " " 160.
" " " of Sea Customs, Madras,	25th Jan. " " 114.

2. With regard to the detection of fraud in connexion with Ships' Registers, I agree with the Board of Revenue in thinking that the paucity of detected cases is owing to want of supervision and a proper scrutiny of each register on presentation prior to entry at the Custom House. A preliminary certificate is, however, granted by the Master Attendant or Conservator of a Port to the effect that a ship's register, passenger lists, &c., have been produced before him, and I think the duty of detecting fraud should rest principally upon the officer granting this certificate.

3. The practice recently adopted in the Administrative Department, since I took over entire charge of the registration work, is carefully to scrutinize each register, put the Tindal or Master through a searching examination regarding the vessel herself, the owners' names and place of residence, and regarding his own antecedents. In this manner two or three cases are discovered every month, either of change of ownership or alterations in the size of the vessel, which would never have been discovered, ordinarily speaking. The vessel is immediately detained pending registration ~~de novo~~. Three doubtful cases presented themselves in the present month, and on measuring the vessels they were found to exceed their register tonnage by twenty-two, twenty-nine, and fourteen tons, respectively, and new registers are being granted them.

4. With reference to the suggestion made in paragraph 4 of the Board's remarks, I would state that all Masters or Tindals are bound to appear in person before the Master Attendant prior to entry, and that this rule should never be relaxed with regard to native vessels.

5. I also concur in the advisability of issuing orders to all Registrars to remeasure all vessels whose registers date more than ten years back, the Surveying Officer receiving his fee only in such cases as exhibit a discrepancy in favor of the vessel.

6. The report promised by the Collector of South Canara has not yet come to hand, but strict orders should be issued to Registrars to prohibit the issue of any "time passes," except for the purpose of proceeding from one port to another for the express purpose of registration.

7. With regard to the frequent change of Masters, I would remark that the practice at Madras is to make no change on a register except with the consent of the owner in person, in writing or by wire, or by an agent when he is able to produce a power of attorney to act for the owner. Several vessels arrive at this port from the Nellore District, and notably Kothapalem where a Master is allowed to leave a vessel on the plea of illness appointing another in his stead, the change being endorsed on the manifest of the vessel by Sea Customs Assistant Superintendents, but not on the ship's register. All such vessels on arrival here are detained as being without a Master, and are not granted the usual certificate until authority is received from the owner to appoint the new Master. One instance of this kind is now pending, the vessel is detained, but the Agent and new Tindal both steadily decline to communicate with the owner, who is, according to their statement, in the Nellore District. I think some similar rule should be enforced at all the outports, including the minor ports, particularly in the Tanjore and Nellore Districts.

8. I would, however, before concluding, solicit the sanction of Government to prosecute one or two gross cases of fraud that may come under my observation, with the aid of the Government Solicitor, detaining the vessel, if necessary, for that purpose.

ORDER.—Ordered to be communicated to the Board of Revenue, and to all Collectors of Coast Districts—ex-officio Registrars of Shipping—with instructions to adopt the precautions indicated by the Master Attendant, Madras, for greater security against fraud.

2. The Master Attendant is authorized to prosecute some exemplary cases, and the Government Solicitor will afford the desired assistance.

(True Extract.)

[Signature]

Chief Secretary.

To the Registrar of Shipping, Madras.

„ Board of Revenue, with enclosures returned.

„ Government Solicitor.

„ Collectors of Coast Districts.

„ Revenue Department.

21 July 1876
Revenue 11/6 2/6
Bout. of 1876 *3000*rs.

MARINE. ✓

To
THE REGISTRAR OF SHIPPING,
Madras,
&c., &c., &c.

Dated July, 3rd.

Issued

Recd. *17. 12/6/76*

Encl.

G.O., 3rd July 1876, No. 214.

JULY.
Nos. 1-3.

By, 11/11/76
Ships' Registers.—Orders passed on certain papers respecting the measures necessary for exercising a close supervision to prevent fraud in connexion with Ships' Registers.

21. 7. 1876

11/11/76

21 July 1876