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# ECONOMICS OF SHIPPING

A STUDY IN APPLIED ECONOMICS.

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

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## FOREWORD.

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This admirably written book deserves to be warmly welcomed in the first instance by the Indian mercantile community and in the second place by the general public who have, for some time past, become fully alive to the vital necessity of developing on well-conceived, sound and practical lines, the productive resources of India with the view of increasing its greater prosperity. One of such activities is the revival of the old ship-building and ship-owning industries. The need for India to possess a national mercantile marine of an up-to-date character has recently been greatly felt by the Indian commercial community. It is now well known that India loses a most profitable source of wealth by reason of the coastal shipping being monopolised, in the main, by foreign capitalists—a trade the gains of which annually amount to lakhs of rupees. The absence of an indigenous mercantile fleet has been so keenly felt and accentuated that the Government of India was obliged to appoint a special committee to consider what measures can usefully be taken to develop an Indian Mercantile Marine. The report of the committee, which is now before the public, recommends the adoption of various measures to achieve the end in view. Meanwhile, the practical difficulties in the way of the profitable operation of a merchant fleet

remain as strong as ever Mr. Haji's work seeks to explain these difficulties and suggest their remedies.

The book is also to be welcomed as the fruitful product of the patient industry and research of a talented Indian trained and graduated in history and economics in the great university of Oxford which, along with her sister of Cambridge, has during the last half a century and upwards sent forth many a bright son of India, fully equipped, from the late Mr Satyendranath Tagore down to date. It is indeed gratifying to note that the Science of Economics is being steadily regarded and cultivated not only for its intrinsic worth but for its practical utility. No doubt during the last few years, some excellent and praiseworthy books have been published on Banking, Currency, Finance and Railways as well as on Commerce and Industries, but none on Shipping in its practical aspects as a great future industry of a wealth-producing character save that solitary work by that learned research scholar and historian, Professor Radhakumud Mookerji, on "A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity from the Earliest Times". The book on the "Economics of Shipping" by Mr. S. N. Haji is, therefore, the first of its kind by an Indian gentleman possessing both the academic and practical qualifications necessary for making a detailed analytical study of the subject in all its aspects. So far it will not be denied that it is unique in its way.

The author has essayed, and I may add essayed successfully, to present to his countrymen in a practical

form, from his close personal knowledge and experience, the economics of shipping industry, with the view of concentrating the attention of Indian industrialists of courage and enterprise on the importance of building by slow degrees a mercantile marine, specially for thousands of miles of the Indian coast, of which we may well be proud and which may, it is to be hoped, eventually form the nucleus of a nascent Indian navy for purpose of defence on the coast and sea routes, of Indian trade, side by side, with the great navy of Great Britain with its glorious traditions of three hundred years and more. The publication of this book at a time when the Indian Mercantile Marine Bill is to be placed on the anvil of the Indian Legislative Assembly is most opportune. It should be in the hands of every member there, as it is full not only of the first principles of Shipping Industry but replete with a wealth of statistical information which only a patient student of research and grasp of his subjects alone is capable of treating scientifically. What those principles and what the mass of useful and valuable information are may be well studied from the pages of this book. To encumber this brief foreword with them will be superfluous. But it may not be unuseful to draw special attention of the Indian industrial and commercial public to the able treatment of some of the knottiest points which are certain to form the subject of an interesting and instructive debate in the Assembly. The points are well put but, like in other large questions, there is the other side to them to which

also the intelligent public will look forward to learn with equal interest and instruction as are to be found in the following pages.

All lovers of a temperate and fair criticism should therefore welcome the volume so far as it is written with a single eye and laudable purpose to educate the public and instruct them in one of the momentous industrial problems of the country of a far reaching and beneficent consequence.

D. E. WACHA.

*4th August 1924.*

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## PREFACE.

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The object of this book is to present a scientific treatment of various economic problems involved in the management of the shipping industry. The questions regarding shipping capital, expenditure and rates are treated in the light of the general principles that govern the problems of transport. In the absence of any adequate treatment of the subject of shipping, the author had to examine the general theories of railway problems which have been exhaustively dealt with by experts in various countries and to evolve therefrom principles of general application to sea transport as well. It will thus be seen that the actual field of this work has not been trodden before. It is, therefore, hoped that this book will serve to indicate the main lines along which a scientific enquiry of the subject of the shipping industry may proceed.

It will be readily seen that, the treatment of the subject being general, the book would serve a useful purpose in all countries interested in shipping. Ship-owners in particular will find in it scientific explanations for their daily work while students in general will find a full exposition of one of the main branches of commerce.

In view of the deplorable fact that India, though a vast maritime country, does not to-day possess a



national mercantile marine, it has been thought desirable to add a special chapter to explain the shortcomings of the present position and the necessary remedies to cure the same. It is a hopeful sign that the Government of India, admitting the necessity for India to have its own mercantile marine, appointed last year the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee to investigate various problems connected with Indian shipping. In view of the fact that the author was intimately associated with the work of the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee and particularly because almost the last pages of this book were being printed when the report of this Committee was made available to the public, it has been thought desirable to omit any detailed reference to the work of the Committee from the pages of this book. However, now that the report is published, it will not be out of place to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that the main recommendations of the Committee are along the lines advocated by the author in his Pamphlets on Indian Shipping published long before the appointment of the Committee in February 1923. The two main desiderata in any scheme intended to develop a mercantile marine for India are (1) Reservation of the Indian Coastal Traffic to Indian vessels and (2) Abolition of the Deferred Rebate System together with the discriminations arising thereunder. These two measures will be found specifically mentioned in the draft of the Indian Merchant Marine Bill which is appended to the last chapter of this book.

Owing to the necessity of keeping the subjects under treatment within reasonable limits, it was not found possible to discuss within this book, as being outside its scope, the general question of nautical training for Indians but the author would like to add his quota of commendation due to the Indian Mercantile Marine Committee for suggesting a very thorough and practical scheme to enable Indians, in adequate numbers, to be trained as deck officers and marine engineers to man the Indian Mercantile Marine of the future

Finally, there remains the pleasant duty of acknowledging obligations to all the gentlemen who, in various ways, have added to the value of the book. It would be invidious to mention names. It is, therefore, hoped that this general acknowledgment will be accepted as an expression of the profound thankfulness of the author to all who have helped him to present an adequate treatment of the main theme of the book.

*7th August 1924*

S. N. HAJI.

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