

PRINCE OF WALES'S ISLAND.

As the Notice of the Public, and the attention of the Proprietors of India Stock, have been excited by the arrangements in contemplation for the Prince of Wales's Island, we persuade ourselves that we discharge a duty grateful to our friends, by enabling them to judge of the force and the motives from whence the measure proceeds.

Lord CASTLEREAGH to the CHAIR, 9th Sept. 1804.
"I have the honour to enclose for your information copies of two private letters, with their several enclosures from Lord Melville to the Marquis Wellesley, on the subject of building ships in India for the King's service."

"I beg to suggest the expediency of your conferring with Sir Andrew Hammond, Commissioner of the Navy, upon the detail of this question with a view of being better enabled to frame such orders as it may be expedient to forward to India on this interesting subject, which, from its pressing importance in the judgment of the First Lord of the Admiralty, will, I have no doubt, claim your early and earnest attention."

EXTRACT.

Lord MELVILLE to Lord WELLESLEY, July 4. 1804.
"The short note I lately wrote to your Lordship by an overland conveyance, will have prepared you for the letter with which I am now to trouble you, on the subject of building ships in India. It is almost 20 years since I first had occasion to consider that subject, and I had much conversation with Sir Charles Middleton upon it, when he was Commissioner of the Navy. My connexion with the Administration of India brought the same idea after occasionally before me, and my opinions both as to the utility and practicability of the plan have never varied. I am aware that many of the statements which were before me were too languine, and many of them came from persons who had given only a superficial attention to the subject, but the general opinion was so prevalent and the teak ships which so frequently came to this country impressed me with a strong conviction that with a view both to marine and commercial purposes, this country must one day avail itself of the valuable resource it had for ship building in India. When my nephew, Mr. Philip Dundas, returned from India about twelve months ago, I was desirous for my own satisfaction, to talk over the subject minutely with him. The situation he had held at Bombay gave him the best means of information, and I was the more desirous to converse with him as he was the very reverse of being sanguine in his ideas on the subject, and tended to counterbalance what I might conceive to be the too sanguine ideas of others. I had a full conversation with him last summer in Scotland, and I send you No. I. a Minute of that conversation. I likewise send you Copy of a Memorandum I have lately received from him, No. II."

"It has lately become my duty to examine the thing to the bottom, with a view to the practical use of this system. That your Lordship may be fully informed on the subject, I send you a Correspondence I have lately had with the Navy Board, from the perusal of which you will perceive the great importance of the measures on which I am addressing you, and it will save me the necessity of troubling you with so long a letter as might otherwise have been necessary. With the same view I send you some Minutes, which within these few days have been put into my hands by Mr. Philip Dundas; they are drawn up by Mr. Tate, recently returned from India, and whose attention has been accurately drawn to the particulars he details, from his being himself engaged in the business of ship-building in India. His details are certainly more minute than any I have received, and are more satisfactory, as being founded on personal observation. I had a very long conversation with him yesterday, at Wimbledon, in presence of Sir Andrew Hammond and my nephew Mr. P. D. and I expect to receive from him in writing, his answers to many points I desired him to consider."

"From what has already passed, I am satisfied that we have at Bombay the means of building ships of the line, of at least 64 guns, and at Cochin we may build frigates of 44 to any amount. If we should not be able to carry it further, these, in themselves, are very great resources, and deserving of arrangements being made for carrying them into instant execution. I am hopeful that the system may be carried infinitely further; that either in Rangoon, in Pegu, or at Prince of Wales' Island, arrangement may be made for building ships of 74 guns, or even larger, as the woods of teak in Pegu are said to be inexhaustible. The best place for a building establishment, if it answers in other respects, would be at Rangoon, in the neighbourhood of the woods; and if the map does not mislead me, the country there seems to be wonderfully intersected by rivers, which, of course, must be highly useful in bringing the wood to the coast."

MY DEAR LORD, Wimbledon, 30th August, 1804.

"I cannot allow the ships about to sail for India to depart without troubling your Lordship again on the subject of ships building for the Navy. The more I revolve the subject in my mind, the more I am convinced of the utility, indeed I should say the necessity, there exists to avail ourselves of that resource; along with this I send to your Lordship what further information I have collected since I last wrote to you."

"I have had conversation with Lord Castlereagh and the Chairs of the East India Company, and showed to them the outlines of the plan I have in view; I found them as I expected, impressed with the importance of the object, and disposed cordially to cooperate in the execution of it. The more minute details must be settled between the East India Company and the Comptroller of the Navy; and it is my intention to furnish each of them with a copy of any former letter to your Lordship, and its accompaniments, and likewise with a copy of this and the additional papers which I have subjoined to it."

"The leading question which I treated in my last conversation with Lord Castlereagh, were, the place where the building of the ships for the Navy ought to be carried on, and the authority under which the operations must be conducted."

"The papers from Mr. Tate, which accompany this, are decidedly in favour of Rangoon, and I am ready to admit, that if Pegu was a part of the British possession in India, the vicinity of the materials for building, and other circumstances, would give to Rangoon a decided preference; and I do not wish to exclude from your Lordship's mature consideration, founded on better channels of information, but I have heard nothing yet to satisfy me that it would be expedient to risk so great a stake on so precarious a tenure; and I

strongly into the opinion contained in the letter to my nephew, Mr. Philip Dundas, which accompanied some of the memorandums prepared by Mr. Tate. It will certainly add very considerably to the expense of ship-building to bring the wood from Pegu to Prince of Wales's Island; but the more minutely I examine the situation of that Settlement, I am the more impressed with an opinion that the East India Company ought to cultivate, and by every means cherish and increase the prosperity of it; and it may be a question how far the distance from which the timber from Pegu is to be brought, may not in a degree be counterbalanced by the eminent advantages which will result from the interests of the Company being more concentrated; and whatever collateral benefits arise from having a new naval depot and arsenal in India ought certainly, if possible, to be thrown into the scale in favour of a settlement of our own, especially one in a situation very promising in a variety of other respects. If Prince of Wales's Island is fixed upon as the station for the new arsenal, the putting the timber before it is removed from Pegu, into a shape as near to use as can be brought, will certainly be attended to; and, if in our intercourse with the people of Pegu, we conduct ourselves in such a manner as to conciliate their confidence and remove jealousy, it is not impossible that in the progress of time they might even countenance ships being built there for our behalf, in the same manner as they have allowed others formerly to build. The great object will be to counteract by our best exertions, the effect of those intrigues, which our enemies, no doubt, will endeavour to use to our prejudice."

"But however sanguine I am in my ideas respecting Prince of Wales's Island, and however desirable I consider it to establish, perhaps, the naval arsenal in that quarter of India, I can by no means enter into the ideas of those who may be disposed to undervalue the importance of Bombay, because it may not have the same advantages, in respect to the quantity or size of the timber, as would belong to an establishment at Rangoon or Prince of Wales's Island. It is undoubtedly a great circumstance in favour of an establishment at either of these places, that ships, probably of the largest description, may be built there; but, there seems no doubt, that ships of 64 guns, and frigates of any size, may be built on the west side of India, and that it is a resource too important in its nature to be neglected. Besides, it will be recollected that Bombay is already known as a respectable marine establishment, with a number of valuable artificers; and a very inconsiderable expence, as reported from Bombay, the harbour and its accommodation may be so extended and improved as to afford full convenience for the operations of both our military and commercial marine on that side of India. In addition to all this is another consideration too important not to be adverted to; I have long thought that there was a defect in the distribution of our Naval Force in India, and that the fleets should be so divided, under separate commands, as to afford constant protection to both coasts of the Peninsula. By such a distribution, the trade connected with Bombay and the two Gulphs of Arabia and Persia, would receive a substantial protection, and the trade with Bengal, and the seas on that side of India, would enjoy a similar protection.— This would guard against many inconveniences arising from the effects of the Monsoons and other circumstances. If I am right in this position, it is obvious that a Naval Station, for the building and repairing vessels of every description, on both sides of India, would be a great accommodation to our Naval interests in the Indian Ocean; a naval establishment, therefore, at Prince of Wales's Island affords no argument for undervaluing and neglecting the establishment now existing at Bombay."

"With regard to the authority and controuling power to be exercised over the Docks and Naval Arsenals in India, I am satisfied there can be no divided authority; and as I am strongly inclined to the opinion that the building accommodations are to be made and kept up at the expence of the East India Company, it will be eligible in many points of view that they should be their property, and kept under the care and management of their servants: this is peculiarly necessary on account of the native artificers on whom it will be wise for us to rely for the building of our ships in India.— The Company's servants are accustomed to their manners and habits, and will deal with them accordingly. But if we were to introduce into the Docks in India a multitude of European workmen, or even a number of European overseers and superintendants, it would probably be productive of disagreeable circumstances, if the manners, or even prejudices of the natives were to be hurt or outraged by a species of manners and habits to which they were not accustomed. In stating this I do not mean to contend that the Navy Board of this country are not to have a few persons placed at the building stations in India, in order to be certain that the ships are built according to the drafts and models which they have approved of, and that no insufficient materials are introduced, or insufficient workmanship allowed in the construction of the ships; but all this is perfectly consistent with the superintending control and authority of the Company's servants over all the subordinate artificers in the Dock Yards. When faults are observed, the persons immediately in the employ of the Navy Board can have them prevented and remedied through the interposition of the Company's servants, on a proper representation made for the purpose."

"If this system is adopted, and cordially and honourably acted upon by the East India Company, as I have no doubt it will be, every thing will proceed smoothly. It will be the business of the Company to take care that their arsenals and storehouses are amply supplied with seasoned timber, and every other material requisite for the execution of the business, and as the East India Company can have no view of making any profit for themselves, on such a national concern, they will, when a ship for his Majesty's navy is completed, take such proper means as shall be settled between them and the Navy Board, for ascertaining the sum which the ship has cost them, when the account is certified by the persons authorized by the Navy Board. I am satisfied this will prove to be both the cheapest and in every other respect the most beneficial method of conducting this great national object."

"It is not my intention to enter upon any of the details by which these arrangements are to be settled between the Government and the East India Company.— They and the Comptroller of the Navy are infinitely more competent for the adjustment of such details than I can pretend to be. It is sufficient for me to chalk out the material heads of the system, and if either of the parties wish from me any further explanations, I will be most ready to listen to them. When they are finally adjusted, as I trust they will be speedily, direc-

tions upon the whole of the business will be conveyed to the Company's servants in India, in proper official form. But I thought it my duty not to keep from your Lordship the ideas which have occurred to me after having bestowed considerable attention upon the subject, I could only do so at present by communicating to you in an unofficial form, the sentiments I have troubled you with in this and my former letter of the 4th ultimo."

I have the honour to be,
My dear Lord,

Your's sincerely,
MELVILLE."

LETTER FROM THE COMPTROLLER, SIR ANDREW HAMMOND, TO THE CHAIRMAN.

Sir, Navy Office, 30th October, 1804.

"The Right Honourable Lord Melville, first Lord of the Admiralty, having transmitted to me copies of two letters which his Lordship has written to the Marquis Wellesley on the subject of building ships of war in India for his Majesty's service, together with several other papers tending to shew the expediency, as well as the practicability of that important measure, if a proper encouragement is afforded to it. His Lordship has likewise informed me that you have been furnished with copies of the same papers, and has directed me to confer with you on the subject without delay, so that no time may be lost in carrying the business into execution."

"The subject of this letter therefore is to draw your attention to such parts of Lord Melville's letter, as tend to recommend the forming a complete naval establishment on Prince of Wales's Island, which shall not only be considered as a yard for building ships, but shall also contain Docks and Storehouses sufficient for the repairing and refitting of his Majesty's Squadron stationed in those seas, whenever it may be found more convenient than proceeding for that purpose to Bombay."

"As the proposal which is now submitted to your consideration, is not meant to infringe, in any degree, on the Rights of the East India Company, no officers of Government are intended to be placed on this establishment, lest it might create any clashing of separate interests. On that account, therefore, I submit to you, Sir, who are so good a judge of naval matters, how very important it is that the Governor or Superintendent should be a person well versed in naval points, and one who might be depended upon to forward the views of Government to the utmost of his power, and should you be of the same opinion, such an appointment would supersede the necessity of having a Commissioner of the Navy on the spot, which, under other circumstances, could not be dispensed with."

"The island, Ponto Guica, in the harbour of Prince of Wales's Island, appears to be the most proper spot on which to place the Naval Dock Yard, from many local advantages it possesses, and particularly from its being easily fortified from any sudden attack of an enemy. Whenever, therefore, I am informed that you and the Court of Directors have decided that this naval establishment shall take place, I shall most readily afford you any assistance in my power towards its subordinate arrangements."

Under these instructions it is understood to be in the contemplation of the Court of Directors to appoint

Captain Philip Dundas, Nephew to Lord Melville, Governor, with a salary of (per annum)	9000
Secretary	2000
Assistant	1500
Accountant	2000
Assistant	1500
Mr. Oliphant, a near relation to Lady Melville, First in Council, and Warehouse-keeper to be allowed a Commission upon the Sale of Company's Goods of 3 per Cent. and his income, including commission, not to be less than	4500
Assistant, a Commission of 2 per Cent. and his Income, not less than	1500
Captain Alexander Gray, Second in Council, Superintendent, and Naval Military Storekeeper, to be allowed a Commission upon the Sale of Stores, and his income, including Commission, not to be less than	4500
Assistant, a Commission of 2 per Cent. and his Income, not less than	1500
Captain Norman Macalister, Adjutant of the Dover Volunteers, and Military Assistant to Mr. Pitt, Commander in Chief and Third in Council	4500
Aids-de-Camp, Brigade Major, Fort Adjutant, &c. not yet fixed.	
Chaplain, the Spiritual Guide of the Deputy Chairman	1600
Master Attendant	900
Collector of Customs	1500
Surgeon	1500
Assistant	750
Ten Writers, 36ol. each	3600
	41,350

The following Officers are also stated to be necessary, but their salaries have not yet been fixed:—

- JUDICIAL ESTABLISHMENT.
- Mayor and Aldermen.
- Clerk of the Crown.
- Sheriff.
- Justices of the Peace.
- POLICE ESTABLISHMENT.
- Three Captains with Assistants.
- Other Officers of Police.
- Provost.
- Clerk of the Market.
- Many Translators, with a salary to be fixed by the Government

Such is the scheme for the Civil Government of an Island, containing a superficies of 160 square miles, of which one-third is susceptible of cultivation, and one-sixteenth actually cultivated. The annual cost exceeds 50,000l. The military charges will amount to a like sum. The expence of fortifications very far inferior to those now proposed, was in the year 1795, estimated at 90,000l. and together with docks and other buildings cannot be completed at less than 200,000l. and all this at a crisis, when the exigency of the Company's affairs precluded the Board of Control from concurring with the unanimous resolution of the Directors and Proprietors, to defray the Income Tax, amounting to 35,000l. from the Company's funds.